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RIEA Live GIG_Scopes

- Delivery of a platform for universities and companies providing a kick off event for studios and projects or simply an alternative fresh experience
- Training of team process and creative collaboration
- Confrontation with compression of time and speed by quick decision making
- Educate and entertain (edutainment)
- Generate ideas for urban topics
- Living the experience of building a 1:1 installation as a tool to communicate ideas

RIEA Live GIG_Methodology

RIEA.ch deploys the experiment as a disciplinary approach to theory and practice. For RIEA.ch, the experiment is structured through elaboration on the Design Thinking methodology. Building upon Herbert A. Simon's and Robert McKim's research, Design Thinking implies methods and processes for how to investigate and explore ill-defined problems, rapid acquisition of information, knowledge analysis, and representation of hypothesis and findings through the means of design and planning. Based on a specific structure of problem solving, Design Thinking can be applied to design and engineering practices, as well as to business and management. Focusing on understanding and solving problems, Design Thinking can be described as a creative thinking-in-action practice applicable to twenty-first century education across disciplines.

RIEA Live GIG_Structure

RIEA.ch Gigs are 48-hour projects, divided into a phase structure, the structure of each phase follows similar procedure through the Design Thinking methodology, which focuses on interdisciplinary research and design processes:

1. Understand, Observe:

Get in touch with the topic by mapping, including confrontation with the local material soloist MC, the master of the given building material for 1:1 installation and the conceptual project proposals.

2. Define:

Process and synthesize the findings from your empathy work in order to form a user point of view that you will address with your design.

3. Ideate:

Explore a wide variety of possible solutions through generating a large quantity of diverse possible solutions, allowing you to step beyond the obvious and explore a range of ideas.

4. Prototype:

Transform your ideas into a physical form so that you can experience and interact with them and, in the process, learn and develop more empathy.

5. Test:

Try out high-resolution products and use observations and feedback to refine prototypes, learn more about the user, and refine your original point of view.

6. Review and Celebrate

RIEA Live GIG_Logistics

The RIEA GIGs are organized by the following set up:

- Formation of groups including task force groups
- Definition of individual contributions for each step by the group
- Coaching by RIEA.ch board members, local professors / assistants and the local material soloist MC by rotation principle
- Conducting by focusing on permanent interaction between the abstract and the real

RIEA Live GIG_Band Constellations

- Solo Gig with 1 RIEA Band Member and local material soloist MC
- Gig with 2 RIEA Band Members and local material soloist MC
- Gig with 3 RIEA Band Members and local material soloist MC
- Gig with 4 RIEA Band Members and local material soloist MC

RIEA.ch Board Members

The RIEA.ch board members represent different cultural and educational backgrounds. The diverse setting of the board members establishes the base for interdisciplinary processes to be initiated and elaborated on the premises of architecture and art.



Guy Lafranchi

RIEA Director, Architect ETH, Designer, owner Glad Ltd Company, Professor of Architecture at Bern University of Applied Sciences. Lives and works in Bern.



Donatella Cusma

RIEA Board Member, Teacher, Adjunct Professor at Woodbury University School of Architecture in Los Angeles, Principal of design office Claret-Cup. Lives and works in Los Angeles.



Per-Johan Dahl

RIEA Board Member, Architect AIA SAR/MSA, Teacher, Researcher, Ph.D. in Architecture from UCLA Department for Architecture and Urban Design, Co-founder of smog studio. Lives and works in Los Angeles and Hong Kong.



Caroline Dahl

RIEA Board Member, Master of Architecture (SCI-Arc) and Urban Design and Planning (BTH), FPR/MSA. Ph.D-student of Landscape Architecture. Project Manager of research platform FUSE and Principal of smog studio. Lives and works in Hong Kong and Malmö.



Corrado Curti

RIEA Board Member, Architect, educated in Engineering and Architecture at the Politecnico di Torino, Teacher, Ph.D. in Architecture Theory and Construction. Lives and works in Torino.



Lars Kordetzky

RIEA Board Member, Architect and Artist, Teacher at Bern University of Applied Sciences. Lives and works in Zug.



