



**ALSTOM WAREHOUSES  
SITE REQUALIFICATION  
AND CONSTRUCTION OF  
THE NANTES SAINT-NAZAIRE  
HIGHER SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS**

**FRANKLIN AZZI ARCHITECTURE**



# PRESS KIT

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## FOREWORD

Located in the “Ile de Nantes” a site undergoing industrial transformation, the Alstom Warehouses requalification project marks a new step towards the objective of urban rehabilitation. It goes beyond – it is about city-making, city-making together on the old Alstom warehouses site so that a new dynamic arises at the crossroads of culture, technology and economy. In over 20 years, the available 26,000m<sup>2</sup> (280,000 sq. ft.) of the existing warehouses will be restructured and converted into a multipurpose Creation district comprising: the Nantes Saint-Nazaire Higher School of Fine Arts (ENSBAN), the Nantes University, an office property complex for creative startups and a business accelerator, artists’ workshops, a creative Third-Place project, and a catering facility. By 2020, this insular city area will bring together over 4,500 students from various backgrounds: art, architecture, design, cinema, digital media, dance and music.

Franklin Azzi Architecture’s mission was twofold: urban planning of the whole old Alstom warehouses area, and architectural design of the Higher School of Fine Arts.

The Higher School of Fine Arts settles in Warehouses N°4 & 5 to accommodate five hundred students in a monumental transparent architecture. This ambitious rehabilitation and restructuring operation will provide the school with brand new premises, better suited for the production of contemporary art work – materials, digital and print. The 4,000m<sup>2</sup> (43,000 sq. ft.) facilities for research and experimentation will be composed of workshops and free-spaces, an Art library, a public hub for creative publishing and a youth center, a contemporary art gallery, a store and a solidarity grocery.

## 1. HISTORY AND CONTEXT

### OVERVIEW

Nantes is a city of around 280,000 inhabitants and the Prefecture of the “Pays-de-la-Loire” French Region. Nantes is also labeled “City of Art and History” for it is strongly marked by its industrial and naval past. It is located to the entrance of the Loire River estuary, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The city grew on both banks of the river, yet predominantly on the right bank – North – as well as on the “Ile de Nantes” or Nantes Island.

The gradual apparition of huge industrial and port wastelands – old warehouses and factories – enabled the city to initiate a complete and coherent urban development project based on brownfield redevelopment. Nantes City is entering into a strong urban and architectural dynamic that sets the stake of heritage management. There are a large number of requalification, rehabilitation and restructuring opportunities to this exceptional heritage. Nantes Island is one of the privileged spots – it is a giant worksite where ongoing urban and architectural experiments unfold for an innovative urban transformation.

### THE “ILE DE NANTES”, A SITE UNDERGOING INDUSTRIAL TRANSFORMATION

The Nantes Island covers a total area of 337ha (833 acres) that is connected to North and South shores of the city by a dozen road bridges, a pedestrian bridge (North) and two railway bridges. The island's outlines are the result of land consolidation between smaller prior bits of islands initially separated by many Loire River arms. The relief in this area is fairly flat. There are currently 18,000 inhabitants, numerous jobs and a wide range of activities. The “Ile de Nantes” is undergoing a vast urban development project, directed until the year 2023 by the “Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique” (SAMOA), a semi-public contracting authority that interests in matters pertaining to spatial planning and major public infrastructures. Its situation close to the historic center of the city, its insular but not isolated nature, and its major transformation, makes the Nantes Island the “new heart” of the agglomeration.



