

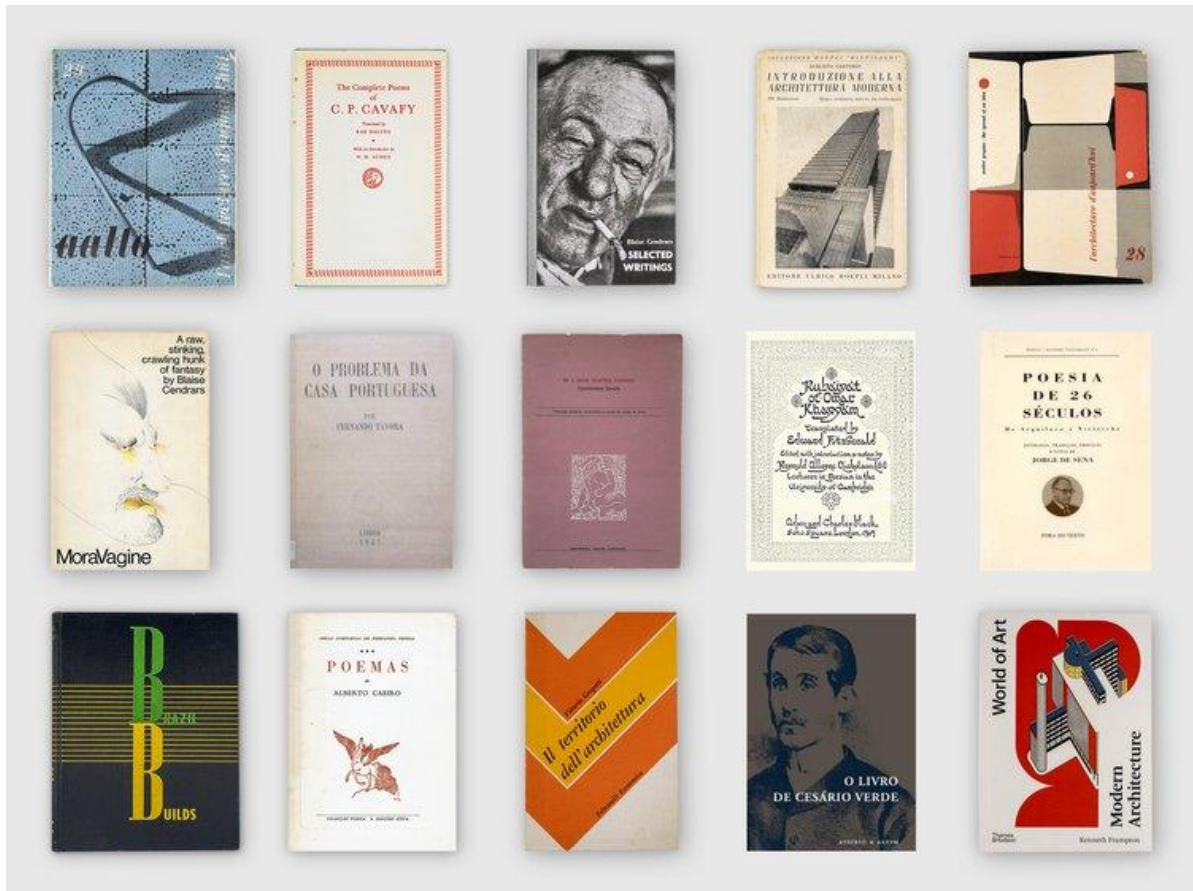
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Alvaro Siza 89th birthday 15 Books of a lifetime



One of the most consistent and yet fully surprising architects working today, Álvaro Siza is the author of a rigorous and obsessive work, deeply rooted in a deference towards local material, craftwork, topography, local light, ever without falling into the sentimentality of excluding rational form and modern techniques.

The Pritzker Prize shares the books that have marked him the most through his life. Álvaro Siza's List spans from fundamental editions on Alvar Aalto or Walther Gropius, to lesser-known Italian modernism, Brazil, critical history and philosophy, a striking novel, and poetry – a lot of poetry – from Portuguese to Greek and Persian masters.



