

**“La Grande Passerelle”
Saint-Malo Cultural Hub
Press Release**

Paris, 2015

CONTEXT

La Grande Passerelle, home of the main public cultural facilities of Saint-Malo, is immediately seen by travellers arriving from TGV (high-speed train) station.

This cultural hub, open to the public since December 2014, was designed by the Paris agency Architecture-Studio, and includes a media library, an art-house cinema, a media centre, and “4^e lieu”, a multiuse space. It is located in the very centre of Saint-Malo, which includes the three communities of Saint-Servan, Paramé and Intramuros.

The new urban renewal movement of Saint-Malo, inspired by the relocation of the old station, was involved in the creation of **La Grande Passerelle**. In fact, the facilities complete the renewal of the area and the creation of a new hub at the heart of the three communities. Notorious tourist attraction, the town owes its prestige to a glorious past, with which the names of Jacques Cartier, René Duguay-Trouin, Surcouf and Chateaubriand are associated. Apart from its historical heritage, each year the town hosts three important cultural events: the festivals “Etonnants Voyageurs” (which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year), “Quai des Bulles” and “La Route du Rock”. These events, nationally and internationally renowned, are part of the city influence and dynamism, which are symbolised by this Cultural Hub, the new cultural icon of Saint-Malo.



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A COMPLETE PROJECT

Taken as a whole, **La Grande Passerelle** expresses the metaphor of openness, a gesture inspired by the proximity of the seashore and the wish of Architecture-Studio to establish a continuity between the built structures and the geometry of the exterior areas. Around this spatial separation there are also the generous public spaces, laid out in two esplanades on both sides of the building, with a small outdoor amphitheatre added to the south.

Taking advantage of its strategic geographical location between the land and the sea, **La Grande Passerelle** emerges and reveals the Saint-Malo historical axis that links the new TGV station with the town within its walls. The cultural hub is the first major element that travellers arriving from the station will see. The architects wanted to offer a contemporary, urban, architectural response, which is one of the challenges of the completion of this new area.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Mereglier-Coudrais

For Architecture-Studio, this “esplanade-building” is not just an architectural statement, but a composition bringing together all the interior and exterior spaces, the constructed and the inhabited. In this way, everyday activities, cultural events and exceptional experiences of **La Grande Passerelle** resonate together, increasing the site attraction and its facilities, day and night, throughout the year.

This ensemble is at the same time contextual and autonomous. It is contextual as part of the interpretation and the structuring of Saint-Malo's main artery and it is autonomous in its architectural statement and in the strong identity that this confers upon it. **La Grande Passerelle** is immediately recognisable, and translates the challenges of this public commission: a cultural platform that will bring together many aspects; from books to audio-visual media, from independent movies to digital creation and support for festivals.

PLACES ON THE MOVE

The contents of the two cultural parts of the program unfold and intertwine in an inverted rising movement, mirroring Saint-Malo's main artery: the curve of the media library rises towards the sea, and the mezzanine art-house cinema towards the inland areas. **La Grande Passerelle** links the station to the old town and the newer areas around it. Its main façades, located along the main artery, let in the light and the views: culture is diffused into the town.

THE THEME OF TRAVEL

The theme of travel, chosen by the town of Saint-Malo to illustrate the relationship between the different cultural content offered by the media library and the art-house cinema, is revealed in the treatment of the building: the multiple ripples of the ground and the built structures create fluid spaces, dynamic lines, confrontations – a depth. It is reminiscent of the sea, the waves, the sails of the ships that left Saint-Malo so often to go and explore the world. It also suggests media flows, information shared out and knowledge.

The kinetic energy of the paths, wherever they are in the complex, brings out a diversity of perspectives that enrich the viewpoints within the building and beyond. The contrast between the linear nature of the surrounding residential buildings can only reinforce this impression of entering a different world, a world of its own, although designed like one of the gates of the town.

A PHOTOVOLTAIC ARCH

The openness of the town towards the sea is immediately put into perspective by an immense curving ribbon linking the two cultural extremes of the centre like a bridge. This arching ribbon, clothed in 640 photovoltaic solar panels, demonstrates the commitment of the town to exemplary environmental action. Like a shade, it tops the foyer, a transparent space that crosses the building, lengthening the public space inside the centre.

