

the approaching south

PROGRAM FS 2008

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wealth and waste of available natural resources mean that

today we simulate materials
constructive systems
architectural languages
not to make a statement
but to be seductively fashionable

the Alentejo - a southern European region still maintaining most of its native character - has always been a place of mixed cultural influences from early times - muslim, christian - to the present.

In its superb quietness - and landscape sensuality - one can still feel the present strength of absent things - hospitable and hospitaller - with slightly disguised harmonies standing out, embracing rhythms without recognisable sequence, faded symmetries, the materials and those that are nearly so, the countless shades of white ... the light!

A place where one is permanently faced with time, reason and feeling - a sense of survival intelligence with lean means

the project:

to design a small research institute to monitor and evaluate the quality of surface and underground waters caused by the recent construction of the Alqueva dam on the river Guadiana and give appropriate and timely responses to nature and the population

the site:

sited south of the Alqueva dam (context in www.edia.pt) bordering two distinct regions - the Alentejo and the spanish Extremadura - with a wealth of vestiges from past to contemporary cultures

constraints:

to be particular to be global:
the water is increasingly short and that which is contained in the huge dam reservoir may turn out to be a paradox
differing weather patterns are already making the daily local management of life difficult - let alone central and northern Europe - where the normal seasonal changes of mild climates are increasingly hard to distinguish and comprehend:

the aim:

to understand and tame the consequences of the 'approaching south'
to establish architectural guidelines able to offer conditions of autonomy and confort in increasingly distressed habitats by critically re evaluating attitudes to the region, type, topography, matter, depth, thickness, light
that in their efficacy do not turn nature into a commodity
for

'architecture is a combination of nostalgia and extreme anticipation'
and life
good life!

'mehr licht' !

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