**Architectural Models Network: Practitioner in Focus**

**Interview:**

Interviewer: Sophie Roberts (MA student, History of Design, V&A/RCA)

Interviewee: George Rome-Innes (Art-historian, Designer and Model-Maker)

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SR: It is Thursday the 11th October, my name is Sophie Roberts and I have the pleasure to introduce art-historian, designer and model-maker George Rome-Innes. So, as to start, it’s clear from the research that you’ve been doing so far that you are a man of many talents and interests, but I’d like to start with; how did you first enter the world of architecture model making?

**GRI:** Well in about 1960, I started studying architecture, almost the same way as Soane did, working for an architect up in Gravesend Square where you worked all week then you went to college in the evenings and you were paid 4 pounds and 10 shillings for a full week’s work and you worked your way through it. It would probably take about 8 years. However, it was the 1960’s and if you think about the form of architecture of that period, basically Brutalism, it really made me depressed. So, architecture was not for me but here I was with my second career choice, having failed at medicine as well. So, I started making models in that practice. As a clerk or as an assistant, or whatever you would like to call it, you’re drawing up other people’s designs. There’s a little church in Kent, which I had done all the drawings for. They were very good drawings, they were published in actual fact, but funnily enough the Senior Partner could not understand the drawings, so I was asked to make a simple model, which I did as I knew it inside-out. So, that was my first model. The second model I made was of the same building, but when the engineers had had a look at it. And that model was in the Royal Academy that summer in the summer exhibition. So, I carried on making models and every year I had about 3 models in the summer exhibition. But, I was working for an architect, not for a client, for an architect all the time so these are models that have come straight off the drawing board, through the architect, to the model. A few years later, at a bad period in architecture where not enough building was going on, I was desperately looking for a job elsewhere. I got a job at Ove and Partners, or Arups Associates it was then, the architectural part of the firm. My old boss, thought it was outrageous working for a firm where engineers and architects worked together “that’s disgusting, what an idea is that?”. Anyhow, it was an amazing period, fantastic firm to work for, and I worked in their model shop. And Arups have an extraordinary work idea where, as a I said, everybody is working together. So, the architects would come to the model shop with their drawings, maybe half finished, and we’d make their models. We wouldn’t contribute towards the design, that’s a very arrogant attitude some model makers have, which is nonsense. We don’t contribute, we may interpret and sometimes we may notice mistakes because of course we think in 3 dimensions much more than some architects who only think in 2 dimensions and you can see that from their architecture. But we found that, those architects who made their own sketch models were the ones that produced the best designs. By the best designs I mean the ones that worked and the ones that were most interesting. Does that sort of answer the first question?

SR: Yes, it does. I think as well if you want to maybe elaborate more on how you talked about the relationship how as a model maker; you don’t want to be arrogant, to think that you’re tampering with the designs, but is it ever difficult when you have a large architectural practice come to you and your craft? Asking what kind of relationship is it, is it back and forth, do you think it’s changing?

**GRI:** It varies, you’ll find that (some of my best friends are architects that will precede some of them) many architects, especially male architects, not female architects except for one who is now deceased, are very arrogant. They tend to treat model makers as workers. Because of my accent as well that surprises some of them. So, where were we going with this question again?

SR: The relationship.

**GRI:** In our practice it worked well, in the outside world you’ll find some architects that are extremely arrogant, because everybody worked with each other it was different [at Arups], but architects on the outside world often they are very, they tell you what to do, as if they know three dimensions better than you do, which is nonsense in many cases. I think that’s fair, I hope that’s fair.

SR: That’s great, and then let’s talk about, so we’re in the Sir John Soane’s museum right now where quite a few of your models are exhibited.

**GRI:** These are not my models, these are models that I have restored. There’s one in the museum, somewhere, which I made but there’s plenty more that I’ve restored.

SR: So, let’s talk about how you started restoring?