BALANCED PROGRAMMING

The foyer

The foyer welcomes visitors to **La Grande Passerelle**. It provides access to the media library and the art-house cinema. The reception area, in several concentric rings like a seashell, houses the town’s tourist-cultural gateway and continues on the interior of the media library. The cinema mezzanine above it provides a bridge to the town: it opens as a viewpoint over the station esplanade, framing the view thus created.

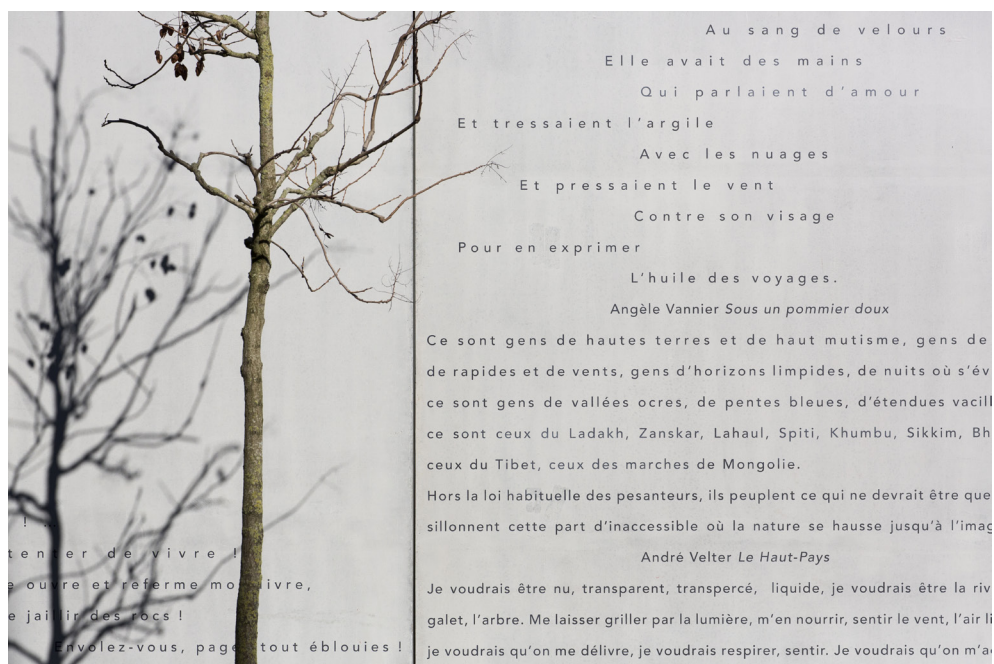
The media library

Architecture-Studio has designed a huge area for the media library – fluid and flexible, with ample, controlled natural lighting. A curved area, covered in anthracite zinc, protects the collections and the offices of the administrative staff. This “looping band”, through its self-contained nature, its curved geometry and the material of which it is made, creates a tension in the space. The warmth of wood dominates: structural pillars made of glued, laminated wood and a ceiling of solid wood planks design curves in the space. The glass façade to the south is protected from the sun by external protective blinds.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Luc Boegly

The north façade of the media library is a curtain of undulating concrete; thick, painted pearly white. It is pierced by glass panels in an irregular pattern in a random rhythm that suggests sparkling. This theme is taken up again in the use of glass in the media library foyer, and in the night-time lighting of the esplanade, where the ground is scattered with luminous scales. The “looping band” ends at the western façade, with suitable signage marking the presence of the cultural hub in the town.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Luc Boegly

The art-house cinema

The rhythm of its façade onto the street is created by large glazed gaps. The concrete walls are screen-printed with poems and quotations from authors.

Inside, the flow of people is organised in such a way that different uses do not conflict with each other. After buying tickets in the foyer, spectators go up to the cinema on the mezzanine level where the waiting area is. In this way, the foyer is always available as information area and meeting point. The organisation of circulation means that on exiting the cinemas, it is possible either to go back to the foyer or to go directly outside.

The "4^e lieu" and the digital centre

The "4^e lieu" and the digital centre, along with the foyer, provide convivial spaces related to the outside areas. The "4^e lieu" hosts different events: literature café, exhibitions, etc. These activities continue outside onto the wooden deck area. The digital centre opens onto the western square.

