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INTRODUCTION

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Critical Questions – Contemporary Practice

A little over 25 years ago, the site of this conference, Maritime Greenwich, London, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Home to the first Palladian building in England, the Royal Naval College by Sir Christopher Wren, the National Maritime Museum, the Old Royal Observatory and the University of Greenwich, it is one of the UK's most important historical sites. It is home to groundbreaking projects in digital heritage, the Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, and a variety of major arts and cultural events annually. It is promoted by its 'state-of-the-art' visitor centre and ardently protected by the UK's Listed Buildings and Conservation Acts. It is a quintessential site of world heritage.

However, as a site located in the city of London, it feels the pressures of economic and urban development. It is threatened by the strains of mass tourism and can be at risk of over exposure. It is located near areas of social deprivation and its buildings and parks are in need of continual, and costly, maintenance. Managing the site for local residents, the heritage community and visitors is complex and can be contested. In this regard, Maritime Greenwich is also the epitome of the difficulties faced across the heritage sector, the world over.

Using the World Heritage Site of Maritime Greenwich as a point of departure, this conference sought to explore the critical questions for the heritage sector today from various disciplinary perspectives. This conference proceedings publication thus contains a range of case studies and theoretical readings that cross disciplinary fields, with this volume focused on issues related to the design, planning and management of the built environment.

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SANTIAGO MICROCOSMOS: THE INTERIOR AS ARCHIVE OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

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INTRODUCTION

Santiago Microcosmos: The interior as archive of the public sphere.

Clubs, literary cafés, theatres, cinemas, bank halls, courtrooms, museums, libraries, and commercial galleries constructed the emerging public sphere of the city of Santiago de Chile in early twentieth century. These interiors triggered a process of transformation and redefinition of the public sphere that mirrored an increasing complexity of the Chilean state and society. Functioning as a synecdoche, they encapsulate and map the relationships with the city outside. Analogous to publication *The Microcosm of London* published in 1808, this essay proposes to read Santiago as a microcosm –a hundred years later. A series of rooms established a network of carefully designed interiors whose importance relies –then and today– as much on their material condition, as in the social activities and relevant decisions that were taken in them. By classifying them in three categories: (i) *circles* as rooms that primarily served functions of sociability; (ii) *institutions* as places for the administration of state power; (iii) *cabinets* designed to store and/or display objects, the interiors are taken as mediators between objects and subjects. The stories of these rooms not only narrate their past relevance but also projects their status in the public sphere of Santiago.

Interiora Urbis

Interiora Urbis is one of over 100 entries in the book *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, written by Comenius in the mid-17th century. *The World in Pictures* is considered the first illustrated book for children in Western history. Translated as *the interior of the city,* the accompanying woodcut depicts the city as a walled interior with access gates, beyond which the topography and geography rise. Comenius needs only draw a corner to describe the entire city as a grand interior composed of buildings and monuments, streets, and squares. Together, they form the *Interiora Urbis*: the church, the school, the town hall, the market, the theatre, the hospital, and the prison[1] (Fig. 1).

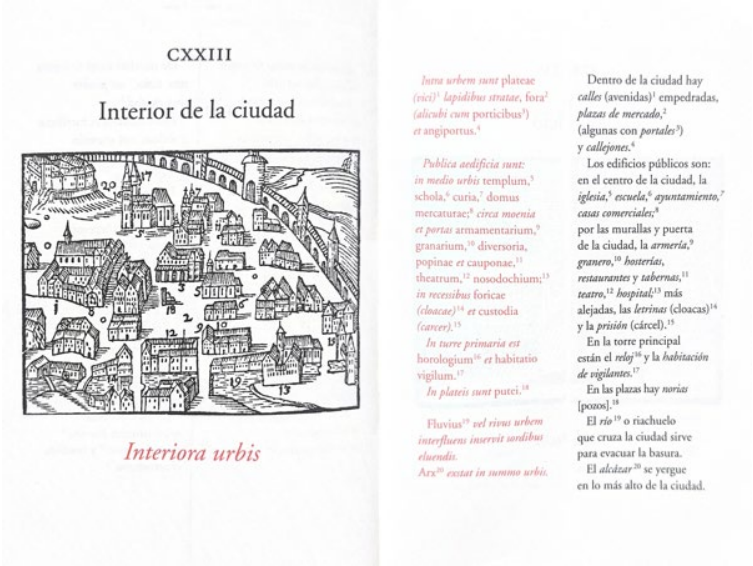


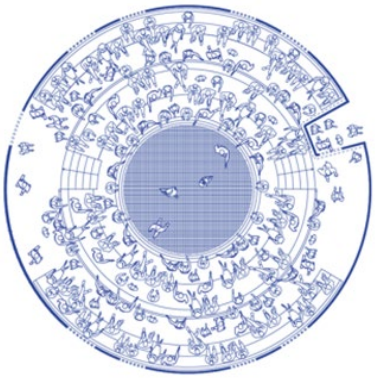
Figure 1. Interiora Urbis. Comenius. (2017). Orbis sensualium pictus: hoc est, Omnium fundamentalium in mundo rerum & in vita actionum, pictura & nomenclatura (Bilingual edition, latin-spanish). Libros del zorro rojo.

Comenius's early view of the city as a sum of interiors is, however, a description of the city as a cartography, from above and the outside, which has been the main way of reading it. This essay proposes a different perspective from that of the map, which seeks to chart the city at scale and attempts totalizing visions of the territory. Instead, it offers a fragmented view, assembled piecemeal. It presents Santiago as a collection of interior worlds, insisting that through this multifaceted reading, we can recognize the public fabric and the larger constellation to which they belong. We borrow the title from *The Microcosm of London*[2] which, across its three volumes, represents perhaps the greatest effort to document a city from within. Inspired by that early 19th-century editorial project, we seek to read Santiago's public interiors one hundred years later, in the first decades of the 20th, century also as a microcosm.