**GRI:** I first came to the Soane museum in the early 60’s when John Summerson was a curator and it was an amazing place, very, very quiet, nothing like now, no queues, nothing. Just Dorothy Stroud, Miss [Christine] Sull and John Summerson, those were the only people who were here. And I just loved it. The most extraordinary place. It was dusty and disorganised, quite extraordinary. And a few years later, John Summerson approached Arups and asked if one or two models could be restored by us and so we started then, so this is in 1991, I looked up the date, no it was before that, it was the 1970’s, 1970’s that must have been, early 70’s we started doing restoration work, which was very interesting in more ways than one. I remember going around the museum with John, finding off things in cupboards “ah, I think this is Aphrodite’s finger” and looking at beautiful copper plates for printing in some of the drawers, I mean they’re still there obviously, it’s an amazing collection. And we’d look at the models and we’d look at the drawings of the buildings. Some of these models were restored in a way I would never restore them now. I mean we painted them, you’d never do that now, but it’s then and not now. There’s a couple down in the, when you’re in the last room downstairs, there are two ones of the Bank of England, again restored not as we would now, but what we did was we looked at the original Soane drawings and then we coloured the models as the drawing, so the section lines and that lovely pale pink that you see on old fashioned sections. I think they look wonderful. Others we just cleaned. I remember there was one which I cleaned, it was a wooden model, back to the wood because of the dirt, which I now see is painted so other people have painted it, it wasn’t me to console you. So, from that period I was working on restoration work for Soane on and off, which was really enjoyable. I got to know John and Dorothy very well, extraordinary people both of them. I’m very fond of them, especially Dorothy who was an absolute dragon to some people. In fact, she was a dragon to me initially. Once I borrowed a piece, took a cast of a part of a model and a tiny piece broke off. That was dangerous. But, years later, when I got to know John better, she had forgotten that version of me luckily. When I came back as a friend of John, so a friend of her, and she was this extraordinary woman. She obviously really loved John Summerson, in an old-fashioned way, and would protect him to the outside world that’s why some people found it difficult. But with our children she was great, we got to know her really well. So, that’s why I’m so fond of this place. It’s not in the place, it’s the people I’ve met over the years. But I’m digressing from model making, so, I mean, that’s what I ended up doing for the Soane. But, then that developed because in 1991 there was an architectural crash and I lost my job, a job I thought I would have for the rest of my life. But, it was a very bad period all round and I had been doing a bit of teaching in the meantime and that’s with a firm who would support teaching, I mean financially. So, I was teaching at Chelsea college, just all over the place teaching model making to architectural students and engineer, design students. So, having lost my job at Arups, made redundant, a massive group made redundant, I increased the amount of teaching. And I also made a decision at that point, having worked for architects for many, many years. The most irritating thing about architects, as far as the model maker is concerned, is they always change their mind. “Oh George, can’t you move that over a bit?”, but it’s stuck down. So, I decided in ’91 to no longer work for any living architect and I’ve kept to that, they all have to be dead. So, there’s a model here I was involved in with John Adam, no, Robert Adam, and I still carried on doing a bit of restoration here. I’ve done work for the National Trust, I’ve done work for the Bodleian, doing restoration but also making some models, which again I find fascinating. The one I made for Claydon House, was a wonderful job to do. We had just one, maybe two drawings. I don’t know whether you know Claydon, it’s an amazing house, wonderful chinoiserie interior with crazy woodwork. But, what is left, is about a third of the house. The other, you could say two thirds, only lasted a very short time. So, when you go and see Claydon, you’re only seeing a third of the old extension at the back. So, they wanted, this is Tim Knox one of the curators here who was not at the Soane then, he was with the National Trust, asked me to make a model of the building as it was at its height. And that was fascinating, from just two drawings; one elevation, a very odd plan, and that was about it, and some little paintings to make (what that was in those days) about 4 feet long, convert that to metres if you like. And that was in various current tempers. That was really interesting.

SR: I mean, what you said there it sounds like, through your teaching as well, you’re not just restoring and preserving the actual models, but you’re also preserving the craftsmanship of model making by passing it on to other people, and I’d be interested to hear about how do you teach an understanding of the material that is most suitable to the scale that you’re working with? And especially to maybe a younger generation of model makers, the process and the tactility of building something with your hands?

