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UNUSUAL ARCHITECTURES: «OTHER» EXPERIENCES IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM, SANTIAGO DE CHILE (1950-2020)

ARQUITECTURAS INUSUALES: EXPERIENCIAS «OTRAS» EN LA ARQUITECTURA Y EL URBANISMO, SANTIAGO DE CHILE (1950-2020)

ARQUITETURAS INUSUAIS: EXPERIÊNCIAS "OUTRAS" NA ARQUITETURA E NO URBANISMO, SANTIAGO DE CHILE (1950-2020)

Figura 0. Photographs Dos Caracoles Building 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

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RESUMEN

Comprendiendo la ciudad contemporánea como una experiencia inabarcable, como un conjunto de experiencias complejas proclives a lo indeterminado, esta investigación reconoce y recolecta fragmentos de un conjunto mayor para buscar y destacar objetos, situaciones, artefactos y experiencias alejadas de los discursos canónicos. Estas experiencias «otras» se definen como *arquitecturas inusuales*, es decir, ubicadas al margen de lo normalmente discutido y valorado en los espacios tradicionales de la práctica, crítica y docencia arquitectónica. Tal reconocimiento es construido desde la otredad y está conformado por un conjunto provisional y cambiante. Metodológicamente, la investigación implica, primero, una contextualización conceptual respecto de la valoración de lo otro en la arquitectura y la ciudad como motor de cambio en la disciplina y segundo, una inmersión en la experiencia directa del espacio por parte del equipo. Mediante recorridos urbanos y búsqueda de información bibliográfica y de archivos, se recogen noventa casos, se discute su pertinencia y sus potencialidades críticas y se profundiza en veintisiete, sobre los que se realiza una representación planimétrica y fotográfica, así como un discurso de contextualización y valoración. De ellos, se rescatan seis casos con el propósito de contextualizar las categorías propuestas para la organización de todos los demás. Como hallazgo, se reconoce en el conjunto el valor de la otredad, con frecuencia silenciada, para desencadenar nuevos modos posibles de enfrentar los retos arquitectónicos y urbanos de la contemporaneidad.

Palabras clave: Arquitectura, experiencias urbanas, inusual, otredad, fotografía de arquitectura, representación arquitectónica

ABSTRACT

Understanding the contemporary city as an unfathomable experience, as a set of complex experiences, prone to the indeterminate, this research acknowledges and collects fragments of a larger complex to search for and highlight objects, situations, artifacts, and experiences far from the canonical discourses. These "other" experiences are defined as *unusual architectures,* that is, located on the margins of what is normally discussed and valued in the traditional spaces of architectural practice, criticism, and teaching. Such recognition is constructed from otherness and comprises a provisional and changing complex. Methodologically, the research implies, first, a conceptual contextualization regarding the valuation of the otherness in architecture and the city as a motor of change in the discipline, and second, an immersion in the direct experience of space by the team. Through urban tours and a search for bibliographic and archival information, ninety cases are collected. Their relevance and critical potentialities are discussed and twenty-seven are studied in depth, making a planimetric and photographic representation, as well as a discourse of contextualization and valuation. Of these, six cases are rescued to contextualize the categories proposed for the organization of all the others. As a finding, the value of otherness, often silenced, is recognized in the set to trigger new possible ways of facing the architectural and urban challenges of contemporaneity.

Keywords: architecture, urban experiences, unusual, otherness, architectural photography, architectural representation.

RESUMO

Entendendo a cidade contemporânea como uma experiência insondável, como um conjunto de experiências complexas propensas ao indeterminado, esta pesquisa reconhece e coleta fragmentos de um todo maior a fim de buscar e destacar objetos, situações, artefatos e experiências distantes dos discursos canônicos. Essas "outras" experiências são definidas como arquiteturas incomuns, ou seja, localizadas à margem do que é normalmente discutido e valorizado nos espaços tradicionais de prática, crítica e ensino de arquitetura. Esse reconhecimento é construído a partir da alteridade e é composto por um conjunto provisório e mutável. Metodologicamente, a pesquisa implica, em primeiro lugar, uma contextualização conceitual da valorização do outro na arquitetura e na cidade como motor de mudança na disciplina e, em segundo lugar, uma imersão na experiência direta do espaço pela equipe. Por meio de passeios urbanos e de uma busca de informações bibliográficas e de arquivos, foram coletados noventa casos, foram discutidas sua pertinência e potencialidades críticas e vinte e sete deles foram examinados em profundidade. Sobre estes últimos foi feita uma representação planimétrica e fotográfica, bem como um discurso de contextualização e valorização. Dentre eles, seis casos foram selecionados para contextualizar as categorias propostas para a organização de todos os demais. Como resultado, o valor da alteridade, muitas vezes silenciada, é reconhecido no conjunto completo de casos para suscitar novas formas possíveis de enfrentar os desafios arquitetônicos e urbanos da contemporaneidade.

Palavras-chave: arquitetura, experiências urbanas, incomum, alteridade, fotografia arquitetônica, representação arquitetônica.

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INTRODUCTION

It is often stated that the representations of the city are insufficient to account for urban phenomena and that the language, the image, the planimetry, or narratives are always partial (Pope, 1996; Simeoforidis, 2001). The character of the city is increasingly that of a casual, contingent accumulation, and the urban experience continues to be presented as the expression of the ineffable, the persistently other (Delgado, 1999). In this context that understands the city as an unfathomable "other", this sample of conditions, spaces, or experiences that are provisionally defined as *unusual architectures*, is accessed. This is based on the active search for direct experience in the city, from the perception of urban space and time, where objects, situations, or displacements that do not coincide with the canonical or privileged discourses within the discipline are often presented. This line of inquiry would operate, to paraphrase Aby Warburg when he describes the procedure for his *Atlas Mnemosyne* (1924-29), as a machine for thinking images – in this case, for thinking spatial experiences -, making analogies emerge. Thus, what is interesting is the strangeness of the phenomenon and the set of possible relationships between objects, rather than their stagnant understanding (Warburg, 2010).

In this framework, this research involved facing methodological challenges. On one hand, the recognition of background information or similar lines of work marks a possible path to follow. On the other hand, the definition of specific strategies that shows the particularities of the body of cases studied and their context. Regarding these strategies and as will be stated, the conceptual precision of the notion of the 'unusual' stands out; the definition, observation, and categorization of cases; and the registration and representation of the selected buildings. In this way, together, these methods allow activating a look that reconsiders the importance and value of architectures usually neglected in the disciplinary field.

BACKGROUND

RECOGNITION OF THE UNUSUAL

The compilation and description of the "other" in architecture and urbanism have been presented, at least since Piranesi, with a twofold angle: first, to give possibilities of representation to marginal experiences, maintaining this marginality as a value, and second, the paradox that happens when otherness risks becoming a model.

