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RECYCled Pavilion

Executive summary

RECYCled Pavilion is a temporary architectural installation realized in the city of Concepción (Chile) as part of the 10th anniversary of the largest free music festival in the country, REC Festival. The project was developed by an international team of students and teachers from the Alta Scuola Politecnica in collaboration with the Universidad del Desarrollo (UDD, Chile) and was realized in March 2025.

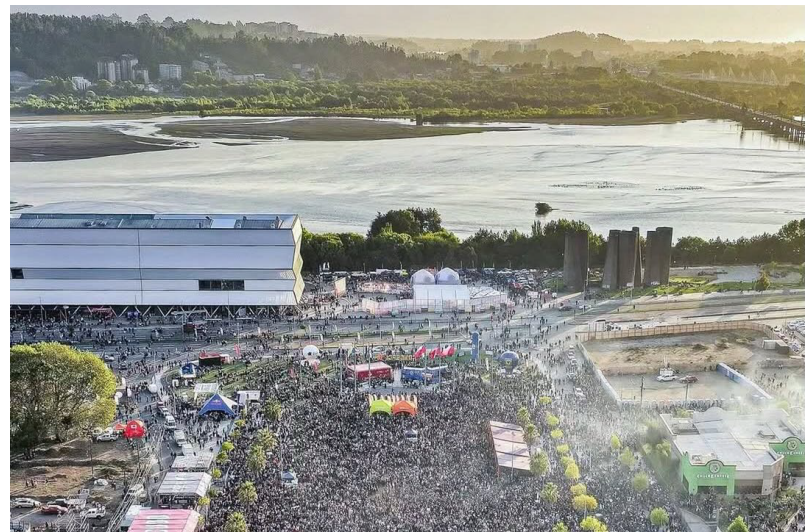
Aside from being an exercise in architecture, the outdoor installation was a vehicle of cultural exchange, sustainability, and pedagogy in experimental architecture. It reconciled scholarly rigor and real building in a combined, cross-cultural, and context-sensitive process.

The pavilion is made of metal scaffolding, a modular system often used in construction, and textile elements. This structure ensures sustainability, cost-effectiveness, reuse and rapid assembly, as well as meeting safety requirements and adapting to the local terrain and climate.

The project has become not only an architectural experiment, but also a platform for cultural exchange, educational interaction and research into sustainable design forms. It represents a model of “learning through practice”, connecting the academic environment with the real needs of the city, community and event.

Key Words

Temporary Architecture, Modular Assembly, Sustainable Design, Cultural Interaction, Music Festival.



RECYCled Pavilion in use during the REC festival



Aerial view of the pavilion under construction, with Teatro Biobío in the background

**Project description
written by the
Principal Academic
Tutor**

This project highlights the development and realization of the RECYCled Pavilion, designed to celebrate the tenth anniversary of REC, Chile's most significant rock music festival. The pavilion not only serves as a functional architectural piece but also embodies a message of sustainability and creative reuse. From its inception, the project was rooted in a collaborative effort between the Teatro Biobío, the Universidad del Desarrollo, and the ASP team, fostering a rich exchange of knowledge and expertise across different cultural and academic spheres. This partnership exemplified the union of different fields, art, music, architecture, and education, creating a unique synergy that contributed to the success of the project.

Throughout its development, the ASP team was responsible for effectively managing a comprehensive budget and navigating complex logistical and construction challenges within the Chilean context. The collaborative framework with both the Universidad del Desarrollo and Teatro Biobío facilitated a process that integrated academic learning, practical design methodology, and professional execution. The construction phase in Chile was a significant achievement, enabling a project of considerable scale that reflected local resources, craftsmanship, and cultural identity.

Beyond its architectural and technical dimensions, the RECYCled Pavilion provided a cultural and educational experience. It became an occasion for reflection on the role of architecture in Chilean society, emphasizing themes of sustainability, innovation, and cultural expression. The project also encouraged dialogue about the future of architectural teaching in Chile, inspiring students and professionals alike to consider more sustainable and socially responsible approaches to design and construction.

