

MATERIAL GESTURE – GYPSUM
Bologna, Vicenza, Possagno, Venezia
Seminar week March 18–22, 2019
ETH Zürich

This seminar week is related to the topic of the design studio, MATERIAL GESTURE in which we focus on the unique gestures dictated by a material and the specific ways of working with it. We will explore these gestures of making in relation to a material, in order to produce an architecture that is solely focused on the relationship between the two.

For this first semester, the specific focus will be on GYPSUM, a material that appears in many different phases and forms in architecture. Gypsum is widely used within the realm of architecture and the building industry either as part of the process of making architecture or as architecture itself, from the mass production of plaster board and gypsum building blocks to the intricate rococo stuccos of the Palazzo Albrizzi in Venice and the plaster finished interiors of the pyramids. It is also used as a prototyping material for model making: think of Vincent de Rijk's famous positive and negative gypsum cast models of the Très Grandes Bibliotheque for OMA, or Christian Kerez' recent Incidental Space research for the Venice Architecture Biennial.

In this trip we will travel to the North of Italy, where we will visit many different places of production related to gypsum, from a gypsum mining quarry and production complex to a foundry for bronze casting with gypsum moulds, the Palladio Museum, a prototyping and model laboratory, Carlo Scarpa's Gypoteca Canoviana, a workshop that produces the textile walls cast for Maison Margiela, and historical palazzos in Venice. The trip will end with a workshop on the production process of Venetian stucco and scagliola. Our interest throughout the places we will visit are linked to the physical properties of gypsum, its craftsmanship, specialized fabrication techniques, cultural significance and innovation in the field of architecture. It is a unique opportunity to visit some of these places of production that aren't usually open for visitors.

Expense category C including transport, accommodation, guided visits, workshop and a dinner.

Professor Anne Holtrop and assistants Yuiko Shigeta, Iris Hilton, Stephan Lando.

13-22 participants. This seminar week is highly recommended for students of the design studio.