Mercado De La Perseverancia

a reflection on permeability, staging and appropriation

Helen Buchholz

Methods and Analysis
Constructing the Commons
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Bogotá, Colombia
In order to fully understand the complexity and urgencies of the social, economical and political background of the city of Bogotá, the research phase and site visit had been essential. After gaining an understanding about the immense differences in discipline between my western European background and working in Bogotá, it was crucial to undertake a change in the approach to the project and necessary to take a strong position operating as an architect.
view outside Torres del Parque towards central
view outside Torres del Parque towards La Perseverancia
The fieldwork helped gaining a very personal perception of the unknown environment, which I put down in sketches and collages, that reflect on the gained impressions. The focus of the fieldwork already lied on the neighbourhood of La Perseverancia and its adjusting neighbourhoods, based on its huge social and typological differences. After having looked into these aspects as a preperation, I was able to confirm the first impression through the fieldwork. As an addition to the method of a perception through walking and mapping, a conversation with locals had been used and put down into maps as well.
processing information from locals
conversations with locals
mapping personal impressions
processing information into collages

approaching La Perseveran-
perception of bor-
physical and perceived bor-
first sketches of the local market-
the district

the infill

La Perseverancia

La Macare-

La Calendaria
the block  the plot  the street
During the fieldtrip, the focus on the neighbourhood of La Perseverancia became stronger. Here, information is illustrated that helped gaining a deeper understanding of the neighbourhood's layout and everyday life.
in de buurt?

La Iglesia

El festival de la Chicha

Desde octubre de 1988

la cancha de básquetbol

La plaza de mercado

"El Piojo"
de la "Popeye"
Intervening in the neighbourhood of La Perseverancia, I am dealing with a neighbourhood with a very strong identity in terms of political orientation and history as the first working-class area in Bogotá and their strong bonds among each other through shared poverty and their outsider condition.
El 9 de abril de 1948 para el barrio obrero de La Perseverancia el asesinato de Gaitán les robó su luz política. Al conocerse la noticia de su muerte, el barrio se tomó la Estación de Policía más cercana, expropió armas y protagonizó parte de los sucesos del Bogotazo.
impressions street vending Bogotá
impressions private and public life Bogotá
Research

1 Inside la Perseverancia

history and identity
rigidity
density
access resources and public space

2 La Perseverancia and its surrounding

scale
income
typology
density
borders

3 The existing marketplace

4 Site analysis

5 References

6 Ambitions
After the fieldtrip, it became clear that the focus of my project would lie on La Perseverancia, a former working-class neighbourhood dating from the 1920s. After having understood its appearance as a city within a city, as an island within its surroundings that is defined by spatial and social-economic inequalities, I started narrowing down those to four main characteristics.

These are its architectural typology, its extreme density, its low number of estrato (it is officially part of estrato 1, neighbouring areas are estrato 4-6), which expresses itself in poor building quality, extremely low income of its inhabitants/unemployment and a high rate of criminality. The last characteristic is its small building scale compared to central Bogotá and the bordering mountains.

In addition to it, the area is surrounded by both physical and perceived borders that appear in different forms.

The area functions as a self-sustaining organism, with services to be found within it, such as a school, a church, shops, sport facilities and a children’s playground and a local marketplace.

As a conclusion, these conditions lead to a closed system, to an environment of spatial segregation and social stigmatization and a poor self-esteem of the area’s residents. We can see a lack of common, public, open space, where people can meet as equals and where a variety of social groups express their voices. Any form of interaction is hindered and thus the present conditions are further strengthened.

