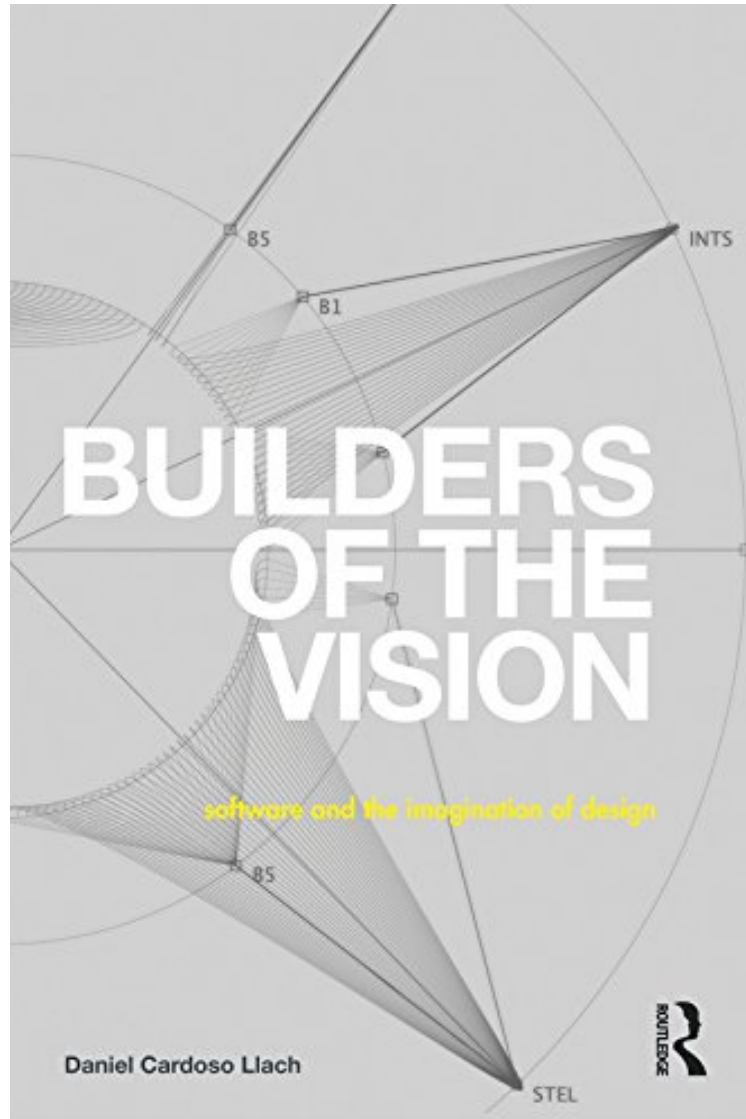


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Builders of the Vision: Software and the Imagination of Design

Daniel Cardoso Llach

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Daniel Cardoso Llach : Builders of the Vision: Software and the Imagination of Design before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Builders of the Vision: Software and the Imagination of Design:

Builders of the Vision traces the intellectual history and contemporary practices of Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and Numerical Control since the years following World War II until today. Drawing from primary archival and ethnographic sources, it identifies and documents the crucial ideas shaping digital design technologies since the first

numerical control and CAD systems were developed under US Air Force research contracts at MIT between 1949 and 1970: the cybernetic theorization of design as a human-machine endeavor; the vision of computers as "perfect slaves" taking care of the drudgery of physical labor; the techno-social utopias of computers as vehicles of democracy and social change; the entrepreneurial urge towards design and construction integration; and the managerial ideologies enabling today's transnational geographies of practice. Examining the contrasting, and often conflicting, sensibilities that converge into CAD and BIM discourses - globalism, utopianism, entrepreneurialism, and architects' desires for aesthetic liberation - *Builders of the Vision* shows that software systems and numerically controlled machines are not merely "instruments," or "tools," but rather versatile metaphors reconfiguring conceptions of design, materiality, work, and what it means to be creative. Crucially, by revealing software systems as socio-technical infrastructures that mediate the production of our built environments, author Daniel Cardoso Llach builds a strong case for the fields of architecture, media, and science and technology studies to critically engage with both the politics and the poetics of technology in design. *Builders of the Vision* will be essential reading for scholars and practitioners across disciplines interested in the increasingly complex socio-technical systems that go into imagining and building of our artifacts, buildings, and cities.

"In this fascinating interdisciplinary study, Cardoso Llach combines the past of MIT visionary Steve Coons and his CAD innovations with the present of global 'starchitecture'. The result is an important contribution to our understanding not just of software tools but of the future of design itself." - Matthew Wisnioski, *Science and Technology in Society*, Virginia Tech, USA "Combining extraordinary fluency in design, computation and STS, *Builders of the Vision* is an outstanding contribution to our understanding of the confluence of cultural imaginaries and material practices in modern technological projects. Cardoso Llach deploys a rich conceptual and methodological repertoire to explicate how dreams of bodily transcendence and political realities of embodied labours combine in the architectures of the most visible artefacts and invisible infrastructures of the contemporary world." - Lucy Suchman, *Centre for Science Studies*, Lancaster University, UK About the Author Daniel Cardoso Llach is Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at the Pennsylvania State University, USA, where he teaches courses on the history and theory of computational design and fabrication media, and on creative computing. He holds an S.M. and Ph.D. in Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA, and a B.Arch from Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá.