

# Port City Architecture

## Reading Paintings as an Architectural Design Method

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### Abstract

This article addresses the role and the importance of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century narratives and depictions of port cities in contemporary architectural design with a specific focus on paintings. In the last decades, cities the world undertook a large number of urban regeneration projects along waterfronts. In this way, vacant sites on waterfront areas became an opportunity to apply contemporary architectural design; however, many of those projects resulted in generic buildings failing to establish relationships with their landscape, environs, and the history of port cities. High-rise buildings, for instance, began to dominate waterfronts in many of the port cities (e.g., in London, Liverpool, Rotterdam, Baltimore). The land was simply used as a “site” by developers, and the contemporary architectural design failed to address the specificity of the architecture and caved in to the demands which had little to do with the possibilities of place. This article showcases a library and concert hall project realised in Bodø, Norway, to provide insight into an alternative model, where the architecture is situated specifically in response to the port condition and acts as a mediator between port, city and landscape.

An interview with the architect Daniel Rosbottom, founder of the architecture firm DRDH which designed the project, provided insight into the design process. As Rosbottom elaborated broadly, a 19<sup>th</sup>-century painting of church San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, by the English painter J.M.W Turner was used as an inspiration for the design process. The embedded knowledge in the painting informed the project at various levels and turned a site into a place on the waterfront of Bodø. The design process analysis reveals similarities and significance of paired relations between artworks and architectural design and hints that the remedy of the contemporary architectures in port cities may lie in port cities' own (immaterial) resources.

### Keywords

contemporary architectural design, port city, port city architectures, Bodø, waterfront regeneration projects, narratives, urban cultures, port city culture

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## **Port cities since the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century**

Since the 1960s, vacant waterfronts of port cities have been in demand as sites for urban redevelopments and contemporary architecture. These developments fundamentally aim to rehabilitate and regenerate former port areas, abandoned port-related spaces that became derelict in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Waterfronts have been a place for a set of different and evolving experiences since the first projects in North America. The waterfront regeneration projects undertaken between the 1960s and 1980s resulted in hotels and office buildings often located in tall buildings, aiming for economic transformation (Shaw, 2004). The subsequent projects (i.e., London Docklands, Rotterdam Kop van Zuid) have been through the same process. After the 1990s, projects like Barcelona Port Vell and Genoa Porto Antico prioritised the development of cultural facilities. One of the most recent developments, the Hamburg Hafencity project, has pluralised the functional programme focusing on mix-use buildings, leisure facilities, luxury housing, and cultural facilities. In addition, the process has improved in terms of organisation of the development projects (from single actor, stakeholder to multiple actors, including public-private partnerships), the architectural design, the way architects' involvement in the projects (from single architects to the competition-based designs) (Tanış, 2016a).

Waterfronts have always been privileged areas before the decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The return to waterfronts and the increasing application of waterfront regeneration projects in the contemporary era is evidence in acknowledging the value of waterfronts that has been ignored for a few decades during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While recent urban developments on waterfront areas in port cities offer an excellent opportunity to develop and implement contemporary architectural design approaches, most of the transformation projects in port cities resulted in some generic buildings. Danish architect Jan Gehl suggests that the buildings in port cities are looking like expensive perfume bottles (Gehl, 2012). Developers, stakeholders, and decision-makers have often considered sites along the waterfronts as an opportunity. The priority for the developments has been given to the rehabilitation of urban places economically and socially. The response of many cities to their derelict waterfronts, is reminiscent of the post-war architecture, which developed buildings hastily to recover war wounds. Notably, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century architecture of port cities reveals the lack of established relationship between their landscape, environs, and historical identity (Tanış, 2016b).

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## **A Gap in Port City Research and its Drawbacks in Architectural Practice**

The lack of relationship between many present-day architectural projects in port cities and their unique contexts projects a gap in port city research. Scholarship in the field of port city research has paid much attention to port and city's reciprocal influences on one another with a specific focus on port-city interface and infrastructural advancement. A part of the scholarship evaluated the port-city relations by analysing how port and city are splitting in line with the technological and economic developments (Hoyle, 1989). Another body of work focused on re-establishing relations between the operational port and the city. In addition, some scholars addressed the waterfront regeneration projects and their governance (Daamen and Vries, 2013; Schubert, 2014). Finally, a part of the scholarship focused on the evolving basic port facilities and addressed how port cities have been interconnected at a functional level to run global trade (Hein, 2011). However, prominent scholarship on the studied field has overlooked the specificity of contemporary port city architectures. Particularly the question of how to design in port cities in the contemporary era has remained unaddressed. Only recently, less than a handful of works hope to start discussions under the overarching theme of port city architecture (Tanış, 2016; Tanış, Erkök, 2016; Tanış, 2020).

