

AMORIM NEWS

YEAR 38 / NUMBER 2

Cork, the future today

South African studio, Counterspace (Serpentine Summer Pavilion), Chinese artist, Ai Weiwei (Ai Weiwei – Rapture exhibition), British designer, Es Devlin (London Design Biennale), Porto-based studio, depA Architects (Venice Biennale of Architecture) or the creative duo, Miguel Flor and Cristina Hora (Porto Design Biennale) are just some of the many artists, designers and architects who have used cork in their most recent international projects. This option stands in perfect harmony with José Pedro Sousa, the only Portuguese member of the round table of the New European Bauhaus, who talks about this issue in an exclusive interview: “(...) I don’t know of any better material than cork that can serve as a model of inspiration for the practices that have to be implemented, not only in the building industry, but in our way of life in general.” Cork, the future today!



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When Jordi Bonet i Armengol suggested using cork for the flooring of Barcelona’s Sagrada Familia, he was told: “That’s just for sealing bottles!”

But, the Catalan architect, in charge of continuing Antoni Gaudí’s iconic work, has felt the comfort of that raw material in his own studio for many years, and remained undeterred. Inspired by cork’s renowned thermal and acoustic properties – that are vitally important for the Sagrada Familia project – and by its long-term durability and resilience, Jordi Bonet i Armengol added another argument: it is a natural product, in perfect harmony with Gaudí’s philosophy.

Cork has countless attributes, making it one of the preferred materials for green building – which promotes the use of sustainable and energy efficient solutions that are derived from circular economy practices. Lightweight, impervious to liquids and gases, and elastic, compressible and anti-static, cork is an excellent vibration damper, which also works to the benefit of the construction sector. This genuinely Portuguese raw material also has high dimensional stability, it can withstand temperatures between -180°C and +120°C, preserves indoor air quality A+, is permeable to water vapour and reduces condensation.

Cork is also hypoallergenic, has slow combustion, is resistant to friction and is a natural carbon sink. Recent studies indicate that for every ton of cork produced, the cork oak forest can retain up to 73 tons of CO₂. This is a striking statistic for retention of Greenhouse Gases, offering vital assistance to combat climate change.

Last but not least, cork has a practically unlimited longevity, while maintaining its technical qualities. Its unrivalled qualities result from its singular chemical composition and unique cellular structure, that make cork a unique material, which combines performance with sustainability. However, instead of resting on the laurels of its exclusive benefits, the cork industry – through uninterrupted investment in

Research & Development + Innovation – has sought to further enhance cork-based products, solutions and applications for the building sector, combining technical and aesthetic characteristics, without overlooking its natural context. As a result of a process initiated by the architects, Siza Vieira and Souto de Moura, for the Portuguese Pavilion in Expo 2000 Hannover, we now have an enviable portfolio of projects for façades that use cork. However, there continues to be constant innovation in the conception, design and production of new types of decoration, adapted to the needs, requirements and cultures of the different markets. Designers, curators and architects are increasingly attracted, passionate, interested, enthusiastic and curious about cork. One of the main points of reference is Expanded Cork Agglomerate, which is recyclable, reusable, additive-free and 100% natural. Expanded Cork Agglomerate derives from the expansion of the cork granules that, through the action of water vapour, agglomerate granules soaked in the resin itself. Cork is a vegetable product that is currently used in walls, façades, roofs, underfloor heating, concrete structures or as a base for natural turf in football stadiums, etc. It offers an amazing ecological response to the multiple challenges facing modern society!

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Alma Gémea presents a renewed product line

Alma Gémea, a brand of household consumer items that combines cork with ceramic, has just launched a new product line. The renewal of the Portuguese brand, which results from a close partnership between Amorim Cork Composites and Matceramics, signed in 2009, is called *5th Element – the Perfect Balance*. It introduces different colours, other references and four unique articles. The Alma Gémea catalogue now includes a total of 54 items combining pink (ten products), green (ten products) and matte black (seven products) with dark grey (nine products) and pearly white (10 products). Alma Gémea is functional, without neglecting its creative look, taking advantage of the finest attributes that each material has to offer. The full

product range includes salad bowls, cups, mugs, fruit bowls, cruets, teapots, plates and bowls. The fusion of cork and ceramic, two strong traditional raw materials that are innovative, exclusive and distinctive, delivers a contemporary, aesthetically pleasing and conceptually useful collection. Cork's warmth is combined with the cool ceramics to deliver genuine added value for the household consumer items sector. These attributes are valued by modern consumers, who appreciate genuinely national products, reduce, reuse and recycle, and defend sustainability issues. Furthermore, the development of the composite used in the production of Alma Gémea is underpinned by the best circular economy practises, wherein the cork

derives primarily from the waste generated in the cork stopper industry. Given cork's capacity to retain CO₂, thereby making an important contribution to decarbonisation of the environment, Alma Gémea is sure to attract the vast majority of customers!





