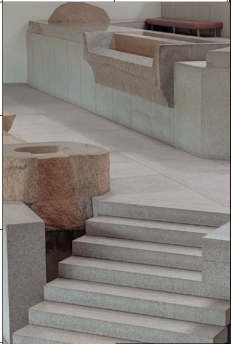




HOW. DO. WE. BUILD. FROM. MESS.



1



2

From what do we build?
How should we build?
What can we learn from the old?
What must we unlearn from the new?

How. Do. We. Build. From. Mess.



3



4



5



6

The big challenges facing architecture are clear - **resource scarcity, climate urgency** - so our question is precise: How do we build without using new materials?

By looking at materials and waste differently. By joining and processing better. By letting the old become the new. By questioning our aesthetic preferences.

This studio invites you to think about how we can build from mess. Building needs regularity. Waste offers none. So order has to come from somewhere: from the pieces, cut until they agree; from a frame regular enough that what fills it need not be; or from the arrangement alone - sorting, sequence, rhythm. We start with a pile that does not match and zoom out to the building. From detail to project. Making the future from what is already here.

The studio will be organised in 3 actions, each anchored in a conversation reflecting on how do we build, given current societal, economic and environmental challenges. For the first two actions, you will work individually, while the third action will be done in groups of two. Each action builds upon the previous, exploring making as thinking, starting from what already exists.

*"We've already created everything we need.
The challenge is to better understand and find
value in what already exists." - Søren Pihlmann*



7



8



9

- 1: Isamu Noguchi - Heaven (Tengoku)
2: Harquitectes - Social Housing 2104
3: Brasebin-Terrisse - No Time to Waste
4: Jo Tailleu Architecten - Binnen
5-6: Unknown - Construction waste
7: Graber & Steiger Architects - Jonaki Ghor
8: Ernst Lohse - The Western Gate of Copenhagen
9-10: Lendager - Resource Rows

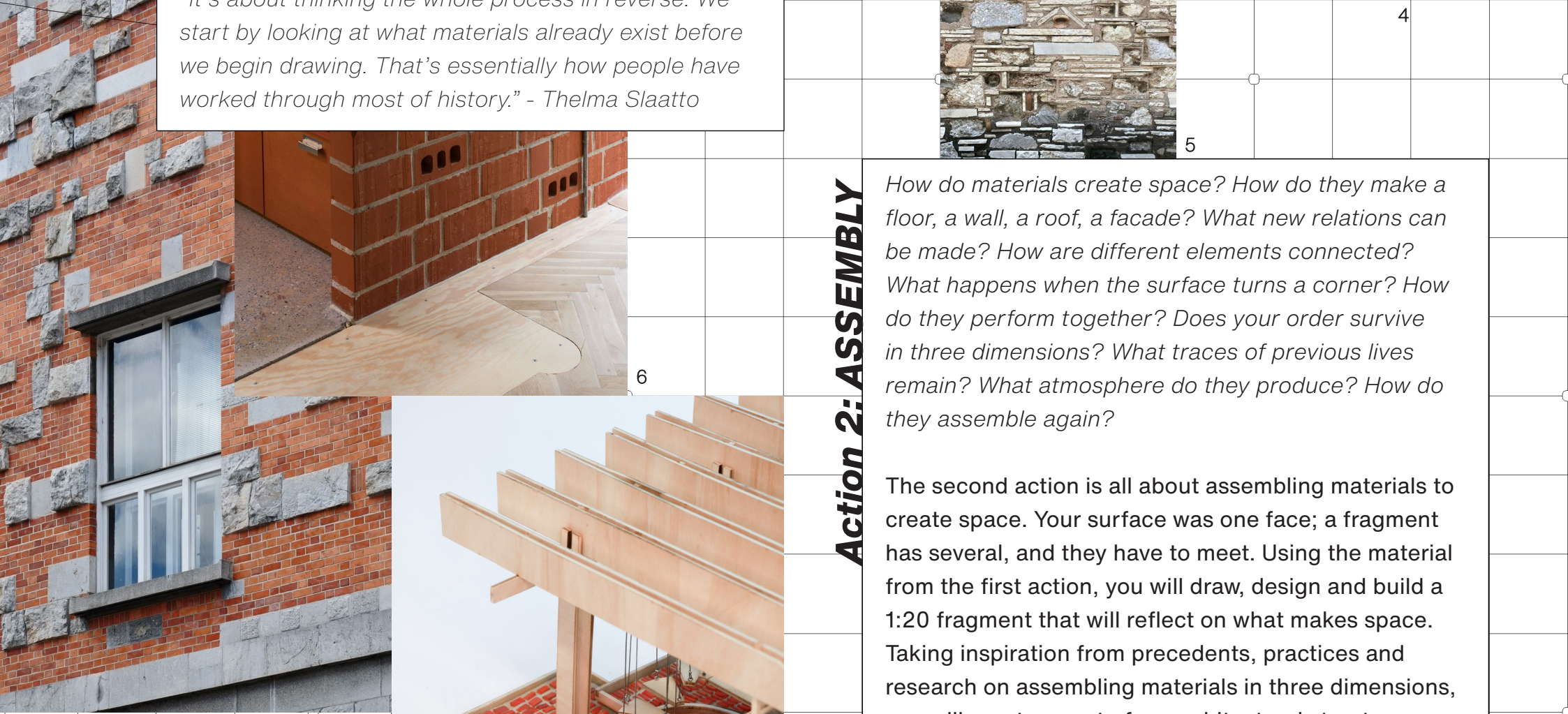
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Action 1: PIECES

