

Murder in miniature

Bouchard, Gianna

DOI:

[10.1080/13528165.2019.1671724](https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2019.1671724)

License:

None: All rights reserved

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Bouchard, G 2019, 'Murder in miniature', *Performance Research*, vol. 24, no. 5, pp. 93-100.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2019.1671724>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Publisher Rights Statement:

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Performance Research* on 21/11/2019, available online:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/13528165.2019.1671724>

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

Murder in Miniature

Gianna Bouchard

The scene is a mid-1940s domestic kitchen: the sink contains a pan, with some potatoes on the drainer and residual peelings; the table is being used to cook on, with a mixing bowl, canned food, rolling pin and bread-board laid out; the blue gas stove has an oven door that is open, with a cake perched on it, ready to be removed; the ironing board is in use, with laundry in a basket next to it and a pile of neatly folded sheets on a chair by a door; there's an open fridge, with foodstuffs inside, including milk and a cabbage, a dining table with high-backed benches, two windows complete with curtains and, through the windows, a washing line with hankies and knitted garments hanging from wooden pegs outside. The room is decorated with wallpaper above a dado rail. A mop is leaning in one corner. There are pots and jars on the dresser and dishcloths and rugs in place and keys in the locks of the doors. In other words, there is every conceivable detail to this mid-twentieth century American kitchen. It's a busy household tableau, capturing multiple chores in process and ongoing domestic labour—a scene of activity that is deeply familiar. The room is comfortable but functional. Looking more closely, the room is made a little strange by a seemingly out-of-place knife lying on the pile of freshly folded laundry, and the tablecloth is skewed on the dining table. More out of kilter is that one of the doors to the room is stuffed with newspaper all along its edges, as though keeping out a draft, with the remains of the paper abandoned inside the room, by the chair with the laundry and the knife. Finally, there lies the wreckage of the housewife, Robin Barnes, lying prone by the cooker. She is wearing an apron over a polka dot dress, her hair carefully arranged out of her face. She has an oven glove on her left hand, and she appears to have dropped a metal tray or can, which lies next to her; she seems to have collapsed mid-task. This is the body of Robin Barnes, found by her husband, Fred, who had left the house for about an hour and a half to go on an errand on the afternoon of Tuesday 11 April 1944. On his return, he found the front and back doors locked, as well as the kitchen windows. When he looked through the window, he 'saw what appeared to be my wife lying on the floor' and he promptly sent for the police (Botz 2004: 181).

The details of the scene are extraordinary in terms of their verisimilitude, the diorama captivating in its miniature scale that is dolls' house size (that is, one inch to

one foot). It could be a stage design, but attending to the smallest of details, including doors and windows with working locks, curtains that can be closed and bars of real soap. Made by Frances Glessner Lee in the 1930s and 1940s as part of a series of eighteen crime scene models, this particular one is called 'Kitchen' and is a miniature version of the kind of environment that a police officer or detective might encounter when called to a murder scene and that they will need to decipher. Accompanying each model is some basic information, including the name(s) of the deceased, the name of a key witness and a short statement from them, plus details of who reported the crime and when. These Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death (hereafter referred to as the Nutshell Studies) were created by Glessner Lee to help improve crime-scene investigation in America and named as such 'after a well-known police saying: "Convict the guilty, clear the innocent, and find the truth in a nutshell"' (27). They were made by hand by Glessner Lee and a carpenter to exacting levels of mimetic realism, capturing a range of domestic scenes that incorporate the wreckage of corporeal violence. Such brutality is enacted, mostly, on female victims in these models, in bathrooms, in bedrooms, in an attic, on a porch and in a parsonage parlour. Based on real-life scenes but embellished by Glessner Lee to stage more complex pedagogic scenarios for investigative training practice, they are still in use to instruct police officers in crime, or unexplained death, forensic processing. This essay will consider how the Nutshell Studies function as forensic tools by focusing on their performative aspects. Such performativity is tied to their relations to action, to the live and embodied, and to space and time, and that generate specific modes of spectatorial engagement. Drawing also on the work of Forensic Architecture, it will be argued that forensic models deliberately provoke certain kinds of looking and speaking that relate to futurity, to collective discourse and being-with victims in empathetic ways. When forensic models are used as forms of legal and judicial evidence, they utilize performative re-stagings to allow police and prosecutors to speak and act through substitutive processes that are reminiscent of theatrical practices. In this sense, the idea of wreckage being deployed in this writing relates to the scene of the crime, to violence and death. Each of Glessner Lee's models captures a form of domestic and bodily wreckage—bodies splayed, blood spattered, furniture smashed.

