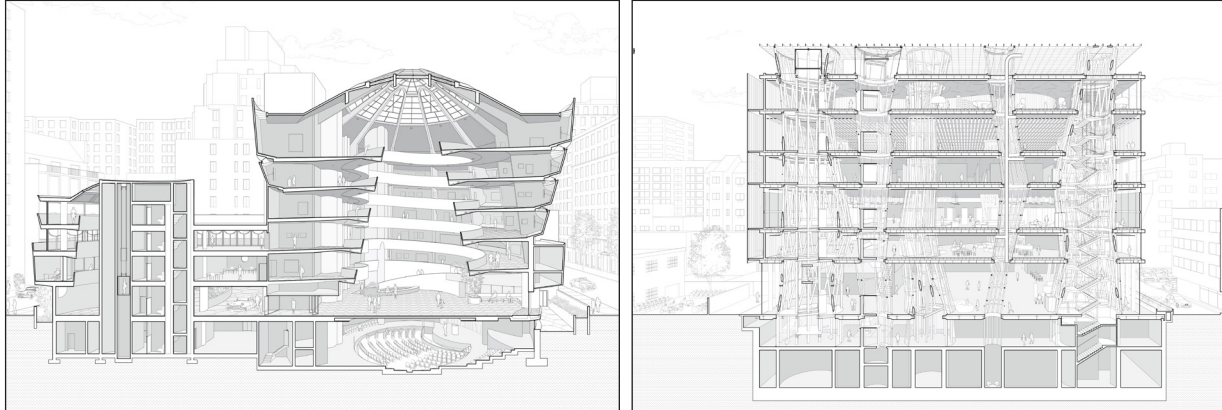


Professor: Marc Tsurumaki
Times: Thursdays, 11am-1pm
Location: 409 Avery

Envisioning Section

The Vertical Cut in Architecture



Introduction

Section, as both a representational technique and a series of spatial practices pertaining to the vertical organization of our buildings and cities, provides a rich and underexploited territory for architectural invention. The section reveals simultaneously interior and exterior, the space contained and the envelope that defines it, exposing the invisible interrelationship between optically discontinuous conditions. As such the section represents an instrumental form of knowledge, one that shifts the understanding of the building from image to space; revealing the connections between material form and experiential effect, program and performance, inhabitation and structure. Given the often daunting complexity of challenges and constraints that confront architects today—from the technical to the social to the environmental—section provides a unique tool for understanding and choreographing these multiple and often contradictory imperatives, leveraging them to catalyze new spatial, programmatic and performative possibilities.

And yet, there is a surprising lack of coherent discourse regarding section. By contrast, the *plan* has been subject to endless debate, theorization and categorization as the plan is typically argued to be the primary locus of design agency. However, it is the section that choreographs forces and vertical hierarchy that are critical to a consideration and understanding of performative and tectonic conditions, as section is where thermal forces, building form, structure and material systems converge and are rendered most legible. At the same time, section implicates the exchange among multiple aspects of embodied experience and architectural space, making explicit the intersection of scale and proportion, vision and view, movement and perception that are best apprehended in the verti-

cal cut (as opposed to top down).

While most commonly deployed as a retroactive tool to describe constructional requirements or (in the context of the contemporary design studio) an automatic side effect of the digital model, this seminar will re-conceive section as an instrumental and projective device. Building on the recent publication, *'Manual of Section'* the seminar will explore and expand a discourse surrounding section in architecture. Generating a set of provisional structures, terms and taxonomies, we will seek to understand the role of section, its historical development, contemporary transformations and possible futures. The goal of the seminar will be to provide students, through lectures, discussions and design research, the techniques through which they can develop their own approaches to section as a vital analytical and design tool.

The seminar will also use the investigation of section to raise broader questions regarding the representational techniques that architects deploy and the complex interrelationship between delineation, ideation and materialization. Forms of representation are never neutral or transparent and profoundly effect the ways in which we are able to conceive and realize our work. An understanding of the way section operates as a representational device, what it reveals as well as what it conceals, will be considered critical to understanding how to deploy and utilize it in our own work.

Sequence:

Each week will consist of a short lecture followed by discussion and presentation of student research and work. The primary focus of the work will comprise a sectional perspective drawing generated by the student and based on original research. Speculations regarding new sectional taxonomies and representational strategies will extend this exercise from the analytical to the propositional, culminating in a series of synthetic drawings based on our collective research into section as both a spatial and representational technique.

Schedule:

Week 1:

Introduction and the Origins of Section: Ruins and Bodies

Week 2:

The Emergence of the Section: Measure and Perception
Discussion of readings

Week 3:

The Modernist Section: Convention and Invention
initial project selections

Week 4:

Types and Performance of Section: Extrude and Stack
initial project research presentations

Week 5:

Types and Performance of Section: Shape and Shear
initial project drawings presentations

Week 6:

Types and Performance of Section: Hole and Incline
Drawings review and discussion

Week 7:

Types and Performance of Section: Nest and Hybrids
Research presentations (sectional taxonomies)

Week 8:

The Vertical Metropolis : Urban Section
Discussion of readings

Week 9:

Deep Section: Section and Landscape
Drawings review (alternative section drawings)

Week 10:

The Cinematic Cut: Section and Film
Drawings review (alternative section drawings)

Week 11:

Section as Imaginary Space

Week 12:

Final Review of Section Projects

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