

Viña del Mar Campus Architecture. Adolfo Ibáñez University, Chile

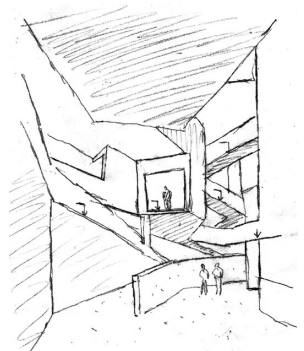
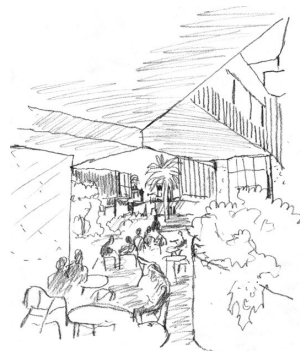
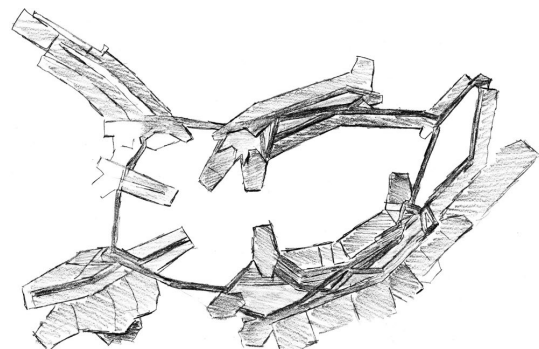
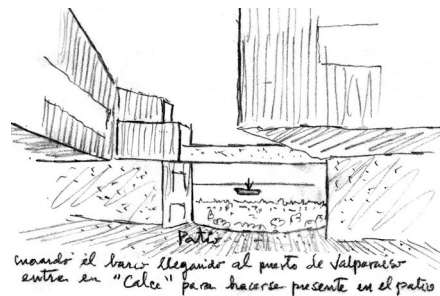
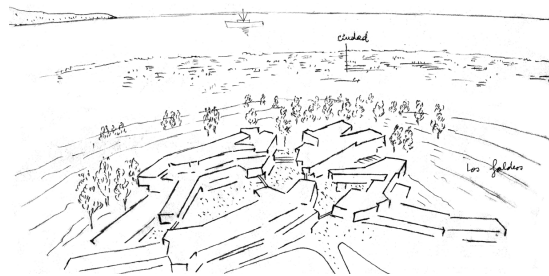
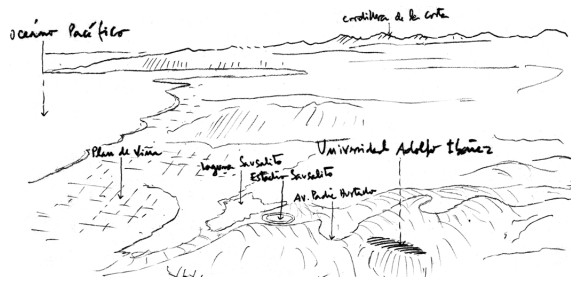
By José Cruz Ovalle – Architect

This university campus, located in the hills of Viña del Mar on a 20-hectare site overlooking the city, the Bay of Valparaíso, and the Pacific Ocean, seeks to create a unique setting to give form to university life.

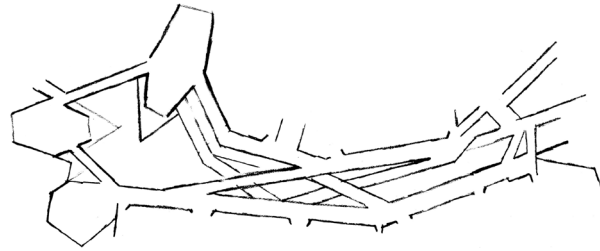
The site combines remoteness, which the project links with proximity. The volumes form an amphitheater-like a patio that unfolds toward the surrounding expanse, extending into a large park that spreads across the slopes. The trees and their foliage, the undulating ground that rises and falls toward the city, the sky, and the ever-changing surface of the sea and its horizon - all are configured through architecture to shape a place where study and contemplation can coexist.

It is proposed that patios also possess the quality of an open-air interior, with gradations between open and overcast sky, from which to receive the distant view. This becomes perceptible when a ship, far below, aligns - so to speak - with the void framed by one of the courtyard's porticos. Then, the courtyard floor, the ocean waters, and the ship come into alignment, becoming simultaneously present within this space. This presence brings the dimension of the port city into the life of the university.

