Building a model of a room or an exhibition space

Catrin Huber

with contribution from Rosie Morris

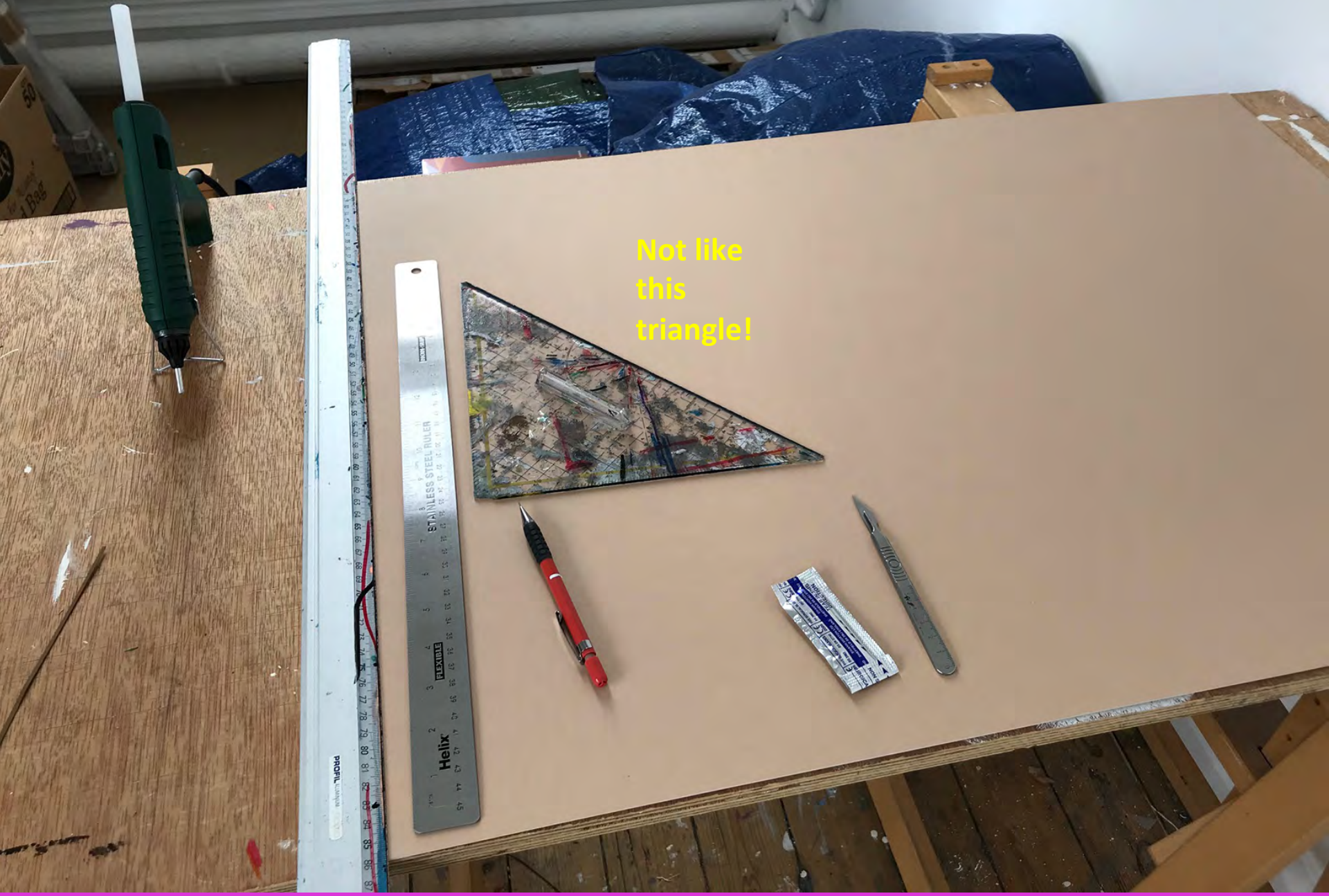
Why?

- To prepare for an exhibition or performance
- To try out ideas on a smaller scale
- To work at home ‘thinking’ big scale
- To experiment, play, and dream…
- To stage photographs
- As works in themselves

…

What do we need?

- **Materials for walls and floor: e.g. cardboard from packaging material, mounting board, foam board**
- **A glue gun or relatively fast drying glue appropriate for chosen materials**
- **Scalpel or scissors**
- **Ruler (preferably metal / steel), drafting triangle**
- **Pencil and paper**
- **Cutting mat**
- **Whatever else you might find useful**

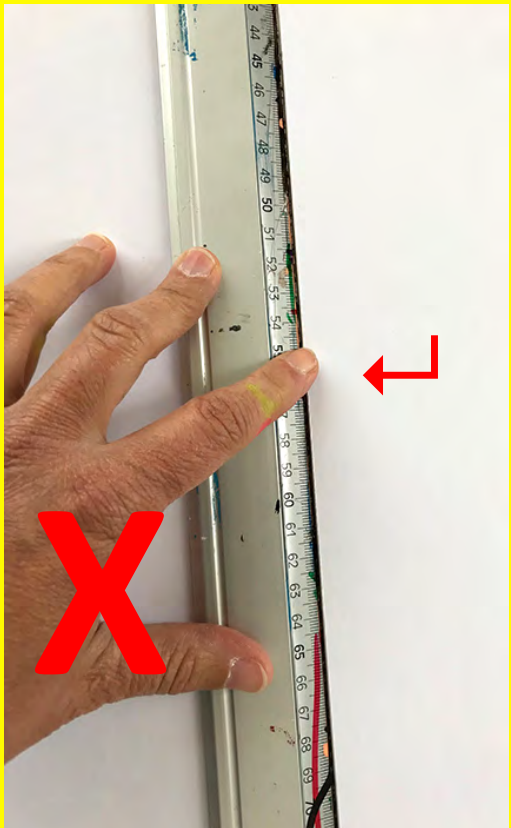


Treat your tools well!

Please be careful with: Glue guns. They can of course get very hot. Always check instructions that come with your product before using it.

And scalpels.

Please watch your fingers!

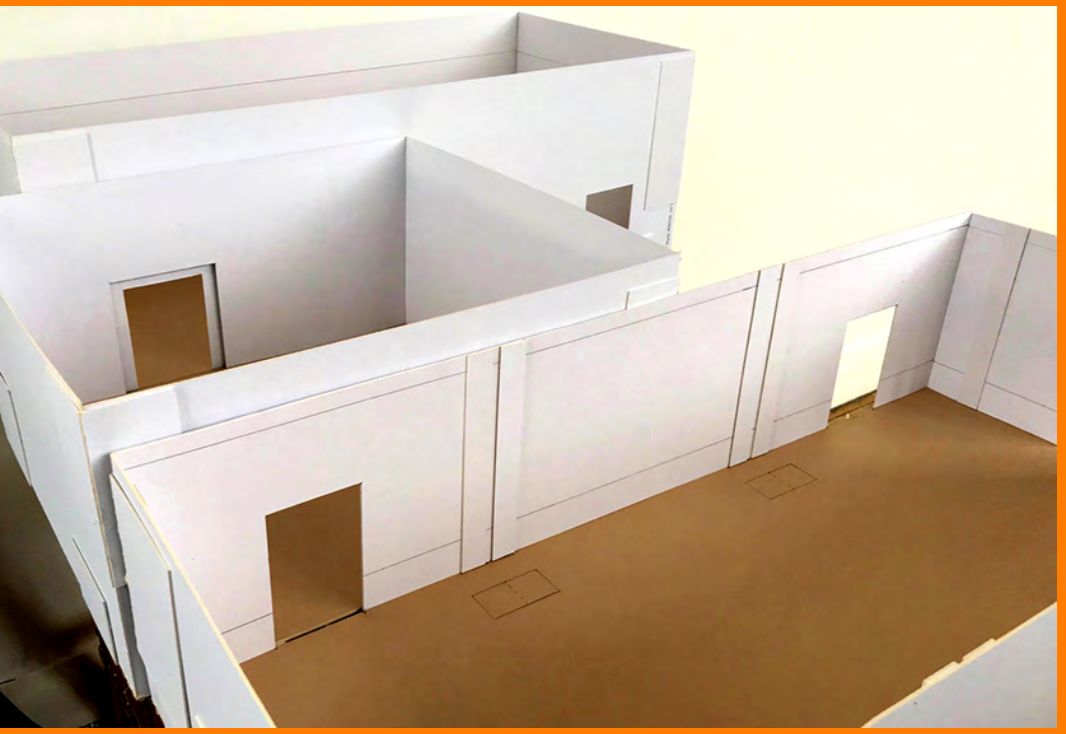


Autsch!!!

