The architecture of the Italian Renaissance is an architecture consisting of incomplete individual buildings and magnificent urban fragments. The artistic return to antiquity was above all a creative act set against a background of only fragmentary knowledge. Often with modest means, the master-builders of the Renaissance created works that have still not lost their expressive power today.

The Renaissance buildings that appeal to us draw their power from the tension and resistance intrinsic to works that equally admit ideal and reality, imagination and contradiction, recklessness and conformism.

This semester we will design buildings in this spirit. We will look simultaneously at buildings from the Renaissance and from today. The richness of architecture is the theme of the semester.
This semester we will explore the strategies of urban densification under the specific conditions of Lausanne’s spectacular topography. The cultural concept of the Villa Suburbana will serve as a metaphor for the development of apartment buildings that reflects the ambiguity of Lausanne’s urban condition - a city that is also a landscape.

The idea of the Villa Suburbana is based on a paradox. Located immediately outside the city the Villa Suburbana belongs equally to the urban realm and to a rural reality. On an architectural and cultural level it negotiates between its position in the landscape and its ties to city life. Unlike the suburban houses of today the Villa Suburbana draws its strength and vitality precisely from this contradictory condition.

The students will work in groups of two. Each group will design one apartment building. We will work simultaneously on the urban setting, the plans and the façades.
Reference pairs consisting of a work from the Italian Renaissance and a project from the 20th century will form the cultural context of our work during the semester. The reference pairs constitute an “in between space”, in which we will work on and discuss the questions of Gestalt and the effects of architectural elements. We will not look at the references in a historical or stylistic way, but as individual creative achievements, formed in a past era, which was just as contradictory and brittle as our times.
Villa della Farnesina, Baldassare Peruzzi, Rome 1508-11

North Penn Visiting Nurses Association Headquarters, Venturi and Short, Ambler 1960
Indiana Avenue Houses, Frank O. Gehry, Los Angeles 1981

Villa Madama, Rafael, Rome 1525
House Latapie, Lacaton & Vassal, Floirac 1993

Palazzo del Te, Giulio Romano, Mantua 1524
The studio will organise a mandatory study trip to Rome. Focussing on Renaissance architecture we will visit villas by Raphael, Peruzzi, Giulio Romano, Vignola and others.

The trip will take place from March 31st until April 3rd. Students are asked to independently organise their transport and accommodation. The additional cost local transport and entrance fees will be approximately CHF 100.