

**VOLUPTAS**

**DIPLOMA FS24**



**HOUSING**

**SUBTRACTION II**



For decades, 'less is more' has served as an architectural mantra, embodying a paradoxical ethos of reduction in the pursuit of more. However, when reflecting on the contemporary environmental and social crisis, such a mindset seems no longer sustainable: less, is less.

Hardly any program seems more affected by this than housing. Hunted by a permanent state of crisis – both in terms of availability of space, resources, norms, and consequently, of architectural expression – housing represents today both the most urgent and the least inventive architectural typology.

Spanning users and sizes, and carrying forward our investigation on retrofitting existing structures through subtraction, the semester will reflect on the programmatic and formal scarcity that affects architecture when it comes to housing. This investigation will challenge accepted conventions related to heteronormative standards, comfort and lifestyle – given the increased mobility of the younger generations, the ageing population, the economic insecurity, et c.

Rather than pursuing sustainability through strategies of addition and multiplication—to layer, to add, to thicken, to regulate more—we advocate for design strategies of reduction at different scales. Subtraction is presented as a modus operandi to attain a more sustainable environment through architectural and spatial proposals that embrace 'less' as a quality and as a positive feature.

Students will engage with existing situations in Zurich, each serving as a case study to champion an ethos of less and address the current (and future) housing crisis.

By shifting the focus from quantitative outcomes to qualitative means, this diploma studio aims to foreground the contingency of the current paradigm in durability, spurring critical thinking about how we might pursue a sustainable future without renouncing radical architectural ideas.

**FORMAT AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

In accordance with the Master Thesis guidelines, the semester is jointly led by two chairs and divided in two different parts. While both chairs are involved in the whole process, each is responsible for one part. Phase one of the course, is taught in close collaboration with the Chair of Prof. Sacha Menz and Hannes Reichel. Phase two, lasting twelve weeks, is mainly supervised by Prof. François Charbonnet, Prof. Patrick Heiz and Marina Montresor.

The work is to be carried out individually in both phases. Every week the students will meet with the assistants to discuss their progress. On set dates, there will be intermediate reviews with the professors (one in the preparation phase and three in the elaboration phase). During the elaboration phase, the students will receive tutorials on drawing, image making and video editing.



**PHASE ONE**

At the beginning of phase one, each student is asked to analyze an existing situation and address it through its redundancies, evaluating the potential of retrofitting the structure to housing. These issues may range from spatial to programmatic, legislative, environmental, material issues. The following weeks are devoted to the conception of a viable design strategy that foregrounds subtraction as its main mean of action. During these weeks, the students are expected to acquire in-depth knowledge of the formal, tectonic, material, technological, and programmatic characteristics of the situation they have selected, as well as to explore and identify issues relative to the planning, site, management, maintenance, use patterns and critical reception.

At the end of phase one, the students will hand-in a visual essay including of all the relevant drawings, photographs, diagrams, assessments that reflect their critical stance towards the present conditions of the chosen site.



**PHASE TWO**

Following the first analytical phase, each student should design and update the issue identified in the preparation phase. This update can differ in approach and method (this may be alterations of scale, of use, of program, of occupancy rate, building technique, densification, new legislations and so on). Every aspect and criteria need to be argued for and should be coherently developed starting from the conceptual premises.

Each student is expected to represent the project through appropriate architectural means, testing different tools and techniques. Cross-disciplinary sources and methods are encouraged as well as an experimental attitude questioning conventional media.



**RATIO OF GRADING**

Preparation Phase

Percentage designer(s): 20%

Percentage theory: 80%

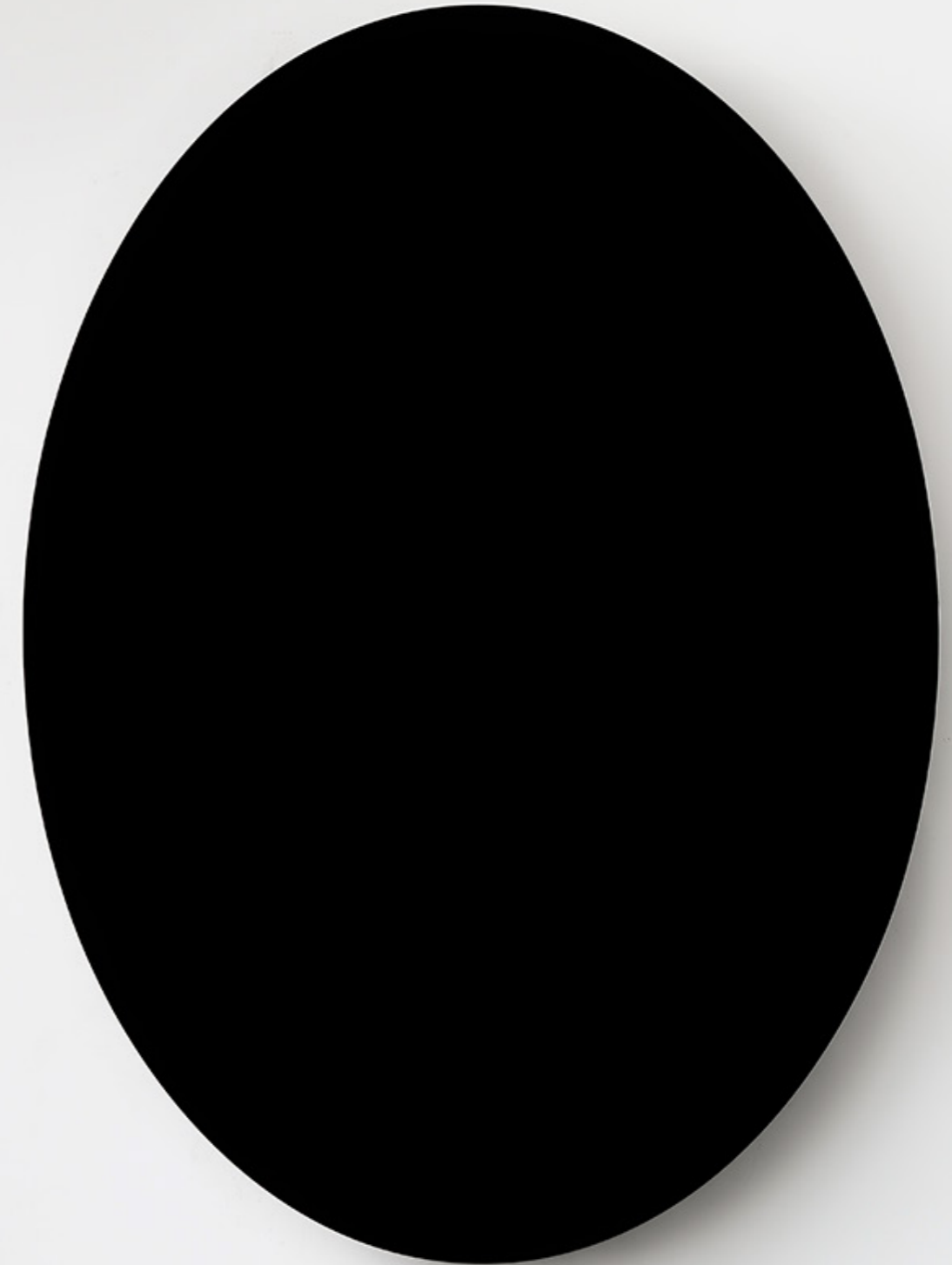
Elaboration phase:

Percentage designer(s): 80%

Percentage theory: 20%

**CONTACTS**

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