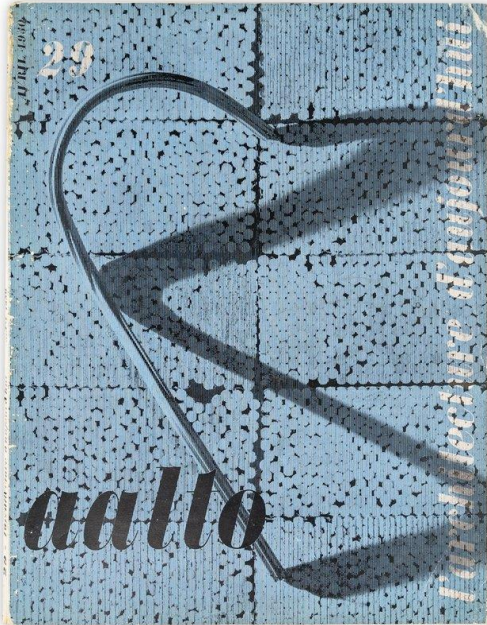
Monade has made efforts to find and collect a stock of these books, some rare and out-of-print, and bring them available.

THE LIST #1 Álvaro Siza

- 1 L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui 29 / Alvar Aalto
- 2 L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui 28 / Walter Gropius
- 3 O Problema da Casa Portuguesa / Fernando Távora
- 4 Poemas de Alberto Caeiro
- 5 Obra Completa de Cesário Verde
- 6 Il Territorio dell'Architettura / Vittorio Gregotti
- 7 Introduzione all'Architettura Moderna / A. Sartoris
- 8 The Complete Poems of Cavafy
- 9 Poesia de 26 Séculos / De Arquíloco a Nietzsche
- 10 90 e mais Quatro Poemas / Constatino Cavafy
- 11 Rubā'iyat / Omar Khayyan
- 12 Modern Architecture / Kenneth Frampton
- 13 Moravagine / Blaise Cendrars
- 14 Selected Writings of Blaise Cendrars
- 15 Brazil Builds

1. L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui 29 / Alvar Aalto

When at architecture school, Álvaro Siza's teacher looked at his drawings and said: "It's clear how little you know about architecture. Why don't you go out and buy some magazines?" In a time when it was hard to find them in Portugal, Siza bought some issues of *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* and this one on Aino and Alvar Aalto, was one of his first copies, of most decisive importance. It's easy to imagine the impact of seeing this work by a Finnish architect, who just in the first lines is described as working in a context where primeval and medieval world as still alive and intermingle with modern civilization. How this tension would reverberate in a young student from Portugal, of equal context of periphery and artisanship can only be evaluated in his own work. Works featuring this magazine, such as the Viipuri Library, are a clear point of departure of many Siza's works.



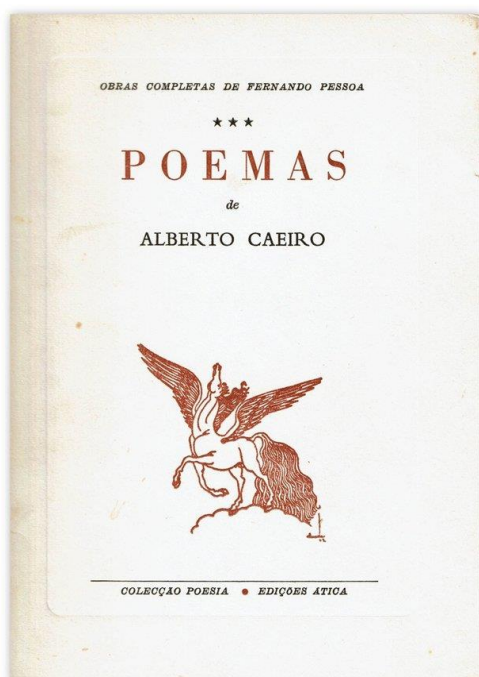
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2. L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui 28 / Walter Gropius

This one of Álvaro Siza's first magazines on architecture when student, curiously an issue edited by the "young American architect" Paul Rudolph, later one of the most decisive American architects in the 20th century.