Model(ling) making

There are intimate connections between models, modelling and theatre, through their shared conceptual basis and practices as representational forms, which depend upon mimesis and display. In the theatre, the model can be a literal object—a tool—in the form of a three-dimensional model set design. In their analysis of such models for the theatre, design theorists Thea Brejzek and Lawrence Wallen compare architectural models with theatrical ones. They argue that the latter always include space and time as principal elements because of their relationship to live performance, where they will eventually be realized (2018: 13). As tools to create future scenographic spaces, there is an in-built acknowledgement of embodied practice in these models of stage settings. Conceptually, the model can also suggest a philosophical approach that considers the theatre as a space for trying ideas and modelling certain kinds of histories, politics, practices and ways of being. In this sense, the model can be exemplary and aspirational. The use of scale in art, therefore, is not necessarily just concerned with aesthetic choices but can be political, in terms of thinking about relationality and meaning for the viewer. According to art critic Eli Anapur, scale is concerned with ratios of artworks and representations to human size and can have a significant impact on spectatorship (2016). In his book on miniatures, Simon Garfield further elaborates that, for artists, the production of miniatures ‘encourages greater scrutiny and deeper participation’ in the object (2018: 2). Put another way, the small-scale does something; it has the ability to actuate certain things in the maker and the viewer. It is this provocation to action that will be explored here as a fundamentally performative feature of the Nutshell Studies, the forensic models.

Glessner Lee clearly viewed her models as scientific artefacts, rather than toys or craft work. They were to be used within professional contexts to develop forensic investigative methods. As scientific models, they were not ‘simply a reflection or a copy of some state of affairs’ but they were supposed to be ‘model[s] of action’ (Wartofsky 1979: xv). This distinguishes the Nutshell Studies from conventional dolls’ houses, in that they have a purpose as fictionalized examples of forensic scenes and of judicial evidence. In this capacity as simulations and prompts to action, they stage the wreckage of domestic scenes of violence, whether suicide or murder. Distinguished, but not entirely divorced, from the conventions and expectations of the dolls’ house, the slaughter within these models is unexpected

and adds a frisson of horror to the moment of looking into the tiny rooms and spaces. Literary critic Susan Stewart argues that the traditional dolls' house excludes 'contamination and crudeness' as part of its tightly scaled control over the 'boundaries of space and time' (1999: 63). Glessner Lee exploded this normative containment, staging murder in miniature and crochet, putting death at the centre of the toy. It is the appearance of this displaced wreckage that heightens the immediate theatricality of the models and evokes certain tensions in their representational form. As re-imagined and reconstructed forensic evidence, the models operate through performative modes that engender particular ways of active looking and encourage dialogue. This essay uses the models to consider more closely these effects and thereby interrogate the relations between forensic models, performativity and spectatorship.

