Through a strategic intervention that connects six underground levels, Suizspacio demonstrates the potential to create public spaces within existing infrastructure, repurposing the remnant space of a metro station into a versatile and accessible cultural device.

Keywords:
Public space, exhibitions, routes, installations, infrastuctural turns
SUÍSPACIO

Arquitecto / Architect: UMWELT (Scheidegger y García Partarrieu)
Colaborador / Contributor: José Ignacio Tello, Lucas Ormazábal
Ubicación / Location: Estación de metro Ñuñoa, Santiago de Chile
Cliente / Client: Embajada Suiza en Chile, Metro de Santiago
Cálculo estructural / Structural engineering: Binden / Javier Fernández
Construcción / Construction: Instalación lumínica / lighting installation: Allan Mcdonald, Claudio Leiva; galería / gallery: NOT; exposiciones / exhibitions: NOT, UMWELT
Letreros / Signs: Decokorp, NOT

Sistema constructivo / Structural materials: Acero, aluminio, alucobond / steel, aluminum, alucobond
Iluminación galería / Gallery illumination: Matías López
Iluminación instalaciones / Installations illumination: Antonia Péón-Keiga
Diseño gráfico / Graphic design: Gracia Fernández, Amalia Fernández, Macarena Vogel
Año de proyecto / Project year: 2019-presente
Año de construcción / Construction year: 2019-presente
Fotografía / Photography: Felipe Ugalde
Instalación permanente: Alpes, diptico con fotografías de Matthieu Gafsou / Permanent installation: Alpes, dipictico con fotografías de Matthieu Gafsou. © Felipe Ugalde
As a platform for cultural encounter, the project activates the Ñuñoa metro station—a historical and emblematic area for the Swiss community—, acting as a counterpart to the commercial spaces that have gradually populated it. Additionally, it explores the question of how to promote relations between two countries without falling into propaganda or tourist pamphlets. To achieve this, a master plan was defined to organize the implementation of a series of site-specific interventions, exhibitions, and events that will take place during the coming years at the station.

The masterplan involved the configuration of a route that crosses the six underground levels, superimposing a new circuit between the city and the underground, and incorporating a series of new elements: railway clocks, signs, and the intervention of one of the station’s structural pillars. The first step was the construction of a lighting installation on level -3. Designed as a red environment without any specific function or content other than the immersive experience itself, the installation announced the possibility of projects to come.

Subsequently, in the same location, a gallery was designed for temporary exhibitions. Given the site’s high transit flow and the need for easy operation, the gallery followed an infrastructural logic: a metal grid suspended from the existing concrete structure supporting both illumination equipment and the system for hanging and displaying the artwork.

The gallery is 9 m x 12 m and consists of modules of 3 m x 3m that define possible configurations for exhibitions based on the light rails and the hanging and anchoring system. In the times in which there is no exhibition, the gallery returns to its state of a light installation. The grid was made of prefabricated components and joints assembled in the station interrupting as little as possible its normal operation. In this way, a practically residual passageway was transformed into a cultural space.

To date, the space has hosted five temporary exhibitions: “Roberto Montandon, el pasado presente”; “Magallanes y las geografías de lo (des)conocido”; “Cleantech, ¿Puede la tecnología salvar el mundo?”; “Paul Klee, forma y color,” and “La cuerda infinita de Catalina Bauer”. In parallel, there are two permanent interventions: “Paisajes poéticos de Chile,” a 40 m mural with a series of twelve poems selected by the writer Álvaro Bisama and interpreted graphically by the Escuela Cantonal de Artes de Lausana (ECAL), and “Glaciers,” a diptych with two giant photographs by Matthieu Gafsou located in the station’s main circulation area.

Thus, the project’s objective is to strengthen the role of infrastructure in the construction of the public sphere in a city where the privatization of urban space has been the norm for years.
Sección isométrica instalaciones "Paisajes Poéticos", "Alpes" y Galería Suizspacio / "Paisajes Poéticos", "Alpes" and Galería Suizspacio installations: Isometric section
S. E. / N. S.

Instalación permanente: "Paisajes Poéticos de Chile" / Permanent installation: "Paisajes Poéticos de Chile". © Felipe Ugalde
Galería Suizspacio, secuencia de exposiciones / Suizspacio gallery, sequence of exhibitions © UMWELT

Isométrica explotada galería / Gallery exploded isometric drawing
S. E. / N. S.
Leyenda / Legend
1 Grilla y perforaciones a piso / Grid and ground perforations
2 Sistema eléctrico y lumínico / Electrical and lighting system
3 Rieles de soporte museográfico / Exhibition display support railings
4 Estructura colgante / Floating structure
5 Estructura de anclaje a cielo / Ceiling anchoring structure
6 Estructura de vigas existentes / Existing beam structure
Uniones y encuentros estructuras de acero / Steel structures joints and connections
S. E. / N. S.

Despiece de estructuras ancladas a cielo / Disassembled ceiling-anchored structures
S. E. / N. S.

Dispositivos expositivos galería / Gallery exhibition devices
S. E. / N. S.
UMWELT

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Practice and research studio for architecture and territorial design. It was founded by Ignacio García Partarrieu and Arturo Scheidegger, both architects and masters in Architecture, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2012. Their projects have been exhibited at the Venice Biennale, the MoMA in New York, the Storefront for Art and Architecture gallery, among others. They have been awarded several times, including the first prizes in the competitions for the PP29 Memorial and the YAP CONSTRUCTO 2014, and more recently for the EFCE Corporate Building, in addition to the Millennium BCDebut Award of the Lisbon Triennale they received in 2016. In 2018 they published Schapira Eskenazi Arquitectos: Obra Cincuentenaria through Ediciones ARQ, a book awarded at the 2019 Chilean Architecture Biennial.