Although port cities distinguish themselves from other cities due to their particular character, waterfronts became a "site" for developers due to the gap in the field, coupled with emerging waterfront development

projects. The notion of the site defines as “the spatial location of an actual or planned structure or set of structures (such as a building, town, or monuments)” (site (n.d.) in Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary). This article attempts to stimulate discussion on port cities’ specific character while providing a methodological insight into port cities’ architectural design, aiming to turn the “site” into the “place”. In contrast to the site, the notion of place offers a deeper understanding and has an existential connotation. We can understand “place” as “an integral part of existence”. It is a “manifestation of man’s dwelling” and locates architecture between earth and sky and within its landscape (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, 10). In the analysis of the place, its character plays an important role. According to Norberg-Schulz, the concept of character is related to a place’s material and formal constitution (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, 14). The material constitution of a port city has been resulted from multifaceted human and non-human encounters due to vast interactions between other port cities. Consequently, different technical knowledge, building materials came into contact with the existing building tradition and building materials of the city incorporating the natural environment (see Taniş, 2021); thus, port cities have a unique character.

Norberg-Schulz criticised modern buildings for not relating themselves to their landscapes, environs, and historical identity (Norberg-Schulz, 2000, 19). The direct engagement of buildings lies in establishing relations between topography, their surrounding landscapes and natural context (Norberg-Schulz, 1971, 24-27). Similarly, British architect Quinlan Terry reflects in the same line of thought: “Architecture depends on function, durability, order, humanity, nature and beauty. Modern architecture has none of these things.” (Terry, 1976). The return to building along waterfronts and the tendency of building constructive relationships on the contrary of the post-war modernism stands as a concrete acknowledgement for building the relationship between present-day and the port cities’ historical qualities that evolved under the maritime and port city cultures. In this respect, universality is an essential dimension of the place-making process<sup>1</sup>. This universality and the embedded knowledge were hidden in port cities’ representation. Paintings function as a nexus for bouncing knowledge and cultures of port cities. Paintings produced until the 20<sup>th</sup> century naturally focused on the waterfronts where the international exchange between diverse port cities have composed an integral part of port cities. The only way to reach Venice was the boat until the advent of the railway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The universal condition regarding spatial construction of port cities in this way captured in the paintings. Principles of port city architecture that succeeded to establish human’s relations to their environment in a historical way are timeless. Such historical depictions of port cities can inform architectural designers today.

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## **Port City Architecture in the Contemporary Era**

In quest of contemporary design approaches for situated architecture in port cities, this study emphasises that port cities need to be understood in their interconnected historical context considering both architecture and their representation. This approach is neither historicism nor nostalgia for port cities’ past. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the development of port cities carefully interpreted the landscape and established links between individuals, culture, nature, and society through architecture. In developing a specific port city character, local features such as topography, climate, city’s spatial relations with land and water body played an important role. Reciprocal links between architecture and representation significantly contributed to the unique development of those cities (Taniş and Hein, 2020, pp. 44-45). Interactions between port cities developed different viewpoints on port cities to understand them as a whole. Particularly two groups of people readily understood the relations between architecture and representation: Merchants, one of the

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For further elaboration, please see the chapter “Universality” in Norberg-Schulz (1997).

groups, had a detailed understanding of building port cities and their representation in promotion for trade. The other group consisted of travellers who depicted port cities and their specific aspects in their works. Port cities and their urban life have attracted the gaze of strangers and were inspirational for travellers, including painters and novelists. They created a large number of artworks. Not only should artworks be understood as a cultural product, but also, they need to be considered as a source of knowledge and insights that could still guide port cities' architectures and urban matters. Therefore, this study introduces consulting to port cities' artworks as a way of thinking in contemporary architectural design towards a unique and site-specific, or, more preferably, situated architecture in those cities<sup>2</sup>. Finding the remedy for the generic architectural results in port cities through artworks is also a tendentious way of explaining port cities' particularity.



