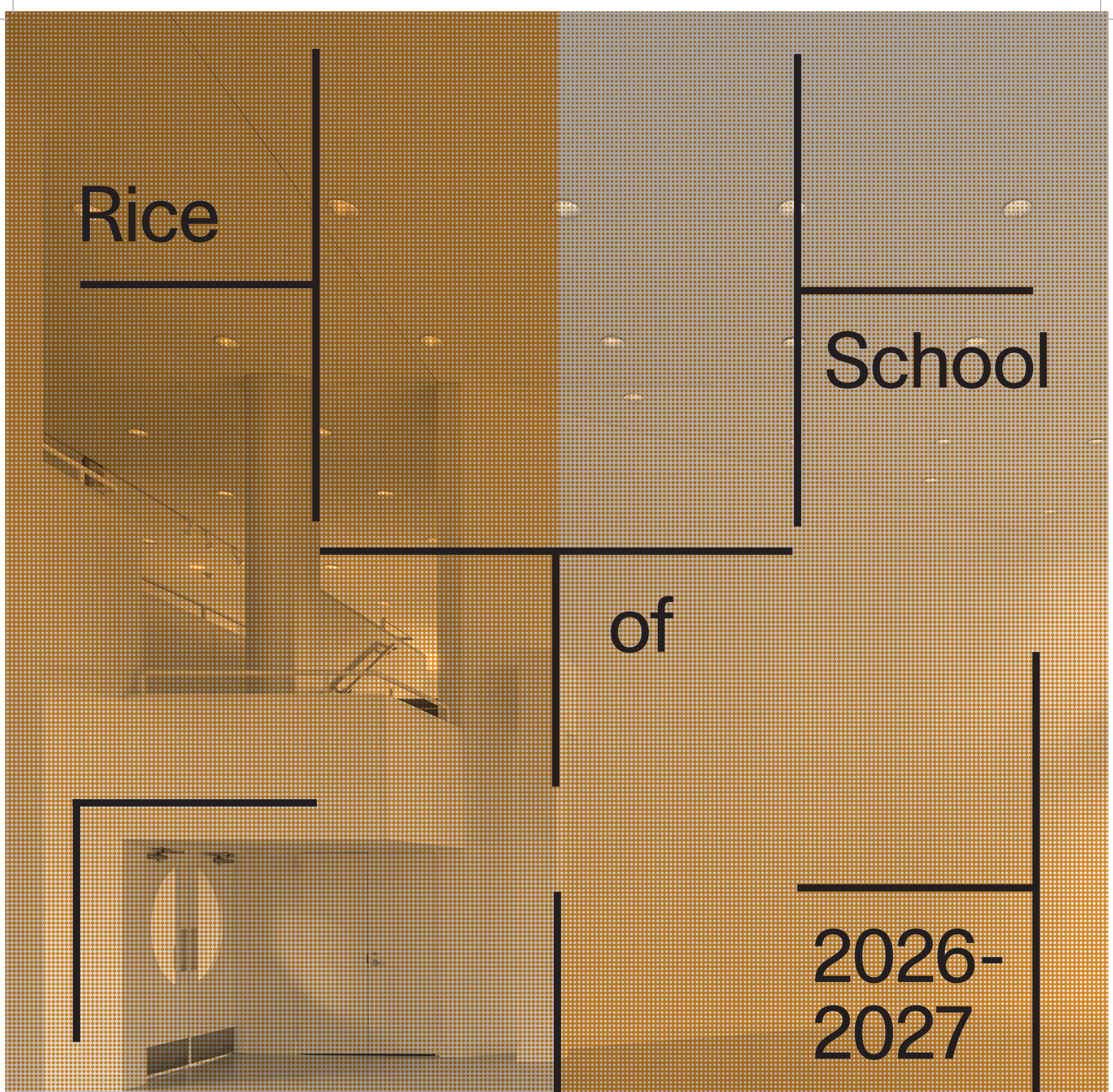
Rice School of Architecture



2026-2027

Prospectus

Rice University
School of Architecture
6100 Main Street, MS-50
Houston, TX 77005, USA

Rice School of Architecture

Pedagogy
Undergraduate Program
Preceptorship
Graduate Program

Pedagogy
From our studios in Houston—the fourth-largest and one of the most dynamic cities in the United States—to our Paris program, and further afield, through field trips, independent student travel, and Global Workshops, the Rice School of Architecture engages architecture as a truly global, planetary practice.