At the same time, within the area, its extremely density leaves its inhabitants with no public space for their own social interaction except for the street. No variety of public space and no conditions for the inhabitants to organise assemblies, celebrations or other important communal activities are to be found. The only identified existing space that holds a strong potential to fulfil the needed communal space and space for interaction with surroundings is the local
The neighbourhood sits in the north of central Bogotá, in between the mountains and the centro international. It is connected to the centre through Carrera 5, which runs alongside the neighbourhood’s West side. Looking at the site plan, the neighbourhood clearly stands out due to its compact and structured form.
history and identity

perseverance
noun

persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success

From the beginning it has been crucial to understand that I have been dealing with a neighbourhood with a very strong identity: its political orientation and history as the first working-class area in Bogotá, its identification with J.E. Gaitán, the self-construction of their homes, and their strong bonds among each other through shared poverty and their outsider condition were central aspects to consider when intervening in the existing spatial and social structures.
perseverance
noun
persistence in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success
rigidity
single focus point
density

housing block of 90x40 m with average 40 units

standard footprint of dwelling with 4x12 m
shortage of public space
shortage of public space
street as compensator
La Perseverancia and its surroundings
scale

centro internacional  La Perseverancia  the mountains
typology

1 La Perseverancia - 2 La Merced - 3 La Macarena
the city of Bogotá divides its areas into 6 so-called estratos. Based on income, residents and their dwellings are classified into 6 classes, from 1 the lowest income class to 6 being the highest. The principle is class 6 supporting class 1.

source: http://www.ifhp.org/ifhp-blog/colombia-social-stratificati-
Critical voices compare the estrato system to the Indian caste system, making it hard for people to move up in income and social status. At the same time, people strongly identify with their estrato and feel a strong sense of affinity to other members.

My name is Vicki and this is my number

By Mark Kennedy

Stratas 'Like Caste System'

Colombia's formal strata system, originally put in place to determine how much in subsidies low-income households should receive and how much middle and upper-class families should pay for utilities, has led to social exclusion and stigmatization.

This is according to Roberto Lippi, head of the Colombia-based United Nations group UN Habitat. Lippi likened the labeling of groups of people from Strata one to Strata six as a kind of "caste system" that inhibited social mobility.

"The UN Habitat backs the existence of an instrument to apply subsidies for public services -- the stratification to establish that whoever has more can subsidise those with less, but that's how the problem," Lippi told ADN newspaper in an interview published this week.

"It's normal to hear people talk about the person who is from this or that strata, as if it were the norm. It's almost logical to think of them as castes, six immovable castes," he was quoted in ADN on Monday as saying.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? The Bogota Post would like to know your opinion on Colombia's Strata System. Is it a relic of a bygone era, or a help to low-income families survive? Email us at newsthebogotapost.com and your perspective could be featured in our next edition.

By Mark Kennedy

15

50

http://www.bogotapost.com/2016/09/14/stratas-like-caste-system/
density

comparative study between La Perseverancia, La Macarena, La Merced, La Candelaria
La Perseverancia is enclosed by both physical and perceived borders. That appear in different forms:
On the north-side it is closed off by a wall, on the east-side it is bordered by the mountains, on the south-side scale of streets and buildings clash and a huge disparity in income is visible, on the westside the area is closed off by a heavily trafficked street.
By a closed system I mean a system in harmonious equilibrium, by an open system I mean a system in unstable evolution. My argument is that the closed system has paralysed urbanism, while the open system might free it.

Richard Sennett, The Open City
first reflections on opening the closed system
The existing marketplace

With the existing marketplace I identified a space that holds a strong potential to fulfil the needed communal space and space for interaction with surrounding neighbourhoods. Besides its strategic location alongside two of the area’s borders, the marketplace has a high economical and communal value for the community of La Perseverancia.
the market as provider for jobs and a steady income

the market as community centre
The existing marketplace

- poor material quality structures
- brick structure housing
- enclosed by wall
The existing marketplace

plan

section with 4 height levels
problematic spatial conditions

circulation - enclosure - unused space
understanding the spatial layout of market stalls and
Looking at the existing conditions, it becomes clear that the market represents a crucial points in terms of location and existing communal as well as economical value for the community. At the same time, the overall architecture of the existing marketplace is problematic, while the design in smaller scale - marketstalls and kitchen - hold important lessons in terms of efficient use of space.
As mentioned before, the border location is a main characteristic of the marketplace, bordering different neighbourhoods and thus holding the potential of connecting them. Besides, the site bridges a height difference of 7 meters, which asks for a solution to make optimal use of the section.
site conditions - border location
Case studies of marketplaces

