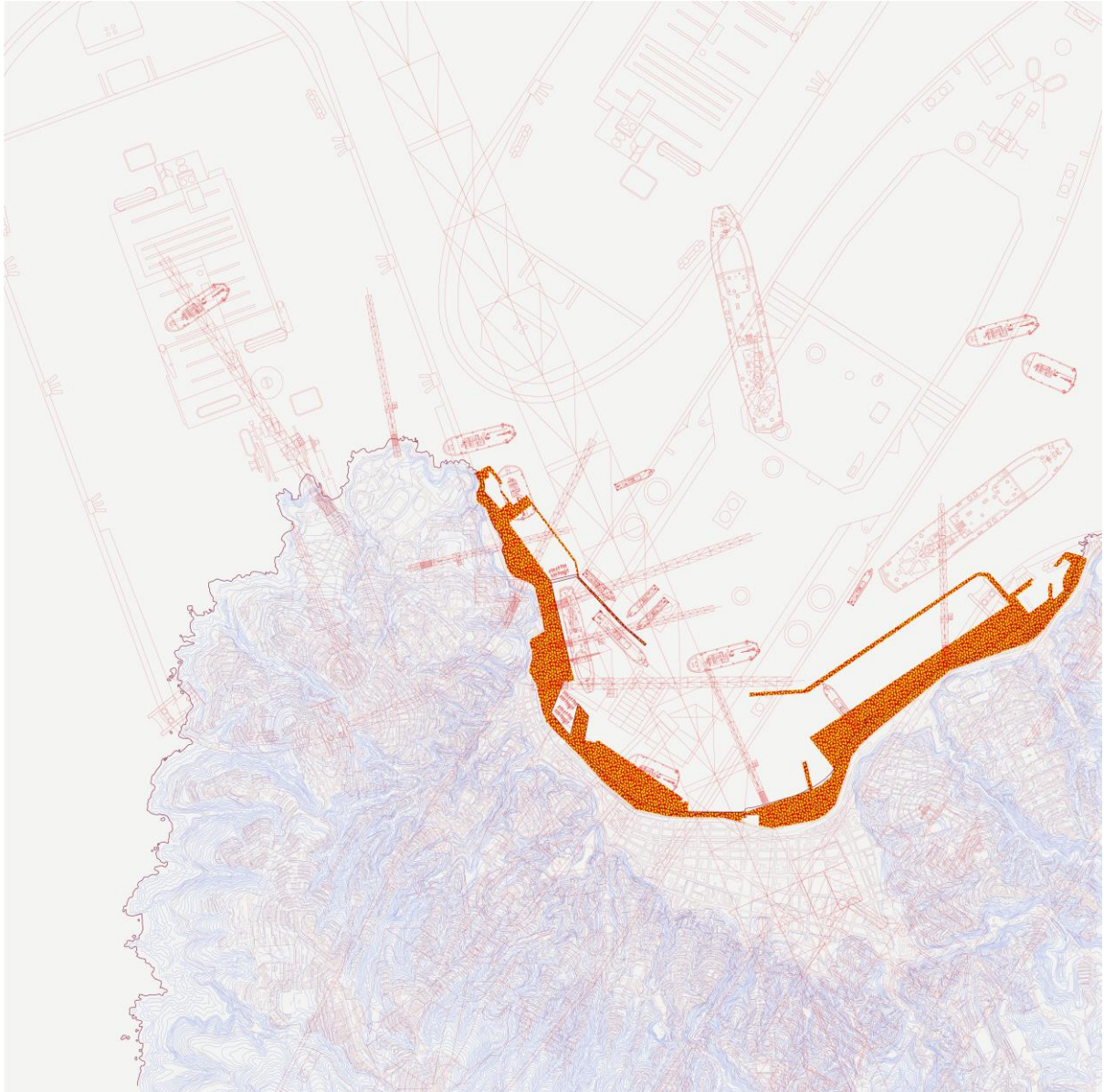


# Bodega Simón Bolívar (BSB) Valpo

social, spatial, sonic interminglings



P4 Reflection  
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**BSB Valpo** is a project for the revitalization of Valparaíso's coastline. It is a new hub for dialogue, creativity, rest and recreation showcasing the work of local communities, artists, craftsmen and performers within a haptic landscape open to public exploration.