NANTES ISLAND



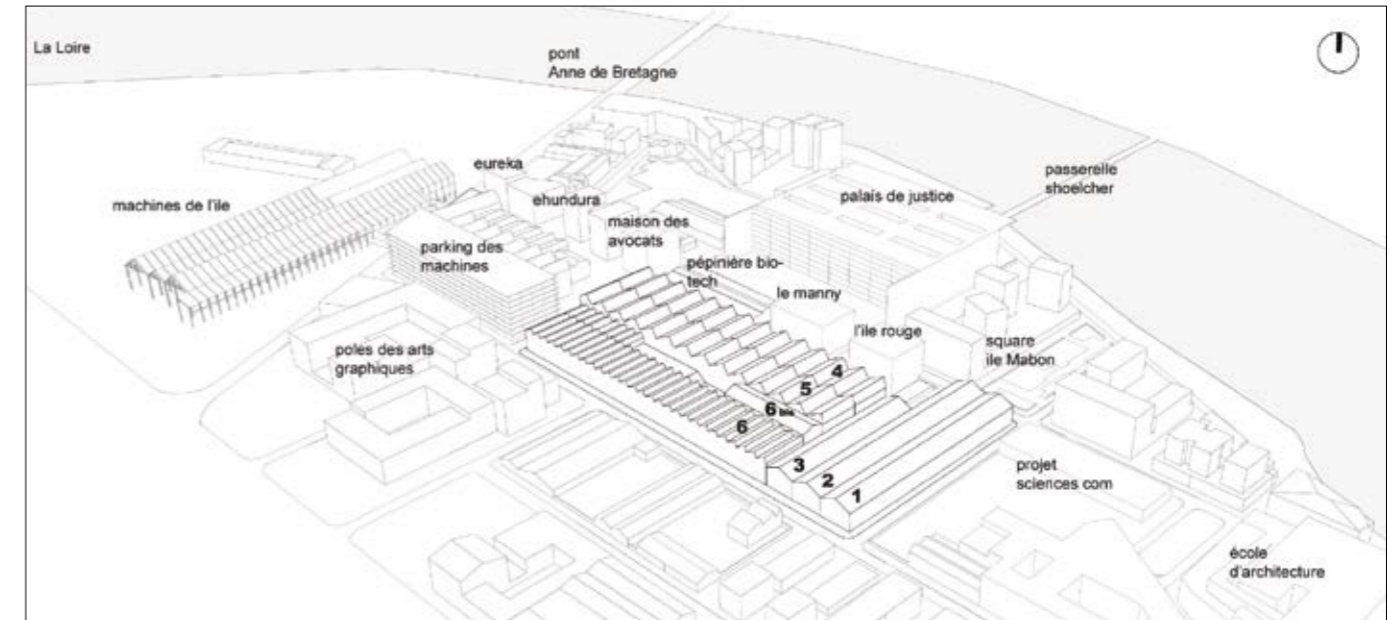
## ALSTOM WAREHOUSES REQUALIFICATION

The Voruz Foundries founded the Alstom industrial site in the mid-19th century. They employed more than 600 workers in the 1870's. A collaboration between Nantes industrialists gave birth in 1909 of the shipyard named "Ateliers et Chantiers de Bretagne" (ACB). The site occupies 13ha (32 acres). It is bounded by two boulevards (bd Léon Bureau, bd Prairie-au-Duc) and three roads (rue La Noue- Bras-de-Fer, rue Tour d'Auvergne et rue Léon Durocher). Alstom group sold it in 2003 to the inter-municipality of "Nantes Metropolis". The Alstom warehouses site requalification objectives are completely in line with the industrial transformation approach for the Nantes Island: this project is an important further step towards the realization of the new Creation district. After 10 transitional years of temporary occupation during which they gathered some fifty various economic players, the old warehouses were destined to change. The site requalification by the SAMOA relies on three complementary activities – hosting cultural events (to progressively reach the wider public), housing small creative businesses, accommodating artists' studios.

In total, more than 26,000m<sup>2</sup> GFA (280,000 sq. ft.) are allocated between the three existing buildings:

- Warehouses N°4 & 5: the Nantes Saint-Nazaire Higher School of Fine Arts (ENSBAN)
- Warehouse N°6: the Nantes University and an office property complex for creative startups and a business accelerator
- Warehouses N°1 & 2: a creative Third-Place project driven by the "Creation District Cluster". It will be comprised of: a technical pole (Fab Labs, assembly workshops, machine halls...); some artists' workshops; the Master branch of the "Ecole du Design"; an exhibition hall used as a space for mediation and dialogue about the in-house production; and a local market based catering facility seen as a pedagogical space for taste and flavor.

These warehouses transformations will necessarily be a long-term undertaking, situated in between urban and architectural actions. Thanks to both SAMOA and Nantes Metropolis's willingness to breathe new life into Nantes Island, a certain diversity of uses, functions and types of actors, will help to strengthen civic amenity and enhance cultural life.



NANTES ISLAND MASTER PLAN - EXISTING STATE



AERIAL VIEW OF NANTES ISLAND – LOCATION OF THE ALSTOM WAREHOUSES



## 2. URBAN APPROACH FOR THE ALSTOM WAREHOUSES

“We intended to open this urban enclave to create a climate of proximity and synergy that didn’t exist yet. The threefold urban work on the arts esplanade, the two new pedestrian streets, and the passageways, enables to create large open public spaces where the various dwellers can meet and exchange. We designed a system that enables everyone to cross or roam the site at will. From now on, the old enclave is connected to its surroundings, grafting itself onto the existing urban fabric of the district and the city.”

Franklin Azzi, Architect



HIGHER SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS, VIEW FROM THE COURTHOUSE









## URBAN PLANNING PRINCIPLES

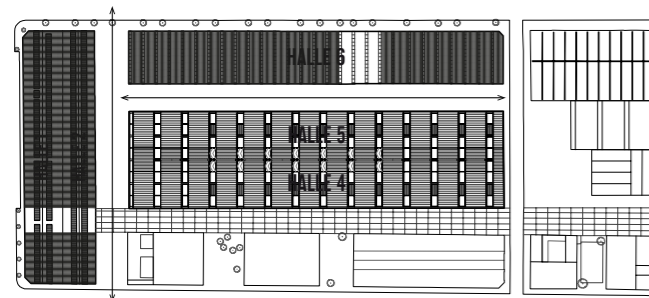
The urban planning guiding principles for this part of the Nantes Island are fair and simple. With every program comes one volume – one for the Higher School of Fine Arts, one for the Nantes University and office property complex, and one for creative Third-Place project driven by the “Creation District Cluster”. It took imagination to redesign the site – cutting the three existing volumes, opening up the existing paths and in-between areas, and creating new ones – considering there was no contradiction between artistic and public openness. Finally, the site had to be reinvented.

Crosscutting principles have guided this urban and architectural intervention:

- Valorization of existing structures (buildings’ envelopes and metal skeletons)
- The three warehouses are thought of as “umbrellas” capable of hosting new functions

- Creation of permeable ground floors that are made of invisible borders
- Modularity and flexibility of spaces
- Densification here that allows feeling some spaces there
- Progressive sustainability and comfort
- Simple and long life materials

Building on the site’s memory, the intention was to value the intrinsic exceptional nature of this industrial wasteland and its unique architectural heritage. This choice, far from any architectural formalism, allows a long-term investment in both building’s actual and future uses. This project was driven by a desire to design appropriate, qualitative, modular and flexible spaces. The warehouses must meet today and tomorrow’s needs.

