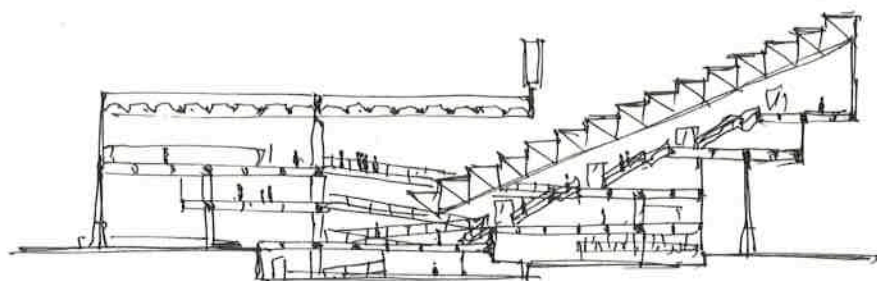


FAU & GSD



FKL (BF)

FAU meets GSD.

CIRO MIGUEL
& FELIX WETTSTEIN

FAU

Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo

CIRO MIGUEL

GSD

Harvard Graduate School of Design

FELIX WETTSTEIN

[...] it pleases me to question you, particularly the youngest, those who enter our school today: what cathedrals do you have in your mind?

João Batista Vilanova Artigas¹

CM: Architecture schools are built statements. For those who experience them every day, they influence the perception of space and promote the development of a shared architectural vocabulary. Their physical presence elaborates specific concepts about design, form, collectiveness, pedagogy, politics, and the built environment.

FW: John Andrews brought the school together under one roof. At the heart of the new construction was "the Trays," an enormous multi-tiered studio space. "The studios on all floors are open to each other, each studio tray overlapping the one beneath it and tucked under the one above," reads a 1969 article in *Architectural Forum*. "The building gathers all studios into one open, integrated environment. Gone are the separate identities cherished by competing department 'empires.'"²

Ein eindrücklicher Raum – das gläserne Dach mit seinen mächtigen Fachwerkträgern aus Stahl liegt knapp über der terrassierten Landschaft aus Ideen, Modellen und Müll. Der diagonale Raum ist eng und gepresst, wohl deshalb entsteht diese knisternde Intensität – jedes Semester neu, mit anderen Akteuren, immer wieder.

CM: Vilanova Artigas describes FAU's open space as the "spatialization of democracy". Under its transparent roof, individuals gather to interact, discuss, experiment, and be urban: "one who screams inside the building will be responsible for having interfered with the entire environment."³

FW: Meine persönliche Erfahrung mit diesem Raum war geprägt durch Ehrfurcht, eben Ehre und Furcht. Die demokratisch offene Konzeption des Raumes wird kontrastiert durch die Hierarchie, die sich auf den Terrassen etabliert. Die älteren Studierenden schauen runter auf die jüngeren, die Professoren kontrollieren das Geschehen von oben. Man fühlt sich immer beobachtet.

CM: Being at FAU for many years, my experience is summed up as a collection of moments. They are stories that I've lived, heard about, or imagined—a personal repertoire that shaped a particular way to think and design.

In the early mornings, a mist inside the building reminded us that architecture does not have to be a shelter, airproof and waterproof.

Instead of a barrier to the natural environment, it can be vague, diluted in the landscape.

From a distance, the building has clear contours, a defined geometry. From up close, the boundaries become porous and disappear. Just like a cloud.

FW: Es gab Tage, da war es unerträglich heiss, und ich erinnere mich an eiskalte Nächte. Es war immer erstaunlich ruhig, wie in einer Bibliothek.

CM: Its architecture is not pure. Its roughness embraces imperfections and the complexities of construction. Architecture leaks. Architecture as daily life. Once a flood transformed the building into infrastructure, a busy harbor connected to the rivers of São Paulo.

At FAU, plants thrive, birds fly around, cats and dogs come and go. One enthusiastic cat, perhaps looking for intimacy, used to fancy the interiors of a cardboard Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater.

FW: Sehen und gesehen werden – nicht unwichtig in einer Architekturschule, einer Eliteschule zumal.

Es geschieht, es entsteht vieles in diesem Raum, unter diesem gläsernen Dach. Der Himmel und die Aussenwelt sind nah und spürbar, und trotzdem vermittelt der Raum die Introvertiertheit einer Raumkapsel.

Die Kreativität, die Dichte und die Konzentration sind immer hoch. Und so sind es die Erwartungen, die Sehnsüchte und die Träume der Lernenden und Lehrenden.

CM: Nude models pose in the great central hall for a first-year drawing exercise. Seen by everyone, their profane presence as human scale (or Greek gods) reveals not only FAU's monumental dimensions but also its democratic urbanity. A boxing ring, installed in the same space, was meant to produce architects with spirit, fearless and physically fit to face the profession's challenges.

Sometimes, late at night, motorcycles rode the ramps all the way up to the studios to deliver pizza, confirming that spatial continuity erases hierarchies between inside and outside, school and city, academic community and society.

FW: Als Massimo Scolari um zwei Uhr in der Früh rauchend (streng verboten!) die Treppe herunterkam, um nach seinen Schäfchen zu schauen, konnte er sich einen kritischen Kommentar zu seinem Büro nicht verkneifen. Die eine runde Stütze mitten im Raum hat er John Andrews nie verziehen.

CM: A project for a new annex doubled the school underground. It was the exact same structure, but with a completely different sense of space, the ground floor transferred to the top of the building. The roof, formerly a window to the sky, was now a door, the main entrance.

FW: "We have always admired the intellectual spirit and free-thinking atmosphere of the school with its mythic Gund Hall building, and can now transform this building by excavating, adding, and connecting spaces that will support communication and exchange within the GSD community."⁴

Da sind wir mal gespannt!

Wie sieht die Architekturschule der Zukunft aus? Ist es denkbar, die Intimität der GSD mit der Öffentlichkeit der FAU zu überlagern?

What kind of cathedral do we have in mind?

Vielleicht gibt es die ideale Architekturschule nicht? Besser ein Bachelor in São Paulo und ein Master in Cambridge, oder umgekehrt

...

CM: Or perhaps a hybrid school, a new entry into the universe of architectural buildings. A fantastic creature, half FAU and half GSD, in which students constantly dream about open cities.

- 1 João Batista Vilanova Artigas, "O desenho," in *Caminhos da Arquitetura* (São Paulo: Cosac & Naif, 1999), p. 81.
- 2 "Design, Inspired by 'the Trays,'" *Harvard Gazette*, May 16, 2016, <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/05/the-inspiration-in-the-trays/>.
- 3 Vilanova Artigas, "Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo – FAUUSP," in *Vilanova Artigas: Arquitetos Brasileiros* (São Paulo: Blau, Instituto Lina Bo e P.M. Bardi: Fundação Vilanova Artigas, 1997), p. 101.
- 4 Herzog & de Meuron on their project for the extension of the Gund Hall, GSD, July, 2018. https://www.herzogdemeuron.com/index/news/2018/498_harvard-gund-hall-extension.html (accessed May 8, 2021).