Amorim Top Series distinguished in the Luxury Packaging Awards

Amorim TOP SERIES won first prize in the category Sustainable Supplier of the Year in the Luxury Packaging Awards. Through its firm commitment to sustainability principles, supported by rigorous independent studies on the carbon balance of its products, Amorim TOP SERIES is “increasingly valued by spirits producers as a trustworthy company to achieve stringent CO₂ targets”.

In addition, by purchasing capsulated cork stoppers from Amorim TOP SERIES, spirits producers can mitigate the carbon emissions from other parts of their value chain, such as glass bottles or metal packaging components.

The jury of the Luxury Packaging Awards, organised by the British magazine *Packaging News*, underlined that “Amorim’s submission carried a strong relative argument about the raw materials used

in the stoppers”. It emphasised that the company “has always been a vocal proponent of the fact that natural cork is the best and most sustainable raw material for a premium stopper”. The jury concluded that the TOP SERIES stopper is “a genuinely very impressive stopper”.

Amorim’s TOP SERIES submission to the Luxury Packaging Awards underlined its “cradle-to-gate approach”, that analyses forestry activities, as well as transport to different markets.



“The circular economy associated to cork is an absolutely extraordinary story”

The architect José Pedro Sousa, a professor at the University of Porto's School of Architecture, is one of the 18 thinkers and the only Portuguese member of the round table of the New European Bauhaus, a movement that crosses the environment, economy and culture, to project our common future in a sustainable manner. At a time when we are emerging from a global crisis, and face the challenges of climate change, the world needs a new architecture, with “strategies that use radically different materials and constructions, in synergy with nature”. Cork, which offers a “singular convergence of qualities”, is especially well placed to respond to this challenge.

What was your first contact with cork, your first memory of this material?

One of my first memories dates back to my childhood, linked to the basement walls that one of my uncles covered with expanded cork agglomerate. The space had a unique atmosphere due to the feel of the material, the design of the panels, which was completed with some wooden slats, the space's hue and acoustics, and the heat that it retained from the existing stove. Although at the time I wasn't at all interested in architecture, I was impressed by the effect created by cork in this space.

Your academic work has focused, among other things, on the relationship between digital and material dimensions in the field of architecture. In particular your PhD thesis "From digital to material: Rethinking the applications of cork in architecture, through the use of CAD/ CAM technologies" focuses on the applications of cork. How did you become interested in researching the possibilities offered by cork in this context?

The use of CAD/ CAM in architecture began at the turn of the 21st century. At that time, in addition to the emergence of new materials, digital manufacturing allowed us to revisit traditional building materials, such as wood or concrete, and opened up new possibilities for design and applications. In 2003, in this context, I was interested in developing my PhD thesis around the exploration of digital technologies with a specific material, or an industry where that innovation could happen. By virtue of its physical properties, ecological value and its importance for Portugal, cork was a natural and ideal case study for this work. The architects Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura first opened up the possibility of using cork as an external cladding material in the Portuguese Pavilion in Expo Hannover in 2000, which gave even greater strength and importance to this research option.

To be able to proceed with my research, I was fortunate to be able to count, from the outset, on openness and support from Amorim Cork Insulation.

What does cork have to offer to architecture, and in a broader sense, to the cities we can imagine?

I think my previous reference to my memories helps answer this question. Cork is a material that has unique characteristics that leaves no one indifferent. Its thermal and acoustic performance had been empirically proven, long before it could be confirmed by any scientific research. Cork's appearance conveys a sense of comfort and using new design technologies and digital manufacturing it can be customised to create unique environments from an aesthetic and functional standpoint. Furthermore, in the current outlook, cork is an extremely important product to confront the challenges facing the world by virtue of its sustainability and the cork industry itself. To apply cork in buildings and in the city is an effective way to respond to the growing needs to incorporate Nature into built environments.

The New European Bauhaus is a new movement that is re-imagining Europe. But its roots date back to the original Bauhaus movement, from the early 20th century. How do we bridge the past and future? What unites and separates these two historical moments?

100 years ago, the world was emerging from a crisis caused by the First World War and Bauhaus sought to solve problems, through convergence of the arts and using technologies from that period. Nowadays, the world is once again in the midst of a global crisis that requires an urgent response. Like the original Bauhaus, the New European Bauhaus appears to give hope and is helping to project our common future, through a collective effort that involves everyone - architects, designers, artists, scientists, economists or ordinary citizens - linked to a movement that also seeks to be a cultural project. Despite the obvious analogies between these two historic movements, there are also clear differences. For instance, current environmental problems require solutions whose various measures deviate from the ideas that have been advocated in the past. For example, concrete and steel, that previously announced the new architecture of that time, are now recognised as an important element of the problems that we now face. Today, we also need a new architecture, and strategies, materials and construction will have to be radically different, in synergy with Nature.