In addition, the cultural hub has exterior screens that extend the media library's cultural programme into the town.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Luc Boegly

WARM AMBIANCES AND NATURAL MATERIALS

The ambiance of the media library and the cinema is warm and welcoming. The wood of the pillars, the canopy and the waxed concrete floor dominate the interior styling of the media library. As a counterpoint of the pre-weathered anthracite zinc of the “looping band”, it participates in the urban character of the cultural hub. Ultimately, there are few materials and a controlled aesthetic.

The colour is provided by the signage and the furnishings.

The design of the furnishings and the consultation areas was carefully planned keeping in mind their ergonomic relation to the general environment of the media library and to the specific environments linked to particular subjects: music, literature, press, films, etc.

The ambiance of the cinema was designed creating a tension between the exterior spaces associated with the foyer, the open, light spaces of the mezzanine, and the screening rooms, with their more intimate, muffled atmosphere.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Luc Boegly

THE URBAN AND LANDSCAPE PROJECT

A "blue thread"

The main Saint-Malo artery, full of light, is symbolised by a bluish line that draws symbolically the eye towards the sea.

Starting in the square outside the TGV station, it defines the spaces that spread out smoothly from there: the esplanade, the cultural hub foyer, the western square, the crossroads fountain.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Mereglier-Coudrais

A dynamic hub

The overall design of the public area is as a forum open to the inhabitants of the town and to visitors. This dynamic hub is spread out around the cultural hub, the station area, and the neighbouring shops, with the aim of establishing close spatial and visual relationships within the neighbourhood. There are many interactions, in fact, to diffuse culture throughout the town and encourage exchanges in a spirit of friendliness.

A diversity of uses

The external public spaces of **La Grande Passerelle** are defined by their different uses. They constitute a series of identified and defined places, linked together but each with their own different function and ambiance. Their locations fulfil two criteria at the same time: being open to the sun and managing any possible nuisance, to achieve the best possible co-existence.

Architecture-Studio has created more peaceful spaces to the south – the square, on the decked terraces, the garden – and more lively spaces to the north, around the exterior amphitheatre.

- The square: this is an open area, peaceful and tree-lined
- The esplanade: a public area that is monumental, mineral, located in the extended square in front of the station. It provides a versatile events area opening onto the Saint-Malo artery.
- The wooden deck, with its garden, provides the transition between the square and the esplanade. Platform, bench and terrace at the same time, it enables the activities of the “4^e lieu” to continue into the exterior.
- The amphitheatre: backing onto the media library, it continues the artistic and cultural programme, and is designed to accommodate all sorts of open-air events. These include those associated with the large festivals, but also everyday events, including a small market, flea market, open-air cinema, concerts, children’s shows, and community theatre.
- The western square: mirroring the esplanade yet smaller, it leads straight into the digital area.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Luc Boegly



The esplanade is largely sunny. The terraces provide for a continuation of the activity in the public areas throughout the day. The amphitheatre faces east, to "warm up" the morning markets and avoid the public being dazzled during the afternoon events. The themed presentation of the public areas allows a rich, friendly social life to flourish for all users.

Comfortable and safe urban ambiance

Urban lighting is provided on different scales: the signs on Saint-Malo's main artery; lightboxes that spread light towards the ground; integral lighting on the benches in the square and on the façades of the building; poles around the edge of the site in keeping with the urban furniture of the new area and the proportions of the surrounding residential blocks. It is designed to provide a safe and suitable atmosphere at night, so as to avoid any form of light pollution in the neighbourhood. It is constructed to hide light sources from view and stir up emotions. Different lightning effects are programmed at different times of the day and night.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT

The best possible built shape

The built shape and the distribution of the interior and exterior functions of the building programme fulfil environmental criteria. These are the main elements associated with the sun, the wind, and the thermal design of the building.

The windowless cinema rooms are situated in the part of the site where the shadows of neighbouring buildings on the south side of the site fall, whereas the main façades of the media library are exposed to the sun (south and west). Passive protection from the sun for the media library and the foyer is provided by motorised external blinds and by the photovoltaic arch which acts like a large sunshade above the glass roof to the common foyer.

The very efficient envelope of the building and the absence of thermal bridges enable the THPE Enr -30% certification to be achieved.

The structures of wood and metal, known as "dry-process", have improved the building time and lessened disruption in the neighbourhood.

