Spotlight
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Everything is Architecture, the Viennese architect Hans Hollein famously proclaimed in 1968, and I have yet to find a better explanation of our field than those three words. Architecture reflects and affects its own relevance—its political, historical, social, economic, material, technical, and cultural contexts, as well as the immediate physical context in which it is sited. Architecture often remains in place long after any or all of these contexts have evolved: sometimes it evolves in sync; at other times it persists as a marker of an earlier time.

The challenge, then, is how do you teach a field that’s, well, everything? Rice Architecture is the meeting point of that everything: of design and discourse; of theory and practice; of past and future; and of Rice and the world. Here at Rice we put architecture within its cultural context, while also mining architecture’s own culture. Architecture shapes our world—it affects how we live in a room, in a city, and across our globe. We don’t shy away from acknowledging that architecture creates boundaries. Walls necessarily define an inside and an outside, a here and a there; doors, materials, and circulation necessarily bring up questions of access, privacy and publicity. Architecture can open onto or it can close our own world from the worlds of others. Repercussions, ranging from the technical to the political, come into play with every design project. There are no “right” answers for how to negotiate architecture’s cultural impacts and one cannot influence or even anticipate most, but learning to think, talk, and act culturally is what we do here at Rice Architecture.

How? We are intimate and intense. We are a small school with large ambitions. We can, and do, optimize at every turn. We know you. You know us. At our core is a running conversation: a tête-à-tête that is at once curated and spontaneous, formal and informal. It connects students, faculty, and visitors. It connects architecture to ideas. It connects the school to the world. It is as casual as a passing exchange and as vibrant as a thesis presentation. It takes place in a series of carefully considered studios, lecture courses, seminars, workshops, events, and travels around the world. It takes place over a coffee. It might be ruminative; it might be rambunctious. It is a conversation that begins as an introduction to architecture and that culminates in an architect being far more than conversant: Rice Architecture teaches architects to be leaders in the conversations that inevitably make up our discipline and impact our worlds.

Faced with global economic, political, and environmental crises, we can’t afford to be passive. Leading – engaging the world – requires mixing a precise understanding of our multiple contexts with architectural speculations that define a better future. It requires being optimistic, discerning, collaborative, and smart. Every project in the school, whether in studio, lecture courses, or seminars, should project forward. Everything is Architecture: we understand these three words as a mandate to navigate that everything (which is as exciting as it is unpredictable) with a nimble, yet precise understanding of what makes architecture relevant.

—Dean Sarah Whiting
Rice Architecture’s top ranked undergraduate program consists of two consecutive degrees: the first four years of study result in a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture; subsequently, students obtain a Bachelor of Architecture professional degree after an additional two years, one of which includes the renowned Rice Architecture Preceptorship program. Preceptorship places our B.Arch. students in notable offices around the world where they gain a year’s worth of mentored practical experience.

The Rice Architecture B.A. is a decidedly liberal arts degree: our curriculum exposes students to architecture’s full breadth. The core curriculum coordinates courses in the history and theory of architecture, technology, and design and it organizes required and elective courses to permit students to take advantage of course offerings across the university. The aim of this broad scope is to ensure that Rice Architecture graduates will be ideally positioned as leaders in the discipline. In addition to the invaluable Preceptorship experience, fifth year students directly engage architectural practice in the advanced Totalization studio in the fall semester of their final year: this comprehensive program embeds distinguished consultants in the studios, emphasizing design’s intrinsic relationship to other fields, ranging from finance to fabrication. Finally, Rice Architecture emphasizes that architecture is a global practice—as significant an issue in Houston (the fourth largest city in the United States) as it is in the European base of our Rice Architecture Paris program, and in our many courses that incorporate travel across the globe.

Students who have been admitted to the School of Architecture can elect at the end of their second year, or any time thereafter, to pursue the Bachelor of Art in Architectural Studies major. This major does not lead to a professional degree, requires fewer studios, and is designed to allow students to pursue other academic interests in greater depth.
Rice Architecture is the meeting point of design and discourse; of theory and prac-
tice; of past and future; of Rice and the world; and of our two inseparable aims: to educate architects and to position our graduates as leaders in a rapidly changing world.