FIGURE 1 Bodø (Wikimedia commons).

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Please read Haraway (1988) for further insights on situated knowledge.



FIGURE 2 Bodø in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Unknown, ca.1890-ca1900).

For this inquiry, this article focuses on the design process of an award-winning project<sup>3</sup> Stormen Cultural Complex consisted of a library and a concert hall in Bodø. Bodø is the second-largest city in Northern Norway. Particularly after Bodø became a market city, kjøpstad in old Scandinavian, in 1816, the town was known for its active trade. The term kjøpstad referred to the city's importance as a port city and indicated the active participation in the trade and export of materials (Hansen, 2015). In 1940, The Luftwaffe bombed Bodø and destroyed around six hundred buildings in the city. Upon this event, Bodø was hastily built, like many other cities affected by wars. Consequently, the city's present-day urban environment is mainly composed of lightweight prefabricated housing as a part of post-war architecture dating back to the 60s and 70s (Olcayto, 2015, 32). This urban condition makes the selected project very appropriate for this article as a starting point. What makes the selected project even more significant is using a watercolour painting in the design process. Architects Daniel Rosbottom and David Howarth are the founders of DRDH Architects in London. Professor and architect Daniel Rosbottom, whose interview and lectures have been informative and insightful for this article, lives in London, works in London and Delft amongst other cities in different countries. DRDH became interested in embedded knowledge in artworks for their design to imagine the atmosphere of a place which the architects had not visited earlier. Considering the quality of Northern lights and their effects on the materials and colours of the building in relation to the atmospheric conditions, architects sought ways to establish a relationship between the building and the viewer across the water. In the case of Stormen Cultural Complex in Bodø, their analysis has benefitted from a painting of the Tate Collection in London. Joseph Mallord William Turner's depiction of the Palladio's San Giorgio Maggiore titled San Giorgio Maggiore Early Morning has been influential for the project from the decision on mass, façade order, void and solid composition to the choice of the materials and its colour. DRDH's design approach provides a particular perspective to reach the specificity as the counterpart of the generic results in port cities.

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The project's success has been internationally recognised and awarded with several recognitions that include the Norwegian Award for Building Design 2015, Building of the Year 2014, Architects' Journal, five best buildings of 2014, The Telegraph, Highly commended, and AR Future Projects Awards 2010 (URL-1).



FIGURE 3 San Giorgio Maggiore Early Morning, Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1819.

In this perspective, this article is ordered by following the role of the paintings in architectural design. Throughout the article, the painter and architect are considered similar in the artwork's composition and the architectural design. There is but one difference: the painter captures the knowledge of the existing building with its landscape and embeds it in his frame, whereas the architect unfolds the embedded knowledge in the frame and transmits it into the architectural design process and creation of a new building. The study starts by explaining the roles of both the painter and the architect. First, it touches upon the significance of being a stranger in the context. Then, it zooms into the design process of the project in Bodø by focusing on underlying patterns that led to unique architectural design while aiming to reveal the relationship between the artist and artwork, architect and architecture. It then continues with reflecting on the project with the notion of monumentality, one of the main concerns DRDH carried for the project. In conclusion, the analysis of the design process reveals the paired relations between artworks and architectural design.

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## **Embedded Knowledge in the Artworks for Architectural Design**

### **The Gaze of Strangers: The Value of Being Stranger to the Context**

Foreign travellers who were strangers to cities produced most of the visuals that include maps and paintings. Foreign cartographers, naval engineers and navigators drew numerous maps, particularly to better-known port cities along their journeys, for instance. Cartographer and engineer Charles E. Goad founded his firm Charles E. Goad Ltd. in Canada. They produced numerous fire insurance plans for industrialised cities that varied from Manchester to Izmir to Istanbul. Another example of these productions



could be the engraving and paintings on Izmir. Numerous visuals are depicting the land-ward looking view of the city, and almost all of these artworks produced by foreign travellers, including French traveller and naturalist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656-1708), French cartographer Henri Abraham Chatelain (1684 - 1743), and Dutch painter Abraham Storck (1645 - 1710). Orientalist painters are great examples of such compilations.