Fondaco dei Tedeschi
Venice, Italy
1228, rebuilt 1505-08
head- and living quarter for German merchants
Kapaliçarşı - Grand Bazaar
İstanbul, Turkey
15th century
Mercado de Giradot
Giradot, Colombia
1946
Leopoldo Rother
Markthalle Stuttgart
Stuttgart, Germany
1911-1914
Martin Elsaesser
Application to the neighbourhood

Having looked at several marketplaces from different times and cultures, I applied their main characteristics to the neighbourhood as an experiment to see the potential influence as an intervention. It soon became clear that open column system appeared to be the most intriguing option.
hypostyle hall and courtyard

After having analysed the marketplaces, two main typologies could be identified - the courtyard typology and the hypostyle hall. In order to achieve my ambitions, I followed the open column system and developed a concept of how to transform the existing typology into an open column typology.
The p2 proposal is an attempt to loosen the dense and rigid structure of La Perseverancia and introduce an alternative model based on the hypostyle hall typology. The plan works with an integration of the existing marketplace within the new design proposal. It opens existing structures and extends through the open column system in order to achieve an open, public sphere, which would allow for a loose and flexible usage of the market.
Ambitions

In the following period, I reflected on the deeper purpose of my project and who I intended to design for. As a conclusion I decided that the new marketplace would serve the residents of La Perseverancia as a centre for community activities, for public action and as a provider for jobs and a motor for economic recovery. Residents would be given back self-esteem and a sense of ownership.

In addition to it, the new marketplace will attract people from the surrounding neighbourhoods for buying quality local products for a good price in a safe environment and thus create a place where social practice and interaction can take place regardless income, class, etc.

The project is made in the understanding that residents of Bogotá all belong to the same city, to the same community. The aim is to work out a spatial condition in which the city comes back to a more balanced condition, a more open system, with less strict borders.
Taking a position

How can an architectural intervention overcome social and spatial segregation?

It also became clear that I had to take a strong position when intervening within the described conditions. There is an obvious limited influence an architect has on politics and people’s behaviour. Saying architects create the possibility of meeting, not the meeting itself, illustrates very well the limits of the architectural praxis. Intervening in the neighbourhood of La Perseverancia, I am dealing with a neighbourhood with a very strong identity: its political orientation and history as the first working-class area in Bogotá, its identification with J.E. Gaitán, the selfconstruction of their homes, and their strong bonds among each other through shared poverty and their outsider condition. To which circumstances is interaction with their surrounding wished and how far goes my influence as an architect when working in the described circumstances?

I came to the conclusion of seeing myself as a facilitator. As an architect I can identify spatial problems and react to them through a new spatial language. I am very aware of my limited influence as an architect on people’s behaviour and political action and know that I can only create possibilities of these to happen. The project was supposed to be diverse in usage - it should be the place where a political debate takes places, and function as a marketplace at the same time. The place should give room for a concert or for art performances, it could be used for English lessons or for a lecture - the decision of usage is given to the people, and not made by me as a lecturing outsider.
Bilateral ambition - The community and the city

1 - improve community life La Perseverancia
2 - create exchange between stran-
The principle of the Agora

The Agora

marketplace and civic center
a place where people gathered to buy and sell all kinds of commodities
a place where people assembled to discuss all kinds of topics:
    business, politics, current events, or the nature of the universe and the divine.
permeability

