



Img. 01 Kader Attia, Arab Spring, Installation and Performance, 2014. Photo by Oak Taylor-Smith.

Enough of this World: Museums

Imagining architecture, institutions, and our societies “at the end of the World,” proposes to follow Denise Ferreira da Silva at the end of this World, and urges a collective effort to dismantle systemic inequalities, racism, and colonial legacies. This epistemological shift from Eurocentrism, embraces alternative ways of conceiving, designing, and experiencing. It rejects linear Europe-centered history and calls for solidarity in dismantling oppressive systems, reevaluating our relationship with nature amidst environmental collapse.

We'll scrutinize Museums as institutions complicit in colonization, prompting redesigns for non-colonial relations with their collections. This prompts questions on the museum's purpose, the urgency of repatriation/rematriation, and envisioning culture beyond its exploitative forms. Our focus on sustainability and heritage in institutional and architectural practices imagines a future where museums shift their focus away from object acquisitions and possession. This perspective inspires positive, innovative solutions as we address pivotal questions in our journey.

Critical questions

How to denaturalize the uneven access to objects, knowledge, and the production of memories and histories? How to deal with (colonial) pasts and their violent histories, and which traces to keep of them? How to deal with spoiled and looted objects if they are not rematriated/repatriated, and which traces to keep of them when they are restituted? What spaces, uses, needs and practices emerge out of these politics, ethics and reparations? How to think spaces for restitution, conciliation, memory reconstruction, repair and what is beyond repair? What are the futurities of museums at the End of the World?

Unit 1 - Research Phase

In the first three weeks, we want the students to step back and define their own understanding and position in relation to the topic of the master thesis. The aim is to formulate a position that refers to the current debate on museums and colonial studies.

Assignment 1 (w1) READ AND DISCUSS

Students will read the suggested texts. We will then collectively discuss the literature in order to build up general knowledge on the topic, find a critical position, and get acquainted with the various debates around arts, provenance, abductions, and controversy.

Assignment 2 (w2) FREE EXPLORATION

Search for a case study: Collect material, such as scientific papers, artworks, current or past debates, controversial buildings, and examples that openly relate to the establishment, functioning, and acquisition of ethnographic museums.

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By means of this case study, students should question the following concepts:

- + the meaning of culture in our everyday life
- + the role of museums for the general public
- + the role of museums as institutions (possessions and acquisitions)
- + the function and meaning of displaying things

Assignment 3 (w3) FIND A NARRATIVE

With the material so far collected, students will further develop and structure their position with regard to their case study. The collection of images, references, and documents will structure their narratives. At this stage, it is important to address and contextualize the case study both in the general debate and at a Swiss / Zurich scale. At the end of week 3, students will submit a two-page statement and abstract of the research conducted so far.



Criteria of evaluation Unit I

The following aspects will be considered: the ability to observe the given context (physical, social, cultural, political context) and interpret it in the project; ability to think and act independently; ability to present clearly, efficiently, and consistently one's own position and project; ambition of concepts and visions of the project; ambition and adequacy of methods to develop the project. Particularly for the preparation phase, it is important to clearly formulate the position statement and to refer to it coherently in the further steps of the project.

Unit II - Reprogramming and Spatial Strategy

During this phase you will choose a site, develop a spatial strategy and a programme. You will prioritize architectural design that acknowledges complexity and social responsibility. Emphasizing sustainability, it aims to uncover architectural techniques and implement knowledge and technologies toward sustainable futures. Addressing decolonization, social vulnerabilities, memory policies, and intersectional sustainability, it seeks design solutions aligned with local contexts.

Assignment 4 (26.02, w4) ANCHORING THE RESEARCH - DEFINE A SITE!

For the first discussion of Unit II, use all the materials and questions you aggregated so far to choose a specific site in which you would like to further explore your research problems through design. The anchor must enable you to design a building, and can be situated anywhere. It must however strongly relate to your previous research and to the Swiss/Zurich context. Students will submit the necessary documents to discuss the potential anchors and their articulation with previous research.

