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Jorge Zalszupin: between Brazilian Modernism and its alternative interpretations

Abstract

This article examines the work of Jorge Zalszupin, a Polish-Brazilian architect, in the context of architectural movements prevalent in Europe and Brazil during the Modernist period.

The aim of this study is to examine the connection between Zalszupin's architecture – with particular emphasis on the architect's residence in Guarujá (São Paulo) – and his biography, as well as the architectural realities that characterized the various stages of his professional career. The research is based on a case study, supported by contextual and biographical analysis that includes previously unpublished materials, such as an original sheet of architectural drawings and trade journals from the period.

The analysis demonstrated the hybrid nature of his work, which combines Brazilian modernism (the *carioca* and *paulista* schools) with references to European Modernism and its alternative forms. The results of the bibliographic search confirm that no studies are devoted to his architectural work, representing a gap in the relevant literature. The authors hope they have partially filled this gap.

Key words: Jorge Zalszupin, Brazilian modernism, sculptural architecture, Mediterranean architecture

Introduction

Jorge Zalszupin (Jerzy Zalszupin), a Polish-Brazilian architect, furniture designer, and industrial designer, is a figure whose body of work is typically situated within the context of Brazilian Modernism. Although he was amongst the most outstanding figures of this movement, his work has not yet been sufficiently studied. Meanwhile, his architectural works, furniture designs, and industrial designs are recognized as iconic works. Suffice it to say that in the 1960s, Zalszupin designed furniture for government buildings in Brasília (Santos 2014, 28), including buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer. In this context, it can be argued that his body of work deserves greater attention and international recognition.

There are still few scholarly studies devoted to his work, and those that do exist (Santos 2014; Andrade 2017) focus

primarily on his design work in the fields of furniture and industrial design. In Poland, interest in him has recently grown thanks to the exhibition “Jerzy Zalszupin’s Brazilian Modernism: Warsaw – São Paulo – Warsaw”, organized by the Visteria Foundation and ETEL, a Brazilian publisher specializing in design. The event took place in the fall of 2025 in Warsaw. However, there is still a lack of research that would present his architectural body of work, which constituted the main focus of his professional career.

This research gap served as the starting point for this article, which focuses specifically on Zalszupin’s private residence in Guarujá (São Paulo), analyzed within the context of Brazilian Modernism. This article also examines selected European trends that influenced the building’s final form. The structure clearly diverges from Zalszupin’s earlier works, distinguished by its surprising form, unusual floor plan, and intriguing use of materials. It is reasonable to ask what prompted Zalszupin, who had previously enjoyed significant professional success, to make such a significant shift in his creative direction, and in what context this change took place.

As noted, Jerzy Zalszupin’s work is most often interpreted through the lens of modernism, which gained wide-

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spread popularity during his professional career both in Europe and in Brazil. While skillfully employing its language, Zalszupin was also an attentive observer of changes and current design trends in Europe, with which he maintained a constant intellectual dialogue. In the authors' view, it is precisely the design of the house in Guarujá that holds the key to interpreting his architectural work, serving as a testament to Zalszupin's openness to concepts that co-existed with Modernism, while also demonstrating his distinctiveness and his consistent search for his own architectural language.

Methods

The starting point for the research was the acquisition of original source materials related to the architect's house design, courtesy of Casa Zalszupin¹. They include architectural drawings – a set of plans, elevations, sections, and building descriptions – as well as photographic documentation from the construction period (1970–1972) and subsequent years.

This study uses a qualitative analysis method focused on interpreting the building under study, as well as a contextual – historical and architectural – analysis that addresses the broader idea and cultural background. A biographical-contextual approach was also employed, linking the architect's work to the course of his life and the contexts in which he operated. The research was based on a bibliographic review that included both academic studies and press materials, including publications in the Brazilian journal *Manchete* and the French architectural periodical *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*.

Direct contact with the architect's daughter, Verônica Zalszupin, as well as an on-site observation of his home in São Paulo – which currently serves as Casa Zalszupin – proved to be an important addition to the research.

Results

The results are presented in three sections focusing on the architect's biography and the architectural trends within which he worked during various periods of his life. This structure allows us to trace the evolution of his work. These sections cover, in turn, his European experiences, followed by the strong influence of Brazilian tropical Modernism², including sculptural works that draw on the “Mediterranean style”.

Within the context of European architectural ideas

Jerzy Zalszupin was born in Warsaw in 1922 into an assimilated Jewish family. He spent his childhood and youth on the streets of prewar Warsaw, particularly in the area

around Oboźna Street, near Nowy Świat, where his family home was located. As a teenager, he came across a book of Le Corbusier's sketches and – as he recalls in his autobiography – decided at that moment to devote his life to architecture (Zalszupin 2025, 21). His path towards this goal was interrupted by the outbreak of the war in 1939. The young Zalszupin and his family were forced to flee to Bucharest. Despite the difficult circumstances, he did not abandon his plans; he began studying at the architecture department of the local university, from which he graduated on July 21, 1947 (Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism “Ion Minicu” 1941–1947).

His subsequent life journey took him through Czechoslovakia to France, where he found work helping to rebuild Dunkirk which had been damaged by the war. During that time, he settled in the nearby town of Saint-Pol-sur-Mer and gained professional experience for a year. Then, driven by ambition and the need to seek out more ambitious design challenges, he decided to emigrate further. He wrote about this decision in his autobiography³:

I'll go far away from the anticipated wars – preferably to Brazil – because my monthly architecture journal (“L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui”) featured names and projects that made me dream and fantasize about these new worlds (Zalszupin 2025, 102).