Green terraces offer surrounding residential buildings a pleasant view over the roofs of the building.

An exemplary environmental operation

It was a challenge to construct a cultural hub certified as High Environmental Quality (HEQ) with a high level of thermal performance and renewable energy as an integral part.

This project was designed from the start as an eco-construction, since it posed complex and even contradictory problems: for example requirements linked to thermal performance as against the see-through nature of the media library. The programme, which presented two entities with very different usage requirements, enabled the media library to open towards the south. The extra level of roofing provided by the photovoltaic arch partially hides this south façade, and the overhead glass roof is partly opaque. The green roof – a vital space in a zone which is predominantly mineral – manages part of the volume of rainwater.

In terms of energy, a hybrid of several renewable sources was chosen. Since Brittany's production of electricity is limited, the consumption of electricity was a real concern which was raised with ADEME (French Environment and Energy Control Agency).

Twenty-six very long (190-metre) vertical probes were inserted in a network in the esplanade, and linked with heat pumps. Two gas condensing boilers provide the backup.



© Architecture-Studio, photo Gaston Bergeret

Using geothermal energy with very deep dry probes to heat the floors meant that the pumps used a considerable amount of electricity. The photovoltaic arch fulfilled this need, providing the EDF network with three-quarters of the electricity used by these pumps. The Town of Saint-Malo chose to carry out and run this solar plant, but if it had kept the work management, the project could have attained a BBC (low-energy consumption) label.

The general philosophy was to limit the environmental impact of the building through fluid, well-integrated architecture, and to make it an energy-producing building.

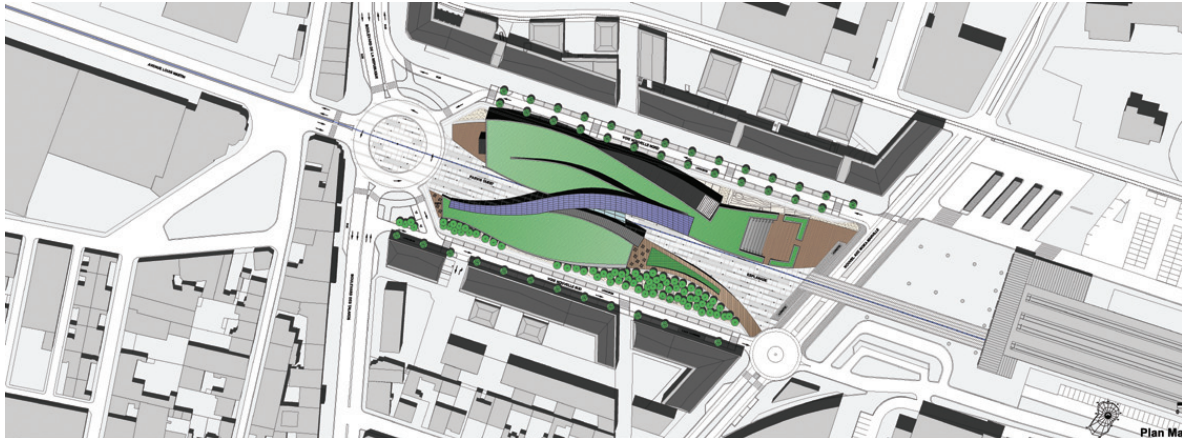


SPECIFICATIONS

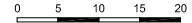
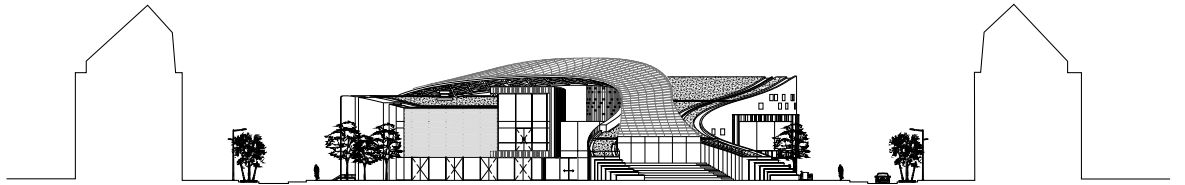
Contracting authority: Town of Saint-Malo
Architect: Architecture-Studio (Design team leader)
Engineering: Arcoba,
T/E/S/S (structure + envelopes)
Lightning: 8'18"
Acoustics: AVA
Mission: Complete design and construction supervision
(structure + envelopes)