At the time of Glessner Lee's model making, forensic science was still in its infancy and she was keen to advance its use and development by police investigators, to the point of constructing the Nutshell Studies as training models. Embellishing the models with short excerpts of imaginary testimonial evidence, her focus was firmly on the materiality of unexplained scenes of death. Her detective was expected to engage with the miniature objects, bodies and traces in each room in order to identify the likely cause of death and the laboratory techniques most likely to help to finally solve the staged scene. In terms of the law, evidence is the bedrock of judicial processes; it is 'law's epistemology', helping to establish 'what the law knows, or what can be known' (Biber 2019: 3). In the courtroom, evidence must be divulged, exhibited, framed and understood in relation to the case being presented by the prosecution or the defence. It is often contested material, although that derived from scientific analysis is argued to be less open to interpretation. In Katherine Biber's analysis of archived criminal evidence, she describes the use of evidence as part of 'legal storytelling', where its artefacts 'provide the props and the protagonists' to each case (4). Evidence then plays a crucial part in the performativity of the law and Glessner Lee embedded aspects of this in her detailed models. They create evidentiary worlds from rooms containing the minutiae of everyday life in the 1940s. In this way, such models can be cosmopoietic or world-making, suspended in time at the moment when violence is discovered at their centre (Brejzek and Wallen 2018: 11). They are frozen at the point when the imaginary first witness enters the scene, a visual document that the trainee detective

can study and pick apart for clues as to what might have happened prior to death. Unlike the dolls' house, which is often a sanitized domestic space, each model is imbued with action reflecting domestic life up to the point of sudden death. The created world is in process and radically disrupted by the intrusion of violence visited on the victim. In the kitchen, for instance, the scene conveys a busy space, where multiple acts have been underway prior to death—cooking, peeling, washing and ironing. In this moment of stasis resides the theatricality of each scene; there is a kind of unnaturalness to the pause in motion, the stoppage of life, that allows the detective to figuratively wander among the detritus of each violent act.

But the element of time, and therefore duration, identified by Brejzek and Wallen in the set design model, is interrupted in the Nutshell Studies and the future passes to the investigator, who must continue in the space but in a different temporality. Each model is like a photograph or a still from a film in this way; there is a kind of frozen animation at work in the tableau. Glessner Lee herself acknowledged this filmic quality to the work, noting that these were the most “effective” moment[s]’ to capture, given their forensic purpose (Garfield 2018: 127). The forensic task is to unpick the world of the unexplained death and to work backwards in time. Solutions come from deconstructing and fragmenting the evidence in the model in order to find cause and effect through a process of reversal. But this is not a simple act of undoing, as a model’s cosmopoietic capacity emerges from an excess of meaning, a familiar argument from theories of representation, including about theatre (Brejzek and Wallen 2018: 15). Beyond the materiality of the model, other, more intangible, meanings accrue from such things as its atmosphere, aesthetics and symbolic elements, all of which manifest this facility to create and stage worlds (ibid.). Such excess, however, seems counter to the scientific ambition of the Nutshell Studies, where ideas of objectivity, clarity and analytical incisiveness appear to be obfuscated by the clutter of home life, by the specificity of locale and historical context, and by the shock of violence permeating each scene. But this, of course, is the point—that the models should convey more than they intend in order to mimic domestic crime scenes, where the police and other experts must learn to cut through any surplus information to reach the ‘truth’ of each case through the accumulation of forensic evidence.

As cosmopoietic objects, the models also stand alone; they are not constructions to be replicated at full scale in the future, operating as design

templates to be copied, but they are complete in themselves. Thus, as ‘autonomous’ models, they are conceived of as ‘singular experiential and performative space[s]’ (18). This simultaneously suggests a shift in the ‘relationship between model, viewer and environment, from a focus on what the model is to what it does’ (ibid., emphasis in original). This active, world-making capacity of the models was at the heart of Glessner Lee’s project as she sought to enable and encourage the emerging field of forensic detection in the mid-twentieth century. Thus, the models’ performativity determined how they were viewed and their affect. She situated the dioramas at the centre of police training through the inauguration of annual seminars on forensics at the Harvard Law School, involving expert presentations, a formal dinner and work with the models by the assembled detectives.^[note]¹ The Nutshell Studies presented forensic puzzles to be untangled—models that open the way to ‘experimentation’, which is not merely abstract but that has to be performed through active, future-oriented engagement (Wartofsky 1979: 148).