**GRI:** Well even on the architectural model making teaching, there are two forms of that. I applied for a teaching job down at Rochester where they had in those days a model making course, which attracted some very strange people as you can probably imagine. Well, model makers are all strange, as you can see from where you’re sitting. So, that was to teach people to make models as opposed to teaching designers to make models of their own things, as that’s a totally different thing. There are link ups, I mean you teach designers to make models, you teach them to use very simplest materials with the simplest tools, and they can make fantastic thing that way, as I did for my first 7 years. I was using just a Stanley knife and scalpel, a straight edge, and you would be astounded to think that would just carve paper. People think you have to use concrete, it’s crazy. Anyhow, so that side of teaching people to make models of their own designs is one thing. That’s a design tool. So, I would be teaching that for model making in design courses, architectural courses, all over the place. But at Rochester I was teaching people who were thinking of having model making as a career. So, it’s a matter of teaching them how to use machines and that is often using machines in ways that machines are not normally used; using circular saws I’m afraid without guards and things like that sometimes because there was not so much health and safety in those days, but you can teach people to use dangerous things carefully, sensibly. And what materials do you use for different purposes. My model making career for permanent models has mainly been in timber and so that is what I wanted to specialize in, it’s the old-fashioned way. You know, look at this, all this. And wood is an amazing material to work. So yes, winding back a bit, no I’ll carry on and then wind back. you start working out what colours you want for the model if you’re doing the model in timber. We tended to use a yellow cedar, which is a sort of yellow, yellowy colour, lime which is a wonderful quiet wood, beautiful wood used by Grinling Gibbons and other great carvers. And then for the darker woods there’s such things as black American walnut, which is again a superb timber for model making. So, you’ve got your contrasting colours, there’s cherry as well and things like that. So those are the things you’ve use for wooden models. I’ve done a little bit of plastic model making, but not so much. I was never, it hasn’t got a sort of heart to it, I don’t know what it is. But that’s a rather effete thing to say, I suppose. So, and also I would teach them how to use plastics. So, there’s the practical model making and of just making other people’s things and then there’s the other side which is actually your own designs. So, there’s two different fields basically. But, if I go back to Arup’s again, the history of the model shop there is unusual. Philip Dowson was the major architect there in the old days, you know of him?

SR: Yes

**GRI:** Yes, a great man.

SR: I’m a big fan of Arup at this time in the practice.

**GRI:** Yes, and Arup himself who was the most amazing man. When Ove died, I went to his funeral, I have never seen a church full of weeping architects, to me, it was worse than when my father died. Now how can you say that about a boss? That’s very very rare, he was a most extraordinary person. Philip on the other hand was quite different. Philip, well Ove was Danish, brought up in the north (Newcastle). Philip had a problem because he went to public school and that’s always a disaster, isn’t it? So, but he was, he was a good architect and a brilliant critic, got an amazing eye. And Philip wanted a model shop at Arups, so at some dinner party he passed around “could we possibly do this?”, and an acquaintance of mine, not I didn’t work with him then, known by someone else, David Armstrong started up the model shop at Arup and Philip specifically wanted wooden models, because the great thing about wooden models and water-soluble glue is that the architect can change his mind, and that was the most, and Philip knew that straight away of course. And so, that was why we started with wooden models in that period. And now the Arup model shop of course is into all the modern techniques that are available and it’s quite, quite different. The, yes I’ve slipped then into modern techniques, haven’t I?

SR: I mean, I think that’s quite a nice transition into us maybe us talking about technological advancements and so what happens to…

**GRI:** So, this is beyond my ken basically, but I can comment in it because I have seen it in practice. I first saw it, these techniques using computer design in laser cutting, that’s the first type I saw. And one of the models I was involved in making is a little model of Chiswick villa, which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, I don’t know whether you’ve seen it, well if you look up in the dome it has, I think it has, octagonal coffers that are made of three layers of lime wood and they’re bent over. Now just think about the math of that; as you bend [the veneers] over they’ll move against one another and yet they all fit. Now that’s an extraordinary bit of mathematics to get that to work. Not me, that was by Nick Grace, one of my most brilliant students I have ever had, an extraordinary young man. Nick Grace, put him down, he is outstanding. So that’s when I first saw laser cutting. Then I did some drawings and some mouldings and Nick knew how to flip them. I mean it’s commonplace nowadays, but to me that was amazing and then again laser cut the mouldings. So that model involved all sorts of techniques. We had a turner who was brilliant, he made stuff for musical instruments. So, he turned our columns and turned the Corinthian capitols as blanks. I designed the shape the blanks should be and then you could cut that and make that. So, we had a group of really interesting people working on that one tiny model. If you go, the Victoria and Albert Museum didn’t like simple craftsmen being mentioned, but if you go and look carefully with a torch, along the very edge you will see all our names on the plinth carefully inscribed, but don’t tell them that. But that was a very interesting model and I basically on that one I designed the model. I got hold of copies of the old drawings and worked out how it would work and advised the museum what the best way to display it, by cutting out a slice of the back so you can see how it works. But then I had amazing people working with me, which was just far exceeded anything I could.