Generosity binds these aims to one another. Inside the school, the exchange of knowledge depends upon the magno-
imous sharing of intellectual culture among students, faculty, and visitors to the school. Beyond the school’s boundaries, Rice Architecture is a catalyst, an advocate for architects and architecture to step unflinchingly into public life. Taken together, these mandates underscore our goal of forming architects whose ideas will continue to reverberate across contem-
porary culture. Our ambitions are simple. Our graduates will be prepared with knowledge. They will always be curious about what they don’t yet know. And they will continue to propose alternatives that foster an unyielding optimism about the future.

The required core sequence of Rice Architecture’s Master of Architecture program includes courses in four areas: design studio, history/theory, technology, and practice. Each area provokes the others in a deliberate feedback loop. The collective conversation that characterizes Rice Architecture – in our studios, our seminars, our juries, our lectures, our hallways – is where we synthesize these threads. Our core courses in design, history/theory, technology, and practice focus attention on key topics within architecture: form, program, materials, technology. The core also establishes a shared set of references – significant, historical, and contemporary. We also offer a broad selection of electives within the archi-
tecture school and across the university.

The advanced options studios of the final year of the master program include Totalization, our unique program that embeds nationally-recognized consultants in the studios, emphasizing that architectural innovation results from collaboration and the nimble anticipation of contingencies. The final course in the history/ theory core is the required thesis proposal, which reflects our conviction that every student must step back and define his/her argument and architect’s contemporary position in the world. Students subsequently complete their studios either with a semester-long thesis project or an additional options studio in their final semester.

Students admitted into the Master of Architecture program have two possible tracks, depending on their previous studies. The Option 1, seven-semester (131 credits) track is for students with little or no background in architecture; the Option 2, five-semester (93 credits) track is for those students who hold a four-year undergraduate degree in architecture from schools that have been approved by our admissions committee for advanced stand-
ing (please note that this list is constantly under revision, so applications may be shifted to another options track as determined by the admissions committee).

Rice Architecture’s Master of Architecture (M.Arch) professional degree is fully accredited by the National Architecture Accrediting Board (NAAB), qualifying our gradu-
ates to sit for the professional licensing exam.

Rice Architecture’s Master of Arts in Architecture is our second graduate program. Known as Present Future, this program is a post-graduate, three-semester (39 credits), special-topic research course under the leadership of a Rice Architecture faculty member. This full-residency program is akin to a lab: students work collectively on a focused research project, culminating in an exhibition, book, or similar shared project. Present Future program results in the nonprofessional degree, Master of Arts in Architecture (M.A. in Architecture).

Totalization recognizes that architecture is generalist, collaborative, and unpredict-
able, and that architectural innovation only happens when that messy totality is nimble enough to accommodate contingencies. Totalization sees the architect as the negotiator at the center of a diverse team of collaborators. Projects are understood to be contingent and evolving—a totaling up that is never fixed or finite.

The Totalization studio semester coordinates all of the advanced fall studios in order to emphasize design’s intrinsic relationship to other fields, ranging from finance to fabrication. Nationally-rec-
ognized consultants (Robert Heintges, Nat Oppenheimer, Mark Malekshahi, among others) are embedded in the studios, advising students on facades, structure, MEP, and other factors.

Each studio focuses in depth upon a single, fundamental research topic engaging materials, techniques, technol-
gegies, elements, or markets.

For example, what is the structural and symbolic role of the roof today? Exposure to additional critical realities takes place in required seminars and lectures attended by all Total-
ization studios and addresses further considerations, such as accessibility, fire safety, environmental controls, construction document delivery, and development financing.

Depth and breadth: Totalization’s unique organization, which coordinates and synthe-
sizes multiple studios and multiple consultants, means that the specific research topic in question is developed within architecture’s broader scope.

Totalization: Fall Option Studios
Associate Professor Troy Schaum

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Graduate Core Studio
Curriculum Diagram

Arch 501
Representation / Form / Program
Program: 15,000 to 25,000 Sq.Ft. – Simple
Site: Simple
Scales: 1/32" / 1/6" / 1/8"

Arch 502
Representation / Form / Program
Program: 20,000 to 30,000 Sq.Ft. – Greater Complexity
Site: Medium
Scales: 1/32" / 1/6" / 1/8" / 1/4"

Arch 503
Skin-Plate-Environment / Form
Program: 15,000 to 25,000 Sq.Ft.
Site: Medium
Scales: 1/4" / 1/2" / 1"

Arch 504
Urban / Form / Program
Program: 100,000 to 150,000
Site: Urban
Scales: 1/32" / 1/16" / 1/8"
Graduate M.A. in Architecture
Program: Present Future
Professor Albert Pepe

Present Future is equal parts education, research, think tank, and soapbox. Urbanization, media, globalization, the environment, and technology are just a few of the issues that press in on us as never before. Architecture can, and will, play a role in the most urgent questions facing us today.