Undergraduate Program
Our top-ranked undergraduate program offers a six-year professional Bachelor of Architecture degree (B.Arch.), which includes our renowned one-year Preceptorship program that places students in notable architectural offices around the world. The curriculum includes courses in history and theory, building science and technology, professional practice, and design, as well as course offerings across the university. The aim of this broad, liberal arts education is to ensure that our graduates can become leaders in the field. The degree also offers flexibility, enabling students to pursue academic interests beyond architecture. All students participate in a rigorous design studio sequence that spans scales and locales, from local to global, culminating in topical research studios: the Watkin Degree Sequence and Research Platforms.

Preceptorship
The one-year Preceptorship program, established in 1968, provides a practicum between the penultimate and final years of the B.Arch. curriculum. Participating offices are selected by the school from among leading firms in the United States and abroad. Preceptees intern for a minimum of two academic semesters, participate in a variety of roles to gain a better understanding of the scope of professional practice, and are compensated for their work.

Graduate Program
Our intensive, top-ranked graduate program capitalizes on our unique resources—including our small size—to empower graduate students to build capacity for research, critical thinking, and independence throughout their time at Rice. It foregrounds design, discourse, and practice to equip future architects with the critical expertise and ambition needed to position them to be leaders in a rapidly changing world. The Master of Architecture (M.Arch.) is an accredited professional degree with two tracks of study: Option 1 (seven semesters) is for applicants with no or limited background in architecture; Option 2 (five semesters) is for applicants with a four-year undergraduate major in architecture who have been approved for advanced standing. Courses in design, history, technology, and practice expose students to fundamental disciplinary issues, while establishing a shared set of historical, contemporary, and emerging references. These areas overlap and intersect in a productive feedback loop, empowering students to synthetically engage the world of architecture and all that it implies. The collective dialogue that characterizes our school—in studios, seminars, juries, lectures, and casual hallway conversations—is where we synthesize these threads, allowing our students to engage the world around them through design research on multiple scales, from local to global. Consequently, the design studio sequence moves across scales and locales, culminating in Research Platforms that provide in-depth, advanced study of a subject—be it theoretical, material, or formal.

Rice School of Architecture

Thesis
Research Platforms
Paris

Thesis
Thesis provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their education, define their interests, and explore them further before stepping out of the academy to engage the world. Students develop a thesis proposal in the prethesis seminar, where they foreground their argument vis-à-vis architecture's role in the world. A semester-long thesis articulates, situates, and investigates those arguments through a specific project and written document, enabling each student to situate their ambitions more broadly. Students develop their theses under the direction of a faculty advisor through intense conversations and creative research, culminating in a public review that engages the entire school. Successful theses and the discussions they foster stimulate future activity at the school and beyond.

Research Platforms
Research is the foundation of any architectural project and, by extension, of practice itself. Structured as the culmination of our design studio sequence, Research Platforms provide an opportunity for in-depth, advanced study of a topic —be it theoretical, material, or formal— as a way of engaging a broad range of methodologies, constituents, and futures. Research Platforms are rooted in the wide-reaching and generalist character of our discipline, engendering new forms of experimentation through a variety of scales and contexts, local to global; from theoretical to material explorations; and, from buildings to cities and larger environments. Research Platforms thrive on criticality, discourse, and public debate, engaging the imagination and creative practices of making to provide a unique interplay of curiosity and conversation.