Regarding this second paradox, its founding mode appears acknowledged in Walter Benjamin and his *A Book at Passages* (ca. 2005), which is a compilation of references and comments on urban modernization events in Paris in the mid-19th century. In this work, situations can be found that, at that time, were making the experience of the city the *other*: shopping galleries, access to the catacombs, urban renewals, collecting, decorated interiors, museums, streets, mirrors, artificial lighting, railways, or the photographic image. With a mixture of anguish and seduction, they refer to architectural acts, unusual spaces, or cultural practices influential in the material transformation produced by modern architecture and urbanism.

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After the canonical period of modern architecture, in the second half of the 20th century, the "other" experiences were presented by assault as disciplinary alternatives. This included the unplanned, the ordinary, the ugly, the ordinary, the weird, or even the ridiculous. Looking for alternatives, members of *Team 10* reviewed traditional urban centers, historical city patterns, or life on the streets (Risselada & van der Heuvel, 2005). In this regard, Bernard Rudofsky (1964) reports, through a very extensive presentation, a look at vernacular architectures presenting his thesis about the value of local ways of solving habitat problems. At the same time, Reyner Banham (1989) travels around the United States demonstrating how industrial architecture, not intended to be architecture, had influenced the most heroic modernity, or how the city of Los Angeles was more than a scattered set of speculative urbanizations covered with smog, recognizing urban cultures and ways of doing (Banham, 1971). Shortly after, Venturi and Scott Brown made an unprecedented exploration of Las Vegas, a city despised by official architecture, through the analysis and innovative representations of casinos, gas stations, signs, or sidewalks, turning it into the place of origin of architecture that, by different ways, radically departed from modern canons (Venturi et al., 1977). Thus, the other, the ugly, the ordinary, and the unvalued becomes an epistemological alternative and a project model, producing conceptual systems to organize or explain reality.

For his part, in 1978, Rem Koolhaas (1994) does the same with New York with a very different analysis from the established methods, where he values how the indescribable is taken for granted, architecture as a circus phenomenon, megalomania, and nonsense. Koolhaas recognizes these expressions as direct antecedents of the excesses and contradictions of contemporary urbanism and architecture. Likewise, he also recognizes these experiences as models of its innovative and exemplary practice of the end of the century, often described as cynical and opportunistic for how it adapts, surrenders, or even magnifies contemporary modes of production, consumption, and imageability (Montes-Lamas, 2015). Koolhaas also explains his critique as collecting guided by the paranoid-critical surrealist method, where the author, while seeking to "systematize confusion" (1994, p. 235), also collects objects or experiences, establishing arbitrary relationships between them, and assumes that everything is useful to support their thesis.

These collection operations are still common to view the city. For example, the Japanese collective, Atelier Bow Wow, describes their *Made in Tokyo* as a study of strange, unnamable buildings, whereby Tokyo moves away from what is prescribed or celebrated by the official architectural culture. The authors state that "amazed by how interesting they are, we set out to photograph them, as if we were visiting a foreign city for the first time" (Kaijima et al., 2001). In this way, the architect, as in the case of *Atelier Bow Wow* becomes an attentive observer of the existing reality, rather than a producer of a new one. This operation reiterates a Japanese tradition of linking architecture and ethnography (Abásolo-Llaría, 2021), consisting of recognizing the present and active otherness, understood as a key factor

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in the very powerful cultural hybridization that characterized 20th-century Japan. In the same way, it points to the experience of immersing oneself in the city. This encourages spatial practices for the study of the urban, in a kind of fieldwork, as had already been done by the Architectural Detective Agency and Terunobu Fujimori (Abásolo-Llaría, 2022).

SANTIAGO DE CHILE

For Santiago de Chile, the first reference to the "weird" is the book by Cristián Boza and Hernán Duval called *Inventarios de una arquitectura anónima (Inventory of an anonymous architecture)* (Boza & Duval, 1982), which assessed a hitherto unrecognized unspectacular architecture. The work incorporated common architectural typologies, with great urban weight but anonymous, that were rarely included in the lists of outstanding works because they distanced themselves from the monumental. Thus, many neighborhoods, complexes, cités[1], buildings, and private houses or small palaces located in neighborhoods of the primary periphery are included as examples of historical importance. The selection is based on the correct handling of the urban form, formal expressiveness, and a modest eclecticism, which is representative of the time in which they were built. However, when Sergio Paz (2003), in the guide to the weird Santiaguino, *Santiago Bizarro,* after referring to gargoyles, crypts, some passageways, and different complexes, affirms that "by a strange never written rule, the cités are usually inexplicably anomalous buildings", placing the unusual character of these spaces above their value as a model.

Santiago de Chile has been described as a city where deregulated urbanism and the architectures of consumption and spectacle dominate the space and replace the action of the public (De Mattos, 1999). In the experiences of urban substitution, displacement of social groups, gentrification, segregation, and accelerated speculation, added to recent migratory processes and weak heritage preservation policies, the dissemination of spatial otherness is frequent. This is exemplified in what Jorge Christie (2004) refers to as the development of the city by layers, by the thoughtless accumulation of matter and omissions, venturing to understand the destruction of the built as a field from which to consider architecture. Thus, he proposes an unusual combination of urban autopsy and abandoned spaces as keys to describing new interpretations of what it means to subtract or demolish, considering the different layers or thicknesses of the city.

Another unusual antecedent is a certain degree of invisibility and inaccessibility of some spaces that make up the city, as Bianchi (2001) proposes about the interiors of blocks, where strange and surprising spatial situations occur that are usually ignored or go unnoticed in the cartographies of the city, evidencing an urban anathema.

Also, the image of Santiago, the accidental expression, that which is between what is thought and what is seen, appears in *An Imaginary Atlas*

1 Cités are a group of houses that share an interior patio as a passageway.

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of Santiago de Chile by Justine Graham (2011). There, alternative views and modes of valuation and representation of the urban environment are proposed through a collection of photographs of the every day, the poetic, and the forgotten, that are systematically classified and compared, reflecting on the informal or the seemingly unimportant in the city (Pérez de Arce & Graham, 2012).

EXTRAORDINARY, ORDINARY, INTERESTING, UNUSUAL

Unlike weak, anonymous, confusing, or ethereal architectures, teaching or architectural criticism has traditionally privileged the strong, the unique, the clear, and the legible. The understandable architecture is one where quality is produced, codes are transmitted, and even stylistic keys are established. The architecture that is valued and taught, has clear concepts, ideas-force, is transcendental or is regulated by general items, aspires to be universal. Canonical architecture paradoxically aspires to repeat itself, while wishing to be *extraordinary*. This is the extraordinary architecture that, it is said, has ended up being usual in the context of current Chile, as it was qualified, for example, in the evaluative text on the *Extraordinary: New Practices in Chilean Architecture* exhibition (Center for Architecture, 2016):

> [...] The exhibition shows how in today's Chile, after the strong influence of modernism on the local design culture in the 20th century, an innovative language is beginning to take shape that looks towards the coming decades and paves the way for a real school. The stars are architects aged between thirty and fifty, all of them from the School of Architecture of the Pontifical Catholic University of Santiago, with numerous projects in their country, but also a growing presence on the international scene [...]