Given the short time of their contact with the city, in artworks, most of the time, the painters have sketched their works very rapidly. They completed it upon their return home. The productions in short-time periods result from the freshness of the context and painters' agility to compose their frames. This process also requires being selective, what to depict, what to exclude from the context. There is a pre-conditioned knowledge and experience that allows us to capture the themes. Painters were often trained in art schools in Europe. The painter of the selected artwork for the design project was English Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775 - 1851), who studied in the Royal Academy of Arts. His works received praise from the British art critic John Ruskin (Turner, 2000). His background and precise understanding that captured the port cities selected fragments in his frame have been very appropriate choices for the design approach of DRDH. Similarly, this feature also exists in architects, given their educational background, experiences and intellectuality. Both architects and painters carry pre-conditioned knowledge, and they arrive at the context as informed individuals.

The condition of being in-between brings value to the architectural project and design process. The culture, climate, history, practice and typicality of Bodø were different from the London-based architecture firm DRDH's knowledge. The research done by DRDH was the primary phase for engaging with the project. This process included reading about the contextual background, learning about the city's history and the building types. The architects recognised the value of being the stranger to the context; DRDH operated in similar positions of travellers, particularly while they were making themselves knowledgeable about the city and its urban context. According to Rosbottom, the underlying reason for the significance of being a stranger is freshness. A fresh pair of eyes helps to grasp the context quickly, allowing building connections and relationships with dimensions that guide architects and urban designers. People may become blind to their surroundings or context, Rosbottom adds (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). Indeed, the realities of cities do not seem apparent to the inhabitants as much as they are visible to strangers. A traveller would value and capture different elements than the city's citizens. That traveller's mind is in an absorbing mode, and they often make themselves informed through multiple channels before they arrive in cities. So do the architects.

## **Towards the Library and Concert Hall Project in Bodø**

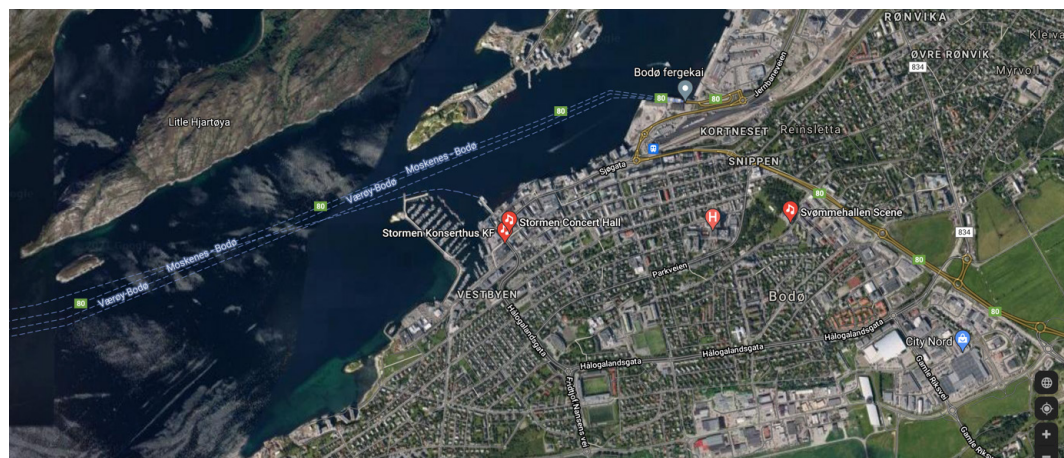


FIGURE 4 The location of the Concert Hall (Stormen Concert Hall) and the City Library on map (URL-2).

The master plan competition launched for designing Bodø's Cultural Quarter was the precursor to the project of the library and the concert hall (URL-1). The architects' comprehensive understanding derived from the freshness of the context brought the first prize to DRDH in 2008 in this competition. According to the brief of the master plan, participants were given autonomy for placing buildings (i.e., a concert hall and theatre, a new city library and a small maritime museum) in the city (URL-3). DRDH placed those buildings in vacant port sites in the urban centre close to the waterfront. The concert hall and the city library aim to address the water and the city while embedding the cultural buildings into the everyday experience of the city. This approach was not recognised by many participants, as Rosbottom explains his surprise during the interview. According to him, this thought was self-evident as an answer to the question. In the present day, Bodo is the end of many journeys, and it is the end of many forms of transport, including the train station and bus stops. Architects unravelled the complexity of infrastructural developments in port cities and translated into the changing perceptions, such as the arrival from the land to the same location along the waterfront extends the perception of the building. In fact, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, waterfronts became places where the buildings were perceived both from the water and the land (Taniş and van der Hoeven, 2019, 170).



