FIGURING VOLUME

Figuring Volume: Space, Void, Volume Seminar

This seminar will survey a range of historical approaches to architectural interiors and test new design strategies for producing contemporary interiors; these methods will consider the in-between and the beyond as vital ingredients. Historically, the terms “space” and “void” have been employed by architects to describe their design ambitions for exterior massings, interior rooms, and the surfaces that describe them. This seminar will explore the nuanced similarities and differences between these terms and evaluate how volume settles into this lexicon and what it implies for architectural design. In parallel we will review the development of representation from the technical to the projective. We will explore multiple techniques that exploit and define the interior figure and examine the value of Volume within architecture’s arsenal of spatial tricks.

As differentiated from space or void, architectural volume is interested in thickness. Volume relies on proportion and thrives on incongruence. Recent surface design techniques and fabrication methods have resulted in a ‘thinner’ architecture comprised of many layered surfaces. These shifts have dramatically impacted architectural elements such as fenestration, thresholds and surface. While architecture will be our focus, we will look to contemporary art projects such as Christo’s Big Air Package, in Oberhausen, Kapoor’s Leviathan in Paris and DS+R’s Inflatable Pavilion in Washington DC to explore the immense and intricate qualities of volume at play. Emphasizing volumetric precision, monumental interiors and large scale ‘outdoor rooms’, students will evaluate tactics employed in existing excessive volumes and using contemporary tools, transform and develop techniques for utilizing surface distortions (pochè).

The seminar will combine lectures, discussion and design workshops to abstractly focus on the dynamics of the sequencing of volumes, choreographed junctures, and orchestrating a spectacle. Through experimentation across multiple mediums and immersive drawings, students will learn to design provocative, volume-oriented architectural interiors with precision and dexterity.

Precedents:
Pantheon, Rome, 126 AD
Wells Cathedral, Wells England, 1180-1425
Sant’ Andrea, Mantua, Alberti, 1492-1790
Sant’Ivo alla Sapienza, Borromini 1660
Larkin Soap Building, Buffalo New York, Frank Lloyd Wright, 1904
Villa Müller, Prague, Adolf Loos, 1928-30
Neue National Gallery, Berlin or / Barcelona Pavilion, Mies van der Rohe, 195- / 1928
Notre Dame du Haut Ronchamp, France, Le Corbusier 1950-53
Unity Temple, Chicago, Frank Lloyd Wright
Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC, Gordon Bunshaft, 1974
State of Illinois Center (James R. Thompson Center), Chicago, Murphy Jahn, 1985
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Schedule

**Week 01**  
August 26th  
_**Introduction:**_

**Week 02**  
September 2nd  
No Class (Labor Day)  
Task 01: Select a building from the Precedent list, digitally model interior volume as surface.

**Week 03**  
September 9th  
No Class (Work Groups)  [Submit Digital Progress via PDF Sept 6th-9th]

**Week 04**  
September 16th  
_**Defining Volume**_

Cornell, Elias, “Going Inside Architecture: A tentative Synopsis for a History of Interior”  

**Pin-up: Review Volume Digital Models. Highlight the volume through analytical drawings**  
Be concise about describing primary and secondary volumes and transitional moments.

**Week 05**  
September 23rd  
_**Defining Space**_

Sigfried Giedion, “Space, Time and Architecture” 1941

**Supplemental:**  
Somol, Robert and Whiting, Sarah, “Notes around the Doppler Effect and other Moods of Modernism” Perspecta, Vol. 33, Mining Autonomy 2002, pp. 72-77

**Week 06**  
September 30th  
_**Defining Space II + Art**_


**Task 02: (pin-up) Remodel with refinement, highlight through analytical drawings and design a section areas of interest.**

**Week 07**  
October 7th  
_**Defining the Void**_


**Week 08**  
October 14th  
Defining the In-Between

Venturi, Robert, “The Inside and The Outside” in Complexity and Contradiction, MOMA New York, 1966 pp. 70-87

**Week 09**  
October 21st  
No Class  
(Work Session) Scheduled Team Meetings (Oct. 17th-18th)

**Week 10**  
October 28th  
Mid Term Presentation  
(Immersive Drawing)

**Week 11**  
November 4th  
Defining the Space Beyond

Robin Evans, “Figures, Doors and Passages,” in Translations from Drawing to Building and Other Essays, pp 55-91
Beatrice Colomina, “Intimacy and Spectacle, the Interior of Loos”, in Strategies of Architectural Thinking, CIAU, 1994 pp. 68-89

**Week 12**  
November 11th  
No Class (Veteran’s Day)

**Week 13**  
November 18th  
Why Volume Again?


**Week 14**  
November 26th  
NO Lecture, Desk Crits

**Week 15**  
December 2nd  
Final Review/ Presentation (tentative)

Reference Reading:
Peterson, Steven, "Space and Anti-Space"

Requirements:
Complete all assigned readings before the associated class. Create and submit 3 highlighted points from the reading selection for discussion. Students will be asked to sometimes lead and participate in discussions.
Design, development and completion of final project is required.

Grading:
20% Class Participation, Discussion Points
20% Weekly Project Development
60% Final Project

*Readings and Tasks should be prepared for the date of the class they are listed under.*