

SMART HARBOR

Young Architects Competition

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HALEY ZHOU
DIANA LOPEZ

“The works of the past always influence us, whether or not we care to admit it, or to structure an understanding of how that influence occurs. The past is not just that which we know, it is that which we use, in a variety of ways, in the making of new work.... The typology argument today asserts that despite the diversity of our culture there are still roots of this kind which allow us to speak of the idea of a library, a museum, a city hall or a house. The continuity of these ideas of type, such as they are, and the esteemed examples which have established their identity and assured their continued cultural resonance, constitute an established line of inquiry in which new work may be effectively grounded.”

The Harvard Architectural Review. Volume 5. Precedent and Invention. Between History and Tradition: Notes Toward a Theory of Precedent. John E. Hancock.

Context



Fig 1



Fig 2

The phrase “Bilbao Effect” was coined after the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain (Fig. 1) acted as a catalyst for the revitalization of the struggling industrial town. According to the Financial Times, the museum opened in 1997 and helped generate \$500 million in economic activity and \$100 million in new taxes in the first three years of its operation.¹ The Experience Music Project in Seattle (Fig. 2) was commissioned by Microsoft billionaire founder Paul Allen in 1996, a year before the Guggenheim opened he appointed Frank Gehry the architect of a Rock & Roll Museum and Performance Venue. The “Experience Music Project Effect” has never been popularized, mostly because during the first year and half of operation for the venue, attendance was down by more than one third and 124 employees had to be laid off.¹ So how did these two projects start with such similar ambitions and end so differently? This question would ultimately inform our design for a harbor revitalization project in Pesaro, Italy.

The Guggenheim in Bilbao is the latest example of buildings that takes on a symbolic meaning far more important than their pragmatic function. While the billowing titanium panels of the 250 000 square feet museum has become the poster child of successful city rebranding, many are unaware of the large effort the municipality of Bilbao invested in its urban guidelines and infrastructure. The wheels were in motion for the revitalization of Bilbao long before Frank Gehry was chosen as the designer of the Guggenheim. Between 1989 and 1994, Bilbao developed three sets of new policies on urban planning and revitalization. Governance inno-

1. Witold Rybczynski, “The Bilbao Effect,” *The Atlantic Online*, September 2002, <http://www.geocities.ws/mitchellmosesstudio/rybcz.pdf> (July 28, 2013)



Fig 3

Fig 4

The Burj Al Arab and the Birds Nest are examples of quickly growing economies looking for iconic buildings to spearhead their development.

vation also lead to the creation of the Bilbao Ria 2000 in 1992, a “private firm with public shareholders set up to carry out integrated urban redevelopment initiatives in the metropolitan area of Bilbao” and capped with large investments in large scale transport and infrastructure projects that resulted in a new underground metro, a new airport terminal and new rail lines, all helping to connect a new convention center, concert hall and a Guggenheim museum. In less than one decade, 4 Billion euro were invested on the urban regeneration of Bilbao.²

In the past 40 years of global economic growth, the act of building bigger, faster and more luxuriously has become a tool to signify national wealth. (Fig. 3 & 4) The hope was creating iconic buildings to act as a catalyst for an entire city. However the failures seem to outweigh successes and examples of extravagant buildings faded from the public’s attention and unable to reach their ambitious goals are worldwide.

Research

We researched specific waterfront developments in Europe next to understand their challenges, failures and successes. Gunter Warsewa, the director of the Institute of Labour and Economy at the University of Bremen published a research report on the Transformation of European Port Cities. He systematically analyzed the patterns of development for 9 European medium side port cities, it became clear that the cities either attempted a complete renewal in its identity, a balanced redevelopment of key economical and urban structures or a modest modernization of existing structures. Regardless there were certain challenges that each city faced in some degree that were key in their success.³

Problems with social integration, the creation of new jobs and particularly the improvement of education and qualifications.

The change of attitudes, identity and image. (Fig. 5)

One of the reasons we chose the Pesaro competition was because of its relative lack of guidelines on required building program/size/use allowed us freedom to investigate uses we were interested in and make a very personal response on how we would approach such a scrutinized topic in architecture today.



