
The architectural model occupies an interesting position in the design and representation of the built environment. Both product and process, the model may be seen simultaneously as an artifact completing an idea (a representation in three dimensions), as well as part of a larger process leading to the realization of an idea (the built work). Advanced Architectural Modelmaking focuses on this duality and seeks to show how model making can be an expressive medium in its own right while remaining in service to a larger creative process.

The authors of the book, two of whom are partners in a professional model making workshop, have chosen to limit their coverage to architectural presentation models, viewing working models as integral to the design process but outside the scope of their work. While not intended to be comprehensive, the book is thorough in the topics it covers and generally well organized. The opening chapter quickly situates architectural models within modeling at large and provides instructive definitions and illustrated examples of various types of architectural models. Three successive chapters cover materials and tools, technical aspects, and a step-by-step guide (a series of five model projects documented with process photographs). A glossary and bibliography complete the text; though both are rather perfunctory in character.

Students of architecture will doubtless find the book fascinating, but it should be noted that the models shown are professional presentation models created by artists working as consultants to practicing architects. The word “advanced” appears in the title of this book for good reason. While many methods and materials will translate to an educational setting, the shortage of time and money confronted by most students will likely preclude them from employing all the techniques shown. As an educational text, the book would also be improved by the inclusion of basic safety information, especially photographs showing artists using proper eye protection and masks for some operations.

If one thing can be cited as setting this book apart from similar works, it is the quality and use of its photography. Uniformly clear color photos document the key steps in the various model making processes throughout. Combined with short, descriptive captions, they provide a rich narrative easily understood by readers. The book’s graphic design further reinforces this narrative; a simple grid organizes text and image, and sufficient white space prevents the density of information from overwhelming. The overall effect is that of an expert guide patiently demonstrating the essence of an expressive and useful craft. Libraries supporting architecture programs will find it a useful addition.

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