

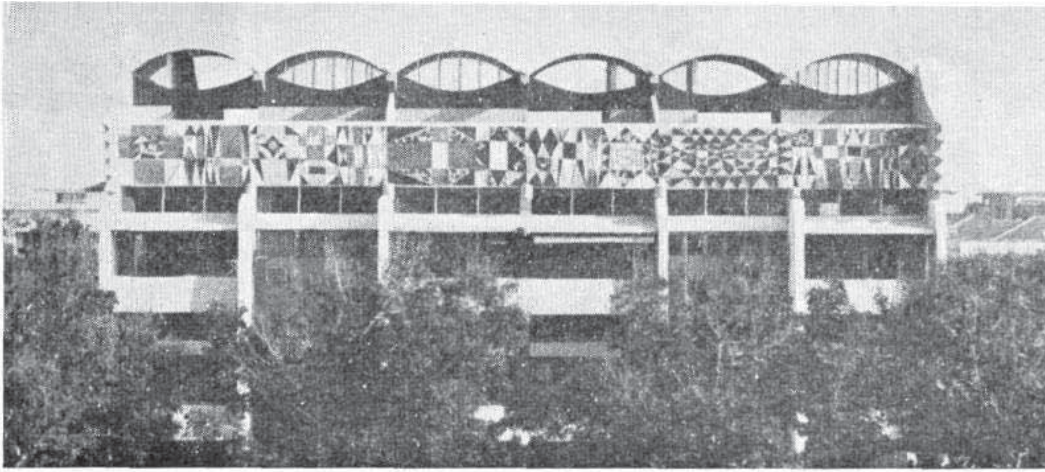
A real architect

Last week a round-faced, baldheaded man in black shirt and purple tie arrived back from Paris. Amancio d'Alpoim Miranda ("Pancho") Guedes had been invited to a meeting of Team X, all that remains of architecturally renowned CIAM (International Congress of Modern Architecture) founded in 1928. Guedes was one of many architects from as far as Japan who attended.

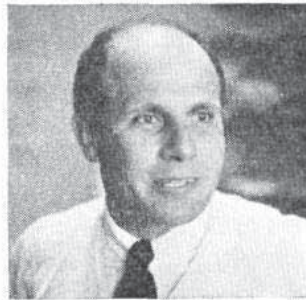
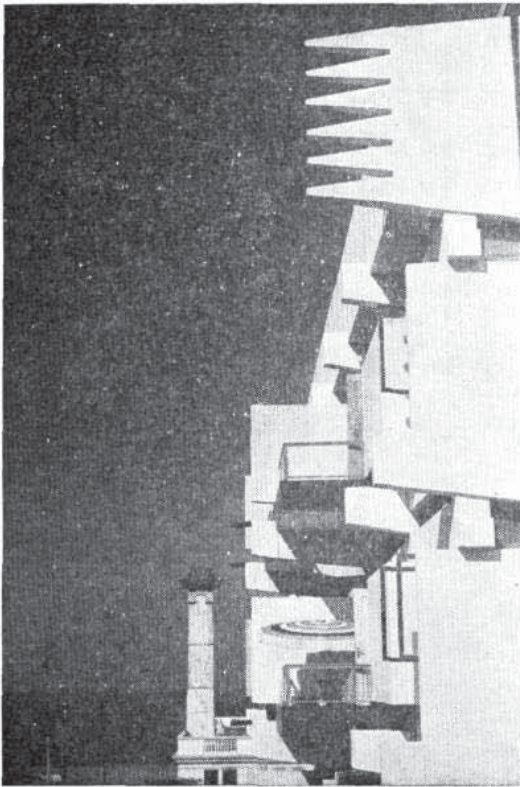
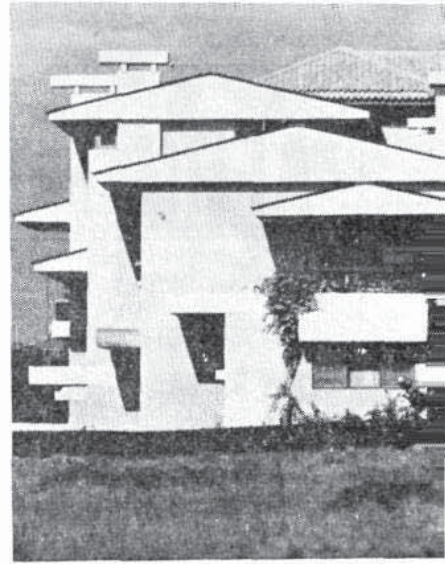
Beginning. Guedes as a student worked at Wits University under Rex Martienssen, friend of Le Corbusier and associated with the architectural revolts of the 1930's. Leaving University in 1950 Guedes set up practice in Lourenco Marques. Soon his own fantastic calligraphy appeared on the Mozambique skyline: houses with cigar-shaped chimneys, blocks of flats with projecting fingers, terrace houses like small villages grouped around a communal space. And the buildings were decorated as fantastically as they were shaped, with murals of paint, stones, pebbles, bristling sculptures. Guedes was attempting an architecture of free fancy, with forms and decoration ruled by no rules except those of his own will.

