

Models

Symposium 11 June 2013

location: deSingel, Antwerp – Muziekstudio

organised by: Centrum Vlaamse Architectuurarchieven (CVAa) i.c.w. STAM Gent

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Models are remarkable, educationally and visually attractive elements of architectural archives. Through its mission as centre of expertise for the cultural heritage of the built environment, the Centre for Flemish Architectural Archives (CVAa), the heritage department of the Flemish Architecture Institute (VAi), has been aware of the specific problems of model conservation and of the lack of a broader policy on the matter in Flanders. Model collections are as dispersed as collections of architectural archives themselves, and their conservation is often even more precarious than that of plans and drawings. Of recently, moreover, models frequently figure in the public programs of cities, as communication tool in the many ongoing city renewal campaigns (Leuven, Gent, Mechelen, Antwerp...). Unfortunately, these newly produced models often disappear quickly with the closing off of phases of the campaigns. Coordination with city museums and city archives for the conservation of (a selection of) these models is often non-existent.

The CVAa has taken the occasion of the exhibition of the models by the Japanese architect Junya Ishigami, organized by the Flemish Architecture Institute and deSingel International Art Campus, to organize a one day symposium on models. The symposium came about in close collaboration with the museum STAM Gent, which plans a model exhibition in 2014. With a keynote lecture by Oliver Elser, curator of the exhibition '[Das Architekturmodell – Werkzeug, Fetisch, kleine Utopie](#)' (DAM Frankfurt 2012) the international background will be set against which a policy for Flanders can be discussed. Another speaker from abroad is Ellen Smit of the Open Maquettedepot of the Nederlands Architectuurinstituut, as a well-known and interesting example of how models can be conserved and valorized. Other speakers come from a Flemish or Brussels context. They will reflect on models and their conservation, either as architects using models in their daily practice, or as curators integrating models in exhibitions, or as (specialized and non-specialized) care-takers of model collections in archival institutions.

The symposium will be closed off with the official launch of the CVAa's new website and the closure of the architectural season of the VAI and deSingel.

The keynote lecture will be held in English; the other presentations will be in Dutch, with English PPT presentations. Abstracts in English of all presentations are available.

PROGRAM

- 9u30 *Coffee*
- 10u00 Welcome
Keynote by Oliver Elser (DAM Frankfurt)
(Curator of the exhibition 'DAS ARCHITEKTURMODELL – Werkzeug, Fetisch, kleine Utopie')
- 10u50 Introduction and objectives of the symposium by Sofie De Caigny (CVAa)
- 11u10 *Coffee break*
- 11u30 **ARCHITECTS and CURATORS**
- Jan De Vylder (architecten de vylder vinck taillieu)
 - Katrien Vandermarliere (curator Ishigami exhibition VAI-deSingel)
 - Discussion: Moderator Marc Dubois (LUCA arts – KU Leuven)
- 12u30 *Lunch*
- 14u00 **ARCHITECTURAL ARCHIVES**
- Ellen Smit (Het Nieuwe Instituut): Open Maquettedepot
 - Stefaan Grieten (Architectuurarchief Provincie Antwerpen)
 - Discussion: Moderator Dirk De Meyer (UGent)
- 15u00 *Coffee break*
- 15u20 **HERITAGE INSTITUTES**
- Lars De Jaegher & Wout De Vuyst (STAM Gent)
 - Eva Van Regenmortel (The Maarten Van Severen Foundation)
 - Discussion: Moderator Jürgen Vanhoutte (Repositories Provincie Vlaams-Brabant)
- 16u20-16u40 Conclusion - The importance of architectural models and how to coordinate and promote a central policy?
- 16u40-17u00 Launch of the new website of the CVAa www.cvaa.be (CVAa)
- 17u00 **RECEPTION**

ABSTRACTS

JAN DE VYLDER / MODELS AT ADVVT

Jan De Vylder is a principle architect of *architecten de vylder vinck taillieu*, a firm founded in 2009 by Jan De Vylder (1968), Inge Vinck (1973) and Jo Taillieu (1971). Jan De Vylder is also a lecturer at Sint-Lucas (LUCA School of Arts). As an architect, he works with models in different ways during the design process when communicating with commissioners and developers but also in cultural projects about the work of *advvt*. The projects of *advvt* include the smallest as well as the large sized commissions. Projects have diverse characters: from a simple house to a university campus or an arts center, in Belgium and abroad. The project Les ballets C de la B was a breakthrough in its scale. Their work is widely published internationally (Domus, 2G, ...) and exhibited on international stages (Venice, Antwerp, Istanbul, Milan, Kortrijk, Dornbirn, ...). It is in this context that *advvt* are building up a special collection of models. When invited in 2006 by Herzog & de Meuron en Ai Wei Wei to design a 1.000 m² villa in Koakoashina (China), they could exhibit the project in 2010 at the 12th Venice Biennale curated by Kazuyo Sejima. The model is a complex of volumes, and, together with the drawing, a crucial object in the designing process of *advvt*.

