



Francoise Choay has often said that the culture of cities - our urban comun heritage - is very likely Europe's greatest contribution to world culture. Monsaraz is an extraordinary "bastide" of the late middle ages, part of the long lines of defense of one of the most stable border lines of the oldest countries in Europe.

The most challenge aspect of this experience was how to integrate contemporary interventions in a long continuum of formal, technological and ancestral knowledge cultures, never hiding or falsifying the contemporaneity of our gestures, but seeking sensitive dialogues, without causing noise and without seeking an excessive protagonism of our time.

One poet wrote that the essential task of our generation is to write new poems that sound entirely familiar. That was essentially what we were looking for in this project.

Complementarity and continuity are the key ideas of the intervention. Understanding this project and place not only as an intervention in historical heritage, but rather as a landscape project, which seeks a more intense and effective relationship with the entire territory of Monsaraz, underlining its landmark condition.

The project undertakes the rehabilitation of Monsaraz west and south Barbican path. The intervention consisted of restoring the collapsing walls, reactivating the old defensive Barbican route and opening previously closed portals, transforming this place into an exceptional path for landscape and territory contemplation.

The fortification material and its constructive specificity clarifies the intervention strategy. Schist as the main building material of walls and pavements and granite as an exceptional material of wall portals construction, embody the new interventions that seek to reinforce the cultural and public character of the place.

Archaeological monitoring allowed a more rigorous definition of the different design interventions, which consists on walls restauration, new shist pavements and new granite stairs. Corten steel appears as a new material for elements outside the wall perimeter, such as stairs and lampposts. This work aims to preserve the authenticity of places, its historical continuity and architectural landscape identity.



Panoramic View Previous to Project. Barbican Path. 2016 © JF



Panoramic View Previous to Project. South Bastion. 2016 © JF



Barbican Path. 2021 © AC