If the predominant way of representing the city has been from an external perspective—viewing its buildings and streets as the protagonists of urban construction—examining its interiors offers an alternative strategy to understand the city. In the emerging metropolis of the Industrial Revolution, images of rooms and salons documented the multitude of urban situations and daily social practices, where public life was forged within these interiors. From palace halls to churches, theatres to lobbies, clubs to reading rooms, cafés, and galleries, these interiors housed (and still house) objects, decorations, furniture, doors, and windows that simultaneously define the city outside and are shaped by it.

Figures 2 & 3. (left) The Microcosm of London, or London in Miniature. Cover. Source: Ackermann, R. (1904c). The Microcosm of London, or London in Miniature (Vol. 3). Methuen & Co. (right) The Microcosm of London. 01- The great room at the Royal Academy, at the time of an exhibition. 02- Astley`s Amphitheatre. 03- Royal Cockpit 04- Court of common pleas 05- Court of Exchequer 06- Covent-Garden Theatre. 07- Debating Society 08- Drury Lane Theatre 09- The Corn Exchange 10- Exhibition of watercolour drawings 11- Great subscription room at brooks 12- Freemasons Hall 13- Guildhall 14- Herald`s Office 15- Opera House 16- Pantheon Masquerade 17- Philanthropic Society 18- The Post Office. Fuente: Ackermann et al. (1904a); Ackermann et al. (1904b). Source: Ackermann, R. (1904). The Microcosm of London, or London in Miniature (Vol. 3). Methuen & Co.

Published between 1808 and 1810, *The Microcosm of London* was one of the most important attempts to construct the city from its interiors (figs. 2, 3). Written by Rudolph Ackermann and illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson and Augustus Pugin, the three volumes of the *Microcosm* compiled a vast collection of images depicting various social settings. Together, the pages featured over 100 illustrations in which the metropolis emerged as an archive of its interiors. In these works, Pugin meticulously and precisely rendered spaces, decorations, and furniture, while Rowlandson created dynamic scenes featuring the people and ways of life that unfolded there (figs. 4, 5). This productive combination of architectural drawing's rigor and the artistic expressiveness of caricature offered a unique approach to representing the city interior. Whereas traditional methods of portraying a metropolis in modernity had relied on maps and plans—representations that presented a totalizing abstraction of the city—Rowlandson and Pugin instead proposed viewing the city as a constellation of interior fragments. A sequence of interior scenes that, together, constructed the larger city beyond.

Figures 4 & 5. (Left) The London Microcosm. Royal Cockpit. Interior dedicated to cockfighting. Source: Ackermann et al. (1904a). (Right) Plan drawing extracted from the Royal Cockpit engraving. Source: thesis student Magdalena Bustamante.

The publication of *The Microcosm* in London coincided with a moment of profound political transformation in the Americas. Newly independent states faced the task of forging durable institutions, stabilizing their economies, and articulating collective cultural horizons throughout the nineteenth century.[3] The victory in the War of the Pacific and the subsequent nitrate boom generated unprecedented wealth, reshaping urban life. Santiago became a privileged stage for this transformation, as private residences, public buildings, and civic works were conceived to embody both the economic prosperity and the symbolic authority of the state and its ruling classes.

Inspired by European imaginaries, principally those of France's *belle époque,* the spaces in which the local elite carried out their lives were predominantly indoors. However, the definition of these interiors evolved from those of the previous century. By the mid-19th century, the Chilean state had embarked on a process of liberal reforms, expressed through the enactment of the Interpretative Law on Freedom of Worship (1865) and the secular laws (1883–1884). This slow but progressive state secularization—culminating in the relatively recent separation of Church and State in the 1925 Constitution—necessitated the creation of numerous civil institutions.[4] This State modernization brought with it, as a material counterpart, the appearance of architectural typologies designed for these institutions. Additionally, cultural changes in consumption patterns and forms of entertainment and urban leisure solidified Santiago's transformation into a metropolis where public life moved from the lounges of family palaces and churches to new public interiors—spaces that would host those forms of sociability and public institutionality that characterized Chile in the centennial era. As the Nolli plans of the centre of Santiago de Chile between 1890 and 1986 (Fig. 5) demonstrates, whereas the century advanced, the network of public interiors grew more complex, forming another layer alternative to that of *damero* ('checkerboard') and the foundational *Calle de la Grilla* (Fig. 6)

Figure 6. Top: Santiago Nolli Collage map Map. Bottom left to right. (1) Santiago 1855-1915. (2) Santiago 1930-1960. (3) Santiago 1970-1984. Source: Nolli Plan of the city centre of Santiago de Chile.1890-1986. Source: PhD thesis "Manzana y Tipo Edificatorio en Transformación: El centro de Santiago y las constantes de la ciudad Hispanoamericana" José Rosas V. ETSAB-LUB, Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña. España. 1986.