Assignment 5 (04.03, w5) FIND A PROGRAM AND A SPATIAL STRATEGY

After choosing an anchor to develop their research through design, students will propose a program and a spatial strategy to continue their projects. The program and spatial strategy must take into consideration all the dimensions of the context while answering the critical questions raised by the topic. Students will bring organization charts, diagrams, sketches, tentative plans/sections/elevations of implantation to discuss the projects.

Assignments 6 (27.03, w8) PREPARATION PHASE REVIEW

For the review of the preparation phase, students will provide a written statement, a 1:200 conceptual model, 1:200 plans, sections and elevations, and an image to present their projects. The documents must state clearly the research question, the anchor, the program and the spatial strategy that the project will further develop. The proposal must discuss the critical questions addressed by the topic.

Criteria of evaluation Unit II

The following aspects will be considered to evaluate the projects at the end of the preparation phase: the ability to observe the given context (physical, social, cultural, political context) and interpret it in the project; ability to think and act independently, and to develop a critical reflection on the projects and their relations to a context; ability to present clearly, efficiently, and consistently one's own position and project;

quality and diversity of the representations; ambition of concepts and visions of the project; coherence between the research problems, the programmatic proposal, and the spatial strategy; ambition and adequacy of methods to develop the project in relation to the critical questions raised by the topic.



Unit III - Materializing and Constructing a Sustainable Transformation

The design process aims to refine conceptual positions for a balanced solution. It involves intensively developing architectural expressions, particularly focusing on building structure and assembly. The detailed exploration aligns projects with specific climates, resources, knowledge systems, and building traditions. Material choices and construction methods strengthen conceptual ideas guiding programmatic and spatial strategies.

Assignment 7 (09.04, w10) CONCEPTUAL MATERIALIZATION & CRYSTALLIZATION

From now on, the students will develop the materiality, structure, spatiality and uses of their projects. They will take into consideration intersectional perspectives on sustainability, looking closely at how the building will be constructed, the sources of the materials, the techniques used, the inner and outer climates, etc. For this first discussion of Unit III, students will discuss their strategies to materialize their programs and crystallize their conceptual ideas into matter.

The students will provide the necessary 1:200 plans, sections and elevations of the project with the context situation, some image proposals, diagrams of their programs, typological studies and sketches, and a conceptual model 1:200. We suggest students also explore their projects through axonometric drawings with uses and users, drawings, collages, and visualizations.

Assignment 8 (24.05, w16) FINAL REVIEW

The list of documents to be submitted for the final review will be the necessary drawings, models, images, to represent the project in all its dimensions and scales.

Criteria of evaluation Unit III

Research and Critical Thinking

Grasp and problematize the historical, theoretical and social context and impact of a project, while developing a critical, situated and reflexive approach. Gather, analyze and share other projects, sources, references relevant to your investigations.

Media, Projections and Representation

Apply a range of communication methods and media to present your research, conceptual and design proposals clearly and effectively which might include but are not limited to the following instruments: Hand drawing, Diagraming, 2D drawings, 3D modeling, Physical Models, Collages, Videographic and Photographic Materials, and Recordings. Develop representations of your research, conceptual and design proposal which might include but are not limited to the following projections: perspective, axonometry, details.

Use these representation to communicate and deepen multilayered dimensions of your research, conceptual and design proposal which might include but are not limited to the following: research problematics, programmes, relationships to the anchor and inhabitants, strategies for a sustainable design, ambiances, scales, topology and spatial relations, urban insertion, structural concept, material experimentations and solutions, building techniques and technologies, climatic solutions entailing heating, cooling and ventilation techniques (not only mechanic solutions but material, spatial and physical qualities), building processes.

Intersectional Sustainability

Develop a strategy for a sustainable design and building, taking into account climatic and environmental—from global (CO2 emissions, pollutants, supply chains, etc.) to local (biodiversity, soils, etc.)—and the social dimensions of sustainability—addressing vulnerabilities created by the social structures toward social justice and equity.