Model(ling) looking

Glessner Lee understood the need to promote forensic thinking through particular kinds of looking and this is fostered through the performativity of her models—reducing the scale of the scenes does something fundamental to that gaze. As is the case with all miniatures, their smallness encourages up-close scrutiny, to see the detail in the object. According to Garfield, Glessner Lee’s own ideas on how a detective should look at her models were very specific: ‘The intention... was to start at the top of each model and observe the contents in an inwardly swirling clockwise motion, progressing slowly to ensure nothing would be missed, and ending with the body at the centre’ (2018: 123). This active, searching, spiralling gaze had also to be durational in order to identify all the clues. Glessner Lee suggested that about ninety minutes spent looking at each model would be sufficient time to notice the vital information and particulars of each scene. The interrogatory view replicates that offered when looking at a traditional dolls’ house, with its fixed frontal aspect. The dolls’ house is usually viewed through the façade of the building hinging outwards to reveal the rooms inside. The Nutshell Studies similarly have (at least) one wall removed, the same viewpoint established by the realist stage, with the proscenium

arch framing the spectator's look and directing it to penetrate the invisible fourth wall to see the action unfold in another set of model domestic spaces.

The view of the dolls' house is likely to be thought of as one involving mastery of the object, as the eye consumes all it can see from a position of dominating surveillance. The Nutshell Studies models offer an apparently similar totalizing view; each scene, or at least each room, can be looked at and absorbed in one go, from a viewpoint not possible in real life. Time is frozen but the space is navigable by the eye. Instead of encouraging visual supremacy as an aspect of forensic looking, however, Glessner Lee proposed a rather different spectatorial approach to her models, involving an activity of projection on the part of the detective (who is resolutely male). She suggested that '[t]he inspector may best examine them by imagining himself a trifle less than six inches tall' (Botz 2004: 47). Instead of approaching the model as a thing to be mastered and objectified, the investigator needed to imaginatively transpose themselves into a miniature figure in order to more fully access the room and its evidence. It is as though Glessner Lee wanted her detectives to creatively feel what it was like in each space, as if they were at the same scale and able to encounter each victim on their own terms. To accept her proposition that these are scientific models suggests that this imagined, miniaturized spectatorship runs counter to this ambition, where a more objective approach might usually be encouraged. Historians of science Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison claim that the idea of objective knowledge is that it 'bears no trace of the knower—knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skill, fantasy or judgment, wishing or striving' (2010: 17). The Nutshell Studies detective is, however, required to cognitively collapse distance and immerse themselves in the diorama, through fantastical projection, which will enable him to get closer, empathetically and forensically, to solving the 'unexplained death'. Such striking use of empathy and imagination in the forensic scene is a kind of being-with the victims, transposing the self into the space of the model in order to retroactively understand the presented circumstances from a number of angles. The conventional narrative of forensic detection is undone in the models, where the ultimate solving of the crime is not the point of the practice. The models were 'designed as exercises in observing and evaluating indirect evidence' (Glessner Lee cited in Botz 2004: 47). Glessner Lee was particularly concerned that detectives should identify clues that were related to forensic, in other words scientific, investigation and that they should learn when laboratory techniques would

be useful and necessary in getting to the truth. Thus, while the models promote thought and analysis through their performative stagings, they do not offer a view that can be subjugated through intellectual domination. Rather, the models are open-ended and require collaboration to be completed, via an acknowledgement that other skills and knowledges are necessary to reach further conclusions. The spectatorship promoted by the models is inquisitive and empathetic, instead of being predicated on mastery and subjection.

To play the game and attend to the minutiae of the models will inevitably draw attention to the socio-economic conditions of the victims in their domestic circumstances. Unlike traditional dolls' houses with their opulent decoration and obvious displays of faux wealth, these scenes of violence are set in more working-class environments. Some of them display furniture, flooring and wall coverings that are faded and worn, dishes are chipped, blinds are broken, rooms are cramped and ash trays overflow. There is one diorama of a woodman's shack, where a deceased lumberjack has been found, a farmer is dead in his barn and death is staged in a saloon and a jail; these are ordinary people, going about their daily lives and work, until violence intervenes and wrecks the quotidian. The fact that Glessner Lee staged mostly women as victims of violence in these homes is marked by many as a clearly feminist statement, but their class and relative impoverishment also deserve critical attention (beyond the obvious contrast with Glessner Lee's own privileged background). In her essay on 'situated knowledges', philosopher of science and technology Donna Haraway explores the political potentiality of the 'vantage point of the subjugated' (1988: 583). This is the epitome of her idea of the partial perspective because such viewpoints 'seem to promise more adequate, sustained, objective, transforming accounts of the world', which are able to see through the pretence of godlike vision (584). It might be that the Nutshell Studies and other forensic models offer a particular form of optics as a 'politics of positioning', through trying to undermine the normative locus of the 'dominator' in subtle ways (586). Through an imagined embodiment that aligns with miniature working-class women in their homes, the models performatively, and temporarily, position male detectives as relational and embodied subjects.