His architectural education enabled him to obtain a visa, and in 1948 he left France (República dos Estados Unidos do Brasil 1948).

At that time, France, devastated by the war, was entering a phase of intensive reconstruction, in which Modernism was used as a key design tool. Le Corbusier was developing the concept of the *machine à habiter* and working on the design for the Unité d'Habitation in Marseille. At the same time, the idea of the synthesis of the arts became widespread and was promoted, among others, by André Bloc, the founder of the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. Bloc's journalistic work played a significant role in shaping architectural discourse at that time. The article “André Bloc and the Architecture-Sculpture Debate” emphasizes that, from the late 1940s onward, the idea of the synthesis of the arts was intensively developed in the pages of his magazines (Campens 2021, 83). It is possible that these concepts continued to influence Zalszupin even after his departure for South America. The magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* was distributed across several continents, including Brazil, which made it possible to stay in touch with the European architectural discourse (Campens 2021, 89).

In Europe, in response to orthodox Modernism, alternative approaches to architecture gradually emerged. The idea pioneered by the founder of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* was taken up in subsequent decades by other designers, including Jacques Couëlle, a sculptor and self-taught architect who is sometimes regarded as one of the initiators of the architectural-sculptural movement. His projects, such as the housing complex in Castellaras-Le-Neuf and the Cala di Volpe hotel, served as a sort of laboratory for sculp-

¹ The space, designed by Lissa Carmona Tozzi and managed by ETEL, is dedicated to research, conservation, and the promotion of Zalszupin's body of work and legacy; since 2021, it has been housed in his home in São Paulo.

² In this article, the term “tropical Modernism” refers to an interpretation of Brazilian Modernist architecture as a response to climatic conditions, the landscape, and the local way of life. Architecture understood in this way is present in the writings of Lúcia Costa and was popularized internationally by Philip Goodwin (Goodwin 1943) and Henrique Mindlin (Mindlin 1956).

³ Zalszupin's autobiography was also published in Polish, translated by Joanna Kuhn (J. Zalszupin, *Z d*** na księżyc*, Wydawnictwo OsnoVa, 2025).

tural forms scaled up to the level of architecture. The design process often relied on working with scale models, and the architect himself actively participated in the construction, directing work on-site using a megaphone (Perkin 1971). Couëlle's design practice spanned both the French Riviera and the Costa Smeralda. His projects in both areas share the context of postwar development in elite tourist architecture. The fluid, organic lines of the floor plans stood in stark contrast to the geometric orthogonality of Modernism. The buildings he created helped shape the identity of these spaces, consciously referencing notions of the Mediterranean lifestyle.

Couëlle's bold, sculptural forms may have provided a significant impulse for those architects for whom orthogonal geometry and the rigidity of the right angle had become too restrictive. In one interview, Zalszupin admitted: *The right angle [...] is something I admire, but that I am unable to apply. What I create takes on a certain lyricism, a certain ornamental character – in short, there is always an element in it that does not stem from purity or formal clarity* (Cartum, Fiamminghi 2008, 90).

It is reasonable to assume that in 1966, when the magazine *Aujourd'hui Art et Architecture* published a special issue (No. 53) dedicated to Bloc's memory (*Aujourd'hui Art et Architecture* 1966), which included photographs of the houses in Castellaras-Le-Neuf, it may also have found its way into Zalszupin's hands. The context of Mediterranean resort architecture, designed with European elites in mind, is also significant here. The trend toward sculptural architecture may have inspired him to seek an alternative architectural language that went beyond the dominant principles of the *paulista* and *carioca* schools, within which he developed his creative work.

Tropical Modernism

– between the paulista school and the carioca school

While living in France, Zalszupin viewed Brazil as a place open to experimentation with enormous architectural potential, as confirmed by his own words:

At that point, I decided to leave France and look for a young country where I could develop my career. And don't ask me why Brazil. Perhaps because I had come across some information about the country in the magazine "L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui", which featured articles on the Fábrica Nacional de Motores, the Ministry of Education, and Pampulha. I believed that Brazil was a country particularly well-suited to the creative pursuit of architecture (Cartum, Fiamminghi 2008, 88).

Upon arriving in Brazil, Zalszupin initially stayed in Rio de Janeiro, but soon found employment at the practice of Lucjan Korngold, a Polish architect who had already followed a similar path of emigration in 1940 (Falbel 2003, 104). By the time Zalszupin set foot on Brazilian soil for the first time, Korngold had already established a stable professional position and invited him to join his practice in São Paulo. On the ground floor of the building housing the firm was a French bookstore, where Zalszupin purchased the magazine *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and met his future wife, the Frenchwoman Annette Kahn (Zalszupin

2025, 123, 124). This marriage also served as an important channel of communication for Zalszupin with French culture and language.

In the 1940s and '50s, a distinct form of Modernism emerged in Brazil. It found fertile ground, becoming a vehicle for a new national identity that clearly distanced itself from the country's colonial past. A generation of architects, including Lúcio Costa, Oscar Niemeyer, and Roberto Burle Marx, emerged from Le Corbusier's vision.