I find 10A blades useful for cutting mounting boards and paper. You can get different types of blades, and might prefer a different one.

What type of model might be useful for you?

- Does it make sense to work with a specific room / gallery? You might want to try something out for the Life Room or Long Gallery before actually booking it; you need to plan an exhibition; you are fascinated by a particular space.
- A ‘white cube space’ that is fairly neutral re features and scale, as whatever you do within it is easily adapted to a different context.
- Work with or make specific imagined or real model spaces (e.g. spaceship, submarine, architectural dreams or nightmares) as works in themselves or ‘fictional’ exhibition spaces.
- You want to create stage-sets
- Etc.



Models of gallery spaces (Catrin Huber), and model of a Roman reception room at Casa del Bel Cortile in Herculaneum (Rosie Morris).

Do look at artists' models: e.g. Constant, Iza Genzken, Theo van Doesburg.

Models of works and as works in themselves by Catrin Huber Photo: Colin Davison

As I am planning an exhibition at the Hatton Gallery for 2021,

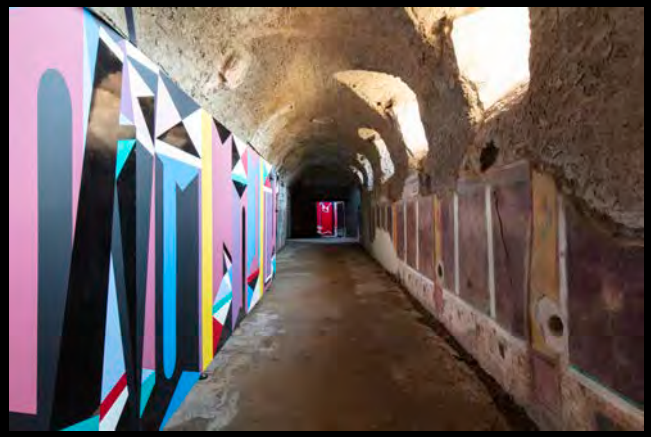
I recently built models for their galleries 1 and 4, and will talk you through the process of doing so.

I hope this is useful when you are building your own models of spaces that are relevant to your practice.

There are many other ways of making a model. Please explore and share your tips with us (e.g. Sculpture / Installation Forum)!

For The Hatton exhibition I will re-stage work from my Expanded Interiors exhibitions at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

https://research.ncl.ac.uk/expandedinteriors/



Catrin Huber, Expanded Interiors at Pompeii, installation 1 + 2

Photo: Amedeo Benestante

Catrin Huber, Expanded Interiors at Herculaneum, installation 3

https://research.ncl.ac.uk/expandedinteriors/

Photo: Amedeo Benestante

These are images of galleries 1 and 4 of the Hatton Gallery:

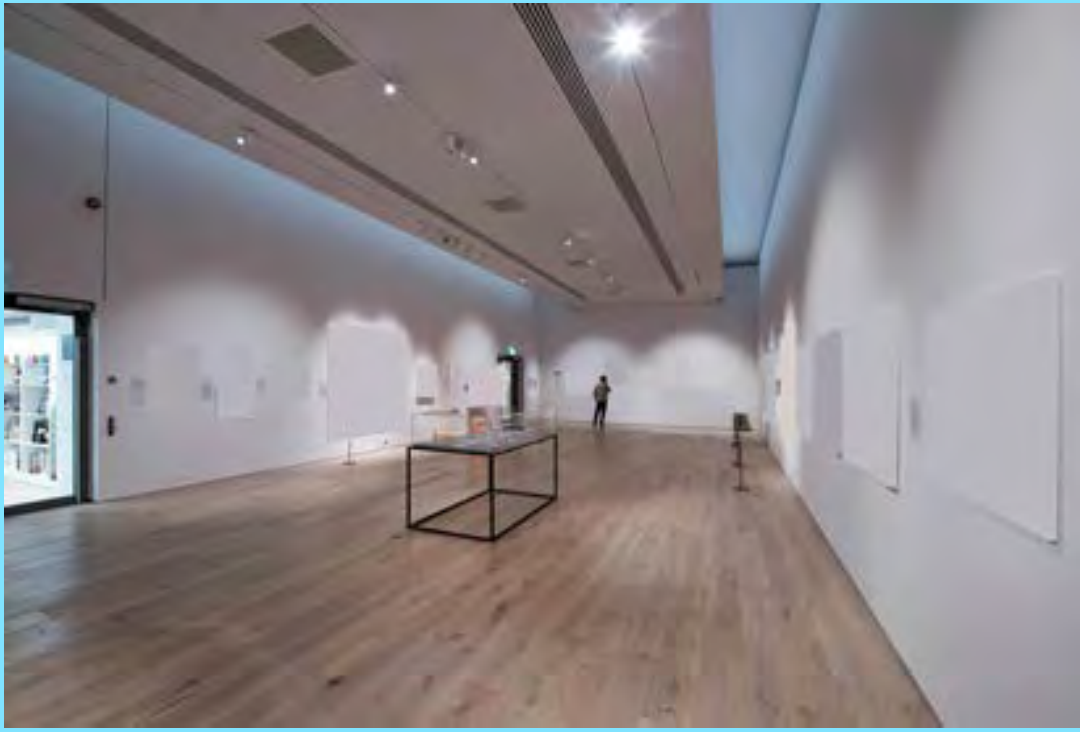
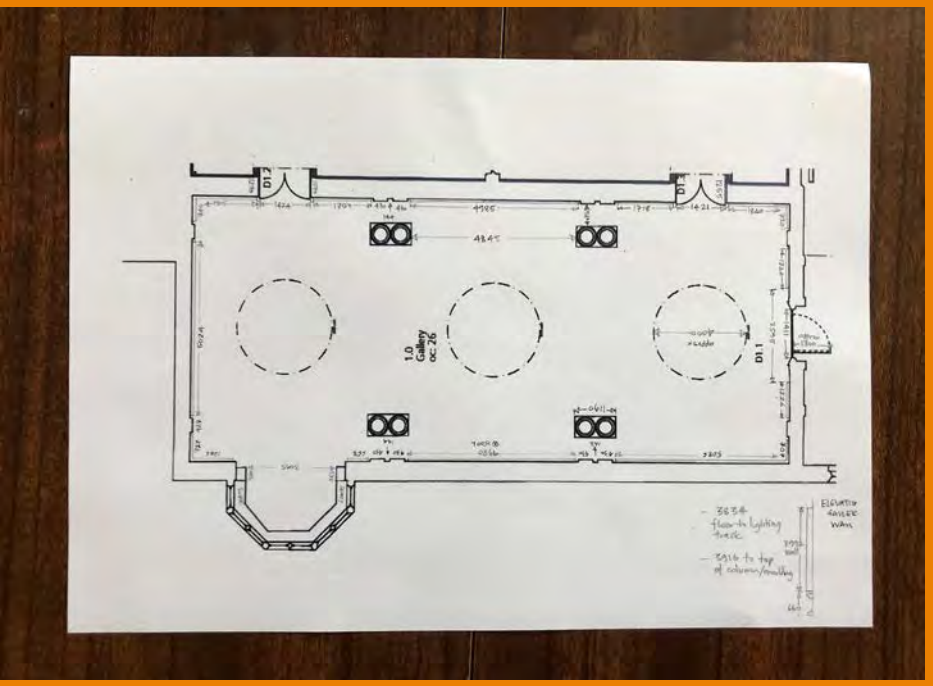
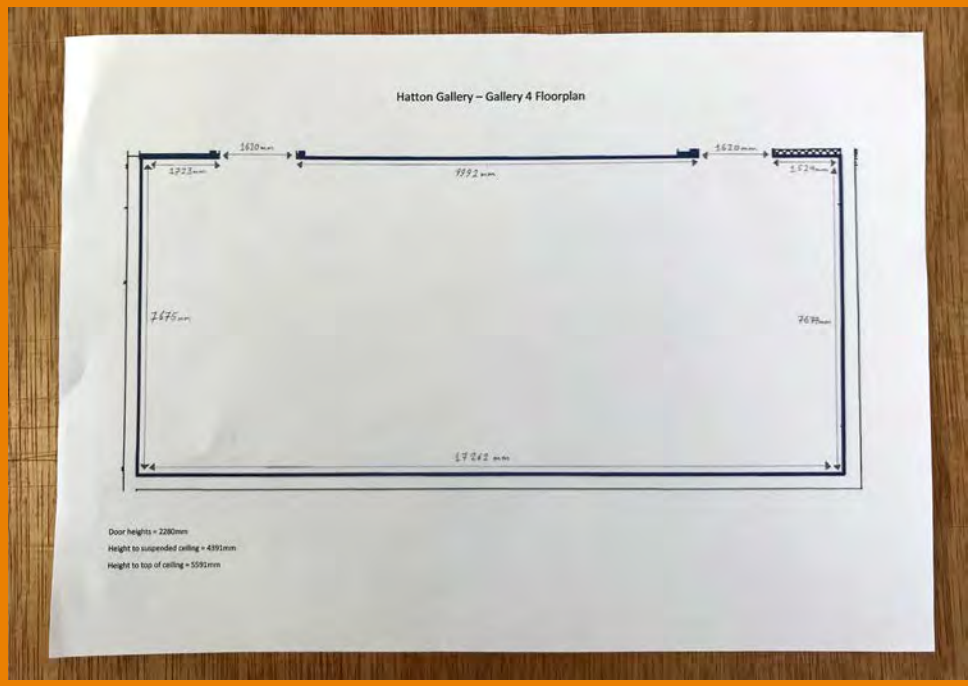


