



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Edinburgh College of Art

UOA D32

ART AND DESIGN:
HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE



RESEARCHER

Charles Stiven

OUTPUT TITLE

Kiosk

OUTPUT TYPE

Artefact

DATE

2015 – ongoing

01 / STATEMENT



FIG. 1
Charles Stiven, *End of the Pier Show*, 36 x 36 x 48cm, wood, acrylic, mixed medium.
Constructed model derived from pier architecture of British coastal towns (Blackpool/Llandudno), reflecting on Brexit voting patterns.
Photo Charles Stiven.

The output consists of a body of 22 hand-made, small-scale architectural models that replicate European street kiosks.

The research addresses questions about the nature of kiosks as symbols of aspects of contemporary culture such as transience and the fragility of small-scale commerce. Through this, it explores larger issues around the way disused architecture can incite reflection upon the impact of global systems of production and consumption on collective urban experience.

Kiosk was selected for two international exhibitions: *Intersection*, Scottish Architecture Fringe 2017, Edinburgh, 14–16 July 2017 and *Make-Shift*, Collyer Bristow Gallery, London, 12 October 2017 – 13 February 2018.



FIG. 2 *Pharmacia*



FIG. 3 *Fix Hellas*



FIG. 4 *No Luck*



FIG. 5 *No Change*



FIG. 6 *No Flowers*

FIGS 2 – 22
Full group of 22 models.
Photos Charles Stiven.



FIG. 7 *No Drinx*



FIG. 8 *Der Gefaulte Traum,*



FIG. 9 *Grab n' Go*



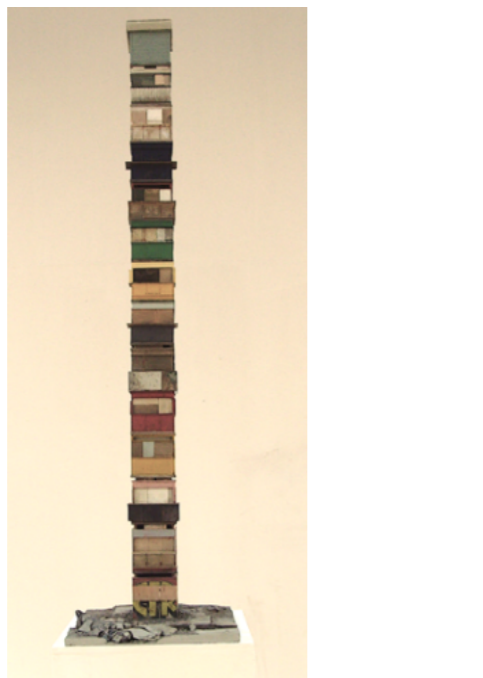
FIG. 10 *Pronto*



FIG. 11 *Downturn*



FIG. 12 *End of the Pier Show*



FIGS. 13–14 *Trickle Down*



FIG. 15 *Pivo?*



FIGS. 16–18 *See No... Hear No... Speak No*



FIGS. 19–20 *K67/C19 No's 1 & 2*



FIGS. 21–22 *K67/C19 No's 3, 4 & 5*



FIGS. 23–24
Charles Stiven, *Downturn*,
60 x 80 x 28cm, wood, acrylic,
mixed medium. Photos
Charles Stiven.



02 / RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

A series of hand-made, small-scale architectural models – to date, 22 have been completed – that replicate European street kiosks.

The works are constructed at a scale ratio of 1:15, using a mixture of materials: wood, acrylic, paper, time, plastic, found material, soil and detritus.

Stiven's research explores the nature of kiosks as symbols of contemporary culture. Lacking the permanence of larger buildings, kiosks can be seen as analogues of our own transient lives and the fragile nature of small-scale commerce and community. As such, they are emblematic of the impact of generic global systems of production, consumption and communication, and the tensions created through social and political uncertainty.

The research is situated in the context of contemporary practices that explore the aesthetics and conceptual possibilities of models and replication, and the form of the miniature. Following research conducted on field trips to over 7 European capitals to view kiosks in-situ, the models were meticulously crafted using a range of media (cardboard, wood, acrylic, plastic, found materials and detritus) with each model requiring several months to complete.