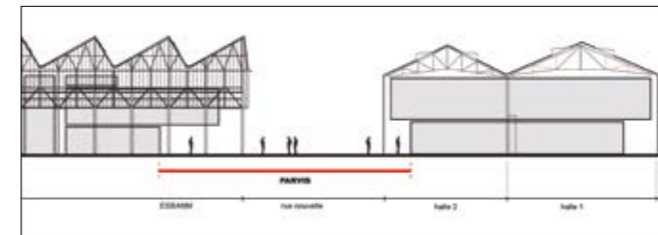


ALSTOM WAREHOUSES MASTER PLAN



## THE “AGORA” ESPLANADE

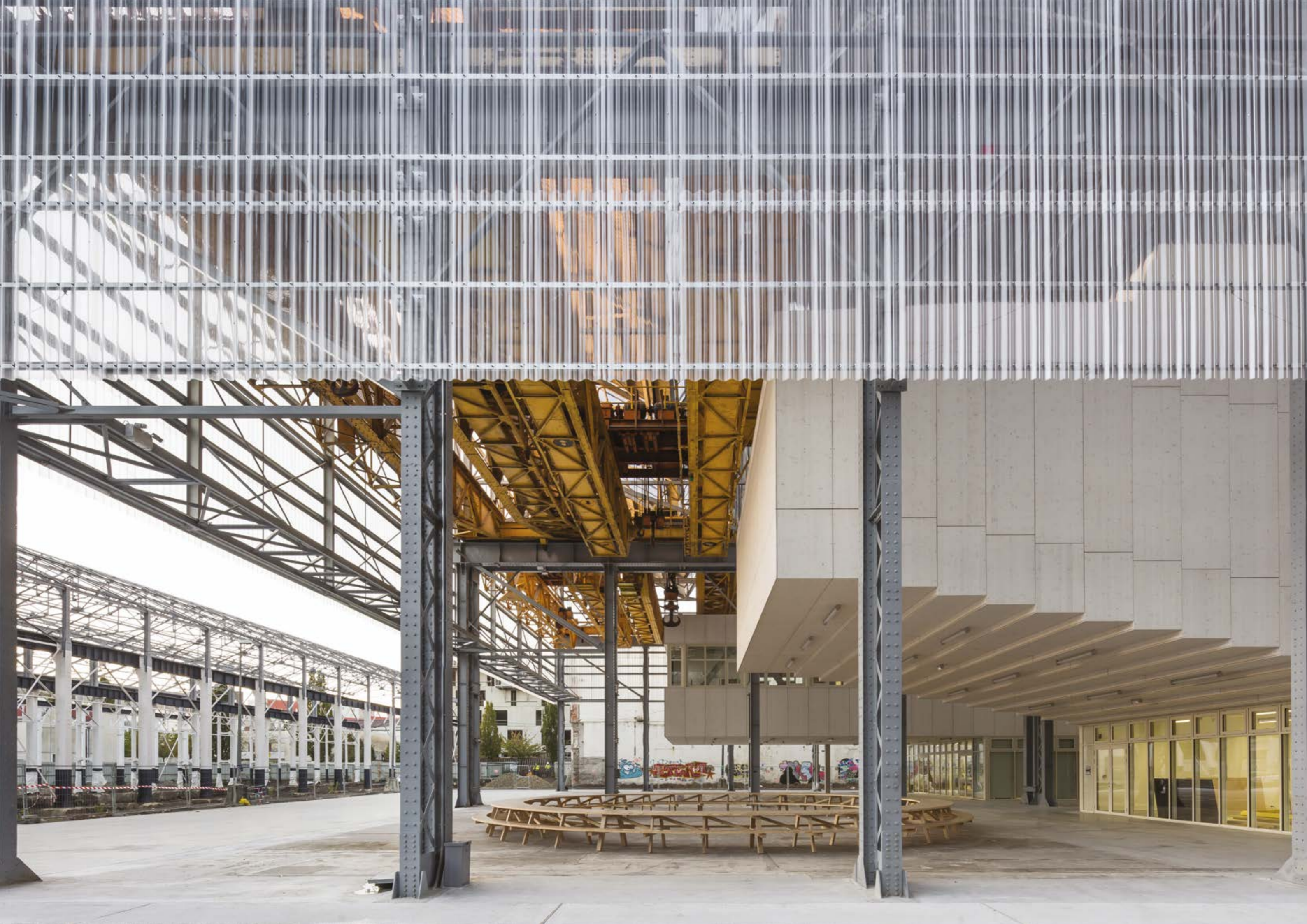
When they encounter the public space, the warehouses’ large roof surfaces and impressive metallic structures create a vast esplanade simultaneously covered and opened. This esplanade is the “gateway” to the Higher School of Fine Arts, and it is a space of articulation between the other programs. It is a natural meeting point, an agora situated midway on the street and under the porch. The “Agora” esplanade really is the new centrality of the Creation district, since it marks the opening point of the old Alstom Warehouses “fortress” by raising the polycarbonate wall that dresses the ENSBAN building. The School entrance is then highlighted and its covered porch seen as an extension of the public space.



