Pedro Aibeo – an engineer, an architect and a multitalented person – memories of his studies in Seinäjoki

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Pedro Aibeo is a world famous architect, who is living nowadays in Hyrsylä, Lohja in Finland. He is not just an architect, but he is a multitalented person, who is also an artist, musician, graphic designer, writer and civil engineer.

Pedro Aibeo was born in Portugal in Porto 39 years ago and his first studies were civil engineering studies in University of Porto. At the end of those studies he came first time to Finland In 2001 and had an Erasmus program exchange in Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences. He has been one of the best students in the faculty of construction engineering in Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences.

Picture 1. Selfie from year 2001 with analog camera: Pedro with his room mate in Seinäjoki.

What kind of memories Pedro has of his studies and time in Seinäjoki: “Well, in short it was a maning up time, the 1st time I stepped away from my parents home to live alone. After that, I lived always abroad, in over 10 countries that I lived in, from Australia, India, Oman or Switzerland. Seinäjoki’s beauty was in the eyes of the beholder, for me, all was amazing, as all was new. The snow, the prefab houses, the warm homes, the teaching methods and the good looking women!”

Picture 2. Skiing was much easier than skating. Seinäjoki 2001.

After Seinäjoki Pedro Aibeo graduated as MSc Civil Engineering (specialized in geotechnics) the University of Porto in 2002. He moved to Frankfurt, Germany and started his work life as an environmental engineer. His work was to plan and build anaerobic biogas plants in developing countries. He worked there for one year and soon he started his architectural studies in Technical University of Darmstadt in Germany and he graduated in 2010 as MSc Architecture.

Pedro Aibeo started his architectural design projects already in the beginning of his studies in 2003. One project he has done during the studies is modular school. The goal of the project was to design an energy efficient school, which could be built fast and cheaply. At that time he had made several projects mostly in Germany, which were new houses, renovation works and also urban planning. In the end of and after his studies he has designed and built over 50 buildings around the world. He has lived in over ten countries, for instance in Australia, India, Estonia, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Oman, where he has made a lot of architectural design projects. From the time in Oman good examples are German University of Technology in Oman and History of Islamic Science Center. Here are also some pictures of those projects. Pedro Aibeo has

had several housing projects in Switzerland. One example of those projects is in Switzerland, a Residential housing named Cappuccino.

Picture 3. German University of Technology in Oman.

Picture 4. History of Islamic Science Center and German University of Technology in Oman.

Picture 5. History of Islamic Science Center.

Picture 6. Residential housing in Switzerland Cappuccino

In 2013 Pedro Aibeo started as a researcher and a lecturer in Aalto University. He is doing his doctoral thesis about Architectural Democracy, which is going to be ready in 2020. In this project they try to find ways to use technology to turn buildings into open source interfaces, to improve the public understanding of the built environment for the everyday life of citizens, and with it, the quality of architecture and political participation. Normally citizens don’t know or they can’t get any information and they can’t involve in urban and architectural planning and his work group is trying to find solutions for that.

The other passion of Pedro Aibeo today is Gamified Cohousing. The main goals are to fight the misuse of resources of the construction industry and the loneliness in the cities with cohousing and also think about environment so that it is better to renovate old buildings instead of building up new ones and the same time

save building heritage. The other aim is to gather information, conduct research and runs public debates and change architecture from the product based service to a process. And one of the main aims is in their own web pages: “ AIl for improving the living, energy dependency and working patterns of Cohousing and co-working spaces and to create living and working communities where people negotiate differences locally (political literacy), in a more economically, ecologically and socially sustainable way, with adaptable physical and social design where users can master their own social rules within that community via game mechanics.” And of course one aim is internationalization. In reality this Cohousing project has been carried out in Hyrsylä Koulu –project. In this project persons, who are living or working in Cohouse, can make decisions together not in the meetings, but with modern technology with your phone and the game in it. The meetings you need just to decide principles of the game together.

Nowadays Pedro Aibeo is also giving lectures all over the world of those two subjects. He has lectured or will lecture in Germany, Portugal, China, India, Oman, Estonia, Mexico and several other countries and at several universities in those countries. And he will also exhibit his work at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2020.

Why Finland? The reasons you can find in Gamified Cohousing websites: “Finns pay their bills on time and obey the rule of law, Finland is one of the safest countries in the world, Finnish economy is growing (also the real estate industry with record numbers in 2018) and Finland is a leader in innovation.”

At the same time with architectural and research projects he has made also several other projects, which are from music to graphical design and drawings. In Hyrsylä there is also World Music School Helsinki. There they teach music as a language by mixing experts with beginners with rules added later and incrementally. Those lessons are financed by the students performances. Pedro Aibeo himself is playing several instruments from guitar to bagpipe and he is also playing in several groups. About graphical design is one example tour of and also websites of Johanna Kurkela (year 2013). One example of the drawings is mural in an apartment in Pasila, Helsinki.

Picture7. Pedro Aibeo and Hyrsylä Koulu.

Picture 8. Webpages of Johanna Kurkela.

Picture 9. Pedro and mural in apartment in Pasila, Helsinki.

What kind of plans you have for the future: “I’m done with moving around. My base is now Finland. I travel a lot so that gives me the balance I need. I plan to bring the work around “Architectural Democracy” in deeper lenghts, either practically through the Gamified Cohousing or in theory with research. All other projects and abilities I have from music to art and theater I have been working on it too and working on publishing what I have learned or created”.

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Photos: Pedro Aibeo, Ilkka Loukola

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