Jitendra Jain

RIEA Board Member, Architect, Teacher, educated at SCI-Arc in Los Angeles (M.Arch.) and Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute for Architecture in Mumbai (B.Arch.), currently working at BIG Architects in New York. Lives and works in New York.



Mikael Pedersen

RIEA Board Member, Architect, Teacher, Former Senior Architect at Snøhetta, educated at Lund Institute of Technology (M.Arch.) and Oslo School of Architecture. Lives and works in Oslo.

“and the gig is carried by you, the participants...”



About RIEA

The Research Institute for Experimental Architecture (RIEA) was founded in 1988 by Lebbeus Woods, architect, theorist, critic, and professor of architecture. Following the first Conference on Experimental Architecture – which was organized in Upstate New York by Lebbeus Woods and included Peter Cook, Neil M. Denari, Michael Sorkin, Hani Rashid, Michael Webb, Lise Anne Couture, Gordon Gilbert, and Ted Krueger – RIEA has developed discourse on the experiment within the disciplines of architecture and urbanism.

- RIEA has conducted numerous conferences and workshops in Europe and the United States.
- RIEA is a non-profit organization with the purpose of advancing experimentation and research in the fields of architecture and urbanism, in response to the changing political, economic, technological, and cultural conditions of the contemporary world.
- RIEA researches new territories of space and species of inhabitation. The institute promotes a type of experimentation that deals with the concept and perception of architecture itself. It operates outside the well-established rules and classifications of mere “problem-solving” architectural design activity.

The Purpose of RIEA

- Promotion and training of experimental design, support, and implementation of experimental projects in architecture, urban design, and other related areas of science and culture;
- Organization and conduct of lectures, workshops, symposia, competitions, consultations, project management, research etc.;
- Conferral of grants;
- Publications in areas related to the association’s purpose.

Organization

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External Relations

RIEA.ch maintains a global partnership network, interconnecting organizations committed to explore the realm of experimental architecture. Selected conferences and workshops on the experiment in architecture and urbanism are:

- 1988 *RIEA founded by Lebbeus Woods.*
- 1989 *RIEA: The first Conference*, Oneonta N.Y.
- 1990 *The Conference on Antigravity*, New York City.
- 1994 *Reconstruction and Resistance Workshop*, Sarajevo.
- 1995 *No place to Hide Workshop*, Innsbruck, Austria.
- 1996 *The Space of Thought Workshop*, Hüttenberg, Austria.
- 1996 Due to expanded European presence, RIEAeuropa was founded by Ekkehard Rehfeld.
- 1997 *BorderLine Workshop*, Kraljevica, Croatia.
- 1998/99 RIEAeuropa leads the SCI-Arc study-abroad program in Vico Morcote, Switzerland.
- 1999 *The Power of Contemporary Architecture* (Academy Ed's Editions Peter Cook, Neil Spiller), London.
- 1999 RIEAeuropa was restructured as RIEA.ch, directed by Guy Lafranchi with headquarters in Bern, Switzerland.
- 2000 *Postcard Workshop*, Bern, Switzerland.
- 2001 *Histaormina Workshop*, Taormina, Sicily.
- 2002 *Gr(o)und Workshop*, New York.
Urbanomad Workshop, Oslo, Norway.
- 2003 *Commuting in CoMa Workshop*, Lund Institute of Technology, Lund, Sweden.
- 2006 *To-Game Workshop*, Torino, Italy.
- 2010 *D-Thinking Urban Strategy Workshop*, Lund Institute of Technology, Lund, Sweden.
- 2011 *Space(s) Innovation Workshop, Innovation in Mind Conference*, Lund, Sweden
- 2014 *ZHUuGROUND14 Workshop*, City University of Hong Kong, China.

RIEA.ch edits the RIEAbook-series and the RIEAconcept-series on Experimental Architecture, which have been published by Springer Verlag WienNewYork since 1998.

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RIEA's Report from Lund

Lebbeus Woods

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Lebbeus Woods (May 31, 1940 – October 30, 2012)

RIEA founder, RIEA Consultant, Architect, has been a visiting professor at many schools of architecture, including The Bartlett (London), SCI-Arc (Los Angeles), Columbia University New York, and Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass). He was Professor of Architecture at Cooper Union, New York City.

