ORIENTATION MASTER
Form + Type

STUDIO (2017/2018)
Xixinan: Rural Return

PROFESSOR
Jeffrey Huang

TEAM
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LABORATORY
Media x Design Lab, EPFL ENAC IA LDM2

SUMMARY (1500 SIGNS)
The advent of new digital technologies has had a twofold impact on architectural thinking and urban design, transforming, on one hand, the processes for form generation and design production through algorithmic and parametric technologies, and, on the other hand, enabling an escape from the static fate of the built environment by facilitating dynamic interaction between inhabitants and their surrounding. Our interest in this orientation “Form & Type” is to explore meaningful form generating processes by the use of algorithmic and parametric tools and introduce the notion of growth typologies in architectural and urban design thinking. In particular, we examine the potential of responsive morphogenetic design to explore intuitive form finding processes that address socio-political challenges. In 2017/18 our studio site will be Xixinan, a historical rural village near the Huangshan Mountains in Anhui Province in China. The studio will deploy digital technologies for (1) studying implications of Rural Return, a movement combining reverse migration of China’s urban elite to their ancestral homes, and (2) generating precise architectural interventions that facilitate the flourishing of a new rural culture.

METHODOLOGY
Parametric Vernacular, Data-driven Design, Geometry and Form, Experience Design, Grasshopper

DURATION
The studio theme will span the entire academic year 2017/18. Accordingly there will be continuity between the fall and spring semester, but each semester can be followed independently.

FIELD TRIP
An optional field trip to Xixinan (Anhui Province) may be organized in early February 2018, depending on interest.

PARTNER INSTITUTIONS
Turenscape Academy, Beijing and Xixinan.

LANGUAGE
The official language is English. Desk crits can occur in English or French.

GROUP WORK
Architectural projects will be developed individually (or exceptionally in groups of 2). Some group work may occur in the analysis stages.