





# NATURAL INSTINCT

WE TALK TO THREE LEADING ARCHITECTS  
ACROSS THREE DIFFERENT CONTINENTS  
ABOUT THEIR APPROACH TO COHESION  
BETWEEN DESIGN AND NATURE.

INTERVIEW YVETTE CAPRIOGLIO





Pictured: OS House by Jacobsen Arquitetura.  
Photography Fernando Guerra (FG+SG)

FORCE OF NATURE

## JACOBSEN ARQUITETURA

PARTNERS PAULO JACOBSEN, BERNARDO JACOBSEN AND EDGAR MURATA

Rio de Janeiro & São Paulo, Brazil  
Lisbon, Portugal

### How does your studio's architecture and design reflect the country in which it is built and the context?

Working globally, our DNA is guided by the understanding of client's profile, regional culture, and an in-depth geographical analysis. In this sense, the personal tastes, cultural habits, and our research of architectural elements linked to regional customs are fundamental to connection between construction and locality.

### How does the work of your studio implicitly and explicitly connect with the natural environment?

For us, architecture should not impose itself on the environment, but establish a harmonious dialogue with it. This involves approaches that seek to dilute the limitations – physical and visual – of the surrounding environment.

At the start of every project, an in-depth analysis of the topography and natural conditions such as insolation, ventilation and existing vegetation, is conducted to give us an indication as to how to position the architecture on the site. From this perspective, the design seeks to dissolve into the landscape, while the materials and textures connect to the local context.

The following set of solutions tries to integrate built spaces with their natural environment: the insertion of glass-less interior gardens, which dissolve the limits between inside and outside, the use of natural materials, such as wood and stone, and the extensive use of windows to embrace views, among other solutions. This atmosphere plays a fundamental role in the overall comfort and wellbeing of residents.

### Biophilic design aims to create spaces that foster a deeper relationship with nature – how has your studio diversified and evolved to embrace this?

When Jacobsen Arquitetura was first established, our founding partner Paulo Jacobsen worked on a series of projects in Paraty, a coastal region of the state of Rio de Janeiro, which used unsustainably-sourced round wood beams.

Today, with more experience and the expertise of Bernardo Jacobsen, we emphasise the use of laminated eucalyptus or pine from sustainable sources, with rare species only being used for specific finishing work.

From start to finish, we adopt an approach that prioritises a respect for nature, striving for the lowest environmental impact, and the comfort of our clients.

Among the many examples that characterise biophilic design in our work, we can cite our use of natural materials, spaces that blend interiors and landscaping, passive strategies for ventilation and natural lighting, construction techniques with low environmental impact, and implantation that causes the least change to the natural profile of the land.

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**Your studio's concept of tropical architecture is based on the potential relationship between the exuberant nature of Rio's landscapes and the architectural project. How does this tropical architecture develop through your creative process on each project?**

Our studio is located in Rio de Janeiro, in the house where Bernardo Jacobsen grew up with his father Paulo Jacobsen. The house itself, as well as the surrounding rainforest and tropical climate directly influences our creative process by inspiring us to create welcoming spaces connected to nature.

We want residents to feel the breeze move through spaces, observe the light throughout the day as it passes through openings, and hear the sounds of the natural elements: water, birds, the rustling of the trees.

**How important is the integration between the built environment and its natural context to the outcome of your projects?**

With each of our projects, we try to establish an interconnectedness between the built forms and the pre-existing natural landscape. By respecting the natural characteristics of the site – topography, insolation, wind direction, predominant views – the project emerges in direct response to it.

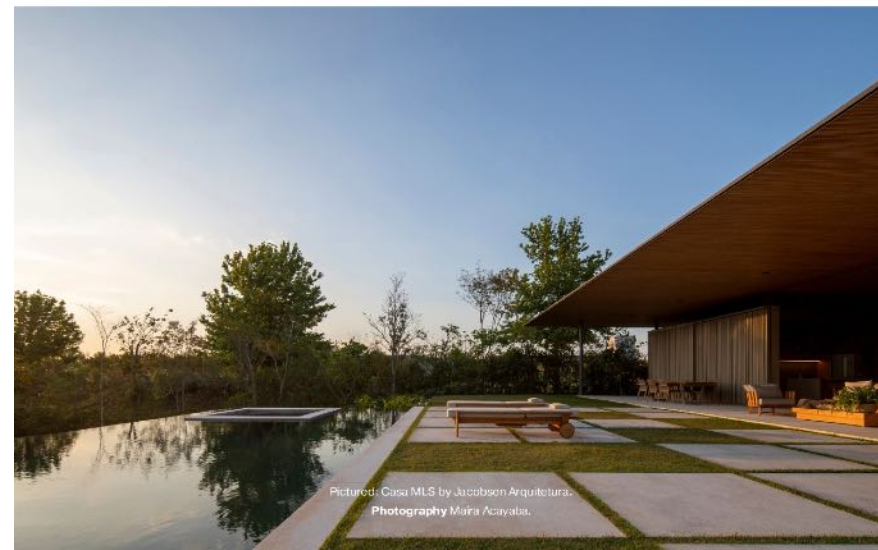
According to our founder partner, Paulo Jacobsen, "Architecture should be closely related to the client's personality and way of life, in full harmony with the surroundings in a timeless way. The idea is that the architecture disappears into the landscape."

**The established dialogue between architecture and nature informs your solutions. How does this dialogue inform your exploration of materiality in each project?**

Our architectural approach prioritises the use of natural materials – predominantly stone and wood both inside and outside. Although these materials are used globally, we prioritise those of Brazilian origin, or from the region where the project is located. This in turn, forms a genuine connection to the location. In addition to stone and wood, we also use bamboo, rammed earth, straw and natural fibres in our interiors.

The choice to use natural materials allows our buildings to 'get old' with dignity.

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itself on the environment, but  
establish a harmonious dialogue,  
as a natural result."**

— Paulo Jacobsen



Pictured: AB House by Jacobsen Arquitetura  
Photography: Rafael Hambrøkke