Returning to the alleged scientific purpose of the models raises another contradiction in their creation, that of their specifically crafted nature. They were made by hand and there are marvellous anecdotes of Glessner Lee wearing outfits

tirelessly to give them the right appearance in a model, as she re-fashioned her own clothes for the victims. She re-purposed household objects, meticulously selected wallpaper and fabrics and searched for specific items from professional dolls' house makers. Her driving motivation was to make credible scenes to sustain the pedagogical imperative through the mimetic illusions of accuracy and authenticity. In order to do the same with staging the bodies within the models, she observed autopsies and studied crime scenes, transposing those insights onto her victims and 'performing a kind of domestic surgery' on the figures (Botz 2004: 34). Forensic science clashes with needlework—the victim in the kitchen scene described earlier, for instance, has the pallor associated with carbon monoxide poisoning. Garfield makes the point that most model-making has long depended on the amateur, toiling away on unique objects and escaping capitalist modes of production—they are labour-intensive, inimitable scenes (2018: 5–6). Haraway's 'politics of positioning' is inflected through the charm of the handmade and the knitted rubbing up against the scientific demands of forensics and the staging of death. Pleasure and discomfort in viewing these models comes from the sight of extraordinary technical accomplishment in the representation of the smallest of details and the frisson caused by seeing such dedication applied to scenes of physical demise and wreckage. For the trainee detective, the models promote a form of active, embodied looking that is directed at physical evidence and activated by their performative content and scale. But the models also require more than embodied vision to become useful forensic tools—they need to be presented and performed to others to become persuasive evidentiary artefacts.

Model(ling) speech

The early part of the twenty-first century has seen the emergence of the field of forensic architecture in the UK, particularly via the founding of the agency of the same name. The general practice of forensic architecture focuses on 'the production of architectural evidence and... its presentation in juridical and political forums' (Weizman 2018: 9). A lead practitioner and advocate for the significance of this field is Eyal Weizman, founder of Forensic Architecture in 2010, from a unit at Goldsmiths, University of London. Weizman's group includes architects, filmmakers, scientists and lawyers who collaborate on cases in order to 'investigate state and

corporate violence, especially when it bears upon the built environment' (9). Commissioned by international lawyers and human rights organizations, among others, they submit evidence to tribunals, commissions and trials that includes animations, video analyses, building surveys and architectural models. Weizman proposes that their approach is 'counter-forensic', partly because, in their work, state actors have more information, data and surveillance mechanisms than the group and partly because they reflect the 'forensic gaze' back onto the state. This is contrary to the founding principles of forensic investigation that uphold the idea that the detection of crime can only be successfully accomplished by the state eventually seeing and knowing more than the criminal (30). In the case of Forensic Architecture, the group deal instead with nation-states as the alleged criminals in a profound reversal of forensic logic, leading them 'to engage a condition of structural inequality in access to vision, signals, and knowledge' (ibid.). Basically, a nation or government will have access to the full detail of an authorized drone strike, for instance, which Forensic Architecture aims to re-construct in the aftermath of destruction with drastically inferior resources. In re-building a site through graphics and various forms of media, they can demonstrate the truth of an act of state-sanctioned military violence, for instance, through its impact on buildings and landscapes. In 2018 they were nominated for the Turner Prize, a major art competition that involved an exhibition of their (case) work at the Tate Britain gallery in London.

