

# CALIFORNIA HOMIES

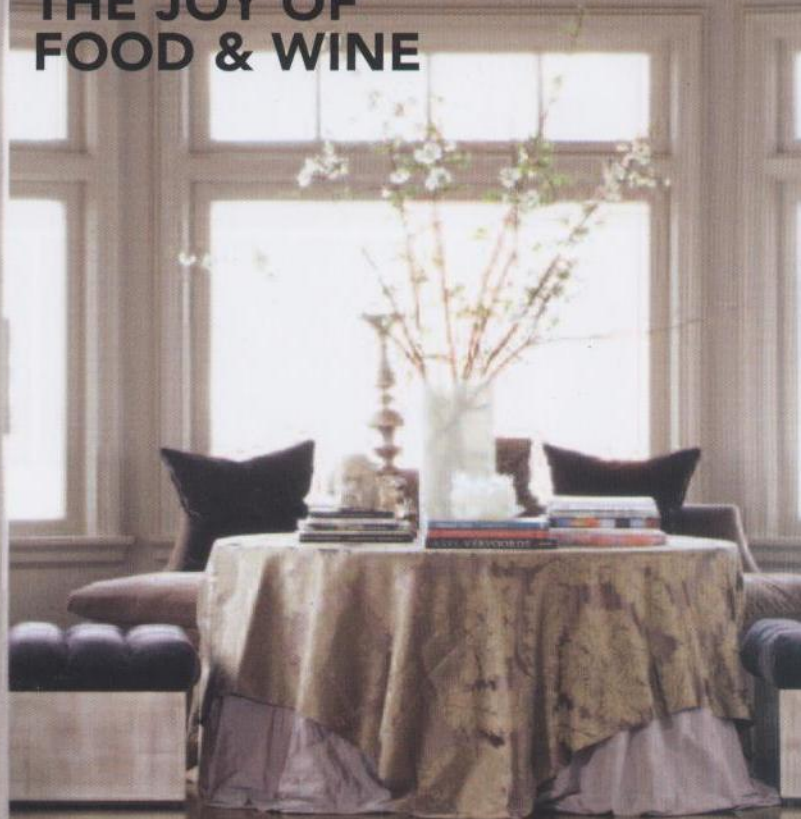
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This Year's San Francisco Fall Antiques Show's  
Major Exhibit Demonstrates The Art Of

