

## **MIZZOU**

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# 3-D walk-through

### **Constructing virtual buildings**

We all need a reality check now and then. With new technology in the College of Human Environmental Sciences, architectural studies students are getting virtual reality checks on their designs using 3-D software and big screens.

Back in the day, students and professionals alike laboriously produced two-dimensional drawings of buildings by hand, and only experts could read them fluently. Now the new generation of drawing software allows students to produce their own plans in 3-D, says Bimal Balakrishnan, assistant professor of architectural studies. Viewing designs on a computer monitor is helpful, but bigger is better.



Student Kendra Carpenter produced this computer rendering of Steven Hall's Little Tesseract House.

In the college's newly renovated room outfitted with an 18-by-6-foot rear-projection screen, an audience of 20 can sit comfortably, don 3-D glasses and participate in a virtual walk-through of a room or building.

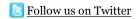
"When students are creating designs, they have to deal with a lot of abstractions," Balakrishnan says. "This technology enhances understanding of their own designs by putting them inside the project." With this sort of experience, it's much easier to spot, say, a lobby that is too small. And the technology makes it easy to communicate designs to clients.

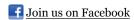
Although many colleges have 3-D labs, most are restricted to research, Balakrishnan says. "You might see this sort of 3-D technology at an elaborate car show, but the architectural industry hasn't caught up to it yet. We want to send out our graduating students ready to use it."

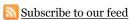
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