PISÉ: FROM LYON TO ST. GALLEN

SPRING 2017

ATELIER
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AT
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We developed a variety of projects at several Lausanne locations during the fall semester that specifically addressed the topic of earth constructions in the context of prefabrication. This semester we plan to build on these design ideas from the fall semester. At Sittertal in St. Gallen we are also looking at the topic of space densification. The students will develop proposals for space densification in the earth building style and draw up a master plan for Sittertal. These project proposals will form the basis for a specific sub-project, a pavilion, to be built during our spring school term. We see special potential in the use of constructive as well as energetically optimised hybrid designs, which we want to develop further in collaboration with the construction industry as well as with qualified specialists.
The Rhône Alps region in the immediate vicinity to Lyon is regarded as a stronghold of Pisé construction. The pioneer Francois Cointeraux wrote a guide to building with clay in the 18th century, which resulted in a boom in rammed-earth building construction in this region. In the 1980s, after the oil crisis, rammed-earth building experienced a new impetus with the construction of the model village “Le domaine de la terre“ close to Villefontaine. We will follow the historical traces of rammed-earth construction in France on a multi-day seminar tour from April 29th to May 1st.

Due to the linen trade at the time, Lyon was not insignificant in the development of the rammed-earth construction method in Eastern Switzerland. In Hauptwil – inspired by the Pisé buildings in Lyon – as well as in other communities in East Switzerland, rammed-earth constructions emerged from the 17th to the 19th century and can still be visited to this day. We will be visiting a few rammed earth buildings in East Switzerland as part of the semester start-up at the Sitterwer, St. Gallen.
Rammed earth buildings in Hauptwil
In Sittertal, St. Gallen a conglomerate of industrial buildings has grown over the last one hundred years. It stands out because of its extraordinary topographic location at the “bend” of the Sitter between the Sitter ravines. The site of a former textile dying factory has found mixed uses today. The various premises and buildings have been rented to a wide variety of companies and institutions. The Art Foundry has been on the site since 1993 as just one among several other tenants. National and international artists commission their work to be cast here, using a variety of casting and manufacturing techniques. The artists Hans Josephsohn (1920-2012) who had all his reliefs and figures cast at the Art Foundry over the last few years deserves a special mention. Today the Kesselhaus Josephsohn and the Sitterwerk Foundation are present alongside the Art Foundry. In Kesselhaus Josephsohn the artist’s oeuvre are displayed, as well as a permanent Josephson collection.
The collection at the Sitterwerk foundation includes a rather impressive library with Art and Architecture volumes and their history, as well as an extensive archive of materials. The archive raw materials are part of a bigger network of the Material Archive Collection. Guest artists are invited to live and work at the studio building of the Sitterwerk foundation for several weeks at a time; this is by invitation of the studio board of directors, and as recognition of their respective artistic contributions.
TASKS

Part of the future planning for the Sittertal site are the establishment of temporary exhibits, studio and workspaces for art workshops, as well as sleeping facilities for artists, students and staff. During the course of the semester we will be checking space densification options of the entire site for the newly required premises and a vision is to be developed in the form of a master plan.

In addition to the large-scale studies the focus will shift during the course of the semester to the specific design of a pavilion which will then be realised on a one-to-one scale during the spring school session. We will begin creating mock-ups during the semester, to be able to identify a suitable design principle for the planned pavilion.

A new awareness and way of thinking in dealing with ending resources lets us explore within this semester the various characteristics of the material earth. Industry is also searching for new processing methods and products using raw clay, which on the one hand will meet the demands of ecological building requirements and on the other hand are compatible with today’s building processes and the related need for prefabrication. Design with the climate factor in mind has preoccupied our planning not only on the design level, but also within urban planning like considering space allocations. We are interested in finding answers, in addition to ecological and construction related questions, to what extent the aesthetics of clay, in synergy with other materials, could possibly find its expression in contemporary architecture. An implementation of an actual project, more specifically a prototype, will enable us to gain further insights.
EXHIBITION ROOMS
The exhibition rooms should provide flexible areas for large sculptures and objects. On the one hand they are to integrate into the space of the Sittertal and the adjoining Sitterwerk, and on the other hand they are to be expandable as a modular system and be adaptable if required. The lighting design and planning for the exhibition rooms therefore needs special attention.

SLEEPING QUARTERS FOR ARTISTS, STUDENTS AND STAFF
About twenty to thirty bedrooms for artists, students and staff are conceivable as sleeping cabins, which could be attached to each other using a modular concept. In addition, and at least to a minimum extent, we need to plan some infrastructure such as bathroom, shower facilities and a small communal kitchen.