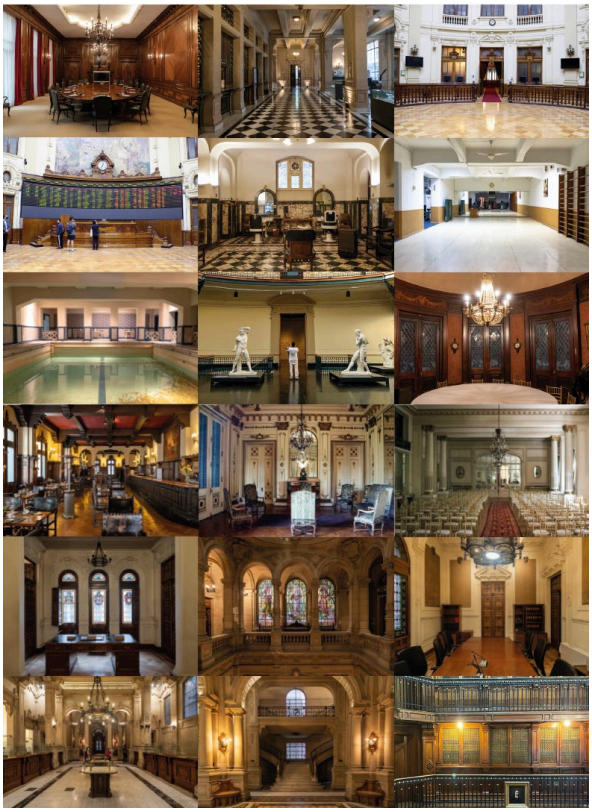


Figure 7. Photographs of Santiago Microcosmos.01- Banco Central 02- Banco Central 03- Salón de rueda, Bolsa de Comercio 04- Salón de rueda, Bolsa de Comercio 05- Peluquería, Club de la Unión 06- Gimnasio, Club de la Unión 07- Piscina, Club de la Unión 08- Hall central, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes 09- Club de la Unión 10- Comedor, Club de la Unión 11- Club de la Unión 12- Club de la Unión 13- Tribunal Constitucional 14- Hall 2do piso, Tribunal Constitucional 15- Tribunal Constitucional 16- Cajas, Tribunal Constitucional 17- Hall central, Tribunal Constitucional 18- Sala Medina, Biblioteca Nacional. Source: research team.

Clubs, literary cafés, theatres, cinemas, bank halls, courtrooms, museums, libraries, and commercial galleries represented this emerging sphere and were carefully designed for the functions they were

intended to fulfil. Furniture, decorations, upholstery, and drapery were still conceived in a pre-industrial way, creating highly refined spaces for Santiago's urban life (Fig. 7). The design of these interiors took on the challenge of creating environments to accommodate an urban society with an increasingly diverse range of collectives. However, as an underlying code, they imposed precise conditions of class and gender and of citizen, member, or client.

This series of grandiose buildings and rooms was part of a constructive drive that would last well into the century.[5] Together, these interiors—mostly located within Santiago's foundational triangle—formed a counterpart to those drawn by Rowlandson and Pugin a century earlier. The *Microcosm of Santiago* was a constellation of dispersed interior spaces, which, connected by the activities they housed, the social codes they embodied, or even the political decisions made within them, collectively formed the public sphere of the country. In turn, these rooms and interiors triggered a process of transformation and redefinition of the concept of the public in 20th-century Santiago. Functioning as synecdoche, they not only encapsulated the image of the whole—the city—within its fragments but, like the indexical entries of an encyclopaedia, they mapped relationships with the city outside. This mapping proved instrumental for managing the territory, its inhabitants, and its symbols. While these "urban rooms" were emerging, parallel processes such as the social question, urban marginalization, and the formation of the working-class family were taking place.[6] The architecture of interiors around the Centenary was a radical counterpart to these processes, constituting, through its decorations, furniture, and objects, a mechanism for managing the city at various levels.

METHODOLOGY

The *Microcosm of Santiago* is a research project that encompassed a wide range of public interiors: case studies constructed between 1900 and 1940, each housing diverse programs. Two main frameworks informed the study. This period emerges from a political context—the Republic's Centennial and the modernization of institutions—as well as a technological and disciplinary one. It was a transitional moment when local architectural production began to break away from the beaux-arts styles and construction technologies toward modern ones: new materials and the delayed influence of the International Style in Latin America erased ornamentation and details as part of their rhetoric of innovation.

During these four decades, Santiago's grand public buildings began incorporating construction technologies such as reinforced concrete while still maintaining a design language inherited from neoclassical or colonial traditions. The early 20th century, therefore, represents a time of economic prosperity, technological change, and transition, where ornament still played a key role in the symbolic construction of the city and succeeded, through these new public interiors, in communicating with a broader public. By the 1940s, the ideas and forms of the modern movement had fully entered the local scene, and modernism's rejection of ornament led to interiors being determined by radically different technical, aesthetic, and economic criteria. This shift altered the production conditions of interiors, marking the chronological scope of the microcosm under study.

This civic and power sphere of the early 20th century can be understood through three main categories of public interiors: circles, institutions, and cabinets. These categories, not necessarily exclusive, encompass both pre-existing typologies and new ones that emerged alongside state modernization, social changes of the period, and even the advent of new communication and entertainment technologies.

The *circles* primarily served functions of sociability. These spaces facilitated conversation and social exchange, playing a central role in constructing the gender, class, and ideological identities of certain groups or circles. Clubs, as the most private, regulated, and restricted example, strongly reinforced the identity and symbols of belonging for elites. Meanwhile, cafés represented important venues for

discussion, gatherings, and reflection, often associated with writers and intellectuals. Theaters, museums, and cinemas joined these, serving a more explicitly performative role linked to exhibition and spectacle.

Another set of interiors emerged with the appearance of new *institutions*. These spaces did not primarily aim to assemble the social fabric, as the *circles* did, but rather to administer power. These rooms bear witness to the state's modernization drive, materializing a political and economic model aligned with these transformations. Bank halls, newspaper editorial offices, meeting rooms, and courtrooms were populated with furniture designed to orchestrate protocols of movement and regulated transactions; revolving doors, counters, lines, and desks choreographed bodily movements and consolidated a microphysics of biopolitical power.

Finally, the *cabinets* were dual-purpose interiors designed to store and/or display objects, mediating the relationship between those objects and their visitors. While public and private in terms of ownership, many were also institutions that played a role in shaping the social sphere. However, the primary function of the cabinets was different. Libraries, museums, commercial galleries, reading rooms, and exhibition halls all preserved collections that, upon becoming public, demanded buildings to house them. These cases are noteworthy both for their storage systems (furniture and room scale) and for the succession of galleries, staircases, vestibules, and foyers organizing them (spatial systems).

