

Three films illustrate societies on the fringes of mainstream culture, suggesting futures less influenced by consumption and a fractured social contract. Agnès Varda's documentary "Les glaneurs et la glaneuse" and Werner Herzog's "Cave of Forgotten Dreams" showcase cultures that, though marginal, possess a latent spirit ready for the right circumstances to flourish into a new future.

This semester, our focus will be on the villages of Tyabb, which has a rich yet concise history and an assortment of "low-grade" buildings. Agriculture plays a crucial role in the region, significantly contributing to Melbourne's food supply and providing employment for nearly two thousand individuals across 422 farms, along with seasonal workers in the tourism sector. While there is a mix of vacant and underutilised structures, the common approach to development demands often leans toward demolition, yield and replacement with generic urban models.

This studio will investigate alternatives to envision potential futures for an underutilised site. Although long-term strategic thinking may be constrained by fear and practical realities, we will emphasise precision and detail, highlighting fields, materials, and forms to uncover joy in agricultural themes. Our objective is to weave social and formal complexity into every aspect of the project.

The studio will explore the concept of dwelling within its context, emphasising multi-use, multi-scale, and multi-material investigations. This inquiry will address themes such as continuity, non-linearity, subdivision, discretisation fracture, composition, roughness, asymmetry, and models that are repeatable yet isolated, highlighting the site's intrinsic values and its wider context. Additionally, it will examine the complex relationship between the detailed ornaments of inhabitation and the inherent utility and picturesque qualities found in daily life.

GLEANNING

A studio that carefully collects small amounts of information, often with considerable effort, to generate ideas for dwelling. This approach is rooted in a deep understanding of the relationship between socially constructed environments and material extraction. The research emphasises the settlement and tectonic logic of buildings, treating projects as essential parts of a larger resource cycle and always considering the whole.

Your projects will make use of the land and its associated assets to offer projects that challenge these lazy assumptions by engaging with the networks and histories that underlie the village's substance, demonstrating the enormous potential in adding to what already exists.

Students will work in teams of three to design a loose fit, multi-use building. Each member will be tasked with managing a specific building type and its space utilisation, while the team collaboratively develops a strategy to incorporate these elements into a comprehensive multi-use matrix.

The 3 building and use types are:

- Affordable / Short Term Accommodation (dwelling)
- Youth Centre (community & infrastructure)
- Municipal service & environment building (agriculture & production)

Additionally, the team will focus more closely on and oversee the governance of a biogenic asset and system that can be used as the primary material in the design to manage thermal comfort. The use of this material and the language of its form will be tested against cultural resolutions and building typologies to describe a resource cycle.

Examples of the agrarian/biogenic assets include

- wheat / reeds / grasses
- wool
- clay / soil

Students will examine the existing context and identify assets on macro and micro scales. They will create drawings to illustrate patterns and systems, organize observations through research, and engage in writing and journal entries. The process will enable the abstraction of language through drawing, analysis, design inquiry, and design iterations by re-reading and re-writing structures

Projects will challenge assumptions by exploring the complex networks of agro-ecology and land use policy in the region and highlight opportunities for revitalising and enhancing both the country and place, showcasing alternative societies that promote cohesive social contracts and less consumption-driven futures through an understanding of program and the project as a whole.

The semester will be arranged as a continuous process where research is seamless with design, where individual work is also group work, where the full scale comes directly from field, pattern and ground.

- the site is located in Tyabb on the Mornington Peninsula, field trips are required
- yellow trace / film required for drawing and design methods
- materials for making biogenic material prototypes maybe required
- Rhino, InDesign and Photoshop skills required
- QGIS mapping and modelling will be used for mapping & matrix development
- skills in grasshopper or other parametric modelling software for biogenic material testing will be helpful but not necessary to complete design tasks

image credit: (Des glaneuses) by Jean-François Millet 1857.