Emanuel de Witte, Interior with a Woman at the Virginals, 1665-
After having set a clear intention and position, I had to find a suitable architectural language to realise my project ambitions. It became clear that the architectural problem lied in creating a highly permeable space - in vertical as well as horizontal direction - within the site conditions of a sloped terrain and a highly dense urban tissue. In addition to this, I set the intention to break with the rigid spatial layout of the neighbourhood in order to introduce a varied and new way of movement and perceiving space. Here, I became interested in the circular layout of buildings and first started looking into Salmona’s late work on radial configurations.
permeability - Bogotá impressions
After having set my ambitions and positions I focused again on the architectural intervention strategy. Intending to break with the rigidity of the neighbourhood I got fascinated by Salonna’s later work on circular layouts and as an experiment implemented projects of his on my site. Through this, my implantation strategy became a clear - a diagonal crossing in form of two centres that connect the city and the neighbourhood.
architectural problem
permeability - spatial

orientation of site - city and neighbourhood
1. City entrance

2. Heart - common place

3. Neighbourhood - shelter
architectural problem
permeability - spatial

breaking grid - ease of movement
day/night function - above: existing situation, bottom: new situation
public road which is always accessible
architectural problem
permeability - visual

view - the city

reference project - Salmona

view - the mountains

sequence of spaces - visual permea-
project strategies
introducing missing element
project strategies
introducing missing element
the circle - adaptable elements

the wall - the theatre - the market stalls - the stairs - the gallery

the market stalls - adaptable system
project strategies
closed cycle and re-use

biogas
energy use
fertilizer
removal
delivery
central organisation
the stall
central organisation
waste
re-use of building material
In the following period I worked on braking up the symmetric circle for more interesting visual connections and spatial perception. Soon it became clear that the project would develop towards a double project - general layout being based on an intense study of Salmona’s Marquez Cultural Centre. Equally important has been the thorough study of Sharoun’s work on concert halls. I have been intrigued by the principle of multifocality in Sharoun’s work and the theme of seeing and being seen has become a strong guideline for my design. The principle of overcoming the barrier between performers and viewers translates the idea of equality and togetherness. His work strongly represents liveliness and playfulness in a beautiful way.
Rogelio Salmona, Fonda de Cultura Económica de México, 2008
form

occupying full site except for two open circles.

area: 9400 sqm
site: 78x35 m
proportions
occupied site versus open circles
proportions circles among each other

geometries

circle and square - in-between

2,3 times more round than square
spaces determined by clash of circle and square
configuration
front and back

60% front - 40% back

configuration
closed rooms versus open surface

40% sheltered

9% of open surface roofed

60% open
edges
closed towards neighbouring buildings, open facade towards street sides
outline punctuated with circular sections

circulation
geometries

strong ties versus free-floating

directions and angles

both centres of the circles create lines, which determine surrounding spaces
Simultaneously, I analysed Hans Scharoun’s work, in which he presents fascinating radial configurations - highly deconstructed and with no strong focal point as to be found within Salmona’s projects. Especially, from having a thorough look at the project of the Berlin Philharmonie, I was able to translate an architectural language of multifocality and staging into my own project.
Hans Scharoun, Philharmonie Berlin, 1963
Lageplan:
1 Tiergarten; 2 Philharmonie; 3 zukünftiger Kammermuskisaal; 4 Lage der zukünftigen Museen; 5 Matthäikirche; 6 zukünftiges Gästehaus; 7 Nationalgalerie von Mies van der Rohe; 8 Staatsbibliothek von Scharoun; 9 Ringstraße; 10 Kanal.
form

foyer as drastic contrast to structured concert hall, completely free movement
outer form based on inner events
service
configuration

concert hall

acoustic spatial and visual centre even though not mathematical centre but

enclosed by audience from all sides
the concert hall

producer' and 'consumer' not facing each other, but grouping around orchestra, strict seating order loosened up

form not determined by formal-aesthetics, but by action: man-space-music
multifocality
axis and directions

multiplicity of faci
multiplicity of symmetries
no parallel walls

axial symmetry
main directions
inner directions
outer directions
the concert hall
axis and directions