The following reflective piece provides the reader with a glimpse into the process of my graduation project. It looks back and discusses aspects of my journey relative to fieldwork, research, analysis, and design materialization.

## **1**

### **Reflecting on the wider social context and the theme of the studio:**

The city's coast has been largely privatized to the point that it became inaccessible to the citizens due to the ever-growing port activities. The thick barrier of the train line and highway also contributes to a weakened relationship of the city to the ocean. A central aim for both the proposed urban/landscape strategies and my architectural interventions is to empower the citizens to reconquer the coast as a common resource for everyone to enjoy.

The project brief was composed based on the knowledge gained at the studio fieldtrip in Chile combined with theoretical and context-related investigations, as well as reflections on contemporary architectural discourse. The scheme was developed through looking at the chosen site from several aspects, starting from the urban scale, moving to the immediate landscape, and finally to the scale of the building and architectural detailing with respect to its multifarious uses. Building on my own observations and relevant readings, the project gradually became about the unlocking of an existing heritage resource of the coast, Bodega Simón Bolívar, to the citizens and visitors as a multipurpose public space and landscape.

The theme of my graduation studio Chair, the commons, was something that I certainly wanted to explore within my project. At the initial steps of our group investigations I opted for the 'Communities of Valparaíso' research group. I was interested in finding out about the social dynamics of the cultural capital of Chile, and the ways community groups form to tackle various issues of the city. To the extent we had the chance to investigate the city's local spirit, I was interested in proposing a scheme that would take into account the cultural particularities of the place and would be able to offer outdoor and indoor spaces

to be appropriated by a multitude of citizen groups (community groups, university students, creatives, performers, tourists, street sellers etc.) Besides standing as a blank canvas for local cultural activities to unfold, the re-purposed warehouse creates an opportunity for community organizations to meet and exchange knowledge in a permeable space that invites public curiosity and informs citizens and visitors about their action. This seems particularly important for the city, since the natural topography of the steep hills and the poor connectivity between them impedes the cross-pollination of communities/individuals with similar goals.

## **2**

### **The importance of fieldwork**

The studio field trip acted as the starting point of my phenomenological investigations. During the trip, I engaged in a series of eye-opening talks, workshops, and interviews with citizens and local actors that provided me with invaluable insight on the current urban and social challenges of the city. In parallel, I investigated the cityscape through field recordings and short videos. The reason I adopted these tools was born out of my first walk in the city and the impact it had on me. The visual polyphony of the city was immensely overwhelming for the eye. The city offered an infinite number of animated frames which were particular and unique. Being there, I felt that the only way to understand these frames was by being inside them, engaging all sense modalities not merely that of vision. Unlike desktop research, the research tools I employed on location were precisely targeted to a collection of observations that are impossible to obtain from a distance.

The choice of experience-based research aims to counteract the issue of problem-solving in architectural education. Students are often being educated to provide solutions rather than to listen, discover challenges, and link opportunities and resources. They are regularly asked to deal with data but not with people and events. In turn, this could be generating detachment from both the people and the physical context. Luckily, in this graduation studio we were able to collect first-hand observations which were grounded in the present challenges and to discuss with several local actors before even considering any design intentions.

### 3

#### **Reflecting on the methodology, research and design:**

In our studio the central aim was not only to understand and design for a remote location, but also to expand our tool set for architectural research and design, to discover what methods and tools worked best. We were encouraged to explore various methods from the very first steps of group research, to our fieldwork in Chile, and finally throughout our individual elaboration on research and design. This allowed each of us to try certain ways of doing that we had not tried in the past. Furthermore, we had a chance to appreciate and discuss our peers' approach and learn from the diversity of methods of representation and points of view that were presented during this academic year.

