

USA

RHODE ISLAND
SCHOOL OF DESIGN
DEPARTMENT OF
PROVIDENCE, RI
architecture.risd.edu
bunnylounge.tumblr.com

The Rhode Island School of Design was founded by the “Women’s Centennial Committee” in 1878 on funds derived from sales at the state exhibit in the Philadelphia Exhibition of 1876. Rhode Island was the first American state to embrace industrialization, and RISD was to provide specifically for the cultural education of the emergent industrial artisan. Its founding still resonates in the School’s teaching of general visual literacy and of dialogical relationships between artifact and thought process, both as fundamental to the act of architecture.

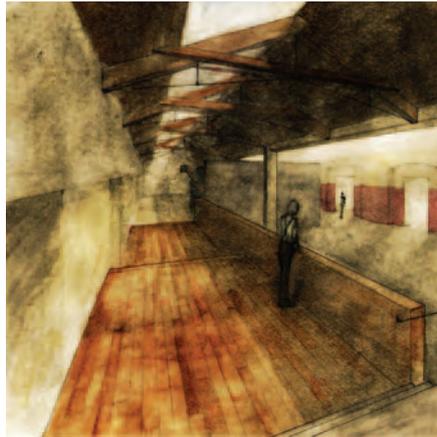
There is no ideology of technology here - logically, since the School’s existence is predicated on technology: new and old technologies coexist in support of the students’ cognition and application of knowledge.

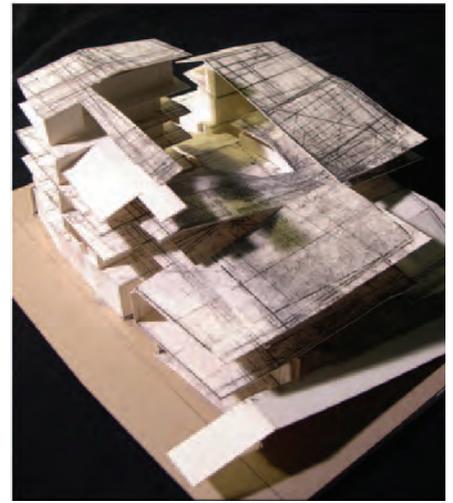
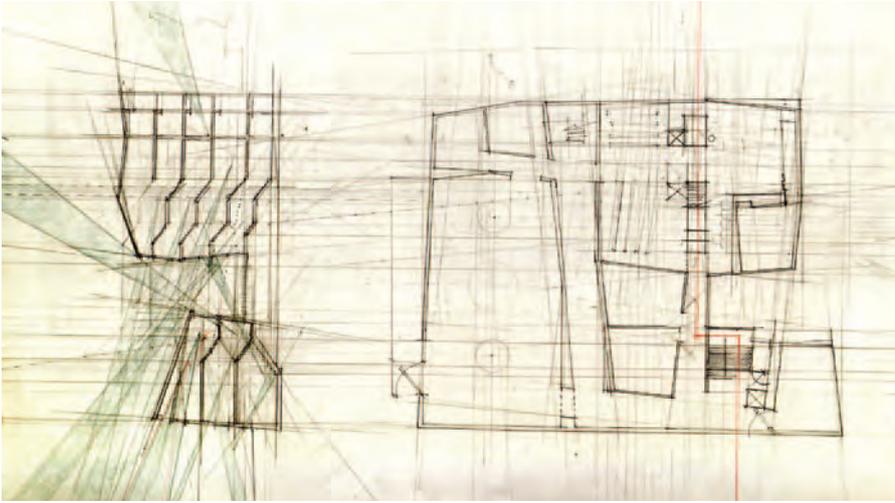
The Department of Architecture is one of the school’s largest departments, and also one of its anomalies, comprising makers who do not realize what they envision in its definitive permutation. Surrounded by the trappings of furniture makers, painters, glass artists, textile designers, digital media artists, the architects are constantly aware of their mediated relationship to their work; it is mediated not only through representation but also through labor and capital. The work included here documents the pursuit of relevance and societal location as part of the pursuit of individual significance and expression.

01

FEATURED STUDIOS: EXCESSIVE VALUES, INFRASTRUCTURAL RESERVES, BAUHAUS REVISITED, ABSTRACTION AND EMPATHY

Like the work of academic architecture itself, the projects included here represent a metonymic reprise of the artifacts, which could not be here, but have produced the dialogue upon which our specific pedagogy depends. Site and scale are deployed in these projects as conceits to test architecture’s capacity for accuracy and engagement. From local and verifiable to distant and inferred, the sites included here range from the 19th century balloon frame triple-deckers of Providence, RI; the Interstate 95 corridor which bisects the city and makes Providence a viable commute from New York; the context of Gropius’ Northeastern Modernism and its Urtext, the Bauhaus; and the culture of two lesser-known Swiss cities.





02



Lynnette Widder (b. 1963, USA) is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Architecture at RISD and a graduate of Barnard College and Columbia University. She is a partner of the architecture office *aardvarchitecture*; her articles appear in “Daidalos,” “Bauwelt,” “architecture,” “kritische Berichte”.

Matthias Bräm (b. 1962, Switzerland) is a graduate of the ETH Zurich and CEO of BWA Bausysteme. Until 2007, he was a research professor and director of the Institute for Construction-based Design at the ZFHW in Winterthur, Switzerland.

Ira Piattini (b. 1965, Switzerland) is a graduate of the ETH Zurich and a partner in Meyer Piattini Architetti.

Gabriel Feld (b. 1957, Argentina) is a Professor of Architecture at RISD and a graduate of the Universidad de Buenos Aires and Harvard University.

