

Special Topics in Architecture
Course Title: **Loud Objects**
Instructor: Katie Shima
Spring 2023 T/R 2:40 - 3:55pm



Steven Holl, Chapel of St. Ignatius

"Architects are a bunch of talkers. Buildings are megaphones."

- Mark Wigley¹

Architects are always telling stories. In fact, we do nothing but tell stories. In school, we stand by our projects and explain our process. In practice, we talk about design with our colleagues; we draw to communicate our intent to builders. But what is a building to do after its architect has walked away?

This course is about the stories objects tell. We will read stories by architects and artists as well as their critics. We will look at spaces, and at works of art and design, and talk about the thoughts and feelings they evoke. We will share objects that are meaningful to us, and talk about why we love them. We will craft our own story, told through a physical object we will make.

We will explore the elemental architectural palette - material, color, light and shadow, form and void - and how these can be composed to create function, support program,

establish ambiance, convey meaning. Our medium for this exploration will be a light fixture - a relatively small and simple object - yet one that demands a high level of creativity, craft, and knowledge of design history. In other words - a microcosm for design thinking at once as technical and complex as contemporary LED technology and at the same time as intuitive as gathering around a campfire.

We will be rigorous in our craft. Students will use both digital and analog techniques, honing their skills in Rhino, lasercutting, finishing, assembly, and documentation. We will explore workflows and best practices to enable students to extend these techniques to other classes and into their future professional work.

¹ Mark Wigley, "Story-Time," *Assemblage*, No. 27, *Tulane Papers: The Politics of Contemporary Architectural Discourse* (Aug., 1995), pp. 80-94, The MIT Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3171433>.