

GS1 PORTUGAL

LISBON, PORTUGAL

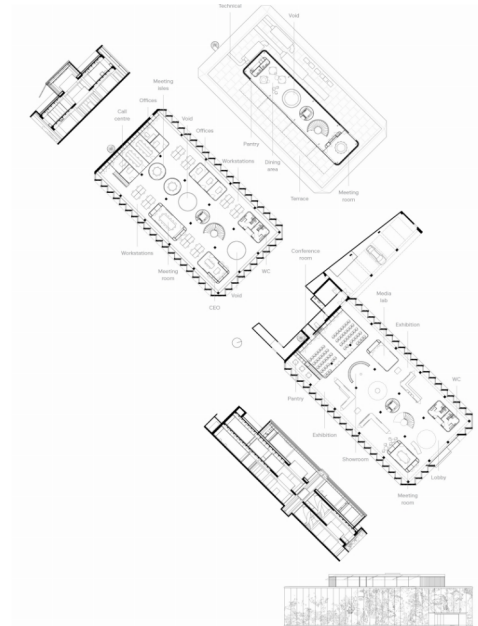
2016–2014

GS1 Portugal is the Portuguese counterpart of the non-profit global body in charge of implementing the technological licensing origin-identification systems of companies and products, promoting, among others, the ubiquitous barcode, now known as QR codes. Its new headquarters are the outcome of a first-prize entry in a competition held in 2014 in collaboration with artist Alexandre Farto Aka Vhils. The building is located on the Lisbon campus of IAPMEI (the state agency for technological innovation) in the Lumiar district of Lisbon. This campus, which is the first in Portugal specifically created for business innovation, is located in the surroundings of an 18th-century farmhouse on the boundaries of the city and was planned in the early 1970s, based on an orthogonal grid largely inspired by the Anglo-Saxon university campus model.

The new building makes use of the concrete structure of an existing 1980s office building, which had become physically and technologically obsolete. The former so-called K3 Building was a two-storey rectangular volume with a simple column-grid and waffle-slab system. In terms of programme, the building has three distinct areas, corresponding to the different floors. The ground floor concentrates the centre's public activities, namely a showroom equipped with value-chain simulators and applied and interactive isles of multimedia information technology. It also includes a multipurpose auditorium and technical areas. The second floor accommodates management and services in a fluid and informal open space, with only the meeting rooms, stationery and toilet areas confined to opaque aisles. Finally, the rooftop is where the social area is located with a bar/coffee shop opening onto a shaded terrace. Inside, the building is unified by two large circular voids subtracted from the existing slabs, thereby visually enlarging the experience of space and user interconnectivity.

In terms of finishing, the interior of the building intentionally plays on the idea of pre-existing material reuse. The rawness of the exposed concrete elements, as well as the absence of false ceilings (thereby exposing all the electricity cable trays and AC ductwork), contrasts with the tactile comfort of the user materials and finishes, such as linoleum, cork, textiles and carpets.

The zigzag façade system alternates between concrete panels and floor-to-ceiling glass panes, respectively facing north or south. This reconfigures the relationship of the building's views to the campus while protecting the workspaces from excessive sunlight and creating a lucent link to the garden. On the exterior, sections of the concrete panels have a bas-relief by Vhils, an art project resulting from a longstanding collaboration between the architects and the artist exploiting technology-based research into large-scale precast-concrete moulding techniques. Vhils' work, and this project in particular, is designed as a contemporary critique of the chaos of information and visual noise while questioning their disruptive role, in turn counterpoised by the presence of the human eye.



Location: IAPMEI Campus (Lumiar district), Lisbon, Portugal

Client: GS1 Portugal

Façade art project: Alexandre Farto, aka Vhils

Scope of services: Architecture and interior design

Project brief: Showroom and offices

Gross floor area: 2,000 sq. m

Construction cost: EUR 2m

Project status: 2014 (shortlisted competition, 1st prize) – 2016 (built)

Photography: Fernando Guerra