Image credit: Colin Davison

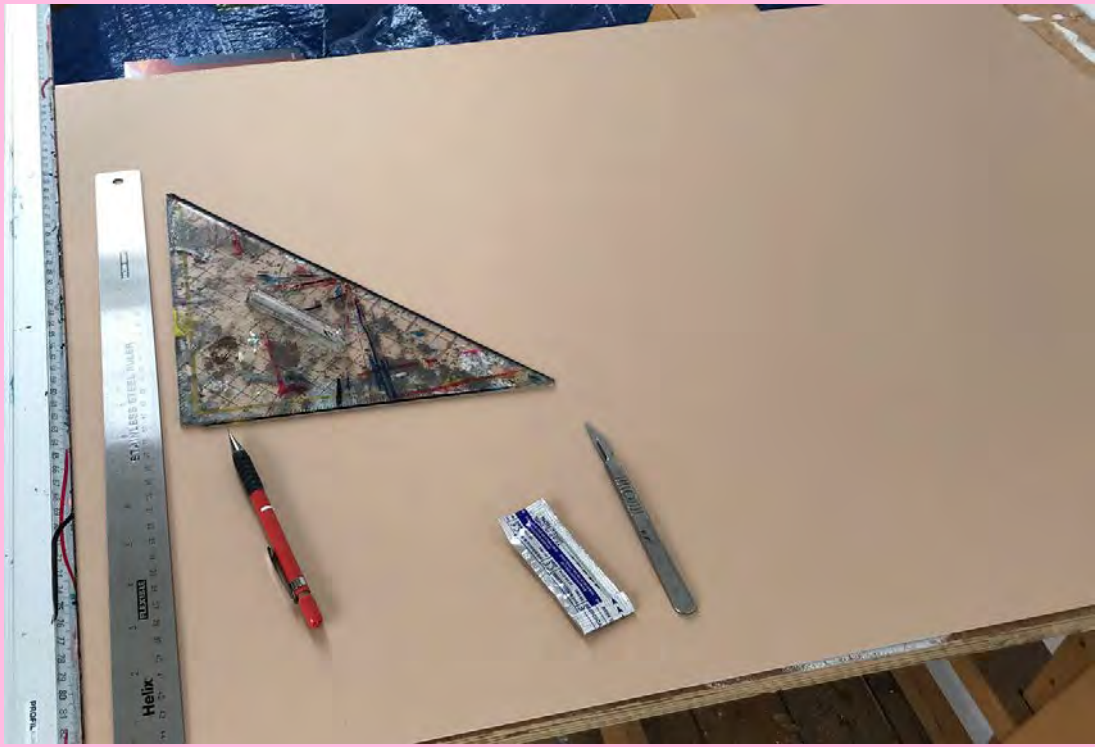
The artworks in the exhibition have been ‘covered up’ in photoshop

I needed the measurements of the galleries, but couldn't access the spaces myself due to C19. The Hatton kindly provided me with floor plans and measurements:





I used mounting board as it comes in a range of colours and sizes:

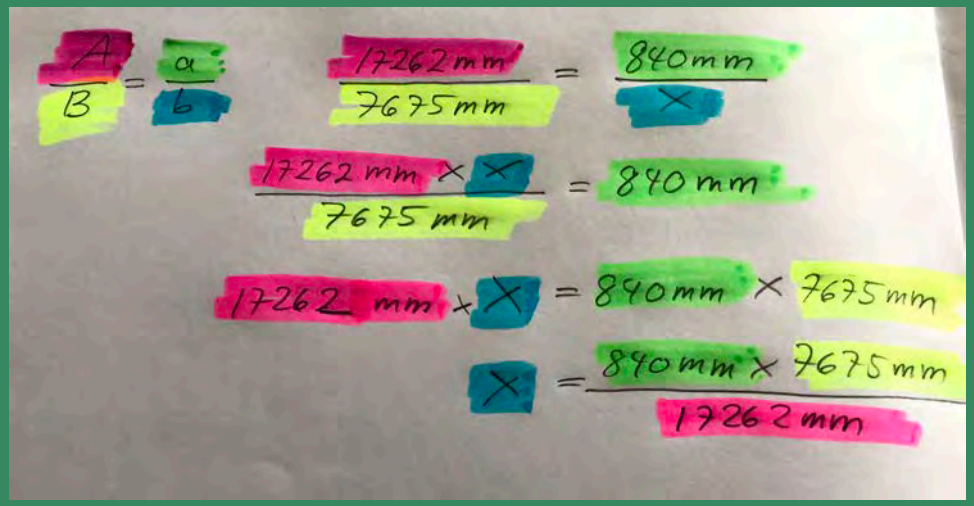


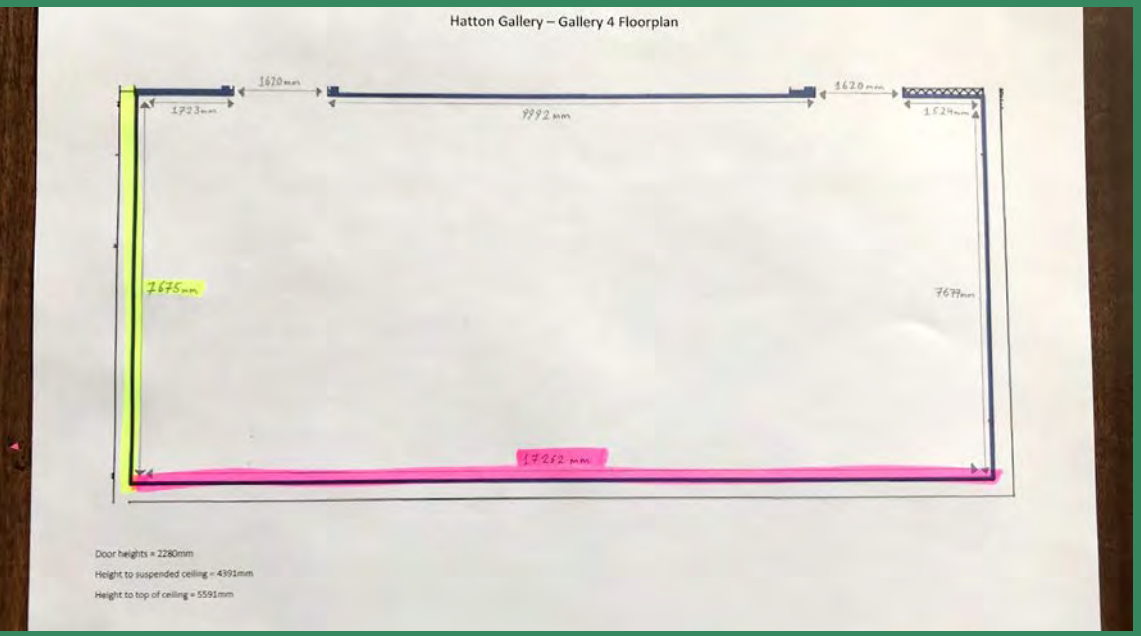
Board size: 84cm x 59.5cm

White for the walls and a light ochre for the floor

Having acquired the actual floor dimensions of the Hatton: 17262mm (A) x 7675mm (B), I decided to use the length of the mounting board: 840mm (a) as the length for my model. The size of the widths of the model: X (b) was missing:

This is my calculation to find out X:





X = 373.5 mm

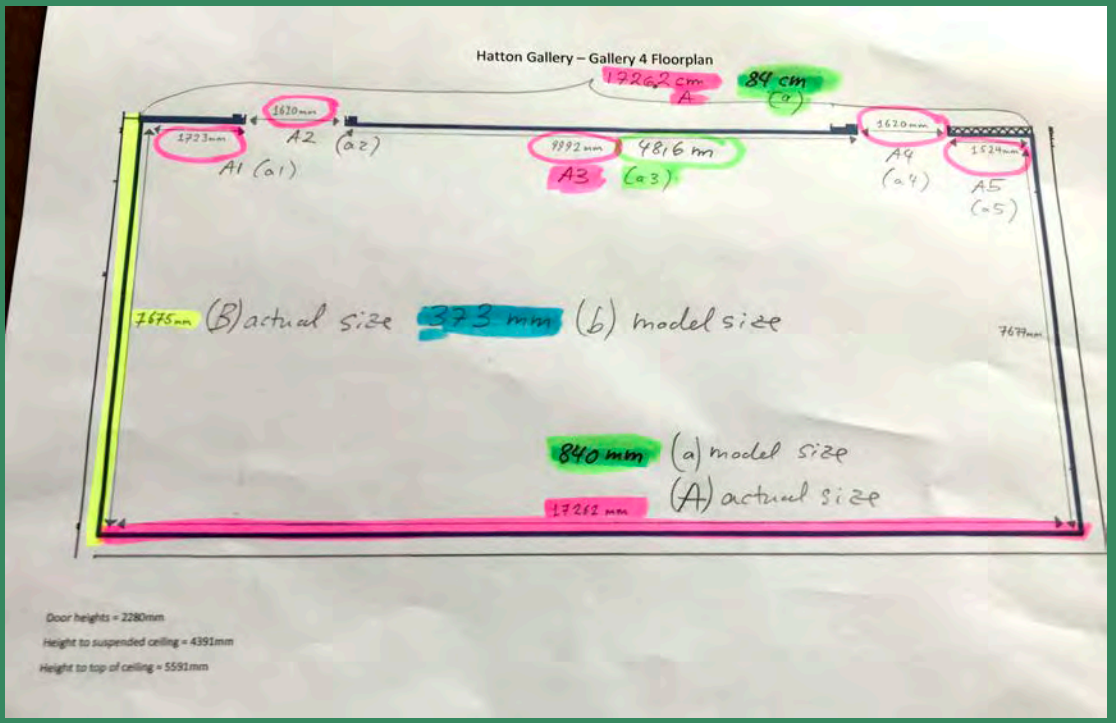
X = 37.35 cm

I also needed the measurements of the doors for the model (a2, a4), and the distances between them, and to adjacent walls (a3, a1, a5). Here is the calculation for a3 as an example:

$$\frac{A}{A3} = \frac{a}{a3} \qquad \frac{1726.2}{999.2} = \frac{84}{X\ (a3)}\ cm$$

$$(a3)\ X = \frac{84 \times 999.2}{1726.2}\ cm$$

$$(a3)\ X = 48{,}6\ cm$$

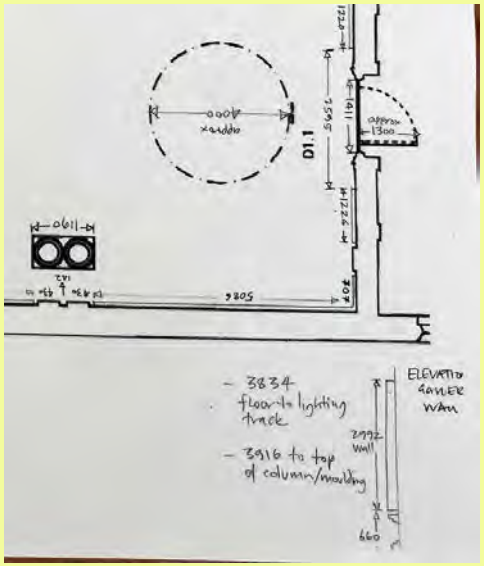


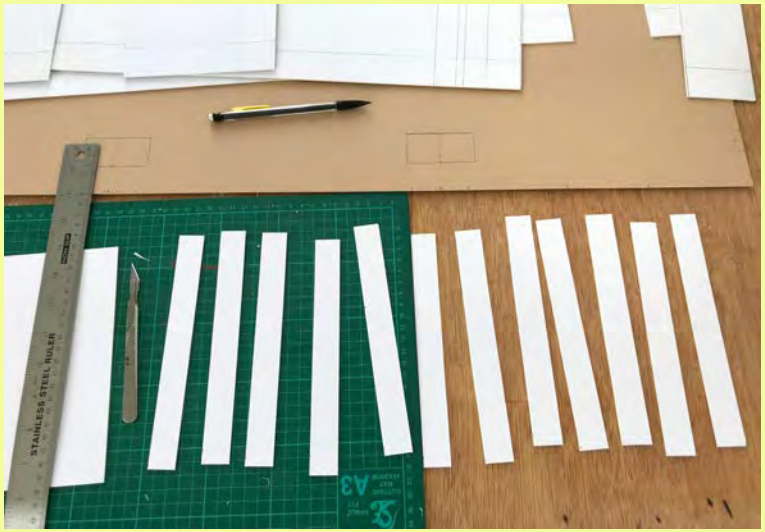
X = 48.6cm

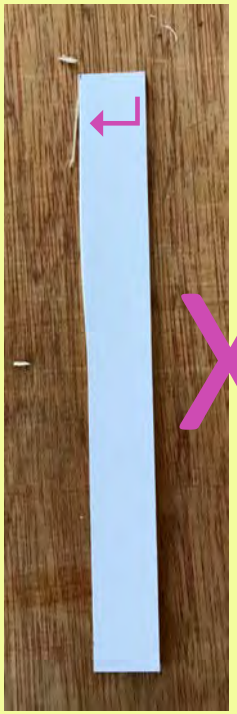
Once I had calculated all the missing dimensions (including wall heights), I started cutting out floor, wall, and door sections for gallery 4:

And the same for gallery 1:

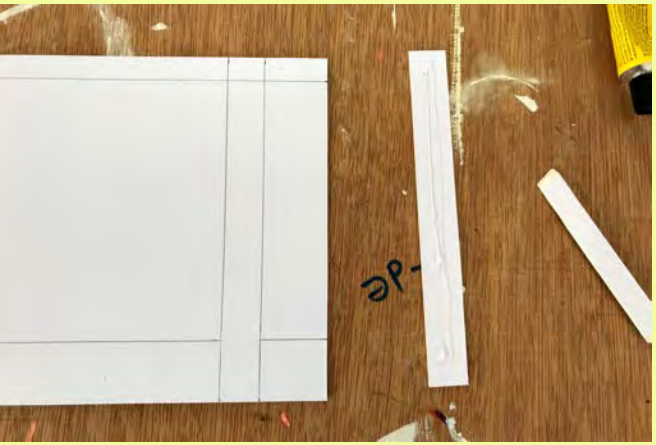
Gallery 1 needed more details:





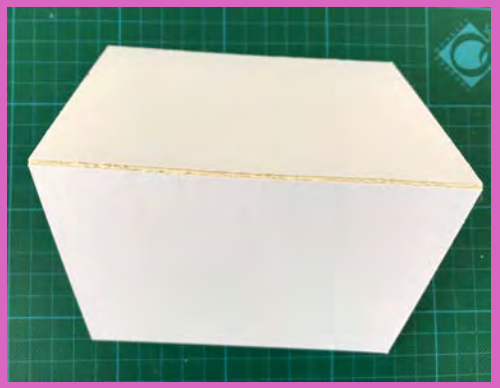


Time to change the blade on the scalpel!