FIG. 25
End of the Pier (studio image).
Photo Charles Stiven.



FIG. 26
Pharmacia (studio image).
Photo Charles Stiven.



FIG. 27
Work in progress.
Photo Charles Stiven.



FIG. 28
Pharmacia (studio image).
Photo Charles Stiven.

FIGS. 29–30

Charles Stiven, *Pronto*, 42 x 42 x 32cm, wood, acrylic, mixed medium. Photos Charles Stiven.



03 / ORIGINALITY

Distinct from most functional civic architecture, kiosks are regarded, if at all, as modest, unremarkable and insignificant.

They are largely overlooked in the consideration of urban and societal dynamics and rarely considered by contemporary artists. Through a sustained focus on the kiosk over a number of years, Stiven brings attention to an overlooked feature of modern and contemporary life. Through this, he brings a new dimension to the notion and meaning of the model.

Stiven's research is oriented by two overarching lines of inquiry: on the one hand, artistic explorations of the psychological and metaphorical potential of quasi-fictional or invented architecture (from Bruegel's *Tower of Babel*, 1563 to the work of 'paper architects' Brodsky & Utkin). On the other hand, the research engages with contemporary 3D manifestations in the field of model-making, which includes such artists as Michael Paul Smith, Rick Araluce and Michael C. McMillen.

Stiven extends these traditions by eliminating nostalgia and melodrama from his models and engaging an insistent focus on miniature scale. Drama emerges slowly through attention to surface, material and detail. The small-scale intensifies the nuances of the modelling process. It removes the model from the realms of the recreational or commercial and re-presents it as a potent means of artistic expression that brings new, previously overlooked insights into the conditions and present dynamics of their original sources. Specific works comment and reflect upon particular societal events: concentrated 'micro' responses to 'macro' concerns.

Stiven uses a combination of materials and processes that situate the models in the spaces between drawing, sculpture and painting. Principles from all three disciplines are applied in a fashion that reveals their interdependence but resists the domination of either one over the other. In this way, Stiven situates the model in an expanded aesthetic field that invites new registers of experience and ways of seeing.

FIGS. 31-34
Charles Stiven, *Grab 'n' Go*, 60 x 80
x 28cm, wood, acrylic, mixed
medium. Photos Charles Stiven.



FIGS. 35-46

From top left: kiosks in Novi Pazar, Belgrade, Madrid, Gdansk, Wroclaw, Liverpool, Athens, Berlin, Belgrade, Blackpool, Berlin and Lviv. Photos Charles Stiven.



04 / RIGOUR

Historical and site-specific research into the social, political and cultural conditions of each site, the architectural forms and structures of the kiosks, experiential conditions such as lighting and atmosphere, and specific materials and processes all inform the investigation.

Numerous research field-trips to European towns and cities enabled direct experiential study of the structure and design of street kiosks and the environments within which they are situated. These visits permitted in-situ study of specific architectural features of the kiosks together with experience of the ambient and psychological characters of their location and installation.

Stiven selected kiosks within particular European cities that have been visibly marked by notable societal shifts in the 20th century, and which remain centres of tension and flux.

An attentive and considered use of materials and techniques enables the models to embody the transience and fragility of their originals. The incorporation of found, non-art materials such as detritus, enhances this character. The models are not exact replicas of existing buildings, but rather structural amalgams/ inventions composed through a manipulation of form, colour and surface that intensifies their allegorical character.

Together, this material and technical, and historical and contextual research provides a rigorous knowledge-based framework which in Stiven's words, 'authorises' him to deconstruct and reconstruct, to test the limits of veracity whilst retaining integrity with respect to the historical source.

A crucial element of the research process are the tools and techniques employed to make the models. The work is shaped and driven by a rigorous knowledge of what certain materials can do, developed over intensive studio practice over many years. It is steered by an ongoing curiosity about the potentials of materials with respect to the challenges and limits of the concept of modelling as such. The key materials used are cardboard, wood, acrylic, plastic, found materials and detritus.