THE “AGORA” ESPLANADE









### 3. ARCHITECTURAL APPROACH FOR THE HIGHER SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

“The establishment of the Nantes Saint-Nazaire Higher School of Fine Arts in the old Alstom Warehouses brings back to life this brownfield site. This existing-friendly project exploits the intrinsic qualities of the site, but this patrimonial approach is nevertheless relatively radical – the metallic structures are the only remaining evidence of what were once the warehouses, and they are dressed with a transparent envelope. The warehouses have been opened, reorganized, and reconnected. They unveil the programs they contain, thus contributing to the urban cohesion and reevaluating the human scale. Committed to rejecting all attempts of architectural gesticulation, this solution not only favors an economy of means but also focuses on freeing spaces that will become expression areas with great flexibility for the students and the neighborhood life.”

Franklin Azzi, architect



### A PRAGMATIC AND SUSTAINABLE STANCE

We did not work with a blank piece of paper. That is why we preferred a simple process for a complex program. Avoiding formal nostalgia and favoring an economy of means and actions, the demolition was considered strictly necessary for fulfilling the transformation of the old Alstom warehouses into the Higher School of Fine Arts. The difficulty of this project does not reside in creating a perfect design, but rather producing a unique tool whose durability depends on its ongoing nature and its ability to transform. We believe that the cornerstones of sustainable architecture are: economy of means, quality of uses, and space flexibility. This twofold work – subtraction first and addition second – is fully coherent with the economic and ecological aims.

### REHABILITATION AND RESTRUCTURING OPERATION ON WAREHOUSES 4 & 5

Opening, breaking down the halls, bringing natural light, keeping the steel frames only, limiting demolitions, making space for relative density, and encouraging appropriation of spaces – these were the key words for the rehabilitation and restructuring operation on Warehouses N°4 & 5 so that they can house the Higher School of Fine

Arts. Located on a 6,894m<sup>2</sup> (74,206 sq. ft.) area, these two warehouses are particularly suited for hosting the school program – flagship project of the Alstom warehouses operation. Each shed measures 161-meter (528 feet) length, by 42-meter (137 feet) width, by 19-meter (62 feet) ridge height. We reflected more in volume than in plan, more in cubic meter than in square meter. This approach is architecturally attractive since the preserved industrial steel frames covered with polycarbonate act as an umbrella that gives various qualities of light depending on the needs – a fundamental requirement for a Fine Arts school.

To establish a degree of urban openness within the site, some existing volumes had to be demolished first – removed so that the site regains a human dimension, a pedestrian scale. Two main accesses, North-South and East-West, were created. They connect to the surrounding urban fabric to counter the initial enclavement. The demolition operation of Warehouses N°3 and N°6A was led to make clearer what would be the three buildings, the three entities of the site. These demolitions also ensured Warehouses N°4 & 5 to offer four accessible façades. The Front Populaire Avenue too benefited from the demolitions – it is now revitalized by entirely glazed workshops that are displayed to the street.



WAREHOUSE N°4 : PICTURE OF THE EXISTING FAÇADE

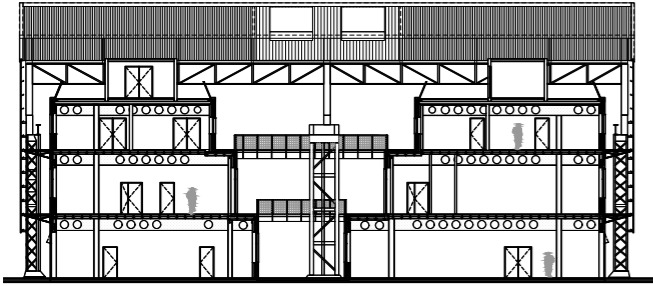






## NEWBUILDINGS ESTABLISHMENT

In order to preserve the existing warehouses, the newbuildings are constructed within the volumes of the steel frames, and the roofing retains the original sheds' shape. The inner volumes take the form of 'Russian dolls', nested within each other, arranged around a central interior street. The school premises are divided into two compact linear box volumes that connect through the inner street.



CROSS SECTION



A transparent polycarbonate envelope wraps the steel frames. This outer skin stops four meters before the ground so that you can see, behind the existing vertical steel structures, what's going on inside the recessed volumes from all around the building. The façade design offers multiple views facing inwards and/or outwards areas of the Alstom site. Wall openings are designed in accordance with the rooms' uses and the views they can offer. Along the North and South facades, the ground floor level is an alternating sequence of solid and void. Mostly porous and transparent, it helps maintaining a dialogue with the street by creating visual and/or physical connections.

Regarding the strategy for the realisation of the "Russian dolls", a principle of self-supporting structures was executed, so that they are uncoupled from the existing one. A gross floor area is created inside the two box volumes inserted in each shed, on both sides of the inner street.

To obtain the expected energy and thermal performances, two types skins are also perfectly uncoupled – the first one is in polycarbonate, it handles storm waters and incoming natural light, and the second one is a thermal shell.

Meeting the requirements of fire-safety regulations, the existing steel structure is exposed. Whereas the autonomy of the two "boxes" meets the anti-seismic standards and thermal comfort norms. Thus, the rehabilitation is different than the newbuildings in all technical aspects – structure, fire safety, thermal insulation, waterproofing. The building's envelope is its most long-lasting feature, then the effort must be focused on its proper insulation to reduce energy consumption.





## SPATIAL AND FUNCTIONAL LAYOUT

It was decided to valorise this industrial heritage by turning it into a contemporary public equipment. The existing steel frames are turned into a modern canopy that shelters a system of modular and autonomous box volumes. On the west side esplanade – the “Agora” – the covered entrance hall will be waterproof but not airproof, so that during warm days the café terrace can spread out. Winter comfort of the entrance hall will be ensured by sliding polycarbonate panels. The inside of Warehouses N°4 & 5 is composed of three parts, on three levels – public lectures and exhibitions, classrooms and workshops, school administration.