Rice Architecture offers an intensive, three semester research-based program of advanced architectural studies: Present Future. The program’s aim is to re-conceptualize the role of the architect from within the complex sets of relationships in which we live today. We are interested in how the discipline constructs new possibilities from never before seen political, economic, and environmental circumstances—by shaping new publics in support of new institutions, by forming new architectural and urban models, and by asserting new ambitions and optimism.

In short, Present Future is a forum through which we can rethink the nature of the architect’s social contract.

Present Future is a concentrated undertaking culminating in a Master of Arts in Architecture degree. The program is structured around a three-semester long exploration of a topic led by a Rice School of Architecture faculty member and advertised in advance of the application process. A select group of students forms the core: a collective intelligence responsible for developing a discourse that synthesizes theoretical, historical, and design ambitions. Subjects will be of contemporary importance and will be framed by a 3-credit seminars in the first and third term and a 12-credit collective thesis in the second term. In addition to free electives, each semester will include additional required credits that are deemed appropriate to the research topic. The program’s student body will include those with backgrounds in architecture as well as other fields; individuals with B.A., B.S., equivalent, or more advanced degrees in architecture or other disciplines are invited to apply.

Present Future is decidedly proposition-oriented. To that end, each three semester sequence will culminate in a book, exhibition, or symposium. The program is intended to be at once intensely focused and enthusiastically extroverted.

The students admitted to the following semester test their proposed thesis in a project that is a synthesis of intellectual and design objectives. These projects are not meant to be comprehensively building designs; thesis is a laboratory for focused research in our field. Thesis concludes with a final public review with distinguished invited guests that engages the entire school. The project is evaluated both on its own terms and within the broader field of contemporary architectural discourse. Successful theses and the discussion they foster stimulate future activity at Rice Architecture and beyond.

Evio Isaac’s thesis project, Hang in there..., 2018
Paris is not Houston. It’s Paris. Modernity lived here. Avenues were cut here. Baguettes taste good here. Heads came off here. Art is everywhere here. We have a school here. If Paris was once the capital of the nineteenth century, as Walter Benjamin announced, today it sits astride the possibilities of the twenty-first century. Infrastructure, energy and globalization all push at the fabric of Paris, stretching it in ways that Baron Haussmann never could have envisioned.

Rice Architecture Paris provides a semester-long opportunity to explore advanced topics in architecture. Established in 2002 and located in the 12ème arrondissement, near la Bastille, the program operates in both the Fall and Spring semesters. Course offerings include a design studio; seminars in history/theory, technology, and representation; as well as French language and culture classes. Paris also includes organized study trips to other cities in France and Europe.

Taught by faculty drawn from Rice and the leading architecture and art history programs in Europe, Rice Architecture Paris is a nimble think tank, taking advantage of the extraordinary offerings that Paris provides, as well as the city’s role as a cultural nexus for the world.

Rice Architecture Paris is now open to qualified students and graduates from other architecture programs who have taken at least six semesters of undergraduate studios or four graduate studios.

For more than twenty years, Rice Architecture Construct (previously known as Rice Building Workshop) has engaged the world by challenging students to contribute directly to the built environment. Construct students design and build projects that produce lasting effects, creating resources for the communities they serve while building knowledge through research and experience.

Working at various scales and in diverse situations, students engage all facets of the creative process—conception through construction. Expanding their knowledge in the pursuit of novel solutions to real-world challenges, students work together to test concepts against the practical realities of budget and schedule, explore innovative means of analysis and fabrication, and translate forward-thinking designs into built works.

Construct was founded in 1996 by professors in the practice, Danny Samuels and Nonya Grenader. It is currently co-directed by Samuels and Andrew Colopy, an assistant professor.

Rice Design Alliance is the public outreach program of Rice Architecture. It was established within Rice Architecture in 1972 by a group of faculty and civic-minded community members whose goal was to empower Houston’s diverse community to transform our city through design.