Paris
The great patron of the arts King François I once said that Paris is not a city, it's a world. As in no other city, the very foundations of Paris are there to see and touch. From the vestiges of its earliest Roman encampment, to the medieval city, through the nineteenth-century urban fabric created by Baron Haussmann, to the innovations of the twenty-first-century urban center, this world provides one of the greatest opportunities to learn from the past, present, and future. The Rice School of Architecture Paris offers a semester-long opportunity to explore advanced topics in architecture and urbanism. The program's course offerings include design, history/theory, technology, and representation, as well as classes in French language and culture and study trips to other cities in Europe. Taught by faculty from Rice and leading architecture and art-history programs in Europe, the program is a nimble think tank, taking advantage of the city's extraordinary offerings, as well as its role as a cultural nexus for the world.

Rice School of Architecture

Global Workshops
Course Travel
Student Travel Awards

Global Workshops
Global Workshops bring together research with planetary engagement, harnessing the school's extensive international network to weave a vibrant tapestry of dialogues, projects, and events. These thoughtfully curated summer workshops immerse participants in diverse local contexts and cultures, celebrating our common humanity and the universal power of design to tackle our most urgent contemporary challenges. Our objective is to expand research collaborations beyond inherited borders and boundaries, to nurture global citizenship among our students, and to encourage them to draw inspiration from the unfamiliar. Past Global Workshops took place in Barcelona, Chiang Mai, Mexico City, Singapore, Tokyo, and Venice. The rotating menu of workshops ensures their timeliness and agility in responding to pressing architectural and urban issues worldwide.

Course Travel
We are an international school, both in our demographics and location in Houston, one of the most cosmopolitan U.S. cities, and in our global reach. Each year we send students to locations across the globe with their design studios, from Arizona and Bahrain to Mexico City and Zurich. As the world becomes more intertwined, architects must address the architectural and urban demands that result from this interconnected, global condition. The choice of locations is linked to faculty research and creative projects, creating a synergy between the school's pedagogical and scholarly agendas.

Student Travel Awards
We teach architects to be leaders in the conversations and practices that shape our world. We recognize students for outstanding academic achievements: inspiring travel proposals, stellar GPAs, and projects that fuel extraordinary discussions during our review week. These awards would not be possible without our alumni and friends. Their generosity provides our students with the resources to see, be shaped by, and, in their own time, reshape the world around them. The school provides a number of travel scholarships for graduate and undergraduate students: the Margaret Everson-Fossi Traveling Fellowship, the William Ward Watkin Traveling Fellowship, the Rosemary Barrick Watkin Traveling Fellowship, the Morris R. Pitman Award in Architecture, the H. Russell Pitman Graduate Fellowship, the Mary Ellen Hale Lovett Traveling Fellowship, the John Crowder Traveling Fellowship, and the John T. Mitchell Traveling Fellowship.

Rice School of Architecture

Spaces
Rice Building Workshop
Events

Spaces
Set on the main academic quadrangle of Rice University, MD Anderson Hall houses our studios, offices, lecture halls, and computer labs. As the school's historic home, it seamlessly combines an original 1947 building designed by Staub & Rather (with William Ward Watkin as consulting architect), a 1981 addition designed by James Stirling and Michael Wilford, and a 2024 renovation by Lap Chi Kwong and Alison Von Glinow. To the immediate west is William T. Cannady Hall, designed by Ünal Karamuk and Jeanette Kuo and opened in 2024. Featuring a two-story public gallery and fabrication shop, this carefully integrated, bespoke addition connects to MD Anderson Hall and embraces the existing Smith Courtyard to form the heart of the school.

Rice Building Workshop
Founded in 1996, the Rice Building Workshop immerses students in global building cultures and diverse construction practices. The program works with non profit, arts, and cultural institutions to create enduring resources for underserved communities while building knowledge through research and experience. Students work across scales and in contexts both local and global, experiencing each phase of the architectural process from concept design through construction. With an emphasis on collaboration, the Rice Building Workshop engages students with clients, consultants, and craftspeople as they translate ambitious proposals into built works.

