

International Conference

# 20th CENTURY NEW TOWNS

ARCHETYPES AND UNCERTAINTIES

Porto, ESAP Auditorium, 22-24 May 2014



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**Title:**  
20TH CENTURY NEW TOWNS. Archetypes and Uncertainties  
*Book of Abstracts*

**Editors:**  
Paolo Marcolin and Joaquim Flores

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**Graphic Design:**  
Joana Couto

**Edition:**  
Departamento de Arquitectura  
Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo  
CESAP/ESAP

**Property:**  
Cooperativa de Ensino Superior Artístico do Porto (CESAP)

**Printed by:**  
LITOPORTO - Artes Gráficas, Lda.  
Porto, Portugal

First Edition, Porto, May 2014

Copies: 200

ISBN: 978-972-8784-57-7

Depósito Legal: 376166/14

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## 20TH CENTURY NEW TOWNS Archetypes and Uncertainties

*Book of Abstracts*

In the first half of the twentieth century, the search for new urban models originated by different factors. In some cases, the desire to create modern cities perhaps the largest reason was to

determine new territorial and urban planning structures that would allow a better organization of the territory, ensuring the development of more

Porto, Escola Superior Artística do Porto  
May 22-24, 2014

integrating the urban and natural components and highlighting the role of the natural landscape, understood as a city matrix on which articulates the urban structures.

In other cases the inspiration come from the rationalist ideals of the modern movement, seeking to personify the idealistic and democratic spirit of a new world order, producing rational and functional solutions and even if sometimes they do not fully overcome certain obstacles, an important contribution to the urban and architectural theory and practice advance was made.

Furthermore, other cases relate to the post-modernism and the emergence of critical views of the modern movement. These towns were born to give an answer to the problem posed by the large settlements deindustrialization and de-urbanization, assuming the role of organized urban extensions needed for

the growth and sprawl of existing cities which was made through a process of

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These new urban models, characterized by physical, economic and administrative factors, have been developed around a central urban centre. Others, even if based on a different model, have been developed in a rural context, characterized by dependence and geographical isolation. In other cases, the new towns were built as isolated entities, disconnected from the surrounding environment, creating urban structures dependent from a main urban center. Many of these experiments have already been object of diversified studies addressing more or less specific thematic areas, seeking to define and apply critical and analytical methodologies to better understand and decode the processes and design criteria that were the basis of their urban and architectural morphologies.

Opening for an analytical prospective directed to re-contextualizing the urban and architectural contributions of these experiences, the conference 20th

Departamento de Arquitectura  
Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo  
Escola Superior Artística do Porto  
Largo de S. Domingos, 80  
4050-545 PORTO, PORTUGAL  
Phone: +351223392130 / Fax: +351223392139  
Email: ceaa@esap.pt

www.esap.pt | www.ceaa.pt

# (IN) THE INVENTION OF BRASÍLIA: MODELLING THE GROUND

Maria Manuel Oliveira

Brasília is built from a rigorous and magnificently designed ground. It is visible to those who wander the city that its composition rests on an extraordinarily modelled ground: the streets and buildings are linked to the land as if on skin that not only welcomes but also amplifies its tri-dimensionality.

The perception of this plasticity is evident at all scales, intersecting the shape of road infrastructures, the layout of buildings in Superquadras and strongly pronouncing itself in the Esplanada platform. Also, it is admirably expressed on Central Rodoviária, known as 'marco zero', a sublime moment where the various brasiliense scales articulate and mould together.

This modelling is a fundamental ally in the 'modern monumentality' of Brasília. Engaging and integrating the infrastructural technique, the moulding of the land appears as a subtle backdrop, resulting from its absolute 'naturalness', insinuating that the topographic support was always present, a feature of the territory that the planner found and, from this 'natural condition', conceived and developed the urban design. But one substantial intervention on the original topography is evident in the photographic records taken during the construction of the city, demonstrating that this 'naturalness' is deliberate and controlled through careful design. However, the disciplinary literature we know systematically represents the city in plan and shows no section at urban-scale that relates to the design of the settlement with the corresponding manipulation of the land.

This communication perceives the modelling of the ground as a fundament of the urban design and aims to contribute to the reading of the Plano Piloto by comparing the project(s) of the city – in plan and section – and determining how the topography upon where it is set was interpreted.

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Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo  
Escola Superior Artístico do Porto, Portugal

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Departamento de Arquitetura  
Escola Superior Artística do Porto, Portugal

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Departamento de Arquitetura  
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Departamento de Arquitetura  
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Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo  
Escola Superior Artístico do Porto, Portugal

**Paolo Marcolin**

Departamento de Arquitetura  
Escola Superior Artística do Porto, Portugal

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Universidade do Minho, Portugal