

BIP _ From Jerónimos to Império Square: public space and heritage

Dos Jerónimos à Praça do Império: espaço público e património

KA131 / ID: 2023-1-PT01-KA131-HED-000116515-4

PROGRAMME

02.05.2025 [1st session / 2 hours] _ staff meeting / online / 9h00_Lx Time

Online Staff meeting with all Learning Institutions to prepare assignments and draft the Intensive Program. This working meeting will also serve to identify analysis tools, research methodologies, definitions of vocabulary, and concepts shared by all and lay the ground for the work to be carried out by the students.

16.05.2025 [2nd session / 2 hours] _ Staff and Students meeting / online/ 9h00_Lx Time

Welcome meeting; Presentations; General information and case study presentation and discussion; Digital cartography and information; Team building

23.05.2025 [3rd session / 2 hours] _ Staff and Students meeting / online/ 9h00_Lx Time

Conferences – invited experts [Architecture / Heritage / Public Space]

Silvia Covarino and Minora Hafez _GUC

Paola Rizzi _UNISS

Cláudia Melo_Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, Museus e Monumentos de Portugal, Ministério da Cultura

WORKSHOP 26th -30th.05.2025 / in person

Lisbon & Porto Brandão [Almada]

26.05.2025

[meeting point_Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, Lisbon]

9h30 /12h30

Welcoming / presentation

Visit to Torre de Belém and Jerónimos

15h00

Boat tripe / Santa Maria de Belém – Porto Brandão

15h30 / 18h45

Design Workshop

27.05.2025

[meeting point_Fundação Serra Henriques, Porto Brandão]

10h00 / 18h45

Design Workshop

14h30 / 19h00

Design Workshop

28.05.2025

[meeting point_Fundação Serra Henriques, Porto Brandão]

10h00 / 13h00

Design Workshop

14h30 / 18h45

Design Workshop

29.05.2025

[meeting point_Fundação Serra Henriques, Porto Brandão]

10h00 / 13h00

Design Workshop

14h30 / 18h45

Final presentations and discussion of the results

30.05.2025

[meeting point_Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, Lisbon]

11h30 / 12h30

Conference Massimo Angrilli, DdA - Pescara

13h00

Lunch at Museu dos Coches

Visit Museu dos Coches

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Belém, Lisbon. In the Praça do Império, we encounter possibly the largest concentration of spaces dedicated to culture and built heritage in the capital, if not in the entire country.

A remnant of the Portuguese World Exhibition of 1940—the significant event organized by the Estado Novo to commemorate the "Double Centenary," marked by the eight centuries since the Foundation of Portugal (1140) and the three centuries since the Restoration of Independence (1640)—the monumental Fonte Luminosa today marks the geometric center of an impressive conglomeration of monuments and museums, forming one of the main attractions of the city.

Circling clockwise, from south to north around the Praça do Império, we find other reminders of the 1940 exhibition in the area closest to the Tagus River: the Padrão dos Descobrimentos—humorously known among Lisbon locals as "Don't Push"—the modern building of the Espelho de Água, and the Museu da Arte Popular, with its lighthouse displaying a design very much in the "Portuguese taste" of the time. Continuing our circuit, crossing the virtual moat created by the railway and the two roads that frame it, we come across the mass of the Centro Cultural de Belém (CCB). This (unacknowledged) evocation of the fortresses that the Portuguese built along the coasts of Africa and India was originally conceived to host the first Portuguese presidency of the Council of the European Union in 1992, was subsequently converted back to its original purpose as a cultural center, and finally, in 2023, as a Museum of Contemporary Art. This significant work from the late 20th century was never completed. The original competition design envisioned a building about double the current footprint, connecting the Praça do Império to the Torre de Belém, which is located, isolated, further downstream on the riverbank.

Resuming our route, we find the modern extension of the Museu de Marinha, featuring its extraordinary Gulbenkian Planetarium, and finally, crossing the courtyard, we encounter the large block that has grown since the establishment of the Real Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Belém. In this volume, gradually built since the early 16th century, when the construction of the monastery began at the behest of King D. Manuel, we find today a significant portion of the exhibition halls of the Museu de Marinha, the Museu Nacional de Arqueologia (MNA), and the so-called Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, a remaining part of the original monastery, which combines the magnificent Manueline cloister with the Igreja de Santa Maria de Belém. In the remaining part of the block, we find the Casa Pia de Lisboa, a public institute dedicated to the protection and enhancement of underprivileged children and young people, which until the early 20th century occupied the monastic area, then demolished to be replaced by the galleries where the MNA is now located.

