Alvaro Siza and SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa and Associates) are two of the most highly regarded and significant architectural practices in the world today. Widely published, recipients of countless awards, including the Pritzker Prize, both have devoted followings and a number of astonishing and entrancing buildings to their credit.

On the face of it, their work presents a number of similarities: abstract and often surprising forms, minimal details, strategies to engage the body and the mind, and "white". Yet they come from different generations, and from opposite corners of the globe, Portugal and Japan, where cultural ideas about buildings -- how they are conceptualized, constructed, and experienced -- are completely different.

Both are frequently portrayed as solitary geniuses. Yet each responds robustly, if sometimes enigmatically, to their historical and material contexts ... giving us a strong alibi to explore the building cultures of Portugal and Japan.

In this seminar we will seek to understand representative examples of their work primarily through making: diagrams, sketches, and models. The material produced in the seminar will form an important part of the exhibition in the Stubbins Gallery that opens in January.