



Edward Burzynsky, Iberia Quarries # 3, Cochicho Co., Pardais, Portugal, 2006

**Veranstaltungen****Focus Lectures**Mondays, 09:30 – 12:00  
C403**Modulverantwortung:** Davide Spina**Lehrteam:** Davide Spina, Nitin Bathla/ Assistant:João Moreira**Architecture, Building Materials, and the Environment**

Buildings are products of architectural and engineering techniques that provide form and aesthetics to an assemblage of building materials. Historically, these materials were drawn from proximate landscapes and commons, such as local stone and sand quarries, mineral and metal deposits, and clay that was turned into bricks. However, with modernity, the extractive landscapes for building materials have stretched wider across the planet. A cursory glance at architectural environments around us is sufficient to reveal the global provenance of spaces we consider hyper-local. Materials like timber, stone, plastic (petroleum), and fabric (cotton and petroleum) come from distant operational landscapes worldwide and are transported at high environmental costs. Consequently, architecture in its current form is an inherently energy- and material-intensive practice, and it plays a decisive role in the formation and progression of the multiple intersectional crises that we understand today as the 'Anthropocene' – the age that sees 'homo urbanus' as a catalyst of climate change.

In reaction to this phenomenon, we are witnessing a rise in ideas of degrowth and designing for decay rather than against it, along with a focus on the environment in general. Squatting groups, radical planners, and architects are increasingly attending to marginal sites and decaying buildings, assigning new and unintended uses to them. This inevitably raises the question: What actions can we, as architects, take to address this issue and reroute architecture towards a non-conflictual relationship with the environment through degrowth and relocalisation? Can we fully grasp the political economy and political ecology of construction materials and adjust our practice accordingly? This course examines architecture's embeddedness within global processes of material extraction and territorial transformation while also exploring how architecture and engineering contribute to shaping, perpetuating, or challenging these processes.