

Building Worlds

Models for Designing, Collecting, Reflecting

15.7.2016 – 8.1.2017

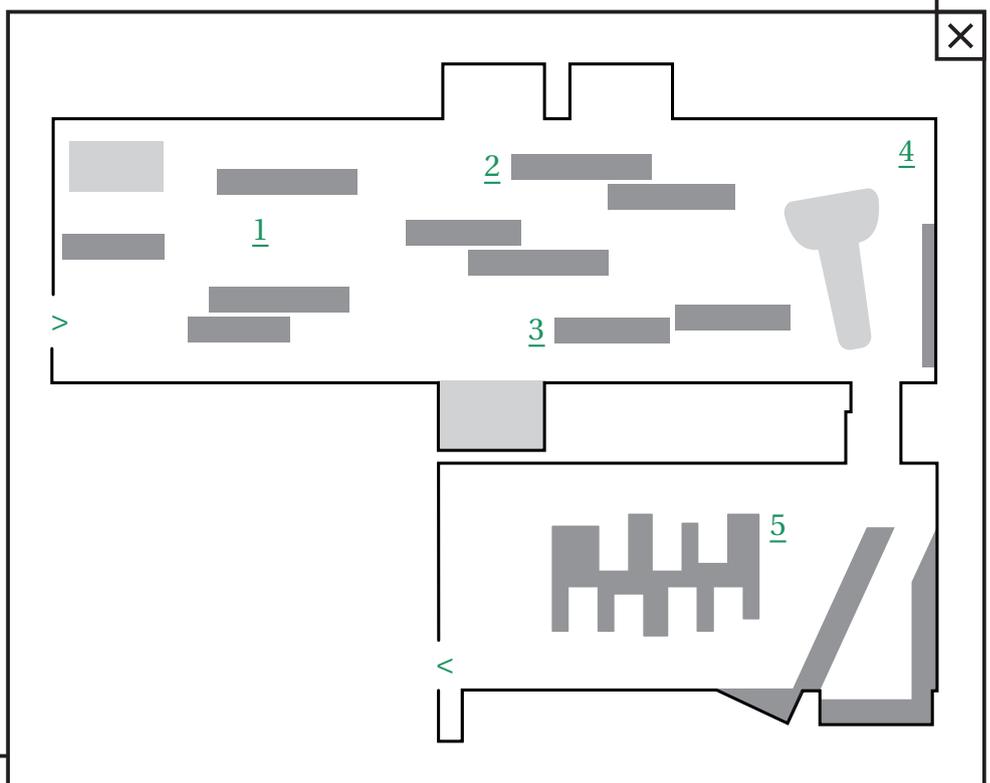
Introduction

Models are all-rounders. They are invaluable in designing furniture and houses, toy miniatures are handy and faithful copies of the originals, and many scientific ideas first become comprehensible through visualizations.

Models allow us to possess things we could not otherwise have. Here one thinks of the innumerable models of railways or automobiles. Models lead us to reflect, and often also to play. Some are aesthetically delightful and more fascinating than the reality they depict: they are generally smaller and therefore more comprehensible or may exist only digitally. Where models offer a version of reality with little detail, they embody its essence.

The exhibition shows the diverse worlds of models today in design, science, and the culture of leisure—and invites visitors to build.

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Working Instrument at the Design Stage

The model is an indispensable working instrument for designing at all scales and in all disciplines. In the case of “Houdini,” the lightweight plywood chair by Stefan Diez, or the vacuum flask “Thermos” by Jörg Boner, the model helped the designers to arrive, along paths that at times were winding, at a definitive form and construction. Following the concept phase, it is important to examine a model that not only uses the original material but also, if at all possible, is made at full size. In the new SBB high-speed train “Giruno,” despite the considerable dimensions involved, Nose Design and Stadler Rail did not balk at the large amount of work that this entails.

In a number of remarkable exceptions, the aesthetics of the working model become a central theme of the design, as in Thomas Dreissigacker’s stage set for *Die Physiker*.

The Power of the Material

In the working model, like in the replica toy, the choice of material plays a very significant role. Original materials or printed cardboard, of the kind that amateur model-makers like to use for their virtuoso works, allow results that are just as naturalistic as those produced by immaterial computer programs. On the other hand, Plexiglas, Plasticine, and textiles are generally chosen more for abstract or conceptual models.

The designs by Tribecraft or Zaha Hadid Architects illustrate the power of the material in model building and show how, in the professional work process today, shifting back and forth between analogue and digital means is entirely taken for granted. This also applies to the large dimensions of urban planning: Zurich is among those cities that have both a large physical model of the entire city and a digital—and therefore interactively usable—counterpart.

Designing a Replica

Every model is itself the result of a design. With a model railway locomotive or a toy animal, the central question is to what extent the much smaller replica with its greatly reduced level of detail can offer a convincing replica of the original. Where a simple, relatively crude modular unit such as a Lego brick is used, considerable ingenuity is required. If the copy is reduced so slightly in size that this is barely perceptible, as with the Krönlihalle Bar, the choice of substitute materials assumes great importance for the atmosphere of the space.