In summary, the RECYCled Pavilion stands as a testament to collaboration, innovation, and cultural reflection. It not only commemorates a milestone for the REC festival but also contributes to ongoing conversations about the transformative potential of architecture within the Chilean cultural landscape, blending practical craftsmanship with cultural introspection and educational growth.

**Team description by
skill**

The team comprised six members, primarily from design and architecture backgrounds. Each student contributed specific expertise, taking on tasks aligned with their academic training and prior experience.

Jaione Aramburu, PoliMi

Jaione Aramburu is a Master of Science student in Architecture and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano. She has a strong interest in urban regeneration and sustainable coastal development, drawing on her background in participatory design and diverse academic and professional experiences abroad. Her work focuses on creating inclusive, resilient, and environmentally responsible design strategies for urban and territorial transformation.

Edoardo Cairoli, PoliMi

Edoardo Cairoli is a Master of Science student in Architecture and Urban Design at Politecnico di Milano. His studies focus on temporary and event-oriented structures as tools to foster urban interaction and cultural exchange. He first addressed this topic through hands-on experience during his internship, where he contributed to installations presented at Milan Design Week, and later with his bachelor's thesis on sports infrastructures for Euro 2032. These opportunities strengthened his conviction that architecture should be both practice-driven and socially engaging.

Gaia Cattaneo, PoliTo

Gaia Cattaneo is a Master of Science student in Architecture Construction City at Politecnico di Torino. She spent a semester abroad at TU Wien through the Erasmus+ program, an experience that broadened her academic perspective and reinforced her interest in urban studies. Her academic path reflects a growing commitment to developing an innovative and responsible approach to architecture,

attentive to contemporary urban challenges and sustainability.

Julienne Joven, PoliMi

Julienne Joven is a student under the Master of Science in Product Service System Design at Politecnico di Milano. As a designer who believes in using creativity for social development, she specializes in community design, participatory design, and design thinking.

Federica Vitelli, PoliMi

Federica Vitelli is a Master of Science student in Architecture - Built Environment - Interiors at Politecnico di Milano. Her academic path reflects a strong interest in sustainable architecture, with a focus on design for disassembly, explored through her bachelor thesis, her collaboration on the "Deep Surfaces" installation at the Venice Biennale, and the ASP project. These experiences highlight her commitment to circular design strategies and reducing the environmental impact of the built environment.

Ala Zhyvulka, PoliMi

Ala Zhyvulka is a Master of Science student in Interior and Spatial Design at Politecnico di Milano. With a background in design and artistic practice, she works across residential and public spaces at different scales of intervention. Her academic path has been enriched by international experiences, such as the Erasmus exchange, the ASP program, and professional practice in Italy and the Netherlands. As both a designer and an artist, she is particularly interested in the social dimension of space, believing that design can foster shared experiences and contribute to building stronger communities.

Goal

The RECYCLED Pavilion project aims to design and implement an architectural installation capable of becoming an expressive, sustainable, and socially significant element of urban space in the context of a mass cultural event.

The pavilion was developed as part of an educational experiment designed to bring together students from different disciplines in search of an answer to a complex challenge: how to create temporary architecture that is functional, adaptive, environmentally responsible, and culturally inclusive?

The goal was not only the physical construction of the object, but also the generation of a new type of architectural practice in which the project becomes the result of the interaction between the academic environment and the real context.

Through interaction with the local community, the involvement of students from the Universidad del Desarrollo in Chile, and collaboration with the cultural institution Teatro Biobío, the project sought to turn architecture into a platform for dialogue, between different cultures, approaches, and levels of design.

The ultimate goal was to show that even temporary architecture can be multi-layered and multi-meaningful. It can tell a story, support local economies, activate public space, and serve as an educational laboratory for the next generation of architects.