During his visit to Rio de Janeiro in 1929, Le Corbusier noted the exceptional qualities of the natural landscape, stating that it was "one of the most beautiful landscapes the human spirit can imagine". His interpretation of the city emphasized the close relationship between nature and urbanization: "the landscape penetrates the city from all sides". This foreshadowed one of the aspects that would become characteristic of modern Brazilian architecture. Le Corbusier's first visit to Brazil, followed by his return in 1936 to collaborate on the design of the Ministry of Education and Health building in Rio de Janeiro alongside Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, proved decisive for the development of Brazilian Modernism (Le Corbusier 1930).

In 1960, with the inauguration of Brasília and the relocation of the federal capital from Rio de Janeiro to the new city built in the country's interior, a debate over the directions of architectural Modernism in Brazil quickly intensified. Parallel to the so-called *carioca* school, associated with Rio de Janeiro – characterized by monumental and formal Modernism – the *paulista* school developed in São Paulo and was associated with João Batista Vilanova Artigas, distinguished by its austere, structural, and socially engaged architecture (Fig. 1).

This was the context in which Zalszupin worked. After several years of working for Korngold, he decided to open his own firm (Escritório Técnico Prumo – 1958), and then, in 1959, he invested in creating his own furniture brand, L'Atelier. His work in furniture design stemmed from the lack of specialized stores offering modern furniture to complement the new architecture, which led him to develop his own designs as an extension of his architectural practice. Although architecture occupied a central place in his work, it was furniture design that brought him recognition, leading to the inclusion of his designs in government buildings in Brazil's iconic capital, as well as in other significant architectural projects, such as the Conjunto Nacional in São Paulo.

From that point on, his architectural projects expanded in scope to include hotels, shopping centers, and office complexes, and began to appear not only in São Paulo's most important districts but also in cities in the interior and along the coast. At the same time, his furniture designs began to be used in public buildings and major commercial spaces, such as bank branches and airports.

In 1960, Zalszupin designed his own home in the Jardim Europa neighborhood of São Paulo (Fig. 2). Although the building displays characteristics of Modernism – such as simple and clearly defined lines in the floor plan and façade – it already revealed the architect's interest in exploring ornamentation, as well as in integrating architecture with nature. In the façade design, he employed geometric ornamentation made of *jacarandá* wood, while the interiors

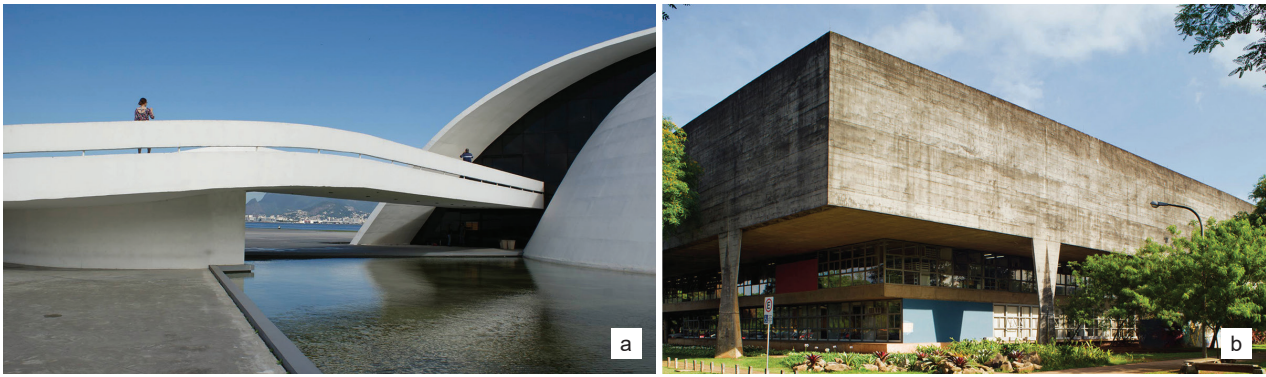


Fig. 1. Examples of the *carioca* and *paulista* schools of Brazilian Modernist architecture: a) the Niterói Contemporary Art Museum designed by Oscar Niemeyer, b) the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo (FAU-USP), designed by Vilanova Artigas (source: © Rogério Luiz Angoneze Jr., © Nelson Kon)

Il. 1. Przykłady szkoły carioca i paulista brazylijskiej architektury modernistycznej: a) Muzeum Sztuki Współczesnej w Niterói projektu Oscara Niemeyera, b) Wydział Architektury i Urbanistyki Uniwersytetu São Paulo (FAU-USP) projektu Vilanovy Artigasa (źródło: © Rogério Luiz Angoneze Jr., © Nelson Kon)



Fig. 2. The interior of Zalszupin's residence in São Paulo (source: © Ruy Teixeira)

Il. 2. Wnętrze rezydencji Zalszupina w São Paulo (źródło: © Ruy Teixeira)

featured textured plaster with an irregular, sculptural form, a floor of hand-formed ceramic tiles, and a ceiling with a rounded, soft line that rises smoothly toward the mezzanine (Fig. 3). Organic motifs also recurred in details such as oval niches and the rounded edges of the sculptural fireplace. The dialogue between architecture and nature was further evident in a wall finished with irregular stone.

