

BIP WORKSHOP

LIVING WITH EARTHQUAKES

Learning from the historic town for a
contemporary sustainable agenda

1-5 September 2026

Title: LIVING WITH EARTHQUAKES

Learning from the historic town for a contemporary sustainable agenda

Set 2026

Coordination: Ana Bordalo
Maria Rita Pais

Organization Committee: José Carvalho, Nuno Rio, Vitor Alves, Carlos Dias, Luís Corredoura, Vitor Dias e Mariana Perry.

Scientific Committee: Ana Bordalo, Andrea Fanfoni, Antonelo Alici, Justyna Borucka, Maria Rita Pais, Spela Hudnik

Terr.A.ID Terr.A.ID, ECATI, Universidade Lusófona
CIAUD, Centro de Investigação em Arquitetura, Urbanismo e
Design, Faculdade de Arquitetura, Universidade de Lisboa

Partner Academic Institutions:

Instituto Superior Manuel Teixeira Gomes [ISMAT, Portugal];

Universidade Lusófona [UL, Portugal]

Dipartimento di Architettura, Università degli Studi "G. d'Annunzio" Chieti - Pescara [DdA, Italy];

Department for Humanistic, Scientific and Social Innovation, Università degli Studi della Basilicata [USB, Italy]

University of Bologna [UB, Italy]

Università degli Studi di Parma [UP, Italy]

Dipartimento di Architettura Design e Urbanistica (DADU) - Alghero - Università degli Studi di Sassari [DADU, Italy]

Faculty of Architecture of the University of Ljubljana [FA-ULj, Slovenia]

Department of Architectural Projects - University of Seville [US, Spain]

Cravow University of Technology - Faculty of Architecture [CUT, Poland]

National Technical University of Athens [NTUA, Greece]

Fachhochschule Erfurt, University of Applied Sciences, Architektur [FHE, German]

"Gh. Asachi" Technical University of Iasi [GA, Romania]

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SINOPSE

This program addresses the architectural and urban legacies of seismic events, reflecting on how historic towns can inform a sustainable and resilient design agenda today. It explores the interplay between built form and landscape, while critically examining strategies of reconstruction and transformation in the aftermath of historic earthquakes. By revisiting these processes, the discussion aims to frame methodologies that bridge heritage values, community engagement, and future-oriented architectural practice.

This workshop will gather specialists, students and local stakeholders on a common work to understand, debate and propose architectural solutions for the future of this heritage.

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CASE-STUDY: PORTIMÃO

The Algarve region, in southern Portugal, forms a culturally layered landscape shaped by both natural forces and human settlement. Its coastal and fluvial topographies, marked by estuaries and the Atlantic horizon, have produced urban forms that embody resilience and adaptation.

Portimão, has a very ancient human occupation, with prehistoric remains and evidence of successive seafaring peoples such as the Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians and Romans, who took advantage of the excellent natural harbour of the Arade River for trade. From the fifteenth century onwards, it developed as a structured urban centre, with the foundation of São Lourenço da Barrosa/Vila Nova de Portimão, the construction of the main church and defensive walls, and its integration into the dynamics of Portuguese maritime expansion. In the nineteenth century, the canning industry and the fishing port drove strong economic and urban growth, transforming the town into an important industrial centre in the Algarve. In 1924, Portimão was granted city status, consolidating itself as a regional urban hub which, over the course of the twentieth century, gradually shifted from an industrial and port city to

a tourist destination focused on its beaches and coastal landscape.

The downtown area of Portimão is structured as the city's traditional urban core, located on the right bank of the Arade River and organized around its riverside axis and former port. It is characterized by a dense grid of small- and medium-scale blocks, with buildings predominantly for housing and ground-floor local commerce, preserving significant features of nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture. The urban fabric adapts to the gentle topography descending towards the river, creating a network of narrow streets, squares and open spaces that function as the main public realm with strong pedestrian activity. In recent years, urban regeneration and the pedestrianization of several streets have strengthened the role of the downtown as a historic and commercial centre and as a high-quality urban waterfront facing the estuary.