Immediately east of the monumental area of Belém, still in the neighborhood of the same name, we find the Palácio de Belém, the official residence of the President of the Republic, the old and new Museu dos Coches, the Museu de Arte, Arquitectura e Tecnologia (MAAT), with its old section housed in an industrial heritage building, the Central Tejo, while the new extension, MAAT, which has rebranded the complex, occupies one of the most interesting architectural works built in Lisbon in this century.

In a more distant radius, we note the presence of the old Cordoaria Nacional factory, a testament to Portugal's maritime vocation, and the Palácio Real da Ajuda, a National Monument. The heritage area of Belém serves simultaneously as a symbol and an attraction. Here we find crowds of tourists seeking to visit various cultural attractions while enjoying the riverside promenade, which intersects with a group of art lovers jostling to attend the numerous temporary cultural events regularly held in this area, supported by the diversity of cultural facilities available, as the Portuguese State continues the tradition of utilizing all the symbolism related to the epic of discoveries that this area conveys, primarily employing the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos as a reception hall for the most important

international figures visiting the country and for the most significant commemorative events of central dates in Portuguese history.

In this context, the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, a National Monument inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and the ultimate symbol, together with the Torre de Belém, of the Age of Discoveries, plays the role of the central star of the Belém constellation. This role emanates from the symbolism it carries, its architecture evocative of Portugal's maritime nature, and its location.

The monastery was built on the former beach of Belém, specifically on the site of an ancient chapel dedicated to Nossa Senhora da Estrela, where 15th-century navigators would gather to pray before embarking on long sea voyages, and also to give thanks upon their return. The chapel was later expanded by order of Prince D.

Henrique and renamed Nossa Senhora dos Reis. The Mosteiro dos Jerónimos is thus considered the point of departure and arrival for the most important transatlantic journeys that established Portugal as one of the world's leading nations at that time.

The Mosteiro dos Jerónimos is now the most visited monument in the country. The ancient shoreline of Belém's beach has vanished beneath successive landfills that over time have pushed the shoreline further into the Tagus River. The public space now facing the main façade of the monastery—and also the two neighboring museums—presents itself as a sort of avenue, bare, configured with parallel corridors, where alignments of difficult-to-sustain lawns alternate with Portuguese paving, a strip of sad asphalt, another grassy area, a multiple-lane cobblestone roadway, and finally, the Portuguese pavement sidewalk that surrounds the Fonte Luminosa. There is no shade, no place for anyone to sit, and no basic amenities like drinking fountains or trash cans.

This space struggles to meet all the requests placed upon it continuously: on one hand, its emptiness allows for an unobstructed view of the monument from a proper distance, and the characteristics of the coverings support repeated military parades and the automobile traffic divided into different lanes. On the other hand, the complete lack of dignity resulting from the absence of design and the dismal materials used in the successive pavements only finds rivals in the distressing and absurd sight of lines of tourists waiting, selflessly, for their turn to enter the monastery.

Every day, a crowd that often reaches 5,000 visitors forms a long, more or less orderly queue, accepting to be exposed to the elements for hours, rain or shine, in hopes of finally experiencing the astonishing cloister and the marvelous church from the inside.

For its part, the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, by its very nature as a finite monument without the capacity for any expansion, also naturally lacks some basic amenities that we find in any contemporary cultural facility: facilitated accessibility, ticket office, café, shop, protected waiting area, seating—the list of needs accumulates.

Naturally, the current management of the monument is the first to recognize the urgent need to address these problems, from the image of the place to its adaptability to the various requests attributed to the public space it occupies. This has led to an approach with academia and its ability to analyze the situation from a different perspective, thinking outside the box, and deducing a series of possible scenarios as a way to contribute to a discussion about what responses could be provided. An exercise that combines the merit of academic research with the opportunity to develop a research by design exercise with evident didactic merits.

Thus, through the ERASMUS+ platform, a series of specialists from different European universities—professors and students—will come together to develop a proactive brainstorming session dedicated to finding viable and recognized solutions. The commitment is not only to develop work that can serve as guidance for those later tasked with developing an execution project but also to ensure that it aligns with the Agenda 2030 - United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically referring to SDG 4—quality education; 11—sustainable cities and communities; and 12—sustainable production and consumption.