FIGURE 5 The Stormen Public Library (courtesy The Guardian).

Following the first prize award for the master plan, DRDH was invited for the second architectural competition, for which they again won the first prize. The concert hall's functional program covers three auditoriums, two small performance spaces and supporting functions (URL-4). The library has community functions that include the performance space, a gallery, a multifunction room, a café and a children's library on top of the building. The spatial generosity of those buildings offers public spaces to the city. For instance, the library's main floor can be used as a public square and provides space for large public events. All bookshelves in the library have wheels to be easily moved and effectively use the space (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). In a project consisted of 6.300 m<sup>2</sup> of library and 11.200 m<sup>2</sup> of the concert hall (DRDH Architects), architects worked at every scale, from fabric to urban fabric, as Rosbottom put it. This large project started in December 2012 and completed in November 2014.





FIGURE 6 The Public Library (image courtesy of David Grandorge).

The location of the buildings and well-established links between buildings and their landscape plays a vital role in the project's success. Through the glazed façade, the main spaces of the library create a dialogue between users and the harbour (URL-5). A café is located on the street directly connected to the city. The building, therefore, has become a backdrop to public life, as Rosbottom suggests (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). Rosbottom stresses the urban role of two buildings in dialogue with one another as much as they are dialogue with water and city. Stormen Cultural Centre has expedient spaces to build up over time. Rosbottom explains the agency of the building that should be capable of consolidating to bring the coherence to be invisible.

Additionally, the monumentality of the building is a way to embody a collective memory of citizens. Collective memory is a socially constructed notion (Halbwachs, 1992). The collective memory is a shared memory and linked to history (Ijabs, 2014). The collective memory of port cities is not limited to a group of people or citizens of a single city. It encapsulates a shared culture amongst other port cities, reinforcing familiarity and laying a common ground for port cities. That familiarity created a universal condition and urbanity. In return, it is essential to get a sense of belonging and being familiar with diverse cultures (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). In this perspective, the architects aimed at creating heterogeneity and bringing back the qualities that were not necessarily there before. They did this by linking the collective activity of inhabitants to the Stormen Cultural Center.

### **Finding the Form of the Monument**

Daniel Rosbottom referred to monumentality as an essential aspect of their project. The functional program and the agency of the building is one part that constitutes the monument. Another essential part is the physical construction of the building, and its representative qualities mirror San Giorgio Maggiore's qualities. The norms of the monument remain fundamental for its architectural design. The function and the purpose of the buildings may change throughout history, but establishing relationships with their surroundings will remain alike. The monumental buildings mediate the everyday experience, a backbone of the building's

monumental character. Palladio's 16<sup>th</sup>-century church was the central figure in Turner's 19<sup>th</sup>-century painting. Regardless of its function (e.g., a place for worship, cultural centre etc.), the embedded knowledge in the artwork regarding the monumentality carries invaluable insights that architects can use for present-day monumental buildings. These insights include the composition, the use of light, the site choice, and the perception of place and space.

The use of the artworks in the design process shows that deconstructing the relationship between the artist and the artwork enables a reflection on the contemporary understanding of port city architectures. The painter captured a moment from the sea looking towards the land. The kinetic movement of the boat they are on and how they approach the city leads to the cinematic approach in the architectural design. DRDH used this approach to compose the mass of their buildings. The church's many façades were flattened as looking like a single continuous façade in the painting. Many layers of façades are compressed into a single façade. This aspect became very present in the final form of the DRDH's project in Bodø. Under the guidance of the depiction, DRDH aimed to form two buildings that would be seen from the sea as a single consumer form. The cinematic approach understood from the painting also leads to registering the experience of moving through the city, as a counterpart of Le Corbusier's perception from the aeroplane, the idea of the urban structure understood as a whole from a distance (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). DRDH cut the corner of the building to provide a terrace to the inhabitants, reaching the building from the land site. In this way, the architects weaved buildings into the urban fabric and the everyday life of inhabitants, as this is an essential aspect of the monument to provide space for experiences to be embodied in the collective memory of citizens.