advvt wants to be complete, embracing not only the design but also the making. Only through understanding how something is created, design is able to play out its critical attitude. A critical attitude, not just as a gesture, but as a living instrument to arrive further than ever expected. The social responsibility that characterises architecture is taken very seriously by *advvt*. The skill of the architect – the craft, the knowledge and the critical attitude – is crucial in this. The skill ensures that contemporary expectations such as cultural sustainability can stand for more than what they stand for today. The *métier* as the key to the future.

KATRIEN VANDERMARLIERE / MODELS: EXPRESSION A WISH TO COMMUNICATE ON ARCHITECTURE

As a curator of architectural exhibitions, I'm of course well known with the contradiction that presenting architecture in an exhibition is impossible. The spatial experience and the context of the building are never that direct and holistic in an exhibition.

Using models to understand architecture is sometimes a good and helpful alternative. It creates opportunities to make a meaningful and attractive architectural exhibition, especially for a non-professional public. In exhibitions different kinds of models are used for different kinds of reasons. Concept or idea models explain the design process or parts of it. Presentation models stress more on the actual result - built or un-built - but detailing and materialization are more important. A third kind of model is the 1:1 scale model. This is an installation in the exhibition room or site that gives a similar impression as the building itself. It shows a construction especially designed for that purpose. In most cases it has a kind of manifesto as ambition. In one gesture it makes a statement on architecture.

The exhibition *How vast? How small. How Architecture grows* by Junya Ishigami that deSingel and the Flemish architecture Institute presented these last months is a model exhibition. Ishigami surprises us with a mixture of the traditional ingredients of the art of making architectural exhibitions and the types of models. His collection of 58 models are 58 exercises of how to create space. And this on the scale of the furniture, the house, the public space, the city, the landscape, a global scale and even on the scale of the macrocosm. The clear choice for 2 media - a small poetic text and the model to communicate on architecture - is a very strong and effective one. The minimal and sharp intervention in the exhibition room - white light, white floor and a series of long and narrow tables - is a strong image that has the effect of an installation, a kind of brand.

As a conclusion I summarize the consequences of using models in architectural exhibitions. The opportunities and qualities models can create in exhibitions are, to my point of view, obvious. Although they are not a guaranty for inviting and thrilling exhibitions. But for the organization and the budget, it is a decision that has to be well considered. It's extremely expensive in comparison with other media, it needs special skills, and maintenances before, during, and after the exhibition. The second life of models is quite problematic. After 3 years they start to be a kind of nuisance for architects, and curators working in contexts where there are no architectural archives. They start to be never ending stories of worry and care instead of a manifestation of their wish to communicate on the importance of architecture.

KATRIEN VANDERMARLIERE is an art historian. From 1991 to 2002 she was responsible for the architectural programme at deSingel. She was the curator of about fifty exhibitions on architects from Belgium and elsewhere. In this connection, she compiled a series of publications on architecture and related disciplines for deSingel. She was also on the editorial team of the Flanders Architectural Yearbook, from 1992 to 2000. From 2002 to 2011 she was director of the Flemish Architecture Institute. Since 2011 she's part time curator for the exhibitions of the Flemish Architecture Institute and deSingel, and part time she communicates on architecture on behalf of NP-Bridging and Ney & Partners.

ELLEN SMIT / THE OPEN MODEL STORAGE OF THE NEW INSTITUTE (formerly: The Netherlands Architecture Institute, Rotterdam)

Storeroom, Research centre, Showcase and Workshop? What will be the future use of the Open Model Storage of the New Institute in Rotterdam?