Here I used a slower drying glue to allow time to align elements accurately.

As the mounting board is thin I wanted to make the model more sturdy by using supportive corners. This made the assembly of all parts easier, however it impacted on what the model looked like from the outside. This was not relevant for me, as I was using the inside of the model.



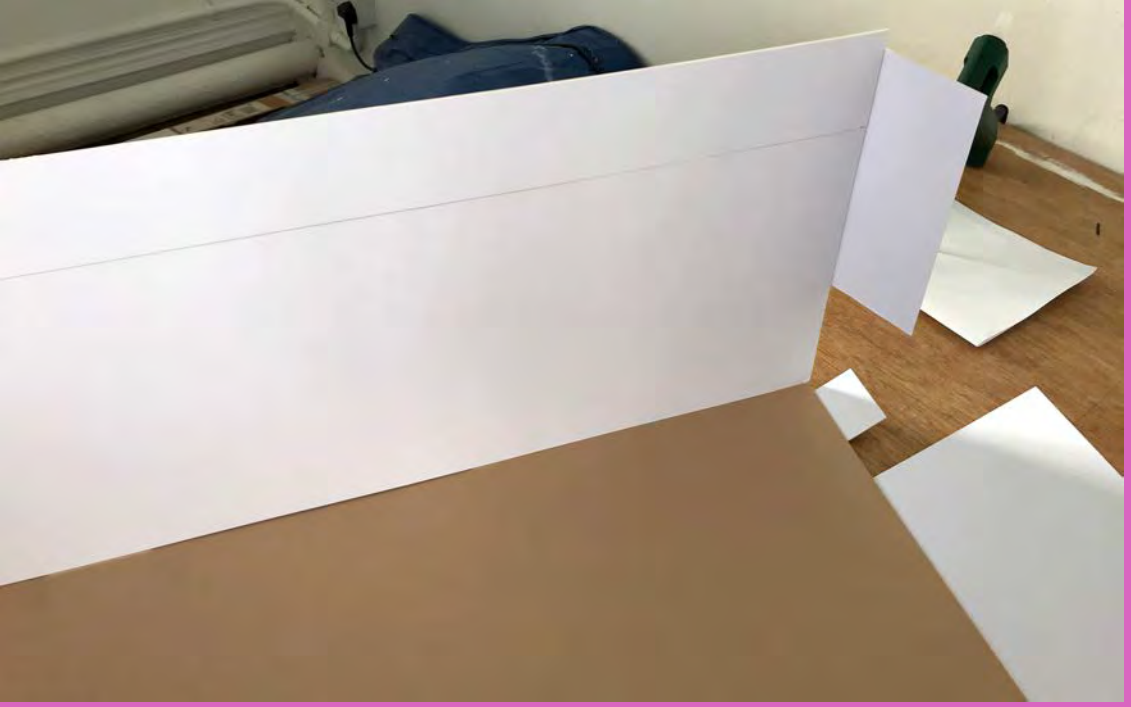
Gently cut (but not right through!) board at a right angle

I glued the corners to the floor section of the model using a glue gun, as it dries quickly

And for gallery 1:

I used the actual wall of my studio as support when attaching the first model wall

Be careful not to attach corners where there will be a door opening.



Gallery 4

Before adding the next model wall I glued a corner to the already attached wall.

I aligned the new wall carefully before applying glue.

I didn't try to fix all corners at once; but rather one after the other.

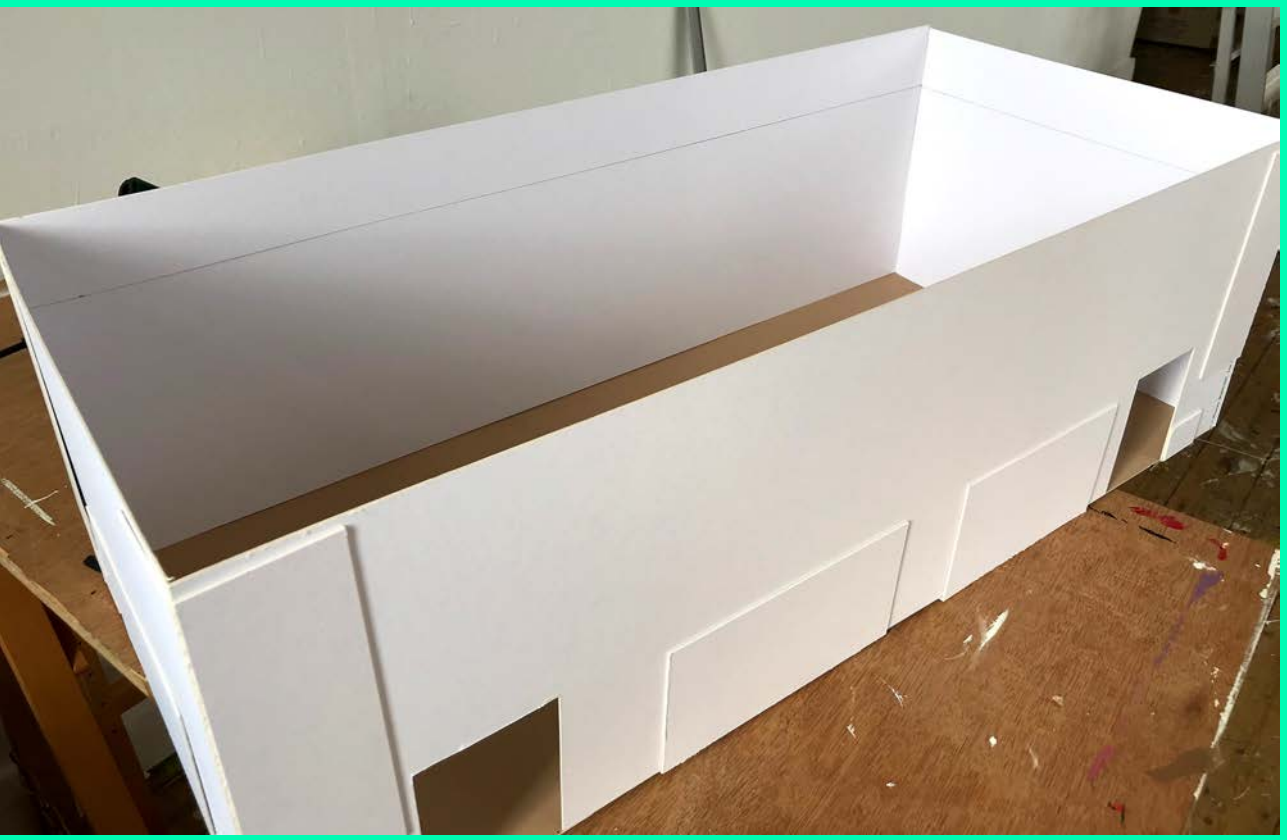
This was because glue applied with a gun dries incredibly fast.

Gallery 1

I don’t need more details – the model is finished!

Gallery 4

I don’t need more details –
the model is finished!



The floor plan for gallery 4 gave details re the height to the top of the ceiling, and the height to the suspended ceiling.

I decided to go with the height to the top of the ceiling for the model walls, and to draw a line where the suspended ceiling would be.