You are the only Portuguese member of the high-level round table of the New European Bauhaus. In your opinion, given your national identity, how can Portugal add something of special relevance to this movement?

Climate change, and all its associated problems, poses a threat to all forms of life and regions of the planet without exception. However, although we face a common problem, the solutions will have to be specific, according to the individual conditions of each location, such as the local weather, materials and economy. In this case, the New European Bauhaus is necessarily different from the original Bauhaus, which gave rise to the modern movement, where universal principles were advocated for architecture and urbanism that were often unsuccessful. In this context, it is important that Portugal, like any other country, contributes to this change and makes itself heard, so that measures and best practices can be adjusted to different realities. I think that the way that our architecture has been pragmatically able to adapt the influence of the modern movement to our local conditions, which was internationally recognised as “critical regionalism”, can serve as an example to lighten the complex challenges that we are now facing.

Cork is one of the materials that you have chosen in your projects. What qualities of cork stand out and how can this 100% natural and recyclable material play a more central role in the architecture of the future?

I would prefer not to try to highlight just one quality, but instead the singular convergence of various different qualities in a single material, that makes cork a very balanced material for architecture. Considering that the two great forces that are shaping the present and future of the building industry are decarbonisation and digital transformation, cork - as a 100% natural and versatile material that can be approached digitally - is perfectly placed to assert its relevance. Some of the examples of applications that underline the value of cork for the future of architecture include building insulation and coverings, landscaped roofs, and the possibility of mixing it with other materials, customisation and reuse.

How can a material such as cork help shape this new movement in the world of European design?

The circular economy associated to cork is an absolutely extraordinary story. Combining elements of the forest, climate, biodiversity and culture, the life cycle of cork encompasses very complete processes of recycling and reuse, which cut across different types of products and applications. In addition, in cases associated to how to produce expanded agglomerated cork (ICB) used in the building industry, recycling can be used to create products that have higher value than the original, thereby demonstrating upcycling opportunities. In this context, I don't know of any better material than cork that can serve as a model of inspiration for the practices that have to be implemented, not only in the building industry, but in our way of life in general.

“(...) I don't know of any better material than cork that can serve as a model of inspiration for the practices that have to be implemented, not only in the building industry, but in our way of life in general”



Cork

THE FUTURE TODAY

The future, now? If all crises bring tremendous opportunities, the current moment may be exceptional. A universe of new possibilities is opening up, if we know how to seize them. Given its nature and versatility, cork – which is an absolutely unique natural material – has a virtually infinite range of applications. If the world can't wait, cork projects the future like never before. In Corticeira Amorim, this is more than a promise, it's a reality.

Yangzhou International Horticulture Exposition 2021: MD is the solution

More than 230 m² of cork was used to cover the walls of the Portuguese Pavilion in the Yangzhou International Horticulture Exposition 2021, that is dedicated to the theme “Live Green, Live Better”. The installation was created in record time, thanks to work by Amorim Cork Insulation and its partner in China, HISTEP, which provided technical support during installation of MD Facade

Highly visible, the installation shows the entire beauty and potential that cork brings to the world, spanning different geographies. More than 230 m² of cork supplied by Amorim Cork Insulation were used to cover the Portuguese Pavilion at the Yangzhou International Horticulture Exposition 2021, that was inaugurated in the spring in Jiangsu Province, China. More than 11 million visitors are expected to visit the exhibition, which runs until October, in order to experience and learn more about green living, sustainability and horticulture. After the success and recognition of the Portuguese Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010, this project is another great opportunity for cork in China. This was the opinion of Amorim Cork Insulation that, after contacting Atelier Data, the studio responsible for the project, quickly implemented an operation that made it possible to install, in just 10 days, 233 m² of the MD Facade solution to cover the Portuguese Pavilion in this leading global horticultural event. “We immediately

organised a Zoom meeting with the exhibition organisers and the architects, and we contacted our distributor client in China – HISTEP – which quickly mobilised its forces to deliver cork to Jiangsu,” explains Carlos Manuel, Amorim Cork Insulation’s CEO. In addition to enabling the prompt arrival of the material to its destination, HISTEP provided technical support for the installation of MD Facade, so that everything was ready in time for the inauguration of the event.

Live Green. Live Better

Under the theme: “Live Green, Live Better”, the Yangzhou International Horticulture Exposition 2021 focuses on the relationship between people and nature and the importance of preservation of the environment to ensure sustainable economic growth. The choice of Portuguese cork for construction of the Portuguese Pavilion was therefore fully justified, as a raw material that is truly ecological and equally sustainable.



