

ARCHITECTURE

AMELIA TAVELLA'S FOSSIL BUILDING FOR THE PITON DE CABRIÈS SCHOOL



After the A Strega School, in Sainte-Marie Sicché, which has been distinguished several times, the young architect has just delivered the Auguste Benoît School to the heart of Provence, at the foot of the picturesque village of Cabriès.

This architectural competition posed a complex equation with sensitive issues. Amelia Tavella's answer is obvious : *“Build a monument barely visible in the monumentality of the landscape as it embraces and marries it.”*

The building seems simple : a mineral terrace architecture extending mainly over a single floor, in the hollow of the valley which protects like a mother.

As if emerging from the earth then disappearing, crawling like a snake, it bears the imprint of the stone, its strata, its identity, which claims an influence on the students :

Knowing where we come from and understanding what we are.





The building becomes like a fossil building which would have pre-existed and yet never been seen before, matching the surrounding site which seems to look at it without seeing it :

Both will watch over each other in secret.

Practicing her profession like an art, Amelia Tavella cannot dissociate the place of knowledge from beauty. To evoke beauty is to evoke that of a space that has become a familiar territory intended for learning, but it is also to evoke the whole that surrounds this space :

The great Landscape that must neither be betrayed nor forgotten.

Without ever departing from morality, the architect builds with a poetic ethic, because we never separate a building from what preceded it: its origin.





Superposition of two plans, the tiers of the school organize the symbolism of an increase in knowledge and age: the nursery school is at the bottom nestled in the lap of the valley, while the elementary school, overlooked by the village, look at the horizon, that of the fields. The vegetation covers all the roofs, surrounds the setting, acts like an invasion and in turn educates young souls.

Constantly designed in connection with the village which overlooks it, the houses which face it and the steep topography of the Piton, the Auguste Benoît school is a line which protects. An alley mimics Rue Saint-Pierre which it runs alongside and extends. This in-between keeps at a distance the building which seems to hide and fade away so as to never break the horizon, nor prevent the simple glance towards what is further away than oneself.

No escape is impossible. The gaze circulates, the view is free.





The buried python cannot be seen, contorting itself to better hide itself and follow the contour lines. And when it shows itself and reveals itself, it is by opening onto the city, recreating the social bond, a still sacred mission of knowledge, thanks to modular spaces offered to residents. Considering the school also as a place of exchange dedicated to the community outside of school hours, Amelia Tavella proposes to broaden its vocation, in particular by making its sport hall a scenic space open to the neighborhood. It thus becomes an amphitheater for the duration of a reading or a concert.





The Auguste Benoît School expresses the architectural gesture of Amelia Tavella:

“When I build, I don’t undo. There is no betrayal. I proceed by inclusion. Nature invades my projects. She is neither an obstacle nor a hindrance, she is my guest whom I celebrate. I adapt to the trees, the light, the terrain. No one is greater than Corsican nature, building there is a vow of humility.

My island taught me light, color, slope, constantly reminding me that there is no valid creation without ethics and that history is the cradle of the present.

Each time, it’s a challenge: placing the building in the original space without anything, moving it, or mistreating it. It’s an extension and not an amputation.”

This school will carry the ecological commitment and perhaps, without doubt, the vocation of the scouts of tomorrow.





AMELIA TAVELLA'S FOSSIL BUILDING FOR THE PITON

DE CABRIÈS SCHOOL

PROJECT INFO

Completion Year : 2023

Gross Built Area : 2300 m2

Project Location: Cabriès – Provence

August Benoit School program :

Kindergarten & Primary school, office, restaurants, Sport hall, polyvalent space.

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BIO
AMELIA TAVELLA

DISTINCTIONS

2023 - European Mies Van Der Rohe Award 2024 - Nominated (in progress) - Fundacio Mies Van Der Rohe

2022 - Prix Dejean Architecture Medal - Académie d'Architecture, Paris

2022 - International Architecture TECU Awards - First Prize

2021 - Prix européen d'Architecture Philippe Rotthier «Genius Loci» - Nominated

2021 - Chevalier dans l'Ordre National du Mérite

2020 - Séquence Bois Award - Landscape sensitivity

2019 - Medium Prize - Corsican architecture award

2019 - Born Award - Social Impact

2018 - Choiseul Ville de Demain 2018 ranking

2017 - Pierre Cardin award from the Académie des Beaux-Arts 2016 - Young Woman Architect Award

Amelia Tavella was born in Corsica, where she saw the beauty of the landscape as an opening to all horizons. In the Choiseul Ville de Demain awards, she was described as the rising star of French architecture.

Her architectural signature, tied to the sensuality of noble, natural materials, is the mark of a constant work on the memory of places, particularly in the Mediterranean.

« The Mediterranean is my matrix. I come from there, from this unique place. As a child of the scrubland and the sands, I learned the complexity of my profession as an architect here. Sea, rock, beach, my femininity embraced the femininity of this sea, practicing with delicacy, reweaving damaged lace, drawing inspiration from sediment, soft, original matter.

My island taught me light, color, slope, constantly reminding me that there is no valid creation without ethics and that history is the cradle of the present. My architecture is inspired by the maquis. I take up its beauty, its color, its texture, its density. Each time, I pay homage to it. I don't separate anything. Nature and my buildings stand on the same line, responding to each other. It's an echo, then a fusion.

I use the materials of my island to bring it back to life each time. A single word contains and gives impetus to my desire as an architect: ethics, and this is how I build my artistic approach, linked to my roots and origins. »

This singular creative process is illustrated by her various projects, including the Convent Saint-François in Corsica, the Château du Seuil, the Ecole A Strega, the Cultural center Edmond Simeoni in Lumio, the Citadelle d'Ajaccio, the Simone Veil School in Villeurbanne and the Conservatory Henri Tomasi with Rudy Ricciotti. She has just won the competition to build Château de Nalys in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, the new vineyard of the Guigal family.