Abstraction and Empathy

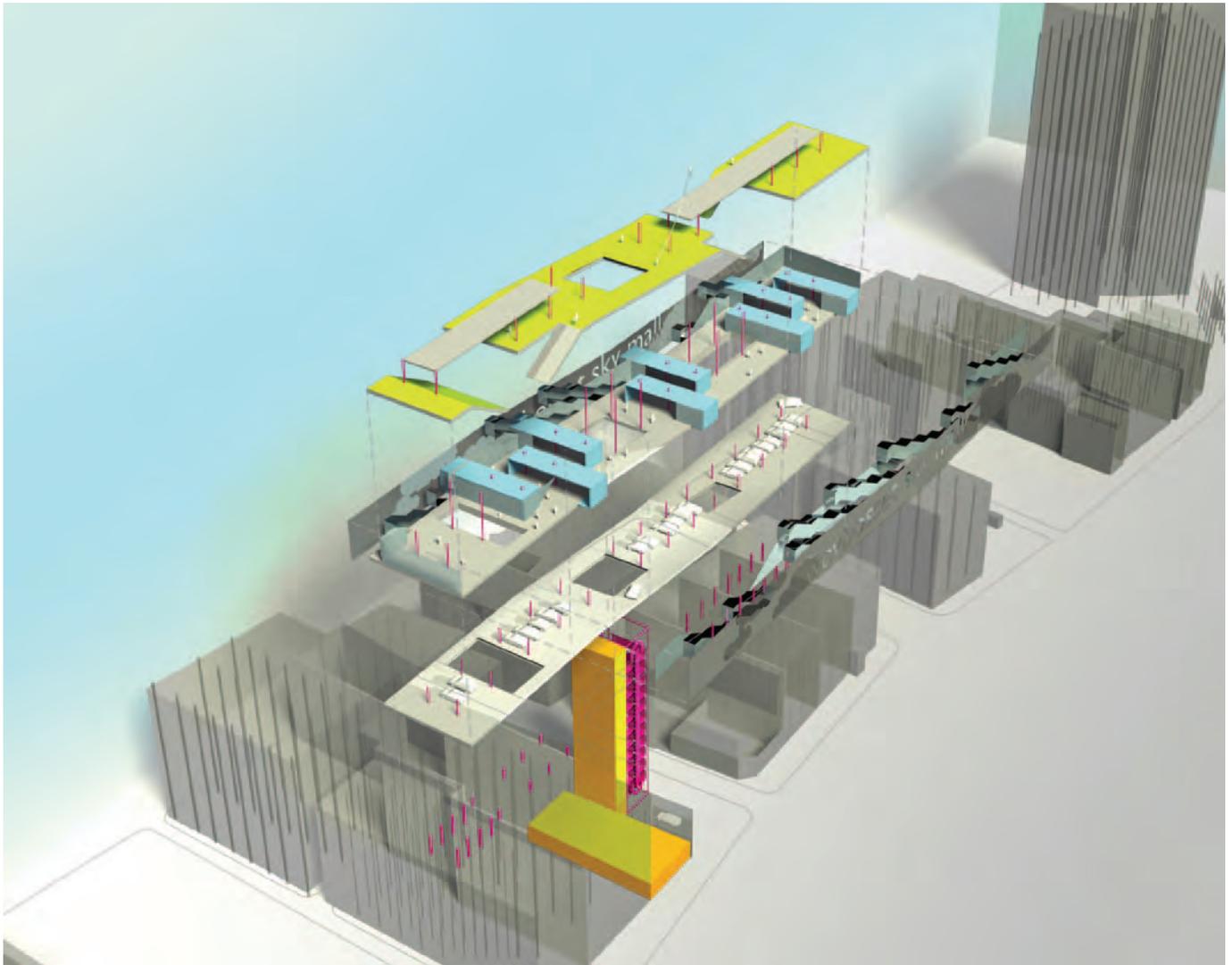
instructors: Lynnette Widder, Matthias Bräm, Ira Piattini

The studios’ projects - a reused slaughterhouse in Lugano and a new school in Lausanne - were vehicles to test abstract analytical and empathetic architectural means by deploying them on a site that could only be known second-hand. Students visited the sites just before the semester’s end for verification.

Bauhaus Revisited

instructor: Gabriel Feld

The studio looked at the Bauhaus legacy as a way to mine the interplay of artistic and cultural practices within the architecture project. There were two exercises: a set of experimentations based on the Gropius House in Lincoln followed by a project of a new library for the Bauhaus in Dessau. Assignments focused on the notions of translation and representation to trigger the imagination.



03

Yu Morishita (b. 1982, Japan) is a graduate of RISD and Harvard University. In addition to teaching, he works independently in Providence.

Andrew Tower (b. 1978, USA) is a graduate of RISD. He is a founder and partner of the design/build office HB in Providence.

Anthony Acciavatti (b. 1980, USA) is a graduate of RISD and Harvard University. He is the recipient of Ford Foundation, Harvard University Southeast Asian Initiative and Fulbright Fellowships for his work on the Ganges River in Northern India.

Excessive Values

instructors: Yu Morishita, Andrew Tower

The studio problematized the excess of the norm, not as an anomaly but as a parallel to the normality. Providence case studies were used to construct an “x-ray figure ground,” culminating in a project to act upon an existing “historical” building with a partial structural failure, simultaneous to construction of a new structure on an annexed open plot, emptied by fire.

Infrastructural Reserves

instructor: Anthony Acciavatti

The studio investigated the spatial potential of the rest stop and inter-modal station along Interstate 95 with the introduction of high-speed rail and regional train service running the length of I-95 between Houlton, ME and Miami, FL. It used the possibility of the rest stop as a means to project a key component of what could be a new National System of Interstate and Defense Highways.