Additional services:
Furnishings : Architecture-Studio (Design team leader)
Program: Le Troisième Pôle
Visual identity and signage: Thomas Kieffer
Specific furniture: Omlarchitecture (Agnès Martin/Yves Lamblin)
General contractor: SOGEA Bretagne

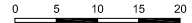
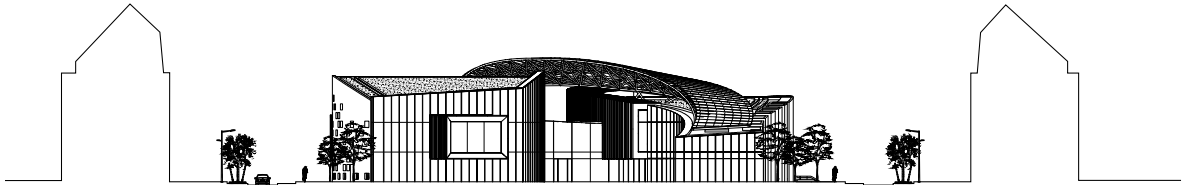
Some figures:
Surface: 6500 sqm
Outdoor areas surface: 10224 sqm
Cost: 23 M euros before tax
Competition: 2009, Prize-winner
Completion: 2014
© photographs: Mereglier-Coudrais, Luc Boegly,
Gaston Bergeret



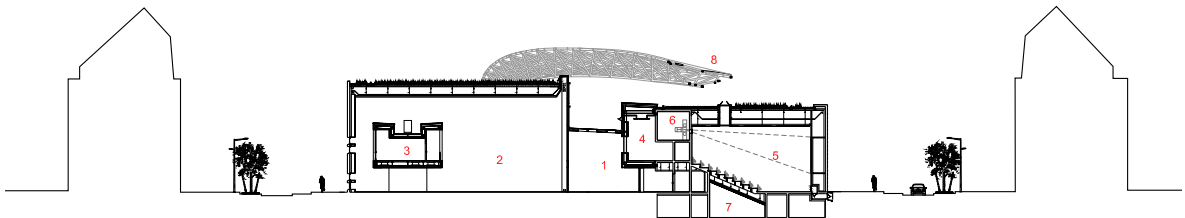
Ground plan © Architecture-Studio



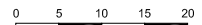
East façade © Architecture-Studio



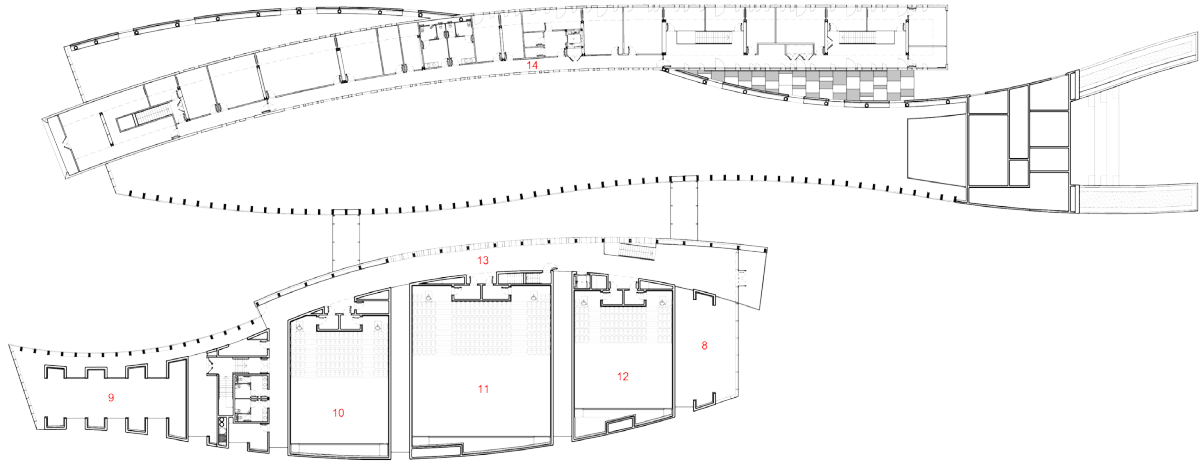
West façade © Architecture-Studio



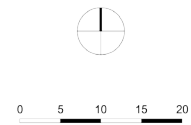
- 1 Foyer – "interior street"
- 2 Media Library – reading area
- 3 Looping Band – staff offices
- 4 Mezzanine – Cinema waiting area
- 5 Cinema – 150 seats
- 6 Control room
- 7 Technical areas
- 8 Photovoltaic arch