Thus, the analysis of these circles, institutions, and cabinets unfolded through thematic axes of public construction during the Republic's Centennial: (i) the Club de la Unión (leisure, society, and politics) and the Stock Exchange (business, economy, and development); (ii) the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario (savings, hygiene, and economy) and the Huemul Theatre (urban construction, its margins, and the territory); and (iii) the Sala Medina (archiving, storage, and preservation), the National Museum of Fine Arts and the School of Art at the University of Chile (education, exhibition, and culture).Each category, constructed through two interconnected interiors, reveals the role of this network of rooms and buildings as an ideological apparatus in the construction of republican Santiago.

The methodology draws on three main approaches but prioritizes on-site visits to the case studies. This decision stems from the need to methodologically centre the building as the object of study and to inform the research questions from the present. Each of the rooms under study will be understood as the starting point for exploring the city, and not vice versa. Once the research of cases of interest has been identified, access to them becomes the primary criterion for selecting and categorizing the cases to be developed in depth. The approach to describing the object will be (a) factual, photographic, and present-day; (b) historiographical, narrative, and archival; and (c) planimetric, cartographic, and speculative. This threefold characterization integrates distinct approaches: three modes of recording that will run in parallel, continuously informing one another. Together they construct a methodology that includes the past (conventional archival work tools and historiographical reconstruction), the present (innovative technological tools for recording the current state of conservation of the interiors), and the future (speculative drawing, inventory and objects) projecting its conditions of possibility.

(i) Leisure and Business

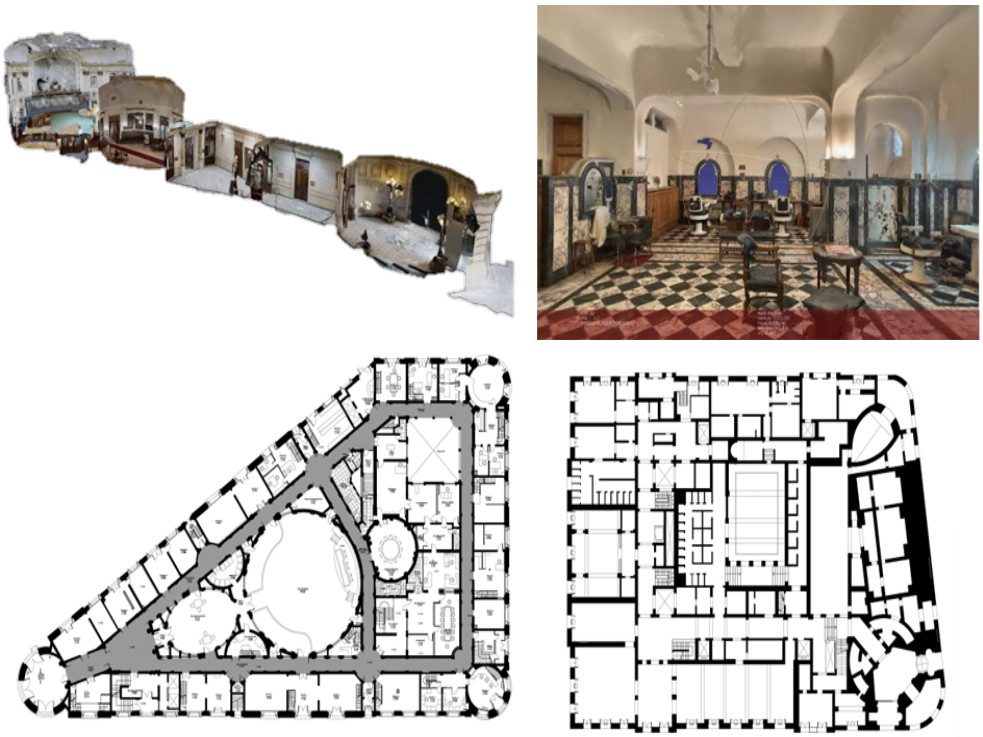


Figure 8. (left) Photogrammetry and drawing of the Stock Exchange Building (right) Photogrammetry and drawing of the Club de la Unión. Source: Images by research team, drawings redrawn by research team.

The Club de la Unión building (Alberto Cruz Montt, 1925) and the Stock Exchange building (Emile Jecquier, 1917) embody the most restricted-access public interiors among the spaces studied (Fig. 8). At the Club, an ideal of high society was forged within its highly decorated halls, the custom-made long bar, the billiard room, private lounges, swimming pool, and barbershop. Luncheons, events, and entertainment provided the backdrop for discussions, agreements, and the development of significant economic and political matters. The Club served as a container of behaviours, discursive constructions, and political operations for the country.[7] At the Stock Exchange, the central trading floor facilitated transactions that defined the economic fate of mining and agricultural assets outside its walls. The hierarchical space—the grand central trading floor for buying and selling stocks—was a symbolic interior of Chile's economic system at the start of the 20th-century. Its circular geometry was not only emblematic and a commercial stage but also a logistical instrument that ensured the transparency of the transactions that were conducted in its interior. Another kind of panopticon, the Club's square central hall allowed members to observe and be observed in a parade of membership and distinctions. Sociability and economy, leisure and business, intertwined from one building to the other. As highly codified and exceptional spaces, they were indices of power and status, reflecting social, economic, and political structures as well as notions of class and gender.

At the Club, access to its halls and facilities was exclusive to members—men of high society who needed to purchase shares to belong. Similarly, the Bolsa's access was restricted to brokers authorized to trade on the stock exchange. According to its initial regulations, members had to pay an introductory fee of half an ounce of gold per year.[8] Although both interiors were not freely accessible, they are considered public interiors because of the impact and effects of the activities they hosted in

shaping the nation culturally, economically, politically, and socially. A public interior is not necessarily defined by its free or open access[9] but by its influence on the configuration of public life and the perception citizens have of their capabilities and freedoms.

