Contents & Objectives
Approach

Left: Vilanova Artigas’ School of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of São Paulo, 1969
Top right: Construction of Sugarhouse Studios, Stratford, Assemble
Bottom: The Rules of Production, Assemble
Bottom right: Organisational Diagram, Sugarhouse Studios, Bermondsey, Assemble
Top: Dying timber with indigo, Kamikatz Brewery, Assemble
Left: Reusing materials for fireplace mantels, Granby Four Streets, Assemble
Right: Render tests, Ateliers LUMA, Assemble and BC Architects, photo by Maria Lisogorskaya
Teaching Principles

Mobile Sawmill, Les 2 Rivieres, in the forest of Burtigny, 2022, Photograph by Hannah Kraus
Situated Practice

As a studio we want to work in a specific place in a sustained way and with recognition that in doing this, we need to offer something equal to what we are getting from the situation ourselves. Drawing on the work of people like Tim Ingold, we want to develop approaches to working in a place which is not extractive or exploitative, which is based on there being a mutual and equitable exchange of knowledge and information.
Felling and cutting of a tree in Burtigny, 2022
Photographs by Hannah Kraus and Camille Sineau
René and Marylise Martinet arrived in Burtigny in 1959. As a young couple of teachers, they were called by the state to work at the primary school in Burtigny.

They were not happy with this change and were a bit bored as the only activity was the men's choir, which René directed. They lived in the flat provided by the school. The village was quiet and rather friendly, but they did not really have any friends. They noticed that the village had remained quite old and people were not particularly open. Moreover, very few inhabitants of Burtigny owned a car, which resulted in a certain isolation of the inhabitants. The children in the village had no real leisure time, as they had to work in their parents' farm. To entertain the children, René set up ski camps for the children of Burtigny in his home village, Leysin.

During the time they spent in Burtigny, the number of students dropped from fifty-five to twenty-five. The school had no choice but to form classes with a wide range of ages. This child depopulation is mainly due to coincidence, according to René: three large families left the village the same year. He adds that the development of mixed classes with different age groups has certainly caused the closure of the schools of Burtigny and Marchissy. Children are now dispatched in Bassins, Le Vaud, Vich or Begnins.

Later, the couple moved to Bursins, a wine-growing village that contrasts with the rural village of Burtigny. According to René, there is a community spirit in Bursins, which can be explained by the reason that the culture of wine encourages the people of the village to gather and spend time together. They also noted that the schools had more financial resources than the small villages of the plain. They still live in Bursins in the house they built.
Collaborative Approach

We are interested in working in larger groups, of 5-6 students, with the belief that it allows for a richer, more open dialogue with students and more focussed work on skills. It offers more scope and space for different skills within a group to be valued, while in practice the ability to co-operate effectively, take responsibility for specific aspects of a project and trust in the judgement and capacity of others are critical skills.
As a student group, we:
recognise these expectations and agree to try our best to meet them.
We also believe in respectful communication and wish to make the studio an enjoyable living space.
We understand that it might be hard for some of us to go talk to other students and teachers and we encourage students in the group with any concerns to come and to their peers and to ask for help, for example, to act as mediator.
During discussion and debate, we shall try to allow everyone to give their opinions.
We shall also be open to different points of view.
We ask the teaching group to acknowledge that each of us has a personal life, needs a healthy balance and sufficient sleep. The workload of the studio should not expect that students are working excessive hours.
We stand against the idea of intensive and unhealthy working practices in the lead up to reviews and deadlines and do not believe that it is the best way to learn. We acknowledge it is our collective responsibility to raise concerns with the teaching group in situations where we feel that the work is excessive and demanding, whilst recognising the responsibility we have to work in an organised and effective way individually and collectively.
We also have other subjects that require a considerable amount of work and are also part of our development as young professionals, so there should not be an expectation that studio work is prioritised to the neglect of these other commitments.
We think that having fun together can foster a good studio identity and is important to help us to know each other and work together as a group, and so we suggest organising activities to support this – for example apero and potinique!!!

