

ETH Zürich  
D-ARCH Departement Architektur  
Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur gta

The history and theory of architecture have always represented vital fields of academic research and teaching for architects. Architecture requires the ability to examine one's own work critically, a skill that emerges through a scholarly basis for practical activity – without this critical sense, qualitative improvement would be inconceivable. As traditional disciplines within architecture, theoretical and historical aspects are particularly important. These fields study the stock of available knowledge in architecture, the forms and techniques of building, the function of architecture and its relationship to society and politics, and the development of the design process and of spatial thinking from the very beginnings to the present day.

The Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture – which, since its foundation in 1967, has been known simply as the 'gta' – offers a wide range of courses, ranging from information-oriented lectures for the Bachelor and Master Programme, to specialized elective and major subjects, to the integrated discipline of design instruction and problem-oriented supervision of examination theses. The professors' special commitment to providing intensive supervision of doctoral students is viewed as the interface between teaching and research. The well-established teaching approach used in the Master of Advanced Studies Programme on 'Theory and History of Architecture' provides a bridge between the practical and academic fields.

Closely related to its academic work, the gta also conducts other communication and research activities within the field of architecture. The gta Archives contains important materials on the history of modern architecture, including the papers and unpublished works of a large number of architects. The gta Publishers publishing house is one of the leading architecture publishers in Switzerland and Europe. The exhibition service, gta Exhibitions, is involved in promoting the public profile of architecture. Its current programs are based on extensive collaboration with partners universities, practical architectural work, and the building industry.

Since its foundation, directors of the gta have included Adolf Max Vogt, Heinz Ronner, Werner Oechslin, Andreas Tönnesmann, and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani.

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