Paradoxically, the value of this extraordinary architecture is to share a series of common signs: a relationship with modernism as the good side of history, an affiliation to a dominant academic institution, a generational homogeneity, innovation as a value in itself, a professional legitimacy for the built work, and the already achieved international recognition.

The *ordinary* is presented In apparent opposition to *the extraordinary* of the most celebrated architectures, which is a category rescued by Enrique Walker (2010) approaching the ways that, frequently, refer to the "other". That is to say, the ordinary is the external to the architectural discipline, either by actions of direct exclusion or by simple omission. In this sense, Georges Perec takes the ordinary to the extreme by referring, using the *infra-ordinary,* to "the rest, everything else" (Perec, 1989). The *infra-ordinary* is radically opposed to the *extra-ordinary*, although it also implies a look of amazement. However, it recognizes the need to move away from the great events that capture the attention because they are singular, and proposes to turn the attention to life itself, to the ordinary everyday experience.

On the other hand, Gerard Vilar (2000) rescues a category of analysis following these issues, useful at a time that he describes as aesthetic entropy.

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In the disorder of stimuli and experiences of the present, Vilar affirms that he highlights only that which arouses interest. Thus, the category of the *Interesting* would act as a provisional aesthetic judgment, a kind of indexing with which the subject marks that which has hit the sensitivity, by which the unknown manages to surprise him, but which at the same time is interstitial, intermediate between the clearly definable and that which is still indeterminate.

A wide territory of interest to investigate appears in this tension between the common and ordinary and the declared extraordinary condition of the Chilean architecture to which one aspires, which immediately produces a wide margin. What elements, within what can be described as ordinary, can be temporarily separated to be seen in detail to arouse interest? What aspects of what is recognized as extraordinary have not yet been seen in their full dimension?

UNUSUAL ARCHITECTURES

The architectural and urban experiences that we want to index are those that can only be designated as interesting and that, after a process of examination, representation, and criticism, could be evaluated less provisionally. What is proposed to be described as "unusual architectures" is a shapeless set comprising artifacts and experiences outside what is normally discussed and valued, which are mostly ordinary, many strange for proposing paradoxes or being incisive in a special way, but at the same time extraordinary. These architectures include public spaces, territories, and urban experiences that are of interest from their aesthetic or typological valuation within the discipline, present potential situations, or sometimes, just a paradox, a gesture, or an inflection. Some are lessons that reconcile practice with the production of space, others are the result of how people manage to inhabit or produce exchanges. Some are leftovers of other times condemned to obsolescence or recent pieces that, due to the particularity of their statements or formal or spatial proposals, deserve to be discussed from other perspectives. Some are even recent and valued architectures, but that support, due to their complexity and interest, an unusual way of being looked at. The aim is then to compose a set of experiences that are alien or uncomfortable to learned architecture, or that, being even recognized pieces, can be looked at from a perspective that enquires about otherness.

The main difficulty of unusual architecture is that it cannot be defined or abstracted to a common type, representation, or concept. It can only be displayed, listed or provisionally organized in one way or another. It forms a disparate and irreconcilable whole, but true to experience. It would be analogous to the one described in that encyclopedia of Dr. Khun, which, as Jorge Luis Borges imagined, proposed an amazing taxonomy of the animals of the kingdom that he inhabited:

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''...the animals are divided into a] belonging to the Emperor, b] embalmed, c] trained, d] piglets, e] mermaids, f] fabulous, g] loose dogs, h] included in this classification, i] that are agitated like crazy, j] innumerable, k] drawn with a very fine camel hair brush, l] and so on, m] that have just broken the vase, n] that from afar look like flies'' (Borges, 1952).

The set that we want to present produces tension regarding how, from its conventions, architecture organizes its words and its things, where it becomes evident the way how, from these conventions, there is opposition to the experience or culture of spaces and their way of being inhabited.

Behind each case lies another possible reading about the city as a whole, which is a fragmentary reading, since it is built from the possible relationships – and discontinuities – between the parts and objects chosen. What is common to the cases that will be collected is that their origin or the ways of interpretation in which the research welcomes them are related to the fact that they are always distant from the conceptually strong, legible, or modelistic. As expressions in the territory, they are almost always consequences of productive instrumentalization, where the architectural or territorial seems to be subjected to a single end. They are a set of physical presences and unformulated spatial expressions, which, accumulating contingently, often determine the experience of the site.

Recognizing unusual architectures as a necessarily open notion, the urban reality of Santiago was carefully observed to identify the cases according to their origin or the ways of interpretation in which the research welcomes them: as distant forms of the conceptually legible, strong or modelistic; as expressions in a territory that appear as a consequence of productive instrumentalization where the architectural or territorial seems to be subjected to a single purpose; as physical presences and unformulated spatial expressions that accumulate contingently and determine the experience at the site; as formal enigmas that are unrelated to their context; or as pieces that propose new keys in urban space. From this classification, the most powerful cases were highlighted, expressions of the little discussed or that made it possible to find the salvageable within the peculiar to propose an index that covered different scales: the landscape, urban systems or ensembles, public spaces, large-scale pieces, buildings, singular pieces and ways of occupying the city.

Methodologically, the research was proposed as an inductive search based on direct or indirect active observation of the city, which included the following stages:

1.- Field visits, site surveys, and consultation of bibliography, hemerography, and archives. There was constant feedback between the search, selection, categorization, and evaluation, distancing from understanding the concepts

METHODOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

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Box of surprises / interiors	086 _ Monte Carlo Hotel	030 _ The Central Market
		034 _ Parque del Cómic, San Miguel
010 _ OMNIUM Shopping Center	Objects / Lighthouses and pieces	035 _ Paseo Las Palmas, Duty-Free area and surroundings, Providencia
	006 _ Commercial snail-like centers and continuous ramp galleries (Dos Caracoles)	036 _ Bio-Bio Flea Market
012 _ Capri Cinema and Gallery	008 _ Lo Castillo Shopping Center	045 _ High voltage line layout (Las Torres and Av. Alonso de Córdova)
019_El Drugstore, Providence	011 _ Innovation Center of the Catholic University	047 _ Santiago Water Tanks
028 _ Juegos Diana	015 _ Channel 13 Television Building	048 _ Phone masts in Stgo
032 _ Chinese Mall and surroundings	016 _ Cruz Blanca Building	053 _ Neptuno Workshops
041 _ Caupolican Theater	017 _ Plaza de Armas Building	063 _ Central Highway (North-South)
057 _ Edwards Interior Gallery	037 _ Pirámide del Sol	066 _ La Hondonada Park, Cerro Navia
061 _ La Merced Building	039 _ Remodelling of República	070 _ Postgraduate campus of Adolfo Ibañez University
078 _ Casa Colorada Gallery and Complex.	040 _ Mestizo Restaurant	072 _ North-eastern Radial Highway
082 _ Lider Express Paseo Huérfanos (old Victoria Theatre)	042 _ Votive Temple of Maipu	079 _ Intersection Vespucio-Independencia-Norte Sur (Quilicura)
087 _ España Gallery	044 _ Entel Tower	081 _ Providencia Neighborhood Unit
	050 _ Chapel of the Verbo Divino School	090 _ Santa Isabel Neighborhood, Santiago Downtown
Mode / Applications	052 _ Bahai Temple	Voids/ Footprints
002 _ Maruri Neighborhood and surroundings	055 _ Ministry of Labour and Private Employees' Fund	
003 _ Meiggs and Estación Central Neighborhood	056 _ Palace of the Alhambra (Compañía - Amunategui)	013 _ National Stadium
004 _ Patronato Neighborhood	062 _ Donde Golpea el Monito Hat Shop	014 _ Waste and persistence in Estación Central
005 _ Aillavilú Street	064 _ San Borja gas and gasometer factory	018 _ Parking lot buildings in Santiago Downtown, Miraflores and McIver Streets
022 _ Informal trade strategies, Santiago Centro and others	067 _ Mausoleum of the Italian Society of Mutual Aid (General Cemetery)	020 _ Intersection of Alameda with Gral. Velasquez, Estación Central
027 _ Graffiti and urban art route	080 _ Los Sacramentinos Church	021 _ Yungay Station and surroundings
029 _ Kiosks, installations and other "pet architectures"	083 _ Former Hyatt Hotel (Santiago Mandarin)	023 _ Faculty of Architecture, University of Chile
033 _ Current occupation of the Tirso de Molina Grocery Market	084 _ Plaza de Armas Metro Building	031 _ Maestranza San Bernardo
038 _ La Victoria Neighborhood	089 _ Alto Parque and Parque Vivo Buildings	043 _ Ambiguous terrain and other central voids
046 _ UNCTAD - Gabriela Mistral Centre	Systems / Networks and Paths	065 _ Maestranza San Eugenio (Estacion Central)
049 _ Brasil Square		069 _ Mundo Mágico
051 _ San Cristobal Hill Park and Renca sign	001 _ Costanera Norte Highway	073 _ Embalse Abandoned Mining Camp El Yeso (Cajón del Maipo)
054 _ Escalada de Los Silos Park	007 _ Cantagallo Shopping Center	074 _ Villa San Luis, Las Condes
058 _ Espacio 365 - Murals (Rio de Janeiro 365) - Patronato	009 _ Los Cobres Shopping Center, Vitacura	076 _ Zanjón de la Aguada.
059 _ Mural Roberto Espinoza Street - Copiapo and Coquimbo	024 _ Fantasilandia	077 _ Los Reyes Park, including silos and meeting with North-South road system
060 _ Paseo Bandera	025 _ La Pérgola gallery and similar galleries in Providencia	085 _ Entre Gigantes Building, Estación Central
068 _ Minimal architectures, architectures of the body	026 _ Contemporary commercial galleries in Santiago Downtown (San Agustín and others)	088 _ Libertad-Yungay Metro Station
071 _ Romualdito's Shrine		
075 _ Neighborhood and social housing associated with extraction of sand in Lo Barnechea		

Table 1. Initial observation group for the selected
cases (selected cases are indicated in grey) 2021-2022.
Source: Preparation by the Authors.

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and cases as watertight and predetermined facts. On the contrary, by consulting in the field, in secondary sources, and through the exchange of opinion within the team, an initial set of observations could be selected.

2.- The pre-selection of cases to be observed (ninety) and the final selection of twenty-seven. For these, further analysis and representation were made. Table 1 shows the preselected cases and the final selection. In them, the complexity of the instrumental systems that overlap the city was identified to a different degree, but also the complexity of the form and space, exotic or even kitsch qualities, the constant expression of paradoxes, a certain residual character of what was simply left there, the absence of meaning, of use or even lack of materiality. In many cases, the presence of people and groups became evident, who, within new dynamics, organize the space according to their needs and benefits.

3.- Constant discussion of the proposed concepts and observation categories and the selection, design, and incorporation of case representation strategies, as a way to foresee the relationship between the conceptualization and the products relevant to each case.

4.- The development of representations. Representations that emphasize traditional means of architecture were chosen, implying that these unusual architectures are still disciplinarily understandable and replicable. On the other hand, the active use of photography seeks to demonstrate a necessary spatial or material concreteness of what is represented and to record an architecture that is present in the most direct way possible. In the same way, as it has been historically, photography has found in the otherness an object where to develop with the purpose of registration and cataloging, but also of aesthetic exploitation (Vielma, 2015).

5.- Finally, a critical-descriptive discourse of each case was constructed. In these texts, the justification and assessment of each one were carried out, contextualizing them according to their origin, describing their current situation, and the detected conditions that allow them to be described and assessed as unusual.

MAP-GUIDE OF UNUSUAL ARCHITECTURES

The cases reviewed in the city are located on a guide map that acts as a selective representation that expresses the different spatial orders associated with each case and its relationship with the territory (Figure 1). This map allows inferring relationships closely tied to the form of occupation of the space, as well as to the time and epoch where they manifest, to know where these forms of occupation that coexist simultaneously are concentrated, intensified, or dispersed. At the same time, the plan allows identifying future actions and opportunities for intervention in cases that are immersed in areas of urban transformation or that need to be reprogrammed in the city.
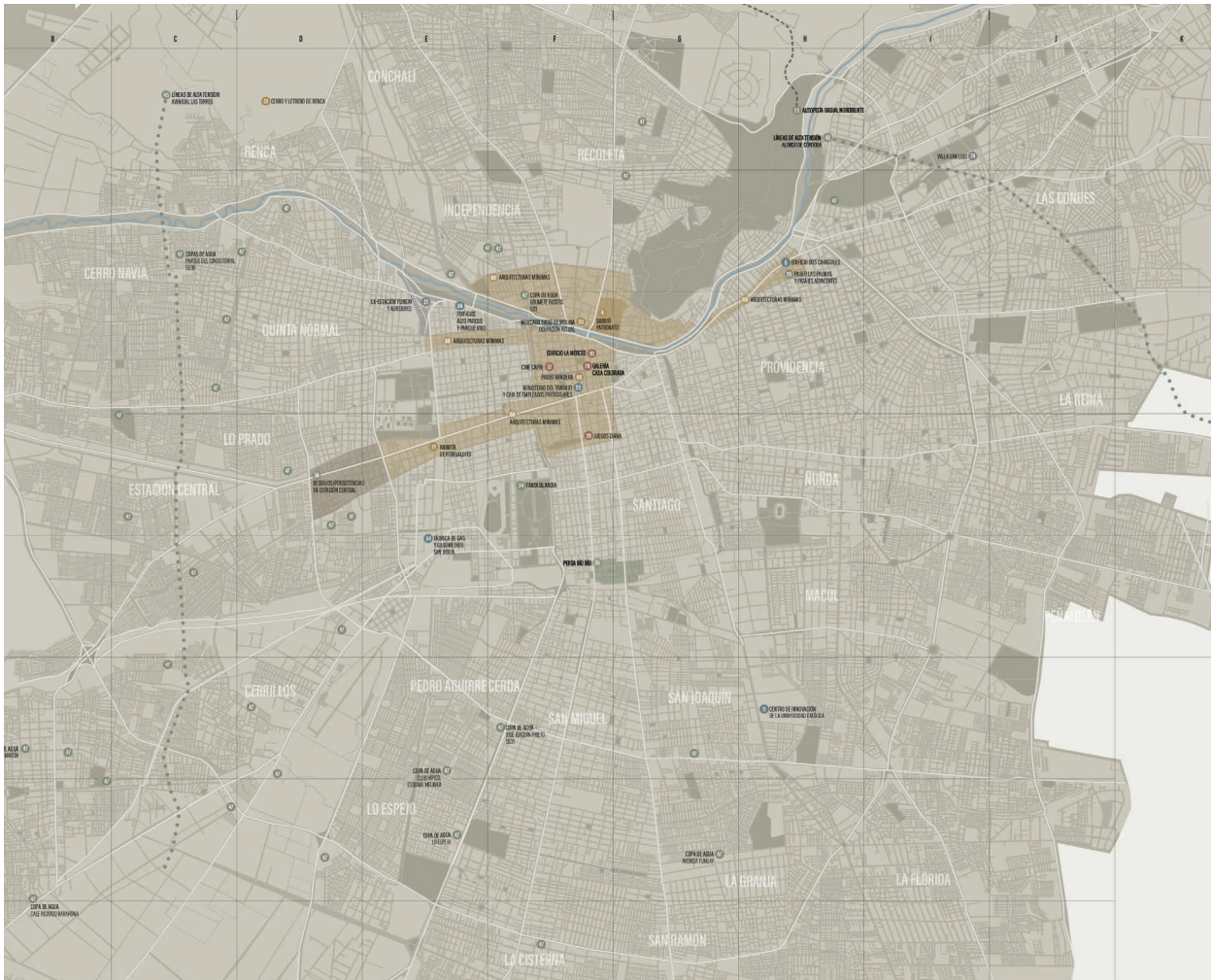
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Figure 1. Map-guide Unusual architecture. <<Other>> experiences in the architecture and urbanism of Santiago de Chile 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