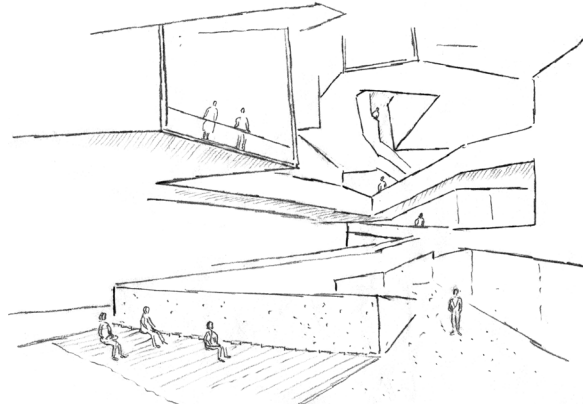
Understanding that university, unlike school, implies a new state of freedom for students, the aim is for this freedom to occur by inhabiting it, both in movement and in stillness. Each person can move from one place to another, inventing their own path and choosing between a multiplicity of spaces that allow for different ways to stay: higher or lower; a narrow or wide space; outside or inside, covered or uncovered; in the sun or in the shade; in the open or more private; next to a path or at a secluded edge...These different ways of staying are accompanied by gradations of scale—from expansive to compact—within a non-homogeneous spatiality, whose turns and folds, changes in size, and transitions between shadow and light bring interest to movement: each step opens new views. In this way, a kind of spatial breathing is assembled.



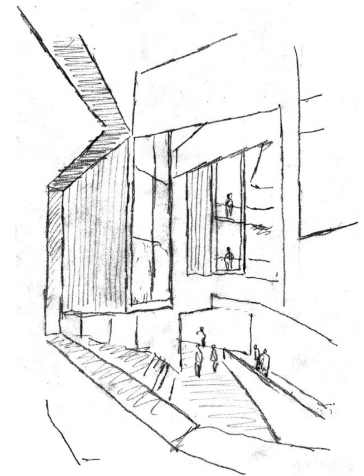
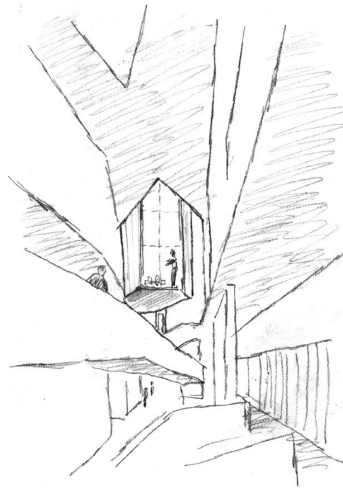
This spatial breathing of the internal void is conceived from the very nature of the hills as sloped terrain. The interiors unfold through the spacing of their floors—not as separate levels, but as a chord of multiple planes at different heights, linked by ramps and stairs. All are conceived in relation to the body, to achieve maximum proximity. To link continuity underfoot with variation for the eye: fluid paths and shifting spatial views that simultaneously relax the body and awaken the senses. This is how the experience of inhabiting the university meets form.



Education might be understood as the act of teaching and learning to shape - things, actions, manners, events - even our thinking. In this sense, education overcomes the resistance of the unshaped. Architecture, by touching our senses, can awaken the desire to shape that, in varying degrees, we all possess. Such may be the relationship between architecture and education.



In this spatial breathing, the vertical expansion of the internal void is not only perceived from below, as in a Gothic cathedral, but can be navigated in all three dimensions - simultaneously becoming inhabited space and suspended luminous void. This is accentuated by the presence of various suspended volumes at different heights, linked by ramps and walkways to form resting places that accommodate different programs. The crossing and incidence of light on these volumes creates a kind of spatial flotation, bringing an unreachable dimension to the space. Because this spatial breathing, in this case, requires the unreachable.



Here, shape must temper space. On one hand, by regulating sound within interiors through absorbent surfaces drawn in wood; on the other, by balancing the relationship between the visual and the tactile to achieve a certain harmony. On the exterior, the white of the base and the dark of the metal cladding; on the interior, the white of concrete, wood, and metal - all attempt to shape the mass and space of the work to give it a certain lightness. Concrete, wood, and metal, with their different lights and tactile qualities, build the nuances that shape requires to achieve a sense of plenitude. These allow the gaze to linger. For in this case, architecture must contend with permanence—that which university life requires in order to reach a certain splendor.