Rice Design Alliance offers a series of multidisciplinary programs, events and publications throughout the year that push design boundaries forward, pose provocative questions and engage our local, national and international audiences with the power of design in our everyday lives.

The fall 2018 lecture series is organized in collaboration with PLAT Journal and explores cutting-edge design ideas. Annual architecture home tours in Houston, as well as guided and curated tours in other U.S. and international cities, invite our members to experience architecture firsthand. Rice Design Alliance civic forums invite governmental, academic, professional, and creative leaders to come together to debate issues and give all Houstonians a venue to contribute their voices. Competitions challenge both emerging and established designers. Publications such as Cite: The Architecture + Design Review of Houston, feature a diversity of voices reflecting on the city’s past, present, and future and the most pressing urban issues globally. Rice Design Alliance also employs student interns and invites Rice Architecture students, faculty, and Rice Design Alliance representatives on its board of directors.

All these programs give Rice Architecture students, faculty, and Rice Design Alliance members a launching pad to build meaningful collaborations and make a real difference in the city through design initiatives.
Rice Architecture Society aims to increase student discourse and connect the school to the broader university. As a group of committed students, Society focuses on the peripheral aspects of an architectural education that shape the culture of the school.

Society’s main social and educational events include weekly open studios: late-night studio gatherings for the exchange of snacks and ideas; mini-charrettes: weekend-long design competitions; Architectonica (fall) and ArchiArts (spring): university-wide parties; and open houses: post-final review events for the display of semester work.

In addition to these events, Society creates the student directory, curates student exhibitions, and organizes conversations with the dean. Its members act as the voice of the student body and keep students informed about events and opportunities at Rice Architecture.

Mentorship coordinates its programming with an internal/external advisory board and Jacki Schaefer, Rice Architecture’s Career and Alumni Specialist.
Amnesiac city. Ephemeral city. Space city — a moniker that could refer to the history of NASA or to the profound vacancy in the heart of this humid, low-slung, sprawled-out megalopolis, the most diverse and one of the largest in the U.S.

Just what is Houston? In fact, this city began as a fiction. Nineteenth-century real estate advertisements for the newly settled town showed mountains and boasted that Houston was “handsome and beautifully elevated, salubrious and well-watered.” We’ve been trying to get the story straight ever since.

No one really knows what Houston is. That’s its charm. Really, it’s all here. Houston’s home to serious architecture — you can see Renzo Piano’s Menil Collection, Mies’ Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Philip Johnson’s Pennzoil Place, not to mention the astonishing collection of world-class buildings at Rice — as well as serious urban challenges, rooted in decades of car-dominated development, a shrugging attitude about historic preservation, and an allergy to planning.

That’s why Houston’s such an exciting, interesting city, in the twenty-first century. A deep architectural and cultural history is met by an almost insurgent progressivism, as the city densifies and works to invest in public spaces, infrastructure, and transit (with three light rail lines, a new bus network, and an expanding bike-share system). It’s true: It’s all here, especially if you’re willing to go looking for it.
"A lot of people throughout my education have said, ‘make up your mind,’” Reto Geiser says. “But in a way, it was productive to go back and forth between teaching, practice, and research.”

Geiser’s manifold interests touch on architecture history and theory, design, and pedagogy. Trained as an architect at the ETH Zurich, he cut his teeth at firms in Switzerland and Belgium. He got an introduction to graphic design while working with Bruce Mau in Toronto, initiating a career-long passion for typography and making books. While studying at Columbia and working at Diller + Scofidio, he started design on Jesse Reiser’s Atlas of Novel Tectonics, which published in 2006 and was awarded the Golden Letter, the highest distinction in book design. After graduation, Geiser lectured and taught design studios as a Muschenheim Fellow at the University of Michigan before returning to ETH for a PhD. His dissertation on Swiss historian and architecture critic Sigfried Giedion is now coming out as a book called Giedion and America, a revisionist history of modern architecture told through the lens Giedion’s work and how it was affected by his long stays in the U.S. Geiser is also publishing a translation of Giedion’s Liberated Dwelling, a visual manifesto on modernist housing, which will reproduce the original 1929 edition as closely as possible with a separate volume of the text in English.