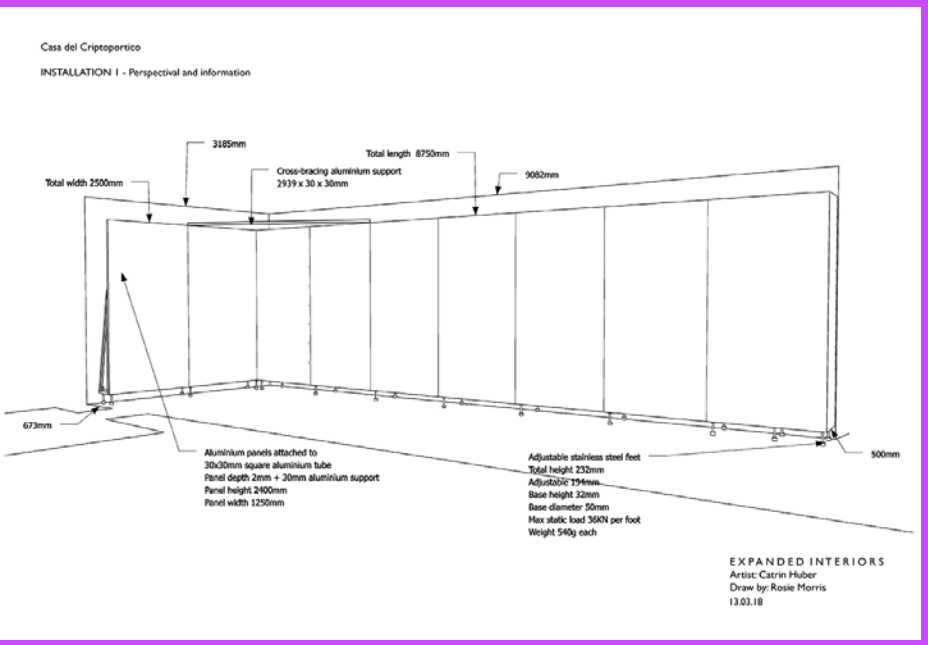
I drew the line before assembling the model.

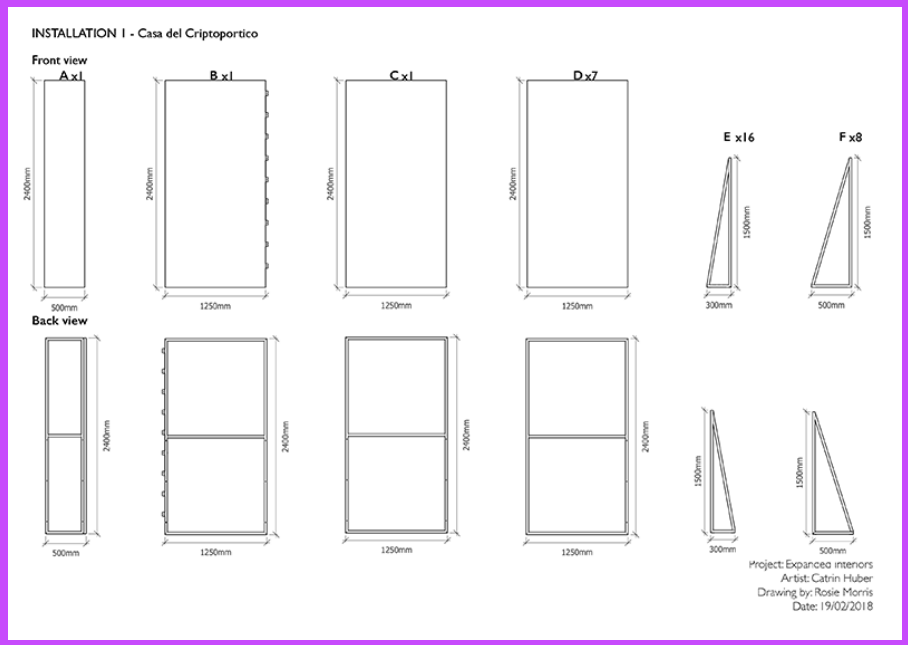
Gallery 1 and 4 will feature previous installations of mine (see slides 11 and 12).

Using the fabrication drawings for the original artworks, I calculated the measurements for the artwork models

(re calculations: see slides 16 + 17)

Fabrication drawings for installation for gallery 1

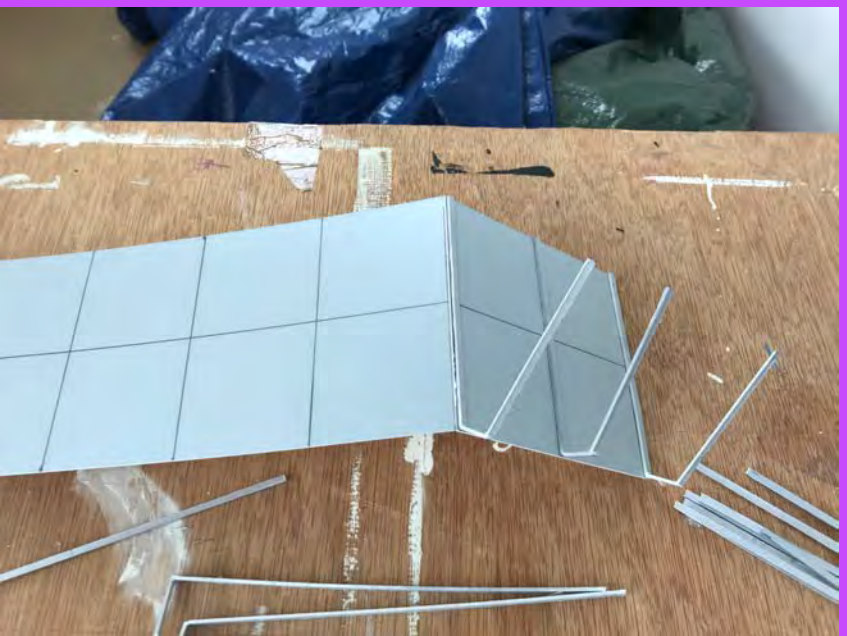




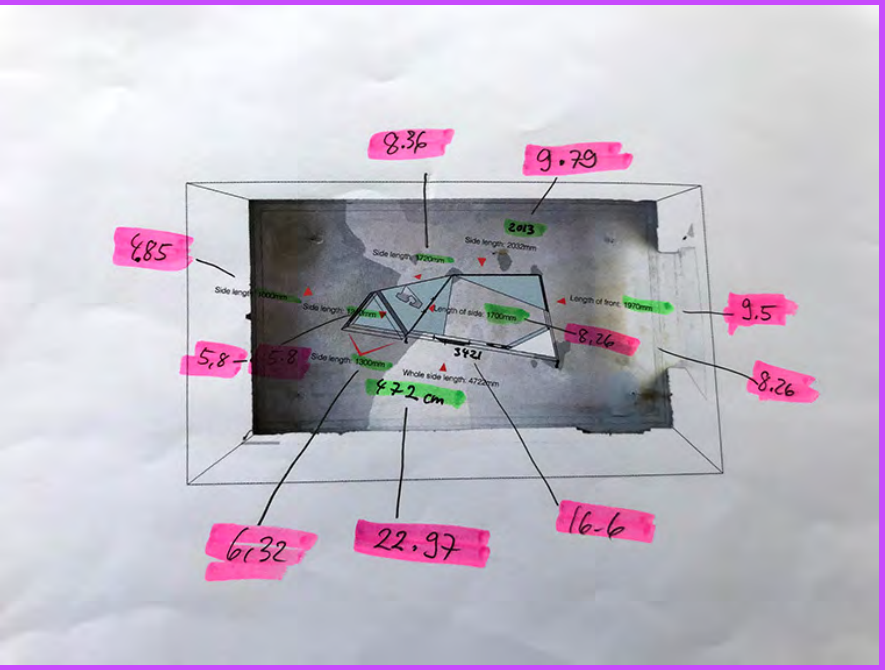
Artist: Catrin Huber Fabrication drawings: Rosie Morris

