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Mediterranean Habitats: Material Genesis, Tuscany

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Entwerfen ● 253.O93 ● 5 ECTS ● Tuscany, Italy
Workshop period 10.06. - 20.06.2026
Excursion ● 253.O95 ● 2 ECTS ● SummerS26
Post-production until 30.06.2026 ● Finals: June

cost estimate per person: travel and accomodation: € 650,- workshop: € 360,- ● ca. 15% of the travel expenses will be refunded by the TU Wien

Kick-Off ● 11.03.2026 ● 9:00 AM / Wed ● AC0401
Meetings ● on Wednesdays ● 9:00 AM ● AC0401
Further information will follow at the Kickoff Event

At a time when climate change, resource scarcity, and the alienation of humans from nature and themselves are on the rise, there is an urgent need for solutions for site-specific and resource-efficient construction methods. We are called upon to adapt to the given conditions, break new ground, and fundamentally rethink our practical and theoretical being-in-the-world. Based on the origins of local cultural and material practices, a timeless architectural language is to be developed that fulfills basic human needs in terms of form and materiality.

The workshop combines theoretical concepts with a practice-oriented approach and focuses on the Mediterranean habitats of the Tuscan Maremma. This area is not only a natural heritage site, but also a didactic space for experimentation. This is fertile ground for interdisciplinary research and exploration. The nature of the Maremma appears as a multi-layered, dynamic, and living organism that is constantly changing under geological, climatic, and anthropogenic influences. Observing, researching, and recognizing these processes sharpens awareness of the subtleties of ecological relationships and the cycles of life.

The first phase of research involves an in-depth investigation of local habitats. The focus is on identifying and systematically mapping territorial stocks of natural materials with regard to their potential use for architectural structures and beyond. In the context of ethnobotanical considerations, the focus is on plants that are suitable as materials for construction and craft applications.

These materials—visible, for example, in archaic, transient structures such as huts or pasture fences—not only preserve the history and identity of the place. At the same time, they open up an approach to architectural practice based on the principles of locally sourced materials.

The aim of this research is to identify architectural principles that are intuitive, phenomenological, and rooted in the intrinsic properties of the materials. Based on these qualities, a wide range of building forms and techniques are being investigated. Through on-site experiments and the production of prototypical models, the structural and aesthetic potential of the materials is being explored. In this process, principles of indigenous craftsmanship are explored, reinterpreted, and tested in practice through techniques of weaving, braiding, and bundling. In order to understand the complete morphological journey of the material, its genesis is traced—from germination and growth to harvesting and processing to application in architecture.

Dynamic landscape analysis / Local material mapping / Material-based design / Experimental material testing / Sustainable, climate-resilient building / 1:1 craft-based making / Interdisciplinary, site-specific approach / Ecological responsibility and reflection / Embodied making and self-efficacy / Collective learning

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