To improve site access, thought was given to flow management and the different degrees of public opening. There are three levels of accessibility within the building – general public, admitted public, and students and staff only. A dedicated part of the school called the “Meeting hall” – entrance hall, exhibition space, library and auditoriums – is year-round accessible for the general public directly from the “Agora” esplanade. The access to classrooms, workshops and school administration is restricted.

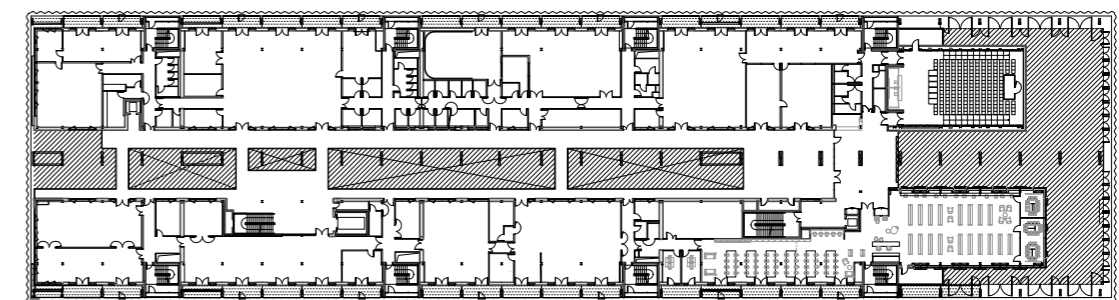
The systematic access control on the “Meeting hall” ensures the global building security.

The “Meeting hall” volume, situated next to the esplanade helps the visitor visualizing which are the public spaces within the school, and strengthens the position of the “Agora” esplanade as the central space of the Alstom site. On the ground floor, the general public can access the entrance hall, exhibition space, computer room and amateur practices room. On the first floor, the auditoriums and the library. On the second floor, the school administration. This volume is a hotspot, it hosts the first vertical circulation core. Visitors progress forward in the building through the inner street, that ensures the transition from more public to more private spaces. The inner street is unheated and naturally ventilated – with a specially conceived summer nocturnal cooling system.

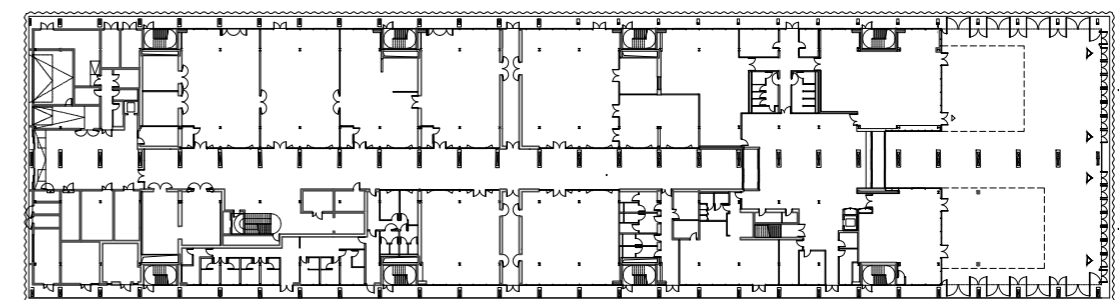
The project also seeks to facilitate encounters and gatherings among the students and faculty, that are seen as a vital force for creation. The workshops are designed as open spaces so that everyone can see what’s going on inside. They are all but confined spaces. Some are undefined – an invitation for students to appropriate the place, but also a means for the building to spare opportunities for possible medium and long-term architectural program requalification.



