

INSIDE A HOUSE, WHITE CITY JABAVU, SOWETO
AND
WALKWAY OF AN APARTMENT HOUSE, MANAUS, BRAZIL

In both the places shown on the left, people are comfortable, normal. At first one may say, well, these people are happy even though in each case they are in what seems like a very rudimentary room, or gallery. But why does that show a living architecture? Are these places made by unfolding?

Yes, it is true that in daytime, without the people enjoying themselves, these places might look not so good, perhaps even miserable. But the point is that, simple or not, poor or not-so-poor, the people are allowed, by the place, to be what they are. These people — judging from

their faces in the pictures, anyway — are free in themselves — perhaps because they are not relying on money for joy — and certainly, I think, because there is so little extra in the situation. In Soweto, a table, chairs, bottle, light bulbs, not much more. The generative system in a society, which creates a living world, is something more subtle, more important, than the machine which creates the buildings. What is at stake — what must be kept, and used, and benefited from, in any living world — are the dynamic generative processes which created these situations as a whole, in Soweto and in Brazil.

HOUSE-PROUD OWNER, MEXICALI, MEXICO

This house was designed and built in 1976, for \$3,500, by Lilia Duran and her husband, as part of a program of construction I undertook in Mexico. Here are a few excerpts from the step-by-step process followed:

- *Walk about on the site, and select the site with other families.*
- *Place the main room of the house.*
- *Place the front door.*
- *Decide how the porch will create a relation to the common land.*
- *Use special foundation blocks to form the edge of the slab.*
- *Place and pour the slab.*
- *Using specially made cylindrical blocks, build the porch columns.*
- *Build beam forms, place steel, pour the beams.*
- *Place the baskets to form the vaults.*
- *Trowel lightweight concrete on the basket.*
- *Whitewash the columns.*

It was an uncomplicated making process, perhaps only sophisticated in its simplicity (see Book 3, chapter 12, for details).



*Lilia Duran, in the porch of her house:
Houses by Christopher Alexander,
Mexicali, Mexico, 1976*