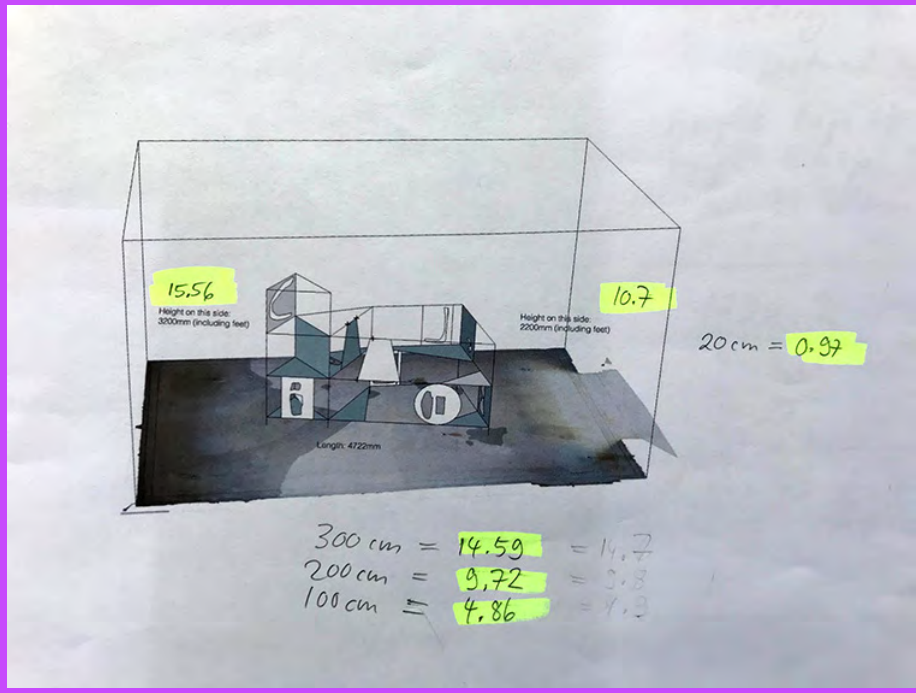
With all the calculations done, I transferred them onto the mounting board.

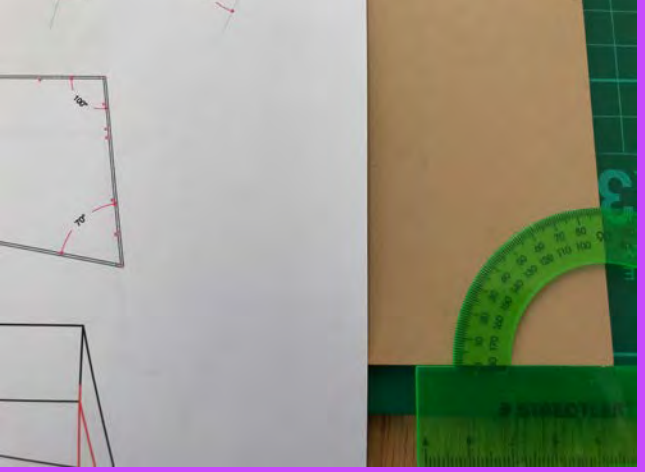
As the original artwork is painted on aluminium panels, I used silver mounting board.



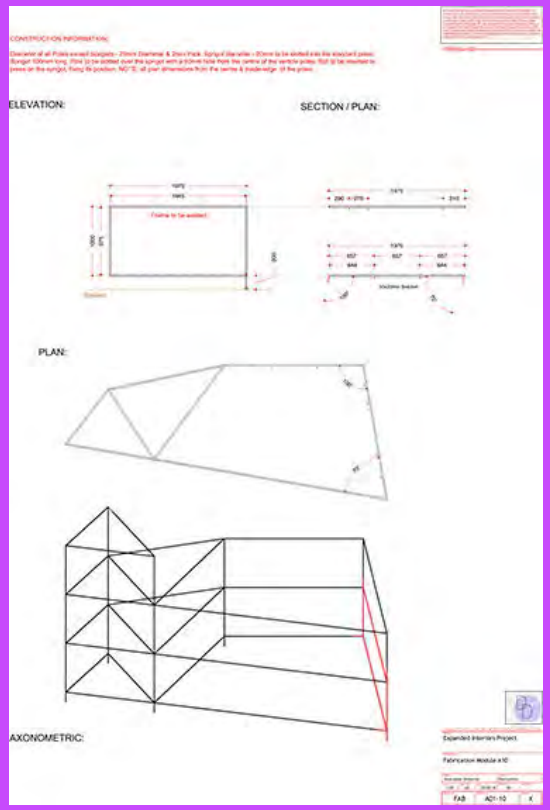
To calculate the measurements for the artwork model for gallery 4, I used Sketch-up and fabrication drawings for the original artwork:





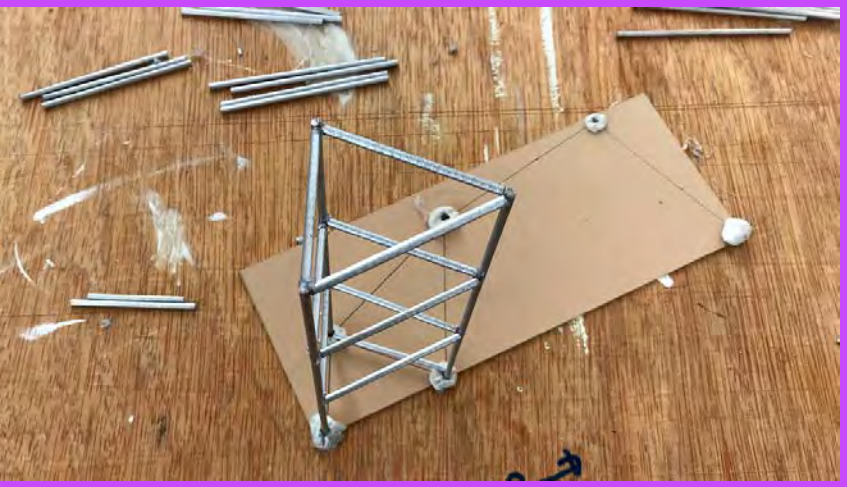


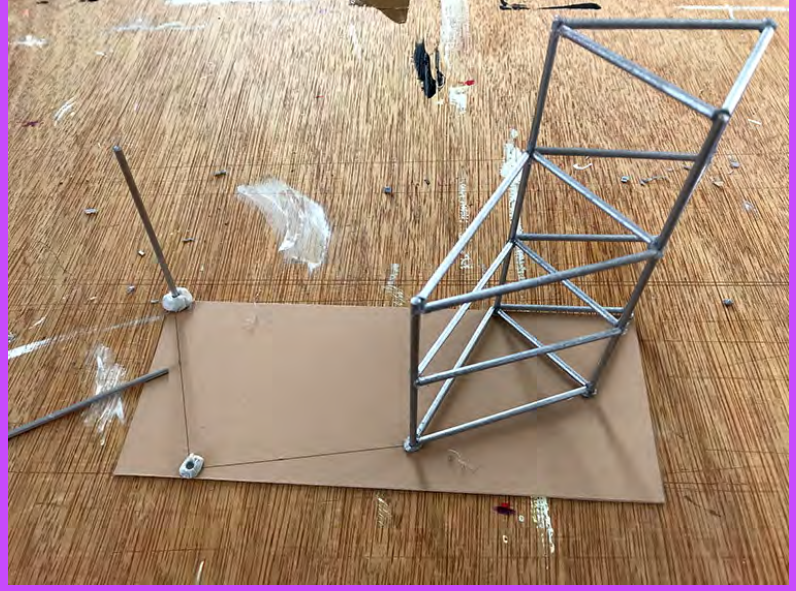
I used a set of fabrication drawings to draw the floor plan for the artwork model for gallery 4