In the case of Santiago, this dispersed attention to the plan allows for knowing intuitively or reconstructing urban transformations over time, such as identifying remnants of the modernization process initiated in the second half of the 19th century. It is also possible to verify the obsolescence suffered by areas and city programs from technological innovation; or the intense expansion of an urban space determined by the rhythm of the market, an issue that allows the strange coexistence between local features and the globalization of consumption logics.

PROPOSED CATEGORIES AND EXAMPLE CASES

The twenty-seven cases chosen (Table 2) were organized into five categories understood as an operational narrative that allowed distinctions to be made. The categories are explained below with brief references to some of the cases included in each. These categories were named with two complementary terms: the first points to a concept that groups the sets and the second to a spatial or material concreteness.

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Box of surprises / interiors		055 _	Ministry of Labour and Private Employees' Fund Calle Huérfanos 1273, Santiago, Metropolitan Region Emilio Duhart, Architect 1969
012_	Capri Cinema and Gallery Calle Santo Domingo 834, Santiago Eugenio Cienfuegos, architect 1958	064 _	San Borja Gas and Gasometer Factory Calle San Antofagasta 3424, Estación Central, Metropolitan Region Empresas GASCO 1910s
028_	Juegos Diana Calle San Diego 438, Santiago Sergio Moreira, arquitecto- Enrique Zuñiga, mandante 1978	089 _	Alto Parque and Parque Vivo Buildings Av. Balmaceda 2610 & 2720, Santiago, Metropolitan Region Juan Eduardo Castañeda, Architect. Nahmias Construction Company. 2019-2021
061_	La Merced Building Paseo Huérfanos 699, Santiago Mario Pérez de Arce Lavín and Mario Pérez de Arce A., architects 1982	**Systems / Networks and Paths**	
078_	Casa Colorada Gallery Calle Merced 823, Santiago Santiago Roi, architect 1983	024 _	Fantasilandia Av. Beaucheff 938, Santiago, Metropolitan Region Commercial entertainment architecture. Gerardo Arteaga and promoting companies 1978 - current situation
Mode / Applications		035 _	Paseo Las Palmas and adjacent underground passages in Providencia Surroundings of the crossings between Av. Nueva Providencia with Avenida Calle Ricardo Lyon and underground walkways around Los Leones Metro station Alberto Sartori, Larraín Murtinho, Alberto Fernández, Roberto Wood, Santiago Metro, among others 1982 - current situation
004_	Patronato Neighborhood Polygon between Bellavista Street, Av. Recoleta, Dominica Street and Loreto Street, Commune of Recoleta Commercial Urban Vernacular, current situation	036 _	Bio-Bio Flea Market Matadero-Franklin Neighborhood, Santiago Commercial district with spontaneous development in the old supply and slaughterhouse area of Santiago Current situation
033_	Current occupation of the Tirso de Molina Grocery Market Avenida Santa María 409, Recoleta Iglesis y Prat Arquitectos - commercial urban vernacular 2011 - current situation	045 _	Aerial layouts of high-voltage networks Las Torres Avenue, Cerro Navia and Adjacent Communes / Alonso de Córdoba Avenue, Vitacura Chile's Central Interconnected Electricity System n.d. - current situation
051_	De Los Cerros Park and Renca Sign Between the communes of Quilicura and Renca Illustrious Municipality of Renca 2010 - current situation	047 _	Santiago Water Tanks Several locations Drinking water distribution companies Current situation
060_	Paseo Bandera Calle Bandera, between Compañía and Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins Victoria Studio. Dasic Fernández, Esteban Barrera and Juan Carlos López 2017	070 _	Postgraduate Campus of Adolfo Ibáñez University Diagonal Las Torres 2640, Peñalolén 2007
068_	Minimal architectures, architectures of the body Commercial and high pedestrian flow neighborhoods Commercial urban vernacular Current situation	072 _	North-eastern Radial Highway Concessions Unit of the Ministry of Public Works - Group S and V 2008
071_	Romualdito's Shrine San Francisco de Borja with Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins, Estación Central Religious urban vernacular 1933 - current situation	**Voids/ Footprints**	
Objects / Lighthouses and pieces		014 _	Waste and persistence in the recent development of Estación Central Between Central Highway, Av. Las Rejas, Embajador Quintana Street and Av. 5 de Abril. Commune of Estación Central Current situation, 2022
006_	Dos Caracoles Building Av. Providencia 2216, Providencia Sergio Larraín García-Moreno, Ignacio Covarrubias and Jorge Swinburn 1978	031 _	Maestranza San Bernardo Av. Portales Oriente, 1471 San Bernardo, Metropolitan Region Directorate-General of Railways - Compañía Holandesa de Obras en Concreto 1913 - Current situation
011_	Anacleto Angelini Innovation Center Campus San Joaquín, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Vicuña Mackenna 4860, Macul Elementary. Alejandro Aravena, Pedro Hoffmann, Suyin Chia, and Juan Cerda 2015	074 _	Villa San Luis Presidente Riesco 5885, Las Condes CORMU. Miguel Eyquem, Sergio Larraín, Ignacio Covarrubias, Jorge Swinburn, Alberto Collados, Nicolás Freund, Gonzalo Leiva, and Isidoro Loi 1969-1974 - current situation
052_	Baha'i Temple of South America Diagonal Las Torres 2000, Peñalolén Hariri Pontarini Architects, 2016	021 _	Former Yungay Station and Surroundings Av. Carrascal 3098, Santiago, Quinta Normal, Metropolitan Region Current situation