A high level of control and mastery over construction process and materials enables Stiven to bring the hand-made and the inanimate with expansive conceptual concerns. The personal and the collective, particularity and universality meet through the rigor of construction.

At the same time, juxtaposing elements that have evolved from highly structured planning with those that have emerged through chance imparts to the work a psychological tension which reflects and gives aesthetic intensification to the often unpredictable effects of economic and social transition.

FIGS. 47–48
Modelling tools. Photos
Charles Stiven.

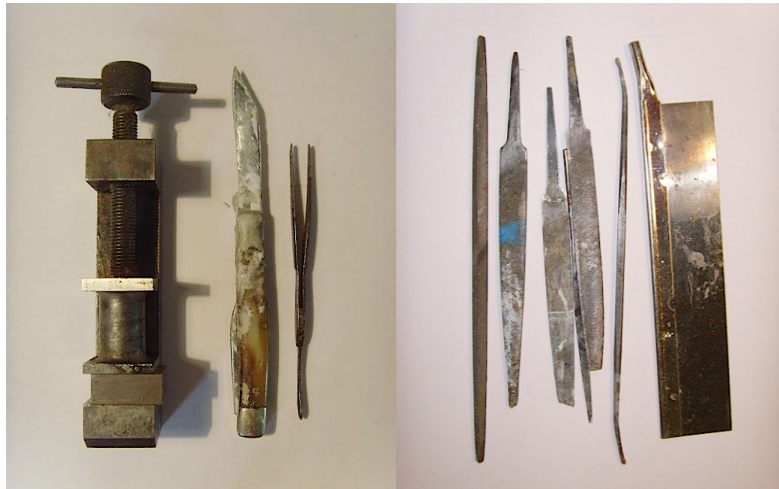


FIG. 49
Model section under construction.
Photo Charles Stiven.



FIG. 50
Charles Stiven, *Fix Hellas* (detail),
wood, acrylic, card, plastic, found
materials. Photo Charles Stiven.



FIG. 51
Charles Stiven, *The Fouled Dream*
(detail), wood, acrylic, soil, paper,
found materials. Photo Charles
Stiven.

FIGS. 52–56
Clockwise from top left: Kiosk,
Berlin; preliminary drawings;
Grab n' Go installation at the
Royal Scottish Academy; work in
progress. Photos Charles Stiven.