Midway through and at the end of each term we will meet to check in at a whole-studio collective review, ahead of which both the teachers and the students will prepare an agenda.
This should be printed and shared at the start of the meeting, so that key issues are clearly set out and can be constructively discussed.

With common agreement the constitution can be adjusted and improved - any amendments can be proposed and adopted or rejected at one of the collective reviews.

Date: 03.10.2022
Top: Workshops and Collaborations, with Studio Albori, Local Works Studio
Bottom: Lunch and Apero in Milan and Lausanne
Tools of the Trade

We will place an emphasis on developing students’ ability to draw and model clearly, capably and efficiently. Specific sessions run by assistants or guests at the start of each semester in technical drawing and modelling techniques will be organised to ensure that all the students have a solid grounding in basic principles of drawing and representation of space and construction.
Projects drawings, students: Sonya Fritz, Hannah Kraus, Chiara Kempter, Francois Descurtins
Models will play an important role in our approach to teaching - they are intuitive and intelligible in a way that more codified and abstract drawing is not, and through the production of models at various scales as the primary tool through which we encourage design development we are able to encourage students to develop their spatial skills, knowledge of construction an interest in the way that things are made.
Scales

We want to work with a range of key scales from 1:1 to 1:50000, with a primary focus on making really large scale study and propositional models and full scale samples and prototypes, bridging with the territorial scale of the material supply chains.

Models: Ben Begon, Nanda Nugraha
Models and experimentations at various scales
MA 21/22, BA 22/23
A skill acquired and refined in one discipline can be applied to others, but technical skill in making is now relatively rare in students studying architecture. As an extension of the programme, we want to provide the tools and material to enable students to participate in various workshops or skill learning sessions providing an opportunity to develop their level of technical skill over the course of the semester.
Woodcutting, Stonecutting and Rendering workshops, MA 20/21, MA 21/22, BA 22/23
Woodprint: "The Return of the Commons,"
Students: Esther Chatelain, Nour Keller, Joseph Mazière, Kemmet Saunders-Nazareth, Aurélien Authier, Marie Jelk
Last Year
Carved Stone, History Museum, Bridport
area during the French Wars of 1793-1815. The Factory Returns of 1838 provide the first parish-by-parish list of textile factories and show eight flax mills in the locality, two in Bridport, three at Burton Bradstock and one apiece in Bradpole and Allington. These mills employed 340 persons and were powered by three steam engines and eight water-wheels, which generated 72 hp and 97 hp respectively. The range of products made in the town, together with the complexity of hemp and flax manufacture, make summary of the changes of this period difficult but this can perhaps best be attempted by a division into four stages: preparation of fibres; spinning; weaving, twisting or braiding and, finally, the finishing stages.

The useful fibres of hemp and flax are located in the stems of the plants, sealed in pectins and gums between the bark and a woody core. Hemp grows much taller than flax and its fibre is longer and coarser and is thus best suited to different products, but the manufacturing processes were broadly similar to those employed in flax manufacture. In the early-nineteenth century, locally grown flax and hemp would be pulled and the seed removed, flax seed being sold for planting out of the district or crushed locally to provide linseed oil. The plants would then be 'dew-retted' or left in the fields to rot, so as to dissolve the pectins and begin to free the fibres. In other areas hemp and flax were retted in ponds and this process was employed locally during war-time revival of flax processing in the present century. After drying, the next stage was to break up the woody core and remove it. This was known as 'breaking' and 'swingling' - the term 'scutching' is used in other areas - and was originally performed with hand tools. Machinery for breaking and swingling was invented in the early eighteenth century but was not introduced into the Bridport area until 1803, when Richard Roberts erected a mill at Burton Bradstock for this purpose. In mills, the stem of the plant was first broken by passing it through a set of three fluted rollers and the sections of core were then removed in the swingling process whereby the fibres were beaten by revolving wooden arms set on a vertical shaft turned by water power. After swingling, hemp would be softened in a stamping or 'balling' mill, also operated by water power, established in the district by the late eighteenth century. The final stage in the preparation of flax and hemp fibres was combing or 'heckling', whereby the fibres were drawn by the hecklers through a series of steel spikes set in wood. The fibres were cleaned and straightened at this stage and the long or 'line' fibres separated from the shorter 'tow'. Imported flax and hemp upon which the industry increasingly depended in the nineteenth century, was delivered ready-scutched and could proceed directly to the hecklers. Heckling was originally carried out in small sheds or shops in the town, but the hecklers were concentrated into the mills later in the nineteenth century in an attempt to solve two management problems: their prodigious drinking habits and the theft of raw materials. Machines for heckling were invented in the early-nineteenth century and were at work in the town in the 1870s, but they did not displace all of the handworkers.