SR: Do you think there may be value in that though, having, it’s not multi-disciplinary, but well these different skills coming in, like the older technique, the newer techniques? Is there room for a collaboration?

**GRI**: I think they’ll always work together, I think they really well. In fact, I think there is an ideal example, I don’t know whether you can call it sculpture, but have you been to Kew recently to see the Pagoda?

SR: No.

**GRI:** Well look at that. There are 72 dragons which are computed printed and there are 7 dragons that are carved and one dragon was made something to do with Blue Peter, something crazy, something ghastly, anyway so, but even if you look at the ones that were carved, the ones on the bottom stage you must go and look at those, they were cut out, they had some sort of mechanical cutting done to get the blocks, and then the blocks are put together and then they’re carved. So that is one of the, I think a prized example of using technology to cut the blocks in the right shape for the wings of the dragon and then the actual handwork comes in, which couldn’t be done by a machine at all. And the thing about doing it by hand is all those slight variations, which make it so wonderful. So yes, I think there will always be these things working together. When computer graphics, I will call them, you know when you talk about ‘computer model’, it’s something on a screen, it’s not a real model, it’s an image, we’re talking about a computer image, when those first came through we were told “that’s the end of model making”. Well, we’ve been waiting a long time now for that to happen. They’re useful, but the great thing about, in fact, do you mind if I read something?

SR: Yes, of course.

**GRI:** I was going to read it at the end, but I did a talk to the Art Workers Guild some time ago and it’s called ‘The History and Purpose of Model Making’. I’ve got it if you want it at a later stage. But I haven’t got is as a text I only have my notes, but I have summed it up in the following way and I think this does cover that to a degree; “the History and Purpose of Architectural Models, architectural models are sometimes considered a mere frippery now we have computer models. But the physical model tells much more than an image on a screen, and can be read by anyone who cannot understand an architectural drawing, and who can understand architectural drawings? And why should you be able to understand architectural drawings? Sometimes the architects don’t even understand their own drawings. I’ve certainly come across that before. They will continue to be made with the help of these new techniques, no matter where technology leads us.” And I go on to something else, which is my interest, may I go on?

SR: Yes, of course.

**GRI:** “When I did my MA quite late in life, in fact I was 60, I wanted to do an MA about ‘the Great Model’. Do you know of ‘the Great Model’, the Great Model of St. Paul’s? There’s a Great Model of St. Peter’s. There’s Pavia, there’s Liverpool, there’s Westminster Cathedral, which I restored a few years ago. These are extraordinary things and what I love about them is that they contain what might have happened. Wren should have built the Model, not the rubbish he put up. Well. That’s what I think. And they are a fascinating record and I think that comes on to what was going to be one of your other questions, I can’t remember the precise questions, it was going to be about, I noted it.

SR: about the afterlife.

**GRI:** the afterlife of models.

SR: So, the afterlife of your models and I guess you were kind of saying they are these amazing time capsule, educational tool.

GRI: Yes, I think the most important ones are the ones that were never built, because that’s the one proper record of what was never built. And the St. Paul’s one is just amazing. There’s a lovely quote, I think from, I can’t find it at the moment, I’ll find that later. There’s a wonderful quote about the Great Model of St. Paul’s saying it is a sort of, I’ll find it later. Sorry, where were we?

SR: Just saying about the afterlife, models as time capsules.

**GRI:** But, they’re very difficult to preserve. I mean, that’s what’s so extraordinary about this. This is amazing here. The RIBA drawings collection does have some models, but not as many as one would hope and they had not been well looked after until more recently. Now they are, now at the V&A, but a bad time at the RIBA.

SR: Would you say that there is still a lot of politics around the presentation of the models? How they should be treated, and how do we choose what should be treated?