The project sought to go beyond utility and propose temporary architecture as a carrier of values, spatial, educational, cultural, and material.

Understanding the problem

Contemporary architecture is under pressure from many challenges: global climate change, the lack of sustainable building solutions, and the growth of mass events that require temporary infrastructures are increasingly challenging traditional models of architectural production.

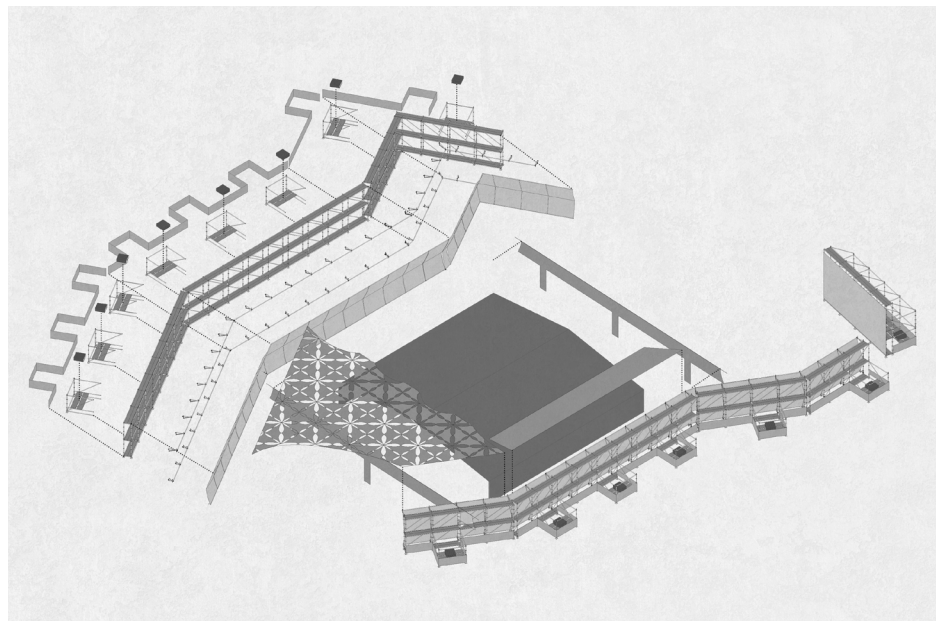
This is particularly acute in the context of temporary installations for festivals, which, despite their short lifespan, require significant resource expenditure and often leave behind environmental traces. These structures are rarely adapted to local conditions, often ignoring the specifics of the place, culture, and climate.

At the same time, architecture can be different: it can become an act of reuse, a space for interaction, a reflection of territorial identity and, at the same time, an educational process. This is precisely the problem that the RECYcled Pavilion project set itself: how to create an architectural form that is both functional and symbolic, sustainable and expressive, temporary, but meaningful?