Weizman argues that the approach of Forensic Architecture re-invests in the link between testimony and evidence that forensic science tends to deny. Conventionally, forensics tends to focus almost exclusively on material traces and scientifically valid forms of proof, rather than what people involved in a crime say or remember. For the agency, the recollection of witnesses can be central to the building of a case, as they use such testimony to create and finesse their architectural models and animations. Weizman calls this kind of architectural work 'mnemonic' in the way that it can help to reconstruct traumatic events (58). The Nutshell Studies are clearly not counter-forensic in the terms outlined by Weizman, but they are architectural in their staging of death within domestic, built environments. Glessner Lee based each model on an extant case, using testimony and crime-scene evidence to build her miniature scenes. Detectives are then presented with a witness statement and the materiality of each model on which to

build their investigation. Both instances—the Nutshell Studies and the work of Forensic Architecture—use architectural models in forensic contexts in combination with speech as a key component of the process and performativity of criminal investigation. Both incorporate the speech of witnesses in their groundwork, to set and test each scene, and both also prioritize speaking the wreckage in the final stages of their forensic processes.

The work of the detective studying one of the Nutshell Studies involved acts of forensic looking and imagination already examined, and the last step of that investigation required speaking their findings. Glessner Lee established the Harvard Seminars on Legal Medicine in 1945, with her models at the centre of these gatherings, which lasted for a week. They included expert presentations on forensic topics and analysis of two of the models for the requisite ninety minutes each. Following intense scrutiny of a miniature and note-taking of their findings, the detectives would then share that information with the rest of the participants (Botz 2004: 29). The forensic evidence had to be presented to the gathered forensic experts, focusing on any significant features of the scenes and proposing hypothetical scenarios for each unexplained death. In this way, the miniatures exemplify the idea that scientific models are performative in their drive to action, being ‘embodiments of purpose and, at the same time, instruments for carrying out such purposes’ (Wartofsky 1979: 142). Part of this purpose relies on the generation of discourse to produce forms of legal truth, predicated on material evidence. On encountering an exhibit of the models at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 2017, writer Nicole Cooley indirectly remarks on their continuing power to provoke dialogue, even outside of the specialist environment of police training: ‘On my several visits, I stood in crowds of people, in the dark, sharing small flashlights—one provided for each diorama. Everyone was trying to solve the crimes. The gallery buzzed with voices’ (2018). Forensic Architecture similarly depends on modes of ‘forensic speech’, which usually require a triadic relation between ‘three elements: an object or building “made to speak”, an expert who functions as the translator from the “language of objects” to that of people, and the forum or assembly in which such claims can be made’ (Weizman 2018: 67). Activating such models through speech and their presentation to others is part of their performative aspect, which coincides in these examples with the workings of forensis.

Weizman's group has found particular significance in returning to the etymological and historical roots of forensics in the Latin word forensis, meaning 'pertaining to the forum' (65). As a place of political speech-making, disputation and trials, the Roman forum depended on presenting various kinds of evidence to a gathered audience for the purposes of persuasion. Small objects could be presented in their material form to a crowd but more abstract, large-scale or distant things 'had to be made vivid by the power of representation or aural demonstration' (ibid.). In these instances, those presenting were encouraged by orators, such as Quintilian, to use prosopopoeia, the rhetorical device of giving voice to, or speaking on behalf of, inanimate things. The presenter needed to conjure what could not be directly seen or experienced in the forum in order to convince those gathered of the veracity of a set of arguments or claims. As an example, this device is obviously at work in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar when Mark Anthony gives voice to the body and wounds of the dead Caesar in order to persuade the crowd to take revenge for his death (3.2.255—263). It becomes Anthony's task to animate and speak on behalf of these wounds as a way to establish the attackers as murderers, with this accusatory moment occurring in the environs of the forum. He enters with the body of Caesar, the physical evidence, and delivers his oration over the corpse.