The Open Model Storage in the Van Nelle Design Factory houses since 2005 four hundred important models from The New Institute State Collection. The Model Collection is part of a wider collection that also includes architects' archives, objects, books, periodicals and photos. By preserving such documents and archives, The New Institute acts as the collective memory of Dutch architecture and planning from the 19th century to today. The main purpose of the Open Model Storage was to facilitate the public to take a peek behind the scenes of a museum storage facility and to stimulate and to profit of the birth of the former Van Nelle factory (built in 1928) into a creative and cultural centre in the outskirts of Rotterdam. Since 2005 many changes have occurred. The Van Nelle factory turned out not to be the culture hotspot because of a lack of museum public. Also the fact that a big part of the models was stored at a distance from the main New Institute building was not convenient. And in 2013 the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAI), Premsela, the Netherlands Institute for Design and Fashion and Virtueel Platform (the official industry institute for electronic culture) merged to form The New Institute. The institute cherishes heritage and has opted for an integral historical perspective. The institute is a 'do-tank', a place where things are not simply stored but can be brought to public attention and even produced (education, laboratory, information hub, forum of debate, and other interfaces of interactivity). Another change is the need of cultural entrepreneurship and the increasing importance of the private sector, to make the institute's funding basis as broad as possible. In this lecture Ellen Smit will focus on how these experiences and new circumstances will influence the new attitude of The New Institute on the NAI Open Model Storage.

ELLEN SMIT is a historian of architecture. She works as a curator in the Heritage department of The New Institute (the former Netherlands Architecture Institute, NAI) since 2001. She is specialised in architecture and townplanning in the twentieth century and wrote a policy on how to deal with architecture models for the NAI (Modelling the future, 2008). She was the curator of the NAI Open Model Storage and head of the project involving the acquisition, restoration and exhibition of a series of rare scale models of the Rotterdam Town hall (1912-1915).

STEFAAN GRIETEN / ARCHITECTUURARCHIEF PROVINCIE ANTWERPEN

The Architecture Archives of the Province of Antwerp (APA) focus on archives related to architecture and construction history in the province of Antwerp, from 1800 until present. The group of about 170 architecture models differs to some extent from the other categories of the archives collection: the oldest model dates from 1930, the others date from the second half of the 20th century. Some rich archives collections contain not a single model, whereas other collections are real treasures. In comparison to the number of collections in APA – some 130 – the group of architecture models seems to be rather small, and this assessment seems to be corroborated by an overview of Antwerp collections, both public and private: only a small number of historic architecture models survive, and all of them refer to types of representative buildings, such as castles, churches and theaters. The typology of models in the APA collection is broader, and mainly refers to houses and villas, office buildings, welfare housing and urbanization projects. Another important category consists of models made at the occasion of exhibitions. The preservation and conservation policy for all models should be the same, regardless of the category they belong to. In view of the scarcity of historic architecture models, a strategy would be most welcome not only to establish a status quaestionis, but also to rescue models that are endangered.

STEFAAN GRIETEN is a staff member of the Architectuurarchief Provincie Antwerpen (Architectural Archives of the Province of Antwerp – Provincial Government of Antwerp, Department for Culture) since 2002. In this institution, he is responsible for the fields of 19th century, art nouveau, restoration architecture and heritage conservation. He has published on various subjects in the field of South Netherlandish art and iconography, religious heritage, Antwerp architecture, intercultural reception and architecture, exoticism and chinoiseries.

LARS DE JAEGHER & WOUT DE VUYST / STAM GENT

STAM is a new city museum in Ghent, a city with approx. 250,000 inhabitants and one of the largest towns in Belgium. STAM opened in October 2010 with a completely new permanent exhibition entitled 'The Story of Ghent'. It follows a clear chronological trail leading through 9 rooms of the former Bijloke abbey, each one presenting a period in the city's history. The exhibition ends in the ever-changing gallery 'City of the Future', focusing on the continuous development of the town. STAM has a multidisciplinary team, specializing in Ghent's history and exploring urbanism from different angles in both the permanent circuit and temporary exhibitions. In 2014, STAM plans an exhibition of scale models.

LARS DE JAEGHER studied history and environmental planning at the University of Ghent. He joined STAM in 2009 focusing on urban history, city development and also multimedia projects. Previously, he worked as a spatial planner at the town and country planning department of the Provincial Government of West-Flanders, as a cultural technologist in the Ename Centre for Public Archaeology and Heritage Presentation and as a multimedia designer at Visual Dimension.

WOUT DE VUYST studied art history at the University of Ghent and achieved a degree in heritage conservation. He worked as a building historian and as a researcher in the Architecture Archive – Sint Lucasarchief Brussels. In 2000, he joined the cultural heritage unit in Ghent, which is now a part of STAM. He was part of the team that realised the new city museum and actually concentrates on the history of the museum's collection.

