Between Memory and Remembering
Julie Ju-Youn Kim RA AIA, Associate Professor

At the Intersection: What’s our Critical Position?
In this field of high-tech, as a creative discipline, we remain driven by the search for the spaces for the ephemeral or the unquantifiable but are challenged by operating within an arena directed by data and computation. Fundamentally, we must find ways to place value to the artistic ambitions of our discipline and to use the technology to leverage new design methodologies. We are not engineers. We are architects and designers who seek the potential to see the immeasurable through architecture. We must maintain our imaginative curiosities and find the spaces between the qualitative and the quantitative, between the immeasurable and the scientific. The work of architecture is fundamentally poetic. Its cultural construct serves as the vehicle to give a voice to wind or light, memories and recollections. This studio will engage in an architectural design process as a balance of desire weighed against fact. Our studio will operate as an arena to discuss the challenges of making qualitative decisions and to balance creative ambitions in a world driven by metrics and data.

The Design Problem: What’s at Stake?
Speed of access and technology. Accelerated design process. Measured design process. Nimble action. Slow burn. We are pulled and pushed in increasingly multiple directions as information permeates all aspects of our daily lives. What if we could step outside of that space? What if we could take a breath and find silence within the sound? What is the spatial and experiential consequence of a design strategy that seeks and celebrates the liminal space between sky and earth, between memory and remembering?

The site location is in Monument Valley, San Juan County, Utah. Gouldings Lodge currently operates out of a series of buildings on the site: a motel, restaurant, swimming pools, and theater. Included in the collection of buildings is the historic Trading Post (http://www.gouldings.com/museum/). We will engage this design problem under the premise that only the Trading Post Museum will remain. All of the other existing buildings are removed and we are working from the ground up.

The focus of the project will be the emotional and spiritual dimensions of architecture. We will study the expressive potential of materiality, light, color, and textures balanced with the functional requirements of the program. The studio project will engage students in the study, experimentation, and critique of the relationships between architecture, and the subjective, intersubjective, objective and transcendental dimensions of life.

You will also consider these questions to help drive and direct your design project investigation.

- This landscape appears so rugged, monumental, and eternal to us but can also be regarded as quite fragile in its way. What is “fragile” there and how do we handle it through our skillful and thoughtful interventions?
- With regard to local culture, Arizona is part of the US with the longest continual inhabitation. What is important about leveraging and extending local culture in your contemporary architectural design solution? How do you research and approach such a history? How does this play out in the development and execution of a spatial circumstance?

We see architecture as an act of profound optimism. Its foundation lies in believing it is possible to make places on the earth that can give a sense of grace to life - and believing that that matters. It is what we have to give and is what we leave behind. We wrote these words a number of years ago and believe in them even more deeply today. We measure the value of our work by the quiet pleasure of the lives lived in our buildings. We want to solve problems and we want to transcend solutions. We try to work with a thoughtful integrity to make buildings that will last and be loved. We want to leave good marks upon this earth.

- Tod Williams and Billie Tsien