© foto by Elisabetta Maria Schmidtlein

Mediterranean Habitats: Material Resonance, Tuscany

Elisabetta Schmidtlein, Marion Kohler, Maximilian Weidacher

Entwerfen ● 253.O82 ● 10 ECTS ● Tuscany, Italy
Workshop period 05.09. - 19.09.2026
Excursion ● 253.096 ● 2 ECTS ● SummerS26
Post-production until 15.10.2026 ● Finals: October

cost estimate per person: travel and accomodation: € 780,- workshop: € 550,- ● 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

Background: Architecture faces fundamental challenges in the face of the climate crisis. How can we think about architecture differently? It is crucial to develop innovative solutions that are based on the resources around us, in order to interact with our environment in an ecological and responsible way. By recognizing the impact of architecture on the environment, we can make more conscious decisions that promote a respectful use of resources. Interdisciplinary approaches, practical learning, and collective thinking are essential to addressing these challenges and developing sustainable, future-proof solutions.

Content: The hands-on workshop focuses on Mediterranean living environments in the Maremma region of Tuscany, combining practical approaches with theoretical concepts. The first phase involves an intensive exploration of the landscape, which is understood as a living, multi-layered organism. Geological, climatic, and anthropogenic influences have shaped the region and its habitats over millennia. Nature is perceived as a dynamic process that serves as the basis for the design work. Simultaneously, the mapping of local materials will be conducted, with participants systematically identifying and analyzing the region's resources. These materials not only carry the history and identity of a place, but also open up new potentials for architectural design. Special focus will be on materials such as earth, which is sourced from various geological regions, as well as those derived from nature and agricultural products. The approach aims to develop architecture from the characteristics and potentials of materials, allowing texture and structure to unfold as new design dimensions, where ecological and aesthetic aspects can merge in harmony. Through experimental field trials, different mixtures and recipes will be developed to investigate the physical and aesthetic properties of materials. Both traditional craft practices and scientific approaches to material analysis will be integrated. The acquired knowledge will ultimately be applied to the design of spatial structures. The challenge is to formulate an aesthetically and ecologically sustainable response to the demands of climate-resilient building based on the developed material mixtures and structures.

Location: The landscape of Tuscany has been shaped over millennia by various cultures. The Maremma, in particular, shows traces of geological and climatic forces—erosion, sedimentation from the sea and wind, and the influence of vegetation—alongside human adaptation. This region is in constant transformation, where the interactions between humans and nature are visible. Geological changes and waterways have shaped the land, while human culture has left its mark. Architectural and agricultural structures are not just functional; they reflect the dialogue between people and nature. They show adaptation and transformation through material choices and integration into the landscape, telling a story of creation and decay.

Institut für
Architektur und Entwerfen
Gebäudelehre und Entwerfen

TU WIEN