Fig 5

The Sydney Opera house was overbudget and had many delays but provides one of the most memorable rooflines in recent history and has become the symbol of Australia

2. Elizabeth Winkel, “Accrediting the success of Bilbao’s urban regeneration to the Guggenheim Museum is misguided,” *European Urban Knowledge Network*, January 28 2011, http://www.eukn.org/Interviews/2011/Accrediting_the_success_of_Bilbao%E2%80%99s_urban_regeneration_to_the_Guggenheim_Museum_is_misguided (July 25, 2013)

3. Günter Warsewa, “The Transformation of European Port Cities,” *European Urban Knowledge Network*, June 11 2008, <http://www.eukn.org/Interviews/2011/www.eukn.org/dsresource?objectid=149490> August 1, 2013)

Design



Fig 6

From our observations we began to make a list of priorities for that our design must satisfy:

Design a successful building that also becomes a tool which serves its community. Pesaro is city with a history of theatre and skilled labor such as ceramics. These local heritages had to be encouraged and new opportunities for training and education be provided to ensure the continual development of the local workforce.

The provision of multiuse outdoor public places, able to accommodate a range of uses from the longstanding annual Film Festival of Pesaro to impromptu performances or farmer markets.

The adaptive reuse of the existing factory structures to serve a reminder of Pesaro's industrial past and relationship to the water.

Encouragement of physical health with a pedestrian/bike path that connects the competition site to the rest of the city and the provision of community centers integrated into the path network. (Fig. 8)

Iconic building that becomes a rallying point for the entire redevelopment.

These requirements helped define a complex of buildings and their relationship to each other.

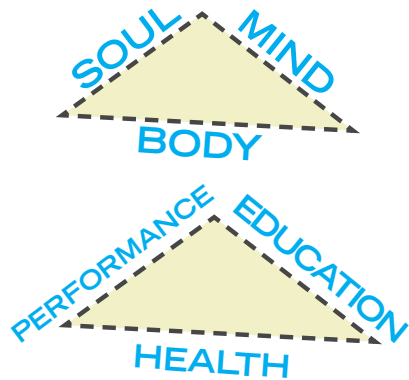


Fig 7

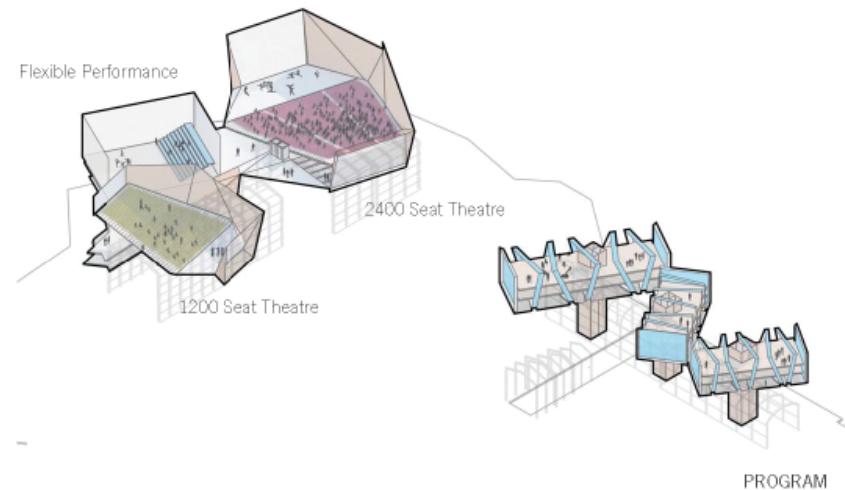
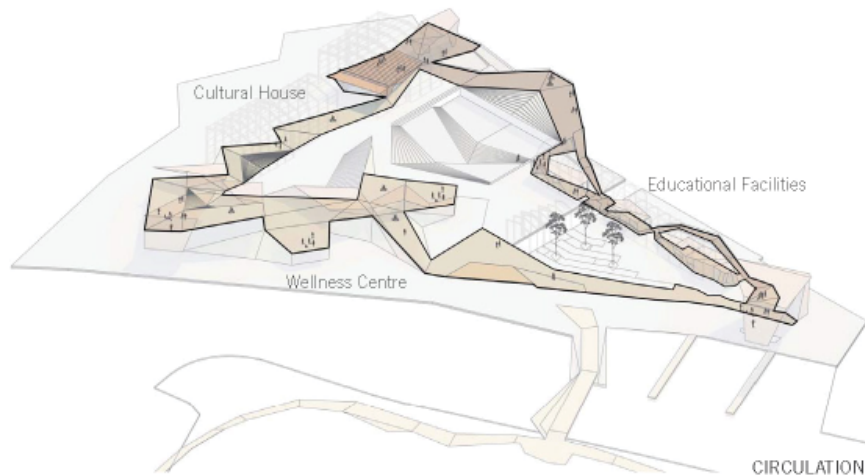