Part of the training initiated by Glessner Lee for the Nutshell Studies' detective required him to imagine himself into the domestic scene of death in order to then articulate those findings to others. The expert investigator would need to give voice to the household props on display—the knife, the open door of the oven and the door stuffed with newspaper detailed in the introduction—and speak on behalf of the absent husband and dead wife, evoking their activities leading up to the moment of death. As Weizman suggests, this idea remains operational in forensic practice today, where crime-scene investigators (particularly in popular cultural versions of these personnel) claim to be speaking on behalf of the dead: bodies and crime scenes are witnesses, and forensic experts are just the mediators between the evidence and the court (68). Certainly, the Nutshell Studies encouraged speaking of the wreckage but Weizman also acknowledges the erosion of the public and political aspect of forensis with its gradual removal from the forum (65). Over time, the forum has been replaced with the specialist locale of the courtroom and forensics increasingly linked with medical science. For Glessner Lee's men, the discursive element of their work was framed by the Harvard Law School, a particularly

exclusive forum. Might the excited tone of Cooley's anecdote about viewing the models in a public exhibition be partly to do with their staging in a kind of public forum?

The practice of the Forensic Architecture agency also involves a substantial element of public presentation and exhibition of their cases and investigations. In fact, the group views this part of their work as crucial to understanding and reflecting on the political and cultural context of each case. They produce 'evidence assemblages', in much the same way as the Nutshell Studies gather rooms of evidence, in order to locate all the material in 'space and study the time/space relations between them' (Weizman 2018: 134). In such instances, they find that models are easily understood by the various actors in legal cases and by the public, with whom they share the work through meetings and exhibitions (58–9). The miniature is deployed as an active, purposeful tool that assists in the recreation of traumatic sites of conflict. Returning to Wartofsky's theories relating to scientific models, they are 'more than an action; [they are] at the same time a call to action' (1979: 143). Models are not passive objects in this sense but function, as demonstrated within such forensic scenarios, to 'constitute the distinctive technology of purpose' (148). The Nutshell Studies and Forensic Architecture's models promote detailed thinking and ultimately aim to activate legal and restorative solutions in response to differing forms of human-inflicted wreckage, with performativity as a key component of this work. As Weizman argues, '[p]resenting evidence... is... the art of making claims using matter and media, code and calculation, narrative and performance' (2018: 83). The forensic models analysed here are forms of evidence presented aesthetically and performatively, engendering certain kinds of making, looking and speaking.

Notes

1 See Botz's work on the Nutshell Studies for comprehensive information about Glessner Lee, her life and the use of the models in police training.

References

Anapur, Eli (2016) 'How scale in art influences the viewing experience', Widewalls, www.widewalls.ch/scale-in-art/, 27 November, accessed 2 June 2019.

Biber, Katherine (2019) In Crime's Archive: The cultural afterlife of evidence, Oxford and New York, NY: Routledge.

Botz, Corinne May (2004) The Nutshell Studies of Unexplained Death, New York, NY: The Monacelli Press.

Brejzek, Thea and Wallen, Lawrence (2018) The Model as Performance: Staging space in theatre and architecture, London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Cooley, Nicole (2018) 'Death and feminism in a nutshell', The Paris Review, www.theparisreview.org/blog/2018/02/05/death-feminism-nutshell/, 5 February, accessed 28 May 2019.

Daston, Lorraine and Galison, Peter (2010) Objectivity, New York, NY: Zone Books.

Garfield, Simon (2018) In Miniature: How small things illuminate the world, Edinburgh: Canongate.

Haraway, Donna (1988) 'Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', Feminist Studies 14(3) (autumn): 575–99.

Shakespeare, William (1951) 'Julius Caesar', in P. Alexander (ed) The Complete Works of Shakespeare, London and Glasgow: Collins.

Stewart, Susan (1999) On Longing: Narratives of the miniature, the gigantic, the souvenir, the collection, Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press.

Wartofsky, Max W. (1979) Models: Representation and the scientific understanding, Dordrecht, Boston, MA and London: D. Reidel Publishing Company.

Weizman, Eyal (2018) Forensic Architecture: Violence at the threshold of detectability, New York, NY: Zone Books.