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Valparaiso is a port city that is based on a historical framework. A dynamic organism that used to feed itself with trade. Different groups arrived and settled in the hills. It happened quite separate but what every group had in common was the port and the daily activities who were related to this area. The situation changed completely as the port started to have its own life, disconnected from the city. An anonymous area that occupies the water border and made it almost unaccessible for the people. What included the system of this historical framework is the fact that since it existence Valparaiso is shaped by private investments and as among others, this has remained until today. Therefore decisions are made within a small group away from any collective feature.

The system on which Valparaiso exist today is embedded in a new social network. One wherein people operate their own working organism. It are strong and self-organized communities. A community with its own network to give warranty to the primary needs of the people who are a part of it. To be an insurance and something to rely on when a city or any other instance isn't providing that. During the visit within Valparaiso we found several of them. It's the way how Valparaiso functions today. Nevertheless it makes the whole existence fragmented, it seems that there is no understanding of a city. People reacted on the same way, as in that their communities operate well but only within the community itself. It makes that al the investment that are made are private and small- scaled. In a city where there is no memory of any collective solution. There is no sense of collaboration. Valparaiso is a lifestyle, a vicious circle where people tend to be stuck in. So many potentials, changes and opportunities are hidden within the hills and are territory bound. The research to the historic immigrant's communities got me into the historical framework that is underlying the city as reference and created the fragmented existence of today.

Almost everyone we spoke to in Valparaiso said that there is a lack of public space, places to feel save. But more important they acknowledged that there is a need for a more shared value and social cohesion. At the same time barely nobody we spoke to is actually collaborating to achieve that.

I did a sort of case study, because I really wanted to know what the influences was of those communities today. What remained in the social structures of the city? The case study was about one of the two most pressing issues Valparaiso knows. There are the earthquakes and the fires. Earthquakes are out of the humans reach, as we can't take measurements to prevent, in the contrary

of fires and especially in Valparaiso, they can be prevented. The fires have been accrued in all times, but the city continues without a proper reaction to it, agonizes and resuscitates from one fire to another. In the fire of 2014, 12500 people lost everything and 15 people died. The main conclusions from this case study was that the city does not or barely makes arrangements to prevent the fires and actually in a way increases the chance for them to appear.

Most of the time, the fires arise in the forest on the hill tops. Therefore the unknown hills are the first in line and most vulnerable. Together with the conditions of these hills the recent fire and the fire tragedy of 2014 were completely foreseeable. This could have happened at any given time, and could still happen anytime soon. The municipality doesn't take good measurements to prevent nor providing any solutions. The whole rebuilt is relying on the self-organized communities. Many communities, organizations, groups of friends and individuals from various cities gathered and with their energy the rebuilding started. With hands, with invention and spirit of solidarity as in other historical moments in Valparaiso. The communities are operating to reach the levels of organization that they want, and to exceed the actions that the government should fulfill. Opposite to the municipality and government, the communities of Valparaiso do have a very well built up organization and a network of their own. Which for them was the only steady thing left since thousands of people lost everything? The communities made the difference.

We actually met a lot of organizations, communities and small groups who are trying to provide solutions for preventing and rebuilding. If it comes for fire, the municipality is not preventing or providing solution, but what we experienced was that a lot of these solutions are already imbedded within the city, and so it's with a lot of things.

All these small organizations providing affordable, accessible solutions, but it is kept within the territory. Hardly no one is collaborating while everyone has to deal with pressing issues as fire, earthquakes unsafety. Everyone could benefit of those solutions. There is no sense for sharing. In my project I took the frequent rising fires as a common issue but also as an example. Fire cant me prevented, within small groups.

I created an urban framework in order to evoke change within the city. What I think is needed to actually make people aware of the urgency of collaboration is places to share. I think there need to be places to share within the city. Where these initiatives can be shared, explained and educated by people in order to inform more people about the knowledge that is already imbedded within the city, so that others also can make use of it. The urban framework exist out of 3 layers.