Acknowledgement. His working methods are as unconventional as the buildings. He does all the technical work himself, but employs untrained people for design and decoration. From his office in Lourenco Marques come paintings by himself and Valente Malangatana (rescued by Guedes from being a ball boy at an LM club), sculpture carved by an ex-building labourer from Guedes' designs, murals, embroidery. Only in the last few years has Guedes gained a reputation outside Southern Africa: a 1961 review of his work in the prestigious *British Architectural Review*, a dubbing by the *London Times* as "an important and original figure", publication of his work as far away as Poland, and a projected exhibition at London's International Contemporary Arts (ICA) Gallery, scheduled for next May.

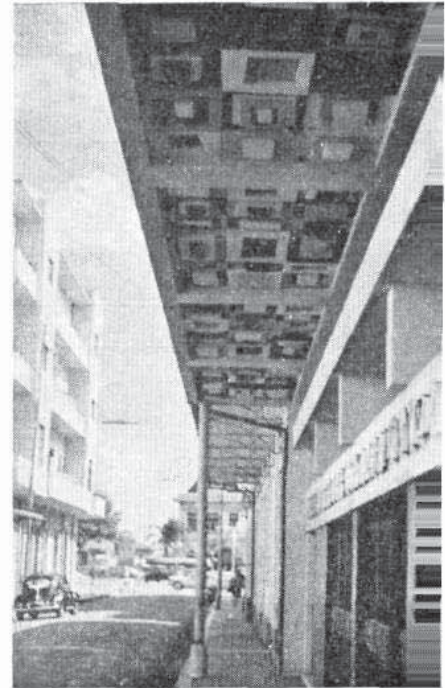
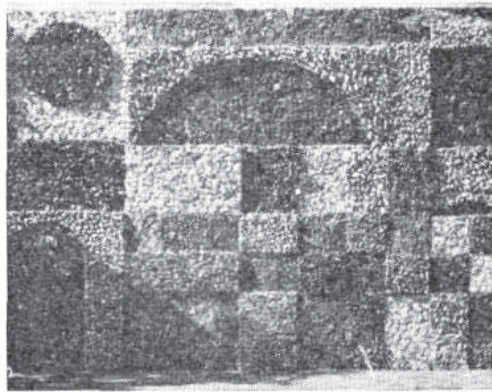
Touch. Back in LM, Guedes occupies himself with building the new multi-racial school in Swaziland, a church and an art gallery for Lourenco Marques. He sculpts, paints, attends conferences, does research in *Art Nouveau*, the late nineteenth century art of fantasy, and Mapoch walls. These days, any civil engineer can throw up a building. Guedes is an architect; one of the few who has an identifiable touch.



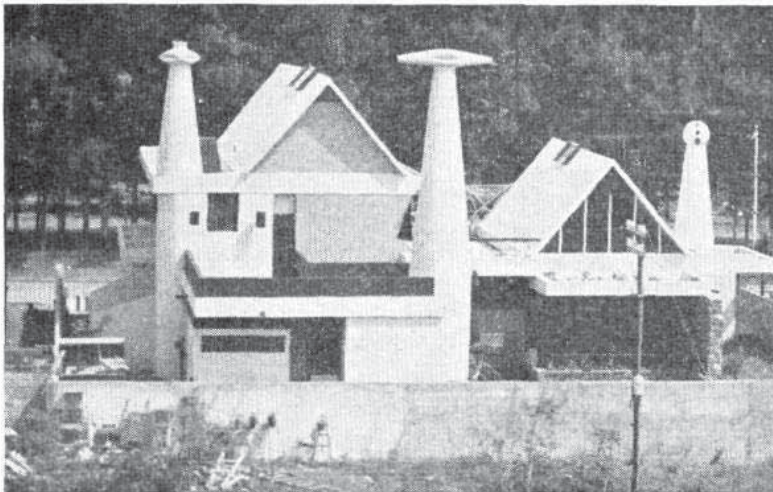
AN ARCHITECTURE OF FREE FANTASY



GUEDES



Patterns of light, colour, form . . . an African gaiety



PHOTOS: JULIAN BEINART