As a term coined by several authors,[10] the "public interior" is constructed by ideas and reflects the social relationships and power dynamics of a given time. It refers to spatially contained environments experienced as belonging to the public sphere. This definition includes spaces within civic buildings (government buildings) and institutions (e.g., education, healthcare, culture). Broadly speaking, public interiors encompass spaces where civil society operates—whether within or outside buildings—serving as environments for private individuals to meet and interact collectively. Both the Bolsa and the Club originated from domestic, closed-door spaces—palace offices and mansion living rooms—that migrated to public interiors with the turn of the century.

The Club and the Bolsa share a common origin in the subdivision of a city block from Santiago's foundational grid, originally owned by the Convent of the Agustinas, which sold the land in 1914. The presence of these large blocks owned by religious orders later allowed the construction of isolated, monumental public buildings in central Santiago.[11] The subdivision of the Agustinas lot resulted in three emblematic buildings: a triangular plot carved out by Nueva York Street became home to the Bolsa, while the block facing Alameda housed the Club, and the convent's church still stands.

In the cases studied, the building and the institution do not always align in time. In both examples, the institution predates the building, often taking years or decades to find its final architectural home. The Club established its institutional identity in 1864, initially located at Estado 36. After a fire in 1869, it moved to Alameda 139, then to Bandera 31 in 1879, where it remained until 1925, when the current headquarters at Avenida Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins 1091 was inaugurated. Today, the Club sits empty; its silent halls reflect a social model that no longer sustains itself. The elites have migrated eastward in the city, leaving its 18,000 square meters frozen, awaiting a new purpose.

Meanwhile, the Bolsa de Comercio originated in the home of Samuel Izquierdo, where brokers periodically gathered, eventually creating the first *Sala de Comercio,* also known as the Santiago Stock Exchange. Years later, in 1870, the Bolsa moved to the second floor of the Portal Fernández Concha, functioning as a space for mercantile business, a commercial archive, and a public reading room, until the current building was constructed in 1917. Its current state is vacant, its future uncertain: while brokerage offices have relocated eastward, the operations of the central trading floor have vanished into the digital negotiations of the virtual stock market.

(ii) Savings and Constructions

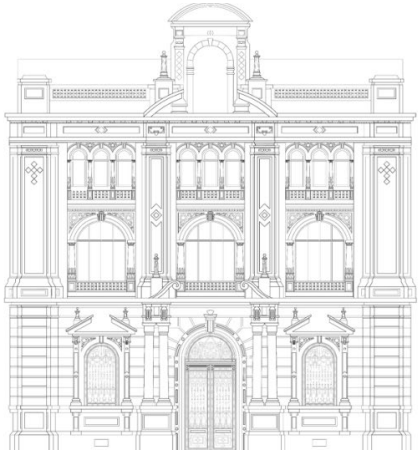


Figure 9. (left) Façade of the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario. Source: Drawn by thesis student Magdalena Bustamante. (right) Façade of the Teatro Huemul. Source: Drawn by thesis student Xaviera Gleixner.

In parallel with these elite secular interiors, some other interiors had the objective of serving social functions for a much more diverse audience. In 1855, the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario was created; this institution would be Chile's first state credit entity and one of the first in the world to issue mortgage bonds.[12] Its objective was to mediate and connect investors with farmers through mortgage loans, enabling the latter to increase their lands' productivity. The *Caja* was largely conceived by Antonio Varas, a minister under President Manuel Montt, who, 30 years later, would also be behind the creation of another subordinate entity, the Caja de Ahorros de Santiago, in 1884. However, this institution had a more openly moralizing and popular focus: it sought to "promote and establish saving as a social habit, especially among workers," with the goal of helping them "aspire to become small property owners".[13] This emphasis on saving was not only pragmatic but was described by Varas as a means of exerting a "positive influence" on the population through economic discipline:

Facilitating savings among the working class is an effective means of elevating the moral condition of this class within our society, awakening in them the foresight they so lack, and opening a path that will allow them to hope that when sickness or old age renders them unable to work, they will be able to meet the most pressing needs of life with what they saved in a timely manner.[14]

The emergence of various savings funds in Chile's major cities eventually led to the creation of the Caja Nacional de Ahorros (National Savings Fund) in 1910 (Figure 9). Also dependent on the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario, the network of offices and branches of the Caja Nacional achieved an unprecedented geographic reach for public institutions of the time. By 1922, in a country with approximately 3.8 million inhabitants, there were over a million savings accounts, equivalent to 28% of the population.[15] By the 1930s, the *Caja* had more than 100 branches across Chile and was the only banking institution with a physical presence in over 50 highly isolated localities, such as Aysén and Puerto Natales.[16]

As the Caja de Ahorros expanded, the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario also acquired a pronounced social role. The 1906 earthquake and the Workers' Housing Law oriented the *Caja'*s focus on the construction of housing and popular neighbourhoods. This change, particularly evident during the administration of Luis Barros Borgoño as director of the *Caja*, aimed at social sanitation through material order—the provision of dignified housing.[17] Savings on the one hand, and construction on the other, were coordinated and integrated into a vast institutional machinery, pioneering in its geographic and numerical scale in Chile, whose central hub was the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario office on Calle Huérfanos.

The building, constructed between 1915 and 1920 to replace the *Caja*'s previous office on the same site, was designed by the architect Ricardo Larraín Bravo, who also served as head of the *Caja*'s technical office. Its interior featured a three-story-high hall richly decorated with custom furniture, lamps, and frescoes, all specifically designed for the building. At its centre, a circular desk served for writing and signing documents, while at the back, service counters articulated the relationship between the institution and the citizenry. This central space was crowned with a large eight-petaled stained glass window depicting allegorical muses representing the nation's production: science, agronomy, mining, transportation, art, commerce, industry, and savings, surrounding the coat of arms of Santiago at its apex. Below, on the walls of the first floor, a series of frescoes complemented the discourse on savings: concepts like crime and vice were compared with poverty, disrepute, and usury, and were put into opposition to values such as home and virtue, prosperity, and honour were celebrated. Ascending the main staircase, additional frescoes depicted customs tied to agriculture and rural labour, reflective of the *Caja*'s original function. On the third floor, the windows facing the street

featured another series of stained-glass panels referencing different cities in the country, an explicit expression of the institution's territorial reach.