**GRI:** That’s always a difficult thing, always with everything. What should be kept? What should’ve been kept from the past? You know it all goes down to that, doesn’t it in the end? Which is what’s so. I mean you use things and it’s like you clear everything out and you suddenly realise a year later you shouldn’t have. But you can’t keep everything. But I think that the ones that didn’t happen are the ones that are most important to keep. Although, the turnover in buildings these days is so fast, but then some of those buildings should well disappear from memory anyway.

SR: I guess as well maybe if we talk about your audiences of display. So, we’ve got some of your work here, we’ve got some in the V&A, those are not architectural clients. They’re a different kind of client, they’re your museum, institutional clients. What’s your relationship like with them? Do you get any say over how you display your models?

**GRI:** No, you get no say because it’s their property, it’s what they do with it. You can advise, that’s the most you can possibly do. Here, I will be asked to do something and that would be it basically. At the V&A we had a discussion, no going back to Margaret Richardson’s time there were discussions then about how things should be done, there’s nothing I’d like to mention more than our *digressium*, Margaret came to mind, she’s just one of those curators, and she did great things by involving students in the museum. There was a design for a model room downstairs and next door, which she involved the students to design this and make their own models of it, which was a brilliant scheme, a pie in the sky, a brilliant scheme. There was another one, which was about the Royal Route, which Soane designed, from Buckingham Palace or House as it was then to the Houses of Parliament and I actually made a great model of the route, the building along the route. So, Margaret was very good at involving students in the museum in a very productive way I thought. I’ve digressed again, sorry. Can I digress backwards?

SR: Of course.

**GRI:** The Great Model of St. Paul’s, this Kerry Downe’s quote about the Great Model of St. Paul’s “The Great Model remains a perpetual and unchanging reproach for what might have been” I think that’s great, isn’t that a wonderful quotation? Sorry, I’ll go back to where we were.

SR: What might have been, no I think that’s interesting what you were saying before about how the V&A did try to get these students in and be involved with the display.

**GRI:** This is the Soane, not the V&A.

SR: And I guess for you as a teacher as well, was that a point where you could see, I guess you passing down your whole career or could you see the sparks happening?

**GRI:** Well I think you know, whatever you are comes through, doesn’t it? I mean, my enthusiasm. I’m enthusiastic about lots of things and that’s what works in teaching. If you really enjoy it, you can teach it basically. And so, for instance on the schemes, I would show, in teaching just to model making students for their end of year shows I would like them to pick, I don’t want to use the word iconic, I can’t bear the word, I’ll have to use the word, an iconic piece of architecture. And I mean iconic, you know something that really shifts design. Maybe the Farnsworth House, something as important as that, or Falling Water, I remember Nick Grace who I mentioned earlier did an amazing model of Falling Water. I asked them to pick a really important building in architectural history and make a model of that. So, for their final scheme, that involved the history and it also involved something very special. So, when it came to their final show, any architects going around thinking “wow, look at that”, so that all works well together.

SR: I mean talking about iconic pieces, it might be a good time to move onto your work for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Galleries? Your work with, is it, Westminster Abbey, the viewing platform?

**GRI:** Well a little bit there, yes, we…

SR: Just because it’s interesting, I know you don’t want to say iconic, but working within a system.

GRI: Yes, that was very, very interesting, I met Ptolemy Dean some years ago here actually and I was approached to advise on that model and this I think comes to another one of your questions, I can’t quite remember what the question was, but it is to do with how a model is viewed or something like that?

SR: Yes

**GRI:** So, I went to this meeting at Ptolemy’s office with a model maker I worked with and also the architect there who involved in the design of the new tower at Westminster Abbey and we talked about what the purpose of a model was. Well, the purpose was so to get past planning permission, that’s the important thing, actually get it through the system. But that’s not good enough you want also to enthuse people. There’s no point in doing a tower stuck in a corner, what’s that going to do? If you’ve got a committee there, you need to enthuse them about why it’s there. And up to that point nobody had thought about putting in the Gallery where the museum was going to be, well it was crazy, I mean you had to show what it’s for. And it got through planning permission. And I won’t say it was because of that, but certainly that helps. If you think about who you’re showing the model to and what it is for. And that, I think worked there, and I think it is a beautiful model. I didn’t make that model, it was made by other people who I know, and absolutely superbly. There’s now a possibility of another one coming up for the diagonally opposite corner for, it’s probably secret I don’t know.

