Assemble Material

Masters Architecture

@ EPFL
The Studio: 2021-2022

Teachers:
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This studio is founded on the belief that an understanding of how things are made brings an intimate engagement with the problems and possibilities of the real world. We are interested in the material life of buildings, how we process the fabric of our environments to construct spaces.

From local resources to global trade; vernacular methods and new technology and auxiliary industrial processes - we will consciously appraise our materials.
Last Year: Stone
Quarry, Molasse of Villarlod, Switzerland

Stone cutting workshop in the quarry of Villarlod

Left: Precedent Analysis Model 1:10 / Right: Project Model 1:10
Helene Stüben & Ricardo Vásquez
Photograph by Nicolas Delaroche
Precedents Study Models, Group Photo, Photograph by Nicolas Delaroche
Model and Model Photos
Project by Anaïs Pestalozzi & Mathias Helfenstein
Spring Semester 2021

Model and Model Photos
Project by Helene Stefan & Pascal Viquez
Spring Semester 2021
This Year: Timber
In our work this year, we will work with one of our most abundant and diverse natural resources - wood. Together we will build our understanding of its qualities as an environment, as a resource and as a material - working within places and with people whose relationships with the forest and its the cultural, economic and social life of the wider landscape of the Jura can deepen our understanding of how to act carefully, intelligently and resourcefully as architects working with timber construction today.
Burtigny, Vaud, Switzerland

During both semesters we will be based between Lausanne and Burtigny in the Jura Vaudois, analysing the construction make up of local timber exploitation, buildings, natural and industrial resources.
We will combine rigorous research and design with hands-on 1:1 prototyping and material exploration. We will explore how existing materials, infrastructure and people could be mobilized to create exciting new materials and models of building.

We think that architectural practice should combine critical thinking and direct making. This approach underpins the work of our practice, Assemble, and will inform the tactics and teaching of this studio.
The teaching this year will emphasise the value of collaboration and co-production. We will actively encourage students to work in groups and develop the skill and confidence to work together effectively, believing that the complex challenges we face today require the profession to move beyond the narrow conception of the architect as an individual author.
Year Plan

We will study timber from the scale of a detail to a broader understanding of bioregional and socio economic logic, as well as the close link that local architecture maintains with its territory through the materials which were used for its construction.

We will visit forests, sawmills and manufacturing sites, consult with scientists, forest managers, carpenters and ecologists, producing analytical models and building a 1:1 structure based on our found knowledge.

Autumn Semester 2021:
1:1 Material Investigation Project

Spring Semester 2022:
Collective Building Project
Term Outline:

#1 A walk in the woods
#2 Nose to tail approach
#3 Construction as culture
#4 A building in the Jura
#1  A walk in the woods

Dates:
24th September - 28th September 2021
#2  Nose to Tail

Dates:
4th-5th October 2021
#3 Construction as Culture
Precedent Study

Dates:
11th October - 1st November 2021
#4 A building in the Jura

Dates:
8th November- 20th December 2021 (Final Review)
Felling a Giant Cedar, USA