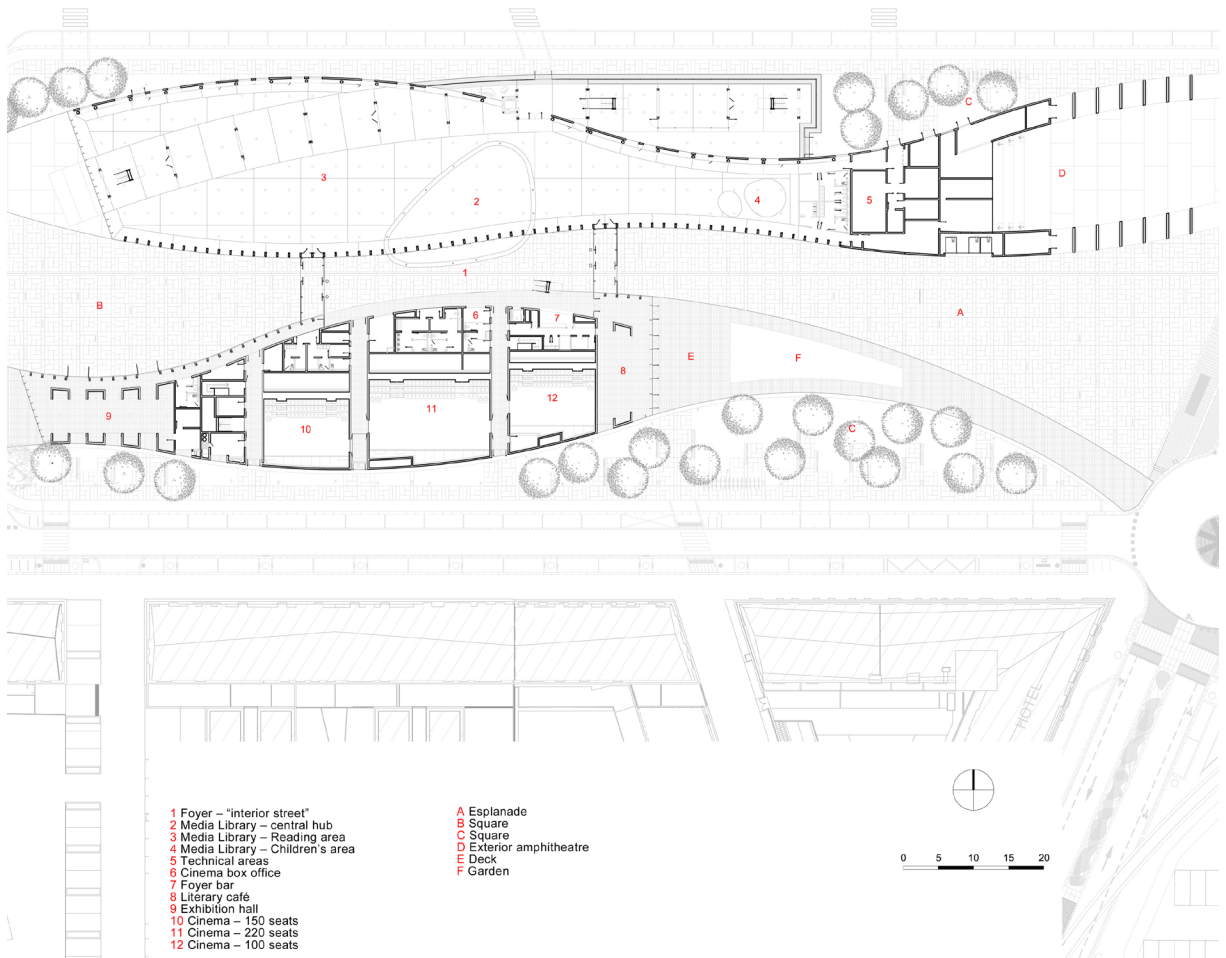
section © Architecture-Studio



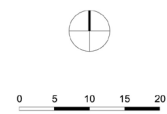
- 8. Literature café
- 9. Exhibition room
- 10. 150-seat cinema
- 11. 220-seat cinema
- 12. 100-seat cinema
- 13. Mezzanine
- 14. Looping band