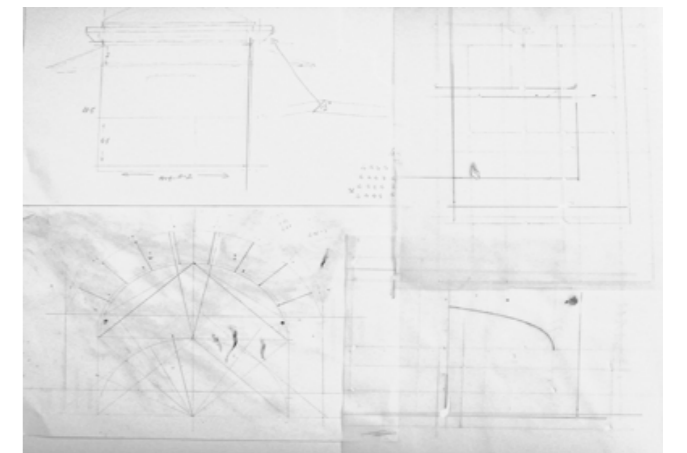
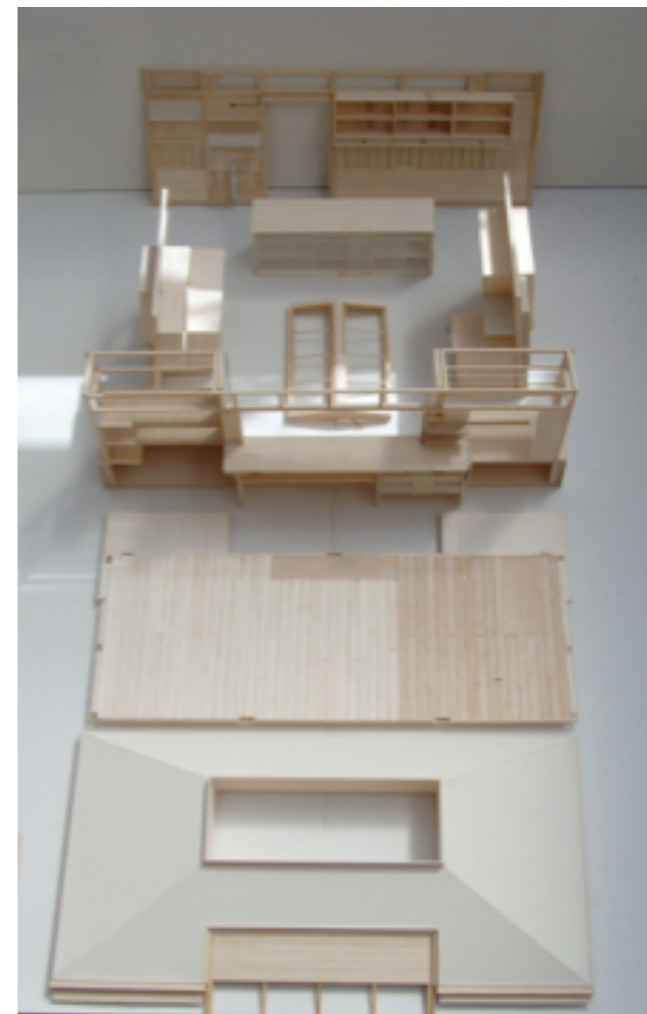
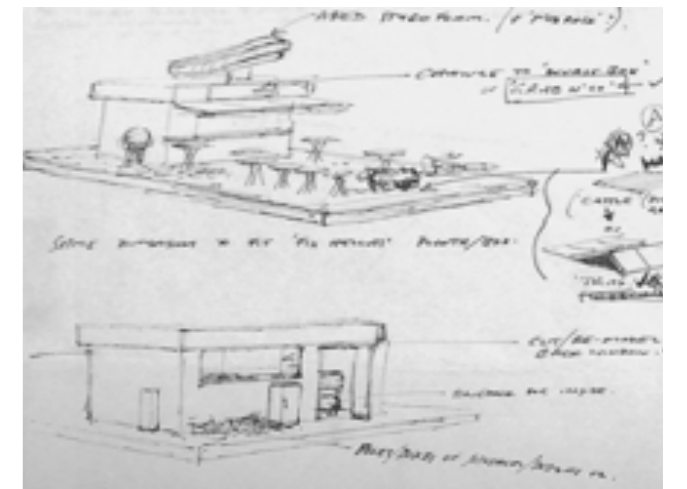




FIG. 57
Charles Stiven, *Pharmacia*
(detail) wood, acrylic, card,
soil. Photo Charles Stiven.



FIG. 58
Charles Stiven, *Fix Hellas*
(detail) wood, acrylic, card, found
materials. Photo Charles Stiven.

FIG. 59
Charles Stiven, *No Title*
(in progress) wood, acrylic,
soil, plastics, plaster, found
materials. Photo Charles Stiven.



Following site visits, information and experiences are distilled and reflected upon through propositional sketches and technical drawings until constructive tactics and the appropriate orchestration of physical dynamics are identified. Depending on the complexity of construction and detail, each model can then take several months to complete.

The transition from two into three dimensions is driven by a consideration of inherent principles of drawing. As they emerge, the 3D manifestations constitute drawings in space. The spatial dynamics within and between various elements of the construction are designed to evoke metaphorical conversations and tensions that are appropriate to site, concept and experiential response.

Once the core structural elements are built, the models are given primary painted identities, rendered in a concentrated, formal fashion. The colours and hues are chosen to reflect both the original function and condition of the source model. This is complimented by a more intuitive and unpredictable process of working, through which atmosphere and character is intensified.

