The Project of Architecture: Themes, Forms, and Politics of the Architectural Project 1450-2000

The seminar poses the question “What is Architecture?” This question will be answered not in a straightforward way, but by analyzing seven architectural projects in which both the idea and the practice of architecture has been deeply theorized in it most essential aspects.

The projects presented in each session are the theories and works of Leon Battista Alberti, Donato Bramante, Andrea Palladio, Giovanni Battista Alberti, Etienne Louis Boullée, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, Oswald Mathias Ungers, and OMA.

The main argument presented in this seminar is that the essential nature of architecture has emerged not so much in vacuo, in the abstract space of treatises, and rules, but within the critical, and precarious space of the city. Towards such space architecture has projected exemplary and paradigmatic forms. It is precisely by struggling with the city that architecture has revealed its absolute form.

1st session
Introduction
Leon Battista Alberti: De Aeedificatoria as political project
Readings:

2nd session
Donato Bramante: the invention of modern architectural space
Readings:
Arnaldo Bruschi, Bramante (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973)
Gretta Tritch, “Questioning the philosophical influence of beauty and perception in Bramante’s first scheme for St. Peters” paper available at:
http://www.uark.edu/rd_vcad/images/Tritch.pdf

3rd session
Andrea Palladio: architecture as project for an anti-ideal city
Readings:
4th session
**Giovanni Battista Piranesi: Antiquity as Instauratio Urbis**
Readings:

5th Session
**Etienne Louis Boullée: architecture as a state of exception**
Readings:

6th Session
**Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: architecture without attributes**

7th Session
**Oswald Mathias Ungers, and OMA: Architecture as a City within the City.**

8th Session
**Final Discussion**