



News Release
17 June 2021

Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed

Today, the V&A and Building Centre jointly announce details of a new free exhibition, *Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed*, which will open in September 2021 at the Building Centre in Bloomsbury, London, to spotlight the essential yet under-explored role that models play in shaping the spaces we live in.

Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed will examine how models are used as a test-bed for materials experimentation and will touch on themes and debates central to current architectural practice, such as sustainability. Featuring a wide range of architectural models, from historical examples to works by international contemporary practitioners, the exhibition will demonstrate the dual role of physical and digital model-making in the design process. From super-sized to miniature, visitors will be invited to experience the spectacle of built environments at different scales. Stories behind model-making will be explored through three questions: how are models made? – materials and processes; who are models made for? – designers, patrons, stakeholders; and why do you make models? – the evolution and communication of ideas through models in architectural practice and education. The exhibition will highlight the renaissance of craft and values of making in the digital age, whilst exploring the rise of new technologies in changing the way models are made.

Curated by the Building Centre in partnership with Simona Valeriani of the V&A Research Institute (VARI), this collaborative exhibition is designed by Roz Barr Architects. The show is generously supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through Follow on Funding for Impact and Engagement (Principal investigator Dr. Simona Valeriani, co-investigator Dr. Marta Ajmar). It is also supported by the Built Environment Trust and the V&A.

The exhibition is part of the larger programme *Shaping Space – Architectural Models in Context*. It builds on research carried out by the AHRC-funded Architectural Models Network (2017-2019), an initiative set up to examine the role of architectural models as part of the creative process in historical and contemporary architectural practice. The core partners in the original network include the V&A, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), the Architectural Association (AA), Sir John Soane’s Museum, the Architekturmuseum (Technische Universität Munich), the MAP Laboratory (CNRS) and the Sorbonne.

To accompany the show a publication resulting from the work of the Network will be launched: Olivia Horsfall Turner, Simona Valeriani, Matthew Wells and Teresa Fankhänel (eds): *An Alphabet of Architectural Models*, Merrell: London, 2021.

Simona Valeriani, Curator of Shaping Space said: “Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed considers ways in which architectural models can engage audiences with architectural and design issues; and explores how digital technologies can be used in the creation and interpretation of models.

This special exhibition explores the power of craft in representing design ideas. An associated public programme will explore the idea that models can become key tools for multimodal learning, learning through visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic approaches to deepen our understanding of space and scale.

The development of innovative methodologies for collections-based research linked with interventions in multimodal learning, embodied learning and learning-through-making aimed at school children and adults, are areas of research that VARI has been exploring extensively. The exhibition and public program will provide a space to share this work with wider audiences.

The exhibition will showcase how digital technologies can reveal new possibilities both for contemporary practice and for the study of historical artefacts.”

Dr Kristine Zaidi, Associate Director of Programmes at the Arts and Humanities Research Council said: *“The Arts and Humanities Research Council is delighted to support Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed.*

This exhibition, with its associated events series, workshops and an education programme, will connect a wide range of audiences to architectural models, physical, digital and blended, highlighting the vital role of architectural models in understanding and shaping the world around us.”

Colin Tweedy LVO OBE, Chief Executive of the Building Centre and Built Environment Trust said: *“The Building Centre is delighted to be curating and hosting Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed. We celebrate our 90th anniversary this year and we look forward to welcoming people to our galleries in Store Street to celebrate how architectural models are a vital part of the design process, bringing the skill of the architect and model maker to new audiences.”*

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors:

To arrange a private view or any other press enquiries please contact Harriet Jennings at the Building Centre, +44 (0)20 7692 6208 or email hjennings@buildingcentre.co.uk

- *Shaping Space – Architectural Models Revealed* runs from 24 September 2021 – 28 January 2022 at the Building Centre, 26 Store Street, London WC1E 7BT
- Entry is free.
- The exhibition will be accompanied by an events series – further details will be announced in due course.
- The exhibition is curated by the Building Centre exhibitions team in partnership with Simona Valeriani of the V&A Research Institute, and is designed by award-winning practice Roz Barr Architects. The education programme is led by Dr. Marta Ajmar of the V&A Research Institute.
- More information is available on the [Building Centre website](#) and the [V&A project page](#) and on: <https://archmodelsnetworkhome.wpcomstaging.com/>.

Social Media:

#ShapingSpace

@ArchModelsNet (Twitter) @archmodelsnet (Insta)

Building Centre:

Twitter: @buildingcentre

Instagram: @thebuildingcentre

V&A:

Twitter: @V_and_A

Instagram: @vamuseum

Facebook: @VictoriaandAlbertMuseum

About the V&A Research Institute

The V&A Research Institute (VARI) leads the V&A's research and academic partnership activities, across the breadth of the museum's collections and practices. VARI hosts a varied portfolio of research projects, programmes and affiliations involving academics, makers, designers, conservators, and practitioners of all kinds, creating a unique research environment. VARI seeks to incubate new methods for interdisciplinary collections-led research and research-led teaching, and with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is taking the V&A's long-established culture of research, postgraduate teaching and academic partnerships into a new phase.

About the Building Centre and Built Environment Trust

The Building Centre was founded in 1931 to represent and bring together the different disciplines that form the built environment. Today the Centre is operated by The Built Environment Trust. The Built Environment Trust supports people to build a better world. Our mission is to inspire, connect and empower people to improve the quality of our built environment. We recognise that the built environment shapes lives and communities and we are committed to involving all members of society as knowledgeable and active voices in determining how we construct our future.

About the Arts and Humanities Research Council

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), part of UK Research and Innovation, funds internationally outstanding independent researchers across the whole range of the arts and humanities: history, archaeology, digital content, philosophy, languages and literature, design, heritage, area studies, the creative and performing arts, and much more. The quality and range of research supported by AHRC works for the good of UK society and culture and contributes both to UK economic success and to the culture and welfare of societies across the globe.



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