Given its social relevance as a massive public interior in the city, the *Caja* building, its architecture, and its elements were also tasked with playing an explicit rhetorical role. These features collectively constructed a kind of speaking architecture, mediated by its popular ambitions, which by 1915 stood in stark contrast to the modern abstraction that would begin arriving in Chile in the following decade. Driven by the moralistic impulse of savings, the building spared no effort in explicitly communicating its message through decorations and lavish figurative elements. This could be interpreted as a paradox: the *Caja* had built a carefully designed and elaborate public palace to promote the savings and austerity of a nation.

The value of the building, however, was not merely symbolic. From it, particularly through the architectural office led by Larraín Bravo, various housing and urbanization projects for the capital were launched and executed. Under the banner of social hygiene—a topic Larraín Bravo had studied in Paris and detailed in his famous book *La higiene aplicada a las construcciones* (1910)—the *Caja* designed emblematic working-class neighborhoods such as Población El Llano, Granjas de Lo Ovalle, and Huemul. The latter, perhaps the most famous, became a model working-class neighborhood.[18]

(iii). Archive and Education

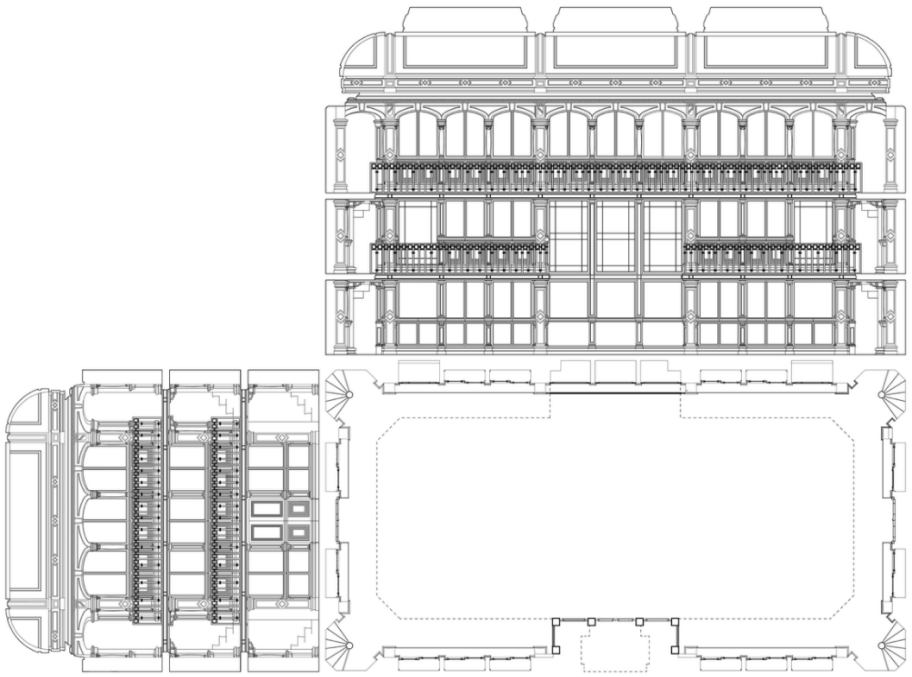


Figure 10. The Medina Room with unfolded interior elevations. Source: drawn by Benjamín Castro and Magdalena Bustamante.

Unlike the previous cases, among the public interiors classified as the *cabinets*, two publicly accessible buildings stand out that, a century after their founding, remain fully operational. Both the National Library and the Museum of Fine Arts—institutions founded prior to the period studied—still function as repositories of books, objects, and works made available to the public. From their inception, they embraced the mission of constructing and reproducing a national cultural identity, initially modeled on references imported from abroad but with an eye toward building a local heritage. These interiors feature highly complex designs that operate on multiple scales, mediating

relationships between visitors and the objects they house and exhibit. Through symbols on their facades, similarities to comparable buildings abroad, the selection of specific styles and ornamentation, and the meticulous design of their furnishings, they represented social and political ideals aimed at positioning Chile on the international stage. In this sense, their materialization completed an educational and pedagogical project for the citizenry that had begun a century earlier with the creation of the first institutions with a national character.

Both were institutions that initially occupied spaces originally intended for other uses, and the construction of their own buildings occurred during the period of the Republic's centenary—a time of economic prosperity fuelled by nitrate exploitation. Initially, both buildings were planned to be located on adjacent lots beside Santa Lucía Hill. The Palace of Fine Arts, on one hand, was intended to occupy what is now Plaza Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, on the Alameda. A complete preliminary design by Emile Jéquier for this location even existed. However, with the creation of Parque Forestal, the Museum project was eventually moved to the banks of the Mapocho River.[19] On the other hand, the construction of the National Library began later, initiated by the Department of Public Works in 1913 on the block where the Clarisas' convent had been located.[20]

The interior of the building originally called the 'Palace of Fine Arts,' inspired by the Petit Palais in Paris,[21] opened its doors to the public in September 1910. Although the institution itself had been founded in 1880, the opening of its new building marked a milestone that underscored its cultural role from the start. This opening coincided with an international exhibition where each room represented a different country, showcasing European culture through reproductions and some originals, alongside a significant collection of local works.[22] Its connection to France is evident not only because the architect chosen for its design was Emile Jéquier but also due to its location in a French-style park designed by José Enrique Dubois, who had trained in Versailles. In fact, at the time of its opening, both elements were featured in the museum's central atrium, which also served as an interior garden exhibiting sculptures in an unprecedented configuration for the local context.[23] Beyond its style, ornamentation, and exhibition attributes, the programmatic mix likely allowed it to construct a national identity while simultaneously acknowledging and describing its global influences. As the Palace of Fine Arts, the building was conceived as a dual-purpose structure housing two institutions simultaneously: the National Museum of Fine Arts and the School of Fine Arts.[24] Thus, the building not only stored and exhibited but also actively produced new works, building upon the museum of replicas. However, this dual condition of direct dialogue between exhibition, storage, and teaching, unprecedented at the time, did not endure. By 1930, with the Museum's administration transferred to DIBAM, the building was divided into two sections by its narrowest part.