In 2008, Geiser co-founded the collaborative design practice MG&Co. with his wife, the architect Noëmi Mollet. The range of their work is as eclectic as their interests, including books and branding concepts, signage and architecture. Their long collaboration with Johnston Marklee has led to two notable environmental graphics projects, The Menil Drawing Institute and the new graduate art studios at UCLA, as well as the book, House is a House is a House is a House is a House.

Geiser came to Rice in 2011 as Gus Wortham Assistant Professor. Following his interest in pedagogy, he became a Founding Faculty Fellow of the Rice Center for Teaching Excellence, a university-wide program set up to improve teaching and learning through mentoring, innovative practices, collaboration, scholarship, and advocacy. Geiser sees the faceted array of his work as mutually supportive. Whether lecturing on history and theory, teaching a design studio, researching his next book, or serving as the director of undergraduate studies, a new role for him, each aspect feeds the rest.

"Keeping up the small practice that we have, plus the teaching and the research — that’s been incredibly fruitful for me,” Geiser says. “It keeps me excited. I learn a lot from students, who, at Rice, are really intelligent and capable. I’m able to test ideas and topics in lecture class, also in design studio. I’m lucky to be at a small school, with good faculty and a collegial atmosphere, where there’s a great exchange that helps me in developing my own work.”

Reto Geiser
By Aaron Seward, Editor, Texas Architect
Troy Schaum did not follow the typical academic route. Trained as an architect at Virginia Tech and Princeton, he started his career in practice, working at a number of firms in San Francisco and New York, including OMA, where he led the design of Milstein Hall at Cornell. He began teaching at Rice as a Wortham Fellow in 2008. “I thought I would be here for one year,” Schaum says. “That was when the recession happened.” Rather than return to New York at a time when the profession was shedding more jobs than almost any other industry, he stayed and earned a position on tenure track.

While the academy became Schaum’s new home, he did not turn his back on practice. Shortly after coming to Rice, he co-founded SCHAUM/SHIEH with Rosa-lyne Shieh. In the depths of the recession, they started entering design competitions and undertaking speculative projects. Notable among them is Sponge Urbanism, the reimagining of a Detroit neighborhood that de-densifies traditional platting and introduces horizontal public programming. The project got them invited to exhibit at the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale. On the tail of that experience, the phone started ringing with actual building commissions. “We’ve just been racing since then,” Schaum says. “We don’t say no to many things. We’re doing preservation with the Judd Foundation, our own artwork in downtown Houston, houses, strip malls, art foundations, music venues.”

“Our work remains suspended between three poles,” he continues. “One has to do with questions of urban experience and subjectivity, another with intersections of materiality and form, and the third with developing tools and techniques to imagine futures through diagraming and drawing. How do we represent that world to ourselves?” This agenda is represented in Schaum’s practice, as well as his academic work. He views the role of the designer, and of design faculty, as one of creating syntheses between things that may seem in opposition theoretically.

Schaum’s forthcoming book, *Totalization*, was developed out of a group of design studios he directs at Rice of the same name, in which students work on projects in collaboration with professional consultants. The studios focus on the inflection point in architecture between technical expertise and speculative vision, and how architects use that dichotomy to create new possibilities for built space and the environment. The book is composed of essays by a variety of contributors about projects they worked on where the handling of this inflection point led to an innovation, such as SANAA’s Grace Farms and Toledo Glass Museum.

About Rice, Schaum says, “It’s a wonderful place. It’s one of the smallest programs in the country. There are amazing students. Because it’s so small, and everyone knows everyone, there’s a lot of intensity. It’s like a think tank, and that immediacy produces really positive energy.”
In 2018, Rice Architecture Paris began a three-year collaboration, spanning consecutive spring studios, with the research arm of Xaveer de Geyter Architects (XDGA), Brussels. In line with the principles that drive XDGA’s professional practice, the focus of these studios is on specific investigations relevant to architecture in the urban context, with each studio intended as a framework to enable different and unforeseen scenarios. By siting their projects in the heart of historical Paris, the studios challenge designers to address broader issues such as density, urban quality, functional diversity, and urban integration.

The spring 2018 topic, The Void as Urban Generator, focused on how the void in a city orders, defines, shapes, and charges the boundaries between the public, private, and tertiary thresholds. The design investigations revealed how programmed voids can encourage urban cohesion and permeability, and how they enrich urban life. Building on this successful first phase, the topics for the subsequent spring studios will be Tabula Rasa vs. Tabula Plena in 2019 and Urban Context vs. Urban Form in 2020.

