

## **Collecting Architecture Territories: Beirut and Doha**

ARCH A4106

Advanced Studio VI

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This studio is a continuation of the evolving research project, *Collecting Architecture Territories*. The project targets one of the most significant developments reshaping the intersection of art and architectural practice over the last three decades: the veritable explosion of institutions and foundations that have emerged out of private art collections. The project proposes that the historical institution of the museum is undergoing a transformation that requires new forms of spatial, cultural examination and design interrogation.

Acknowledging this transformation, the studio stretches the problem further. It asks what new conditions of collection and organization beyond its walls the mutation of the contemporary museum signals. The studio will rely on the notion of territory to help understand how collection, and its sister terms accumulation, asset, and value, circulate among new cultural institutions as well as the zones, cities, nations and regions in which they are lodged. The studio considers architecture both as an agent that organizes, supports, and informs a range of contemporary collecting practices, but also increasingly as an object of collection in its own right. With this double role in mind, the studio will probe various collecting systems to speculate on architecture's relationship to the infrastructures of movement, the networks of investment, the technologies of protection, as well as the strategies of viewership and exposure implicated in the territories of collection.

The studio will travel to Doha, Beirut and Amman. Students will choose sites in Lebanon or Qatar, locations that sharply inflect notions of collection and that have distinct conditions of access, mobility and circulation. Where private global art collections seemingly share a frictionless economy in which objects, curators and collectors migrate effortlessly, in the Middle East this mobility is often interrupted by precarious politics and territorial controls. If the shuttling of Koons' metallic balloon dogs around the globe suggests a contemporary incarnation of the museum without walls, the Middle East institutions that must contend with heightened risk, and manage the burden of containment and isolation, represent pockets of political, institutional difference within the global collecting economy. This is a not territory of museums without walls, but a territory of museums both curtailed and defended by supplemental walls, boundaries, check points and controls. The studio will examine and exacerbate these distinctions, constraints, and instabilities to work through their implications for architecture and contemporary collecting apparatuses.