As with other textile fibres, the spinning stage for flax and hemp consists of drawing out and twisting the fibres, but is more complex in that individual flax fibres can be broken down into finer filaments at this stage. Before spinning, the tow had to be carded, as with cotton and woollen fibres, but line could be spun directly. Traditionally, the spinning of yarn for cordage and sailcloth was carried out in long open walks, sited on level ground behind the houses of the town, sometimes with shelters at each end of the walk. The spinner would carry a bundle of heckled fibres around the waist, and having fixed a thread to a spinning wheel, would walk slowly backwards whilst spinning the yarn, the wheel being turned by a boy. This process continued into the present century, but latterly only for Manila fibre which was spun by hand for trawl twine. From the late-eighteenth century, the spinning of yarn for cordage and sailcloth would also be carried out on machinery developed from Richard Arkwright's frame, which was first employed...
Week 1 - Week 3

Material World

We will start with learning construction methods based on materials available locally. We will make tests using timber, hemp, straw, clay, and earth. We will trace the supply chains for the materials’ extraction, transport, processing, storage and illustrate with a drawing, and learn how to draw a construction section with each of those materials.
Week 4 - Week 7

Learning from Example

We will study through drawing, model-making and photography, a given precedent project chosen for its interesting approach to housing. This will form the basis of a collective library of precedents project to draw from in the semester and future years.

Project: Gut Garkau, Hugo Häring, 1920s
Students: Hadrien Arlaud, Juliette Nicolas
Project: Trigon House, Heidi and Peter Wenger, 1955
Students: Justine Troillet, Manon Voide
Big House

How do we build more housing in the town to respond to identified local needs that are not provided for by conventional market housing?

How do we make this housing characterful, adaptable and varied by utilising low energy design principles and ecological construction approaches?

Using the two previous briefs, each group will design a housing prototype, drawing from the chosen construction technique using a locally available material and the previously studied precedent project.

Project: Granby Four Streets, Liverpool, by Assemble
Illustration: Marie Jacotey
Project: Bridport Housing, Bridport, by Assemble
In any project there are a multitude of factors beyond the professional responsibilities of an architect that fundamentally shape the design. Architecture is not autonomous, rather it is contingent on a range of factors that include finance, policy, time, tolerance and who the project’s stakeholders and decision-makers are.

In housing, this is particularly acute. In housing in Britain, it is central to the crisis of affordability and access. In order to make housing that addresses local needs rather than compounding existing issues, we first need to ensure that the conditions that underpin our projects support and enable design outcomes that are constructive.

Each group will write a proposal that describes the project’s legal and financial framework - how it is funded, owned, managed and maintained, to then be applied to a chosen site in town.
Study Trip

Week 1

We will start the term with a study trip to Bridport, to visit the site but also meet with local actors and take part to a workshop with Local Works Studio. We will leave on Friday 22nd (pm) and should be back on Tuesday 26th (pm). The journey will be done by train then by bus.

A second trip to Bridport will be organised in Spring.