This unique collaboration is possible thanks to the generosity of a member of the Dean’s William Ward Watkin advisory board.

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of the construction of the Chateau de Chambord in 1519, 20 schools of architecture around the world, including Rice Architecture Paris, have been selected via a competitive process to contribute to an exhibition called Unfinished Chambord. Participants will produce projects that extend and amplify the utopian ambition of the original Renaissance castle and grounds into the 21st century.

Rice Architecture Paris will respond to this mandate through the lens of the Totalization studio, using natural bioclimatic design principles as a springboard for developing an innovative, low-energy, low-carbon architecture. Due to its precocious integration of simple passive strategies such as hygienic natural ventilation and building inertia, Chambord offers unexpected inspiration at a time when designers are focusing their attention on climate imperatives. The Chambord studio will harness the design of innovative thermodynamic performance as a bridge between past, present and future. The challenge will be to advance an architecture that can tackle exigencies by reimagining the world as it exists, not by turning away from it. The proposed utopian thinking for Unfinished Chambord therefore looks first to the here and now: the here of architecture’s history, its present, and its future, to address the ideal of right now.
Rice Architecture teaches architects to be leaders in the conversations and practices that shape our worlds. We recognize students for outstanding academic achievements that range from inspiring travel proposals to stellar GPAs and to projects that fueled extraordinary discussions across our review week. We also recognize our generous alumni and friends who have given these awards to the school, offering our students the time and resources to see the worlds that will shape them, and that they, in turn, will shape.

The Margaret Everson-Fossi Traveling Fellowship
Established in memory of Rice Architecture student Margaret Everson-Fossi, this award goes to fifth year or graduate students on the basis of the best design projects for the options studios during this academic year.
Awarded to: M.Arch. students Seth Defore, Ekin Erar, Veronica Gomez, Hannah Yeung; B.Arch. student Deok Kyu Chung

The William Ward Watkin Traveling Fellowship
This award for foreign travel honors the memory of the first chairman of the Department of Architecture.
Awarded to: B.A. students Andrew Bertics, Ethan Chan, Samantha Ding, Vera Tian

The Rosemary Watkin Barrick Traveling Fellowship
This fellowship is awarded to talented students in architecture for travel while still enrolled at Rice, based on proposals evaluated by the faculty.
Awarded to: M.Arch. student Ana Escobar; B.A. students Lara Hansmann and Ilya Rahklin

The Morris R. Pitman Award in Architecture
Awarded to returning architecture graduate students showing outstanding potential to the profession, earmarked for travel, and awarded based on merit and strength of a proposal. A stipulation is that travel take place this summer so that the student can return to Rice and share the learning experience with fellow students.
Awarded to: M.Arch. students Kalyani Bhatt, Steven Collier, Hillary Davlin, Ekin Erar, Daniel Kleeshulte, Philip Niekamp, Samantha Schuermann

The H. Russell Pitman Graduate Fellowship in Architecture
This award provides traveling fellowship assistance to graduate students in architecture and is awarded based on merit and strength of proposal.
Awarded to: M.Arch. students Leyuan Li, Alex Palmer, Hannah Perrino, Grey Peterson

The Mary Ellen Hale Lovett Traveling Fellowship
Based upon submitted travel proposals and academic performance, these fellowships are awarded each year to talented graduate and undergraduate students in architecture for travel while still enrolled at Rice.
Awarded to: M.Arch. students Shinji Miyajima, Hannah Yeung, Yixin Zhou; B.A. students Phoebe Cox, Anna Fritz, Sebastian Grande

The John Crowder Traveling Fellowship
Established in memory of John Crowder, a 1963 alumnus of Rice Architecture, this award is to be used for broadening an individual’s experience through travel and is awarded to a returning student or students in the graduate program, based on merit and strength of proposal.
Awarded to: M.Arch. students Jack Murphy and Tiffany Xu

The John T. Mitchell Traveling Fellowship
Established in memory of John T. Mitchell, Jr., a 1972 alumnus of Rice Architecture, this award is to be used for broadening an individual’s experience through travel and is awarded to a returning student or students in the graduate program, based on merit and strength of proposal.
Awarded to: M.Arch. students Drew Heller and Kohen Hudson

K2LD Singapore Travel Award and Summer Internship
Awarded to a rising senior or graduate student who demonstrates outstanding leadership and scholastic achievement.
Awarded to: M.Arch. student Hannah Yeung

Funded by Rice Architecture’s John Crowder Traveling Fellowship, during July and August I made a pilgrimage to see the built work of Portuguese architect Eduardo Souto de Moura. After visiting his chapel realized for the Vatican at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale, I spent time in Porto, Lisbon, and throughout northern and eastern Portugal.