“This material arouses the curiosity of the Chinese. The reactions have been very good”, explains Carlos Manuel, who, in addition to cork’s inherent sustainability, and excellent behaviour in terms of its acoustic and thermal insulation, highlights its symbolic character “Where there is cork, there is always Portugal, and the Alentejo”, he concludes. In addition to the building, that is made of cork, the Portuguese installation also has a garden, that celebrates the best of Portuguese design and creativity and enhances the green economy and preservation of the environment.



Venice Biennale of Architecture: the art of cork

Portuguese cork returns to Venice, through the Porto studio, depA Architects, which has incorporated this material in its proposal, after being chosen to curate the Portuguese Pavilion in the 17th Venice Biennale of Architecture.

This is not the first time that cork has been showcased in Venice, marking a presence in one of the most important events in the international agenda. On each new occasion, the changes of perspective and surprises delivered by the creativity associated to cork has revealed something new that we previously didn't know about. In the 17th edition of the Venice Biennale of Architecture, which opened its doors on May 22 and continues until November 21, the curatorial proposal presented by the studio, depA Architects, to lead the Portuguese delegation, directly responds to the question posed by the curator Hashim Sarkis: How will we live together? There are about 100 linear metres of cork agglomerate incorporated in the structure

of the project, *In Conflict*, which focuses on the first 45 years of democracy in Portugal, and its relationship with Portuguese architecture. Through an exhibition, that is combined with talks and debates, the proposal by depA aims "to consider the role of architecture as an artistic, public, political and ethical discipline". The exhibition project focuses on a newly democratic and impoverished Portugal, in the process of decolonisation. A country marked by material destruction, social dislocation and civic participation. On the basis of this scenario, others are called to discuss issues related to the problem, "building a broad and transversal panorama of the first 45 years of national democracy, through its reflection in Portuguese architecture", creating a space where everyone can imagine, debate and project a common future. *In Conflict* joins other projects that have previously been supported by Corticeira Amorim that over the last decade have made it possible to promote cork in one of the world's most important creative showcases. Other examples include the "Trafaria Praia" ferryboat by Joana de Vasconcelos (Biennale Arte, 2013), the "Curcubit" lamps by Tiago Sá (Venice Design, 2017), and the cork flooring used in Leonor Antunes' installation, "a seam, a surface, a hinge or a knot" and

a lamp by Nacho Carbonell (Biennale Arte, 2019). These artistic interventions also demonstrate the versatility of cork as an element that is creative, innovative, cultural and educational. At the same time, Venice also offers the chance to discover the latest works produced in the SUBER Design collection.

SUBER Design

An Amorim Cork Italia initiative which since 2019 has offered a second life to recycled cork stoppers, initially transforming them into small granules that are subsequently combined with other materials to give life to new objects such as lighting systems, tables, benches, key holders or clothes hangers, etc. This time, the creativity of the renowned transalpine architect, Michele Lucchi, resulted in the production of 16 distinctively designed chairs.



© Ed Reeve

London Design Biennale: cork as support for the world's to-do list

A forest of 400 trees in the centre of London. An artistic intervention that is driving change. Cork is supporting, and encouraging, the world that we want to build, in the project, Forest For Change – The Global Goals Pavilion, an interactive installation in Somerset House, the heart of the London Design Biennale 2021.

The installation offered an oasis of tranquillity in the middle of London, and was also an inspirational provocation. In the 18th century, when Somerset House was first built, trees were prohibited from entering the grounds of the London palace. But in the 2021 edition of the London Design Biennale, the situation was reversed and nature erupted in the heart of the city, in Forest for Change – The Global Goals Pavilion, the central installation of the Biennale, held in June in the British capital. Corticeira Amorim was the “Official Material Partner” of the initiative, that was conceived by the British designer, Es Devlin, and is powered by the non-profit agency, Project Everyone. The pavilion, one of the most emblematic interventions in this year’s edition of the London Design Biennale, included a central circle-shaped core, built entirely from Portuguese cork. It was in this interactive space that visitors were able to learn about and increase their knowledge of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Jack Headford, Associate Designer at ES Devlin Studio, explains: “We proposed the idea of introducing a young forest within Somerset House as a provocation, aimed to inspire and maintain the wave of environmentalism, showing visitors the possibility of what this can involve”. The heart of the forest revealed an infrastructure consisting of 17 mirrored pillars representing each of the SDGs. Each

pillar provided quotes, reports and facts to demonstrate the reasons why the Sustainable Development Goals are on the world’s *to-do* list. The journey ended with the 17th pillar, that represented the Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals, which invited visitors to record a short testimony expressing the changes that they would like to see achieved within the framework of their favourite Goal.

Cork, the obvious choice

“During development of the project, it became obvious that we needed to work with materials that convey a sense of empathy and robustness within the forest” explained Jack Headford. “Cork seemed the obvious choice, due to its wooden tones and smooth texture, and its inherent sustainable nature – as a renewable and biodegradable material. Cork also provided a safe and resistant flooring option that blends perfectly with the forest floor, enabling visitors to walk freely among the trees”.