Further painted washes, staining and distressing, along with the inclusion of appropriately scaled found detritus are incorporated to give the works further visual weight and in turn, greater psychological resonance.

An intuitive exploration of process is accompanied by an in-depth knowledge of the nature of materials and a curiosity in their manipulation to discover new properties. The result are works that both express authority, and uncertainty.

An example of this research process is *Der Gefaulte Traum* (The Fouled Dream).

The title refers to a newspaper item that Stiven discovered in the German tabloid newspaper 'Bild', concerning the extramarital activities of a B-list sports personality.

The title of the work transcends its original context to prompt reflection on our present remove from the original impact of the printed word. It invites reflection on the transformation in the dissemination and valuation of information and knowledge, and its current state of endless distraction and fake news.

The model intensifies the pathos of this condition. Stacked repetitively at the front of the structure and left discarded at the rear, the miniature newspapers are arranged to express this sense of endless distractions the value of which is comparable to detritus.

The contrived construction of the kiosk follows certain principles of European modernist architecture and at the same time seeks to evoke a physical and allegorical tension that resonates with the thematic. That is, the structure has logic and cohesion, but remains unsettled and ill at ease. The miniature scale intensifies this tension, by compelling observation but remaining inaccessible.



FIGS. 60–63
Charles Stiven, *Der Gefaulte Traum*, 42 x 42 x 34cm, wood, acrylic, mixed medium.
Photos Charles Stiven.



FIGS. 64–65
Charles Stiven, *Fix Hellas*, 80 x 60 x 30cm, wood, acrylic, mixed medium. Photos Charles Stiven.



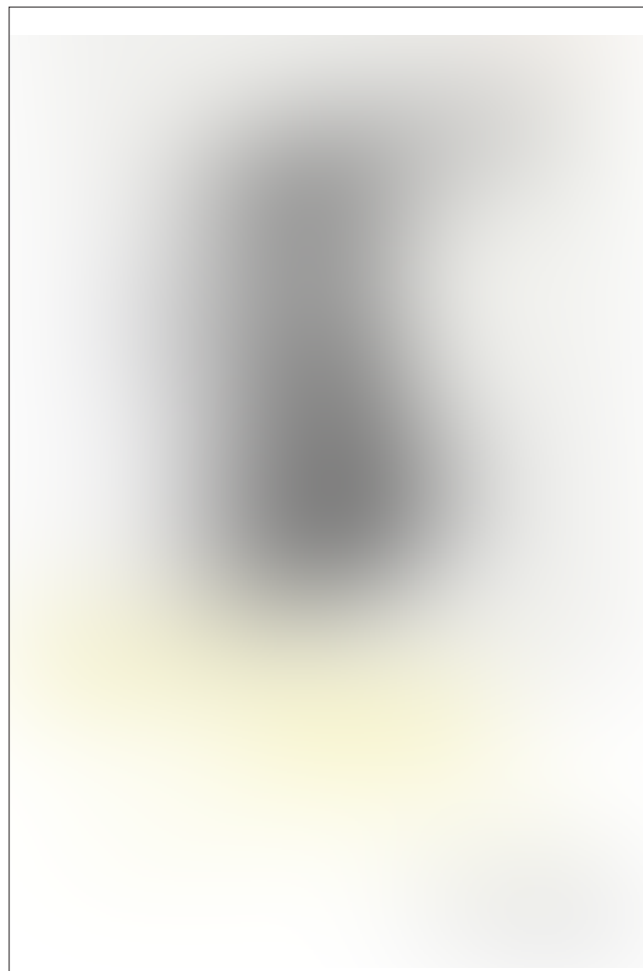
FIGS. 66–69
Charles Stiven, *No Drinx*, 42 x 42 x 30cm, wood, acrylic, mixed medium. Photos Charles Stiven.

Abandoned refreshment kiosk, Athens – an invented construction, its design echoes American Art Deco architecture as a reference to American input and influence following the end of the Greek civil war in 1949, its neglected condition reflects contemporary economic circumstance.