The following is the report of a workshop held recently by the Research Institute for Experimental Follow Architecture (RIEA), at Lund University in Sweden. The form of the report is more academic than articles usually published on this blog, but its content is very much in the spirit of critical thinking that underlies most of the posts. RIEA is an ongoing collective of architects, theorists, experimentalists, and educators who investigate the purposes and practices of experimental thinking and design, the results of which are published in online and print journals, and in the Institute's Book and Concepts series by Springer Wien/New York.

I find of particular interest the 'political' story unfolded in the report. Individuals and groups who resist changes in thinking or design often turn to laws enforcing conventionality, using them to block or undo experiments in the name of public safety – even though the experiments in question conform to the rules established by law. So it was in Lund. Still, the collaborative team in this case was able to achieve its goals, however briefly, by acting quickly and decisively. There are useful lessons to be learned from their experience.

LW

[Note: I was a founder of RIEA, but have not been active in its activities for some years, including the workshop in Lund.]

Published October 2, 2011 on
<https://lebbeuswoods.wordpress.com/>

Space(s) Innovation: Aspects of Behavior and Codes in Disguise

Report from Lund

Per-Johan Dahl

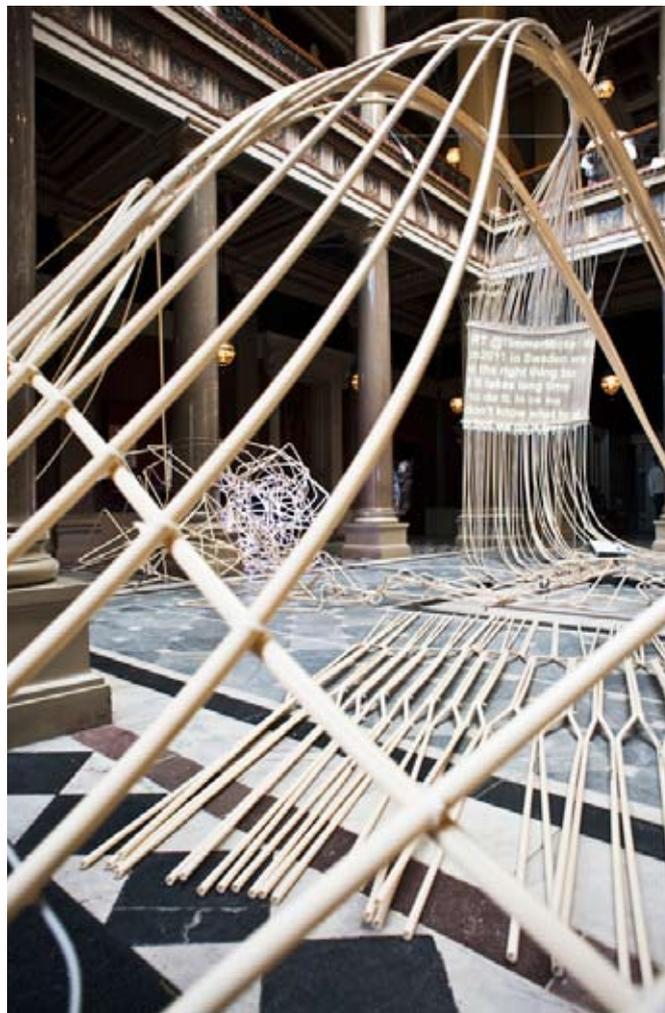
"Design can be a means of controlling human behavior, and of maintaining this behavior into the future."^[1]

– Lebbeus Woods

The thirty-hour workshop *Space(s) Innovation* departure from the hypothesis that architectural and urban space comprises a capacity to foster innovation. Headed by faculty Caroline Dahl, Guy Lafranchi, and Per-Johan Dahl, and executed 14–15 September 2011 in collaboration with *ESS MAX IV i regionen – TITA* (<http://essmax4tita.skane.com/en>) and the *Innovation in Mind* conference (www.innovationinmind.se), the workshop aimed to test this hypothesis by claiming Helgo Zettervall's neo-classical atrium of 1882 in Lund, Sweden, as a site for experimentation. By drawing from a set of traits that seems to be common to the disruptive innovators, *Space(s) Innovation* merged the concept of prefabrication and on-site construction to produce a series of large scale installations that investigated and communicated the generative aspects of space. Reconceptualizing the aesthetics and spatial attributes of electrical tubes and wiring, the workshop introduced a second layer of innovation by exploring the tectonic qualities of a material that generally is hidden inside walls and thus devoted solely to the slavery of electricians.