FIGURE 7 A look from the city towards Concert Hall and the library (image courtesy David Grandorge).

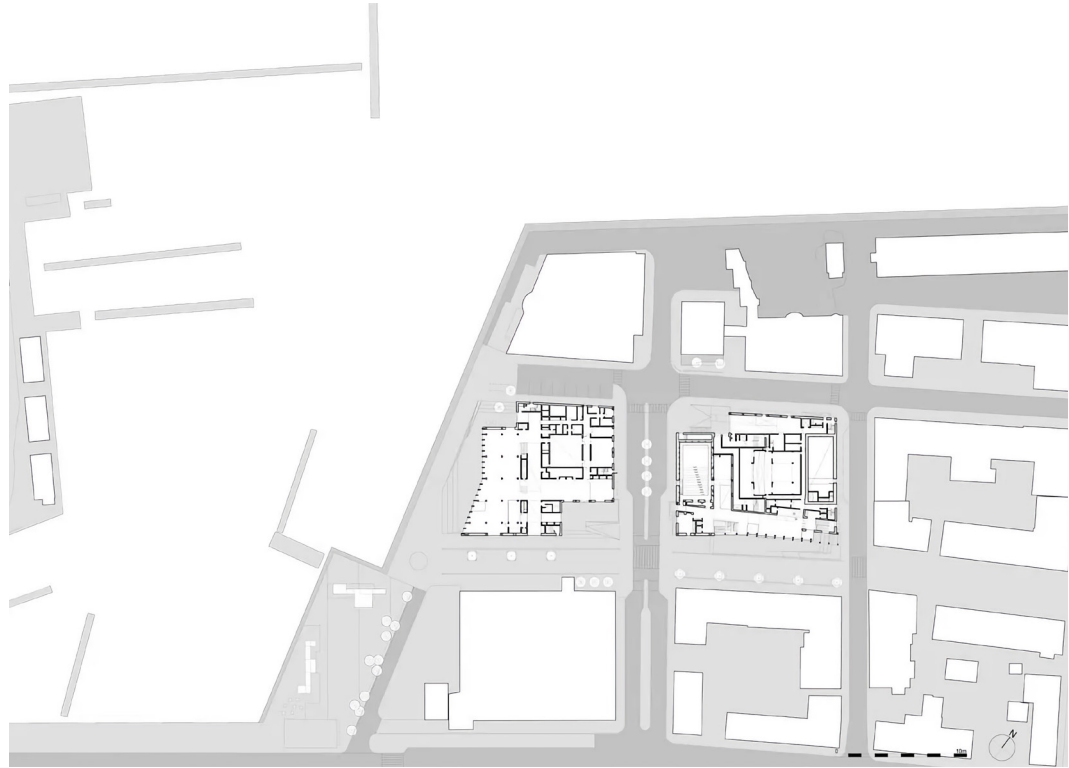


FIGURE 8 The site plan of the library (on the left-hand side) and the concert hall (on the right-hand side) (courtesy: DRDH Architects).



FIGURE 9 Library and Concert Hall Buildings from the harbour (image courtesy David Grandorge).

Local characteristics of Bodø, such as climate and geographical conditions and building tradition, have been essential determinants in the design process, particularly for the quest of the longevity of buildings. Bodø is in the Arctic Circle. Being close to the North Pole naturally leads to cold winters and cool summers in Bodø. The weather and the superb natural lighting condition were essential parameters for the material choice of the building. There are two different approaches for the outer and the inner construction of the building. The technical application of building material also refers back to the monuments. Building a public monument has more responsibility to last longer. Many post-war buildings were prefabricated concrete constructions. Therefore, they were contingent and unable to deal with its environment, particularly Norway's extreme natural conditions (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). The material choice in this project was also a critique of the contemporary architecture culture. Building materials last for about twenty-five years nowadays, says Rosbottom. Building next to the sea means also dealing with salt, humidity, and extreme climate conditions that lead to substantial temperature changes in the case of Bodø. For this reason, considerable research is done together with the Norwegian research institution to develop prefabricated concrete as a solution to the climate (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019).

