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The Memory Model Project

An investigation of three-dimensional models as triggers and documents of recall

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Models of Homes in Contemporary Art

The *Memory Model Project* will investigate how three-dimensional models can be used for the self-presentation, specification and communication of personal, home-related memories. Except for scattered examples from the field of practice-based PhD research in art, related studies have mainly been undertaken in the areas of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and design theory.¹ There are also some philosophical discussions on miniatures and other physical models,² but the most obvious reference for this project is the *practice* of model-making itself. One might first think of practices associated with a handicraft, hobby, or specialised trade, such as the making of architectural maquettes and dollhouses. Various examples are discussed throughout these working papers; however, the proposed concept of the memory model is especially akin to ideas explored in the field of contemporary visual art. *Memory* and *home* have been intensely explored themes in this domain and several big exhibitions suggest a growing interest in the model as a sculptural medium.³ Thus the main focus in the following will be on memory models' 'closest relatives' found in art and, if that is a separate domain, contemporary miniature⁴. This [working paper](#) will provide examples of models that artists have produced of their own homes, discuss how model worlds can imply different time frames,

¹ See *working papers: Models of Dwellings in Arts-Based Research; Memory: Models as Triggers and Monitors of Recollections, and Home: Domestic Space through Memory through Model*.

² Pertinent examples include Stewart (1984, chap.II), King (1996), Black (1962), Lévi-Strauss (1966, pp.22–26). These and others are invoked throughout the different texts of these working papers.

³ For an overview on 'Contemporary Art and Memory' see Gibbons (2007); for an overview on 'The House in Contemporary Art' see Perry (2013). Noteworthy exhibitions dedicated to the theme of models in visual art include (but are not limited to): *Miniature Environments* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1989); *Small World: Dioramas in Contemporary Art* (Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 2000); *Model World* (Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, 2002); *Post_Modellismus - Models In Art* (Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, 2005); *Miniature Worlds* (Jerwood Space, London, 2006); *Otherworldly: Optical Delusions and Small Realities* (museum of arts and design, New York, 2011); *Speculative Spaces* (Robin Giobson Gallery, Sydney, 2013) *Was Modelle können* (Museum für Gegenwartkunst, Siegen, 2014); *Feel Big Live Small* (apexart, New York, 2015); *Model* (Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague, 2015), *Small Stories: Dream House* (National Building Museum, Washington DC, 2016/17); *A Working Model of the World*, UNSW Galleries, Sydney.

⁴ According to the definitions in [working paper Introduction - The Idea](#), the term *miniature* is "confined to those [models] which might be said to be the result of a conscious effort to attain complete realism" (Pattinson 1982, p.6). Miniatures (such as those discussed below by Marc Giai-Miniet, Charles Matton, Matthew Simmonds and others) are not often seen in museums and biennials of contemporary art but are rather regarded as an artisanal curiosity.

and how different materials, analogue representation and abstraction impact the content and ‘feel’ of models.

Models of Home

Although a very specific combination – the home in memory explored through model-making – some artists and miniaturists have already brought these interests together. One example is that of the pensioner who reconstructed his parents’ house and the entire, meanwhile vanished, village on Borneo (see the [Introduction working paper](#)). Another instance is Michael Paul Smith’s recreation of his Pittsburgh childhood home as part of his [Elgin Park](#) project (see [his statement in the working paper Memory: Models as Triggers and Monitors of Recollections, section Practice-based Experience](#)). A third model-maker to pursue this theme was Roma Hopkinson, who [re-created the house her family lived in during World War II](#). In meticulous detail, Hopkinson recreated her childhood home in a (then avant-garde) south London housing estate, including ration books, gas masks and a wealth of paraphernalia typical for life during the war. In effect, ‘Hopkinson House’ (built in the 1980s and 90s) became both a memorial of her experience and an historical record.

