

The invention of the Architect: the reiteration of the scale model as a representational system under the definition of a new paradigm for the profession

João Miguel COUTO DUARTE,

Faculdade de Arquitectura e Artes da Universidade Lusíada de Lisboa / Centro de Investigação em Território, Arquitectura e Design (CITAD), Lisboa, Portugal

joao.mc.duarte@gmail.com

Orcid: 0000-0002-2161-2650

Abstract

The inception of Modernity – acknowledged for architecture as having occurred in 15th-century Italy – brought Western Culture the invention of the architect as a practitioner of a liberal art, his status and his work being conceptualised beyond a strict relation with construction. The ability to define an architectural object thoroughly before its building would prove this architect's new condition.

This paper aims to re-evaluate the role of architectural representation in the invention of the architect.

Drawing has long been acknowledged as being inscribed in the very definition of the profession. Nevertheless, the noticed lack of drawing systems able to adequately convey the whole of an architectural project until the early 16th-century, the number of scale models used until mid-16th-century, and the range of purposes ascribed to them, justify the inquiry of the scale model as more than just a presentation device. In Alberti's 1452 *De Re Aedificatoria*, the inaugural declaration of architecture as a liberal art and of the architect as its practitioner is linked to a comprehensive defence of scale model's affordances as a design tool. Also, scale models must be scrutinised as being inscribed in the definition of the architect.

The reiteration of the scale model as a representational system ought to be found under the definition of a new paradigm for the profession of the architect.

Keywords: the invention of the architect; Leon Battista Alberti; architectural scale models; architectural drawing; architectural design practices.