In September 1974 Alison Smithson published in the British journal Architectural Design the article “How to recognise and read mat-building”. It was a first attempt to conceptualise the notion of mat-building, a low-rise and high density building type that circumscribed the concerns and interests of the Team10 during the last decade. The article adopted the format of an unfinished chronology of examples. A selection that had the Free University of Berlin as the starting point and axis of discussion. Work of the architects Candilis, Josic and Woods from which it descended in a timeline until reaching the architectures of ancient times. Projects from different origins, times and scales were traced down, describing a kind of atlas or visual catalogue where the concept was loaded with great conceptual indeterminacy and the article with an enormous ambiguity. But, in which way if not by the notion of mat-building?

The architecture of the mat-building responded to a highly interventionist structure that was supposed to be able to grow in space in a potentially unlimited way and to be modified in the course of time, adapting to the multiple contingencies that would take place. This constant transformation of its state conferred...