EVA VAN REGENMORTEL / MODELS IN THE MAARTEN VAN SEVEREN ARCHIVE

The Maarten Van Severen Foundation was established in 2008 in order to manage the artistic legacy of the furniture designer Maarten Van Severen (1956-2005), to make it accessible and to keep it alive. The archive is kept in De Zwarte Doos (The Black Box, the city archives of Ghent), where it was inventoried over the last three years.

The archive of Maarten Van Severen partly consists of objects, which can be divided into three groups, namely 1) studies, moulds, prototypes and finished products on scale 1: 1, 2) two collections that one could consider as documentation, namely 'Tools for Food' and 'Souvenirs and finds', and 3) some 50 scale models.

Most models were conceived as form studies, such as the model for the Low Chair in aluminum from 1995 or the lounge chair for Durllet in 2004. There are also a few presentation models, such as for the architecture project Boxy and a scale model of the design for an exhibition at the Design museum Ghent. Most models were not created by Maarten Van Severen himself, but by his assistants. Maarten Van Severen designed especially by drawing or by studies on life-size scale.

The scale models were cleaned and repacked in 2011 by two students of the Conservation and restoration training at the Antwerp Academy. Two of the models were badly damaged and were restored by students of the same training.

For the time being the scale models of Maarten Van Severen are kept with the rest of his archive in the city archives. In time, they will move to a better equipped depot of the city of Ghent, together with the other objects.

The Maarten Van Severen Foundation has, based on information in the project files in the archive, knowledge of other scale models regarding the work of Maarten Van Severen, that are not in its possession. The Foundation considers it as its task to trace those as far as possible and to register them, to be able to inform researchers and curators.

EVA VAN REGENMORTEL is historian and art historian. She began her career as contributor to the project 'Designarchief Vlaanderen' of the Design museum Ghent. For The Maarten Van Severen Foundation, she worked on the inventory of the archives of Maarten Van Severen during the last three years. In addition, she works part-time at the Flemish Centre of architectural archives (CVAa), where she currently works on a project on the cultural heritage of design.

DISCUSSIONS

MARC DUBOIS is trained as an architect and professor at Department Architecture Sint-Lucas Ghent & Brussels since 1979. He also was also lecturing at the Piet Zwart Instituut, Willem De Kooning Academie of the Hogeschool Rotterdam, MA Retail Design (1996/2008). In 1996 and 1998 he was the commissioner / Director for the International Biennale Interieur in Kortrijk (Belgium).

As a critic, he published in a wide ranch of international journals and was a member of the editorial board of the review ARCHIS (Netherlands) (1986/1994). He published on Albert Van Huffel, Gaston Eysselinck, and on contemporary architecture and design in Flanders and Belgium. He is advisor for the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion Award Barcelona. Since 1996 is a member of the advising board of the review Casabella (Italia). He commissioned the exhibition "Architects from Flanders" at the Architecture Biennale of Venice (1991) and "Arquitectura de Flandes" in Barcelona (1997).

DIRK DE MEYER teaches History of Architecture and Architectural Design at Ghent University. He has been a Visiting Scholar and Chief Curator at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal. He is a founder of the Ghent Urban Studies Team, was the Director of the Institut de Recherche en Histoire de l'Architecture, Montréal, and has lectured at a.o. Columbia University, UC Berkeley, the I.I.T, McGill and IUAV.

He is the author of books on a.o. *Johann Santini Aichel* and on *Piranesi*, and contributed to books published by the Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte (München), Electa (Milano) and the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme (Paris). He published in journals such as the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, the *Journal of Architecture*, *Casabella*, and *SanRocco*. He has curated international exhibitions in Belgium, Prague and Montréal.

JÜRGEN VANHOUTTE has a Masterdegree in History. After being a teacher for some years, he worked in the National Archives (dept. Leuven) in 2003-2004. From 2004 to 2009 he was head of the archival department (FoKav) of the Centre for Religious Art and Culture (Centrum voor Religieuze Kunst en Cultuur /CRKC vzw). From 2009 to 2011 he was head of the department of consultants of the same organization. From July 2011, he is consultant conservation of the Heritage Department of the Province of Vlaams-Brabant.

FILMS

Production: Centrum Vlaamse Architectuurarchieven 2013

Realisation: www.eckelwood.be

We are very grateful for the participation of the following studios:

- Stijn De Vos in Junya Ishigami - How Small? How Vast? How Architecture Grows (deSingel, Antwerp, 8th February-16th June 2013)
(<http://stijndevos.tumblr.com/>)
- Apis BVBA (www.apis.be)
- Ney & Partners (www.ney.be)