Assemble Material

Masters Architecture
@ EPFL
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.
This year we will be focusing on stone; its physical material qualities, the infrastructure of skill, labour and technology around its contemporary and historical uses; as well as the metaphysical poetics of its permanence, weight, and construction.

Our site - a stone quarry - will bring together geological nature and man made culture.
During both semesters we will be based between Lausanne and Arles; analysing the construction make up of local regional stone buildings, natural and industrial resources, as well as the new material research at the Luma Labs.

We will note how shared geology and material cultures go beyond political borders.

Acknowledging our contemporary context, we will propose new approaches to the material built environment and the social access to stone.
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.
Learning from stone buildings: model, drawings, words

Arles: Grand Tour + building a stone BBQ

Site scanning

Modelling proposals

The life of the proposals

Details

We will study stone 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 quarries and manufacturing sites, consult with scientists, stonemasons and geologists, producing analytical models and building a 1:1 structure based on our found knowledge.

Our proposals will return to the quarry, building with innovative approaches to new and old stone.
Learning from stone buildings: model, drawings, words

Analysis of stone buildings through a 1:10 model of a significant structural or detail element, scale drawing, and an illustration and summary of how the building was built.
Arles: Grand Tour + building a stone BBQ

Lessons learnt from our stone study will inform a 1:1 construction project of a stone BBQ.
The life of the proposals

Exploring ideas about programme and spatial inhabitation through an evocative drawing.
1:1 ‘souvenir’ detail of your proposal building made in stone along with a setting out drawing.