the seats are oriented in six different directions, all having a slight different focus
in section, seats are not straight aligned
Having done the analysis of the two reference projects, I started applying the principles to my design, working on a section, which would completely free the ground level and create a series of shifted terraces that step up the slope. Above this level its a second level - a theatre that stages the market happening and works in the principle of multifocality to allow for new and unexpected views.
first sketch of terraces, tiers and cores
first spatial impressions
sketch modelling
From here on, the final layout of the project became clear, resulting in the three themes of permeability, staging and appropriation, which became the guidelines for the design development. Each layer of the design is connected to these themes.
folded roof structure with light openings

metal mesh curtain facade

internal separation curtain

the tiers - the community

the tiers - the theatre

service clamps

load-bearing columns

market terraces

integrated storage

movable stage

La Perseverancia

La Macarena

Carrera 5
the market
open market terraces

vertical permeability
the market
fluent border
the market
multifocal movement

the terraces

the stairs
the market

flexible market stalls and integrated storage
All the world’s a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.

William Shakespeare, As You Like It, Act II, Scene VII
the theatre

see and be seen
the theatre
the market life as a play
the theatre

two foci / diagonal crossing

city entrance

community side

public functions

communal functions
the theatre
the principle of multifocality
the theatre

response on ground level

movable floor

pavement
steel fibre reinforced concrete roof

supporting concrete ribs

openings for sunlight

cement platforms

load-bearing columns supporting roof

load-bearing columns supporting platform and roof

connected foundations

cement terraces

structural concept
the building
construction and process
the roof
permeable shelter
the roof
folded shape for optimal profit from climate conditions
high points

in-between points

low points

water-collecting column

water supply toilets

drawings of water flow to toilets
the roof
transition between city and community
the roof detail planning

roof and tier

supporting concrete rib

steel fibre reinforced concrete

rainwater pipe

overflow pipe

load-bearing structure

grey water basin

filling material

sewage outlet

reinforced concrete shell

cover protection

wood attachment

wooden planks, screwed

bobbin

steel ring for lifting cable

combined fabric and mesh curtain for internal separation

weight with electro magnet

concrete finish 500mm

rail for storage doors

concrete finish 500mm

marketstalls on wheels
the curtain
shelter with high permeability
the curtain detail planning

facade plan 1:5

facade section 1:5

rod

mesh holder C channel bobbin guide for lifting cable

0,25m

0,50m

0,170m

0,04m

0,16m

0,154m

lifting cable diameter 5mm metal mesh stainless steel ring for lifting cable diameter 2.5mm metal ring diameter 50mm weight attached to electromagnet lifting cable diameter 5mm weight attached to electromagnet stainless steel ring for wire rope and lifting cable wire rope diameter 4.50mm washed concrete stairs re-used brick, perforated C channel
the curtain
fluent transition inside - outside
usage- temporalities

The market response with its two layers to different functional use and it responds to different day times. Reflecting on the natural differences between a marketplace in the morning - delivery, setting up, seeling of fresh goods - and later in the day, when its cleared up and thus makes room for different activities. In my design, these temporalities work in different way - market and theatres function at the same time as well as seperately. In combination with the day or night time, a wide variety of actions can take place, performed by all different kind of people.
morning
morning

local child

market vendor

student universidad nacional
arriving at the market

unloading delivery
afternoon
afternoon - inside the market
afternoon
students on lunch break

vendors clear up

birthday party
having a break having lunch
evening
evening - inside the theatre
evening
having a drink at the bar

community meeting

on the way to the theatre
enjoying the theatre
appropriation in material

re-used exposed concrete
re-use
making use of the existing

the building
the material

wood  fabric  mesh
the building’s future is given into people’s hands in order to appropriate, inhabit and occupy it.
from closed to permeable system
Reflection Paper

Methods and Analysis, Graduation studio 2016, Positions in Practice / Constructing the Commons

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In order to fully understand the complexity and urgencies of the social, economical and political background of the city of Bogotá, the research phase and site visit had been essential. After gaining an understanding about the immense differences in discipline between my western European background and working in Bogotá, it was crucial to undertake a change in the approach to the project and necessary to take a strong position operating as an architect.