With work that is minimal in its form—through design sensibility or sheer project constraints—the architectural detail becomes an important articulation. Given Souto de Moura’s proficiency in “boxlike” solutions that are very simple yet have so much detail that they seem sickly sweet, anti-natural” (in his words), I was interested to study how his constructions touch the ground, as this is an unavoidable junction for buildings. Variously, his projects read as subterranean, anchored in the earth, floating above it, or indifferent to its presence. At same time, Souto de Moura actively manipulates the ground itself, such that the designed architecture-ground relationship heightens the impact of the work at hand.

It was a very rewarding trip. Of many highlights, two notable experiences were the opportunities to stay in spaces designed by Souto de Moura: a small office renovation turned short-term rental in Porto, and the Pousada de Amares, a monastery converted into a hotel.

Hotel & Catering School by Eduardo Souto de Moura + Graça Correia, Portalegre, Portugal
JACK MURPHY: What made you interested in working as the executive director of the Rice Design Alliance?

MARIA NICANOR: My passion is to make architecture and design thinking accessible to others. We all learn in different ways and we all know that learning doesn’t only happen in a classroom setting. I’m even more passionate about how people experience architecture and design and how that experience could be improved. There’s a variety of ways to go about that, but what stood out to me about the school of architecture, and specifically about the potential of the Rice Design Alliance as its public programming arm, is its willingness to bring critical urban thinking into the city and beyond in accessible and inspiring ways that can cut through disciplinary barriers.

The RDA’s mission is to engage Houston’s built environment and citizens. How do you think this mission can be enriched with a more global awareness of architecture and urbanism?

For good or for bad, nothing in our time is just local anymore. While RDA has deep roots in Houston going back 40+ years, the urban topics it has addressed throughout the decades and the questions that we will be putting out there in our programs and initiatives from now on are globally relevant. Major cities around the world are dealing with issues of climate change, accelerated urban development, immigration—to name just a few of the questions that Houstonians deal with. The way I see it, Houston should be a laboratory of ideas, an extreme example of some of the most interesting, challenging, and fascinating urban conditions in twenty-first century cities that require some deep thinking. Let’s look at some of these local examples and connect them to the larger patterns happening worldwide; we might even come up with new and unexpected urban models.

You’ve recently relocated to Houston from Madrid for this position. What are you seeing now that you’re here? How does Houston look to you so far?

I’ve had the unusual luxury to get to know Houston through monthly visits for the past year, having landed first here just two days after Harvey hit. We’ve had intense, occasional dates in a long-distance relationship! That’s always fun and exciting at the beginning, but I prefer the reality of waking up together every morning to discover the little (or big!) imperfections. And if I’ve learned anything, it’s that this is a city that can’t really be measured by any traditional modes of urban thinking—it’s in those shocking Houston particularities where opportunity lies. But also, can we get more zebra crossings, please?
Mentorship Recess

Kayla Bien (M.Arch. ’21) & Tiffany Xu (M.Arch. ’20)

Mentorship Recess is a new community outreach program intended to share the student talent and energy at Rice Architecture with a K-12 audience. Each month Recess provides current Rice Architecture students the opportunity to volunteer and teach design thinking to local youth within the greater Houston area. The lessons are fun and engaging, meant to introduce creative thought processes not typically integrated into their school curriculum. Focused activities build on the lessons, helping students to identify problems, propose solutions, and communicate their ideas. The program hopes to catalyze new perspectives in understanding our built environment and the ways in which design can enhance life.

Recess aspires to diversify the ways in which Mentorship fulfills its overarching mission. In its first year, Recess worked in partnership with the STEM Foundation at the Judson Community Center, providing content for Engineering Saturday once each month. Past lessons have considered structure, communication, space, environment, and community.