Entangled between a sterile historicism and the arrival of modern architects to America, this issue strives for depicting a clear vision of modern architecture. Here, it means to reset what architects' training should be. From W. Gropius' Harvard to the "Bauhaus of Chicago", to "Black Mountain College", the significance of a plan of studies for Architecture and Design was non less than the way of ensuring social recognition on the importance of Architecture in everyday live, and assuming a strategic role in the postwar crisis.

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4. Poemas de Alberto Caeiro

Fernando Pessoa (1888-1935), Portuguese poet, is perhaps one of the most significant voices in western modern culture. Prolific writer, Pessoa wrote under many names, his heteronyms, imaginary writers he created with autonomous work. Alberto Caeiro is one of them, along with Ricardo Reis and Álvaro de Campos being the main. Octavio Paz described, "Reis believes in form, Campos in sensation, Pessoa in symbols. Caeiro doesn't believe

in anything. He exists.” Poetry before Caeiro was essentially metaphoric, interpretative, symbolic. In Alberto Caeiro a thing just is.

Siza often states that Poetry as a lot to do with Architecture. In Caeiro, Siza underlines the apparent simplicity of his work – the difficult simplicity – he adds. Perhaps besides form, sensations or symbols, the true difficulty in Architecture would be to not be a representation, a metaphor, but rather simply *be*.

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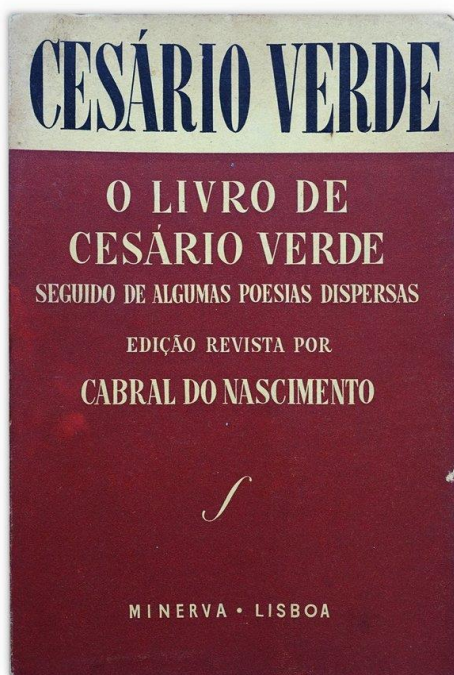
5. Obra Completa de Cesário Verde

Cesário Verde (1855-1886) was an 19th century Portuguese poet known by his vibrant descriptions of life in cities, of the dawn of modernity captured in its daily aspects.

Architecture’s affinity with Poetry is repeatedly remarked by Álvaro Siza. One can speculate if this as something to do with minimum of means to archive maximum expression; or of Poetry’s praise of the Word, in its multiple means, in sound, in graphic, as Architecture regards to material, the stone, the brick and their composition. But to every attempt to deepen this relation, Siza answers with a poem recited by heart. As this:

*Wagging sumptuous hips they come!
Their manly torsos remind me of pillars;
And some, in the baskets on their heads,
Rock sons who’ll one day drown in storms.*

