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| BVCH Practise |
| Carlos Bresciani, Hector Valdés, Fernando Castillo and Carlos Huidobro |
| The architectural practice composed by the architects Carlos Bresciani, Hector Valdés, Fernando Castillo and Carlos Huidobro (BVCH) dominated the Chilean national scene in the fifties and sixties. The initial group gathered in 1942, originally composed by Valdés, Castillo and Huidobro (VCH); in 1953 Bresciani joined their ranks. Their individual careers, spanning well into the nineties, are also extremely significant. Once the modern ideals were more absorbed in the country, the firm managed to put into practice certain principles and modes of production which represented a different architectonic attitude to that of the first half of the century. While the Chilean modernism of early twentieth century was mainly concerned about the construction of public monumental buildings, this second half opened a new trend of development. Along with the building of institutions, central to Chile’s modernity was the construction of social housing. Socially engaged, BVCH architectural practice had a central role in this movement. |
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Socially engaged, BVCH architectural practice had a central role in this movement.  File: Figure 1- BVCH.jpg  Figure 1- BVCH  Source: Image can be found at <http://www.edicionesarq.cl/2006/bresciani-valdes-castillo-huidobro/>  They are the authors of the ‘Unidad Vecinal Diego Portales’ (1954-1968), the ‘Torres de Tajamar’ (inaugurated in 1967 and designed with the architect Luis Prieto Vial), and the ‘Remodelación San Borja’ (CORMU 1968-73). The three are exemplary projects of social collective housing in Santiago. The ‘Villa Portales’, as became known, was a thirty-one hectares development of ninety blocks and almost 2,000 dwelling units and communitarian services in Quinta Normal. The ‘Torres de Tajamar’ was a high-density project of about four hundred dwelling apartments distributed in three towers in less than one hectare. In a privileged location in the riverbed of the Mapocho river in Providencia, the project represented a challenge of competitiveness with real estate developments. In turn, ‘Remodelación San Borja’ was a housing complex of twenty-one high-rise towers, one of the most important projects of urban regeneration built in Chile and Latin America.  File: Figure 2- Villa Portales.jpg  Figure 2- Villa Portales  Source: Courtesy of Casiopea: Can be found at <http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-84819/clasicos-de-arquitectura-unidad-vecinal-portales-b-v-c-h>  File: Figure 3- Villa Portales second shot.jpg  Figure 3- Villa Portales second shot  Source: Source: Courtesy of Casiopea: Can be found at <http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-84819/clasicos-de-arquitectura-unidad-vecinal-portales-b-v-c-h>  The practice also designed educational buildings, such as the campuses in Santiago and Punta Arenas for the ‘Universidad Técnica del Estado’, and single-family houses such as the ‘Santos’ house (1958-61), the ‘Santiago Mingo’ (1955) house, the ‘Orlando Mingo’ house (1957) and the ‘Ravera’ (1953) house, among many others. The prolific firm operated as well as a place of formation of young professionals. More than seventy architects collaborated for the practice along the years, many of them becoming outstanding architects during the 70s (Perez Oyarzun). The team managed to interpret social and technological processes of modernisation of the country, using the architectural project as a platform, not any project, but mainly through collective housing proposals. The planning of the house became the place for innovation and experimentation, and to set forth ideas regarding the urban, engaging in these terms with an international disciplinary desire of social and urban reform.  File: Figure 4- Remodeling San Borja.jpg  Figure 4- Remodeling San Borja  Source: Image can be found at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/28047774@N04/4555434259/sizes/o/in/photostream/>  File: Figure 5- Remodeling San Borja, Original Plan.jpg  Figure 5- San Borja Original Plan  Source: Image originally from AUCA Nº24-25, 1973, pp. 23-34. Can be found online at <http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0718-83582011000100003> under Figure 5. International Competition ‘redevelopment area in the centre of Santiago’. 1st Prize (Argentina) Source: AUCA Nº24-25, 1973 (Edition projected before the September 11, 1973), pp. 23-34.  File: Figure 6- Remodeling San Borja, Original Plan second shot.jpg  Figure 6- San Borja Original Plan 2  Source: Image originally from CA Nº46, Santiago, December 1986, pp. 31-32. Can be found online at <http://www.scielo.cl/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0718-83582011000100003> Under Figure 4. Remodeling San Borja, Santiago. CORMU Source: CA Nº46, Santiago, December 1986, pp. 31-32.  As individuals, each managed to be engaged in the political and academic realms as much as in the practical one, balancing their public and private participation. Valdés and Castillo became influential teachers at the Catholic University in Santiago. Between 1971 and 1973 Valdés was president of the School of National Architects in an extremely politicized environment, when he created the ‘CA Magazine’, influencing the architectural and political debates. Castillo became Director of the entire university (1967-1973), becoming also professor at Cambridge University and the Central University of Venezuela. He assumed as Mayor of La Reina in 1964, as Intendant of Santiago in 1994, and again as Mayor of La Reina from 1966 to 2000. Bresciani was Dean of the Faculty of Architecture (1952-1969) in the Catholic University at Valparaiso. Three of his four partners were awarded with the Architectural National Award.  File: Figure 7- Torres de Tajamar.jpg  Figure 7- Torres de Tajamar  Source: Courtesy of EAD/PUCV. Image can be found at:  <http://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/2011/12/20/clasicos-de-arquitectura-torres-de-tajamar-luis-prieto-vial-b-v-c-h/gfrc0016/> List of Main Works 1942 Echeverría Building  1946 Castillo House.  1953-54 Holanda Building; Ravera House  1954-55 Housing Caja Previsión del Estado  1955-56 Housing Chinchorro; Casa Mingo  1956-57 Housing Estadio  1954-1964 Unidad Vecinal Diego Portales  1958-59 Casa Santos 1960 UN Competition Entry  1960-61 Games Casino, Arica; Honsa Hostel; Social Security Offices  1961-62 Brasilia Villa; Echeverría House  1962-66 Torres de Tajamar  1964-72 CAP Casino and Offices  1967-70 Remodelación San Borja |
| Further reading:  (Menéndez)  (Moreno Guerrero)  (Perez Oyarzun)  (Weibel)  (Garcia-Moreno) |