1st floor section © Architecture-Studio



- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Foyer – "interior street" | A Esplanade |
| 2 Media Library – central hub | B Square |
| 3 Media Library – Reading area | C Square |
| 4 Media Library – Children's area | D Exterior amphitheatre |
| 5 Technical areas | E Deck |
| 6 Cinema box office | F Garden |
| 7 Foyer bar | |
| 8 Literary café | |
| 9 Exhibition hall | |
| 10 Cinema – 150 seats | |
| 11 Cinema – 220 seats | |
| 12 Cinema – 100 seats | |



Ground map © Architecture-Studio



Les associés d'Architecture-Studio

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photo : Gaston Bergeret

ARCHITECTURE-STUDIO

Founded in Paris in 1973, Architecture-Studio brings together about 150 people, around 12 partners of all generations. This team of 25 different nationalities is composed of architects, urban planners, designers and interior designers.

Architecture Studio has built itself upon the will of a will for broad-mindedness and group philosophy. The European Parliament in Strasbourg, the site planning of the Shanghai World Expo 2010, the Arab World Institute, the church Notre-Dame de l'Arche d'Alliance and the Novancia business school in Paris stand among the most symbolic projects of Architecture-Studio which is also in charge of the rehabilitations of the Maison de la Radio and the Jussieu University Campus in Paris.

Based in Paris, Shanghai, Beijing, Venice and Saint-Petersburg, Architecture-Studio has intensified its activities on the international stage, especially in China and in the Middle-East. Jinan's cultural center, the Onassis Foundation in Athens, the Rotana Hotel tower in Amman, Muscat's Cultural Centre in the Sultanate of Oman, Bahrain's National Theatre are among Architecture-Studio's latest international projects.

**SAINT-MALO "ÉTONNANTS VOYAGEURS" (SURPRISING TRAVELLERS)
FESTIVAL**

23rd-25th May 2015

One of the greatest festivals, since 1990...

Each year at Pentecost, nearly 300 guests from all four corners of the planet – novelists, poets, directors, essayists, photographers, musicians – with a passion to express the world, to reproduce its multiple faces, giving form to the unknown from what is to come, from the best-known names to newcomers, come to Saint-Malo to debate it all over three days. Meetings (nearly 300!), readings, films, shows, exhibitions: an immense festival, 28 simultaneous programmes, full halls everywhere, for passionate and committed followers.

The festival was born out of the reaction of writers opposed to the literary modes that were dominant in France at the time (inward-looking attitudes, formality of a literature supposed to have no other object but itself), the idea of "literature-world". One world disappeared before our eyes, and another rose up, opaque, worrying – fascinating. And we had the conviction that literature was never as powerful or necessary that when it was determined to give it to us to see, to capture it, to invent its live speech. By the pen as by the image.

...across the world...

Because this requirement for a "literature-world" is shared everywhere, and arises strongly – diverse, colourful, inventive, mixing identities and cultures, Étonnants Voyageurs has spread through the world. Versions born of complicity between writers and stories of friendship, organised since 2000 in Missoula (USA), Dublin, Sarajevo, Bamako, Port-au-Prince, Haïfa, Brazzaville and Rabat in 2014, feed the festival in Saint-Malo in return, making it a fantastic laboratory of emerging literature – and, through this literature, of the world to come.

A new stage in our development: against the idea of "Big Brother", the strength of the network.

Edinburgh, Berlin, Beijing, Jaipur, Melbourne, Toronto, and the Pen Club in New York are some of the great festivals in the world that are grouped together in a "Word Alliance". Several of them are the biggest in terms of size, and in terms of prestige, very definitely. And particularly through literary demands. To say the least, their suggestion in 2011 to join them resulted in the full and complete Étonnants Voyageurs becoming members! We are grateful for this mark of recognition, since it is definitely a case of contributing as much as possible to restoring French literature to its place in the great dialogue of world literatures, from which it had been absent for decades. A new stage of our adventure – incredibly exciting!

www.etonnants-voyageurs.com



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