



Gottfried Semper, main building of the Swiss Federal Polytechnical School in Zurich, 1858/59 (gta Archiv / ETH Zurich)

Gottfried Semper (1803–1879) founded the Bauschule (School of Building) at the Eidgenössisches Polytechnikum (Swiss Federal Polytechnical School) in Zurich. In the same year of his death, some of his Zurich students took the initiative to establish a Semper Museum. After a short period of independence (1880–1884), the museum holdings were incorporated in the library of the Bauschule (later the Architekturbibliothek), which in 1950 the Architecture Division handed over to the ETH Main Library. 1967 saw the establishment of the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta), and this received, as a basic stock, the Semper Archive first collected for and by the Semper Museum.

Apart from the Semper Archive, the gta Archives now also holds the estates of his successors Georg Lasius, Alfred Friedrich Bluntschli, Gustav Gull, Karl Moser and of a number of older and younger Swiss architects. The institute's research work has always been accompanied by intensive collection activities. In particular, building up the CIAM Archive (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) produced more and more stocks. The Semper Archive held ever increasing numbers of estates and individual documents and finally became the Archive for Modern Swiss Architecture. Today it is called the gta Archives and forms one of the pillars of the gta Institute, next to the divisions gta Digital, gta Exhibitions and gta Verlag.