

A Child's View of Architecture, the Way the World Should Work

Ask a child what's important in the architectural design of public spaces and they'll tell you...plenty of interactive areas, readily accessible restrooms and someplace to buy a snack. These were common themes at the Seattle Architecture Foundation's Youth Architectural Model-Making 2-Day Camp. This year's workshop focused on interior spaces and was co-sponsored and hosted by the Frye Art Museum. Using as inspiration, the *Candida Höfer: Architecture of Absence* photography exhibit, on display at the museum through April 16th, students were tasked with designing an aquarium, zoo, school, park or really any place of their choosing.

Acknowledging a need for the practical didn't inhibit the students' creativity in designing special and unique spaces. Miranda's model of an Art Museum included a large entryway with sculptures surrounded by floor cushions and available art materials for creating one's own fine art. Thurston, a frequent participant of the model-making camp, designed an Aquarium with dedicated education areas and a special tank where willing visitors could don wet suits and swim with the sea life. While some kids might have been visiting an amusement park over last week's Spring Break, Halley was busy designing one, featuring her own creation, "Sumpercars", underwater submarines that operate like bumper cars.

Not all the students designed public spaces. Julie utilized the model camp to construct a condominium venue she'd often visualized as a backdrop for her original story-telling. At age 8, Hunter was one of the youngest participants, but that didn't curb his creativity, eagerly explaining his design for an underwater home with just a chimney and small deck space peeking above the water line. "Just in case", says Hunter, "you ever want to come up and see what's going on in the world."

Renee Blanton and co-facilitator Michelle Wagner designed the camp to combine hands on model-making with educational insight into how the design community works with a client. "We thought the kids might struggle with concepts of scope and function", said Michelle, "but instead they amazed us". They readily grasped the needs of the end user and how their built structure might function within the community. Then they brought their own insight to the design process and the result, some remarkable and creative spaces. Both Renee and Michelle credit an instructor from Bellevue Community College's design program for getting them involved as volunteers for Seattle Architecture Foundation and the Model-making Camp was a first year experience for both of them. They collaborated on curriculum and both created visual tools to teach the design process from conceptual idea through to the selection of materials for interior design features.

The next Seattle Architecture Foundation model-making workshop is geared for families and will take place on June 24th in conjunction with the *Ideas in Form 9* Architectural Model Exhibit that will feature the current work of local architects and architectural students and local projects designed by architects outside of Washington. Youth and adults will team together to plan an ideal community while exploring how buildings and spaces influence the way people live, work and play. Space is limited with advance registration and prepayment required. Register online at www.seattlearchitecture.org or call 206.667.9184 for additional information.