

# Studio Anne Holtrop

## ETH Zürich

design studio

FS21



## MATERIAL GESTURE:

## TEXTILE





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**In times of constant and unpredictable change, we look at textile as one of the most adaptive and comforting materials. Adolf Loos, resonating Gottfried Semper, wrote, ‘The architect’s general task is to provide a warm and liveable space. Carpets are warm and liveable. He decides, for this reason, to spread one carpet on the floor and to hang up four to form the four walls.’**

**With textiles in architecture, the tents used by nomadic tribes come first to mind. Nomads have no conception of dwelling as a thing of permanence, and their tents do not erect a clear boundary between inside and outside. These are ideals that in our highly mobile lives are embraced (until recently), but in which we have adopted few of the tools from the nomads. Within the nomads’ possessions – almost all containers, from the bags to the tent, along with the mats, rugs, and cushions – are made of textiles.**

**The last revival of an all-over textile presence in architecture was probably in the 70s in the form of tented interiors. The hero of these interiors is Renzo Mongiardino, who designed for people like Marella Agnelli and Lee Radziwill, who weren’t exactly embracing Hans Wegner or Pierre Paulin for their houses, but instead chose to exorbitantly furnish their interiors with pattern-rich textiles.**

**Adolf Loos pointed out in his text ‘The Principle of Cladding’, that the problem with building a house out of carpets alone. He argued that a structural frame is necessary to hold the tapestries in the correct place: ‘to invent this frame is the architect’s second task’. ‘It was in this sequence that mankind learned how to build. (...) Man sought shelter from inclement weather and protection and warmth while he slept. The covering is the oldest architectural detail.’**

**The ‘covering’ in architecture was rediscovered during modernism, as new construction methods became possible, such as steel skeletons, and other non-load-bearing alternatives for façades could be explored. In a charcoal drawing of Mies’ Glass Skyscraper, the façade proposed in glass has a curtain-like expression, which hangs loosely around its inner structure. The separation of structure and space defining walls is especially interesting for us in relation to textiles.**

**With the focus on textile, we can study space as an adaptive environment, from rugs and tents that can be travelled with, to technologically advanced woven fabrics that can adapt to changing conditions, such as climate or acoustics. Or we can use textiles that express our personal and cultural identities and lifestyles, or those we wish to connect with. In all possibilities, textile will be our main space-defining material for the architecture we will work on in this semester.**