© Iwan Baan

Serpentine Summer Pavilion: cork returns to where it was happy

Nine years later - equivalent to the interval of the cork harvesting cycle - this genuinely Portuguese raw material has once again returned to the Serpentine Summer Pavilion, the annual architecture installation that marks the summer season in London. The project, designed by the South African studio, Counterspace, has a clear focus on sustainability and valuation of the encounter between communities and cultures, bringing the centre closer to the periphery.

Portuguese cork is returning to London's spectacular Kensington Gardens as the material chosen for the 2020/21 edition of the iconic Serpentine Summer Pavilion, in a project designed by the South African architecture studio, Counterspace. The studio, formed by three women architects, Sumayya Vally, Sarah de Villiers and Amina Kaskar, is the youngest team ever to lead the Serpentine's architecture programme. The project uses 200 m² of cork, supplied by Corticeira Amorim, and responds to the

challenge posed to the architects to build a distinctively eco-friendly temporary installation.

This is not the first time that Portuguese cork has been used in one of the world's most important annual art and architecture events. In 2012, cork was chosen for the project signed by the Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron and by the Chinese artist and activist, Ai Weiwei. On that occasion it was integrated within a circular structure comprised of around 100 items of furniture made of Portuguese agglomerated cork. The results spoke for themselves: it enjoyed the highest-ever number of visitors to the summer pavilions of the famous London art gallery.

Counterspace, the architecture studio founded and directed by Sumayya Vally, who was recently recognised by the Times (2021 TIME100 Next List), is the 20th guest to design the Serpentine Summer Pavilion. "Cork was chosen because of its moulding capacity, malleability and flexibility, making it possible to recreate different spaces inside the pavilion, aligned with the pavilion's objective of recovering and reconfiguring the local and material context," explains Sumayya Vally

An invitation to reflect on ideas

Subverting the normal permanence of architecture, the Serpentine Summer Pavilion is conceived as an event that, in this edition, will include a set of movable



Sumayya Vally © Iwan Baan

elements that will be installed in different London neighbourhoods to promote and facilitate improvised meetings and interactions, in honour of the places and structures that have consolidated communities over time. The project designed by this trio of female architects from Johannesburg focuses on the experiences of peripheral and migrant communities in the British capital. It offers an invitation to reflection about ideas associated to architecture, design, the environment, community and well-being.

Porto Design Biennale: cork is a “vibrant matter”

In the second edition of the Porto Design Biennale, the challenge is posed: How do we design the present and propose more positive alter-realities for the world we want to build? Cork, that is sustainable by nature and fully aligned with the best practices of circular economy, is highlighted in the design biennale, that takes place in Porto and in Matosinhos.

In the antechamber of the Museum of Vibrant Matter, the main exhibition of the Porto Design Biennale 2021 (PDB '21), there is an installation consisting of 104 tubes, which welcomes visitors. The project, designed by Miguel Flor and Cristina Hora, was conceived as a playground with a life of its own that invites those who enter to pursue an urgent reflection: how to design the present that we want to build? Running since June 2021, the PDB '21 proposes a set of exhibitions, conferences, workshops and publications that, despite its temporary character, aspires to leave a long-term ballast of discussion, thinking

about design as a contemporary discipline that can foster reflection, questioning and sharing, with imminent protagonism and responsibility in collective life and environmental survival. As an associated brand of PDB' 21, Corticeira Amorim is making its contribution to this discussion, by providing material that results from circular economy practices, that are transversal to all its units of business, a policy in which the company has been a pioneer, implementing such practices since the 1960s. In this manner, different combinations of cork with components, such as recycled rubber, recycled EVA and recycled Pu were chosen by the coordinators of the exhibition of the second edition of the Porto Design Biennale. The result is an amphitheatre where people immediately sense the appeal of local materials, whether biological, technical or hybrid, harmonising with them so that they can take better care of each other - from other living beings, from the soil, from the water and from geological elements.

The biggest Portuguese reference in the field of sustainability

Inside the space, the creative duo also used cork panels, printed using screen printing, to implement the entire communication project of the exhibition of the Museum of Vibrant Matter. Cork-lined