SR: We can edit that [laughter].

**GRI:** And I have been asked and I am interested in advising on that, but I would be because then there would be, alright we’re down this track, cut it out for timing, there is one model showing that, there is one model showing that [the diagonally opposite section of the Abbey], so you’ll actually have sort of half model each end, which will be wonderful. Have you been up the that Gallery actually?

SR: I haven’t been up yet, no.

**GRI:** You must, this weekend I went up with my wife and it is just stunning, I mean the quality of the design of those galleries, for instance they’ve put in a new oak floor and in some places the oak floor is level with the beams that go above the vaults below. So, you walk from an oak floor onto the beams actually flat with it. In other places the beams are lower, so they disappear, but those little bits, just wonderful bits of detail and real thought, I mean Ptolemy is an excellent architect there are no two words about it. He really thinks about the detail and about what will work well. But you must go up there, you will really enjoy it, it’s great.

SR: So, I guess with those, the key thing was contextualisation and having that critical eye coming in and making sure that, if you’re parachuting in like Westminster Abbey, an iconic building, making sure that things are perfectly contextualised and your job as a model maker has also evolved into also being a researcher, an academic.

**GRI:** A researcher yes, because I, that’s where it leads, there’ one big problem with model making, being a model maker. To spend your life continually interpreting other people’s ideas is a bit demeaning in the end and you will find most really good model makers divert in some other direction. I have diverted into the History of Art, but still is the model making there, which I enjoy. Grace is now a novelist, which is a long way from it but he was a classic example, I’m sure he wouldn’t mind me saying, but he’s so bright that anything he does after a time becomes boring. So, he went form model making, to computers, to working at the Royal College, he’s now doing novels, so he’s that sort of person he’s very very bright. So, model makers don’t last, I think, about 10 years is the average for a really good model maker, they won’t last just a model maker. Because you’re going to be a designer within yourself of some sort, and always building other people’s designs and not your own, even though you’re not a proper designer. Does that make some sort of sense?

SR: Yes, of course. I mean going back to your work with Arup, so like you said how model makers last 10 years, you’re only interpreting the designs. Yet, people like, massive industry players like Arup, you said Arup I thought about Fosters, Rogers, coming out of the same time period and yet they still outsource their model makers. They have the means, they have the skill-set to do so in-house. Why do you think that is? Is it critical distance?

**GRI:** No, the reason they outsource, is because certainly, Arups not so much, but certainly Fosters and Rogers, I know people, I know this as a fact, their model shops are basically design model shops. So, in Foster’s and Roger’s they would make a series of designs of variations, but for the actual presentation model, which is a different thing, it is a much more technical thing, I mean these days it would be printed it would be laser cut, I don’t know, so many methods would be used which are highly technical to produce a perfect little miniature. Whereas what they’ll be doing in their own shop is working out the designs, so it’s a different field they’re using there. But Arups in the old days, we would do the whole lot.

SR: Do you think there’s a different quality of a physical model that has that human touch, that kind of dexticality, where maybe a more cold, technical machine-driven.

**GRI:** That is where I’m prejudiced, I think that’s always very, very true. But then I think much of modern architecture has no soul. You know, to look for good buildings these days is not easy. I take my students around London to show them, well on Friday I’ve got a group I’m taking, I’m taking them to Tate Modern to show them how not to design a building because it’s so badly designed, it’s absolutely appalling, the detailing is terrible. It is amazing, I mean nothing works in it. And then I’m going to Newport Street Gallery. Have you been to Newport Street Gallery? You must go, it’s amazing, it’s by Caruso St John. It’s full of Damien Hurst art collection, which is ghastly, but the building itself, the detailing is absolutely exquisite.

SR: They have quite a fame for their detailing because they did Nottingham Contemporary with the pitted concrete, with the lace patterning.

**GRI**: They’re amazing, with the Tate, the Tate Britain they’ve done as well. They are absolutely brilliant, they were at Arup’s as well.

SR: Yes, so I think with that example of architecture as well it is that, like you said, the attention to details, the perfect contextualisation, knowing how to integrate a building and then building something well with well-chosen materials.

