

# Adolfo Ibáñez University Architecture, Peñalolén Campus. Santiago, Chile

By José Cruz Ovalle - Architect

Situated on a 250-hectare site in the foothills of the Andes Mountains, this university is set against the vastness of nature; a place that represents Chile's long reach and the immensity of the American continent: A huge expanse.

To approach this immensity by abandoning any preconceived notion of the project as a building allowed us to start from the origin without following any particular model.

The origin considers the habitable space of the project - within its boundaries - as a space arising from this vastness. The act of inhabiting the university is like going for a walk, which, with its stops and pauses, mimics the relationship between study and contemplation.

The architecture is conceived simultaneously as an empty void and a spatial unfolding that accompanies nature. It provides multiple routes so that moving from one place to another becomes a stroll. This ensures movement for the feet, so as not to lose one's pace, and variation for the eye, which maintains the inherent interest of any walk. This variety allows students and professors to choose different paths every time, providing the freedom inherent in a university's non-didactic spatial character, in contrast to school.

The twists and turns, the changes in scale, the transition from shadow to light, and the varied nuances of the shadows... all reinforce the concept of spatial richness. This unfolds into a multiplicity of unique locations that never repeat, ensuring that students, even when gathered in numbers, do not feel like a crowd.

Linking up and down, earth and sky - as one would expect from a place in the hills - through ramps, galleries, amphitheaters, and terraces, the form responds to this spatial unfolding with a disregard for traditional notions of front or back, right or wrong, inside or outside. The white surfaces receive the infinite tones of sunlight and the nuances of chiaroscuro, with their constant variations throughout the day and across the seasons, providing a sensation of lightness to the bulk of the buildings.

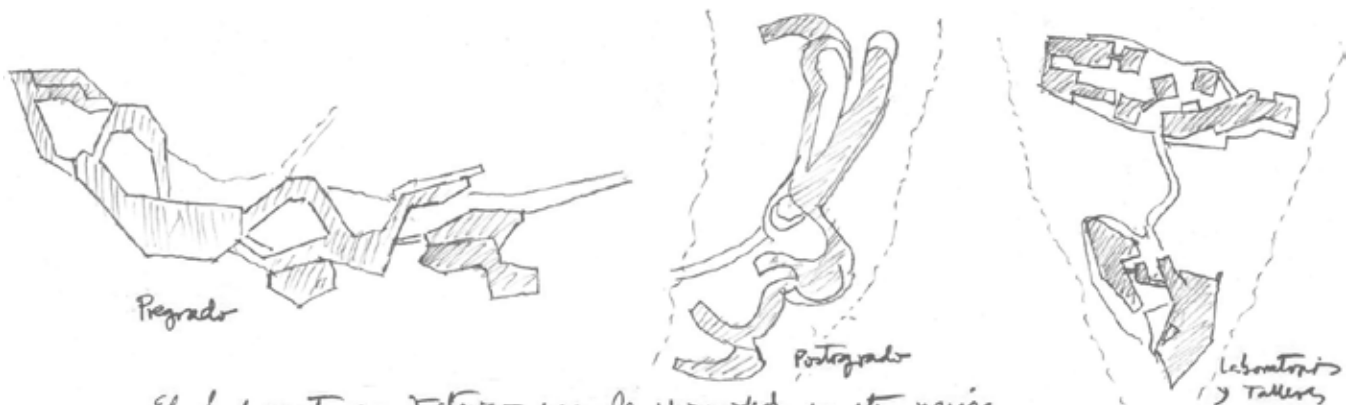
Getting up and down the slope is helped indoors by interspersing multiple levels, in continuous loops, defying the conventional order of "floors" to create a sense of proximity. This is about measure: the



measure of the human body in space. A measure of a different kind of abstraction—not one that understands the body, for example, as a principle of mathematical proportion, as seen by Le Corbusier.

Being located on the hills does not, in this case, mean devising formulas that can be repeated to resolve habitability on a slope. No. This architecture is founded on the unrepeatable abstraction of singularity, where mathematics is only one of its dimensions. It understands space through its discontinuities: its places. Each complex is situated in an enclave, as these possess the traits of a particular geography and topography unique to this territory.

Thus, the three complexes—Undergraduate; Graduate; Laboratories and Workshops—are different from each other. Each, responding to the characteristics of its site, has invented a spatiality to inhabit the slope of this landscape in the foothills of the Andes. A slope that is not seen as a problem, but as a gift of nature that architecture can turn to its advantage.



*El fundamento arquitectónico para la Universidad en este paisaje se despliega para dar lugar a 3 situaciones distintas del espacio natural inventando cada vez un lugar = 3 formas de habitar la pre condilla*