Space(s) Innovation gathered fifty-three students from the disciplines of architecture, landscape architecture, and interactive design. The interdisciplinary setting met with the objective of mobilizing an autonomous community that, on instant command, could engage in rapid design research and large scale construction.^[2] Guided by Hasso Plattner's design thinking methodology, which has been cultivated by Lafranchi's teaching at the architecture department of Bern University of Applied Sciences, the workshop formulated a six-step process that interconnected data assembly and processing with brain-storming and prototyping.^[3] The community was subdivided into eight groups and assigned an architectural or urban element that, in a tectonic fashion, could be used to demarcate spatial attributes.^[4] Drawing from New York Times journalist Steve Lohr's remark that "you can't engineer innovation, but you can increase the odds of it occurring," the workshop deployed Hal B. Gregersen's observation that specific behaviors seems to be common to the disruptive innovators.^[5] When cross-referencing Gregersen with Lebbeus Woods's argument about design's ability to control human behavior, then it seems possible to create spaces that foster innovation.

The key approach to Gregersen and Woods was to experiment with space constructions that challenged the normative modes of inhabiting the atrium space. The installation redirected various entrances and cross-ways; it amplified the soundscape; and it utilized the affect of tubes to manipulate scale relations, sight-lines, and the haptic qualities of building components. Strict geometries were interconnected with filed conditions to generate a landscape that, almost in a surreal fashion, operated in stark contrast to the neo-classical architecture of the atrium. The coherent ma-



teriality was augmented by the different structural forms, which together directed a complex constellation of forces that coincided to shape the temporary installation.

The pace and scale of space construction was managed by the community, which operated as a fluid social construct. The space between expertise and labor was flattened due to the instant alternation of strategies and tactics that served to constitute both specific goals and provisional feedback. The workshop deployed an interior to host the installation, but the process shouldn't be limited to any traditional dichotomy of inside and outside. On the contrary, the mobilization of the workforce describes an operational procedure possible to deploy at multiple scales. As the theme of the workshop was proclaimed by Eva Dalman of Lund Department of City Planning, the relationship to urbanism, for example, was explicit throughout the working process. Due to the current planning of Brunnskog in north-eastern Lund – a new city district geared towards research and development businesses – the results from the workshop will be processed by the city planning office.



The working process produced a successive transformation of the atrium, which proved to be highly successful in its capacity to challenge normative behaviors. Positive reactions from participants and expertise at the conference were mixed with aggression from building administrators and security staff. Maria Nordh of the National Property Board Sweden, for example, forced a premature disassembly. Utilizing incorrect references to the Swedish building code, Nordh demanded the installation to be removed immediately after the closure of the conference.^[6] The premature disassembly was, on the one hand, unfortunate for students, faculty, and organizers as it hampered valuable exposure outside the realm of the conference. On the other hand, however, it pointed to the success of the workshop in providing evidence about the generative aspects of space.



The installation altered conformist behavior, but it also complied with the Swedish building code. Indeed, neither emergency exit nor access was blocked by the structure, and the plastic material of the tubes didn't prove exceptional inflammability. The circumstances that triggered Nordh's reaction, hence, had nothing to do with the material that temporarily occupied the atrium, but with her perception of how to inhabit the space. When the installation altered her normative behavior, then she used the authority of codes to force eviction. And it is exactly at the intersection of the normal and the unfamiliar that the *Space(s) Innovation* workshop can be problematized. All codes and regulations strive to normalize the unknown. They use, or misuse, sovereign powers to process the space inbetween security and opportunity. The key issue to be extracted from the premature disassembly of the installation complies with the demarcation of power. All innovation implies the exploration of the unknown. If we draw from Lewis Tsurumaki Lewis's argument that "beneath the surface of the normal or familiar exists the strange or the unfamiliar," then we can conclude that the spaces capable of bypassing normative behaviors are the spaces that hold the potentials of innovation.^[7] Indeed, the recognition of the unpredictable conditions that Lafranchi is concerned about enables us to advance the spaces of excellence.^[8] The outcome of the workshop, hence, points to the argument that the Lund Department of City Planning will succeed to stimulate innovative environments at Brunnslog only if their power structures are adaptable to the paroxysmal trajectories of the unknown.

