



ESCADINHAS FOOTPATHS: REVITALIZING HIDDEN URBAN SPACES

Posted on September 12, 2024 by Dima Fadel



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'Escadinhas Footpaths' is a project that connects architecture and art together with the natural world. It forms a network of pedestrian footpaths linking the hilly neighborhood of Monte Xisto to the banks of the River Leça in Matosinhos. The initiative aims to showcase the value that low-budget projects can bring to overlooked and neglected urban spaces in our cities.

Over the course of a year, the process involved a multidisciplinary team and an extensive network of partners including architects, local builders and artists. In the initial phase of construction, the steps leading to Rua das Escadinhas—an unusual urban feature connecting the upper and lower levels of the western hill of Monte Xisto—were rehabilitated. The steps and handrails were repaired, and a new boundary was created between the public steps and the adjoining private land. This boundary, designed as benches, allows the stairs to serve as a resting place.

Further along the path that leads from the foot of the steps to the River Leça, an old ruin was rebuilt and transformed into a seating area surrounded by nature. Small-scale interventions restored the site's original character, undoing the random modifications made over the years. The careful rehabilitation of the site, including the addition of benches in each "room" of the structure, has encouraged people to spend time there, transforming it into a social gathering place.

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