Architecture for the dead has a rich history. The idea that a person’s life should be marked as a tribute and memory is deeply embedded in most all cultures. There are cemeteries and mausoleums all over the world that are beautiful and haunting cities of stone and statuary. Even today, that beauty and tradition has not been lost on certain contemporary architects, including: Gunnar Asplund’s Woodland Cemetery (a), Carlo Scarpa’s Brion Tomb, Aldo Rossi’s cemetery in Modena (b), and Enric Miralles’ Igualada Cemetery (c). Most common cemeteries today, however, eschew tombstones or statuary in favor of flat lawns for ease of maintenance. In addition, there are many who question whether places for the dead can even be justified given the growing demands for development and an ever-burgeoning population. This studio, therefore, will explore an alternative architecture for the dead: the idea of an urban mausoleum.

The site for this mausoleum will be on an urban infill site in Portland Oregon, thereby necessitating multiple floors. The program will include a garden and pavilion, an entrance hall, a small chapel for funeral services, a columbaria, an ossuary (interment chambers and/or burial vaults), and places for prayer or contemplation.

This studio will center on the role of ritual and symbolism in architecture and the notion of integral ornament as a way of delivering that content. It will also investigate the art of room-making and the need to resolve design intentions on an experiential and material level. The use of full scale previews or mock-ups, models at all scales (especially room study models), and evocative perspective drawings (a la Edward Hopper) will be required.