Below are the methods/tools which influenced my design process the most:

#### *Sound as research*

By investigating sound I wanted to comment on the ocularcentric tendencies of architecture and the neglect of other senses. Today, the image and its perception are the key means of communication and dissemination of ideas and projects. I would argue that reality is much more complex than what meets the eye. By systematically ignoring the other senses, the outcome of our work risks becoming disjointed from the real needs and challenges in society.

As mentioned in the previous section, one of my first tools for research during the fieldtrip was sound. Through listening and recording I was led to some of my design intentions for the site. When I was walking along the coast, I noticed that even in the very few places that it was publicly accessible, the sensory experience was compromised by the lo-fi noise of the highway and the passing trains. This led to the idea that a large part of the highway should be moved underground along with the new metro-train, transforming a problematic barrier into a soft traffic road, safely linking the site to the rest of the city.

In addition, my interest in sound studies was sparked by the very attributes of sound and the potential I saw in its educational dimension within my project. 'Sound unfolds as a dynamic relation between an inside and an outside' (Avidar P., Ganchrow R., & Kursell J.); it entails a reciprocal relationship between the sound source and the listener. Sound is a

process with the capacity to cross boundaries, to function as a communicational medium, and to potentialise relationships as it implies the notion of sharing.

In my proposal, sound is used both as a tool for architectural and urban intervention, for example in the different ground surfaces of the landscaped areas or the nested and raised interior interventions, and as an education tool serving the general experience of listening, by providing spaces for open lectures, performances, collective work, recreation etc. Points where citizens learn through listening and sharing local knowledge.

One challenge I encountered was assigning sound attributes to spaces which need to adapt to different events. I did not want the acoustic design to dictate the spaces' use so I decided to place most of the rooms requiring more silence in the small building, and allow for more spatial reconfiguring in the large one.

### *Cut-outs*

In order to fully grasp the size of the warehouse and the landscape, I felt the need to model it in 3D immediately. It was crucial for me to understand the building's position on the site and to be able to apply and visualize the changes of the landscape, the envelope or the interior as the project developed. However, at some point I realized that designing for the entire site simultaneously was not helping me develop the project in further depth or detail. Therefore, I decided to switch to the method of cut-outs, i.e. isolating a part of the plan or working on key sections/ perspective views, a method that I had used for the city research and analysis earlier in the process. This helped me deal with the large scheme in a more ordered and organised manner, while it enabled me to test and implement one by one the mental notes I had accumulated in the previous stages.

### *Narrative line*

Another useful tool which helped me overcome an impasse during my design process, was composing the project narrative. When my tutors asked me to think about how such a large project would be sustainably managed and operated, I researched how other public cultural projects have done so. Then, I decided that in order to ensure this public project remains economically viable and socially sustainable, the city would hire a quango company to mediate between the city, port authorities and user groups. The company is

hosted inside the warehouse, regulating the booking of spaces and the organisation of planned events.

One of my narrative writing exercises was the design of the BSB promotional leaflet written from the point of view of this managing company. Through this exercise I began to think about the logistics of the various activities that the building accommodates. What happens by day and what in the evening? Who organises each event? Could the citizens be involved in the larger events at a volunteering basis? How can we achieve a sense of ownership and care towards a new space?

(see project leaflet in Appendix).

### *Drawing diptychs*

Based on the aforementioned method of thinking about the project as a realistic narrative, I started to think of the next drawings I wanted to create from the users' point of view. Since most parts of the main building can be adjusted to accommodate various events, it became important to find a way to portray this transformability and adaptability of spaces. Therefore, I chose certain key views of the project, on which I will be showing two possible narrative scenarios of use, laid out as a diptych.

### **Reflecting on relevance:**

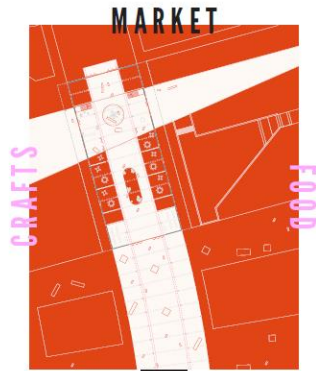
Based on my choice of location and the size of the site, I recognize that the impact of such a project on the city would be considerable. Standing between two metro-train stations, BSB Valpo would be the first place for any visitor to encounter. Due to its scale it would be visible from the cruising ships and the city's hills alike. My hope is that by offering the city with an accessible social hub, a new public landscape and a new point of access to the sea, the immense creativity and knowledge which is scattered across the city could find grounds to become exposed. Moreover, by providing a place for listening and dialogue, communities and individuals may learn from each other to build upon their collective pool of skills for future initiatives.