In an interview given in 1984, Zalszupin stated: I have come to the conclusion that morphological forms are the most authentic and closest to my heart, rather than those with naturally straight lines (Cartum, Fiamminghi 2008, 91). Zalszupin's fascination with fluid, soft, and calm lines – a distinctive feature of his work – had already been evident in his earlier design projects (Fig. 4) – such as the

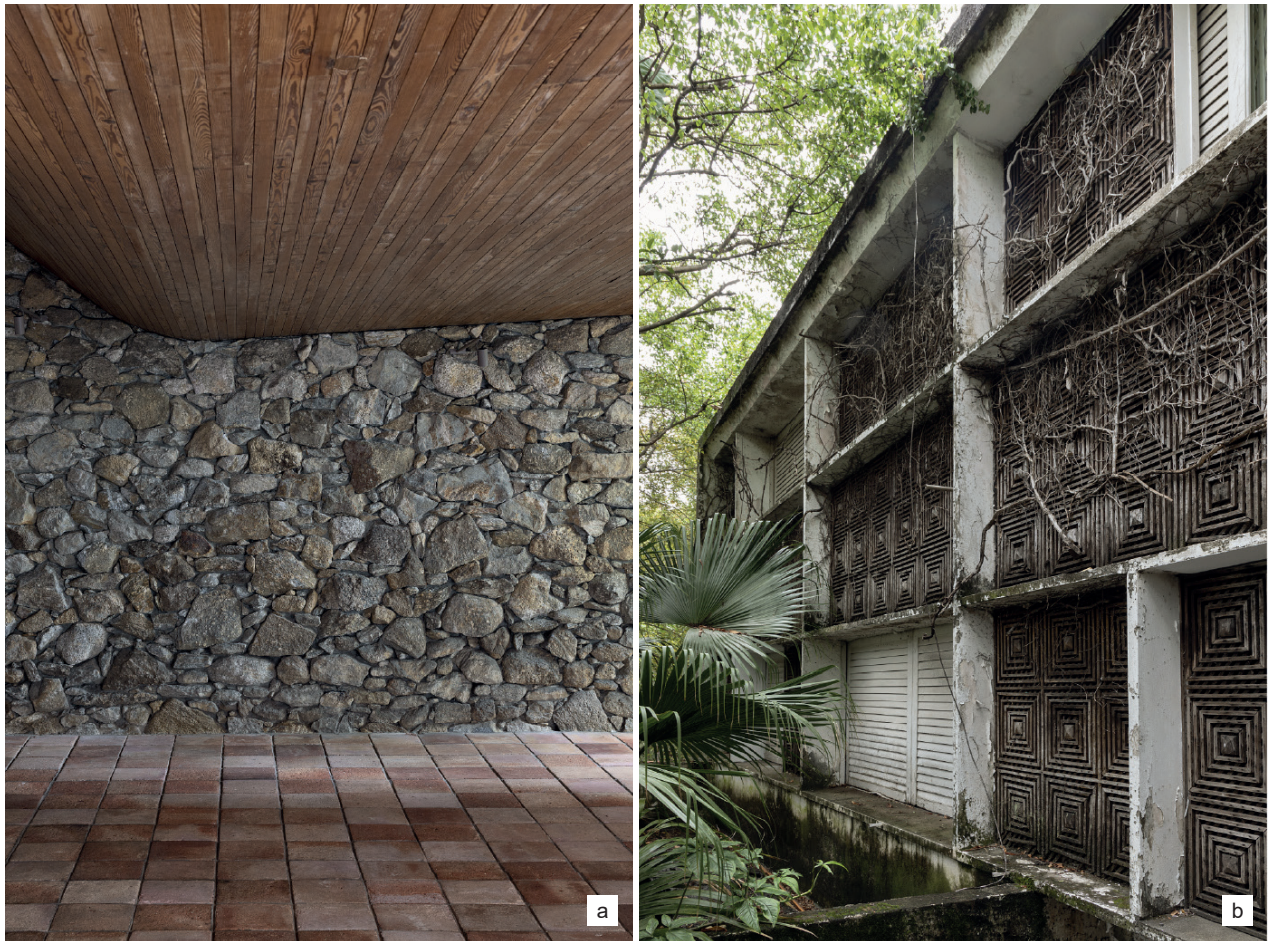


Fig. 3. Zalszupin's residence in São Paulo: a) sculptural surface design and the use of natural stone, wood, and ceramics in the interior, b) geometric panels made of jacarandá wood and vegetation on the garden-facing façade (source: © Ruy Teixeira)

Il. 3. Rezydencja Zalszupina w São Paulo: a) plastyczne formowanie powierzchni oraz zastosowanie kamienia naturalnego, drewna i ceramiki we wnętrzu, b) geometryczne panele z drewna jacarandá oraz roślinność na elewacji od strony ogrodu (źródło: © Ruy Teixeira)



Fig. 4. The Danish armchair (1959) and the Pétalas coffee table (1959), designed by Zalszupin (source: © Fernando Laszlo)

Il. 4. Fotel duński (1959) oraz stolik kawowy Pétalas (1959), zaprojektowane przez Zalszupina (źródło: © Fernando Laszlo)



Fig. 5. Interior of the L'Atelier store, Rio de Janeiro (1964–1965),
 “Vanguarda: cenário do futuro”, article from the magazine
 Jóia: Revista Feminina Quinzenal (source: Figueiredo 1966, 88)

Il. 5. Wnętrze sklepu L'Atelier, Rio de Janeiro (1964–1965),
 Vanguarda: cenário do futuro, artykuł z czasopisma
 Jóia: Revista Feminina Quinzenal (źródło: Figueiredo 1966, 88)

Danish armchair⁴ (1959) or the Pétales coffee table (1959) – but in architecture, its development has faced greater limitations. This is because Zalszupin operated within the clearly defined context of Modernism as represented by the two major schools.