Intervening in the neighbourhood of La Perseverancia, I am dealing with a neighbourhood with a very strong identity in terms of political orientation and history as the first working-class area in Bogotá and their strong bonds among each other through shared poverty and their outsider condition. Throughout the process of my project development, I had to ask myself what I was aiming for, who my project is made for and about possible (unintended) consequences of my intervention. Especially combined with me coming from a completely different background and operating in Colombia for the first time, it was very challenging to position myself within this context and to become clear about what my intervention must provide in order to justify it.

After having spent some time to become clear about the goal of the intervention - giving residences of La Perseverancia space to practice community life and the chance to up-value their perception from the city and better circumstanced neighbours, whilst at the same time giving the city a place to celebrate exchange (in terms of economics as well as conversation) - I came to the conclusion of seeing myself as a facilitator. As an architect I could identify spatial problems and react to them through a new spatial language. I am very aware of my limited influence as an architect on people’s behaviour and political action and know that I can only create possibilities of these to happen. My project is diverse in usage - it can be the place where a political debate takes places, and it functions as a marketplace at the same time. The place can give room for a concert or for art performances, it can be used for English lessons or for a lecture - the decision of usage is given to the people, and not made by me as a lecturing outsider.

I have gone through a long process of translating the intention of the project to a successful architectural language. After having had a clear site and programme from early on, it took me various trials before arriving at a satisfying formal and configurational language. Looking back I can say that in the end, the combination of site specific analysis, and research on reference projects, which have been feeding my intervention in a more abstracted way, made me able to make the right design decisions. Methodological, towards the p4, my design development has been an interrelation between these two approaches.

First, gaining a deep understanding of the marketplace in general was essential and the study of various markets throughout history and place have informed me a lot. I now realise that especially the case study of the Mercado de Girardot by German architect Leopold Rother from the 1940s has been very important. I see a parallel to my intervention in terms of cultural identity and way of intervening. The architecturally impressive and thoroughly designed yet robust structure he came up with, today is completely taken over by the people operating the market.
Realising that this a crucial aspect of designing a marketplace, relates to my own intervention, which follows the same idea of robustness and given-away ownership.

Equally important has been the thorough study of Sharoun’s work on concert halls. I have been intrigued by the principle of multifocality in Sharoun’s work and the theme of seeing and being seen has become a strong guideline for my design. The principle of overcoming the barrier between performers and viewers translates the idea of equality and togetherness. His work strongly represents liveliness and playfulness in a beautiful way by highlighting the event as the actual starting point for his design.

I introduce multiple architectural figures that represent the commons - figures that create permeability in multiple ways. The public market square, that sits along terraces on the sloped terrain of my site, frees the entire ground floor and becomes a public zone that works as an extension of the street. The theatre floats above the market square and works with the concept of multifocality - offering new and unexpected perceptions - these two layers allow for permeability also in the vertical direction. From above, the spectacle of the market can be watched, events can take place, integrated or separated from the market activity. Being a highly robust and easily accessible structure, the building itself invites people to occupy and appropriate it.

The project is also a critical response to the on-going problem-solving of the Bogotá administration, which in the past has demolished areas of poverty and criminality and left many people homeless and without prospects. In the context of this, my intervention is not only the new creation of an inclusive public sphere, but also challenges the way of thinking of existing politics by giving the marginalised a chance to up-value their self-esteem and appearance towards the outside.

The graduation lab is part of the larger investigation Constructing the Commons, which is crucial for the intention of my intervention. Generally, the city of Bogotá suffers enormously from economical inequality and social segregation that results in stigmatisation and criminality, combined with little public and equally available space within the city. My project is set within this wider social context and aims at achieving a highly permeable building that works as an oasis and thus creates an inclusive public sphere that actively works against the segregated city. The theme of the commons is readable in my aim of creating a bridge between the citizens of La Perseverancia and the city through the spectacle of selling and buying. By reproducing an agora or forum kind of program, the exchange of goods is elevated to the exchange of speech and performance.