Looking ahead, I believe the final part of the graduation period will focus on refining some of the more detailed drawings of the project, organising the entire body of work in

a structured manner for the final presentation/report and possibly producing a couple more drawings or a model to convey materiality, climate and atmosphere.

# Appendix

BSB VALPARAISO



On weekends the entrance doors are kept wide open! Local crafts and food stalls are invited to sell their goods within the main halls of BSB as well as at the periphery of the buildings. Sellers can register online for a day slot and will be then offered a place on a first-come, first-served basis.

**ON WEEKENDS!**



By day, BSB is open and free for all citizens and visitors to drop in and use the premises to meet, work/study, rest or talk over coffee.

- Café and lounge: chat and relax
- Main hall: a series of collective seating configurations allow visitors to appreciate the generous space beside others.
- Side isles: adjustable wall panels allow users to change the open plan arrangement for more privacy and sound isolation.

**DAY TIME**

**ON WEEKDAYS!**

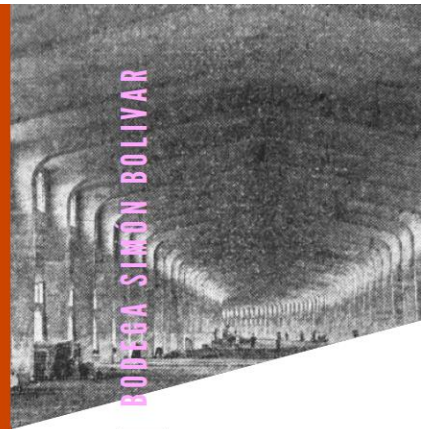
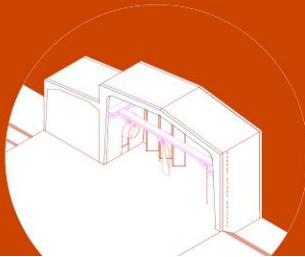
DIALOGUE | EXCHANGE | RECREATION

## YOUR EVENT AT BSB

For communities, organizations, and individuals interested in booking space for collective or public activities please contact us directly at:

☎ +56 234 567 890  
 ✉ [bsbvalpo@website.com](mailto:bsbvalpo@website.com)  
 📍 Av. Errázuriz, Muelle Barón  
 Valparaíso, Chile

[www.bsbvalpo.com](http://www.bsbvalpo.com)



BSB Valpo is the new meeting point on the coastline: set inside and around Bodega Simón Bolívar, a 500m long industrial warehouse of heritage value. The former coal store of Valparaíso—later repurposed as a passengers' terminal—is now home to a range of exciting public and collective initiatives, as well as a space for repose, dialogue and knowledge exchange between citizens. By day, the building is open to all and can be adapted for a range of spatial configurations. By night, live performances, larger expos, and cultural events by local groups unfold.

**WHO WE ARE**

COLLECTIVE VOLUNTEERING

## CO-CREATE EVENTS!

Each month, BSB is preparing for a new large-scale event! Citizens and students are warmly invited to collaborate with the organizations involved to make their vision possible. Tasks may vary from producing stage props in the in-house wood workshop, or designing promotional material and decoration, to helping out visitors with way-finding during the event.

Remember, you can always bring your unique skill to us and our events team will propose some fun options for you to explore!



**EVENING**

At sunset, BSB presents the city with small performances, music gigs, lectures, workshops or film screenings which are organized by local creative initiatives or student groups.

- Free workshops and lectures are organized by community organizations who wish to share their know-how on their area of expertise.
- On evenings which happen to be event-free, film screenings will be taking place in the stage area.
- Cultural events are free for people under 25 and over 60, while we aim for normal ticket prices to remain affordable at all times.

**ON WEEKDAYS!**