Fig 8

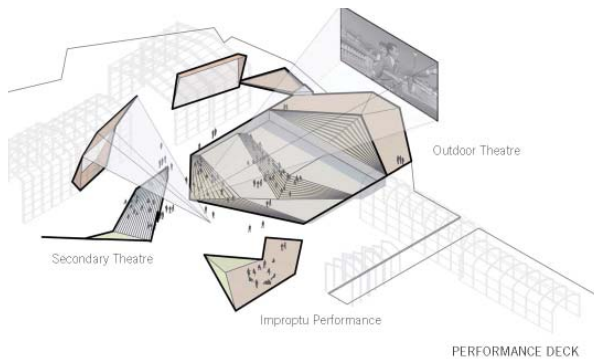


Fig 9

We started our design with a decision to retain the existing warehouse structures but to peel away the skin. We saw the industrial steel framing as a great way to reference our project back to the past of the Pesaro waterfront and help anchor our new buildings. The comfortable weather and sunlight meant the warehouse frames naturally transformed into an open air lobby and permeable transition space between the outdoor public space and our buildings. Another unique feature of the site was the man made change in elevation of a large area in the middle of the site where ships are assembled and released into the water on a lengthy sloped plane. We integrated the slope into our landscaping of large performance plaza. (Fig 9)



Fig 10

The northern side hosted the large cultural venues of a double theatre building that cantilevers over the warehouse lobby. The two theaters faced opposite directions and a large solar chimney provided daytime lighting while also acted as a fly tower. A triangulated surface wraps the two spaces together and reveals moments of transparency in key public spaces along with an observation plaza on the roof. Lastly a copper mesh sandwiched glazing system created a unique backdrop for each performance space while also giving a reduced solar gain and maintaining opacity from the exterior. (Fig. 16 & 17)

The eastern side of the site would contain public program for the Pesarians to educate themselves and ensure the long term local employment and development. The buildings adopted a similar strategy of using the existing warehouse framing as an open air lobby but bar buildings are balanced on top of vertical circulation cores and are angled to views towards points of interest around the site (mountain, ocean, beach, major buildings) The bar buildings contain all the educational program that could host classes, workshops, exhibitions as well as leasable office spaces for small businesses in their infancy. (Fig. 11)