Preceptorship Fieldnotes:

Johnston Marklee

Toshiki Niimi (B.Arch. ’19)

My preceptorship year at Johnston Marklee provided me with an incredible range of experiences that exposed me to the realities of architectural practice. I was able to work on different projects at a variety of scales from exhibition design to office renovation to public museum competition. Being at a relatively compact office, my work always involved direct interactions with the designers at the office, and I was consistently able to meet with and learn from Mark Lee and Sharon Johnston. For me, the most fruitful experience I had at the office was the opportunity to work on a single-family residence from the start of pre-schematic research all the way up until the construction document phase. I worked on a team that consisted of only one other designer and Mark, and I was able to learn directly from the two. The schematic design phase was particularly exciting for me, as we worked fluidly and intensely through physical models, always iterating through the model and hacking at it at times to reveal new potentials. The rigor with which they examined the spaces through the model left a big impression on me. The opportunity to continue on the project through design development and construction documentation following this schematic phase was an incredible way to follow how a project moves from concept to realization, and it allowed me to engage in a whole new realm of architectural practice. My time at the office was rich and intense and turned out to be incredibly rewarding.
Conduct. How one comports oneself... how we convey intent...on a good day, how we affect our environs. Conduct is a notion that seems simple enough. It depends on something shared, something beyond our own demeanor, something bigger than ourselves. While it can be hard to grasp what is meant by good conduct, we have typically relied on something akin to "I know it when I see it," as put forth in Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s 1964 definition of obscenity. But what happens when we can no longer see or know good conduct? Does the obscenity of the moment – our moment – mean that codes of conduct have altogether vanished?

Architects are guided by particular codes of conduct. We don’t necessarily agree about them, but they grant us a shared rudder, a means of navigating the swirling political, financial, environmental, ethical, and professional waters in which we swim. Rather than accept that codes of conduct have altogether vanished, we have no choice as architects but to work with them, even if it means rewriting them. Because if we don’t, architecture will vanish into the very same darkness that engulfs conduct writ large at the moment, a darkness that we can, and should, push back upon.

This fall’s Rice Architecture public lecture series, which is joined to the school’s Cullinan seminar, will take up architecture and conduct. We won’t wallow in the repugnant conduct that surrounds us today. We’ll do better. These talks will focus instead on the possibilities of conduct. For practice, for culture, for cities, for history, for now, and for tomorrow.

Our speakers include Kenneth Frampton, Ware Professor of Architecture at Columbia GSAPP, New York (09/24); Ellen van Loon, partner, OMA Rotterdam (10/15); Jack Self, architect and writer, London (10/22); and Tom Emerson, partner, 6a architects, London and professor of Architecture and Construction, ETH, Zurich (11/5). In the Cullinan seminar, students prepare for these talks and then interview each speaker; the day after each talk, a faculty member responds to the talk, opening an all-school lunchtime roundtable discussion with the speaker.

Our promise: there will be good conduct at these events.

Fall 2018 Lecture Series
Conduct
Dean Sarah Whiting

PLAT Journal
Jack Murphy (M.Arch. ’20) & Tiffany Xu (M.Arch. ’20)

Founded in 2009, PLAT Journal is published by the students of Rice Architecture. Through a combination of open submissions and commissioned pieces, the editors seek out contributions from various disciplines to generate a vibrant conversation. PLAT offers a place to share applied work and theory, mixing writing from established professionals and emerging voices and featuring built and speculative projects. The readership and contributor base stretch worldwide. Each new editorial board develops a unique theme, cognizant of the previous issue. While the .0 issues always come in a standardized print form, the .5 issues respond to the previous .0 publication and take various forms including printings, lectures, and online features. This format provides agility and maintains PLAT’s commitment to advancing a provocative set of ideas that are always in flux. PLAT 5.5 Re:License was featured in Metropolis magazine and the Studio NOCK exhibition “A Print.” More recently, PLAT was interviewed for the “Pulp Pedagogy” insert of the LA Forum’s Summer 2018 newsletter “Re:Learning,” participated in Archinect’s Outpost storefront in Los Angeles, and was the subject of an Archinect Redlines feature.

PLAT 7.0 Sharing, the current issue, focuses on the so-called sharing economy’s relationship to architecture and urbanism and assesses whether and how new forms of digital capitalism are impacting the built environment. PLAT 8.0 will be about simplicity. Follow the work online at platjournal.com and on Instagram at @platjournal.
Rice Architecture