What materials are there? How many of each? How far apart are they? What colour, what profile, what damage? How were they held before? When does a pile become a set? Where does order come from - the pieces, the frame, or the arrangement? What should be cut, and what left alone?

In the first action, we will visit sites that will become our material research for the studio. You will work together to photograph, draw, measure, map and analyse found materials, collecting in batches and recording not what each material is but how far apart its pieces are. You will then work individually, taking one batch and making it behave as one thing, three times over: once by cutting the pieces until they agree, once by building an exact frame around them, once by arrangement alone. Then you build the one you can argue for, at size. Workshops and knowledge-sharing set a common ground - examining the potential within the found materials at 1:1.

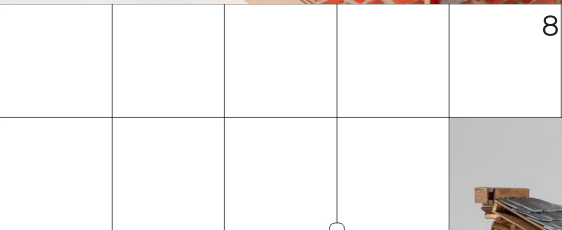
"It's about thinking the whole process in reverse. We start by looking at what materials already exist before we begin drawing. That's essentially how people have worked through most of history." - Thelma Slaatto



Action 2: ASSEMBLY

How do materials create space? How do they make a floor, a wall, a roof, a facade? What new relations can be made? How are different elements connected? What happens when the surface turns a corner? How do they perform together? Does your order survive in three dimensions? What traces of previous lives remain? What atmosphere do they produce? How do they assemble again?

The second action is all about assembling materials to create space. Your surface was one face; a fragment has several, and they have to meet. Using the material from the first action, you will draw, design and build a 1:20 fragment that will reflect on what makes space. Taking inspiration from precedents, practices and research on assembling materials in three dimensions, you will create a part of an architectural structure. Each assembly will engage with archetypical structural elements within a building such as floor, wall, roof, facade, providing a solution for how enclosure, support, and aesthetic appeal can be managed. The order you found in the first action comes with you; here it meets a corner, a thickness and a second material. Input, workshops and tutorials will provide an insight into how to draw, visualise and detail the designs.