Apart from these ‘hobby’ miniaturists (the predicate should by no means discount their achievements), several contemporary artists have also dealt with the issue of the remembered home through models. Mike Kelley’s [Educational Complex](#) (1995), which is predominantly an assembly of models of all the schools he attended, also includes the house where he lived as a child. The work is remarkable in this context as Kelley embraces ‘errors’ in memory leaving blank areas where he could not remember any details.⁵ Other artists have ‘zoomed in’ on the home itself and (quite literally) stripped it to the bones. For her floor-bound sculpture series [Ellefu](#) (2012), Katrin Sigurdardóttir created transverse sections of the house she grew up in Reykjavík, cutting through rooms, corridors and staircases. Empty of all interior detail and rendered in the sober, white-surface style reminiscent of architects’ models, *Ellefu* is autobiographically inspired but denies any conclusions about Sigurdardóttir’s private history. Similarly, Michael Grothusen’s [Scale Model, from memory](#) (2008) is architectural in focus. For this work, Grothusen rebuilt the wood-frame construction of a house he lived in in the mid-1970s at a scale of 1:2 – a model the artist describes as “*an attempt to reconcile early spatial memories with a structure that conforms to architectural logic*” (Grothusen 2016). A third example of an artist’s former home reduced to an empty architectural structure is Marwan Rechmaoui’s [Spectre \[The Yacoubian Building\]](#) (2006), a model of a modernist block of flats in Beirut rendered mainly in grout, aluminium and glass. The original building was constructed for the educated Lebanese middle class,

⁵ Kelley explains: “*Educational Complex was done directly in response to the rising infatuation of the public with issues of repressed memory syndrome and child abuse ... The implication is that anything that can’t be remembered is somehow the result of trauma. So the parts I could not remember of these buildings was the majority of them, probably like 80 per cent. So that meant 80 per cent of these buildings that I had been in for most of my life were the site of some kind of repressed trauma*” (cited by Miller 2015, p.9).

but was later taken over by rural migrants and squatters and was eventually evacuated during the conflict with Israel.

With the knowledge of the building's history, Rechmaoui's work conveys stronger emotions than the other examples; however, none of the works give away much of their makers' personal experience of a place.⁶ Rather, they leave a lot of space for the viewer to fill with imagination. Other artists, by contrast, expound their own experience of the home – often making use of strong metaphors. Louise Bourgeois' installation [Cell \[Choisy\] \(1990–93\)](#) features a marble model of her childhood home, placed under a huge guillotine and inside a cage-like structure. Stephan Huber relocates his parents' house from Bavaria to an ice desert ([Shining](#), 2004) and Ilya Kabakov recasts what is allegedly his [Father's House](#) (2002) in the shape of a stylised wolf's head. Another and particularly pithy example is Erwin Wurm's [Narrow House](#) (2010). Like Rechmaoui, Wurm reflects a social reality (in his case the petit bourgeois atmosphere of rural Austria in the 1960s and 70s)⁷, like Grothusen, he chooses a big scale to facilitate a physical experience of the structure. *Narrow House* is a walk-in model of Wurm's childhood home, scaled 1:1 in height and length but compressed to just little over a meter in width. The house contains a range of replicated, likewise compressed personal items such as furniture, an old telephone, lamps, etc. as well as framed family photographs. These domestic details as well as the house's distortion give the narrow-mindedness and tension that the artist remembers a form but, as he clearly looks back with a wink, they also exemplify how the model functions as a filter of original memories.

Time Frames

A dwelling is usually not identified as a home if one has not lived there for at least a few years. During that time, every home changes. Features like the shape of the building remain largely the same but furniture is replaced and moved around, interiors are redecorated, and all kinds of items gradually accumulate and then disappear again. All examples discussed so far display relatively stable aspects of homes. Some do so by showing the dwellings' exteriors (which are generally subject to less visible change than the interiors) or by avoiding traces of human occupation. Others (also) employ metaphors

⁶ Upon request, Smith, Sigurdardóttir and Grothusen ascertain an impact of their work on their own memory. Sigurdardóttir explains that she employs architecture to “to redraw and re-experience a moment” (Sigurdardóttir & Heisler 2013, para.30). Grothusen says that the decision to build his model was “an attempt to answer one of [his] favorite questions, ‘What was it like, really?’” (Grothusen cited by Crane Arts 2008, para.4).