# Creating Buildings— In Miniature

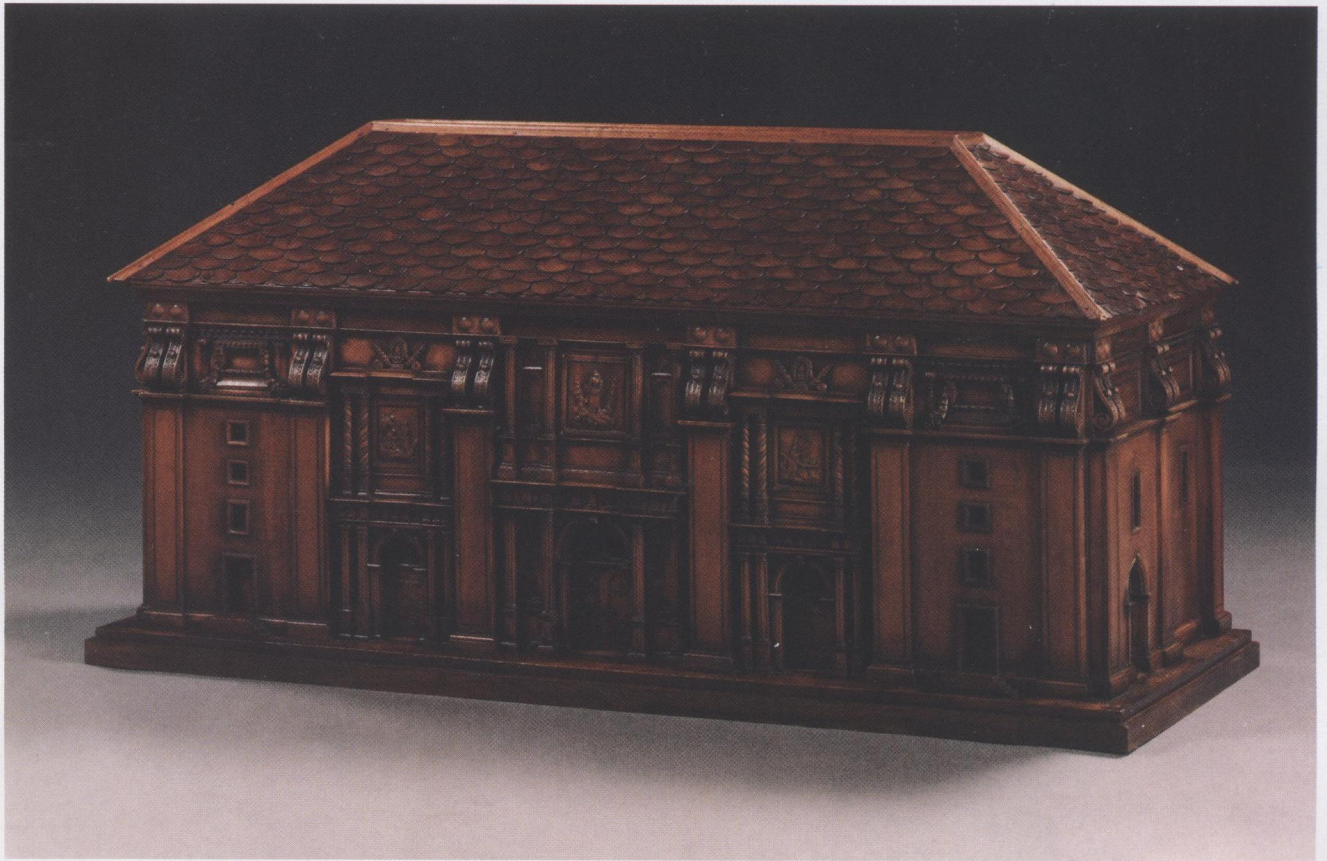
TEXT BY DIANE DORRANS SAEKS



San Francisco architect Andrew Skurman and curator Maria Santangelo with a model of Villa Rotunda, Vicenza, (made by Andrew Skurman) in Andrew Skurman's office. Photograph by Drew Altizer



18th century model of an unidentified building,  
lent by New York dealer, Carlton Hobbs.



The San Francisco Fall Antiques Show, which attracts an international list of top antiques and art dealers and collectors, this year offers an extraordinary exhibit highlighting the role of architectural models. The show, held at the Festival Pavilion in Fort Mason Center, runs from October 23rd to the 26th.

Celebrating the 500th birthday of the famed 16th century Italian architect Andrea Palladio as a starting point, the curator Maria Santangelo created an exhibit entitled "Building Small: Antique Architectural Models" which is a gem of an exhibition. "Palladio as an architect favored classical design," she says, "and we selected twenty handcrafted architectural models in order to demonstrate their shifting relevance over the last few centuries.

"We chose the finest specimens of handcrafted maquettes in order to

examine if they are still important and useful to the design process today," explains Santangelo, who is also a consultant in European Decorative Arts and Sculpture for the Legion of Honor.

"This exhibit allows us to ponder whether they are simply wonderful curiosities of the past, now outmoded by computers," she said. "I admire them for their artistry and as tangible proof of the complex architectural design process for both realized and fantasized buildings."

The major private donor of the show is Ace Architects in Oakland. They have lent the most striking bronzework model: a three foot tall, highly detailed sculpture of the Monument of the Column of Congress and the Constitution, of which the original, 154-foot monument erected in 1831 stands in the center of Brussels, topped with a sculpture of King Leopold.





ABOVE An early 20th century marble Roman Coliseum and other Grand Tour objects.

Photograph by Douglas Sandberg.  
Courtesy of Ace Architects.

RIGHT The Gates of Sandringham Palace, circa 1902. Courtesy of Kentshire Galleries.





The oldest piece is a superbly detailed eighteenth century model of an unidentified building, lent by New York dealer, Carlton Hobbs. The four foot wide model is carved in walnut with powerfully-graphic Doric columns, Romanesque doors, a shingled roof and carved religious panels.

"The carvings are exquisitely detailed," said Santangelo. "This is model-making at its finest."

Also included is a marble model of the gates of the Royal Family's Sandringham House. An early twentieth century marble Roman Coliseum, also lent by Ace Architects, is a Grand Tour object, sold as a memento of the grandest style.

Other highlights featured in the exhibit are: a Temple of Hercules bronze inkwell, circa 1870; a nineteenth century bronze model of the Bank of England headquarters in London, by architect Sir John Soane; a bronze Arch of Constantine model; marble Roman Forum models; the gilt clock of Notre-Dame cathedral in Reims, France; and the Roman Pantheon, early twentieth century, in marble.

San Francisco architect Andrew Skurman designed a majestic columned stage set for the exhibit, inspired by neo-classical museum interior architecture designs by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, in Potsdam, Germany, and John Russell Pope, in Washington DC.

"I felt it was important to honor the tradition of architectural models, which have always served such a fine purpose for architects," said Skurman.



Gilt clock of Notre Dame cathedral in Reims, France. Photograph by Douglas Sandberg. Courtesy of Ace Architects.





"For this specific exhibition, I was inspired by the Parthenon and the Lincoln Memorial, which are delineated boldly and elegantly with columns," observes Skurman, acclaimed for his classically-inspired residential architecture.

In the center, Skurman has designed a custom-crafted pair of large faux limestone plinths supporting the models.

"Elaborately carved models like these in the show may no longer be created," said Skurman. "But architectural models still assist us to see architecture in three-dimension. They are always beneficial to the design process as they represent ideas, inspiration and beauty, but on a manageable scale."

The lecture series, 'In The Classical Style,' offers speakers including: Tim Knox, director of the Sir John Soane's Museum, London; garden designer, author and tastemaker, Carolyn Roehm; and Peter Lang, the director of the English Furniture Department, Sotheby's, New York.

The San Francisco Fall Antiques Show, benefiting Enterprise for High School Students, October 23-26, 2008, Preview Party Benefit Gala, October 22, 7 to 9pm. Information 415.989.9019, [www.sffas.org](http://www.sffas.org)

Temple of Hercules  
bronze inkwell, circa 1870.  
Photograph by Douglas  
Sandberg. Courtesy of  
Ace Architects.