This 2014 Biennale Session will celebrate the
CENTENNIAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, 1914-2014!

“Fundamentals” is the celebrated theme of the 2014 Venice Biennale of Architecture, curated by Rem Koolhaas of the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). The theme is divided into three exhibitions: Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014, Elements of Architecture and Monditalia. The first - the issue each national pavilion was asked to address – is intended to provide historical research in order to explore how Modernity and globalization has, since 1914, formed the architecture we practice today. The second is intended to pay close attention to the fundamental elements of architecture - the floor, the wall, the ceiling, the roof, the door, the window, the façade, the balcony, the corridor, the fireplace, the toilet, the stair, the escalator, the elevator, the ramp, et cetera. The third provides an intensive focus on Italian design, understanding Italy as possessing one of the most prolific design cultures today.

The ISU.Co.DoA Biennale Session will consist of a two-day student workshop and address the second of the Biennale themes - Elements of Architecture. A one-day colloquium will address the first of the themes - Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014.
CAUTION WET-FLOOR: SLIPPING INTO DEEP

Workshop organized by Cameron Campbell, Peter Goché & Mitchell Squire October 16 & 17

Of the ‘elements’ of architecture, the ISU.CoD.DoA workshop will focus on the fundamental ‘floor’—architecture’s topographic surface—as something more than a flattened space on a denatured field.

Floor is the primordial element on which spatial productions are founded and the site of deliberate and spontaneous transformation. To “take the floor” or to “be floored” are everyday idioms that hint at an underlying structure of what is for many a familiar surface from which to rise or, perhaps ingloriously, fall.

We find a similar consequence with the specific topography of the Venetian Lagoon and thereby directly link the intellectual evidence of a stable set of fundamentals to the visual evidence of an unstable aquatic ground plane. This relationship forms the basis for our workshop as we seek to stage an intense but delicate floor formation in an antiquated arsenal. Like most land-use practices, this effort to rethink the floor of the Arsenale is intrinsically grounded in the spatial and cognitive confines of its surroundings, not the least of which is a great deal of paper.

The workshop, led by Cameron Campbell, Peter Goché and Mitchell Squire, will consider both the Giardini and the Arsenale exhibitions as sites for survey and analysis. With fifty design, interior design, and architecture students, they will generate a dynamic form that elevates our understanding of the performative actions that occur on this, the most elemental surface of architecture. In the end, this temporal installation will serve as an architectural intervention not unlike the admonitory note laid out by a custodian to draw our attention to a near-invisible condition of the plane before us, “Caution: Wet Floor.”

Richard Sennet’s “Together: The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation,” underpins the otherwise delicate paper that will be the chief component utilized in this creative workshop. While most architects gravitate toward Sennet’s earlier work, “The Craftsman,” a deeper analysis exists in this recent text that argues cooperation is a craft. The intersection of craft and cooperation may well be the new fundamental that necessitates an extension of the architect’s focus beyond material mastery.

The workshop will be divided into morning and afternoon sessions, which will then be linked to the colloquium by the screening of a video documentary of the project’s evolution in an attempt to capture the cooperative spirit between cast members.

Student Participants:

DISCIPLINING MODERNITY

Colloquium moderated by Deborah Hauptmann October 18

Absorbing Modernity 1914-2014 is particularly fortuitous in that it was in 1914 that architecture as a discipline first emerged from the College of Engineering at Iowa State University. The ISU.CoD.DoA colloquium will focus on the effects modernity has had on the practice of architecture itself: not only the material but the immaterial effects which have led to new forms of studios and offices, alternative arrangements of production and, of course, of globalized practices as we understand them today.

For example, the move from the large corporate firms of the late 20th century to the small firms in which micro-knowledge transactions are becoming the new network model in the coordination of design team expertise. What some call post-studio practices – a more common term in the arts, now being used in architecture – are transforming design culture from market-driven practices to more agile forms of collaborative/networked offices better situated to address social-driven practices. Today these post-studio practices work through new networks of attention and communication and bring people together without the need for traditional infrastructure. Invited speakers will present ideas, reflections or positions with respect to the changing landscape in the culture, size and disciplinary configurations of architecture and design practices – what we refer to here as “Disciplining Modernity”

Reinier de Graaf, partner in OMA, will present the thinking behind the “Absorbing Modernity.” Speakers will include Eva Prats and Ricardo Flores. Flores & Prats Architects, Barcelona Spain; as well as ISU alumni speakers Jeffrey Morgan, Historic Boston Incorporated, Massachusetts; Nora Wendl, Professor of Architecture University of Portland; and Eirc Smith, VAULT founding partner, Chicago Illinois.
Colloquium Speakers:

Reinier de Graaf, Partner OMA, Rotterdam. Mr. de Graaf joined OMA in 1996. He is responsible for building and masterplanning projects in Europe, Russia, and the Middle East, including the new G-Star Headquarters in Amsterdam (completed 2014), the 'Stadskantoor' (City Hall) under construction in Rotterdam, the Tors Torn residential tower in Stockholm, and the Commonwealth Institute (under construction) in London. In 2002, he became director of AMO, the think tank of OMA, and produced The Image of Europe, an exhibition illustrating the history of the European Union. He has overseen AMO's increasing involvement in sustainability and energy planning, including Zeekracht: a strategic masterplan for the North Sea, the publication in 2010 of "Roadmap 2050: A Practical Guide to a Prosperous, Low-Carbon Europe" with the European Climate Foundation, and "The Energy Report," a global plan for 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, with the WWF. De Graaf has recently worked extensively in Moscow, overseeing OMA's proposal to design the masterplan for the Skolkovo Centre for Innovation, the "Russian Silicon Valley," and leading a consortium which proposed a development concept for the Moscow Agglomeration: an urban plan for Greater Moscow. He recently curated two exhibitions, On Hold at the British School in Rome in 2011 and the travelling exhibition Public Works: Architecture by Civil Servants (Venice Biennale, 2012; Berlin, 2013).

Ricardo Flores and Evan Prats Flores & Prats is an architecture office from Barcelona, dedicated to confront theory and academic practice with design and construction activity. After their experience at Enric Miralles’ office, Ricardo Flores and Eva Prats have developed a career where research has been always linked to the responsibility to make and to build. The office has worked on rehabilitation of old structures for new occupations, as well as on neighbours' participation in the design process of urban public spaces, and on social housing and its capacity to create community. But they have also experienced using film to document architecture, or with menus of edible architecture for their exhibitions in Barcelona and Copenhagen as a way to bring their work closer to a broader public. The work of Flores & Prats is widely awarded, published and exhibited. They have obtained the Grand Award for the Best Work in Architecture at the Royal Academy of Arts in London 2009 for the rehabilitation project Mills Museum in Palma de Mallorca, the International Award Dedalo Minosse of Vicenza 2011 for the New Campus for Microsoft in Milan, and at present their rehabilitation work Cultural Centre Casal Balaguer is being exhibited at the Biennale di Architettura di Venezia. Ricardo and Eva are both professors at the School of Architecture of Barcelona, and have been invited professors to several universities around the world.

Jeffrey Morgan is an architect, urbanist, real estate developer and, the Director of Real Estate Development for Historic Boston Incorporated, a non-profit, mission-driven, real estate development organization utilizing historic preservation as an urban revitalization strategy. He has also been engaged in research regarding the role of community development corporations at the intersection of micro-business development and inner-city multi-cultural neighborhood business district redevelopment. Mr. Morgan received his Master in Design Studies from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design in March of 2012. He received his Bachelor of Arts in Architecture degree in 1981 and his Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1983, both from Iowa State University. He is a 2011 Edward M. Gramlich Fellow of the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies and Neighbor Works America. Morgan’s work as an architect has included market rate and affordable multifamily housing design and infill mixed-use and retail design in multicultural neighborhoods. His urban design work includes redevelopment strategies for distressed neighborhood business and warehouse districts. His design projects have garnered awards in affordable housing, interior design, historic preservation, master planning, and urban design. His work in design education has included serving as adjunct faculty in design at Drake University and Iowa State University. He has served on the Education Committee of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards and on visiting accreditation teams for the National
Architectural Accreditation Board. He currently serves on the Architecture Advisory Council of the Department of Architecture at Iowa State University.

Eric Smith is a cross-discipline design thinker with a keen eye on emergent trends in the human experience. Trained as an architect, his expertise across interactive, narrative, environmental, industrial, motion, urban, material sciences and graphic practices led him to found an innovation practice with the vision of uniting world class leadership to realize next generation impacts. Following the global economic meltdown and the U.S. housing crisis in 2007, Eric had circumstantially sought new formats and arenas where he could unlock the technical skills, thinking patterns and collaborative role fundamental within the architecture paradigm to help drive new project types and future directions. Since the establishment of VAULT, he has proposed concepts for the U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of School Nurses, the National Restaurant Association, the National Chamber of Commerce Association, the City of Chicago, the National Football League Players Association, the Trust of Public Land, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Olympic Committee and numerous corporate, civic and start-up organizations.

Nora Wendl questions the composition of architecture—seeking to expand the perception of what the discipline’s built forms and histories are (and could be). Her compositions exist on a spectrum between the written artifact and the built artifact, aligning architecture and its histories with the adjacent fields of fiction, poetry, contemporary art and literature. She is co-editor, with Isabelle Loring Wallace, of Contemporary Art about Architecture: A Strange Utility (Ashgate, 2013). In 2012, with Michael R. Allen (Director of Preservation Research Office), she co-organized the international design competition Pruitt Igoe Now. In 2010-2011, she was one of twelve Pacific Northwest writers selected as a Jack Straw Fellow (Seattle, WA). Her research has been featured in various publications including Journal of Architectural Education, Architecture and Culture, On Site: Review, Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, 306090, and Invisible City. She has presented, performed and exhibited at numerous national and international academic conferences, museums and galleries including, Seattle Art Museum, Blue Sky Center for Photographic Arts, Seattle Public Library, Center for Architecture (Portland), Art Institute (Portland), Westbrook Artist's Site and Wordstock. She is currently Assistant Professor of Architecture in the School of Architecture at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon, and sits on the editorial board of the Journal of Architectural Education.