⁷ The issue of *atmosphere* is implicit in many examples discussed in this text (e.g. Huber's *Shining* and Kabakov's *My Father's House*). For some very graphic examples see also [Adia Millett's miniatures](#). Many of her interiors convey the uncanny feel of a lucid dream or nightmare, an effect evoked by a carefully orchestrated lighting in combination with absurd arrangements of objects (like tiny planes cruising around a floating part of a pram). For a brief discussion on domestic atmospheres, see working paper [Home: Domestic Space through Memory through Model](#), section *Atmosphere*.

that create an impression of stability.⁸ Smith, Huber, Kabakov and Wurm suggest that we see the home as it felt (or still feels in memory) *per se*.

As a static medium, the model lends itself to presenting static ‘facts’. In fact, it may be argued that models are incapable of representing episodic content as they can, like any sculpture, only embody a frozen moment or a general condition. However, in practice, model-makers have found various ways to suggest different temporal frames. One strategy for doing so is to include people. The least figures can do is fuse the notions of the frozen moment and the general condition. When Laurie Simmons presents little plastic housewives in plastic dollhouse worlds ([Early Color Interiors](#), 1978-79) or Ai Weiwei recreates scenes from his life in a Chinese prison ([S.A.C.R.E.D.](#), 2013) people are presented in *typical* positions, implying recurring situations.⁹ With figures, however, it is also possible to step beyond the frozen moment / general condition alternative. A case in point are the *Psikhelekedana* models from Mozambique. Many of these often brightly painted wood carvings depict events from the country’s history, staging figures in key situations (Ribeiro 2003). As also seen in [model railways](#), figures can be effectively halted to suggest a particular event or short scene. Poignant examples in contemporary art are provided by many of [Thomas Doyle’s miniatures](#). A number of the sculptor’s works show people in nightmare-like situations, often involving a home being destroyed. They are depicted in decisive moments, provoking the imagination of what has gone on before and what will happen next.¹⁰ Particularly noteworthy instances of the use of figures in models are also Frances Glessner Lee’s [Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death](#). These reconstructions of actual domestic crime scenes were made in the 1940s for the training of detectives, which included officers hypothesising about the events that led to the – scarily frozen – moment presented.

Figures are a powerful means to suggest a model’s time frame but carefully staged *objects* may also be used to meet the challenge. In her (somewhat misleadingly called) [Barbie Trashes Her Dreamhouse](#) (2015), Carrie Becker creates exemplary snapshots of a hoarder’s home. In reality, the littering of the rooms would probably look slightly different every day; however, the moment she shows in her models represents the general living conditions of the house’s inhabitant(s). It is interesting to consider here what, in fact, a *general condition* is in the case of a dwelling. It can either be a time-transcending, dream-like phenomenon (implied, for example, by Huber’s home in the ice desert) or just an extended period of time that could theoretically be measured in months or years (as in the works of Weiwei or

⁸ According to Susan Stewart, this is even constitutive for miniatures in general. She argues that “*the metaphoric world of the miniature makes everyday life absolutely anterior and exterior to itself*” (Stewart 1984, p.65).

⁹ Another example is Joe Fig’s portrait of painter Philip Taaffe contemplating his work ([Philip Taaffe: February 25, 2014](#)). The title suggests a specific time frame that is owed to the painting the artist is occupied with. Yet Fig’s work shows a situation that probably takes place very similarly in Taaffe’s studio regularly.

¹⁰ Doyle depicts memory-like scenes that he describes as “*the remnants of things past – whether major, transformational experiences, or the quieter moments that resonate loudly throughout a life. In much the way the mind recalls events through the fog of time, the works distort reality through a warped and dreamlike lens*” (Doyle 2016, para.1).