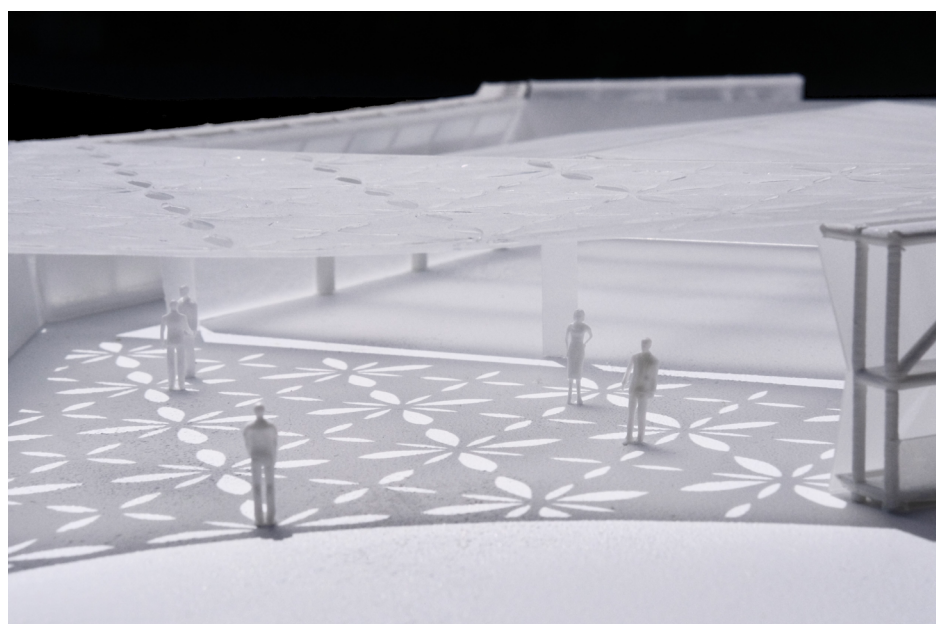
An additional layer of complexity was the international structure of the project: teams from Italy and Chile worked in different time zones, climates, and institutional systems. Architecture then becomes not only a material challenge, but also an organizational one, where it is important to consider logistics, resources, culture, and interaction.

Another aspect of the problem is the need to quickly adapt to the conditions of the site, including terrain, wind load, density of people flows, and safety requirements.

Thus, the team faced not one, but several interconnected tasks: to rethink temporary architecture not as a background utilitarian structure, but as an active cultural statement; to learn to work with reality, materials, conditions, people; and finally, to demonstrate that architectural design can be a response to real challenges, and not just an academic simulation.



Exploded axonometric view of each component of the pavilion



Detailed view of the model at scale 1:100

Exploring the opportunities

The RECYcled Pavilion became a meeting point for architecture, education, sustainability, and cultural exchange. It brought together students and teachers from different countries, facilitated collaboration with local authorities and residents, and became a stage and shelter for musicians, vendors, families, and children.

The architectural solution for RECYcled Pavilion was the result of a multi-stage design process in which iterative modeling, contextual analysis, and direct interaction with the local conditions became equal elements in the final form.

The pavilion structure is a spatial grid of metal scaffolding, which was chosen for its versatility, quick installation, and ability to be reused. Textile elements were integrated into the structure, both functional (shade, shelter) and expressive (graphics, narration of the festival's story).

The pavilion's shape, inspired by a crab, not only refers to local symbolism, but also fulfills the practical task of organizing visitor flows.

During construction, the team faced a number of technical challenges. For example, the need to withstand strong winds and uneven terrain, which required rapid adaptation of the design and the development of solutions on site. These processes became part of the learning experience for the students, demonstrating the importance of flexibility and interdisciplinary interaction in real architectural practice.

The final result combined architectural expression, sustainable materials, cultural awareness, and social inclusivity, transforming the temporary installation into a vibrant, multifunctional space.

More than a pavilion, it is an experience of creating meaning through materiality, design, and interaction. It proves that even temporary architectures can leave a lasting mark on memory, culture, and learning.

Generating a solution

The RECYcled Pavilion project arose as a response to a unique combination of challenges: the need for a sustainable, easily assembled architecture for a large-scale music festival, and the desire to create a space that would be embedded in the cultural and geographical context of the city of Concepción.

In exploring the architectural possibilities of temporary structures, the team turned to a modular scaffolding system, which combines accessibility, reusability, durability, and high adaptability to site conditions. Additional inspiration came from lightweight textile architecture, the tradition of temporary structures in Latin America, and the visual image of the crab as a symbol of sustainability and local identity.

The project team sought not only to build a pavilion, but to create an architectural event that would become a place of interaction: between people, between cultures, between academic knowledge and real building practice. The possibility of implementing architecture in a real context allowed the project to expand the boundaries of traditional studio learning, becoming a genuine testing ground for architectural thinking, meaningful design, and cultural exchange.

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