

## **Some thoughts on “the starting process” by Alvaro Siza**

Lotus International 22, 1979/I, p. 49.

I still remember the frustration of the early years of school and professional practice, when the hypothetically exhaustive (static) analysis of a problem was followed by the unprotected encounter with a sheer of blank paper.

Ever since then I have always been anxious to “analyze the site” and to make a drawing before calculating the square meters of the area to be constructed.

The process of designing begins from this first comparison between one act and the next.

I have tried to select material which might document, or which I consider essential to, this process; the constant and patient process of research, the slow approximation of the drawing which corresponds to complex goals and circumstances, which embraces each work and all my work.

Accounts of this research, instead of the found drawing. The trials of days and days of doubts, of small steps forward and errors, of the abandonment of one idea in favor of some different aspect of the same idea, of the difficulty pursuit of form.

At the start of a project study, we are confronted with objectives that set off contradictory tensions in a very deep-rooted concrete reality made up of superimpositions, transformations and recoveries; with a compound of one’s own or extraneous preliminary experiences and information; with models, interests and contacts.

I believe that within this very complex network of facts and “projects” lies, as if it were a matrix, *almost everything* that determines the “project.”

The rapid sketches shown –a work tool like any other and not a romantic methodological proposal– help rather than reflect, to create a consciousness of the innumerable tensions involved in any hypothetical solution to a concreated problem. As a work tool, they help to set up a permanent dialectic relation between intuition and rigorous checking, in a progressive process of complete comprehension and visualization.

In this progressive visualization, in a provisionally final image, the *almost nothing* which is so important, beyond the existent, the slight torsion so often materialized in the drawing, begins to take shape.