1.   Places to share, the spine. When I was in Valparaiso I experienced two good public places. Places that had a common and collective atmosphere, and it was also visible that others experienced the same. Maybe the only two places I felt totally save. It also seemed that these are two spaces that are loose from territory and everyone could come there. And I think the city is lacking those spaces. So within this framework I took these two spaces as the main public and important places. In where there can be worked on the expansion of the save and social qualities these spaces have and create an image of a place where knowledge is shared. These spaces can be used for different initiatives and groups to come together and educate other resident from other parts of the city about their solutions. Of course these spaces attract a lot of people in general so it might not really an issue if those gatherings for instance or small lectures are not properly announces, but we can work on make it a more a standard thing.

2.   The second layer of the frame work consist of trying to make this shared value permanent within the city. Making the memory and achieve something that never has been. I did this by

connecting all the community centers because I think the structure of these community centers is very useable for this. Almost every community we met puts its children very high. You can teach children how to be strength and they are the key to win trust of the parents. They see them all as the strength of a community, the key source and so it their education. So by creating a network where the teachers attain the events on the shared places, they can give it through to the children and so start a more sense of collaboration and a shared value within also the new generation.

3.   Than the third layer of the framework is realizing it. In the first place I tried to find ways for just the resident to make this happen. The city needs to work on the social and common safety, also to establish this framework. Most stairs are a lot of times hidden, you not really know if it leads somewhere and if it its accessible. So if it comes to these horizontal crisscross connections which are most of all stairs, some simple rules/guidelines could be implemented by the nearest people from the neighborhood, which already will make a difference. I provides a set of urban guidelines for this.

The area I choose to intervene got most affected by the fire, and is still building up life. It's the area that is still highest in risk to be affected by the same incident again. So they need help and solutions. It's the area that is lacking the public space to share within the framework but also is lacking public space in general, this could be add. A space needs to be given so Minga can share their solutions. The project completes the urban framework and creates a spine. The site is an interesting point where connections come together and where they have to be made. Its central located between the affected hills. Central in the middle where these local initiatives could be shared.

To schematize the project I created a scheme defining the conceptual project as a sequence of layers that would evoke the central axis from memory to perspective.

I first of all started with defining the functional aspect of the project. In what kind of way is it responding to my ambitions and how is it working on the solution of the fire as a common issue?

The project acts as a catalyst and relates to fire by outlining a set of functions. First of all the building will offer spaces in order for these different initiatives being brought together. To educate each other so everyone can benefit from their solutions. The building will be a shelter and a place for the neighborhood to gather in case of emergency. The memorial will emphasize the memory. This function is a more permanent one. A function that will always be there in its pure form.

The most direct group of people who are related to the fire in Valparaiso are as no other the large amount of fire companies within the city. These fire departments represents the port city and its culture in many ways. Every historic immigrant's community used to have its own fire department. Therefore the fireman have a large history within Valparaiso. They are the crown on people own initiatives. Even the fireman culture started with a gathering of neighbors who settled up the Association Against Fire. Until today the fire service profession is in Valparaiso a full charity based job.

A fireman who dies in duty receives a fireman's funeral ceremony. This ceremony includes a lighted parade at nighttime. The relatives and the fire corps, carry the coffin in a procession to the grave. It was a reaction on the regime in 1859. Where the fireman were forbidden to burry there died colleague in public. They decided to take the darkness as an ally and proceeded the ceremony at nighttime. During the parade, fire transforms from a fear and a danger into a sign of honor. This parade is different than a regular funeral ceremony. It's a common event where all the citizens are free to walk with the parade or watch it from a side line.

The fireman's funeral ceremony reminded me of my experiences in the Open City in Chile. A community that aims to be the ideal city. Next to the housing they built, two elements have make a highlighted presence. The agora and the cemetery filtered out as the essentials of being a city. The agora as the place to gather, to negotiate and to agree. And the cemetery that initiates that this is a place to stay and that you are being able to leave it with something being established while you were there. This feeling of staying and the urge to gather are leading within the values I aim to establish. Therefore will these two functions be leading within the project?

This functional step settled the program, which meant that it contains 2 categories; the ritual and the community in form of education and collaboration. The program combines these two categories and aims to weave them through the different spaces of the project. The categories share accommodation and circulation spaces. The two categories strengthen each other but separates on one aspect, the transition between day and night. The ritual will always take place at nighttime while collaboration and education is a daily daytime activity. The program makes that the project will be experiences in different shades of sunlight but will also operate under a sky full of stars. The program takes care of the different streams the project will receive. Equal to the cemetery and the agora as the main spaces of the two categories. Visually connected by its architecture and meaning.