Events
Our discursive culture also extends to our public events. In line with our broad academic ambitions, we continually seek to export our discourse beyond the university—to our city, region, and the world. Our events include lectures by architects, artists, and scholars from a wide spectrum of disciplines. Before each talk, students engage speakers during an informal coffee chat that allows for highly personalized conversation and exchanges of ideas. Faculty-led symposia highlight cutting-edge research into topics as varied as Japanese, Mexican, and Swiss housing, novel construction materials, and the role of garden ecologies in sustainable urbanism. Civic Forum is a signature community event that brings together architects, planners, design enthusiasts, government representatives, and citizens alike to cover a range of urban topics, from taxation to historic preservation and urban parks. By programming public events both on and off campus, we seek to build new audiences and alliances in the city of Houston and beyond.

Rice School of Architecture, Houston
Collective
Rice School of Architecture, Paris

Contact

Rice University
School of Architecture
6100 Main Street, MS-50
Houston, TX 77005, USA

(713) 348–4864
arch.rice.edu
@ricearch

Rice School of Architecture

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Faculty Collective
Georgina Baronian
Shantel Blakely
John J. Casbarian
Andrew Colopy
Reto Geiser
Christopher Hight
Carlos Jiménez
Igor Marjanović
Albert Pope
Mónica Rivera
Troy Schaum
Brett Schneider
Maggie Tsang
Brittany Utting
Jesus Vassallo

Professors in the Practice
Amna Ansari
Nathan Friedman
Nicola Springer

Worthan Fellows
Federico Fabrinatti
Alicia Moreira

CERCL Postdoctoral Fellow
Alan Alaniz

Lecturers & Visitors
Doug Allard / Paris
Nicola Carnevali / Paris
Mandi Chapa
Lieven De Boeck / Paris
Xaveer de Geyter / Paris
Stephen Fox
Françoise Fromonot / Paris
Nicholas Gilliland / Paris
Jim Njoo / Paris
Federico Pedrini / Paris
Antoine Picon / Paris
Stephen Redding
Gaelle Rey / Paris
Ian Ting
Brett Zamore

Staff
Yulia Bocharova
Jeremy Cross
Estefania Garcia
Tami Giordano
Greg Haines
Kristina Kennedy
Jacque McGregory
Bryan Miller
Dan O'Connor
Sarah Pinkerton / Paris
Gary Schott
Cassia Tang

Exhibitions at Rice
Spotlight Award
Tête-à-Tête

Exhibitions at Rice
The school's curatorial program, Exhibitions at Rice, looks at the world differently by applying the lens of design research. Using the full spectrum of architectural representation—including drawing, making, and prototyping—our exhibitions weave together scholarly inquiry, visual experimentation, and public engagement. Exhibitions at Rice embrace a range of topics, cultures, and scales, engaging the discipline of architecture as a cultural practice with a civic mandate and using gallery walls, events, and media platforms to create new discourses that are relevant locally and globally. Recent exhibitions include *The Sixth Sphere* (examining the planetary Technosphere as a site of architectural intervention), *(dis)assemblies* (framing the act of "disman-tling" as an approach to contemporary practice), *Iwan Baan: The Notational Surface*, (documenting Houston from above as part of the Houston Archive Project), and *A'rin Context: Judd in Marfa* (imagining productive and sustainable futures for environmental conservation).

Spotlight Award
The Spotlight Award recognizes local, national, and international architects in the first fifteen years of their professional practice who have demonstrated design excellence and curiosity through their body of work. Founded in 2009, the award is given by a committee of architects, academics, and design practitioners. Past award recipients include Antón García-Abril (Ensamble Studio), Sou Fujimoto, Grace La and James Dallman (L.A. DALLMAN), Pezo von Ellrichshausen, Georgeen Theodore (Interboro Partners), 5468796 Architecture, Tarik Oualalou and Linna Choi (Oualalou+Choi), Cadaval & Solà-Morales, Anssi Lassila Architecture), Material Cultures, and TEN. Arquitectos.

