TROUBLEMAKERS
LAND ART / LARGE SCALE EARTHWORKS AND AMERICAN INFRASTRUCTURE

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SPRING STUDIO TRAVEL PROPOSAL
THE ARGUMENT

"Land art, Earthworks or Earth art are terms designated to a period which emerged in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s, that sunlight to link principles in landscape and art. It is considered an art form that is created in an open environment, focusing on involving the material palette of its immediate surroundings. Soil, rock, boulders, stones, water and trees were embedded or positioned jarred with materials like concrete, metal, asphalt, mineral pigments. Earthworks were mot seen as sculptures placed in a landscape, instead the landscape became their means of creation. Often earth moving equipment, primarily used on quarries or large scale suburban site demolition, were used to make large incisions into the ground and rearrange huge piles of boulders. The works frequently exist in the open, located well away from the built environment. Left to change and erode under natural conditions, the art pieces brought into question issues around time, legitimacy and the gallery as the only means of representation for art. A lot of the work that will be seen and explored on this trip will center around sites in the deserts of Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Arizona.

Land art was initially formulated around Robert Smithson writings; antithetical to the artificiality, plastic aesthetics and callous commercialization of art in the 60’s. Robert Smithson, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, Nancy Holt, all rejected the "museum" and the white boxes of current gallery space as the setting of all artistic activity. Instead they developed monumental landscape projects in the vast desert. Because land art was inspired by minimal art and Conceptual art but also by modern and minimal movements such as De Stijl, cubism, minimalism and the work of Constantin Brâncuşi and Joseph Beuys. Many of the artists associated with land art had been involved with minimal art and conceptual art. Donald Judd's work in the reconstructed military compound at Marfa attempts to link both of these worlds of minimalism and large scale earthworks. It is here where students will be able to grapple with overlaps in art and Architecture, constituted by scale and materiality.

THE PROGRAM

The proposed traveling course would be an intensive research exercise in understanding the departure of art from the gallery. Traveling through most of America, students will engage, connect and differentiate between land art / earthworks / large scale infrastructure and massive naturally occurring formations. Site Visits to Marfa will focus in a JUDD sculpture workshop run by the Chinati foundation. Here students will learn the craftsmanship that underlines Donald Judd masterfully crafted minimalist pieces. From there, students will lodge at Walter De Maria's "Lightning Fields" run by the DIA art foundation. During this time, students will participate in manufacturing models that expand on the idea of art involving process that occur atmospherically. The Spiral Jetty and Sun tunnels will allow students to gain insight into art’s separation from the "gallery space” and understand it as a passage or time based phenomenon. Following up at the Nevada museum of art’s - Land Art Collection, Students will engage in all of the material that was drawn up to plan out these massive ventures. The Hoover Dam and Grand Canyon will call into question the legitimacy of "arts" potions by contrasting them the previously visited sites. Heizer’s Double Negative will culminate this discussion and conclude the trip’s investigation into large scale land art. Students will then fly back to Ann Arbor from Los Angeles.
ITINERARY

Travel Dates
May 9th - 10th: Workshop in studio at Taubman
May 11th - 12th: Travel to Columbus and New Harmony
May 13th - 14th: Travel to Nashville and Baton Rouge
May 15th - 16th: The Menil Collection
May 16th - 19th: Travel and tour Marfa
   JUDD Workshop: Art production workshop with the Chinati foundation
May 20th-22nd: Walter DE Maria - Lightning Fields - Workshop with DIA Art Foundation
May 23-24th: Denver Art Museum
May 25th - 26th: Spiral Jetty and Sun Tunnels
May 27th: Nevada Museum of Art - LAND ART COLLECTIONS tour
May 28th: Hoover Dam and Grand Canyon
May 29th: Michael Heizer - Double negative tour
May 30th - 31st: Palm Springs Mid century Modern
June 1st-4th: Los Angles
June 5th: Fly back to Ann Arbor