Zalszupin's independence from current trends and his tendency to experiment with form – perhaps inspired by the idea of a synthesis of architecture and sculpture – became increasingly evident over time. His first attempts to incorporate the language of sculpture into architecture can be seen in the interior design of the L'Atelier store in Rio de Janeiro (1964–1965), located at 29A Barão de Ipanema Street (Fig. 5). Zalszupin is not officially listed as the designer of the project, whose authorship is attributed to Roberto Bastos Cruz, an architect and employee of L'Atelier at the time. However, in an interview with the industry magazine of the time, *Revista Casa & Jardim*, Bastos Cruz

⁴ Zalszupin drew much of his inspiration from Scandinavian architecture and design, as he mentioned, among other things, in an interview for *Murator* magazine (Żylska 2020). The authors intend to devote a separate study to this topic.

himself stated that the concept of the space was developed entirely by Zalszupin, who provided him with guidelines for implementing the project (Andrade 2017, 137, 138). The store's interior, entirely white from floor to ceiling, was shaped using a variety of materials, such as “canvas, eternit, concrete, Vimatex, gypsum, lime, paint, and even rubble” (Andrade 2017, 137). These materials were used to model the walls into organic, sculptural forms. These were his first attempts at experimenting with form, which emboldened Zalszupin to design Casa Niemirovsky (1971) and, subsequently, his own home in Guarujá (1972).

An architectural experiment in a Mediterranean spirit

This house marked a complete shift in architectural style, one that would determine all subsequent designs. I could only attempt this experiment for myself, because no one could have predicted the outcome. But it turned out to be immensely satisfying both for me and for my future clients, who immediately began to appear, seeking something in the same architectural language. And so it was these circumstances that helped bring about the miracle of discovering a true desire to create a kind of architecture that lay hidden within me, waiting to be unleashed (Zalszupin 2025, 195).

This is how Zalszupin described the design of his own home, built in the coastal town of Guarujá, located 82 km southeast of São Paulo. It is worth noting that the city, founded in the late 19th century as a vacation resort for the elite from wealthy coffee-growing families, was part of an ambitious tourism project.

At the time, the famous hotel with a casino, the beaches, and other attractions drew wealthy tourists, making Guarujá a popular seaside resort and a meeting place for the political and intellectual elite (Aguar Vaz 2010, 1).

In 1967, Oscar Niemeyer – who had gained recognition at the time for his successful projects in Brasília – prepared a study on the tourist development of Guarujá (Fundação Oscar Niemeyer n.d.). This project was never carried out. It survives only in the form of hand-drawn sketches with the author's annotations (Costa Cabral 2017, 324). The extensive plan included, among other things, a small settlement consisting of “alternating houses”. Noteworthy is the brief description Niemeyer added to one of the drawings: “white and picturesque like Mediterranean houses”.

The term “Mediterranean” in the context of Guarujá could not have been a coincidence. In 1974, the popular Brazilian magazine *Manchete* published an article titled “The Mediterranean Style – The Old Art of Good Living”, which explained the emergence of a new style that had quickly gained popularity in this resort town. The author traces its origins, explaining that:

A group of architects led by Le Corbusier – one of the main leaders of the modern architectural revolution – turned to the study and analysis of the forms and ways of life of past societies, primarily those that inhabited the Mediterranean coast [...]. The result of this research was the incorporation, in numerous contemporary projects, of vernacular Mediterranean-style architecture (Ferreira 1974, 134).

In reality, interest in the vernacular architecture of the Mediterranean region accompanied Modernism from its

early stages. Experiences related to the development of tourism in the early 20th century played a significant role here. It was in this context that Ibiza was “rediscovered”, and its rural architecture – resembling white, geometric forms – was interpreted as a model example of modernity (García Vergara, Pizza 2021, 1125, 1126).

In this context, it is worth noting the findings of Marisa García Vergara and Antonio Pizza, who point out that the term “Mediterranean style” does not refer to a coherent architectural language, but rather to a mythical image of a lifestyle created and disseminated by the architectural media of the 1930s. In their view, this image was constructed in a way that aimed to create an almost scenographic vision of a lifestyle:

The fusion of modern decorative elements and timeless furniture and artisanal objects in the interiors formed an evocative image of the Mediterranean environment, adopted to the metropolitan inhabitant's need for summer consumption (García Vergara, Pizza 2021, 1132).

As a result, the concept of “Mediterranean style” underwent a transformation and was transmitted in this form to South America, among other places.

The author of an article published in *Manchete* outlined the path by which this style is said to have reached Guarujá:

Initially, its influence was concentrated in the Mediterranean region, where it had previously flourished. It then spread to other parts of Europe, establishing itself as a new style and a new concept of modern life. Later, crossing the ocean, it took root on the American continent. A few years ago, it arrived triumphantly in Brazil – specifically in São Paulo, where it was introduced by architects such as Jorge Zalszupin [sic!], Eduardo Longo, Elsa de Wit, and William Ferreira, who applied it to residential architecture (Ferreira 1974, 134).

The rest of the text also highlights the characteristics of this architectural style, which include: massive, white-painted walls; rough finishes on walls and floors; relatively small, rounded openings; arches; corridors; interior courtyards; built-in furniture; vaulted ceilings; handcrafted decorations; irregular, asymmetrical forms; roof terraces; wrought-iron details; winding staircases; gargoyles; and chains.