Table 2. Selection of cases by category of discussion 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.
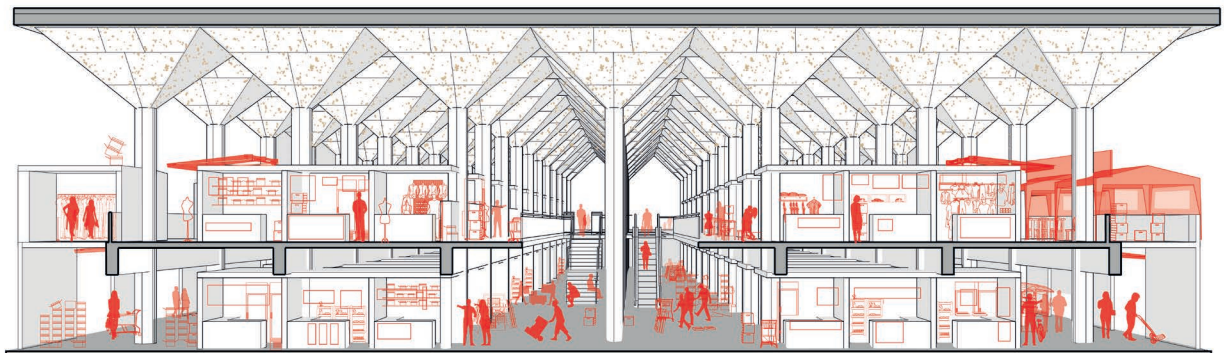
Figure 2. Photographs and interpretive drawing - Juegos Diana 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

SURPRISE BOX / INTERIORS

This considers situations where the matching and legibility between interior and exterior are broken. The experience of the space or its modes of use is contingent and flexible compared to the built form and the interior usually exceeds expectations. They are related to what has been described as "containers" to refer to those situations where the form/function link is broken and the architecture is open to flexibility, surprise, or simulation (Solà-Morales, 1996).

An outstanding example of this category is *Juegos Diana* (Figure 2), which is a leisure and entertainment space inside a warehouse built like a winery or a light factory, close to a park and the monumental Basílica de los Sacramentinos. An ordinary shed outside hints at its contents from its sign and a Ferris wheel that breaks through its envelope. The Ferris wheel expresses the playful character that links the interior to the exterior and allows the user to rotate incessantly, entering and exiting the container. Thus, the irruption of this playful artifact can be thought of as a synthesis of what happens in the place: the encounter between urban reality, its continuity, and monotony, the presence inside a space that opens to the illusion of play proposing alternative times, actions, and uses. This box of surprises reveals a diverse set of machines and characters inside that

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disconnect the visitor from the usual rhythms, transforming a generic space into one characterized by the accumulation of visitors and visual stimuli.

Figure 3. Photographs and interpretive drawing Tirso de Molina Market 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

MODE / APPLICATIONS

This is those cases where how the space is used or laid out modifies the proposed shape or use of the project. Through an overlapping that ends up replacing the originally thought, or where the unusual manifests itself in how the intervention in the space, while supposedly being fragile or soft, can determine the experience, expressing the paradox of how the informal organizes the city (García Canclini, 2003).

In the *current occupation of the Tirso de Molina market* (Figure 3), it is seen how the expression of the present displaces and distorts how the new Tirso de Molina Food Market was looking to *architectualize* the sale of food and goods

Figure 4. Photographs and interpretive drawing Dos Caracoles Building 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.
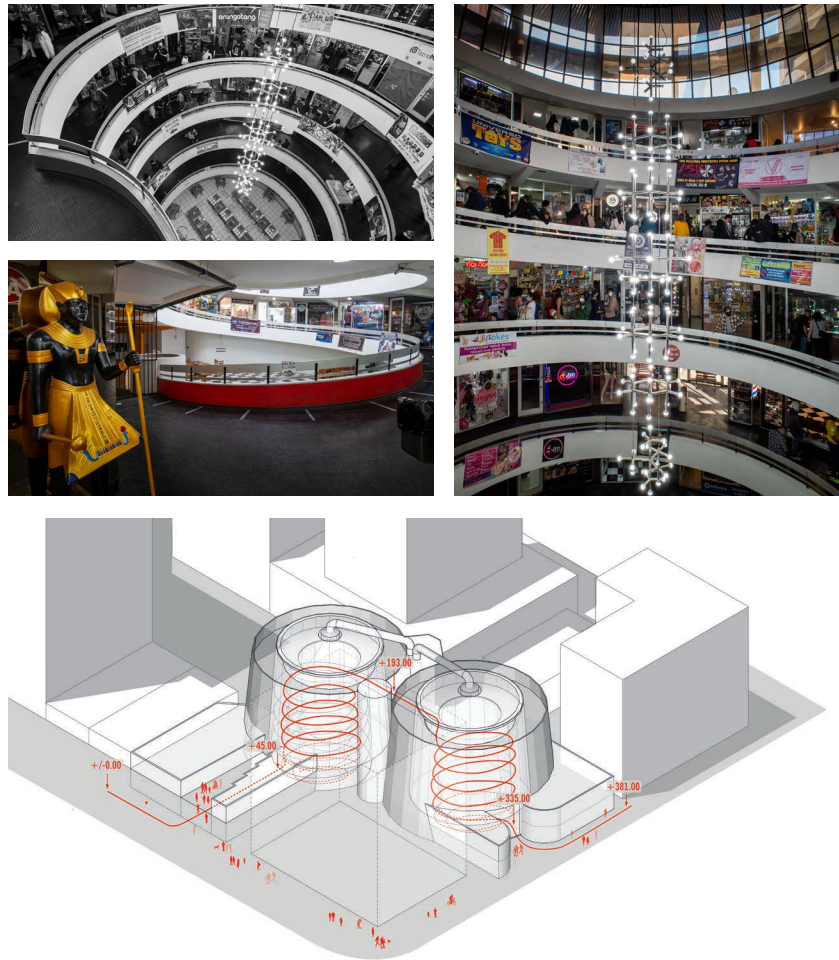
that has historically occurred in that place. Today, the spontaneity of the sector that hosted it has surpassed the building, originally organized by brick-clad modules with an independent roof. Multiple layers have been superimposed on it, it has been intervened with plastic and nylon covers to protect the activities from the weather, awnings, and lintels with trademarks, multiple formal and vernacular notices and signs, a religious altar in the central space, and exposed concrete painted in colors. The result is a tense expression of the encounter between the ways people use spaces and the expectations of architecture to organize them.

OBJECTS / LIGHTHOUSES AND PIECES

Architecture as an object, privileges being visible, to mark a place. It usually acts in a centrifugal way, focusing the space, attracting gazes, concentrating, and maintaining activities inside. Architectures understood as objects often become strong attractors (Gómez, 2012), in devices that offer alternative experiences.