Tête-à-Tête
The *Tête-à-Tête* podcast extends architectural conversations beyond our school—into the city and the world at large. Defined as a conversation between two people, *Tête-à-Tête* also features an easily accessible digital format that amplifies these dialogues into the public realm. Each episode focuses on a pressing topic in Houston that is also relevant globally, creating architectural parallels, contrasts, and alliances. The podcast includes conversations with a diverse roster of guests, including lecturers, faculty members, alumni, students, and practitioners.

Rice School of Architecture

Prospectus

2023 2024

Drawing on Research

Dear Friends,

At the Rice School of Architecture, we see architectural education as an opportunity to develop new forms of knowledge and engage the complex conditions shaping our world. Our students learn by closely examining the interconnections among design, research, making, and critical discourse, supported by a faculty whose work spans architecture, urbanism, building science, history, ecology, and culture.

Research is central to this environment and is embedded in our Research Platforms, undergraduate and graduate design studios that bring students into focused investigations of theoretical, material, and formal questions, connecting experimentation across scales and contexts—from buildings and cities to larger territories and environments. Our school's imprint, Architecture at Rice, extends this architectural inquiry through books, dossiers, and pamphlets that connect emerging ideas to broader disciplinary and public conversations.

Our newly expanded facilities provide additional opportunities to translate research into physical and public forms. MD Anderson Hall and William T. Cannady Hall bring together studios and lecture spaces with a gallery and fabrication facilities to create an environment where drawing, making, prototyping, exhibition, and discussion can intersect.

Warmly,

Igor Marjanović, Ph.D.
William Ward Watkin Dean and Professor

Rice School of Architecture

Prospectus

Architecture at Rice
Sphere
Plat
Student Organizations

Architecture at Rice
Since 1961, Architecture at Rice, the imprint of the Rice School of Architecture, has published architectural scholarship that engages cultural, political, and environmental issues, connecting them to the inherent potentials of architectural and urban design—their practices, histories, and theories. The imprint also promotes established and emerging threads of design thinking that, taken as a whole, form a fabric of local-global dialogues. Architecture at Rice is dedicated to the advancement of pedagogical ideas and public discourses among students, educators, practitioners, and citizens, fostering architecture's agency in a dynamic, interconnected world. The imprint's three series—Books, Dossiers, and Pamphlets—allow different formats to capture diverse discourses and forms of architectural inquiry while presenting a unique interplay of image and text.

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Plat
Founded in 2009, *Plat* is the school's independent student journal. Through a combination of open submissions and commissioned pieces, the editors seek out contributions from various disciplines to generate vibrant conversation. *Plat* offers a stage for diverse voices, including both established professionals and emerging voices. A different editorial team is responsible for each issue. *Plat* prizes editorial agility and remains committed to advancing a provocative set of ideas that is always in flux.

Student Organizations
Society is the school's umbrella student organization, supporting social and educational events that connect students to one another and the larger community. *Society* organizes student meetings, open studios, charrettes (design competitions), Architectonica and Archi Arts parties, and the Archi Market bazaar for student-designed creations. It also maintains the student directory, curates sexhibitions, and organizes "Ask Igor" conversations with the dean. Another student organization, *Mentorship*, connects alumni and friends with the current student body, providing professional development and informed career choices. The program includes mentoring events, lectures, a public-school outreach program, career fairs, workshops, and field trips. *NOMAS Rice* is the student chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)—an inclusive collective of students of all backgrounds, with a mission to collaborate, learn, and share ideas to elicit success in individual and group endeavors. Recent programs include Contextualizing Africa, a symposium and exhibition focusing on design, resilience, and cross-cultural dialogue.