The translation to architecture started with the adjustment of walls and stairs as the main architectural elements within the landscape. Seeing the hills as an architectural structure in itself existing out of a network of natural walls present as the existing tool. Trying to operate in the field of tension between the existing natural elements and the elements that I adjust. The wall and stair as the architectural elements that as no others are operating between earth and heaven. Building up the horizontal layers of the project opposing the verticality of the core. Considering elements rather than volumes. This method also had the intention to keep the project on a human and local scale. Going along with the impact and presence of the landscape. It possess a territorial quality but at the same time preserving its intimacy. The walls are able to act within the gradient of the axis within the building that transfers from earth to haven. The walls are able to open up spaces as well to enclose them. The method provides an honest and pure architecture, a structure of walls and stairs built up in the landscape

The first layer of the project contains the cemetery and is located underground. The parade will access the cemetery from of the path that is coming down from the hills. With the stair down as a continuing of this path. Right at this moment a separation of different streams will take place. The closest relatives of the fireman that passed away, will carry the coffin down into the cemetery where the burial ceremony will take place. The citizens and others who decided to join the parade will leave the relatives now and take the side ways to bring a last greeting to go up to the agora where they can join the funeral on a distant. The agora and cemetery are visually connected by the projects circulation but also by the walls that are rising up from the cemetery. Built up of the carved out material.

The core is rising up from the cemetery and is bringing the memory, the monumentally through the whole building. In this core the axis from earth to heaven will always be present. The core is also the main circulation source of the building and therefore this is the place where the ritual and the daily will always be woven. The stair as an icon of the city, monumentalizing the daily. Connecting and becoming one with the ritual. Ritual and daily life merges together and becomes the conductor of the program. The value in this becomes clear in the way it provides ground for meeting points, interactions and connections.

In the second layer of the project the rooms are brought to the other side of the periphery. In order to create a structure that exerts an attractive force, has the at least barriers to enter. Is welcoming and as accessible as possible. The walls open up de spaces in order to give and to receive. Creating a room that is completely public but intimate. The rock wall is considered as one of the walls that is enclosing the interior space of this layer that can be used for a movie screening at daytime. In this part of the building the necessity of the ''sub elements'' becomes clear. The buildings ask for a fixed furniture. That is answering the intention of the room. Rooms that could be the extended space of the surrounding initiatives, institutions and schools. The furniture is operating on the scale of a room and the scale of a façade.

The third layer is the agora and is meant as a public space. For bigger groups to gather at one time. This space is receiving the stair from the side connection.

The fourth layer offers spaces for education and collaboration in a more private and introverted atmosphere. This layer is totally enclosed. And opposing the second layer. Characteristic to many rooms in Valparaiso where the framing of the ocean view is always there, these rooms are the opposite. The ocean view is completely blocked. The different layers of the project offering different kinds of spaces in different languages answering the intention of the room. This layers makes the continuing of the connection to the other side of the cliff.

The connection from one side of the cliff to the other side makes that the project also connects on the larger scale of the circulation elements in the city. It's part of a huge and diverse public pedestrian network that Valparaiso knows. Within the 3th layer of the urban framework its makes a connection possible. The project is therefore part of the rich and diverse amount of stairs within the public pedestrian network in Valparaiso. Integrating into the neighborhood on different levels and different scales. The project as a gift to the city. Offering a special experience of the stair as an icon of the city. A large strength of the project is embedded within the circulation. This is completely public and is receiving the nice materials.

At the fifth and final layer you will find the viewing point. At this final layer the separation between the two categories of the program takes place. The water mirror in the core projects to the ocean that starts to appear in this final layer. According to the concept this is the most open structure. I tried to define a space without enclosing it. Creating a room without losing the framing of the ocean. The carved out room is offering space for the reception that will take place after the burial ceremony. Offering a space for an after dinner under a sky full of stars, projecting the buried souls.

A capture of the site and all its elements, the physical and the invisible ones. The dynamics between the two rock walls.