FIG. 70
Intersection exhibition poster.



FIG. 71
Make Shift exhibition poster.



05 / SIGNIFICANCE

Kiosk was first presented, through selection (by the architect Chris Dobson) for a group exhibition, 'Intersection', at the Scottish Architecture Fringe 2017, Edinburgh, 14–16 July 2017.

The exhibition, which interrogated the meeting points of visual art and architecture, was curated by Olivia Turner and Chris Dobson. Also exhibiting were James Basey, Remi Rough, Paul Stallan and Tasmin Cunningham. Now in its fourth year, the Scottish Architecture Fringe is an independent, annual series of projects and events across Scotland that explores Scottish architecture and design and its socio-political contexts and impacts.

Kiosk was subsequently selected by artist and curator Rosalind Davies for the group exhibition, 'Make-Shift', at the Collyer Bristow Gallery, London, October 2017 – February 2018. This exhibition focused on innovative usages of provisional & rudimentary materials. Stiven was one of 11 artists invited to participate. Also exhibiting were artists Fiona Curran, Asger Harbou Gjerduik, Alan Magee, Gunther Herbst and Neil Fuller.

The research has also been disseminated through invited conference participation.

- 'Institutions, Politics and Performance' conference in Athens, Greece, 24–28 September 2015. The conference attracted an audience of several thousand.

- 'Micro Makes Macro' explored low-tech, low-cost materials as a form of cultural critique, small scale 'micro' model making as reaction to 'macro' societal phenomenon. Presented at 'Institutions, Politics, Performance' conference held at Pedion Tou Areos (Green Park), Athens, Greece, 24–28 September 2015. See Appendix, page 28.

- 'Reading Architecture across the Arts & Humanities', Stirling University, December 2015. The conference considered the creation, expression and representation of architecture, architectural space and the built environment, addressing understanding and cultural impact of both real and imagined sites of architectural construction throughout time, incorporating discourse from disciplines such as literature, law, history, politics, film & philosophy.

- 'Art, Materiality & Representation' British Museum, London. 2 June 2018. Royal Anthropological Society conference.

- 'Model – Making – Metaphor' at 'The Aesthetics of Modelling; Patterns, Politics & Pleasure in Visual Representation'. SOAS, London, 2 June 2018.

FIGS. 72–73
Solo exhibition of the *Kiosk* works,
Museum of Ideas, Lviv, Ukraine,
June 2020, confirmed. Curated
by Kristina Bezpalki. Photos
Charles Stiven.



FIGS. 74–76
LVIV, June 2019.
Photos Charles Stiven.

Once a hub within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Lviv currently sits in an uncertain socio-economic position, caught between traditional Russian values and Western culture and markets. Many of its street kiosks have a hybrid characteristic shaped both by the Austro-Hungarian Art Nouveau architectural style and a functional Soviet-era aesthetic. As such they can be seen as concentrated ‘capsules’ of multi faceted political and cultural dynamics. Following a research visit and subsequent proposal to The Museum of Ideas in Lviv, an exhibition of Stiven’s works that respond to these specific dynamics of Lviv would have been held in June 2020 (postponed, due to COVID-19).



FIGS. 77–81
Charles Stiven, *See No... Hear No...
Speak No...*, works in progress for
Lviv *Kiosk* series. 60 x 16 x 24cm,
wood, acrylic, mixed medium.
Photos Charles Stiven.

06 / APPENDIX

Conference Paper

Charles Stiven, 'Micro Makes Macro'.
Presented at 'Institutions, Politics,
Performance' conference, Pedion Tou Areos
(Green Park), Athens, Greece, 24–28 September
2015.

FIG. 82
'Institutions, Politics and
Performance' conference in Athens,
Greece, 24–28 September 2015.



FIG. 83
'Reading Architecture across
the Arts & Humanities' Stirling
University, December 2015.



FIG. 84
'Art, Materiality & Representation'
British Museum, London,
June 2018. © The Trustees of the
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