Becker¹¹). Another example of the latter are the weird experiments going on in the libraries, laboratories, and storage rooms of [Marc Giai-Miniet's miniatures](#). Judged by their scope (e.g. the construction of a submarine in the basement), one sees activities which would be expected to last for at least a couple of months. However, the dusty and deserted atmosphere of many of Giai-Miniet's works leaves one wondering whether these activities have just been paused or if the place has been abandoned with the work unfinished.

Another kind of 'long-term' general condition is an historical period. This is the concept of miniature parks like [Wimborne Model Town](#), nostalgic dollhouses and miniaturised period rooms like in [Narcissa N. Thorne's reconstructions of living spaces from eight centuries](#). Here, but also in works of contemporary artists, typical commodities imply the intended time frame: the array of post-war American consumer goods in Simmons' interiors, the 1950s style cars parked outside Smith's childhood home, the typical 1970s furnishing in Wurm's *Narrow House*, etc. So the claim that some of these models suggest a home as it felt (or still feels in memory) *per se* is relativised by the fact that their architecture, interior design, etc. inevitably suggest the broad time frame of an historical period. Finally, it should be noted that a careful orchestration of objects can also imply short episodes. An example is Charles Matton's [Hall d'hôtel 4, en travaux](#)¹² where a small pile of rubble, a broom, a ladder, and a streamer suggest the brief intermission of a clean-up.

All examples invoked above show that an escape from the frozen moment / general condition alternative can only be insinuated. Some artists, however, have subverted the stasis of the model by integrating time-based media. In his miniature *Debussy's Poisson D'Or* (2004), Matton uses a video projection of his son on a piano stool, creating the impression of a tiny young man indeed playing the instrument.¹³ [Tracy Snelling](#) applies a similar technique as she plays video sequences on small LCD screens within her model buildings and employs 'offstage' sounds (like that of a flushing toilet). Matton and Snelling create the impression of events taking place in real time. A completely different approach to model time is taken by Olafur Eliasson in his work [Your House \(2006\)](#) – a laser-cut negative impression of the artist's house in Copenhagen carved into a 454-page artist's book. Each of the pages corresponds to a 2.2 cm 'slice' of the actual building. As viewers flip the pages they proceed through the house, constructing, as Eliasson's website asserts, "*a mental and physical narrative. The result is an intensified sense of space, dimensions, materiality, and time*" (Studio Olafur Eliasson 2007). On the one hand, *Your House* is just another example of an empty 'architectural' space

¹¹ Becker's work may be interpreted as an illustration of the phenomenon of hoarding *per se*; however, all the individual belongings appearing in her models point to a specific character and thus (a phase in) this particular person's life.

¹² Alternatively labelled '*Hall d'hôtel 3, en travaux*'.

¹³ With respect to the topic of memory, poet and art reviewer Colin Herd's observes that this work has „*the atmosphere of a particularly vivid memory; a particularly resonant dream. Matton's box suggests, as Bachelard also argues, that it is our spatial awareness that most vividly suggests memories*“ (Herd 2011, para.5).

suggesting a permanent condition.¹⁴ On the other, it introduces an aspect of interactivity to the appreciation of model homes and questions the model-typical phenomenon of the whole being given to the senses at once and not in increments. Eliasson's is a highly idiosyncratic approach to modelling that does not lend itself to repetition. However, it shows (as does Wurm's *Narrow House*) that there are ways to involve and at the same time guide the viewer's temporal experience of a model.

