MAKE NEW HISTORY: THE CHICAGO BIENNIAL 2017

Since the mid-twentieth century, art and architecture have experienced a revolving and reciprocal trade. While artists have adopted ‘architectural’ means such as plans and models or intervened directly into public spaces, at the same time, architects have borrowed ‘artistic’ strategies such as sculptural objects or full-scale installations in museums, biennials and other art events. Art institutes themselves have merged both disciplines as part of an expanded hybrid field and erased the conditional differences between literal and institutional boundaries.

The seminar Make New History: The Chicago Biennial focuses on specific examples of multidirectional transactions: artists adopting architectural means on the one hand [James Turrell or Donald Judd], and architects adopting artistic strategies on the other [Gordon Matta Clark or Herzog & de Meuron]. In particular, we will study contemporary examples of the transposition of strategies from architecture to art, through the installations at the Chicago Architecture Biennale, up to the point where their status, meaning, or function is dismantled and transformed. For example, the 2015 Biennial featured works by Bjarke Ingels’ BIG, Gramazio Kohler Research of ETH Zurich, MOS Architects, Jimenez Lai of Bureau Spectacular, John Rohan, Amanda Williams, Lateral Office, Studio Gang, and SO-IL, among others.

Over the course of the semester, we will view and critique installations at the Chicago Cultural Center, visit art galleries, meet the architects, work with artifacts at the Chicago Art institute, attend lectures, performances and other media events.

The seminar is planned in parallel with the graduate “Maker/Thinker” Design Studio and strongly recommended for those intending to register for that specialized studio. Weekly readings will be required as well as participation in class discussions. Final deliverables for the course will consist of a 3d prototype and 15 page discursive paper. Please email instructor with questions: tierney@illinois.edu