Per-Johan Dahl
September 27, 2011
Venice, CA

the photos of the *Space(s) Innovation Workshop*
are by Fredrik Dahl

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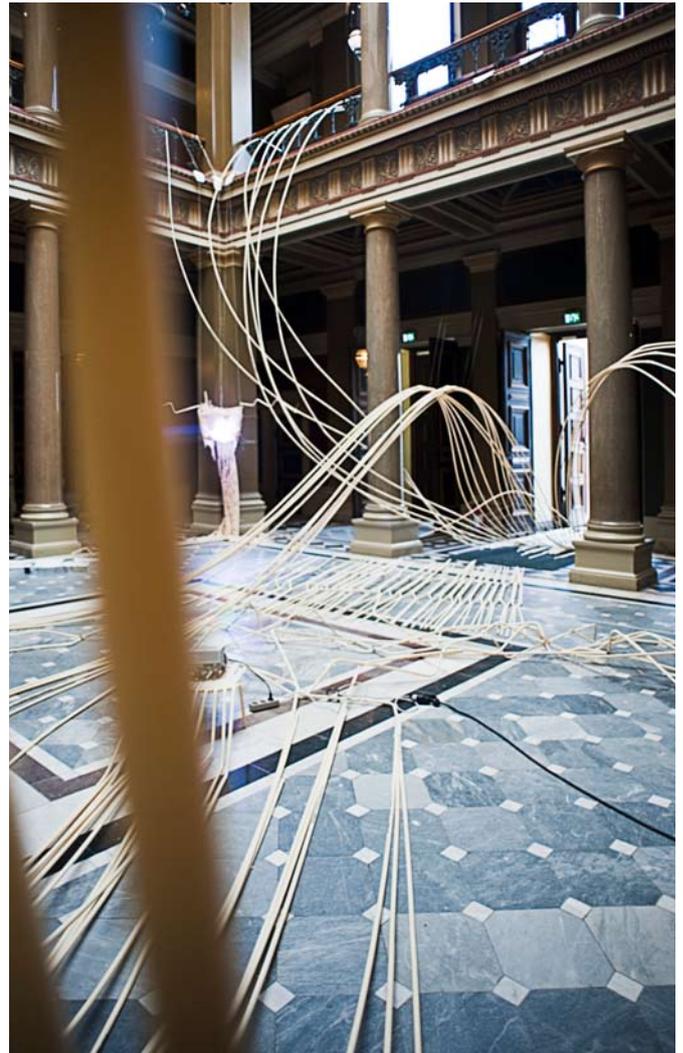
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Link to a short documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyHsf-MFHiw>



[1] Lebbeus Woods, *Radical Reconstruction* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 23.

[2] The term autonomy is used here with reference to Lebbeus Woods's discourse on the experiment. Woods argues that "[t]he experimental architect of today is the precursor of the free and autonomous individual of a cultural heterarchy yet to come." The mobilization of an autonomous community, hence, safeguards the formation of a cultural constellation capable to liberate ideas and initiatives from surrounding norms and preconceived behaviors. See ———, "Experimental Architecture: A Commentary," *Avant Garde: A Journal of Theory and Criticism in Architecture and the Arts 2* (Summer 1989): 18.

[3] Read more about design thinking in Hasso Plattner, Christoph Meinel, and Ulrich Weinberg, *Design-Thinking* (München: mi-Wirtschaftsbuch, 2009).

[4] Gottfried Semper described the tectonic through four architectural elements. Read about Semper's elements in, for example, Gottfried Semper, *Gottfried Semper: The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, translated by Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann. (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

[5] Steve Lohr, "Reaping the Rewards of Risk-Taking," *New York Times* August 27, 2011. Read about Hal B. Gregersen's behaviors in Jeff Dyer, Hal B. Gregersen, and Clayton M. Christensen, *The Innovator's DNA: Mastering the Five Skills of Disruptive Innovators* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press, 2011).

