AR-401(bd)

Studio MA1 (Cierto)

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Cursus	Sem.	Type
Architecture	MA1, MA3	Obl.
Mob. AR	H	Opt.

Language of teaching	English
Credits	12
Withdrawal	Unauthorized
Session	Winter
Semester	Fall
Exam	During the semester
Workload	360h
Weeks	14
Hours	**6 weekly**
Courses	2 weekly
Project	4 weekly
Number of positions	

Il n'est pas autorisé de se retirer de cette matière après le délai d'inscription.

Remark

Inscription faite par la section

Summary

The studio focuses on the domestic world. Through a sequence of architectural fragments, students progressively construct a dwelling from the inside out, allowing each exercise to reshape the next.

Content

Inside out

Conventional housing design often begins with a programme: a given number of bedrooms, a list of functions and a predefined organisation. This studio proposes a different approach. Working in pairs, students progressively construct a dwelling through a sequence of architectural fragments, each exercise focusing on a single domestic question. Rooms, spaces of care, filter spaces and housing typologies are explored one by one, allowing each investigation to inform and transform the next. The final dwelling emerges gradually, rather than being predetermined from the outset.
The studio deliberately avoids a specific site. Freed from the constraints of context, students are invited to speculate on the dwelling of the near future by concentrating on the most intimate scale of architecture: inhabitation itself. The physical model becomes the principal design tool throughout the semester, enabling each fragment of the house to be explored spatially before being assembled into a coherent whole.
We understand the house as something that is built from the inside out. Rather than beginning with the city or the urban block, the semester starts with the room: the smallest domestic unit, where everyday life unfolds. A single space is first designed - its geometry, proportion, light and atmosphere - before attention gradually shifts towards spaces of care, filter rooms and, finally, the housing typology itself. The semester concludes by assembling these successive investigations into a flexible, non-hierarchical dwelling conceived from the inside out.

. Case study (2weeks):
Reference dwellings
Capture what makes it valuable
Build a shared imaginary

. A room (2weeks)
Reflect on the smallest unit of the dwelling: the room
The model is the working tool
Programme is left open
The room's form as a design resource

The seed for the exercises that follow

. Spaces of Care (1week)
Spaces devoted to care work
Overturning the hierarchy
Servant spaces as rooms that are dignified

. Filter rooms (1week)
Rooms that mediate between inside and out
Tempering extreme temperatures, both heat and cold
Rooms that can shift their condition with the seasons
Extend the uses and comfort of the dwelling throughout the year

. Typology (2weeks)
Assembly
The dwelling as a whole
Knitting together
Completing with whatever is missing
Housing typology born of the earlier reflections
Materiality of the spaces
Model as a working tool

. Aggregation (2weeks)
Moving from the single unit to the many,
From one home to a set of homes that together make up the building
Variations and exceptions
A system with a clear spatial and design logic
Satellite room

. Timeline (2weeks)
A dwelling is never finished
Flexibility of the system
Projecting its transformation across fifteen years
Temporal reading
Revising and adjusting the aggregation already designed
Reversibility and ambiguity

The final review presents the project as the synthesis of a single architectural investigation developed throughout the semester. Rather than a collection of independent exercises, the project is understood as a continuous process in which each successive design decision has informed, challenged and transformed the previous ones. Students will revisit and refine every stage of the project - from the room to the spaces of care, from filter spaces to the housing typology, from the individual dwelling to its aggregation, and finally to its evolution over time - demonstrating the coherence of the proposal across all scales.
Alongside the updated project, each pair will produce a final axonometry drawing of the dwelling capable of conveying the spatial atmosphere of the project and illustrate the relationship between domestic life, spaces of care, collective living and the evolving nature of the housing system. The final review presents not the sum of a series of exercises, but the synthesis of a single architectural investigation progressively developed throughout the semester.

Keywords

Case study, room, care, dwelling, typology, housing, collective, domesticity, publicity, privacy, representation, models, drawing, photography, form, architecture

Learning Prerequisites

Important concepts to start the course

Housing interest, drawing, model making, critical thinking

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, the student must be able to:

- Analyze critically an architectural reference, identify the spatial, typological and domestic qualities that underpin a housing project
- Design domestic spaces based on their spatial qualities (geometry, proportion, light, connections)
- Develop spaces for care and domestic work by integrating equality and quality of use into the architectural design
- Design transition spaces that promote comfort, seasonal adaptability and the environmental performance of the dwelling
- Produce a flexible, non-hierarchical housing typology capable of evolving over time and catering to a variety of lifestyles
- Operate design tools, physical models, drawings and typological studies
- Present a design approach through oral presentations, analytical boards and coherent graphic outputs

Transversal skills

- Communicate effectively, being understood, including across different languages and cultures.
- Use a work methodology appropriate to the task.
- Demonstrate a capacity for creativity.
- Demonstrate the capacity for critical thinking

Teaching methods

The studio adopts a research-by-design and project-based learning approach. Through a sequence of cumulative design exercises, students move from the scale of the room to the typology and aggregation, using precedent analysis, iterative model-making, drawing, and regular critiques to develop a flexible responsive housing typology. The pedagogy emphasizes learning through making, critical reflection, and the progressive assembly of architectural ideas from the inside out.
Students will work in pairs throughout the semester. They will critically read and discuss *Rehabitar* by Monteys, Mària, Fuertes, Puigjaner, Sauquet, Marcos, Callis, and Fernandez, using it as a framework to reflect on contemporary housing and inform their design process.

. Study trip:
Zürich and Basel from Friday 9th to Monday 12th October 2026

Train: CHF 80 (round trip with half-fare card)
Accommodation: 3 nights, estimated at CHF 100 per night
(Total: CHF 300)
Meals: Estimated at CHF 15 per meal (Total: CHF 120)
Total Estimated Cost: projected to be around CHF 500

. Cost of the semester:
Depending on the project and the students, the cost estimation for model making and printing is approximatively CHF 150

Expected student activities

. Analyse a case study
. Design and model domestic spaces
. Develop a flexible housing typology
. Design a collective housing aggregation
. Test housing adaptability over time
. Produce models and analytical drawings
. Present and discuss design proposals
. Collaborate in pairs and engage in critical reflection

Assessment methods

Students are expected to demonstrate curiosity, engagement, creativity, and the ability to respond critically to evolving

challenges.
Assessment is based on continuous evaluation through an intermediate review, a final jury and regular pin-ups. In addition to feedback from the teaching team, the assessment process includes individual self-evaluation, encouraging students to reflect on their learning process, collaboration, and design development.

Supervision

Office hours	Yes
Assistant.e.s	Yes
Forum	No

Resources

Virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI)

No

Bibliography

A bibliography will be handed out at the start of the term.

Moodle Link

- https://go.epfl.ch/AR-401_bd