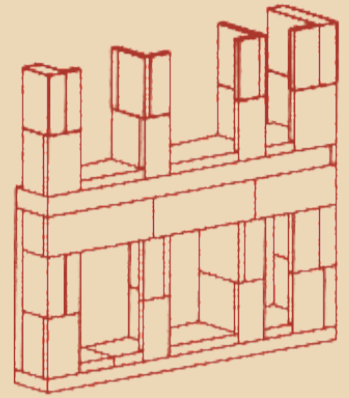
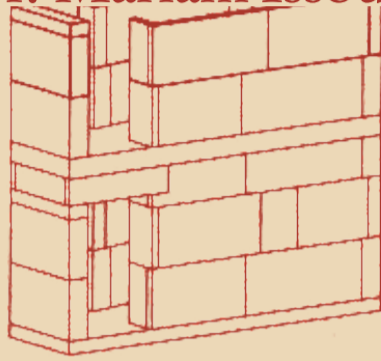
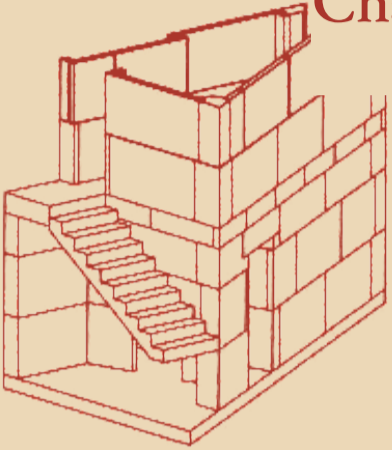
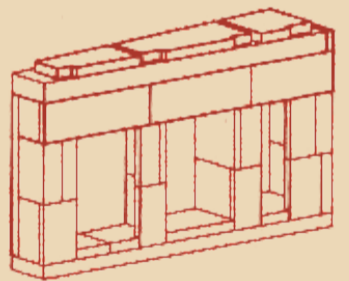
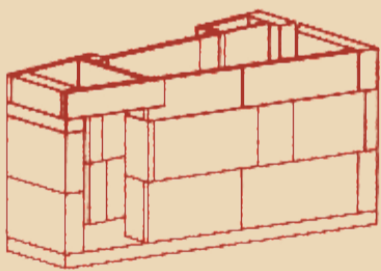
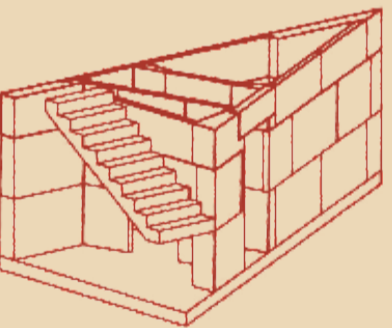


Chair of Architecture Heritage and Sustainability
Prof. Mariam Issoufou

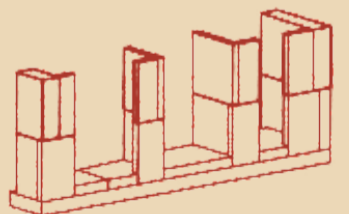
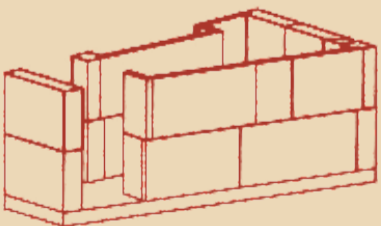
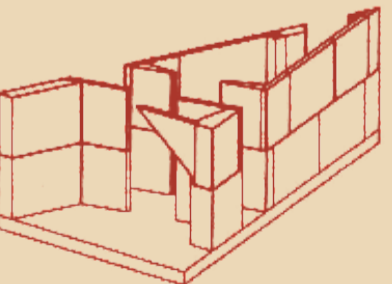


(Climate Echoes)

