There is a meeting in the shadows barriers
Castelldefels - Promenade

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Data Project:

Name:
Tratamiento ambiental del frente marítimo de Castelldefels, Tramo III
Castelldefels - Promenade

Author(s):
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2.751.806,52 € (Total),
83,50 €/m²

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“Dialogue as an opening to discover people and territory”
HOW IS A BEACHSCAPE? ...

Barcelona a city from the Catalonia community, is located on the Northeastern coast of the Mediterranean and French Pyrenees. The city details the large mountain areas that generate a great natural diversity within the territory, perceiving a connection between the natural, sea and mountain within the urban. Although it offers many tourist and entertainment places for people around the world, but there is a very monotonous perception about the territory.

In the coastal area, Llevant, Nova Mar Bella, Mar Bella, Bogatell, Nova Icaria, Somorrostro, Barceloneta, Sant Miquel and Sant Sebastian, because of their easy access, these beaches have become the most frequently visited by the Barcelona citizens. Users can rest, get out of the routine, sunbathe, swim in the sea, do sports, have a leisure time, etc. Actually, these beaches are visited by millions of people with a high growth in the future regarding to the tourist demand. However, the extension of the coast of Barcelona shows different types of beaches, which generate great diversity to the territory. The beaches mentioned above have a perception of leisure and entertainment spaces, but there are other beach spaces that are related to the landscape. In this case we refer to Castelldefels’s seafront which is bordered at beginning with the Delta Llobregat (Natural Reserve), the national airport and towards the other side are connection with Sitges and a mountainous space that forms the natural park of Garraf. This place has a lot of natural presence and the city occupies a small perene-tage of the territory.

Castelldefels’s seafront is a coast line development with an interesting variety of natural wildlife and public spaces. The abundance of nature like diverse vegetation, dunes, rivers and a whole complex of the urban with the sea, has characterized this great place. A beachscape with a natural area and with almost no construction it is where people lives.

KNOWING THE TERRITORY

The strength of the wind and the force of the sea contributed in the formation of the Llobregat river. This river started its course in the Sant Boi and Prat, gaining the form of the Garraf coast and separating it from the Murtrassa sea. Consequently the pond of the Murtrassa started to be filled up with little streams transforming them into the Delta de Llobregat.

In the 20th centuries, the delta sea front, became one of the most important beaches of Barcelona. People from different parts of the world started visiting this place and making it to reach a higher standard for people living in Casteldefells. Therefore the local economy transformed the beach into a touristic symbol in the 1960’s.

In the Roman age, Casteldefells was part of a natural anchorage port with a few land structures where the boats arrived to protect themselves from the strong winds. All the area that is now a days Castelldefells and Viladecans were part of a place of great importance for the agriculture trades. After the pirate attacks to the coast in 1550, the population was terrified causing people to escape to the nearest mountains.

In the 14th century the settlement was dispersed due to the insecurities that were presented at the time. In Santa Maria de Castelldefels, one of the first cities, the construction of houses were particularly for the farmers however they were insecure spaces with poor agricultural quality. Demographic stabilization begins after the decreased population caused by the low middle age epidemic disease. It was in the year 1721 when it starts a set of agricultural promotions of the city of Barcelona for the improvement of its economic establishment. In the 1930s a group of architect (GATCPAC) started a urban plan project for Barcelona that would include the cities of Castelldefels, Viladecans, and Gava. A project that would be destined for the popular class, that would qualify the needs for people that like outdoors activities, leisure and vacationing. However this project of great ideas failed due to the paralysis of the
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expropriations and the beginnings of the civil war. Later in 1959 the urban growth arising a new empower rich class in Castelldefells. The citizens commonly spent their time during summer living in their second houses. Is in this period where new housing projects started launching. The increase of population between the 60’s and 70’s was exceeding the 2,000 reaching the 20,000. This was the cause of excessive growth in housing construction and a demand for land lots. Castelldefells starts representing a map of new neighborhoods and new different typologies of residence.

The territorial cohesion has been the conformation of a diverse union in provenance, due to the French that arrived in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is from the 20th centuries when the urban structure began to appear with a small nucleus of simple constructions, surrounded by stables, cultivation fields and fruit trees. Castelldefells began to be a city with a worth equipped urbanization, green zones and great presence of natural spaces.

CASTELLDEFELS SEAFRONT - PHASE 03

The maritime promenade constitutes a highly urbanized area that defines a longitudinal connection that invites the user to a lineal walk that assures the pedestrian its direction, linking it to the urban transversal axes with hierarchy that constitutes its own income to the site coming from the urban areas. This helps the interactions with the natural systems, such as the dunes, the beach and the sea. The purpose is to preserve and recover the natural and scenic values of the coastline and the maritime public domain as land. The project produces different activities that over time it generates new landscapes and necessities to the users which they are not seen in a preview phase, but should be planned for a morphologic change of a natural or antropique theme in their environment.

The proposal not only seeks to satisfy the needs of the human beings but also to understand the territory where the project is located and how it works. That is why we opted for the construction of different scales for the dunes, which together with the vegetation will make the natural system work correctly. The composition of different natural elements of this system generates an ideal atmosphere for the variety of biodiversity of animals such as the lizards and birds (Chortlejo).

The proposal design must be flexible to the constant change of the territory since all the spaces are in constant transformation over time. It should seeks human comfort and connection with the environment. As previously mentioned, the maritime front behaves like an intermediate space between the nature and the city, causing a physical edge looking forward to its proper space and preventing the perturbation of the city. It attempts to create comfortable and pleasant spaces, for the user and in this way the user can interact satisfying its own needs and always respecting the importance of the natural territory and its biodiversity.