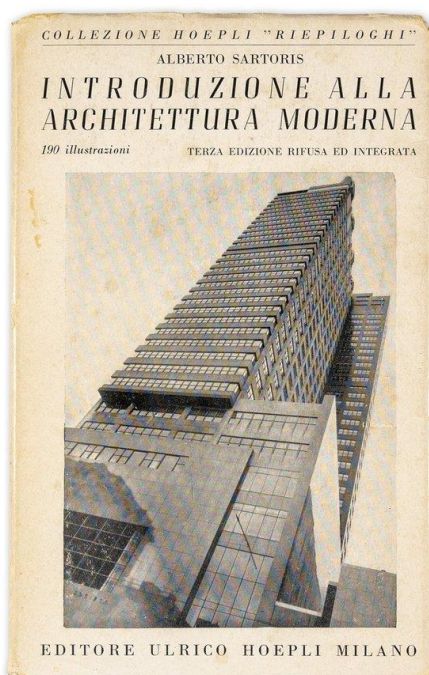
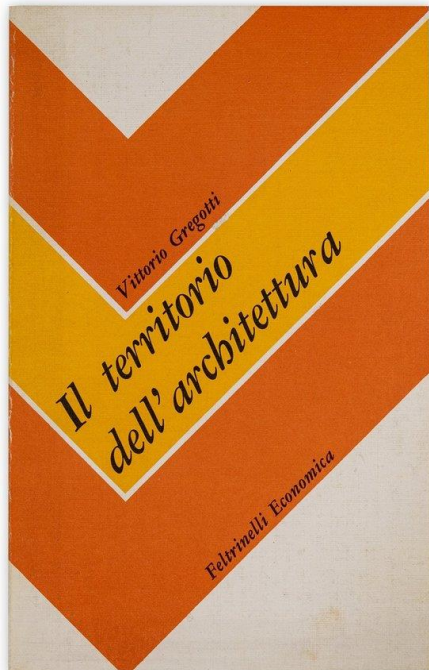
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6. Il Territorio dell'Architettura / Vittorio Gregotti

This is, perhaps, the most influent book by Vittorio Gregotti (1927-2020), Italian architect, decisive to the coming paths of contemporary architecture, originally published in 1966. Unusually clear and aware of philosophical depth of thought in Architecture, this small book dares to start with the question: “*What kind of ‘thing’ is Architecture made of?*”. Now as then often, if not ever, Architecture seems to block in crossroads where its fundamentals have to be checked, discussed, seen in perspective. This book is one referential contribution to that. Vittorio Gregotti was also credited to be an excellent critic, with keen eye for significant peripheral practices, and one of the first to publish works by Álvaro Siza, beginning a season of renewed interest in Portuguese architecture coinciding with the end of the dictatorship in Portugal.

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7. Introduzione all'Architettura Moderna / Alberto Sartoris

This book is stated by Álvaro Siza as being one of the first he bought on Architecture. A pocket-size, refined, strongly illustrated edition, seemingly made as a “manual”. Published in 1949, this book presents a most vast and solid collection on unknown and outstanding modern architecture, that we can only wonder what else are we missing. From today’s unfamiliar impressive works, to celebrated

projects shown in unusual points of view, this book is a 500 pages gem.

Alberto Sartoris (1901-1998) was co-founder, with Rietveld and Le Corbusier, of the *Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* (CIAM), and also friend of Fernando Távora who presented him to Siza, making some early exchanges between Portugal and Switzerland.

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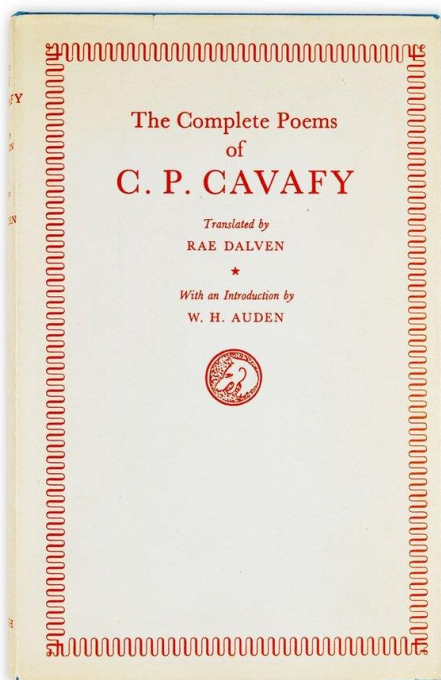
8. The Complete Poems of Cavafy

Ever since Álvaro Siza first discovered the work of Cavafy in [Jorge de Sena's anthology](#), it has remained an influence.