Computer-assisted processes allow high resolutions, either physically using 3D printing or visually with computer-generated imagery (CGI). In advertising today, mounting digital depictions of automobiles in existing settings is a standard procedure. Only a few years ago, elaborate and thus expensive photo shoots, involving closing off streets for hours, would have been necessary to achieve such realistic images.



Collecting

Some very carefully built and therefore expensive miniature replicas are made solely to be acquired by collectors. The model railways from the estate of Claude Nobs, for example, stand for what is often a lifelong passion of collecting by buying, which allows people to bring home with them parts of worlds that in many cases have disappeared.

Theme parks respond to our fascination with simulations and copies and our thirst for adventures on demand: well-known sights are brought together at a single place, all within walking distance. Generally reduced in size, they offer tourist attractions at a manageable scale. In the case of Swissminiatur in the Swiss village of Melide, an area of 14,000 m² suffices, but the increasingly numerous parks in the rapidly growing Chinese cities occupy up to 500,000 m². This way of collecting by recreating offers an alternative to lengthy travel. Photos and videos of the kind shown here, in turn, can save you the journey to these imitation worlds.

Reflecting

Models help us to reflect on reality. In the world of science, for instance, they offer a way of arriving at a deeper understanding of new approaches. The protein research carried out by Kurt Wüthrich allows us follow the change from the hand-shaped wire model to the 3D-printed plastic model. In an interactive model of the Titan Arum developed at Zurich University of the Arts, this flower—the largest in the world that blossoms only rarely—can be made to grow, so to speak, and its interior explored.

In their images, the photographic artists Aydın Büyüktaş, Philipp Sidler, and Clement Valla deal with the model-like character of digital depictions of landscape and architecture today. In politics, by contrast, photos in which models are used to announce large building projects are widespread and develop into media that proclaim the future. In film narratives, models are also used as temporal references—above all, however, as metaphors.



Education (in German)

Live in the exhibition

Visitors are offered an opportunity to look over the shoulder of a model-maker at work

Sat/Sun, 27/28 August, 10am–5pm

3D-printing with plastic

With Roman Jurt, Head of the Industrial Design Lab, ZHdK

Sat/Sun, 29/30 October, 10am–5pm

Cardboard

With Thomas Grüninger, «Mister Mikro»

Sat/Sun, 12/13 November, 10am–5pm

Lego

With Peter Kammer, Swiss Lego Users Group

Sat/Sun, 10/11 December, 10am–5pm

Natural materials

With Marcel Ackle, architect

Guided Tours

Wednesday, 6 pm:

20.7., 3.8., 17.8., 24.8., 31.8., 7.9., 21.9., 28.9., 5.10., 12.10., 19.10., 26.10., 2.11., 16.11., 14.12., 28.12.2016

Sunday, 11 am:

17.7., 31.7., 14.8., 28.8., 11.9., 25.9., 2.10., 9.10., 16.10., 23.10., 30.10., 13.11., 27.11., 11.12.2016, 8.1.2017

Workshops

Saturday, 8 October and 3 December, 2–4.30pm

Building Worlds in the Snow Flurry

Snow globe workshop with a kitsch factor

With Franziska Mühlbacher, curator education department

For Families

Saturday, 1 October and 19 November 2016, 2–4.30pm

Workshop: models for take-off

For families with children from the age of 5
With Franziska Hess, cultural mediator

Walk

Friday, 4 November 2016, 2–5pm

Dimensions of a City

For adults and young people from the age of 16
With Sandra Bischler, art and design expert and member of the exhibition team

To register or if you have any questions, please contact: +41 43 446 66 20
vermittlung@museum-gestaltung.ch

During Vacation

Monday–Friday, 18–22 Juli 2016, 10 am–4 pm

I build myself the kind of world I like

Project week for children from the age of 8 to 12
In cooperation with Pro Juventute Ferienplausch
Registration: projuventute.ch

For Schools

Scale 1:87

Workshop for the 3rd–10th school year, Vocational and secondary schools

With Franziska Hess and Julia Wacker, staff members education

In cooperation with schule&kultur

Dates and registration: schuleundkultur.zh.ch

Symposium

Friday, 25 November

Model and Knowledge

On the meaning, function, and aesthetics of drawing, scientific illustration and visualization as instruments in design and research processes

Organization: Fachrichtung Knowledge

Visualization, ZHdK, in collaboration with

the Museum für Gestaltung

Further information: museum-gestaltung.ch

Concert

Wednesday, 30 November, 6pm

Music and Model in Dialogue

With several saxophone duos by ZHdK students

Directed by: Lars Mlekusch,

Professor for Saxophone, ZHdK

Opening Hours

Tuesday–Sunday 10am–5pm

Wednesday 10am–8pm

Public Holidays: 1 August, 24, 26, 31 December

and 2 January, 10am–5pm

Closed on Mondays, 25 December and 1 January

Museum für Gestaltung

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Tram 4, stop Toni-Areal