Architectural Heritage

Be aware of what we inherit, perpetuate, why and how we can shape it in return as living beings, humans, citizens and architects. Embed architectural, spatial and material solutions within local climates, knowledge systems and building cultures, while unearthing and valuing pasts, presents and futures building cultures, and combine them with actual knowledge and technologies.

Design

Generate design proposals which respond to the open questions of the topic, integrate the methodological and theoretical approaches of the studio, take into account multilayered and entangled forms of sustainability and heritage, and respond to the urgency of decolonizing practices..



Communication & Collaboration

Listen actively to others, participate in groups, be able to learn alone, and in groups. Show honesty, integrity and respect for your fellows, teachers, and all staff of ETHZ. Argue and develop structured discourses which integrate evidences, arguments, hypotheses, assumptions and conclusions.

Reflexivity, Engagement and Consistency

Consider opinions, positions and affects of others, and question yourselves about your own positions, assumptions and opinions. Be aware of the impact of your discourse and proposals on others, as much as on the context and the society. Position yourselves in regard to other practitioners and fields, and critically scrutinize your work, while considering what you know, and what you don't. Be consistent during the semester, which means to be engaged in a constant manner and explore in depth and continuity all the dimensions of the questions you raise and proposals you develop.

Ratio of grading by cooperation partners for both, preparation and elaboration phase

Percentage design chair: 70%

Percentage non-design chair: 30%

UNIT 1: RESEARCH

w1 05.02 13:00 Introduction to the Master Thesis via Zoom with Mariam, Maarten and the team

[Assignment 1 READ AND DISCUSS](#)

w2 13.02 13:00 Meeting with assistants
14:00 Short Lecture by Alena Beth Rieger

[Assignment 2 FREE EXPLORATION](#)

w3 20.02 10:00 Site visit Museum Rietberg, Ethnographical Museum
21.02 16:00 Lecture Françoise Vergés

[Assignment 3 FIND A NARRATIVE](#)



UNIT 2: REPROGRAMMING AND SPATIAL STRATEGY

w4 26.02 09:00 - 13:00 Mariam desk critics

[Assignment 4 ANCHORING THE RESEARCH](#)

28.02 10:00 Bookclub: Decolonizing knowledge production and transmission

w5 04.03 14:00 Meeting with assistants

[Assignment 5 FIND A PROGRAM AND A SPATIAL STRATEGY](#)

05.03 09:00 Guest lecture Denise Bertschi, Alice Herzog & Debasish Borah

06.03 PARITY TALKS

w6 13.03 9:00–13:00 Mariam and Maarten table critics

16:00 Lecture Samia Henni + Mariam Issoufou

w7 19.03 9:00–13:00 Meeting with assistants

w8 27.03 10:00–13:00 Reviews Colloquium preparation phase Master Thesis, Guests: M. Umurungi others tbc

[Assignments 6 PREPARATION PHASE REVIEW](#)

w9 01.04–05.04 Easter Break

UNIT 3: MATERIALIZING CONSTRUCTING DESIGN (ELABORATION PHASE)

w10 09.04 10:00 Meeting with assistants

[Assignment 7 CONCEPTUAL MATERIALIZATION & CRYSTALLIZATION](#)

10.04 10:00 Bookclub Decolonizing typologies. On spatial justice and accessibility. (Facultative)

w11 15.04 14:00–18:00 Mariam and assistants table critics

w12 22.04 14:00–18:00 Mariam and Maarten table critics

w13 29.04 14:00 Construction tutoring with Jaquelin Pauli

30.04 10:00–12:00 Guest crits Maarten Liefoghe (tbc)

w14 07.05 09:00–13:00 Meeting with assistants

w15 13.05 14:00–18:00 Mariam desk critics

w16 21.05 09:00–13:00 Meeting with assistants

24.05 18:30 Handing in of master thesis

[Assignment 8 FINAL REVIEW](#)

w17 29.05 10:00 13:00 Schlusskolloquium Master-Arbeit



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- Un-doing race: la racialisation en Suisse. Zurich: Seismo, 2022.
- Un/Doing Race: Rassifizierung in Der Schweiz. Zürich: Seismo, 2022.



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