THE MEETING HALL



FIRST FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

0 10 50m







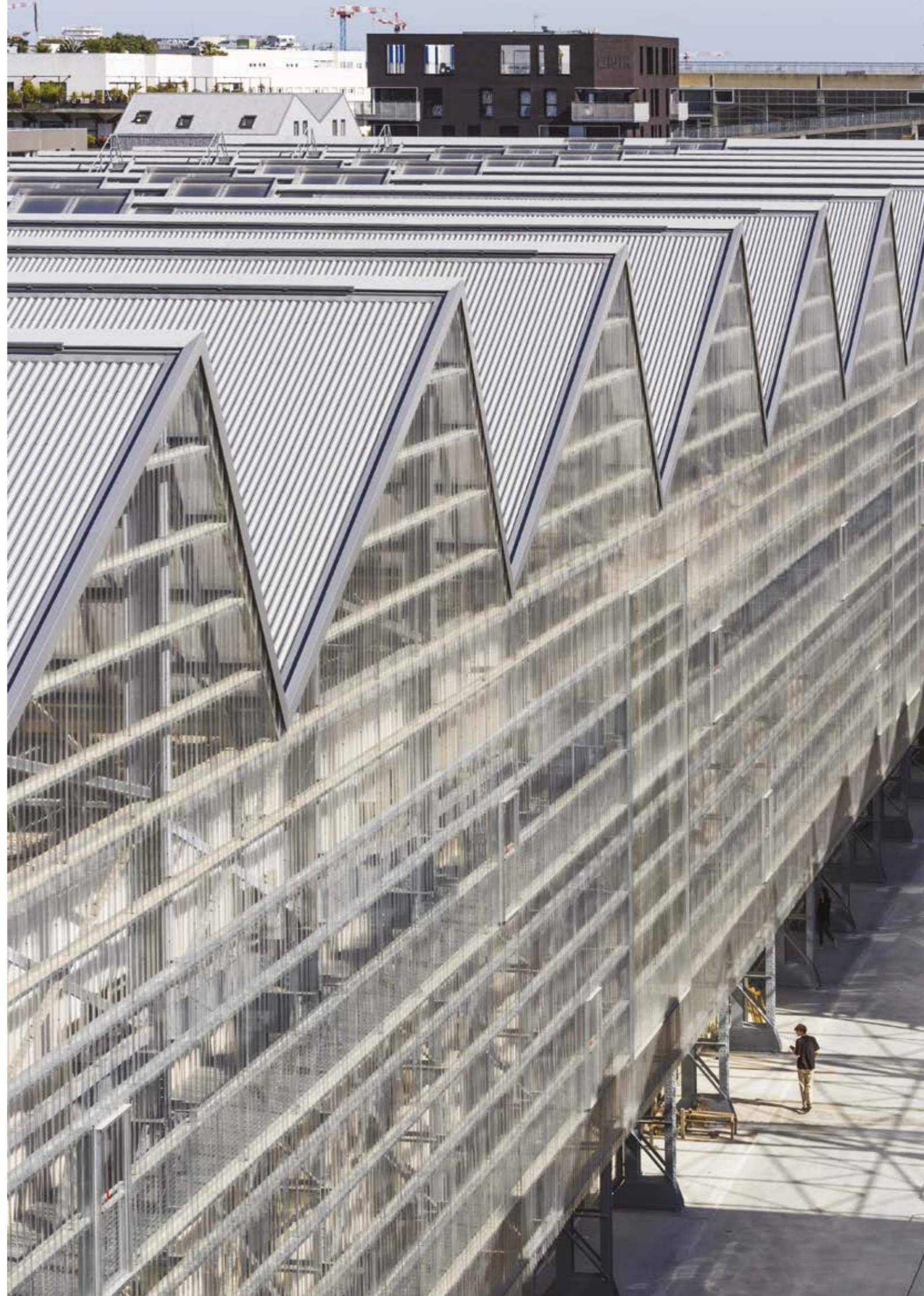




The many passageways and walkways linking the two box volumes above the inner street are natural spatial extensions of the workshops. They encourage social interactions and living-together, they are natural break and resting spaces for informal gathering. In other words, enlarged spaces needed to narrow social ties.



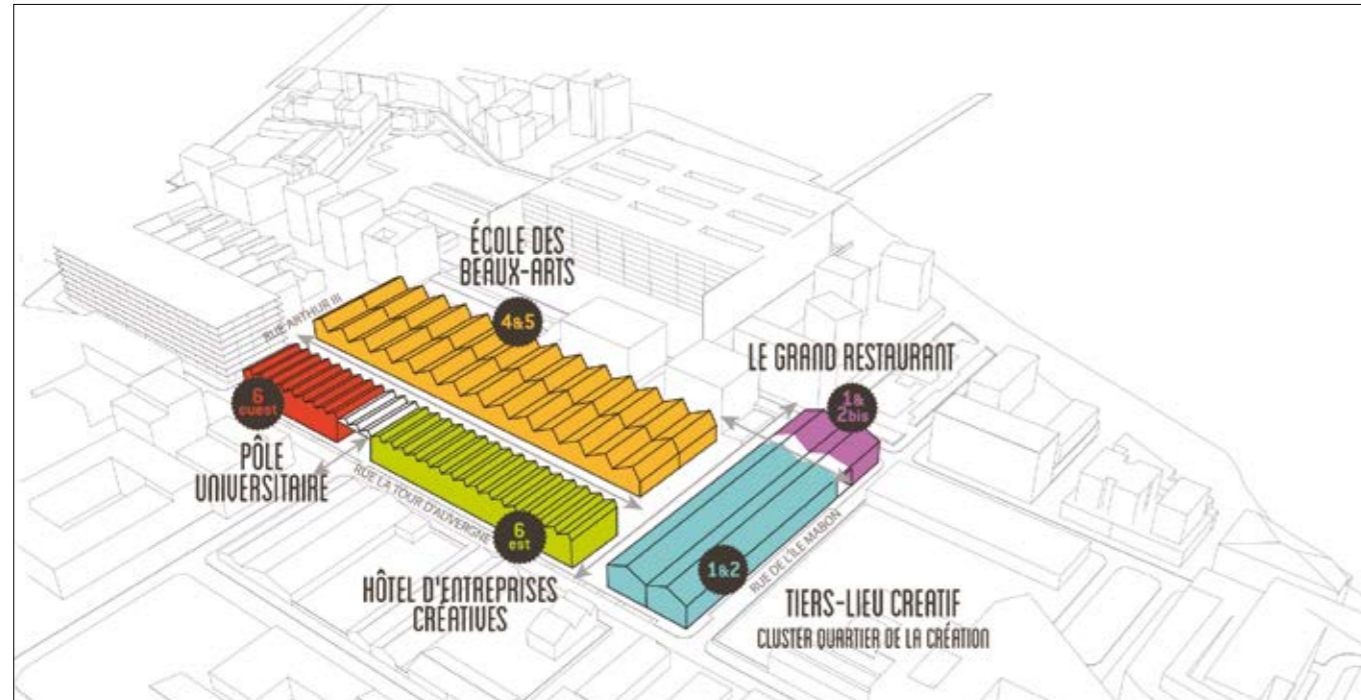
WALKWAYS





## 4. OTHER PROJECTS ON THE ALSTOM SITE

Five programs dedicated to creation and innovation are grafted in the existing volumes. Since 2014, each project moves forward at their own pace – the Higher School of Fine Arts is delivered, and the Architects teams selected for the four other projects have now refined and elaborated their proposals. By 2019, the construction-phases will be starting in a regular pace.