To conclude, models are static, sculptural devices whose primary strength is dealing with spatial and not temporal phenomena. However, model-makers can *imply* time frames. Key methods for doing so are:

- choosing a degree of abstraction / amount of detail
- integration of figures
- orchestration of items that warrant a place's use or historical period
- integration of time-based media

Building Materials, Analogy and Abstraction

Model-making depends on the use of analogous representation. Building materials are chosen to mimic original materials (Rechmaoui uses grout to mimic concrete, Huber employs plaster and polystyrene to represent his ice desert, etc.) and simplified forms stand in for complex referents. Especially miniaturists (who tend to have an enthusiasm for "*detail to the point of excruciation*" (Stewart 1984, p.62)) strive to minimise the visibility of analogous representation. Their materials and construction techniques are chosen to make the copy look as much like the original as possible. This usually requires a mix of different materials; however, there are exceptions. The use of cork in [Dieter Cöllén's recreations of antique buildings](#) convincingly mimics the surface of the material needed: weathered stone. Likewise interested in ancient buildings and miniaturising ruins, [Matthew Simmonds](#) carves his vaults and temples directly out of marble and other stone. Simmonds thus carries the miniature paradigm of '*a conscious effort to attain complete realism*'¹⁵ to extremes – he actually avoids analogous representation on the level of material by using the same as its referent and, due to his minute carving, reduces it to a minimum regarding simplified forms.

Some simplification is always engendered by the miniature's scale, Simmonds' examples included. This fact defines a benchmark for their evaluation, as Steven Millhauser argues in his essay on the '*Fascination of the Miniature*': "*The relation between smallness and the amount of precise detail is the measure of our wonder*" (Millhauser 1983, p.132). This criterion applies distinctly to the miniature and distinguishes it, along with its mimetic focus, from other kinds of models. As an example from the other end of the spectrum, Erwin Wurm's [Little Big Earth House](#) (2003/2005) – a silver-plated bronze

¹⁴ Another category to describe this work is 'dissection'. Eliasson – in this respect similar to Sigurdardóttir's *Ellefu*, or, to give another example, Ofra Lapid's 2014 work [Room Plan](#) – cuts apart and unfolds his home. This strategy of dissection shall be discussed in more detail as the project proceeds.

¹⁵ See note 4.

sculpture of a somewhat ‘puffed up’, rural home – seems almost antithetical to works such as those by Simmonds, Matton, Gaii-Miniet, etc. Probably resulting from a playful and deliberately clumsy shaping of its original form, the dwelling is anything but precisely detailed but has adopted features resembling a chewed piece of gum or even an ulcer. Another example of models far from the miniature paradigm are Katrin Wenzel’s [bread models](#). Her likewise ‘puffed up’ replicas of buildings in Berlin and Waidhofen (Austria) are made of dough, a material that (like silver-plated bronze) is much richer in symbolic than in mimetic value. According to Wenzel:

The bread sculptures’ escape from the subtlety of the miniature, their tendency towards amorphousness and their organic [organhaft] face let them appear rather like an extension of the body than an externalised piece of a possible reality inspected from the distance. (Wenzel 2008, p.239, translation mine)¹⁶

This last aspect, however, highlights a crucial difference between Wenzel’s sculptures and *Little Big Earth House*. Being perishable (and even edible) they are in contrast with the notion of the contemplative object that Wurm’s work still shares with Simmonds’. Wurm stages the discrepancy between the object’s non-diligent shape and its classical, precious material whereas in Wenzel’s work the material determines the shape. In fact, by its very nature it eludes the control of the artist once it is put into the oven.

The choice of an appropriate material and its symbolic connotations make it a powerful element in defining a model’s content and emotional charge.¹⁷ Bronze, silver and marble allude to (perhaps ironically, as in Wurm’s case) the traditional ‘art world’. Cork models continue the legacy of a near extinct craft and sculptural genre (*phelloplastics*). White-painted wood or foam board convey the technical notions of an architect’s model. The appropriation of plastic toys suggests a comment on consumerism. Another example is recycled cardboard – a material that makes models like the [interiors of Damaris Odenbach](#) and [Michael Ashkin’s models of urban structures](#) unpretentious and provisional. It allows for, and thus mediates, an atmosphere of, “*rapid erasure and reconfiguration coupled with standardized materiality*” (Ashkin 2015). A final, yet very different, example is a series of model buildings by William Christenberry that the artist covered in white wax. The coating makes the houses