The 1970s and 1980s brought dynamic growth to Guarujá's real estate market. Jorge da Silva Prado, the owner of extensive properties near Praia de Pernambuco, commissioned Gregori Warchavchik – a renowned architect and the designer of Brazil's first Modernist building – to design a small pavilion. This marked the beginning of ambitious projects and the presence of renowned architects in the area, who in the years that followed left a distinct mark on the landscape of Guarujá (Azenha Dias 2004, 17).

Zalszupin's experiment was carried out at the intersection of Rua dos Flamboyants and Rua dos Jambolões, in Praia de Pernambuco (Fig. 6). The building has a floor area of 264.2 m², and the residence is accompanied by a separate outbuilding with an area of 26.7 m². The building's form brings to mind a white, sculptural structure gently rising from the ground, resembling a hill, a cluster of boulders, or a tent. The building's mass is polygonal and faceted, with a distinctive chimney that tapers toward the top. The structural system combines masonry with a monolithic concrete slab



Fig. 6. Construction of Zalszupin's residence in Guarujá (20.07.1971)
(source: © Acervo Casa Zalszupin)

Il. 6. Budowa rezydencji Zalszupina w Guarujá (20.07.1971)
(źródło: © Acervo Casa Zalszupin)

formed in formwork – whose imprint creates the distinctive pattern known as *forro paulista* – and a ribbed ceiling with ceramic infill (*tijolos baianos*). The walls were built of solid brick and then sculpted into artistic shapes using mortar – reinforced in places – with the addition of fine and coarse aggregate. Furthermore, the architect incorporated authentic sails into the design, mounted on the garden side in the form of an awning. The use of these elements may indicate a deliberate connection between the architecture and the coastal character of Guarujá, as well as references to Zalszupin's European career, particularly from the period of his stay and work in the port city of Dunkirk (Fig. 7).

The floor plan (Fig. 8) has an organic layout and is based on clearly defined functional zones, separated by doors yet connected by a meandering circulation route. The central part consists of a tall, open living space connected to a mezzanine. It features a fireplace, a built-in sofa, sculptural winding stairs leading to the upper level, and a dining area. This zone opens onto the garden, bringing light and nature into the interior. The ground floor also houses the kitchen along with an outdoor utility area, while the opposite section features a private zone comprising three bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms and a garage. Despite its free-flowing, irregular form, the layout maintains a clear functional organization. The upper level features additional bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms and two terraces.

The interior of the house (Fig. 9) is almost entirely white – this includes both the polished concrete floor and the ceilings. Against this backdrop, bold color accents emerge, particularly in the bathrooms, which are decorated in intense shades of orange and yellow. Their form brings to mind molded plastic elements and references Zalszupin's work in industrial design. This was a period during which Zalszupin developed the production of plastic furniture and furnishings, introducing this material to the Brazilian market, including through the mass production of Hille chairs and the EVA line of household appliances (Fig. 10).

The context of the 1970s, marked by a fascination with space exploration and the space-age aesthetic, may have



Fig. 7. Zalszupin's Residence in Guarujá: a) exterior view of the dining room showing a sail used as an awning, b) façade facing Rua dos Flamboyants, ca. 1972 (source: © Acervo Casa Zalszupin)

Il. 7. Rezydencja Zalszupina w Guarujá: a) widok zewnętrzny jadalni z widocznym żaglem wykorzystanym jako markiza, b) elewacja od strony Rua dos Flamboyants, ok. 1972 (źródło: © Acervo Casa Zalszupin)

