

48-369 TERRA COTTA ASSEMBLIES: CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

TUESDAYS 2:10-4:50PM

(UNDERGRAD AND GRAD)

Can the building skin propose an eco-centric expression? One that not only accounts for the local biome's climatic functions, and the global causes of climate change, but also communicates our potential cultural responses to these issues?

This seminar speculates that merging communication with environmental performance, a material like terra cotta can be instrumental in returning cultural expression to the building skin (Picon 2013). The ornamental nature of architectural terra cotta facades can not only move us towards a more sustainable future, but also express our milieu: we created problematic climate futures but as designers we also can envision and propose diverse and alternative relationships to our environment. An exploration of the topics that define the ecological turn and how to manifest them through form, technique, and material will be the focus of the seminar which will culminate in a collective project. The group's issues of concern that will be manifested in the design of an architectural ceramic assembly may range from the expression of conditions of scarcity, to patternings for biodiversity, or performances of energy flows, to an indexing of climate change, to mention a few.

Following the methods of interaction with fabricators and manufacturers often found in practice, we will be working hands on (but remotely) with the techniques and technologies used in contemporary architectural terra cotta design and fabrication. The seminar will engage the Architectural Ceramic Assemblies Workshop -2021 (<https://archceramicworkshop.com/>), sponsored by regional industry partner Boston Valley Terra Cotta, to expose students to contemporary architectural terra cotta workflows from design concept to production. Through regular engagement with the projects and process of participating architectural firms the seminar will provide students exposure to architecture professionals, facade engineers, ceramics engineers and artists, and glaze experts. In consultation with these the group will develop a prototype to be presented in the upcoming Architectural Ceramics Workshop along with the professional teams.