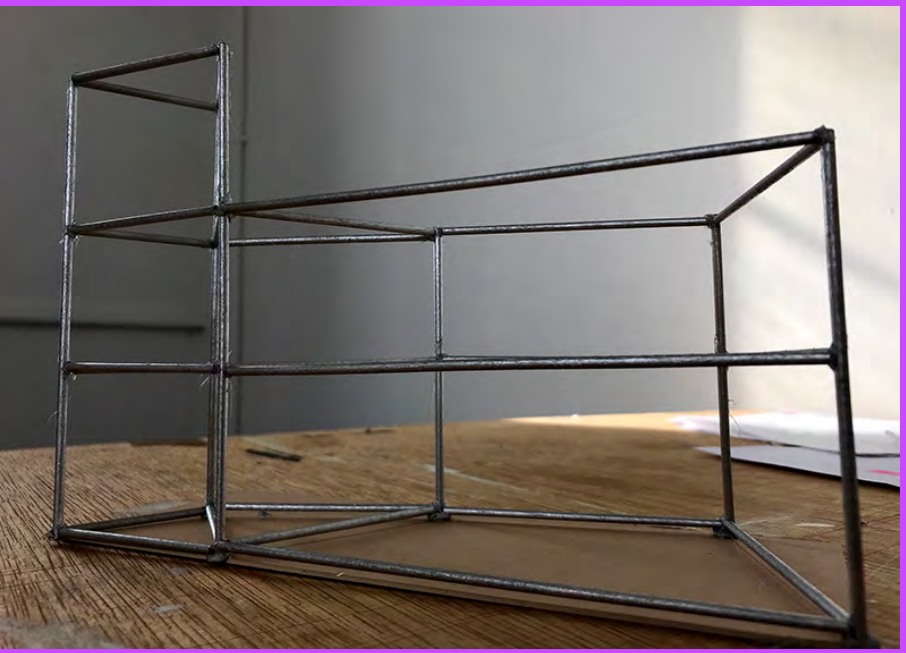


Artist: Catrin Huber
Fabrication drawings: Daniel Duffield

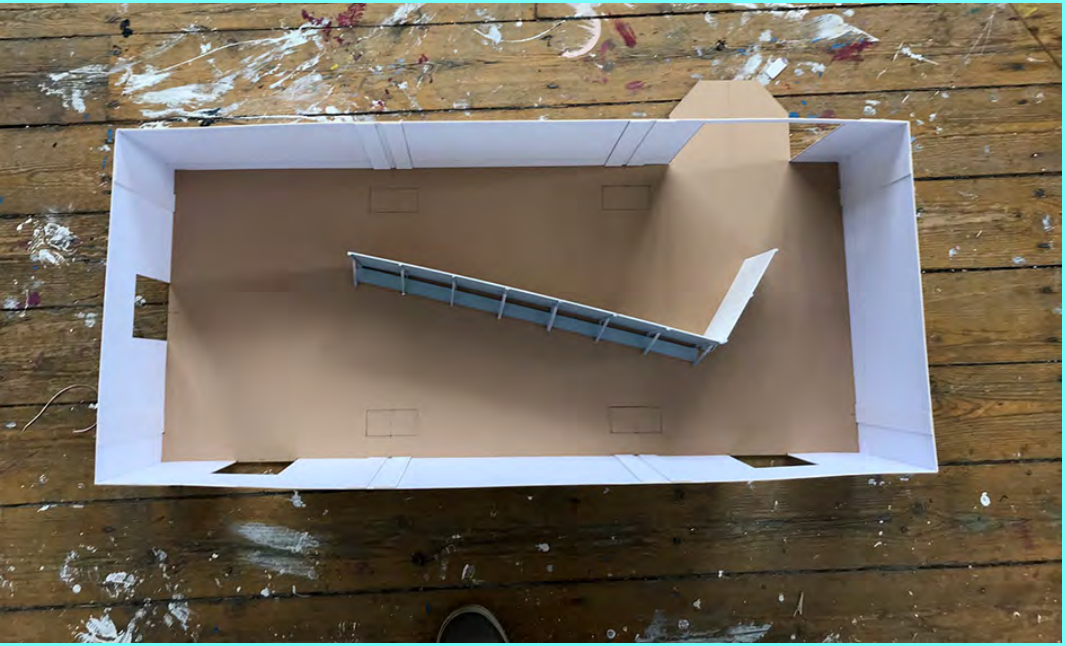
Work in progress…



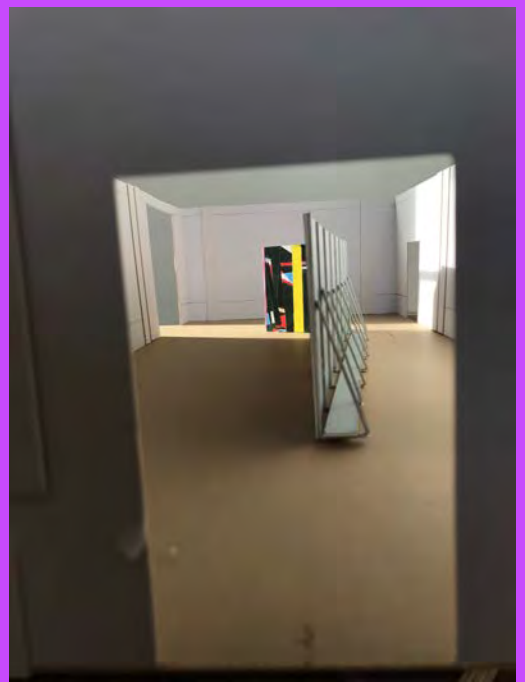




Gallery 1 with artwork model



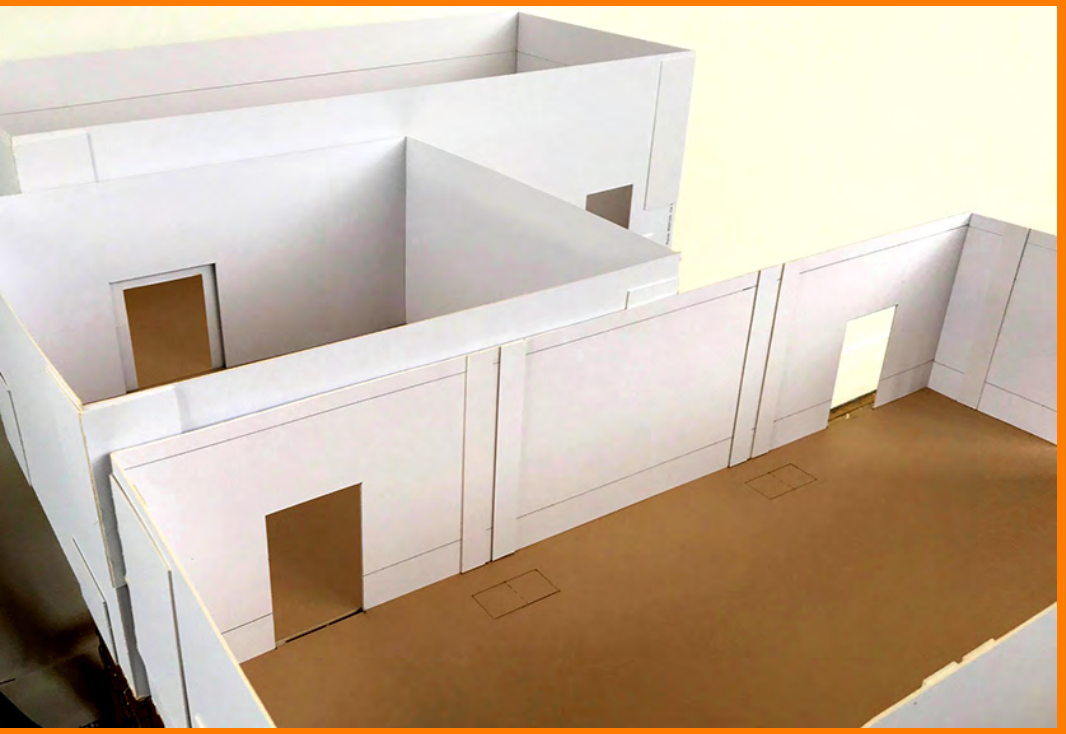
Gallery 4 with artwork model



And with drawings of the original paintings attached to the constructions

This is a model of the reception room at Casa del Bel Cortile in Herculaneum. Rosie Morris made this model with cardboard and prints from 3D scans taken in the Roman house:

Please note Rosie's elegant solution with 'flipped' edges!



What kind of model will be useful for you?


Carla’s model, 8 years old

Now, make YOUR own special model of a room or an exhibition space

Please do share your models with us at our Sculpture and Installation Forum on the 25th November, 5-6pm

Sculpture and Installation Forum:
https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/sculptureandinstallation/