STUDIO AND WORKING SPACES
The studio, as well as working spaces should be well illuminated. A possible option may be to design these rooms flexibly and in combination with the exhibition rooms. These rooms are to be developed on a modular basis with expansion options.

PRODUCTION ROOMS
Additional production rooms are to be in the planning for the continued development of the Art Foundry. The production halls only require consideration in the master plan and do not need to be developed in depth.
Construction site House Rauch, Schlins
SEMESTER SUPPORT

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SITTERWERK AND ART FOUNDRY
To reconsider the densification of the Sittertal area is a real request of representatives of the Sitterwerk and Art Foundry. The constructor will present ideas and concepts for the space as an introduction to the semester. The discussion with the representatives of the Sitterwerk and Art Foundry will give us an important basis for the in depth clarification of the design theme. The representatives of the Sitterwerk will be Felix Lehner, owner of the Art Foundry and co-founder of the Sitterwerk, the architects Christoph Flury and Lukas Furrer who have a specific knowledge of the area and who are responsible for the renovation of the Art Foundry and the Sitterwerk, as well as Julia Lütolf, director of the materials archive.

SPECIALISTS
The semester assignments will be accompanied, along with the teaching staff, by the rammed-earth building pioneer Martin Rauch, the engineers Jürg Conzett and Corentin Fivet and the architect Wayne Switzer, who also is experienced with earth building concepts. All specialists will be part of the interim and final reviews.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BUILDING INDUSTRY
Another important supporter in this semester will be Christian Keller again from the Keller Ziegeleien AG (brick manufacturing yard), Pfungen (ZH). The company owns the majority of clay pits in Switzerland and – since this building material so far has only been processed in its fired form – is welcoming possibilities to use the clay in its unfired form as a material, especially in a pre-fabricated process. Other partners who have shown an interest in the development potential of unfired clay as a building material are Martin Krammer from Erne Holzbau AG (wood construction company), as well as Lukas Knechtle from Krapf AG (metal constructions).
EARTHEN MOCK-UPS

As part of a 4-day workshop, from the 18th to the 21st of April 2017, the first design proposals will be built on a one-to-one scale and quality tested. We expect, through the building involvement and the hands-on experience gained from it, to develop a feeling for building with earth / clay in combination with new hybrid systems.
The most interesting design and drafts from a constructive and architectural view developed during the semester, will be realised as part of Summer School. The Summer School will take place from 21/8/17 to 1/9/17 at the Sitterwerk in St. Gallen. Please direct your registration to our assistant by 30/5/17. More information about our Summer School is to follow.
As of 20/03/2017 the Studio will curate an exhibition together with Archizoom at the Rolex Learning Centre (EPFL). Along with the history of the rammed-earth building concept or “Pisé” from France all the way to Switzerland, contemporary architecture of earthen buildings as well several EPFL student works will be displayed.
You may select to work in a group or as an individual. The workshops, as well as the large room models are intended as group projects for several students.

Our first exercise we will be to build – introduced by a specialist – room size models from unfired clay. With this we intend to discover the spatial possibilities of the material, and at the same time discover the construction possibilities of unfired clay as part of a hybrid design. Parallel to this examination level, only on a smaller scale, we will explore the spatial qualities of space condensing of the Sittertal area.
SUBMISSIONS

1. INTERIM REVIEW
MONDAY 13/03/2017 / TUESDAY 14/03/2017
- Situation plan 1:500 with urban planning perspective for the Sittertal space
- Room model from unfired clay 1:20

2. INTERIM REVIEW
MONDAY 03/04/2017 / TUESDAY 04/04/2017
- Proposal for a one-to-one mock-up
- Earthen room model 1:20
- Model photos
- Master plan planning 1:500
- Floor plans, sections, views 1:50
- Sketches, axonometric projections, detail views for the engineering system

3. INTERIM REVIEW
MONDAY 15/05/2017 / TUESDAY 16/05/2017
- Earthen room model 1:20
- Model photos
- Master plan 1:500
- Floor plans, sections, views 1:50
- Sketches, axonometric projections, detail views for the engineering system
- Calculations of grey energy

CONCLUSION
MONDAY 29/05/2017 / TUESDAY 30/05/2017
- Earthen room model 1:20
- Model photos
- Model 1:50
- Master plan 1:500
- Floor plans, sections, views 1:50
- Sketches, axonometric projections, detail views for the engineering system
- Calculations of grey energy