Stone Narratives from Geneva to Marseille



19.10.2025 until 24.10.2025



DESCRIPTION

This Seminar Week offers a critical exploration of massive stone construction, seen not only as a constructive material, but as a cultural and historical artifact. As part of our Climate Echoes cycle, which imagines a future shaped by climate change, we ask: what is the potential of massive stone as a low-tech, locally sourced, and durable material in a shifting climate? Following the Rhône from Geneva to Marseille, the journey traces a material geography, visiting stone buildings, quarries, and cities to explore the technical, symbolic, and historical meanings embedded in stone. Rather than focusing solely on its structural or sustainable qualities, we read stone through questions of labor, heritage, affect, empire, and place. We begin in Romandie with Archiplein's project in Geneva, which opens a reflection on stone construction in Switzerland, where stone is a low-impact, reusable, and widely available resource, being already part of the landscape. The trip includes quarry visits, site visits of contemporary and historical projects, critical perspectives, urban readings, and visits of experimental reuse projects. More than a study of a physical material, but of the multiplicities one material can hold in past, present and future: inviting reflection on local sustainable architecture beyond materiality, as both cultural practice and political act.

DESTINATION

Genève (CH), Lyon (FR), Marseille (FR)

COST RANGE

C (501 to 750 CHF) Including transportation from Geneva to France, accommodation, local transport, entry tickets, tours, lectures and some meals. The trip to Geneva and the trip back from Marseille to Zurich are excluded.

DATES

19.10.2025–24.10.2025

PARTICIPANTS

15–24

STUDENTS CONTACT

Soukaina Laabida

laabida@arch.ethz.ch

ID

Please check the ID requirements based on your nationality on the official website.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

A travel insurance policy covering France is required for all students. Please make sure your insurance includes coverage for health, accidents, and emergencies while in France.

This Seminar Week proposes a critical and situated exploration of massive stone construction, not only as a material technique, but as a cultural and historical artifact. As part of our ongoing Climate Echoes cycle, which projects into a near future shaped by climate change, we are asking: what is the role of massive stone in a context of increasing environmental urgency? What are its potentials as a locally sourced, low-tech, durable material in a time of shifting climatic patterns?

Following the Rhône River from Geneva to Marseille, this journey traces a material geography, visiting stone buildings, quarries, and cities to examine the technical, symbolic, and historical narratives embedded in stone. Rather than simply framing it as a sustainable or structural material, we approach stone as a bearer of meaning: shaped by labor, empire, heritage, and territory. We ask how its meanings have shifted over time, and how it matters today to contextualize material practices, especially extraction and construction, within specific histories and geographies.

Continuing our Seminar Week approach of engaging with hyperlocal practices, we begin in Romandie, the French-speaking region of Switzerland. There, our interest sparked by Archiplein's stone building in Planles-Ouates, which prompts a wider reflection on the potential of massive stone construction in a country where, as Stefano Zerbi notes:

“The impact of the cut-stone industry on the landscape is relatively limited compared to that of gravel or cement. Stone is a local resource, widely available in Switzerland, and it addresses many contemporary concerns: it has very low embodied energy and is easily reusable. It may sound strange to say this, but if you walk through any village or city in Switzerland, you'll see that stone works—it's already there.”

Zerbi, S. (2019, March 20). Poser la première pierre [Interview]. Tracés, Espazium. Retrieved from <https://www.espazium.ch/fr/actualites/poser-la-premiere-pierre>

Throughout the trip, we will engage with a range of perspectives and practices:

- Contemporary architectural projects that revisit stone with renewed attention to material intelligence and sustainability, including works by Archiplein (Geneva) and Atelier Perraudin (Lyon).
- Extraction sites such as the Fontvieille quarry, to encounter stone at its origin and learn about the knowledge and labor involved in its transformation.
- Critical and scholarly voices, including researchers like Stefano Zerbi and Jean-Lucien Bonillo, who will help frame stone within broader architectural and political histories in Switzerland and France.
- Urban readings such as a guided walk through Marseille's imperial architecture, where we'll reflect on how stone has historically been mobilized to assert power, authority, and colonial ideology. Historical examples of massive stone constructions like the reconstruction of Le Vieux Port by Fernand Pouillon, will serve as a background for these histories to reveal.
- Experimental and adaptive reuse projects, like those developed by Yes We Camp in Marseille, which open up questions of collective use, transformation, and spatial agency, extending our reflection beyond materiality alone.

This Seminar Week is not only about stone, nor solely about architecture. It is about how architecture reveals and conceals histories, systems, and values. We explore stone not just as a technical solution, but as a cultural and political mediator, helping us think about what it means to build, reuse, and care for the built environment in times of crisis and change.