# Artist’s miniature Brutalist models spark renewed appreciation amid demolition threats



An artist has embarked on a mission to elevate the status of Brutalist architecture, often dismissed as unappealing, through the creation of meticulously crafted miniature models of iconic buildings. Adam Carthy, 39, the founder of Spaceplay, has tapped into a niche market that embraces the unique aesthetics and cultural significance of this architectural movement that flourished between the 1950s and 1970s.

Brutalism is marked by its bold, geometric forms and the use of raw concrete, a style that has faced rampant criticism and widespread demolition in recent years. Carthy’s project coincides with moments of significant architectural change, such as the controversial demolition of the Birmingham Central Library, a notable example of Brutalist design. His work seeks to preserve the essence of these structures, which many have come to regard as integral to Britain’s urban identity.

From his base in Balsall Heath, Birmingham, Carthy has created miniature renditions of approximately 60 buildings, including revered structures like Trellick Tower and the Alexandra Road Estate in London, as well as the University of East Anglia Library. His repertoire reaches beyond UK borders, with models of international landmarks like the Jenaro Valverde Marin Building in San Jose and Torres Blancas in Madrid. “A lot of Brutalist buildings are being demolished, neglected, and unloved,” Carthy remarked, highlighting a sense of loss for urban heritage that spans generations.

His approach is rooted in the belief that these structures deserve recognition and appreciation. He noted the excitement surrounding buildings from the 1960s and 70s, some of which have found new life and admiration, such as the Royal National Theatre and Hayward Gallery. Through his models, Carthy aims to provide not just a representation of these structures, but also a narrative that evokes memories and connections among those who encounter them. “What we are trying to do is bring attention to something that is unloved, giving it value,” he explained.

In the process of making his models, Carthy often visits the buildings to capture their essence. He described the experience of holding a miniature version of the Alexandra Road Estate against its full-sized counterpart as “magical.” His fondness for Trellick Tower is particularly strong, as he speaks of the deep connections the residents have with the structure. He shares a story about visiting with a long-time resident, noting the warmth of community spirit that permeates the space: “Everyone coming in and leaving seemed really happy.”

The creation of these models can be a lengthy process, taking anywhere from one to two months. Carthy begins with a digital model derived from architectural drawings and photographs taken during site visits. This digital file is subsequently transformed into a tangible model through resin 3D printing, mould-making, and concrete casting—a journey Carthy finds both challenging and rewarding. “Concrete is a wonderful material…it sets into a solid,” he explained, highlighting the uniqueness of each model due to the irreversible nature of the concrete-setting process.

To refine his techniques, he has embraced a variety of methods, incorporating feedback from peers and personal experimentation. As a result, he employs tools such as a vibrating table to minimise air bubbles in the concrete and a compression tank for added durability. Carthy’s dedication to his craft is reflected in his considerable success; his work has garnered attention and sales globally, with requests coming from as far afield as America and South Korea.

Through his miniature creations, Carthy aims to cultivate a sense of community among enthusiasts of Brutalism. “There’s definitely a sense of community around the love of Brutalism,” he noted, celebrating the connections formed through shared appreciation for these often-overlooked structures. By designing models that can fit comfortably in one’s hand, he facilitates a personal connection that resonates with memories tied to the real buildings. In doing so, Carthy not only champions Brutalism but also invites others to embrace and cherish the architectural legacies that define our urban landscapes.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/),
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/),
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/),
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* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/),
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/), ,
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/),

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/artist-makes-mini-versions-of-brutalist-buildings-to-champion-unloved-style-M2SU2FO4L5KALBCBJPHJRWGEEQ/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data