UNBOUND:
Reimagining a Community Library

The institution of the library is in transition. As debates concerning the obslescence of the book appear with increasing frequency, the library’s definition as a container for printed material is also being challenged. What is the architecture for the library of the 21st century? Will the traditional library typology fade along with the book? Should the institution of the library hybridize virtual space with physical space? Or, given the ubiquity of digital media – from the internet to e-books – will the design of the library forge a new identity altogether?

This studio will reimagine the idea of a library for the community of John Day in Eastern Oregon. How might a library in a remote and rural desert town be more responsive to its local community, its sense of history, and the knowledge it contains? What potential is there for recombining programs where the essential functions of a library – lending, borrowing, storing – could be expanded to include more than books? In a world increasingly defined by iphones, twitter, Amazon and blogs, how might the overlay of virtual spaces enrich, reconnect and reassert the library in the public sphere of a small community? Students will visit the site to gain first-hand knowledge of the issues at stake.

This studio explores the expansion and contraction of physical and virtual boundaries as potential spaces of engagement for the design of the library. Students will be encouraged to question existing precedents in order to reimagine new paradigms for this revered institution. In the first part of the studio students will investigate and analyze systems of classification, with an interdisciplinary emphasis, to understand how we access information and organize knowledge. In developing proposals for a new library, students will explore how new forms of classification and access expand the definition of the library as an institution.

Arch 484/584   Summer 2012   Jolie Kerns   Adjunct Faculty   jkerns@uoregon.edu