[6] Maria Nordh of the National Property Board Sweden argues in email correspondence, September 16, 2011, that the installation violated the premises of "fire, emergency exit, and access." These premises are regulated by the Swedish building code BBR. The code measures pass ways for emergency exit and access to minimum 1.3 meters, which was confirmed by the installations. The code also regulates the inflammability of materials within an area demarcated to insulate fire. No attempts were made to verify the inflammability of polystyrene, which constitutes the material of the electric tubes.

[7] Lewis Tsurumaki Lewis, "Snafu," *in Situation Normal... (Pamphlet Architecture 21)* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 4.

[8] Guy Lafranchi has theorized the space of unpredictability in various texts and projects. See, for example, Guy Lafranchi, *Archonpoison* (Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 1999).

ZHUuGROUND14:

Critical Skills and Social Interaction at CityU

Per-Johan Dahl

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Summary

ZHUuGROUND14 was an architectural workshop pursued at the City University of Hong Kong, 17-19 May 2014, and in collaboration with the Research Institute for Experimental Architecture (RIEA.ch). Taking the retaining wall as intellectual compound, the workshop engaged in a large scale modelling exercise, which had been orchestrated to improve the critical skills of the architecture students. ZHUuGROUND14 merged undergraduate students with Ph.D. students and Post-Doctoral researchers to instigate social interaction through design. And it deployed the tectonic aptitudes of bamboo material and detailing to render an experimental design and fabrication process. This article explicates the background, the learning objectives, the execution, and the conclusions of ZHUuGROUND14. The article argues that critical skills are becoming increasingly important for both academia and the industry, thus feasible to be implemented through open ended exploratory design and fabrication processes; it elucidates the RIEA.ch presence at CityU; it clarifies the intellectual premises of the retaining wall; and it describes the tectonic approach of the workshop, which, through social interaction, eradicated the normative barriers between theory and practice. ZHUuGROUND14 marks RIEA.ch's entry into Asia. Drawing from the legacy of Lebbeus Woods, the workshop suggests a new form of collaborative learning labs feasible to be implemented through Hong Kong's architectural community.

Introduction

Architectural education in Hong Kong and elsewhere is often characterized by disconnected curricula. Generally structured through gradual advancement of disciplinary maturation, Bachelor, Master, and Doctoral students in most architecture schools tend to work segregated from each other with limited, or no, interaction. From a traditional academic perspective, this system may be validated as Bachelors consume and Doctors produce knowledge. On the other hand, however, as soon as tradition is replaced by innovation, disadvantages unfold. To prosper in accord with the innovation economy of twenty-first century, architects are not only required to master the disciplinary means of professional activities, such as history, theory, and design. They are also required to constantly reinvent the discipline through critical assessment of related practices, such as digital fabrication, construction management, and building law. The skills of interconnecting and critically evaluating the complex web of assorted information cannot be matured in social isolation, but needs interaction. The three-day architecture workshop ZHUuGROUND14 – pursued 17 to 19 May 2014 at the City University of Hong Kong – was therefore dedicated to foster critical skills through communal collaboration.

Learning objectives

ZHUuGROUND14 engaged all curricula of the Architectural Studies at CityU to render social interaction through design: thus undergraduate students teamed up with Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers to activate a collaborative learning experience. The objective of the workshop was not only to stimulate collaboration beyond customary academic routines. Additional objectives were to render an open ended exploratory design and fabrication process, dedicated to space making through large scale modelling, and to offer the mere local body of students at CityU the opportunity to learn from a cross-cultural constellation of student-to-tutor mentoring.

The workshop was organized by Assistant Professor Dr. Per-Johan Dahl, and in collaboration with the Research Institute for Experimental Architecture (RIEA.ch). RIEA.ch was founded 1988 in New York City by Lebbeus Woods, with the purpose to advance experimentation in the field of architecture. The institute's European presence expanded during the 1990s, thus its headquarters moved to Bern, Switzerland. Committed to architectural experimentation and connected with top-universities throughout Europe and the American continent, RIEA.ch provides an intellectual platform for both critical assessment and cross-cultural aptitudes. The RIEA.ch staff that teamed up with Dr. Dahl included Director Guy Lafranchi (University of Applied Sciences, Bern), Donatella Cusmá (Woodbury University, Los Angeles), and Caroline Dahl (SLU, Sweden). Due to the interest in design thinking methodology, which has been cultivated by RIEA.ch in accord with Lafranchi's commitment to interdisciplinary teaching at the University of Applied Science in Bern, the workshop fused team building strategies and open source methodologies with graphic design exercises, concept transmission through metaphors, tectonic explorations, and space construction theory.