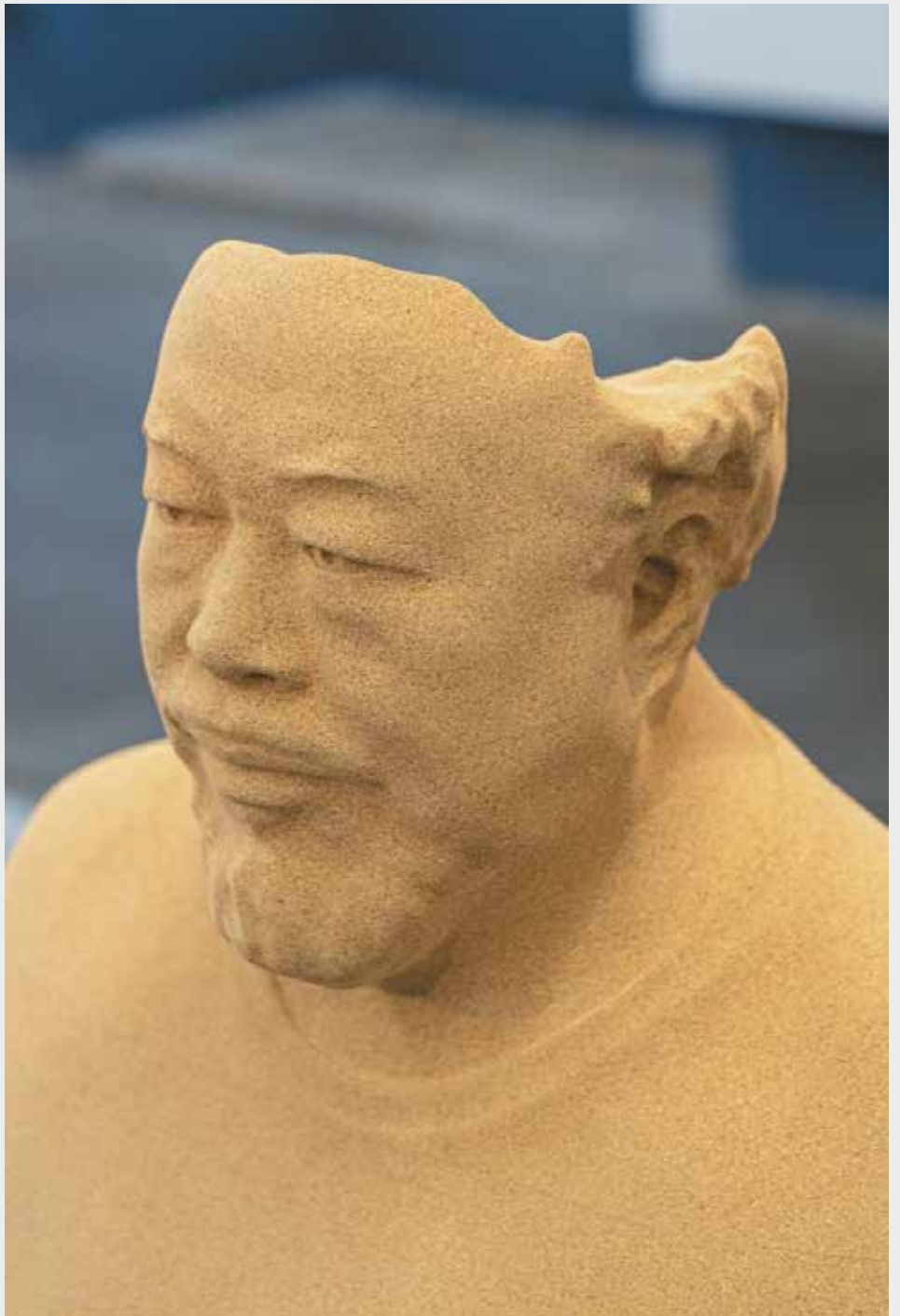
benches and tables are the other objects in the exhibition that use this genuinely Portuguese raw material”. How could we design the present and this exhibition without including the biggest Portuguese reference in the field of sustainability? In the Museum of Vibrant Matter, AMORIM is vibrant and giving life. The company challenged us creatively and will certainly challenge the spectators who visit the exhibition”, state Miguel Flor and Cristina Hora, the creatives responsible for the installation.



Ai Weiwei Exhibition - Rapture: Brainless Figure in Cork

Cork is one of the materials that has been chosen by the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei for creation of original works in Portugal. Supplied by Corticeira Amorim, the genuinely Portuguese raw material is showcased in *Brainless Figure in Cork*, a sculptural self-portrait by the activist. The work, produced from high density agglomerated cork, is part of the exhibition, *Ai Weiwei - Rapture*, that was inaugurated at the Cordoaria Nacional, in Lisbon, on 4 June. Unlike a traditional sculpture, the preparatory work for *Brainless Figure in Cork* (91 x 81 x 148 cm) involved a CNC cutting machine to guarantee technical precision. A craftsman then sculpted several details that could only be fine-tuned using manual methods. As in the cork cycle, this artistic project is born from the combination of manual work, state-of-the-art technologies and the grandeur of Nature.

This is the second time that Ai Weiwei - one of the world's most influential contemporary artists - is working with cork from Amorim. The first occasion was in the context of the Serpentine Summer Pavilion in 2012, a project signed by himself and the Swiss architects, Herzog & de Meuron.