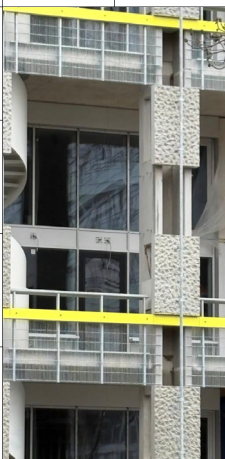
- 1: Charles Harlan - Pallets
- 2: Studio Widerøe - Lasting Larvikite
- 3: Slaatto Morsbøl - Outdoor Table, House 14A
- 4: Anna Kleber - Action 1 (2025)
- 5: Dimitris Pikionis - Saint Dimitrios Loumbardiaris
- 6: Pihlmann Architects - House 14A
- 7: Josef Plecnik - National Library of Slovenia
- 8: Anna Kleber - Action 2 (2025)
- 9-10: Norell/Rodhe - Raamland
- 11: Kim, Zhao, Zhao, Duchon - Bioregional Tectonics



Action 3: PRACTICE

*What is the goal of the practice? What will it design?
What is the program? Where is it located? How will
it relate materials and their assembly to a context?
Where is the building regular, and where is it not? How
can it envision building from what does not match?*

In the last action, two students will form a practice. Each practice will design a building / a place. The practice defines its own program and functions, choosing from the Action 1 locations. If it is repurposing an existing building, creating a “new” building or a bit of both. Each practice will, through its design, reflect on how future buildings can be adapted or built from mostly existing materials/fragments and how they can relate and adapt to their (future) context. The chosen approach will have its starting point in the previous two actions: two positions on order meet in one project, and the practice must decide where the building is regular and where it is not. Not one such decision, but hundreds — from the joint to the plan. Through the design, the practice will showcase a vision for how we can build from mess.



1-3: Ju Tailieu Architects - Pachtwoning
4-5: Pihlmann Architects - House 14A
6: Käferstein & Meister - Gewerbehaus MACH
7: Dorsa + 820 - Petrchor
8-9: Sampling - Augustines Garden
10: Errante Architettore - Casa BM
11: Dorsa + 820 . Der Blaue Wolf

METHODOLOGY

Participants in the studio will collectively engage with topics brought forward by initiatives like <https://www.houseeurope.eu/>, while studying examples from architects and offices such as Jo Tallieu Architecten, Superuse Studio, Lendager, Pihlmann Architects, Herzog & de Meuron and Josef Plecnik.

The studio emphasises creative exploration combined with critical analysis of existing projects/ research while implementing lessons learned into design work. Participants will refine their ability to focus on essentials, filter relevant information and enhance personal working methods, including self-organisation and collaboration within teams. These tools and methods aim to foster both independent and collective learning while encouraging creativity and critical thinking. The studio will be a mix of informal design crits, discussions, presentations, tutorials and workshops to guide you in the design process.

The studio will be taught mainly on Thursdays (with exceptions relating to workshops, guests and public holidays) and in English | German.

INSTRUCTORS

Mathias Bank is from Denmark and has a background from the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, while also having worked for BIG Architects in the past. He recently finished his PhD on generative AI processes in early architecture design at the university.

Layla van Ellen is from the Netherlands/ Belgium, and she studied building technology at TU Delft and holds a PhD from Newcastle University in living architecture. Her focus is on sustainability transitions.

CALENDAR

This is an early **preliminary** overview of the current studio calendar. A detailed version for the first semester will be available at the Studio Introduction in October.

01.10.26 Studio Introduction

01.10.26 Action 1: **PIECES** Start

08.10.26 Site visits

29.10.26 Action 1: **PIECES** Review

29.10.26 Action 2: **ASSEMBLY** Intro

26.11.26 Action 2: **ASSEMBLY** Midreview

14.01.27 Action 2: **ASSEMBLY** Final

14.01.27 Action 3: **PRACTICE** Concept

28.01.27 Action 3: **PRACTICE** Design

15.04.27 Action 3: **PRACTICE** Production

10.06.27 Action 3: **PRACTICE** Exhibition

24.06.27 Studio Finals

- 1: Herzog & de Meuron - 543 Hortus
2: Boltshauser Architekten - Kiln Tower
3: Lina Weixelmann, Luis Seethaler - Action 3 (2026)
4: Amir Zejnullahu - Cassa Delle Settefonti
5: Aulets Architectes - Futur Habitable Pavilion
6-8: Norell/Rodhe - Under Construction
9: Marie Jurzig, Luca Kreisel - Action 3 (2026)