Similarly, from its inception, the National Library operated in ways that resembled the Museum. Founded nearly a century before the construction of its building, its mission was to collect, archive, and make available the most relevant publications from Chile and abroad. Founded in 1813, its complexity grew over time, gradually forming a collection encompassing books, manuscripts, medals, prints, and larger objects and maps. It was not until 1913 that the Department of Public Works initiated the construction of a building that would house the National Library's holdings, joining a series of centennial buildings, including the Palace of Fine Arts, the Courts of Justice, and the Mapocho Station.

Within the Library, the Medina Room is an interior that is particularly paradigmatic of how initially private interests—related in some cases to the domestic sphere—shaped the ideals of the public sphere and the republic (Fig. 10). While not the largest or most visible space in the library, its history, objects, and design trace connections between the private and public spheres and between Chile and the international realm. Its origins can be traced to the 1920s, when José Toribio Medina agreed to donate his private book collection to the National Library. This donation unleashed a process whereby

the work of his personal life as a prominent lawyer, researcher, historian, and collector was transferred from his home to the library building. Understanding that his collection was not only comprised of books but also included the furniture that stored them, their organization, and arrangement, Medina participated actively in determining how his collection would be preserved, displayed, and even managed. Thus, the Medina Room can be read simultaneously as a domestic interior opened to the public; as a private vision of the cultural areas the country needed to consider– its shelves include writings on science, history, and politics; and local and international connections– as Medina participated actively in renowned intellectual circles of his time. As a room, it is a piece of furniture, a collection of objects, and an idealized miniature vision of the world outside.

These buildings crowned an effort that simultaneously consolidated the goal of enlightening the country through infrastructure of the highest standards. Intellectual endeavours were translated into material interventions. Naturally, these initiatives were driven by cultural elites with the resources and power to make them happen. Indeed, it was their visions and references that were later reflected in the collections stored and exhibited. However, as these collections were made available to the public in the case of the Library and Museum—and to students in the case of the Academy of Fine Arts, albeit briefly, they were subject to reinterpretations, appropriations, and, consequently, the formation of new identities over time.

CONCLUSION

The project *"Santiago Microcosmos: The Interiors of the City as an Archive of Its Public Sphere"* analyses how Santiago's public interiors during the early decades of the 20th century constructed a precise republican public sphere. Through specific case studies, it addressed three thematic axes: (i) Leisure and Business, represented by the Club de la Unión and the Stock Exchange; (ii) Savings and Construction, exemplified by the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario and the Huemul Theatre; and (iii) Archive and Education, featuring the National Library and the Museum of Fine Arts. The 20th-century public interiors of Santiago are microcosms that synthesize the values, aspirations, and tensions of Chilean society 100 years after its independence. These spaces not only served as venues for interaction and social assembly but also housed the institutions necessary for republican formation, consolidating narratives of national identity and class.

The study presents these interiors as microcosms that reflect the social, political, and cultural structures of their time. Designed to promote sociability, institutionalism, and education, they reveal tensions between elitism and accessibility, as well as between tradition and modernity. Now often unused and obsolescing, these interiors encapsulate the technological, social, and economic changes that have defined urban life in Santiago, reshaping the relationship between the public and private spheres.

While some interiors, like the Club de la Unión and the Stock Exchange, were designed for an exclusive elite, others, such as the National Library and the Museum of Fine Arts, aimed to democratize access to knowledge. Meanwhile, the Caja de Crédito Hipotecario and the Huemul neighbourhood simultaneously educated and contributed to urban development at the city's edges and throughout the national territory. Today, many of these interiors are vacant or have lost their original function, signalling shifts in social dynamics, cultural consumption, and the impact of technology. This transformation highlights a crisis of representation in the institutions that once sustained them.

The configuration and design of these spaces respond to an ideology that aimed to consolidate political, economic, and social power structures. These buildings not only served practical purposes but also materialized discourses of urban control and organization. They bridged private and public realms, integrating fragments that form a symbolic infrastructural network of the city. Although initially designed for specific contexts, their study reveals the ideological and cultural foundations that

continue to shape or expose fractures in our public sphere. The project invites reflection on the current relevance of these spaces, the role of interior architecture as a 'lost link,' and the need to reactivate and adapt them to meet the contemporary needs of the city and its citizens.

Today, many of these public interiors are vacant or obsolete, signalling various breaks with the roles they fulfilled 100 years ago. Some of these reveal a crisis of representation in those institutions and fractures in our shared construction. The status of others, which used to store and safeguard objects, has radically changed over the course of a century. Examples include post offices (and letters), libraries (and books), and banks (and gold bars). Various interiors, like cafés, theatres, cinemas, and galleries, depended on forms of social life and patterns of consumption that have changed drastically over the past century.[25] This has not only been due to digital technologies and social networks but also because other typologies have assumed their functions within the city. Reviewing the current state of these cases allows us to understand not only what they represented at their origin but also to reactivate the cultural status they hold today as pieces of the city.