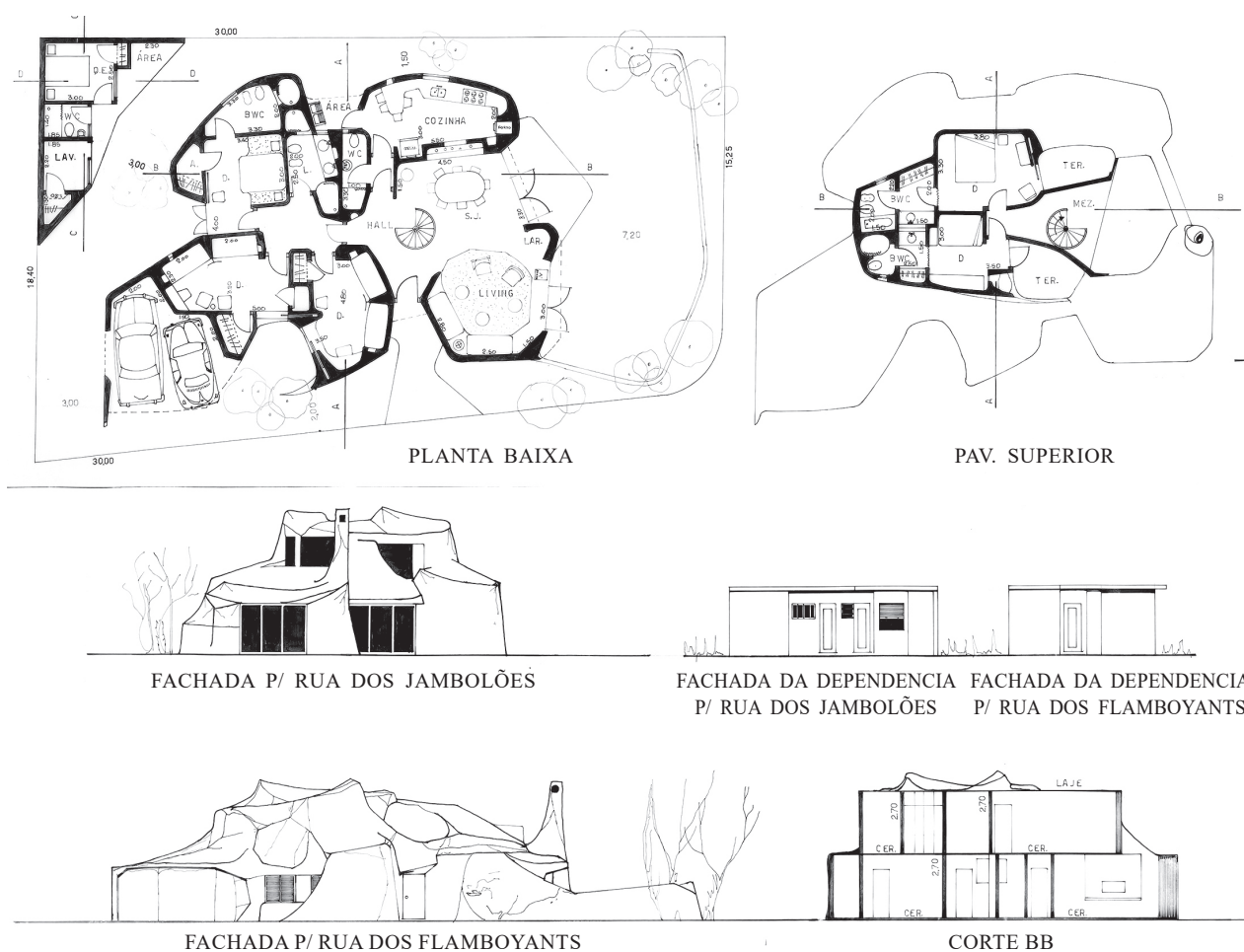


Fig. 8. Floor plans, elevations, and a cross-section of Zalszupin's residence in Guarujá (source: © Jorge Zalszupin, Acervo Casa Zalszupin)

Il. 8. Rzuty, elewacje i przekrój rezydencji Zalszupina w Guarujá (źródło: © Jorge Zalszupin, Acervo Casa Zalszupin)



Fig. 9. Residence in Guarujá: a) living room, b) dining room (source: © Nelson Kon)

Il. 9. Rezydencja w Guarujá: a) salon, b) jadalnia (źródło: © Nelson Kon)

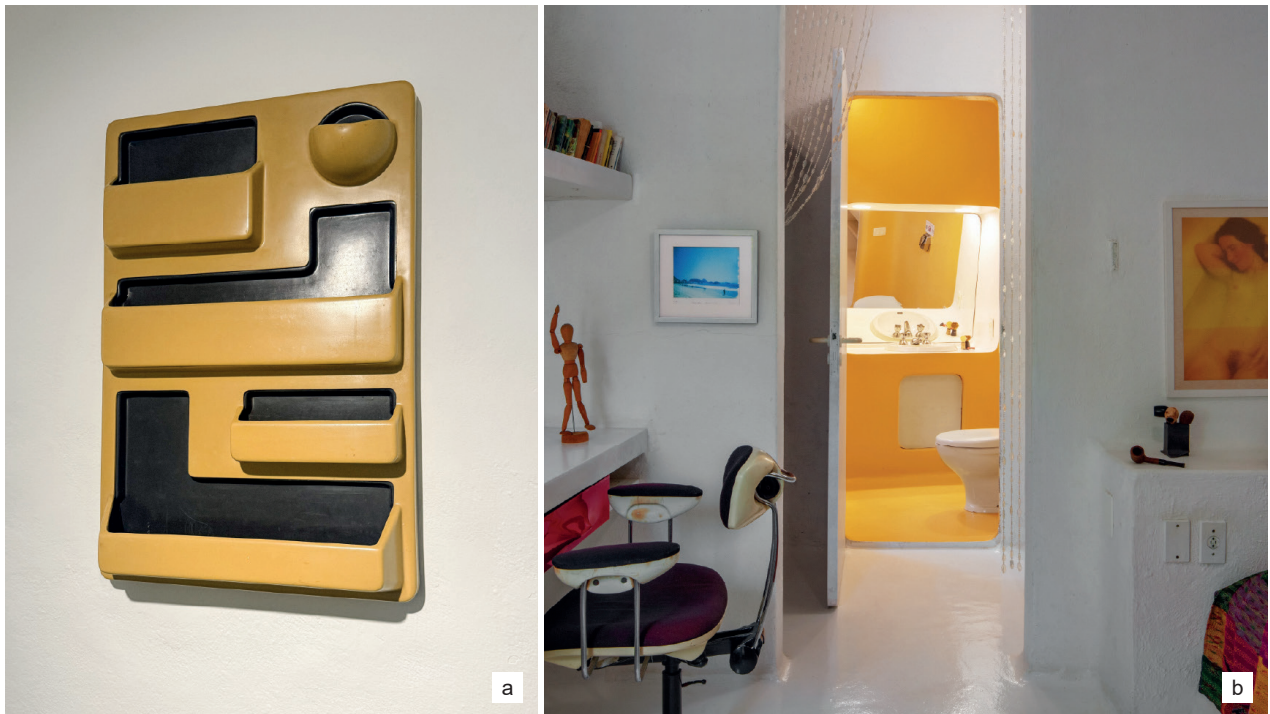


Fig. 10. Analogies in form between industrial design and interior architecture: a) an organizer from the Putskit line, by Laura Amanda Salgado and Jorge Zalszupin, L'Atelier, Hevea (1973), b) a residence in Guarujá – bedroom and yellow bathroom (source: © E. Angoneze-Grela; © Nelson Kon)