Constantinos Cavafy (1863-1933), Greek poet, one of the key figures in western Poetry. Commonly known as the author of "Ithaca" (1911), a poem inspired by the return of Homero to his home island, as depicted in "Odyssey". Cavafy drew themes from personal experience as from Helleno-romaic antiquity and the Byzantine era in poems of celebrated modernity. Perhaps a reminder that classic tradition is not a thing from the past, nor a ruin.

Often Siza's work is described as being more Greek than Roman, in allusion to his attention to the site, often deriving his designs from the specificity of it. Also often, Siza recalls that the site is in our mind, maybe just as much as Ithaca was in Homero's.

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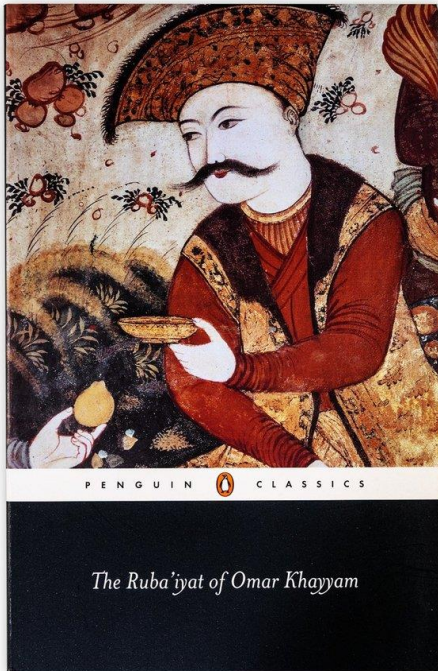


11. Ruba'iyat / Omar Khayyan

Although Omar Khayyam is best known in the West as a poet and author of *The Ruba'iyat*, in the East he was famous as an astronomer and mathematician – and, indeed, was one of the greatest mathematicians of the Middle Ages. He was born in Persia and is thought to have died in approximately 1122.

Intensively fun, vivid and daring, this work was possible thanks to the invention of the *Ruba'i* – a clever formal simplification of poetry, allowing the expression of daily experiences, thoughts in a way direct and simple. In addition, a *Ruba'i* could easily be memorized, and as easily imitated.

The rise of the *Ruba'i* coincided with revulsion from lengthy and highly artificial panegyrics and narrative poems of the time. The hypocrisy and lack of genuine human understanding frequently displayed by arid scholastics and religious jurists were here frequently mocked. A promising full peep on the life of an ancient Persian erudite, clever enough not to forget common life.

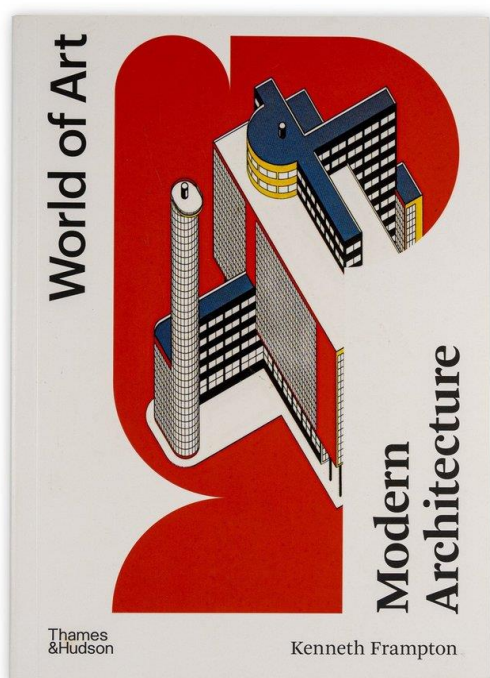


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12. Modern Architecture: A Critical History / Kenneth Frampton

