ARCH 484 / 584, Winter 2015

Transparency

Critic: E Landry Smith

The space that pertains to the conical perspective demands hierarchical vision; it must be a space easily formulated, enunciable, predictable. It is clear that this geometry is going to go badly with an architecture that describes transparency, absence, lack of appearance, occultation, glittering in the night and a trick of measure and reference. — José Morales

Transparency is one of the most frequently used architectural metaphors and arguably one of the most important characteristics of the contemporary world. The origin of the word dates back to the middle ages and is most closely associated with gothic cathedrals (The Latin- *transparere*- to appear through). In the twentieth century, the etymological evolution of the term has been significant and appropriated by a range of social, political, and architectural agendas. Transparency has been linked to clarity and rationalism, translucency and opaqueness, and more recently ambiguity, vagueness, and the uncanny.

The beginning of the studio will focus on the analysis and (re)interpretation of select architectural precedents (incl. works by Chareau, Corbusier, Gropius, Herzog and de Meuron, Ito, Johnson, Koolhaas, Mies, Nishizawa, Nouvel, Sejima, etc). These investigations will be studied alongside key texts (incl. Gideon, Kepes, Loos, Mertins, Rowe, Scheerbart, Slutzky, Vidler, etc).

In the (larger) second part of the term students will explore their own agendas related to transparency in developing their respective proposals for an urban, mixed-use building in Portland, Oregon.