Execution

ZHUuGROUND14 took the retaining wall as intellectual compound to investigate some neglected potentials for architecture. Five sites had been detected in proximity to the CityU campus, all including a series of retaining walls. Characterized by various urban programs, the five sites raised questions about innovation of new forms and patterns, manipulation of spatial typologies, material attributes, relocation of programs, and transformation of topographies.

Following the urban analysis, the students were instructed to look beyond the mere normative approach on retaining walls and, instead, develop alternative means of form and content arrangement. By recognizing the structural premise of the retaining wall, which is to resist the lateral pressure of soil when there is a desired change in ground elevation, the workshop prompted an additional layer of spatial design which, thus, moved the concept of retaining wall from engineering to architecture.

Sketching exercises in various media were initiated to explore the architectural potentials of the retaining walls. The tools were soon shifted, however, to encompass full scale modeling, using bamboo scaffolding technique with traditional binding methods and off-the-shelf scaffolding covering membrane. Bamboo was chosen as prime workshop material due to its tectonic aptitudes, its aesthetic qualities, and its cultural significance which is explicit in Hong Kong. By working with bamboo scaffolding technique, the students were not only given the opportunity to produce a lucid construct, but also to render an assembly process frequently deployed at most construction sites in Hong Kong. When familiarized with such process, the students' awareness of construction management and control increases.

The bamboo scaffolding technique was not instructed by RIEA.ch faculty, but by scaffolding specialist Mak Chiu Leung Donald. Mak mastered not only the structural aspects of bamboo, but also the details of assembly and joining. Demonstrating the differentiation between hemp ropes and nylon strings, he emphasized both the safety aspects and the aesthetic endeavors of detailing. By adding Mak to the team of instructors, the traditional methods of bamboo scaffolding were properly taught while the normative barriers between theory and practice were eradicated.

Conclusion

ZHUuGROUND14 at the City University of Hong Kong activated social interaction through design. Building upon Lebbeus Woods's discourse on experimental architecture, the workshop fostered critical thinking and doing through the making of large scale bamboo structures. Merging undergraduate students with Ph.D. students and postdoctoral researchers, the workshop celebrated knowledge production beyond the customary routines of disconnected curricula.

Disconnected curricula, exercised by traditional academia, are certainly necessary for the training of architects, because different levels of knowledge production require, to some extent, various degrees of autonomy. However, like Woods concludes, you have to "be alone [and] be together" (Woods, 1997; 29). Indeed, the skills of critically assessing information in the innovation economy of twenty-first century require various means of communal collaboration. By intersecting the mere horizontal structures of traditional academia with vertical structures of social interaction, disciplinary precision may be supplemented with critical dexterity.

ZHUuGROUND14 marks RIEA.ch's entry into Asia. We may use the legacy of the Swiss institute to make Hong Kong's architectural community a leading platform for the instigation of collaborative learning labs.

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Photo credits

Chan Kwan Lei, Queenie (photos without students)
Feiyu Qi (photos including students)

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Link to a short documentary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MtHEO00cqk>



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MANIFESTO

RIEA RIEA.CH
UNPLUGGED
LIVE GIGS

The audience is always part of the performance

The conceptual thinking trained in the analog is the base for all digital processes

The generation change requires a compression of time
= SPEED

The interaction of levels through vertical studio principle
= PROFIT OF EXCHANGE

Methods and logistics with teamwork and Task Force Goups
= MAX. ACCUMULATION OF KNOWLEGDE

Every Gig is supported by a local material company
= MATERIAL SOLOIST MC

The performers ALWAYS create space
= 1:1 INSTALLATION

1:1 Installation, Movie, Project-Descriptions, Project-Logos
= COMMUNICATION TO THE PUBLIC

People, Innovation, Emotion, Unpredictability, Change
= FUN