This highly acclaimed survey of modern architecture and its origins has become a classic since it first appeared in 1980, and has helped to shape architectural practice and discourse worldwide. The idea for this book came from Robin Middleton, editor of Thames and Hudson, who in 1970 invited Kenneth Frampton (b. 1930) to create an overview of the complexity of modern times architecture, from the disruption of French Revolution to present days, to provide some deeper understanding of the developments of our own practice. The challenge was huge and took more than ten years to consolidate this book. Two paths were chosen and were quite unusual: ideas are not issued generically as “concepts”, but by quoting its main protagonists and their works and voices directly; the phenomenon of modern architecture is taken as being built upon fragmented parts, even if contradictory ones, abandoning an unitarian aim of discourse, many times of forced and of questionable convergence. One of the virtues of this book is to have coined some terms in our discourse, such as, “*Critical Regionalism*”, giving voice to peripheral practices very rooted in its own context, but at same time of admirable universal qualities. It was under this title that Frampton early mentions the work of Álvaro Siza, at a time far away from its full international recognition.

Recent editions, as the English one,



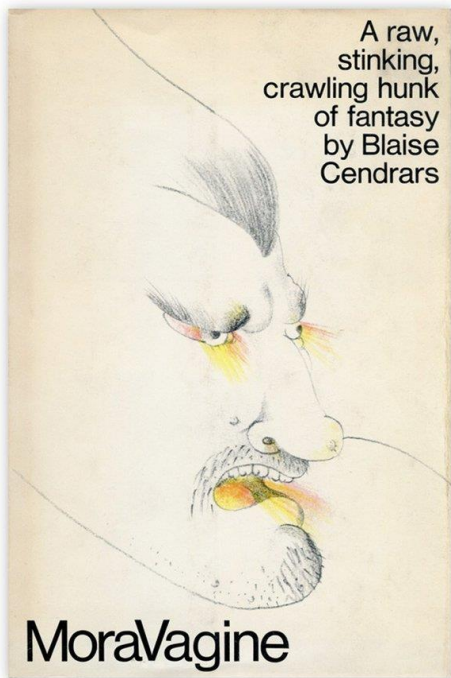
integrate new chapters of architecture in Americas, from East Africa to Turkey, Iraq, to India and Australia, Sri Lanka, always exercising his keen reading of the architectural practice.

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13. Moravagine / Blaise Cendrars

Written in 1926, Moravagine is the most well-known novel by Blaise Cendrars. A complex work, Moravagine is an “epic of destruction in which one senses Goya, Bosch, Dante”. It’s a strange story of a man who destroys, shatters and pulverizes everything that binds, oppresses the man of our time. In the book only madness, insurrection, gratuitous crime, revolution, evasion in the dream, conflict between freedom and need, sexuality, violence, absurdity of the world. The book was written during World War I at a time when as the narrator describes, “the whole world was doing a Moravagine”.

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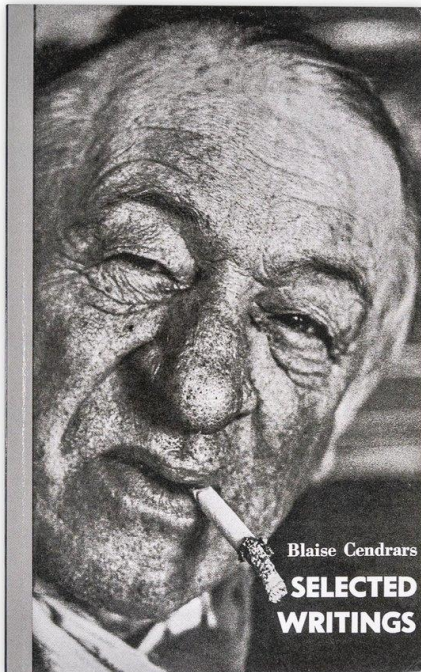
14. Selected Writings of Blaise Cendrars

Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961), novelist and poet, oddly having born the same place and year of Le Corbusier, was an early exponent of modernism. His name is not as much familiar as one might suppose of someone being painted by Leger, Modigliani, and Chagall, who helped to “discover” Jazz, Negro art, Surrealism, Anarchism, and Henry Miller, who writes the preface of this book.