Il. 10. Podobieństwo form między wzornictwem przemysłowym a architekturą wnętrz: a) organizer z linii Putskit, Laura Amanda Salgado i Jorge Zalszupin, L'Atelier, Hevea (1973), b) rezydencja w Guarujá – sypialnia i żółta łazienka (źródło: © E. Angoneze-Grela; © Nelson Kon)

inspired the design of futuristic interior spaces. In turn, references to the Mediterranean style are evident in elements such as the white façades, massive walls, small rounded openings, raw finishes, brick furniture, terraces, and winding staircases. At the same time, the overall design brings to mind a vision of a house of the future or a space station rather than the vernacular architecture of the Mediterranean region. This project demonstrates Zalszupin's clear exploration of sculptural architecture, inspired by Couëlle's works, though in his interpretation these forms remain less soft – balancing between polygonal geometry and curved

lines with rounded edges. Like Couëlle, Zalszupin used scale models as a design tool, treating them as experimental studies of form. According to family members, he also personally participated in the construction process, collaborating with the contractor – a Spaniard named Pépe – and supervised its progress on site, which allowed him to achieve a result consistent with his own vision.

This project contributed to the evolution of his architectural language. As demonstrated in this article, however, this was not an abrupt change, but rather a process that had already been foreshadowed in his earlier designs. It led to a se-

ries of subsequent projects in a similar style, which were created in the years that followed during his professional career.

Discussion and conclusions

In light of the aforementioned remarks, it is possible to identify the factors that shaped Zalszupin's unique architectural language, as well as the context of the transformation he mentioned in his autobiography.

Zalszupin's work falls within a period of intense development of Modernism, both in Europe and in Brazil, and is often unequivocally associated with this movement. From today's perspective, however, it is difficult to determine which of the two schools – *carioca* or *paulista* – he was closer to. His work does not fully align with either of them but rather constitutes a reinterpretation of both, a sort of hybrid. On the one hand, there is a sculptural quality and visual expression of form, as well as a strong connection between architecture and nature – characteristic of the *carioca* school. On the other hand, it is distinguished by the rationality of its solutions and the emphasis on the raw quality of the material, as exemplified by, among other things, the *forro paulista*.

Zalszupin did not apply the principles of Modernism – including Le Corbusier's "five points" – in an orthodox manner, although he remained clearly influenced by Le Corbusier's thinking. As he himself admitted, he valued "the purity of line and the rationality of this architecture" (Jarecka 2020). His designs thus reveal both a need for order and a desire to transcend rigid rules through the free shaping of form. In this context, it is also worth noting his references to the home as a form of shelter, as well as comparisons to the mother's womb (Jarecka 2020), which may stem from his personal experiences, including those during the war and his time in exile.

His work was also influenced by ideas that went beyond mainstream Modernism. These can be linked to the concept of a synthesis of architecture and sculpture, popularized by André Bloc in the pages of *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, as well as to the works of Jacques Couëlle. In this sense, Zalszupin's architecture is part of a broader search for alternative directions in Modernism. Despite his strong ties to the European context, maintained through intellectual dialogue, Zalszupin adapted well to the Brazilian reality, which was conducive to experimentation, and thus became part of the local architectural language.

References to the so-called Mediterranean style also play a significant role; in his designs, this style is not directly copied but rather reinterpreted and combined with other inspirations, including the space age aesthetic, as well as his own design work involving the use of plastic, a material that was new at the time. In this way, an architectural language emerged that combines different orders – tradition and modernity.

This article discusses only a selected portion of Zalszupin's work and does not fully capture the complexity of his architectural legacy. Previous research has focused primarily on industrial design, while Zalszupin's architecture – despite its originality and exceptional formal sophistication – remains largely underrecognized and unexplored. It seems essential to conduct further analyses covering both his architectural projects and his work in industrial design, as well as the interrelationships between them. The authors intend to continue their research in this direction, treating this study as a starting point for further analyses of the work of this Polish-Brazilian architect.

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Streszczenie

Jerzy Zalszupin – między modernizmem brazylijskim a jego alternatywnymi interpretacjami

Tematem artykułu jest twórczość Jorge Zalszupina, polsko-brazylijskiego architekta, interpretowana w kontekście nurtów architektonicznych obecnych w Europie i Brazylii w okresie modernizmu.

Celem prezentowanych badań jest powiązanie architektury Zalszupina, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem domu architekta w Guarujá (São Paulo), z jego biografią oraz realiami architektonicznymi towarzyszącymi kolejnym etapom jego kariery zawodowej. Badania oparto na studium przypadku, wspartym analizą kontekstową i biograficzną obejmującą niepublikowane dotąd materiały, takie jak oryginalna plansza z rysunkami architektonicznymi, a także czasopisma branżowe z epoki.

Przeprowadzona analiza pozwoliła na wykazanie hybrydowego charakteru jego twórczości, łączącej brazylijski modernizm (szkoły *carioca* i *paulista*) z odniesieniami do europejskiego modernizmu i jego alternatywnych odmian. Wyniki kwerendy bibliograficznej potwierdzają brak opracowań poświęconych jego twórczości architektonicznej, co stanowi lukę w literaturze przedmiotu. Autorzy artykułu żywią nadzieję, że udało im się ją częściowo wypełnić.

Słowa kluczowe: Jerzy Zalszupin, brazylijski modernizm, architektura rzeźbiarska, architektura śródziemnomorska

