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PALIMPSEST CITIES

PALIMPSEST CITIES: GAMIFICATION AND STORYTELLING FOR ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AWARENESS
ÇOK KATMANLI ŞEHİRLER: MİMARLIK TARİHİ VE KÜLTÜREL MİRAS FARKINDALIĞI İÇİN OYUNLAŞTIRMA VE HİKÂYE ANLATICILIĞI

Model of the Palimpsest City

activity as a part of Palimpsest Cities Course





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Model of the Palimpsest City Activity

Model making is a common practice for architecture students and for architects. But it is also a fun and engaging learning tool for everyone who would like to think with their hands and explore the potentials of learning by doing in more than two dimensions. Additionally, in our case, we will have a tool for the learning and understanding of a multi-layered city. So, let's begin!

Models have existed throughout the history of human civilization in many many different forms, like gifts in tombs, dedications in religious and political contexts, in paintings and sculptures etc. In history, architects made use of models to impress their clients who were kings, popes or sultans. Today a model has become a common tool for many creative practices, including architecture and can be produced in a wide range of conventional or experimental materials and of course in advanced virtual technologies.

Model is a representation tool. The word "representation" is a combination of two things: to "present", as in presenting an entity's knowledge (its form, scale, components, relationships etc.) and "re-" as in repetition or reproduction, referring to the interpretation of that knowledge by analyzing, investigating and understanding. The combination of these two makes the model a very rich learning, thinking and design tool, of which we want to benefit in this course.

We use models to think with our hands. We test ideas, decipher complex formations, develop new concepts, realities, explore and express possibilities. With models, we can investigate situations, communicate our intentions, detail them, and understand multiple contexts by working in a range of scales.

What is our expectation from model making in the context of the Palimpsest Cities course?

We can benefit from models in at least two ways:

1. in enhancing the learning experience in the course
2. in the organization of the curriculum.

In terms of the learning experience:

- Models can help us better understand the context, relationships and the layers of architectural history and cultural heritage in multiple dimensions.



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- It creates a hands-on engagement with the study object, triggers learning by doing, and it helps us to analyze the study area in various scales and materials.
- The logic of model making enforces us to interpret the idea of layeredness in creative ways. Students will use models to think about the physical and non-physical layers, the historic evolutions, continuities and discontinuities in the study area.
- Model making can engage individuals in co-production, discussion as well as collaboration.

In terms of the benefits for the curriculum:

- Models can be used to integrate different modules of the curriculum in the Palimpsest Cities course. They can be integrated with the field trips, can be used for creating content for the Timeline Travel app, or can be used as a custom-made visual background for Digital Storytelling. It can even be produced and presented for the City-on-trial procedures as evidence.
- Students can create their original, authentic content for their productions in this course, instead of relying on ready-made images and materials.

Some themes and tools as quick tips on how to work with models in the context of this course:

Scaling: Different scales of models have their own level of detailing, expression and context; therefore provide different opportunities as well as limitations. It is important to choose the right scale of study for a building, area, environment or object that fits the intentions of that exploration (1/1000, 1/500, 1/100, 1/5 etc. or just work with matching proportions). It is also essential to work between different scales of models and switch between them in the process interchangeably.

Framing: The framing of a model is a deliberate choice in deciding what the context of the study object/area will be. Scaling and framing also determines the real life size of the model, which has practical implications on how it will be carried around, how much material will be used, how much time it will take, or how many people can work on it simultaneously, etc.



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Material selection: All kinds of materials can be used to make models, including scraps or left over materials. It is important to test and explore the potentials of each material in terms of its expression, structural capacity, practicality or fitness for the intended study. Digital models also provide a wide range of immaterial characters, opportunities and limitations to be explored.

Structuring & Detailing: Detailing and structuring should fit the intentions for that model. One can choose to work without glue, make the pieces detachable for a game-like model. A quickly folded paper can allow exploring different forms in the shortest time. Alternatively, for example, to make an enduring exhibition model, firm joints should be studied and tested in advance.

Expression & Language: The expression of a model depends on multiple parameters. Even with the exact same material, dramatically different sceneries and narratives can be built. One can ask what is the most important element in this particular story of the model, and therefore what can be eliminated or left out?

Abstraction: Abstraction refers to taking away some characteristics and reducing it to a set of essential ones that we would like to focus on and work with. Every model is essentially a degree of abstraction of a built or imagined reality.

“Look in”: Models can be designed in multiple ways to allow “looking in” them.

“Layering”: They can also be designed in layers. These layers might be fixed or interchangeable. It is always possible to add additional layers onto a model, such as text, drawing, images, pins or even digital ones such as QR codes to increase the level of information attached to them.

“Interactive / Game”: They can be produced as games. Such models give the users a chance to speculate, brainstorm, discuss and role play.

“Collective & Individual”: Models can be designed individually or as a teamwork. It is also possible to organize the production process like a puzzle where individually produced parts come together to form a consistent whole.

“Post-production”: By using hybrid representation techniques such as photo-editing, collages, drawing, light and shadow plays, models can be manipulated for post-production and be used for the other visual documents that will be produced in this course.



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“Post-production” - Video editing: These post-productions could also include moving images and films to include the dynamic layers of time, movement, and actors in the narration of the study.

In our Palimpsest Cities course we will try to bring together the creative production process of a model with the research on the rich history of our city. And it will never be the same. Every tutor, every student, every topic will change the outcome of the product, but they all will contribute to a more creative way of engaging with architectural history.