

Cornell University  
AAP, Department of Architecture  
Option Studio, Spring 2019

FOUND THING  
PEZO VON ELLRICHSHAUSEN



*John Ruskin, Study of a Piece of Brick, 1871.*

Perhaps the only difference between objects and things resides in their scale. Before objects were available to be found, even before they had a proper name, things were already there. Mute, opaque, tacit, like posing for an impossible still life, one without an author. Things precede words, yet sometimes they exceed them. Ruskin, in one of his many didactic enterprises, could describe a mountain formation through a tiny rock, and vice versa. Architecture, as any work of art, is founded in the same tautological principle. There is no purpose in nature (even if we see it). It has been clearly (and irrevocably) entitled as the “useless

utility” (the same a brick or a tulip). We keep dreaming about those innocent days, those bright mornings, in which we had no name for walls or rooms. Can we sincerely fake ignorance? Can we really “forget the name of things”? Architecture, as any other natural thing, can certainly be produced without history, but also without context, program or construction. What is left, then? Perhaps no more than some invisible tendencies, some comparative sizes and basic directions. As if in a logical venture, buildings will be collected from a personal and rather impulsive memory. They will be translated into repositories for geological fragments. Not a large museum for a prefabricated urban scene, but a small house for a private pilgrimage into pure (and idealized) wilderness. Celebrating its tenth variation, this studio further extends our Naive Intention program; an intimate research on the apparent contradiction between intentionality and chance, rationality and futility, prediction and circumstance, authorship and anonymity. Based on a series of subjective constrains, every student will elaborate a precise inventory of architectonic propositions, a selection of which will be developed through hand made models, drawings and paintings.

This studio includes a Field Trip to the Grand Canyon National Park and selected architecture of the region. Mauricio Pezo and Sofia von Ellrichshausen, Associate Professors of the Practice and founding partners of Pezo von Ellrichshausen, will be in Ithaca on the following dates: January 23 - 25, March 13 -15, April 12 - 15 and May 7 - 10. They will also participate in the ±weeklong Field Trip\* February 16 to 22. Diego Perez, Visiting Critic and project director architect at Pezo von Ellrichshausen, will be based in Ithaca with a full time commitment to the studio. \* \$500 field trip contribution per student is required