© Juliette Bayen

We are the most attractive industrial company to work for in Portugal

Corticeira Amorim is one of the 20 most attractive companies to work for in Portugal, and the most attractive in the industry sector. The results are from the study by Randstad - Employer Brand Research 2021, part of the largest worldwide independent study, which analysed the perceptions of more than 5,000 Portuguese workers. In a pandemic context, which has challenged employers and workers, this is a distinction that has special meaning.

The results of the Employer Brand Research 2021 reveal that Corticeira Amorim is the most attractive company to work in Portugal, in the industry sector. The company was also ranked amongst the top 20 attractive companies in Portugal, in 13th position. "We're extremely proud of this distinction", says Alexandra Godinho, Corticeira Amorim's Human Resources director. "The employer brand is a very important reference and, I believe, reflects recognition within the job market of distinctive factors in terms of attracting and retaining People." Alexandra Godinho considers that the "people" factor, specifically the universe of Amorim employees, assumes a special role because, "the employees are the main communication channel and key spokespersons about what a company is, and show to others what they perceive about their own experience". Over recent years, Corticeira Amorim has been committed to an active Employer Branding strategy with university students and young graduates. But, "Above all, we

try to be very consistent and transparent in communication of our Values and Culture". In addition to the human factor and transparency there is a third differentiating element: "we are lucky to work with a fantastic raw material and, admittedly, to position ourselves as a company that combines tradition with innovation, solidity with boldness and ambition with discretion and sobriety, we believe that Employer Branding is a successful strategy that shows "our image reflects who we actually are!".

Results of the Industry sector

Employer Brand Research is the biggest independent study carried out worldwide. It uses the analytic methodology of perceptions of employees, in relation to the 150 biggest employers, in 34 countries. The 2021 edition involved the participation of more than 190,000 people, in a sample that also included unemployed persons and students. It therefore provides valuable insights that help companies adapt and adjust their brand to an evolving job market. The results of the 6th edition of the study have revealed that the industry sector is the 9th most attractive sector to work for. In terms of its financial health, it is perceived by participants, at a global level, as the "healthiest" sector. It also occupies 2nd place in the criterion of good reputation and is ranked amongst the top 3 in terms of the EVP – Employee Value Proposition. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed society, habits and behaviours. It has changed the world and, inevitably, the job market forever. This spans from obvious and visible change, such as new handwashing habits and the emergence of remote working, to the most profound changes, which the Randstad study has helped us identify: the relationship with the company, digital skills, fear of going to work and employee trust. 2020 will forever mark the entry into a new era, and poses new challenges for employers. Therefore, to receive this distinction in 2020 "has an even more special meaning", explains Alexandra Godinho, "because it was a difficult year, where our employees demonstrated great resilience and a remarkable ability to surpass obstacles".

A year of surpassing our limits every day

2020 was a year of surpassing our limits every day. Although Corticeira Amorim's operations never stopped, "the main concern has always been the health and safety of our People", stresses the human resources director. "This involved a major

task in terms of the implementation of countless and varied measures, but, above all, getting closer to everyone, in an effort to alleviate insecurities, fears and anxiety, creating a safe climate, in both physical and psychological terms. The employees responded with courage, dedication and responsibility that impacted the cohesion of the teams and the work environment. This, clearly, also defines our brand as employer," concludes Alexandra Godinho.

The full version of the Randstad - Employer Brand Study Research 2021 is available at www.randstad.pt/employer-branding



The permanent ambition to excel

It is a big family, but very united. That is how the Silva Family describes itself since the 1960s. Today, after almost six decades, three generations have worked for Corticeira Amorim. A portrait of the Silva Family, an example of diversity, tenacity and unity within the Amorim family.

Each day used to begin very early for Gaspar Silva. The family patriarch joined the Amorim Group in the early 1960s, and always travelled to work on foot, from his home in Soutelo (Fiães), to Mozelos. It was a 45-minute journey, there and back. He worked for many years as a guard at Corticeira Amorim. He had 15 children, and of those, more than half – nine – came to work for the company, because it was the principal opportunity available at the time, and stability was important. Amongst Gaspar's sons, Júlio Pereira da Silva was the first to enter the company, and was followed by his siblings, José, Carolina and Manuel. Now aged 64, Júlio is a driver and prides himself on being one of the longest-serving employees with the Amorim Group. He doesn't think about retiring, and although his shift begins at 8 am, he turns up the company before 7am every day. He jokes, "if have a flat tyre, since I live in Seixzelo, I have time to walk". He joined the company in 1971, at the age of just 13 – as a boy with a child's heart. But it's in the memories of his (short) childhood that he recalls his first adventures in the factory and the world of cork. "I went to the factory to bring my father his lunch, together with my mother. I was very young. There was a restaurant in front of Corticeira Amorim, the Copacabana, and my father left me there to watch TV, as he did his rounds and then he would come to get me". He worked in the cork boards section for many years, learning everything there was to learn about the job. But he had the ambition to go further, to "leave the factory". It was then that he started working as a driver, a job he is still doing. In addition to his work and family, Julio is dedicated to serving others: he is a decorated firefighter (with the Carvalhos de Vila Nova de Gaia fire brigade) and a parachutist.