Apart from the technical aspects regarding the building should meet requirements for its longevity, the light in the painting has inspired the material choice. Turner painted the San Giorgio Maggiore across the lagoon in the very early morning with hazy gold light. Bodø is in the Arctic Circle. Therefore, the city has white nights; the sun does not set from June to July (URL-6). DRDH tested several materials on the light. The choice was on reflective material. They saw that the building was never in the same colour during these tests, how the light reflected differently in the facade and how the colours varied. The colour was changing as the sky changes. In this way, DRDH consolidated the representative value of the building. Yellowish-white was appropriate for the colour choice, particularly for its reflective characteristic.

Additionally, white was dominant in Norwegian architecture. As Norberg Schulz explains, white could light up long winter nights and somehow hold the sun. Therefore, the material choice had several purposes. For instance, on the ground level, continuity was necessary for the urban scene, the post-war neighbourhood built with creamy concrete. Thus, the yellowish-white coloured material was an appropriate choice. In this way, DRDH also hoped to acknowledge the inherited architectural culture in their buildings (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019).

Historically, Norway has a strong building tradition connected to the natural environment. The historic settlements of the city took their root from the balance of the individuality and interdependency of the Norwegian culture (Rosbottom, 2020). The primary concern of architecture was to build a relationship between the individual and culture, nature, and society (Rosbottom, 2020). Daniel Rosbottom reflects on the current condition of the broken relationship that existed historically in Norway. Rosbottom indicates the responsibility of contemporary architecture and agrees that the projects like Stormen Cultural Center in Bodo have the power to recalibrate the relationship between the city and its waterfront, as this study aims to stress (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019).

Additionally, Rosbottom refers to the architect's role in understanding how to stitch the urban fabric, disrupted through the 20<sup>th</sup> century (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). Cities change over time. Rosbottom points out that intention and value are the keys to consider for an architect. Port cities have unique urban conditions. The architects' ethical responsibility is not to ignore the colonial history, extreme social differences, cataclysms of world wars, and present-day challenges such as climate change to make a valid contribution to the body of architecture that cities inherited (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019). Thus, rather than a finite outcome, DRDH planned a monumental building that would remain speculative and make things valuable over time, even those that are not necessarily considered as valuable at the moment (D. Rosbottom, personal communication, June 14, 2019).

## Conclusion

This article demonstrated how port cities and their architectures have evolved under changing technologies and socio-political conditions. This study attempts to bring gravity to the architectural design in port city research by pointing out the generic problem in port city architectures. It provided insight for contemporary design approaches by establishing a relationship with port city's architecture and cultural products of these cities. In this regard, this study showcased the design process of the library and a concert hall located in Bodø, Norway, under the guidance of the painting of Venice. The artworks, evident from the painting, are nexus for bouncing knowledge kept and preserved in frames. The painter's background (the informed and educated traveller) mirrors the relationship between the architect and the project. Mobility in the architecture profession, working in a place that one is a stranger to, may bring the unseen to the surface. It is an additional value for the architectural design not only for the port city but at large. The painter also represented users of the city. The position he took to capture the painting reveals how inhabitants and transients perceived the building.

Port cities have widely inspired the artists, and artworks have inspired the port city architecture in return. Using the painting, the project of DRDH provides a keen perspective on how the representation of port cities and art productions may inform the designer today. Given the value and character that the port cities carry, designing the waterfronts must go beyond the mere generic results, and the "site" needs to become a "place." In this matter, this article exemplified the selected award-winning project to provide insights on the relation between architecture and urban narratives and artworks that might play a crucial role in contemporary design approaches in port cities. The representation of the city was captured when the waterfronts were still privileged areas. It also caught the urban realities that addressed: the question of monumentality, the changing context and functions in port cities, the shifting perception of the waterfront, the impact of the representative value on architectural design, and the material culture. The study also clearly intends to invite further studies to unveil the role of the artworks and urban narratives in other projects realised in port cities. The use of a painting in architecture allows us to establish cultural relationships amongst port cities. Working with the artwork provides an intriguing working channel to work for situated architecture. It also offers an alternative way to regionalism and provides a solid perspective for avoiding generic architectures in port cities. DRDH's design approach reassures that the remedy of the contemporary architectures in port cities lies in the own resources of port cities.



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