Course Syllabus

Not Quite Architects   Prof. Mark Wigley

A8904-1 Doctoral Research Colloquium Fall 2017   **412 Avery, Tuesdays 2-4pm**

A Ph.D. in architectural history and theory by definition presupposes some agreement on what constitutes "architecture." Yet doctoral research is also by definition "original" in the sense of taking the field where it has not been before, even of challenging the limits of the field, and therefore the agreement on what constitutes architecture. Each and every act of scholarship carries this question, even when it appears that the research is simply going deeper into an example of a well-established case using a well-established paradigm. This is compounded by the disciplinary paradox that architectural discourse often makes the claim that architecture is everywhere and everything.

To say the least, architecture never simply sits there waiting to be researched. Each act of architectural scholarship makes a complex set of typically unannounced decisions as to what constitutes architecture and what constitutes appropriate ways of reading it. The doctoral colloquium will explore this question through a series of case studies of figures over the last century that routinely appear within architectural scholarship yet whose work could be characterized as "not quite architecture." To use the very labels that will be rethought, these include architects moving towards art, artists towards architecture, builders towards architecture, architects towards construction, furniture and interior designers towards architecture, and so on. Particular consideration will be given to how these figures are considered "inside" architecture and the way their most "architectural" qualities are treated "outside" the field.

The purpose of this exploration is not to reinforce any particular methodological formulas but to increase sensitivity to the huge role (both progressive and conservative) played by unannounced disciplinary classifications. The colloqium will consider the extent to which the very sense that there is a specific unambiguously architectural focus of the discipline is actually dependent on "not quite architecture." A set of proper names is offered to test this question, but the framework throughout will be to think of architecture in terms of networks that include diverse practices, protocols, technologies, media and doctoral candidates.

There will be a series of three introductory sessions:

1. Gordon Matta-Clark and "Anarchitecture"
2. Jean Prouvé and "The Constructor"
3. Hans Hollein and "Everything is Architecture"

Followed by nine sessions led by student presentations, with each student making presentations on figures including:

Vladimir Tatlin, El Lissitsky, Lilly Reich, Charlotte Perriand, Friedrich Kiesler, Yves Klein, Constant Nieuwenhuys, Cedric Price, Dan Graham, Walter Pichler, Ant Farm, Hélio Oticica, Vito Acconci, Andrea Zittel, Tomas Saraceno.