João da Silva



Vitorino da Silva

Memories and future

Like his brother, Vitorino Pereira da Silva joined Corticeira Amorim while still a teenager. Like his father, he walked from home to work every day. At the time, we all walked to work, 7/8, with my older sister who also worked there, Carolina". When he was child, he recalls "the great fun of going to the Cinema de Lamas, that no longer exists, to get a toy. That was the only time that we had the chance to eat chocolate, because can you imagine how hard it was to bring up 15 children? Things were always tough. But there was always a great sense of joy". With over 40 years of work experience, Vitorino is today in charge of the injection of capsules, in Amorim Top Series, managing a team of ten people. When we asked him to describe his happiest moment at Corticeira Amorim, he didn't hesitate: it was when he received the invitation to be a foreman. "I missed a few nights of sleep, until I accepted. Coming to an industry that was entirely new for me, where I didn't understand anything, was a big challenge. Anyway, I thought, if they asked me to do this, it was because they saw that I had sufficient skills to lead this project. We have a spectacular team, very united, very responsible, to whom I have to be grateful for this entire project".

The selector

Gloria Pereira da Silva is one of Gaspar's three daughters. Like her sister Carolina, she was one of the women from the family to join Corticeira Amorim, where she has worked for 40 years. Like her brothers, she remembers the moments when toys were handed out, and the figure of Mr Américo Amorim. She also started very young, aged 17, working as a "selector". At the time there were 50 women who selected the cork stoppers, a job that required great knowledge, a keen eye, and yes, sensitivity. "I needed to be familiar with the cork stoppers, know their defects, be able to separate them by classes, from the *flower* to the *trims*. The flower, was the higher grade - 1st, 2nd and 3rd" she explains. "You need a keen eye, you can't learn from one day to the next. It takes time to learn, to know the stoppers and learn how to choose". Due to technological advances, this function no longer exists, but Gloria did not lose her place at Amorim Cork and now operates a machine that analyses cork stoppers with an X-ray. A woman of profound convictions, Gloria worked for a few years as a union delegate and is proud about her participation in negotiating equal wages for men and women "It is something that I'm very proud of. Young people who enter the factory today do not feel this discrimination."

The third generation

João da Silva, 27, together with his cousin Cátia, represents the third generation of the Silva family working at Amorim. Vitorino's son, he began studying nursing, but soon realised that that it wasn't for him. His father hasn't yet lost hope that he will continue his studies, but João is a man of various talents and interests and has very different plans. In his free time, João is an announcer on local radio, a comedy show at AVFM radio in Ovar, and a sports show at Sintonia Feirense. But his dream is to do Stand Up comedy, for which he already has a stage name – João Fakire. At Corticeira Amorim, where he began working aged 19, he works in the cork stopper washing logistics section, and is happy with the independence that he has gained. But he is still extremely curious, and has never been shy to ask about what the machines do. "I began to question the engineer about the process, how does the machine work, how does this or that method work, what does this product do, so you don't just go and press buttons without knowing why", he says. João learned to value work and enjoy what he did from the older generations. "A phrase that I always remember was someone, I don't remember who, who said: 'it's important to do what you like, but it's more important to learn to like what you do'.

Amorim Cork Flooring receives the Investors in People certification

After achieving the Investors in People standard accreditation last year, Amorim Cork Flooring has proudly announced that its Business Sales Units around the world have also been granted this accreditation. This achievement marks a milestone in the company's history and in an internal transformation process that puts people first. Successful accreditation with the Investors in People standard is the sign of a great employer, an outperforming place to work and a clear commitment to sustainability. In the words of Fernando Melo, CEO of Amorim Cork Flooring: "We believe that motivated people, with access to high

levels of training, will consistently provide a high quality service, committed with the vision, mission and values of the organization. This will bring satisfaction to our customers and will enhance the profit and sustained growth of our company. We take this accreditation as an opportunity to assess where we stand today as to how we lead and engage people in the organization's day-to-day lives and as a tool to work and focus on a sustainable future." Investors in People is a standard for people management that offers accreditation to organizations that consistently outperform industry norms. Created to meet the

constant challenges of everyday business, Investors in People is an improvement tool designed to advance an organization's performance through its employees. It reflects the latest workplace trends, leading practices and employee conditions required to create outperforming teams, focusing on three key areas: Leading, Supporting and Improving.



Our People



AMORIM

Sustainable by nature