NOTES

[1] Comenius, *Orbis sensualium pictus: hoc est, Omnium fundamentalium in mundo rerum & in vita actionum, pictura & nomenclatura*, *Edición bilingüe latín-castellano* (Libros del zorro rojo, 2017), 266-277.
[2] See: Rudolph Ackermann, William Combe, Augustus Pugin, and Thomas Rowlandson. *The Microcosm of London; or London in Miniature. Vol. 1*. Methuen and Co., 1904; Ackermann, Rudolph, William Combe, Augustus Pugin, and Thomas Rowlandson. *The Microcosm of London; or London in Miniature. Vol. 2*. Methuen and Co., 1904.
[3] For a more detailed review of this historical process, see: De Ramón, Armando. *Santiago de Chile: (1541-1991): Historia de una sociedad urbana*. Catalonia, 2007.
[4] For a more detailed examination of this historical period, see: Pérez, Fernando. *Arquitectura en el Chile del Siglo XX. Volumen I: Iniciando el Nuevo Siglo 1890–1930*. Ediciones ARQ, 2016.
[5] See: Fernando Pérez. *Arquitectura en el Chile del Siglo XX. Volumen II: Modernización y vanguardia 1930-1950*. Ediciones ARQ, 2017
[6] See: Larraín Bravo, Ricardo. *La higiene aplicada en las construcciones (alcantarillado, agua potable, saneamiento, calefacción, ventilación, etc.) (Vol. 1)*. Impr. Cervantes, 1909; Macarena Ibarra. "Periferia. Poblaciones y desarrollo urbano en Santiago de Chile 1920-1940". *Historia* 56, no. 1 (June 2023): 468-472. https://doi.org/10.4067/s0717-71942023000100468; Simón Castillo and Waldo Vila. *Periferia: Poblaciones y desarrollo urbano en Santiago de Chile, 1920-1940*. Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2022.
[7] Pérez, *Arquitectura en el Chile del siglo XX, Vol. 1*, 110-111. For a detailed discussion about the club as a political *dispositif*, see: Sol Pérez Martínez. "La Arquitectura Del Club: Un Contenedor de Comportamientos, Lenguaje y Política." *ARQ*, no. 92 (April 2016): 104–13. https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-69962016000100011
[8] Juan Ricardo Couyoumdjian, René Millar y Josefina Tocornal, *Historia de la Bolsa de Comercio de Santiago: 1893 - 1993; un siglo del mercado de valores en Chile* (Bolsa de Comercio de Santiago, 1993), 21.
[9] Mark Pimlott, *The Public Interior as Idea and Project* (Jap Sam Books, 2016), 10.
[10] See: Charles Rice. *The Emergence of the Interior Architecture, Modernity, Domesticity*. Routledge, 2007; Harteveld, Maurice and Denise Scott Brown. "On Public Interior Space." *AA Files* no. 56 (2007), 64–73; Pimlott, Mark. *Without and within: Essays on Territory and the Interior*. Episode Publishers, 2007.
[11] See: José Rosas Vera. "Manzana y Tipo Edificatorio En Transformación: El Centro de Santiago y Las Constantes de La Ciudad Hispanoamericana." PhD diss., ETSAB-LUB, Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña, 1986.
[12] Raúl Cordero, *Historia de la Caja de Crédito Hipotecario* (Banco del Estado de Chile, 1999), 36.
[13] "[...] L*a promoción e instauración del ahorro como hábito social especialmente entre los trabajadores* […] *que "aspiraran a convertirse en pequeños propietarios*". Natalie Guerra, 'La Caja de Crédito Hipotecario: Los Valores de La Modernidad Social y Cultural En Chile", in *El Edificio de La Ex Caja de Crédito Hipotecario: Nueva Sede Del Tribunal Constitucional de Chile* (Ediciones del Archivo Central Andrés Bello; Tribunal Constitucional Chile, 2016), 20.
[14] Original: "*Facilitar el ahorro de la clase trabajadora es un medio eficaz de elevar la condición moral de esta clase de nuestro pueblo, de despertar en ella la previsión que tanto le falta y de abrirles camino que les permita esperar que, cuando las enfermedades o los años les inhabiliten para el trabajo, podrán proveer las necesidades más imperiosas de la vida con lo que en tiempo oportuno economizaron*." Raúl Cordero, *Historia de la Caja Nacional de Ahorros* (Banco del Estado de Chile, 2000), 58.
[15] Ignacio González-Correa, "La Caja Nacional de Ahorros y La Banca Estatal: Un Caso Exitoso de Economía Asociativa Entre Cajas Financieras En Chile, c. 1920-1950," *Áreas. Revista Internacional de Ciencias Sociales*, no. 41 (September 2021): 76.
[16] González-Correa, "La Caja Nacional de Ahorros y La Banca Estatal," 76.
[17] Guerra, "La Caja de Crédito Hipotecario," 22-24.
[18] Guerra, "La Caja de Crédito Hipotecario," 24.
[19] Pérez, *Arquitectura en el Chile del Siglo XX, vol. 1,* 68-69.
[20] Alejandra Celedón and Gabriela García De Cortázar, "La Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, Cien Años Tarde, Cien Años Después", *ARQ*, no. 100 (December 2018): 129.
[21] Fernando Pérez, Rodrigo Booth, Claudio Vásquez, and Yolanda Muñoz, "Cimentando el Centenario: el Hormigón en Tres Edificios de Santiago de Chile a Comienzos del Siglo XX," *Atenea*, no. 523, (2021): 48.
[22] See: Ximena Gallardo Saint-Jean. *Museo de Copias: El Principio Imitativo Como Proyecto Modernizador*. Ediciones Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2015.

[23] Romy Hecht, "Idea y Proyecto de Paisaje En El Santiago Del Centenario, 1890-1930", in *Arquitectura En El Chile Del Siglo XX. Volumen I: Iniciando El Nuevo Siglo 1890-1930* (Ediciones ARQ, 2016): 138-139.
[24] For the conflict between these different institutions while using the same building, see: Salin Fernández, Aarón. "Un Edificio Bicéfalo. O Por Qué Dos Cabezas Piensan Mejor Que Una." Master's thesis, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2023. https://repositorio.uc.cl/handle/11534/75096.
[25] See: Rodrigo Mora and Miguel Vizcaíno. *Interiores Urbanos*. RIL Editores, 2017.

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