

*Where Does FORM Come FROM?

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YOUR MAIL IS TO THE RIGHT

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Others were saddened by the state of the mailboxes—those who placed mail within them, and others who retrieved mail from them. The mailboxes exist in a public space, and are frequently viewed by visitors to the department. What do they say about our attitudes concerning this kind of relatively mundane object? How should the object be constructed and crafted? How should it meet the brick wall? These questions began the process of designing new ones.

The design should be simple and functional. A jig was made to produce a bent plywood form. The size and grade of the plywood is of relatively low quality, and very unpopular, there were only eleven sheets left in all of Rhode Island—with no intent for restocking by retailers. It is not typically used for finished products, but it can be sanded and bent to a very tight radius without splitting. The wood was then finished, making sure not to coat faces that would be glued to another bent wood form. Metal brackets were cut and milled to hold the mailboxes away from the wall, and the hardware got inset and hidden where possible. Finally, the spaces for name tags are routed. The plastic name tag holders remain the only non-custom built items on the mailboxes.

What do the new mailboxes say? For me, they speak about things I have always believed. The opportunity to build with one's hands is a pleasure, and the importance of the quality and craft of things we build should be most evident. The mailbox is an inherent part of the form that is created by placing multiple pieces of corrugated plywood in sequence. The functional element is derived from a structural logic that creates form. Now, the mailboxes are beginning to speak about things I have learned in the architecture department at RISD. Only one thing is not obvious in the construction of these mailboxes, it must be learned... Your mailbox is to the right of your name.