¹⁶ With special reference to buildings made of bread, Wenzel argues: “*As artistic material, bread and bread dough have frequently been experimented with throughout the 20th century. This resonates with visceral connotations of bread dough concerning its half soft, half hard, bodily consistency, its warmth and its capacity of growth, as well as religious and folkloric conceptions that identify baked bread with the body. Houses and buildings can also be interpreted as bodies making the connection of a building and bread in the house-body appear conclusive. ... The dimensions of time, which can especially in refurbished buildings, be sensed only in a limited way ... should be brought to mind once again with the distorted bread model*” (Wenzel 2008, pp.226–227, translation mine).

¹⁷ For a variety of further examples see the exhibition [Small Stories: Dream House](#) (National Building Museum, Washington DC, 2016/17) as well as Sue and John Wieland’s collection [the wareHOUSE](#) (Atlanta).

(which Christenberry recreated based on memories of his home state Alabama)¹⁸ “*more simplified, more purely defined*” (Christenberry & Hirsch 2005, p.36). However, it also adds a ghostlike feel to them, alluding to the fact that they were once used by the Ku Klux Klan.

Metaphorical material qualities are often bound to the specific kind of abstraction and distortion they engender. Model-makers choose them precisely for their outlandishness or because they are versatile and can easily be shaped at will and with few limitations. Both can be important regardless of whether a mimetic copy is desired or abstractions are crafted to “*magnify, focus, and diversify ... the space in which we exist*” (Goddard 2002, para.2). This description was originally attributed to the sculptures of [Vincent Fecteau](#). Fecteau employs a kind of abstraction that does not capitalise on the peculiarity of a specific material but emphasises the artist’s ‘free’ invention of forms. He uses foam board, stuck-on collage elements and papier-mâché to explore structural details of flats and houses by distorting, inverting, reshaping and colouring architectural features. Although all of his materials are versatile, they demand very different approaches as Fecteau explains:

With the foam core works and earlier collages, it was all concept – think about it, construct it. It wasn’t a hands-on process. It was clear when I started with papier-mâché that I had been missing a hands-on approach. Thinking and figuring out by making. I think there is a real knowledge in one’s hands. (Fecteau & Lewallen 2009, p.30)

Arguably, most model-makers are convinced of the significance of hands-on activity and the knowledge it yields¹⁹ but Fecteau’s statement implies that further differentiation is appropriate: Some materials allow a quicker response to emerging forms and a quicker realisation of ideas than others. Their malleability makes them particularly well suited for model-makers with a propensity to develop their work ‘with the flow’ as opposed to ‘working off’ a plan. Generally speaking, making models can be anything from a highly conceptual to a highly improvisational activity, and one’s preferred approach has an important bearing on the choice of the modelling materials.

To summarise, contemporary artists demonstrate that virtually any material can be used for model-making. Important reasons for the choice of a specific material are:

- permission for the desired degree of (mimetic) realism
- characteristic abstractions and surfaces
- symbolic or metaphorical implications
- permission for spontaneous alteration

¹⁸ Christenberry calls his works ‘*Memory Forms*’ and explains that for these works his “*memory of things is more important than the literalness of things*” (Christenberry & Hirsch 2005, p.36). However, his concern is more with the disappearing vernacular architecture of the American south and with the spooky past of buildings associated with activities of the Ku Klux Klan rather than with homes the artist inhabited himself.

¹⁹ Compare [Part II \(a\): Models: Enchantment and Utility, section Model-making as research](#).