The *Dos Caracoles Building* is a building belonging to a very widespread local architectural type between 1970 and 1980 (Figure 4). Chilean snail-like shopping centers developed from helical ramps adjacent to shops, containing the complex in truncated-conical drums. As a commercial type, they expressed

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themselves in a very different and innovative way compared to the covered gallery or the multi-level store (de Simone, 2012a, 2012b; Marchant, 2011). Among its particularities, the extension of the uninterrupted commercial front stands out around a central space with daylight that establishes multiple visual relationships between space, people, and merchandise. In this particular case, the building comprises two hermetic truncated-conical volumes, which capture the public as if they were air circulating inside through a coil that returns them to the street. The two ramps, one in each volume, solve the problem of the traditional spiral ending in a dead end, allowing the public to go up and down through different spaces. This is a curious commercial artifact that allows walking in front of a long and continuous band of variegated goods, which manages to build an uninterrupted and fluid route through two monumental spaces, while occupying the inside of a block that is integrated into the street's commercial front, now extended.

Systems / Networks and Paths

These can be expressed in the following ways: as a network of relationships, paths, or potential movements; as the way of systematic repetition of a specific piece; as a mode of performance, usually used to satisfy instrumental orders. These autonomous patterns are imposed on the territory based on an understanding of the city as a system of flows and activities (Allen, 2009).

The *Santiago Water Tanks*, mostly built between 1950 and 1980, constitute a system that is part of the water storage and distribution network (Figure 5). These show the hygienist vision put in place by modernization, so the location, shape, and dimension of each one obey a unique role and constitute a kind of typological family defined using parameters of demand, capacity, and structural efficiency. Today, these striking urban landmarks are decontextualized in old peripheries that have been densifying and mutating towards residential uses. There they become a strange, unusual presence. Many of them are no longer used, alien forms that fail to establish a formal or even programmatic relationship with the place.

In another example in this category, the *Paseo Las Palmas* complex *and the adjacent underground passages* in Providencia comprise a network that interconnects different properties along underground pedestrian paths, at street level, and above ground (Figure 6). This was built as a result of an urban renewal policy in this sector, which, starting in 1976, granted incentives to buildings that included commercial galleries on their ground floors and subfloors (Briceño, 2009). In the complex, in terms of its shape and route, the formal complexity of the *Dos Providencias Shopping Center*, consisting of a spiral intersected between the basement and the fourth floor with internal ramps with access from Paseo Las Palmas, a tower with enveloping external helical paths and a low level oriented towards an outdoor pedestrian passage with patios, stairs, and half commercial levels.
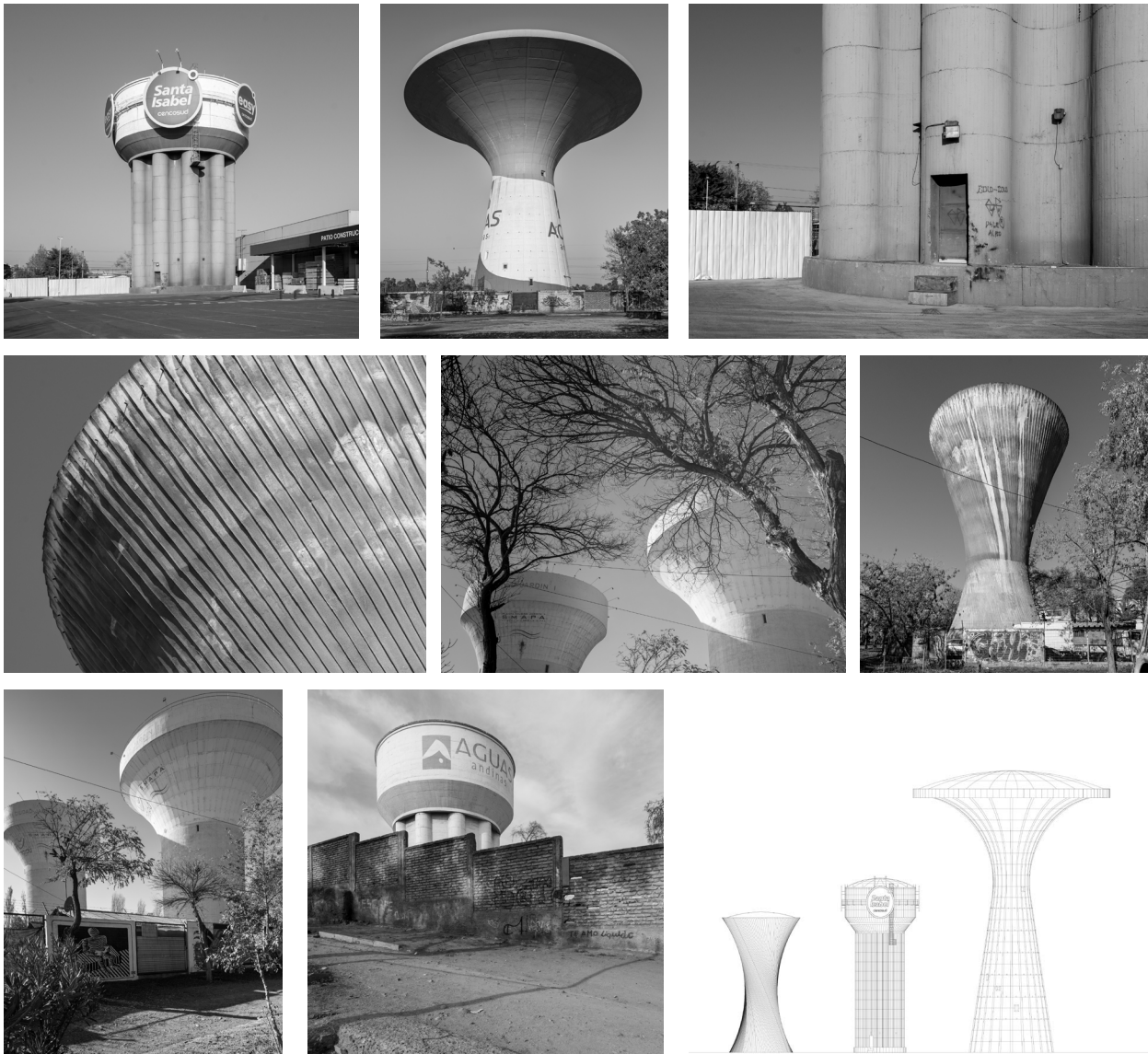
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Figure 5. Photographs and descriptive drawings of the Water Tanks 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

VOIDS/ FOOTPRINTS:

These include the obsolete territories or pieces that persist due to uncontested changes in the ways of thinking and production about the city and its objects, in an analogous way to what Solà-Morales recognized as *vague terrains* (Solà-Morales, 2002). On these voids, as footprints, layers of signs from different eras or activities tend to accumulate. Entropically, the accumulation and progression of the loss of the sense of architectural or urban performance are expressed, as a persistent layer of dust that testifies that instrumental thinking or the complete legibility of the city will never succeed in imposing a general order (Bois & Krauss, 1997).
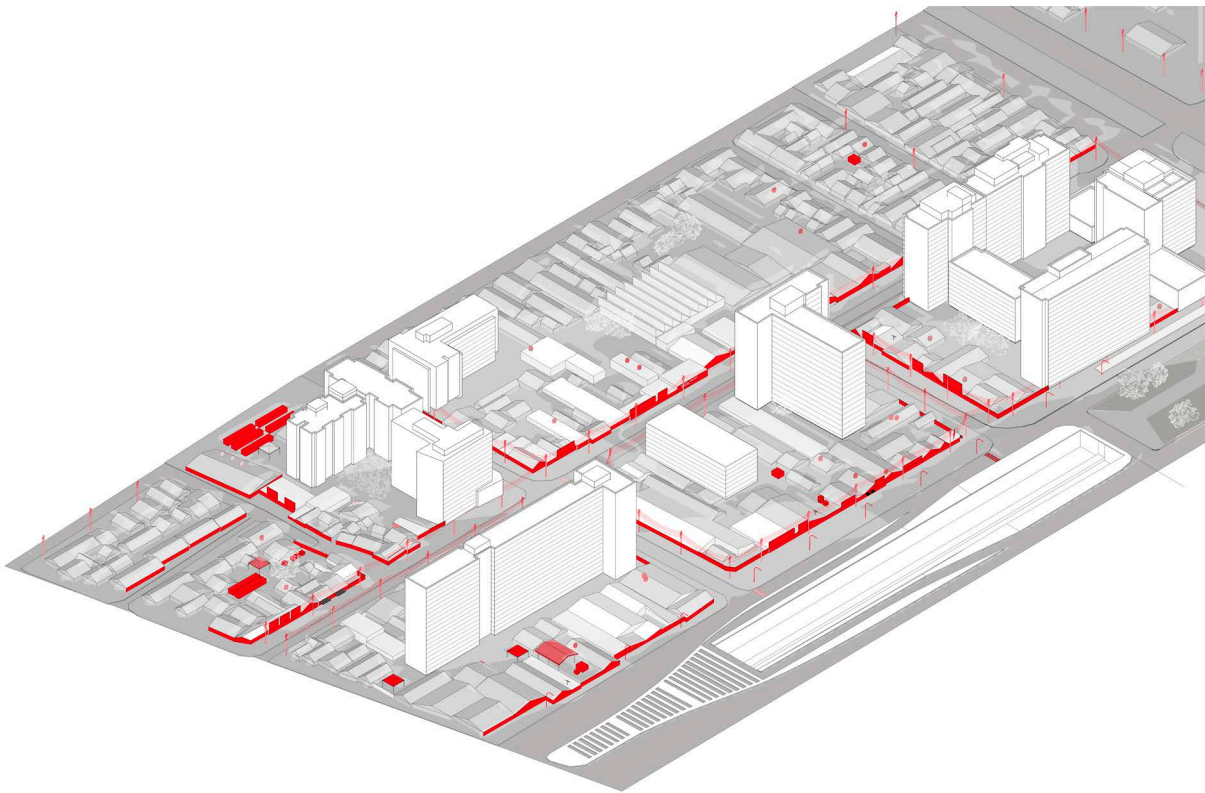
This is the case with *waste and persistence in the recent development of Estación Central* (Figure 7), where the fragmentation and emptiness left by the large speculative operations in this sector have led to a singular urban power. The absence or laxity of regulations caused a ghettoization process, where about

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80,000 people have settled in recent years, those who live in hundreds of small apartments located in buildings that are around 30 floors and sometimes occupy almost entire blocks (Andrade, 2021).

In the urban landscape, huge buildings are combined with the remains of an old working-class neighborhood, warehouses, or empty sites. The demand, deregulation, and availability of obsolete space have caused a varied offer of local commerce that occupies old houses and vacant lots, sidewalks, and public spaces. Thus, how these activities occupy the space, the signs with a different scale and quality, the color, the display of the merchandise, and the congestion, contrast by their small scale and picturesqueness with the brutal architecture imposed by speculation.

Figure 6. Photographs and interpretative drawings of Paseo Las Palmas and underground passages 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

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CONCLUSIONS

Figure 7. Photographs and interpretative drawings of Waste and persistence in the recent development of Estación Central 2021-2022. Source: Preparation by the Authors.

The Invisible Cities de Italo Calvino (1972) is a collection of fantastic cities that Marco Polo describes in long conversations with the emperor of the Mongol empire and the first emperor of China, Kublai Khan. In the narration, Polo reveals to the monarch the magnitude and richness of his empire through the enormous diversity and complexity of the fifty-five cities visited. These cities, each one more amazing than the other, do not form a hierarchically or legibly ordered set but are rather an index pointing to different places, *others* of the empire. As Calvino himself describes (1985), they constitute a network where multiple paths can be traced and different conclusions are drawn.

Calvino's book is often used as a reference in teaching and architectural criticism, as he is recognized both for the value of his texts and the

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complex devices that detonate images and spatial opportunities (Bari, 2017; Enrich et al., 2004; Sun, 2022; Taylor, 2016) and that, in addition, explore a complex relationship of otherness. The text culminates with a recommendation from Polo to Khan, who is saddened by the inevitability of one last hellish city:

> The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, given them space (Calvino, 1972).

What is presented here as unusual architecture should be understood in an analogous way to this otherness of Calvino's cities. An index of complex situations, but interrelated in many possible ways to the extent that you can discover their power, their lines of escape. A structure of a fragile and provisional order, an index, from which to think of experiences that can make sense of their own location or new ones or to exist. The exercise of observation, accumulation, selection, and representation of these unusual architectures allowed the astonishment before shapes and spaces not previously considered, evidencing other possible ways of thinking about architecture and the city.

This otherness, which is beyond the curious or the unusual, is presented as potential having been subjected to the representation and discussion of the architecture itself. Unusual architectures thus make up a set of *other* experiences, those that, despite some being recognized as works of the canon, others ignored, and others as part of the domestic landscape, are unique and constitute part of the specificity of Santiago de Chile, because they constitute the keys to reading urban space and its transit through time and are capable of generating recognizable spatial orders, useful in the revision of the city.

From the methodological point of view, the selection of the cases is based on both their readability and the way they are perceived by grouping them into categories for analysis. These categories are unstable and show that many of the cases could be associated differently. In the case of representations, a common denominator is proposed that, through these, allows linking the cases and establishing crossed-comments between them in a dynamic very typical of studies on architecture and urbanism. In this way, the review of unusual architectures aspires to represent other ways of approaching reading and producing space, placing architecture in a broader framework that allows new exchanges for disciplinary work on emerging views on the city and its processes.

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Finally, we can only insist on the partiality and provisionality of the investigation undertaken here as a transversal and fragmentary observation, but always attentive to the possibility of identifying new findings that force us to reassemble the pieces of the puzzle that has just begun and allow us to see how within the city there are keys from where to innovate to solve the immediate or the next.

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