### WAREHOUSES 1 & 2

For the creative Third-Place project driven by the “Creation District Cluster”, works will begin in 2018 and the opening is scheduled for mid-2019.

- Contracting owner team: Nantes Métropole delegating to the Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique (SAMOA).
- Project management team: GARDERA-D / Bouriette et Vasconsin - INGEROP ECMS -LA/PROJECTS (signage).

### WAREHOUSES 1 & 2 A

The “Grand Restaurant”, a food court for the promotion of local gastronomy will take shape between winter 2017 and late 2018.

- Contracting owner team: Ardissa
- Project management team: DLW architectes / Fichtre, ECGG, AREST, Yves-Marie LIGOT, Pouget consultants, ITAC, Noctiluca.

### WAREHOUSES 4 & 5

The Nantes Saint-Nazaire Higher School of Fine Arts opened its doors to the academic 2017.

- Contracting owner team: Nantes Métropole
- Developer: Nantes Métropole delegating to the Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique (SAMOA).

- Project management team: Franklin Azzi Architecture - SETEC Bâtiment TRIBU - 12ECO - BAS SMETS - Lamoureux acoustique - Casso & associés.

### WAREHOUSE 6 WEST

The Nantes University will be a cluster dedicated to digital culture and innovation. The works began in late 2017 and the opening is scheduled for summer 2018.

- Contracting owner team: Nantes University
- Project management team: LIN architects / F.au, Bollinger & Grohmann, Aida, Elogia, Execo, Quatuor, Casso & associés.

### WAREHOUSE 6 EAST

The works began in the beginning of 2017, to create an office property complex for creative startups and a business accelerator. Delivery is due end of 2018

- Contracting owner team: Ardissa
- Project management team: Avignon et Clouet architects - SNC Lavalin, ITAC, Nicolas Gautron (graphic designer).



## 5. TECHNICAL SHEET

### CONTRACTING OWNER TEAM

Nantes Metropolis  
Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique (SAMOA)

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Representative architects: Franklin Azzi Architecture  
Execution Architects: ACS  
Building economics: 12ECO  
Environmental engineering: Tribu Ingénierie  
Acoustic engineering: Lamoureux Acoustique  
Façade engineering: T.e.s.s.  
General engineering: Setec Bâtiment  
Landscape architects: Bureau Bas Smets  
Technical inspectors: Dekra

### PROGRAM

Higher School of Fine Arts, Office property complex, Restaurant, Artist's workshops, and Exhibition space

### TYPE OF MISSION

Urbanism: reconfiguration and conversion of Alstom Warehouses' industrial site  
Architecture: rehabilitation and restructuring operation on Warehouses 4 & 5, construction of the Higher School of Fine Arts

### SURFACES

Floor surface: 9 827 m<sup>2</sup> (Warehouses 4 & 5)  
Land surface: 17 000 m<sup>2</sup>

### COST OF WORK

27 M € pre-tax value

### CALENDER

Competition: 2010  
Winning project: 2011  
Front-end engineering design (FEED): 2011 - 2014  
Construction-phase: September 2014 - June 2017  
Project handover: June 2017

### LOCATION

Mail du Front Populaire — Ile de Nantes - 44200 Nantes

## 6. FRANKLIN AZZI ARCHITECTURE



Since the foundation of his firm in 2006, Architect Franklin Azzi developed his skills in architecture, furniture and urban design throughout France and abroad. Franklin Azzi Architecture (FAA) deploys a multidisciplinary team composed of some 40 collaborators including: architects, interior designers, decorators, graphic designers, art historians, and also parametric design researchers. Thanks to being at the crossroads

of collective reflection arises. This attention to transversality allows FAA to explore, among others: large-scale renovation programs for industrial buildings, but also new construction, or specific interior design for luxury stores.

Hybrid and rigorous, Franklin Azzi's practice is inspired by the interdisciplinarity promoted at the Glasgow School of Art - where he studied -, the industrial atmosphere, Google Image, Paul Virilio, Modernism, and Contemporary Art. He has always taken a constructive approach, working from the perspective of sustainability, efficiency, and clearness. He is known to have lead many major cultural projects of public procurement. First, the Center for the Francophonie of the Americas in Québec in 2007, then the Saint-Sauveur train station and the Tri postal in Lille, and the Mame Factory in Tours.

More recently, the transformation of the old Alstom Warehouses into the Nantes Saint-Nazaire Higher School of Fine Arts (ESBANM) is an emblematic project for his career. These projects are notably characterized by their close attention given to public spaces. This care to the urban context is reflected in the 2013 shoreline development project on the left bank of the Seine, a promenade commissioned by the Paris City Hall, stretching on a listed UNESCO World Heritage Site (between Orsay, and Quai-Branly museums). The firm's Greater Paris « Chevilly Trois Communes » train station project currently under way, also takes part in his thoughts on what should The City of Tomorrow be composed of: sustainability and flexibility of architecture.