Photo-based Works

The main focus of the discussion so far has been on the model as a *sculptural* medium in visual art. However, some of the artists mentioned (Smith, Huber, Simmons, Odenbach) do not, or very rarely, exhibit their physical models but use them as settings for photographic work. Many others work with models both sculpturally *and* photographically. Judged by the number of practitioners, miniature photography may be considered a genre of its own with famous proponents including [Thomas Demand](#), [James Casebere](#), [Oliver Boberg](#), and others. Some also further process their photographs of models by using digital imaging (e.g. [Maxime Delvaux](#) and [Kevin Laloux](#)). Since the specific effects and conceptual merits that photographic reproduction brings to the model are not germane to the *Memory Model Project* (at the current stage of planning), this genre is not considered here in more detail.

Summary and Implications for the *Memory Model Project*

With the exception of Grothusen's *Scale Model, from memory* (which emphasises architectural but not autobiographical elements), none of the examples that could be identified for this overview claims to be based on memory (mental images) alone.²⁰ Thus, 'empirically', the concept of the memory model is still an 'empty set'²¹ that remains to be explored. However, contemporary artists have tackled pertinent issues related to memory and the home through the medium of the model. Works dealing with the artist's own home ask the viewer at different levels of intensity to follow her/his autobiographical exploration. If reduced to architectural features and empty rooms, they give the viewer – quite literally – a lot of room to imagine their use and history. By contrast, through interior details or a metaphorical interpretation, personal experiences can be shared.

The incorporation of temporal aspects is a classic problem for static, sculptural media. Thus the time frame of a model can only be *insinuated* but not elaborated in any performative way. For the maker of a model of a *home* this will be a common challenge since a home is defined by the goings-on that it houses. One way to insinuate episodic content is to stage figures or items that suggest the place's use or a specific historical period. In order to undermine the stasis of the model and to present events more fully, it is possible to integrate time-based media like audio or video feeds. However, such attention-grabbing devices might outshine other elements of the model. Thus, they must be very carefully directed in order to maintain its generic character. Overall, it is apt not to work against the tendentially static nature of the model but to focus on the 'general condition' of the home as it was experienced. The fact that the home changed during its inhabitancy cannot be ignored; however, for the task at hand it is not necessary to decide on and determine an accurate time frame. In fact, time frames may even be mixing and conflated. If, nevertheless, a rather specific event or period is chosen (e.g. because it is

²⁰ Even Mike Kelley used photographs and floor plans for his *Educational Complex*. Another example of a work made without such means is that of the Malayan pensioner who re-modelled almost his entire home village from memory (See the [Introduction working paper](#)).

²¹ Compare the [Introduction working paper](#), section *Mapping the terrain*.

particularly salient in memory or seems representative for the overall experience of the place) there is no need to define its duration.

To build and furnish models of dwellings, artists have appropriated a variety of ready-made items, including dollhouse furniture, dolls, and model railway figures.²² Yet more importantly, they have employed an immense range of different construction materials and demonstrated their importance for mediating contents and atmospheres. Materials can be chosen for their physical faculties (e.g. because they engender a certain kind of abstraction or, on the contrary, allow great control even over tiny details) or because they convey metaphorical notions. Although the miniature paradigm remains an option in the *Memory Model Project*, it is anticipated that expressive materials and deliberate abstraction will be helpful for mediating the personal experience of a place, accounting for atmospheric aspects and, perhaps, handling obscure and ambiguous reminiscences.

Finally, it is noted that the photographic mise-en-scène of models might be an interesting option for further exploration. This, however, belongs in the category of unforeseeable developments an arts-based research project might take. It is hard to predict if other media – photography, drawing, 3D rendering software, etc. – will eventually play a greater role than anticipated. However, the initial and conceptual focus is put on the making and appreciation of physical, three-dimensional models.

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²² In addition to the examples discussed before, see Rachel Whiteread's installation *Place* (2006-08) consisting of 200 second-hand, vintage dollhouses lighted from inside as well as Oliver Croy and Oliver Elser's *The 387 Houses of Peter Fritz* (1993-2008) – a collection of model buildings made by a Viennese insurance clerk in the 1950s and 60s that Croy found in a rag shop.

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