



Premise

“Whenever the cultivation of the wilderness comes up when I’m around, stories of religion and warfare start to migrate toward it... (T)hese are subjects embroiled in the human struggle with the wilderness; how to explain it and how to own it.”

Paul Shephard, *The Cultivated Wilderness*

We can define landscape as the literal piece of ground on which we stand. It may be steep or flat; verdant or barren; solid or shifting.

Site, on the other hand, is not just the literal plot of land beneath our feet. It can be sacred or profane; communal or contested; wild or tamed. In other words, site is a social construct – the accumulation of historical, cultural, political and economic life over time and the meaning we ascribe to that particular place.

It is these poetic qualities drawn from site that anchor and inform architecture until the two become one. So intertwined that one can’t exist without the other, they become building/site.

Course Content

“Architecture and site should have an experiential connection, a metaphysical link, a poetic link. When a work of architecture successfully fuses a building and situation, a third condition emerges. In this third entity, denotation and connotation merge; expression is linked to idea which is joined to site.”

Steven Holl, *Anchoring*

As mentioned above, we will focus on site as a social construct – a product of human interpretation – and study works of architecture that engage site in ways that make both richer. NOTE: While we will study buildings and sites from urban to rural settings, this studio will not focus on urban design or environmental design.

Methodology

“...I started with a room and a garden. That was all I had. Why did I choose a room and a garden as a point of departure? Because the garden is a personal gathering of nature and the room is the beginning of architecture.”

Louis Kahn

Over the course of the semester there will be 1-2 introductory projects and 1 longer project.

In addition to design projects, we will engage readings and films to study building/site. The readings and inspirations would be in the vein of James Corner, Italo Calvino, Paul Shephard, Steven Holl, Ted Steinberg, Douglas Darden, Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, R.D. Dripps, Kim Dovey, etc.

We will do a lot of digital section drawings and physical modeling.