**GRI:** But it is all the detail with that. I mean sometimes, I think one of the questions you had was what’s your favourite scale; it depends what the model is for. I’ve made ones that are full size, because you actually want to work out how real things will fit together, I’ve made models where I think the scale was 1:2500, something like that, it was a Welsh Valley with a damn it. So, it can be anything it just depends what it’s for. So, there’s no favourite scales, it’s whatever works.

SR: Whatever works.

**GRI:** But, what some people forget is that as the scale becomes smaller, the object becomes, well, less, and less detail is necessary or sensible, so you edit out as you go down, get smaller in scale. Some people expect light fittings at 1:100, which of course is pure nonsensical.

SR: Is there anything that I haven’t asked you yet, that you would like to talk about?

**GRI:** Can I just have a quick look, I did have some notes here somewhere. Thank you. No, I think you’ve actually asked everything that I was basically thinking about.

SR: I have got a few more personal questions; do you have any of your own models in your own house?

**GRI:** No, well I’ve got a tiny bit, yes just they’re scraps from another model that was taken apart that’s all.

SR: Was it hard to not take things home and turn you house into your model studio?

**GRI:** It wouldn’t have been allowed [laughter]. No, I mean, I have worked at home occasionally but very rarely and it’s so disruptive and I collect other things anyway. I am a born collector, my house is, there’s not a horizontal surface that isn’t covered with stuff, none of them are models, they’re other things. They’re nature’s models; shells and stones.

SR: OK. And well I guess we’ve covered it mostly about your opinions on the changes in the profession, the architectural the profession, and obviously you said you were made redundant, in ’91?

**GRI:** ’91.

SR: In ’91. What were your contemporaries who were working with you, what was happening with them? Was there a divide? Do you suddenly go, right I’m only working with architects who are no longer alive, did you have any of your colleagues who made that jump or this switch into the high-tech, the auto-CAD, the rendering software? And was it difficult then to come back together again I guess?

**GRI:** You mean, was there a difficulty between us as people?

SR: Maybe just as model makers.

**GRI:** Not really. I mean, half of us were made redundant and we just went different ways and doing different things. I mean, one of us went into book publishing, I went into teaching and the Art History, and I can’t remember what the other ones did now. Oh, there was one other thing, which again is to do with the Soane, to do with the model making, it’s to do with, in the radio programme, what’s the date again? It was in, which John Summerson did a radio programme on the classical language of architecture and this is the little leaflet, booklet, which went with it at that time. And that, this was just in the ‘60’s, with Brutalism, and this and that talk inspired me really to carry on from the architecture, which was so terrible, to move into the Art History and to think about this side of it, which I did so love. So, he was a great inspiration to me, John Summerson here, but it was really this programme, on the third programme I think it was. I don’t know whether you’ve heard of it? It’s now quite a thick book he wrote, but that was outstanding that.

SR: So, the book that you’re holding now is his, the Classical Language of Architecture?

**GRI:** That is an original, the BBC issued it at the time to go with talks on the radio.

SR: I guess it’s handouts like this that I guess is, would you say it would be missing from architectural schools and practices now, like going back?

**GRI:** I’m afraid that a lot of architectural schools are just ignoring the history.

SR: Yes.

**GRI:** Which is very sad. I’m teaching now some students from Brazil, of all places, and they’re, and also, I have three students from the USA. And some of them, I’m really surprised at how good their education is. I was amazed. I thought it would be worse than ours as far as Art History is concerned, but in some cases, it’s very, very good. Whereas some students in this country haven’t the faintest idea about the background to all of this. And that’s where I think, well I’m sure many people feel that, where architecture has gone wrong, that people have lost the background to it all. I’m not saying that you should carry on designing in the classical mode.

SR: No

**GRI:** But, you know, when you see the work of Caruso St John, it’s not classical but it’s got that quality and that’s the point.

SR: Do you think perhaps that came, so this was done in the ‘60’s around, well, the heyday of Brutalism, concrete buildings cropping up all across London, do you think that was a moment of, well, it was said with the ‘carbuncle’ speech that the Prince of Wales gave afterwards, do you think that was a moment of collapse for architectural history in Britain? Do you think it was a real rupture point?

**GRI:** It’d been happening right throughout all the art schools as well. If you think about all the casts that were cast out, strange casting a cast out. And now, at long last, people are starting to see the importance of drawing from an object, from life, but that was all thrown aside. Well we have Tracey Emin is a result of that, don’t we?

SR: That’s great.