Cendrars boldly praised Eiffel Tower, loved Brazilian Baroque, was the so-called first foreign to visit the ‘favelas’ of Rio, and even encouraged Le Corbusier to design a new capital of Brazil.

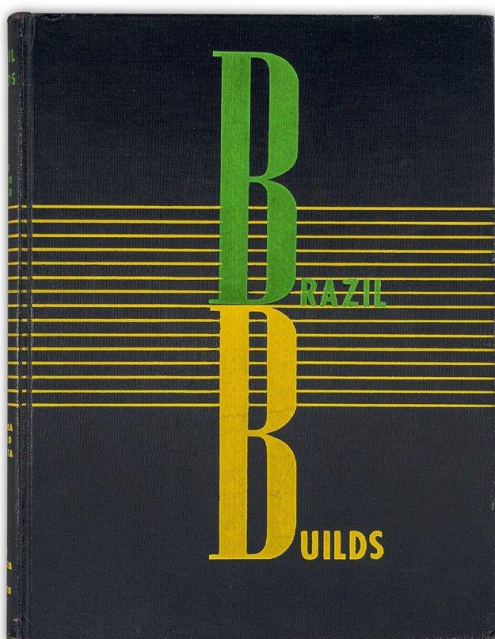
This book recollects most of his main writings where, in the words of Henry Miller, “*Everything is written in blood, but a blood that is saturated with starlight.*”

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15. Brazil Builds

The most seminal book on presenting Brazilian architecture to the world, it followed an exhibition in MoMa in 1943, by the architect Philip Goodwin. In a two-month trip to Brazil, Philip Goodwin and the photographer Kidder Smith collected 650 black and white photographs, 250 Kodachromes, 200 archival images, original drawings by Niemeyer. The book features a careful edition and printing of technical drawings and photographs using rotogravure. Not only the works featured there are surprisingly brilliant, but also the scope of this edition, beginning with



baroque and popular architecture intermingled with latest achievement at the time, is a statement. Modern architecture was now, and by right, also tropical, popular, historical, daring. It overpassed its colonial past, as completely self-standing in front of flashiest American or European productions.

Still today, Brazilian architecture and all its power and mastery, is not completely reachable. Therefore, this edition has a double interest, it is still the utmost reference for those curious on Brazilian Architecture, and it is a vivid and solid testimony through the journey of Modern culture in an unpredictable and rich context such as the Brazilian.

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The List is a project to share and make available to order a rigorous selection of books chosen by some of the most decisive minds in Architecture. From Architecture to Poetry, History, Philosophy, Literature, Science, Photography.

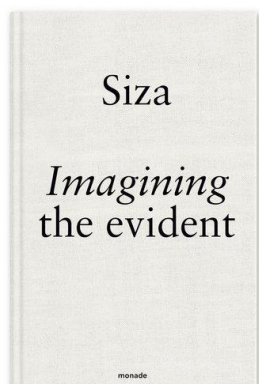
[See the FULL LIST #1 Álvaro Siza](#)



Curated and Presented by **Daniela Sá**

Founder and Publisher of Monade

Suggestions



Imagining the Evident / Álvaro Siza (1st Edition - RARE)

The referential book by Álvaro Siza on his own work, in its first English edition.

Describing some of his projects, his expectations and struggles, references and decisions, this book is a fundamental contribution to the understanding of Álvaro Siza's architectural thinking.

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Book + Silkscreen Álvaro Siza, 2021
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Limited Edition of 50

Paper size: 470 x 390 mm / Image size
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Signed and numbered in pencil on the
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Silkscreen 2 colours, Fabriano Acid-free
paper 300 gms

Wrapped in Acid-free tissue paper and
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tube. Shipping carefully worldwide.

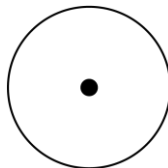
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