The human activity it is largely spent in the urban tissue, the main factor that helps unify the project. Whether residents or tourists are willing to spend a favorable time outside the city. Commerce, culture, education and other services invites the user to the coastline to meet their needs, this causing an impact of connection between the natural with the human in its territory.

The AMB (1) proposed a set of wooden walkways, which work as connectors for temporary activities between the urban space and the beach. All the public equipment like the urban furniture, restaurants etc, serves as a transversal connection with the beach.
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AN UMBRELLA AS A COMMUNICATIVE ATMOSPHERE

In order to know the relationship between the maritime front of Castelldefels, its territory and the different dynamics of the users, it was decided to develop a disturbance within the site, to understand how the linear proposal is use and how a public space intervenes within the user. Facing the littoral front coast in a period of time we wanted to understand the human interactions and necessities.

As a first step we evaluated the type of weather that would be generated during the intervention, we looked for a rainy environment to be able to generate the performance and be useful for the people to make a comfort space for them. However, we found a hot climate we used the same methodology, but this time we would offer a space of shade to travel throughout the maritime promenade.

In able to generate the perturbation we use umbrellas to make an intimate proximity with people and start a conversation. This kind of approaching was inspiring in projects of the artist Suzanne Lacy (2) who use meeting to talk about different kind of topics. This element helped us create an atmosphere that would leads us to gain personal information from people and on how they use the maritime front, if they use the local equipment, the green areas, the restaurants, the beach etc.

Therefore, our disturbance was to have a group of people with umbrellas positioning in a strategic point of access for people to avoid passing through them. We created barriers with helium balloons trying to prevent them from going to the beach. The balloons will intrigue the user and helps us to attract them and start a conversation. The helium of the balloon will help us detect where the user is located and how the human flows. We conclude that with all this process we will be approaching with the users creating small atmospheres in movement. The user and the umbrella were our principal protagonists of this performance, being able to analyze what is the routine of each individual and what are there activities. At the end of the intervention we storage a mass of information that will help us understand how they use the space and the different things that had not been thought of the master design of the maritime front.

Some of the cases of a people were the collection of snails in the dunes for the for the diet of some users, use the beach as their “big pool” and swim before going to work or just to take bathing showers because the landscape is more comfortable. Another particular example occurred during 11:00 am to 2:00 pm they wanted a shade shelter to avoid the sun rays but be able to be in the beach so they use their house seats, since these are more comfortable and put it them under the palm trees. The most frequent walks were from 2 to 4 kilometers and they take place between 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and between 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., due to user routines (before or after going to work, to school, university, institute, etc.). Also, these schedules applied with almost equal frequency to people who were going to run or cycle, showing distances between 5 to 10 kilometers and 8 to 15 kilometers respectively. The intensity of use of these activities was between 3 to 5 times per week.

DRAWINGS - DIAGRAMS ABOUT DISTURBANCE PROCESS. UMBRELLA ATMOSPHERE (CASTELLDEFELS - BARCELONA) OWN SOURCE BY: PEDRO MENDOZA AVILA - PERU
BEACHSCAPE: THE COEXISTENCE OF HUMAN TERRITORY OVER TIME

The value of public space for a society lies in being spaces of different uses where the user can express himself/herself and interact as a collective being before society. However, these spaces can not only be seen as spaces to meet the needs of people, they are interventions that occupy a specific territory, which has particular and unique characteristics that must be respected since there is an entire ecosystem that lives in it. The seashore of Castelldefels behaves like a longitudinal line parallel to the coast which is a hinge between the urbanization space and the coastal natural territory. The project aims to satisfy the needs of its users, however, the aspect of time must be reinforced for the constant change of space and also to know how the intervention will react to urban growth and its new needs. In this way the factors of time, the constant change of territory, biodiversity, play an important role in understanding the perception of the landscape.

After the development of the disturbance, information was collected regarding the perception of the users. First of all, almost all users were grateful to have a natural beach with a dune system, this was due to the great visual impact that marks unlike beaches like Barceloneta. In this way he gained rapid acceptance and encouraged his care. However, there was concern about the width of the footbridge since some places were narrower than others with the aim of giving space to the dune system. The perception of users regarding these areas is dead spaces, without use and only to travel. Another point to take into account is the shadow. Whether with natural or artificial elements, users looked for shaded areas to protect themselves from the sun. However, the presence of these spaces is scarce, which got users to claim for them because they perceived that these places are resting places with respect to different activities they perform on the seaside looking for comfort. Then, the presence of elements that propitiate the shadow should be evaluated accompanied by continuous furniture for the user’s rest, in this way different atmospheres would be generated that respond to the morphology of the territory.

With respect to access, it must be understood that although everyone will have similar elements, each access is different. This is because each one is a different door between the city and the beach, transversality is not only crossing from one side to another but also experiencing the varied routes of its users, which give an information of the use of the place. Likewise, each access respects the development of the dunes, seeking that the dune landscape not only be present as a static element but also as a changing and living system.

In this way, these aspects have been evaluated regarding the disturbance created with the umbrellas, leaving in evidence the perception of the users with regard to the beach of Castelldefels. Showing that the residents of the place use the space very often and that they take into account that the landscape they experience worries about the territory, seeking harmony with the activities of man.