

A Journey through our World of Flows

“If, today, our world is in crisis, it is because we have forgotten how to correspond.”

Tim Ingold, *Correspondences*. Cambridge: Polity, 2021

The urban landscape of Switzerland and all the buildings that compose it can be understood as a concentration of resources. Their construction, their maintenance, their operation, and even their dismantling imply ceaselessly reaching far and wide into Swiss territory and across the globe to keep fuelling the life and growth of this built environment. Following the suggestion to reflect on 'Enough' and focus on plenty and limits, we propose to explore the reciprocal relationships and correspondences established within Switzerland between cities and the wide array of spaces facilitating the production or use of the fluid resources and invisible flows that serve it.

The Swiss territory is perforated by infrastructures serving the water and electricity networks, distributing heat, or processing material waste. This metabolism is ubiquitous, running in the unseen background of the city's life and is spatially marginalized, relegated to the urban underground and fringes. Those resource flows create ripples, touching sites of extraction and production, practices of refining, transport and transformation, affecting landscapes and waters, needing reservoirs, dams, train stations, factories, highways and human skills. Anything that feeds the city here creates holes, buildings, infrastructures and myriads of impacts there.

Together, we will observe and document the sequence of spaces implied in specific resource flows, going back and forth between their points of origin, the intermediate spaces of transit or transformation they create, the city and buildings they give substance to. While taking into consideration some of the globalized implications of resource consumption, this master thesis will primarily focus on the territory of Switzerland, to allow first hand observations and visits of key locations, helping to produce situated research. This investigation will enable you to critically reflect upon a resource flow as well as its correlated spatialities, and to take a position through the development of an architectural strategy corresponding and reacting to the resource in question and its manifold aspects. We will negotiate between the binary

ideas of nature and culture, oscillating within the contemporary discourse on the environment, and its complex layers based on scientific, philosophical, spiritual and cultural approaches. We will strive to open new perspectives on these resources, crossing spatial and temporal scales, revealing the vast and surprising journeys and mobilities of our world of flows, unmasking their pasts, possible futures, and even failures, and showing them as active, and animated by a life of their own, beyond our control.

This diploma trajectory will introduce artistic methodologies to accompany and stimulate the design, using media like film, text and sound, while the projects themselves will focus on developing 'spaces of resources' and will investigate design questions such as: How to imagine new programs or adjusted flows for a resource trajectory? How to give visibility to resources and their narratives, exposing what is usually kept hidden? Can rethinking our relations – or correspondences – to resources through architecture, going from extractive to reciprocal, also help us renegotiate the divide between nature and culture that is consistently exacerbated by the built environment? Over the course of a few months, this reflection on buildings, infrastructures, and their correspondences will cultivate a broad resource literacy, serving as a substrate for master thesis projects emerging from an awareness of how our buildings and ways of life always affect the world way beyond their visible urban surroundings.

A Journey through our World of Flows



Walter De Maria, Munich Earth Room, 1968. Photo by Heide Stolz. © The Estate of Walter De Maria. Courtesy of Dia Art Foundation

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Preparation phase

- Make an in-depth analysis of a resource flow directly related to the architecture and infrastructures in Switzerland, selecting a specific resource whose trajectory will be retraced, and taking into consideration the intersection of its material and immaterial dimensions.
- Develop a resource travelogue that documents and reflects on a resource flow through time and space, either through video, photo series, field recordings, a book, or a medium of your choice. Adopt a perspective of movement (i.e. personification of the resource, scientific or pseudoscientific storytelling, mapping, fictitious narrative, journaling, etc.) as a storytelling mode for these resource mobilities.
- Elaborate on the vibrant matter of these flows through their embodied experiences, entanglements with other forms of life, territorial trajectories, possible futures and failures, and expansive ecologies.
- Situate the research and the resource, look into the political, societal aspects of the resource trajectories, address the stakeholders involved in the resource flow, the architects, contractors and users involved in the point of departure (or arrival) in Switzerland, visit the spaces and architectures supporting it
- Contextualize the selected resource beyond Switzerland, informing yourselves on how it relates to global flows of that same resource, and how it connects to topics of scarcity, plenty, limits, over-extraction, exploitative neocolonial dynamics, potential for the ecological transition, changing energy standard, etc.
- Identify the segments of the resource trajectory you would like to intervene on, the buildings, sites or infrastructures to design or redesign, to program or reprogram, and sketch out your intentions and brief.

Elaboration phase

- Develop a design proposal critically reacting to a specific resource flow, and correspondences within the Swiss territory.
- Imagine a design strategy as well as an architectural language and expression elaborating on a specific kind of resource literacy assembled during the preparation phase.
- Redefine the agency of the architect when working on the question of resources. What kinds of projects can one propose to curb, visualize, rethink or encourage the use of specific resources in architecture?
- Represent your design in correlation to the medium you used in the preparation phase, and embed it as a new component in the resource trajectory you will have studied.
- Respond to the brief you will have set in the preparation phase, use your architectural design to articulate a clear and concise master thesis argument.

Work to be done in preparation phase

Teaching formats

- Collective walks & visits;
- Readings and discussions;
- Reviews;
- Lectures

Research and working formats

- Historical, archival, statistical & technical research;
- Discourse analysis & theory reading;
- Site survey or analysis through walking, observing, inhabiting, interviewing;
- Artistic account and thinking through a chosen medium (film making, writing, photography, recordings, etc.)
- Mapping, drawings, photographing, model-building, in situ intervention for selected segments of the resource trajectory.

Expected outcome

During the preparation phase you will be asked to produce a resource travelogue, to show the resource dependencies and correspondences of the Swiss territory. This will be accompanied by an archive, a continuous gathering of information that will support your resource travelogue, containing the following:

- formulate a series of narratives that reflect, in words, drawings, plans, images, the various explorations and reflections on one particular trajectory that you will have decided to focus on;
- uncover complex discussions on the correspondences established between buildings and urban environments on the one hand, and possibly remote Swiss territories and environments on the other;
- bring in examples or references on how architecture has already engaged with the topics at stake;
- outline architectural scenarios to further elaborate on in the elaboration phase.

Ratio of grading by cooperation partners

Preparation phase: Chair of Affective Architectures: 50% /
Chair of Art in Time and Space: 50%

Elaboration phase: Chair of Affective Architectures: 50% /
Chair of Art in Time and Space: 50%