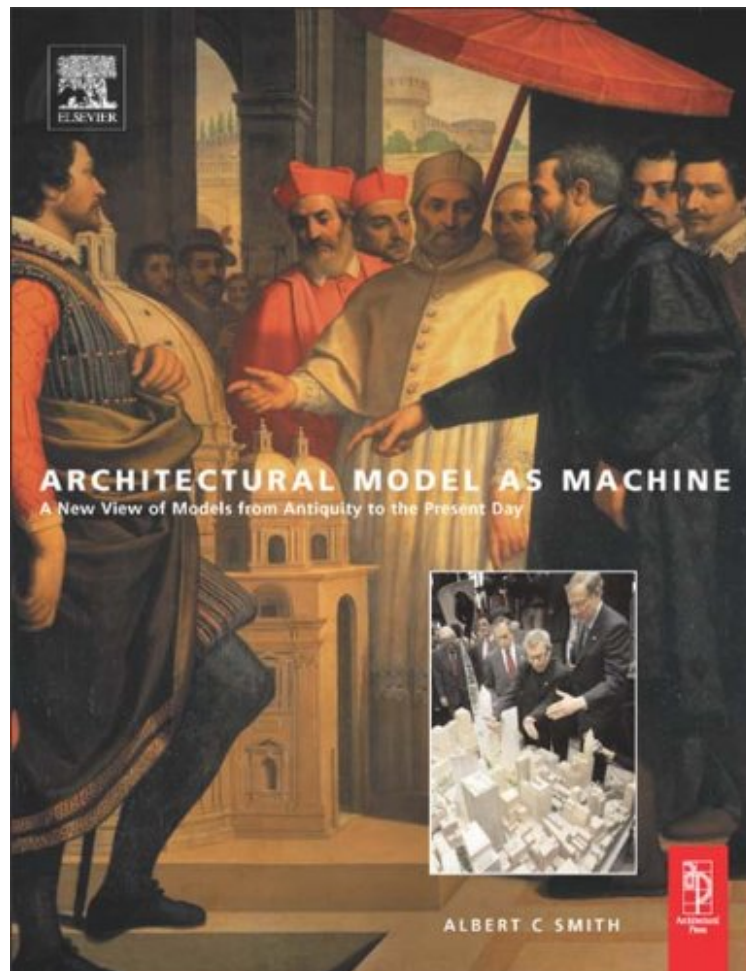


Architectural Model as Machine

Albert Smith

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Albert Smith : Architectural Model as Machine before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Architectural Model as Machine:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. What is an architect and why do they build the models they do? By David Shaw Somewhat academic approach to the role of architectural models in Western civilization, from the ancient Greeks up to the end of the 20th Century. I found this in the architectural library at a nearby university (my daughter had a junior high school class project on building a scale model of a Gothic cathedral, and I first thought this book might be a handbook on building scale models, but not so). Still, it looked to be an interesting read (for those used to reading works by academics, at least). Most readers of this book will be students of architecture, but for this non-architect I found the exploration of what an architect was and how they were trained over the past 5000 years an interesting mirror of how Western culture has changed over the centuries. (I'm speaking here as a social scientist more used to reading history than works in the humanities). The first and fourth chapters are well-done surveys, though the second chapter seemed light in analytical depth in places. The third chapter provides formal framing of his argument

between the first and second halves of the book, too academic for many readers but mercifully brief. The payoff to the too-academic structure of the book comes in the last (fifth) chapter, as the author attempts to deconstruct the work of a handful of architects from the 20th Century, focusing on the role of drawings versus physical models of specific projects in their body of work. I found the approach persuasive for all of the architects examined except for the last, Andrew Libeskind (spelling?), but at least some illumination came of it. A read of a day and a half for a casual reader outside the field. I'd be interested to hear what specialists in the field would have to say about the book. For instance, is this book based on refereed articles in the field? And how does it relate to other scholarly work in the field of architectural studies?

This book offers an explanation of why scale models are important to the design process. Albert Smith takes the reader through the history and significance of models in architecture from the magic of the Egyptian scale model to the present day. Through this description of the relationship between architecture and the scale model, Smith demonstrates the most effective process between concept and 'machine', between the idea and the final building. The great value of this book is to reveal the nature of the scale model and to unlock the tremendous potential of this design tool as a thinking and communicative advice. His chronological analysis goes on from Egypt through Rome to the relationship between the Greek paradigm scale model and then on to Medieval and Renaissance models. It concludes with the models of the Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi, the Russian Constructivists, the American architect Louis Kahn and finally looks at the role of scale models in the present day through the work of the Polish/American architect Daniel Libeskind and the American Frank Gehry.

'An extremely well-written and researched piece and, from my perspective, a deeply absorbing work.' Tom Porter, author of *Architectural Supermodels*