The workshop will address the construction and transformation of urban space at different scales, with a focus on the downtown of Portimão. It aims to provide students with methodological tools to critically analyze the relationship between architecture, urban form, and social practices, in order to envision strategies for sustainable and resilient urban futures.

Participants will be introduced to established approaches in the study of urban life, including methods inspired by Jan Gehl, that emphasize the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of public space. Spatial analysis, mapping, and overlay techniques will be employed to interpret urban morphology and to explore

new possibilities for contemporary urban density. Case studies in Portimão serve as laboratories to identify exceptional spatial conditions in historic environments and to reframe them as drivers for innovative design responses.

The pedagogical framework is structured around three interrelated categories:

- 1.The physicality of space - material, tectonic, and morphological dimensions.

- 2.The narrative of space - historical layers, memory, and Inclusion and diversity; Sustainability; Citizenship

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WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Studying and teaching methods

Active methodology for monitoring and guiding the work developed by students in working groups with elements from all universities working together.

Learning outcomes

Multidisciplinary research, social responsibility, sustainability, promote innovation and entrepreneurship, multicultural approaches

Evaluation criteria and methods

The assessment of the students will be done by the supervisors of the group work and by the representatives of the municipalities involved in the project that will award the best projects.

Primary teaching/training language

English

City and country of the venue

Portimão, Portugal



Workshop: Living with Earthquakes

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AGENDA

Start and end date: 01.09.2026 – 05.09.2026

Duration: five days

Activities: Design workshop

31.08.2026 / arrival day

Arrival in Faro. Introductory seminar introducing the place, its cultural qualities, and the workshop methodology.

Welcome dinner

01.09.2026

Group organisation and site investigation in Portimão, structured around the three categories:

- Physicality of space*
- Narrative of space*
- Practices of space*

Meeting with the local community and first work review.

02.09.2026

Full-day comparative study in Portimão, exploring its unique cultural and urban values.

Work review in the afternoon.

- Physicality of space*
- Narrative of space*
- Practices of space*

Meeting with the local community and first work review.

03.09.2029

Workshop activities in Portimão, with continued application of the methodology. Work review in the afternoon.

04.09.2029

Group preparation of presentations. Afternoon session for presenting preliminary findings to the local communities.

05.09.2026

Final site visits to capture the spirit of place using the workshop methodology. Closing dinner to celebrate the outcomes and exchange reflections.

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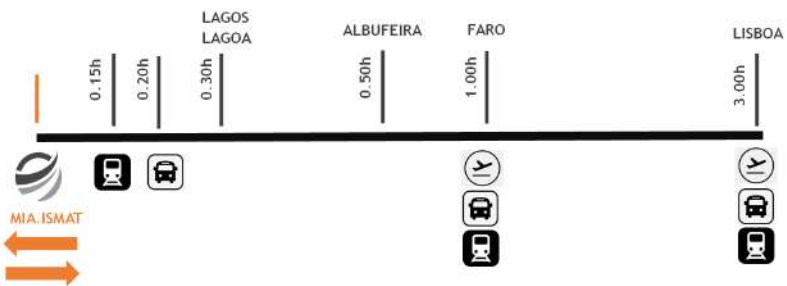
ONLINE SESSION

The online session for students and teachers will take place the **28.08.2026** at **14:00** [WEST - Western European Summer Time] to introduce:

- The content on the workshop
- The place
- The methodology
- Introduction to readings

Zoom Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82444053541>



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STAYING

Workshop Address

R. Dr. Estevão de Vasconcelos, 33a, 8500-590 Portimão

Travel Tips

You can consider travel by plane to Lisbon or Faro and then travel by bus or train to Portimão

Staying Tips

Multidisciplinary research, social responsibility, sustainability, promote innovation and entrepreneurship, multicultural approaches