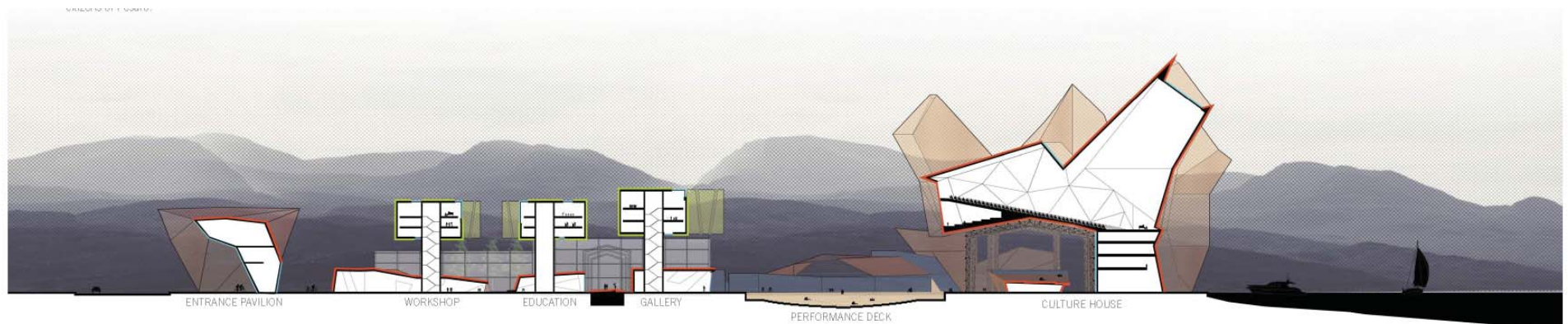


Fig 11

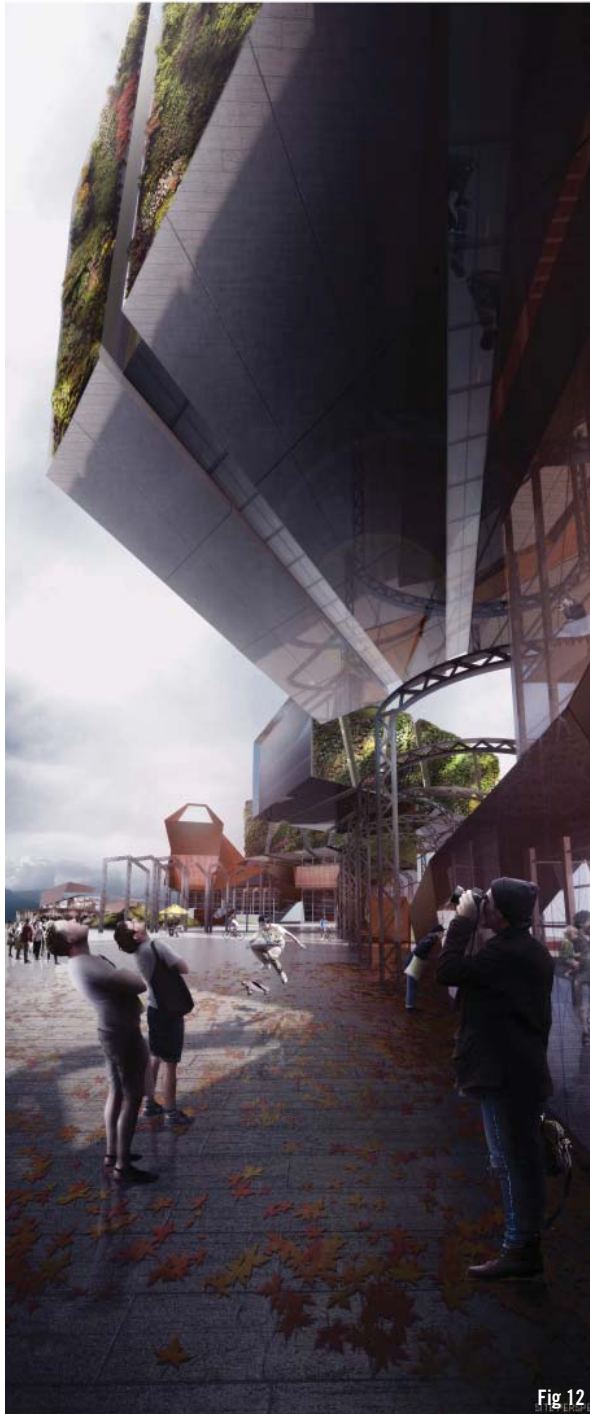


Fig 12

The triangular site is connected with a pedestrian/bike loop that navigates between/under/through buildings to give visitors easy access to all the facilities while acting as a boundary for the variety of outdoor plazas that hosts the cultural and commercial events on the site. The plazas vary in height and ample seating is offered to accommodate public viewing events where erect screens and building envelope surfaces become projection opportunities. (Fig. 9)

The west side of the site contains a large amount of circulation spaces that snakes down in elevation and a community center is tucked underneath the pedestrian path. (Fig. 13) A selection of health services and exercise spaces are provided and available for access to ensure the physical and mental health of Pesarians.

The circulation loop completes itself and ties into a much large vehicle/pedestrian network to give access to the site and is framed by an entrance pavilion at the southern corner.

Our topic of obsession for this competition was the ability of developments to drive the revitalization of a city, we wanted to dissect the successes and pitfalls of these ambitious developments and react to them with our own proposal. Our proposal was inspired by an idea that iconic building that offers much more to the community than entertainment, that it could nurture growth and development, physical and mental wellness and become an integral part of the everyday life of its inhabitants.



Fig 13



Fig 15



Fig 14



Fig 16



Fig 17



Fig 18



PERFORMANCE DECK + CULTURE HOUSE



AERIAL VIEW

Fig 19 & 20

Bibliography

Rybczynski Witold, "The Bilbao Effect," *The Atlantic Online*, September 2002, <http://www.geocities.ws/mitchellmosesstudio/rybcz.pdf> (July 28, 2013)

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Fig 2: <http://arch2o.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Arch2o-Experience-Music-Project-Frank-Ghery-1.jpg>

Fig 3: <http://www.toptenz.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/dubai.jpg>

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Fig 5: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/40/Sydney_Opera_House_Sails.jpg

Fig 6: *Provided with competition brief*

Fig 7 - 13: *Original Content*

Fig 14: http://www.archdaily.com/88298/museum-plaza-update-rex/20070909030631_museum-plaza-14/

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Fig 19 - 20: *Original Content*