In addition, Franklin Azzi also collaborates with office real estate developers, designing outstanding buildings treated with almost surgical precision with a strong concern for commuters. Including: the 'Dock en Seine' building in Saint-Ouen, the 128 -130 Raspail Boulevard Paris office building, or the Hines Workstation tower in Paris-La Défense district, and by now the Tour Montparnasse with the architectural consortium of "Nouvelle AOM". Interior and furniture design are convened just like architecture, under the watchful eyes of Associate Artistic Director Noémie Goddard. Fashion designers such as Christophe Lemaire, Isabel Marant, Jérôme Dreyfuss, Bali Barret, Lacoste and LVMH Group have entrusted FAA with the conception of their stores across the United-States, Japan, Korea, China and France. Restaurants and cafés owners also trust Franklin Azzi in the design of their institutions, like the Café Holiday in Paris - a tribute to the eponymous magazine dedicated to travel and lifestyle. These projects are developed in a specialized department within the firm, which also takes care of the interior design of new construction and rehabilitation projects.

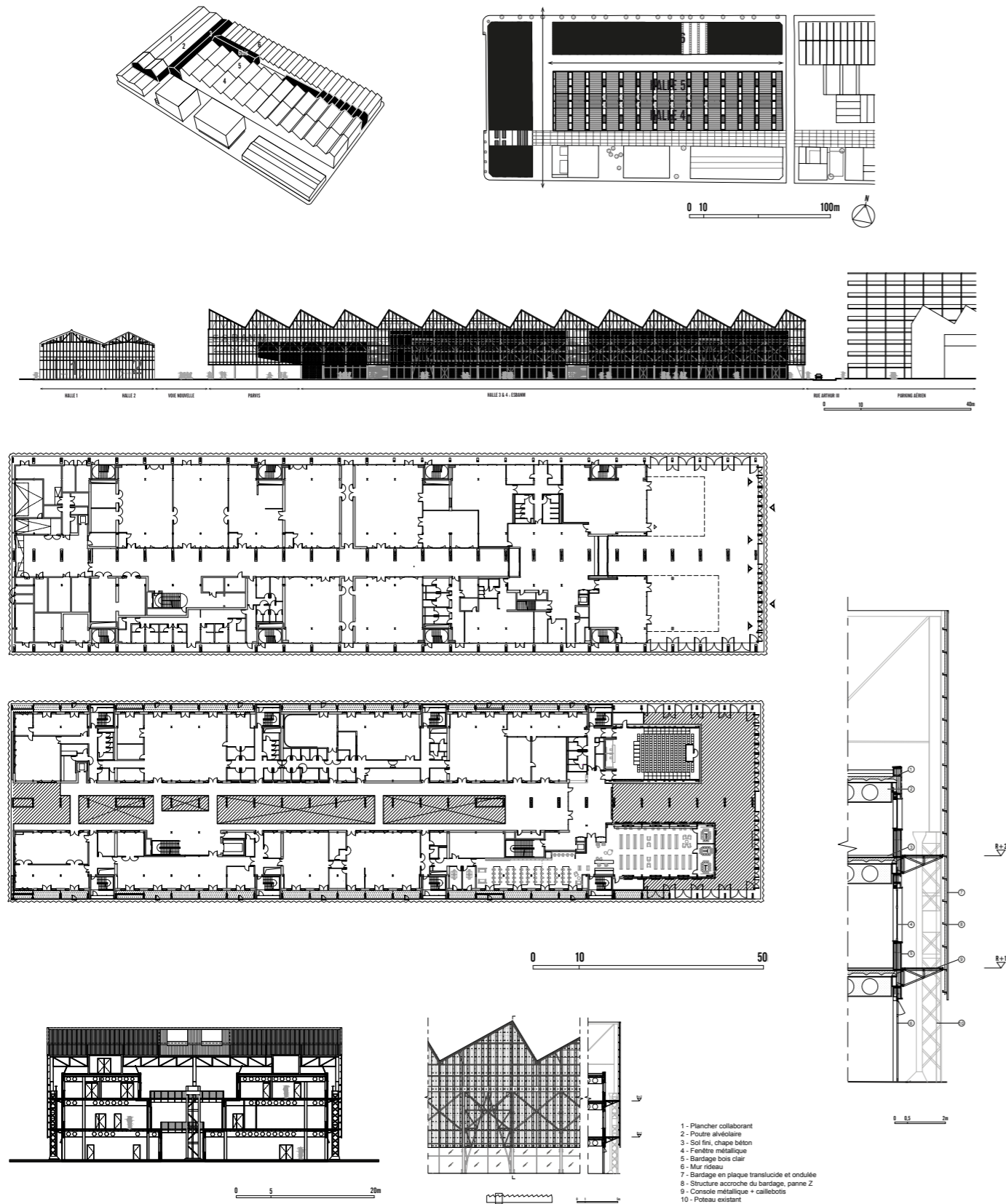
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# 7. ICONOGRAPHY AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS

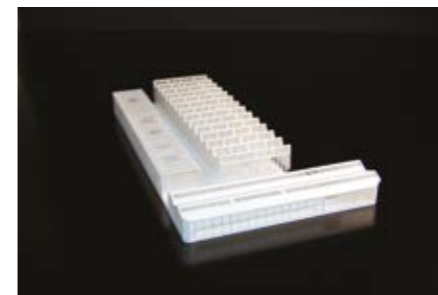
DRAWINGS © FRANKLIN AZZI ARCHITECTURE



PORTRAIT FRANKLIN AZZI © A.TABASTE

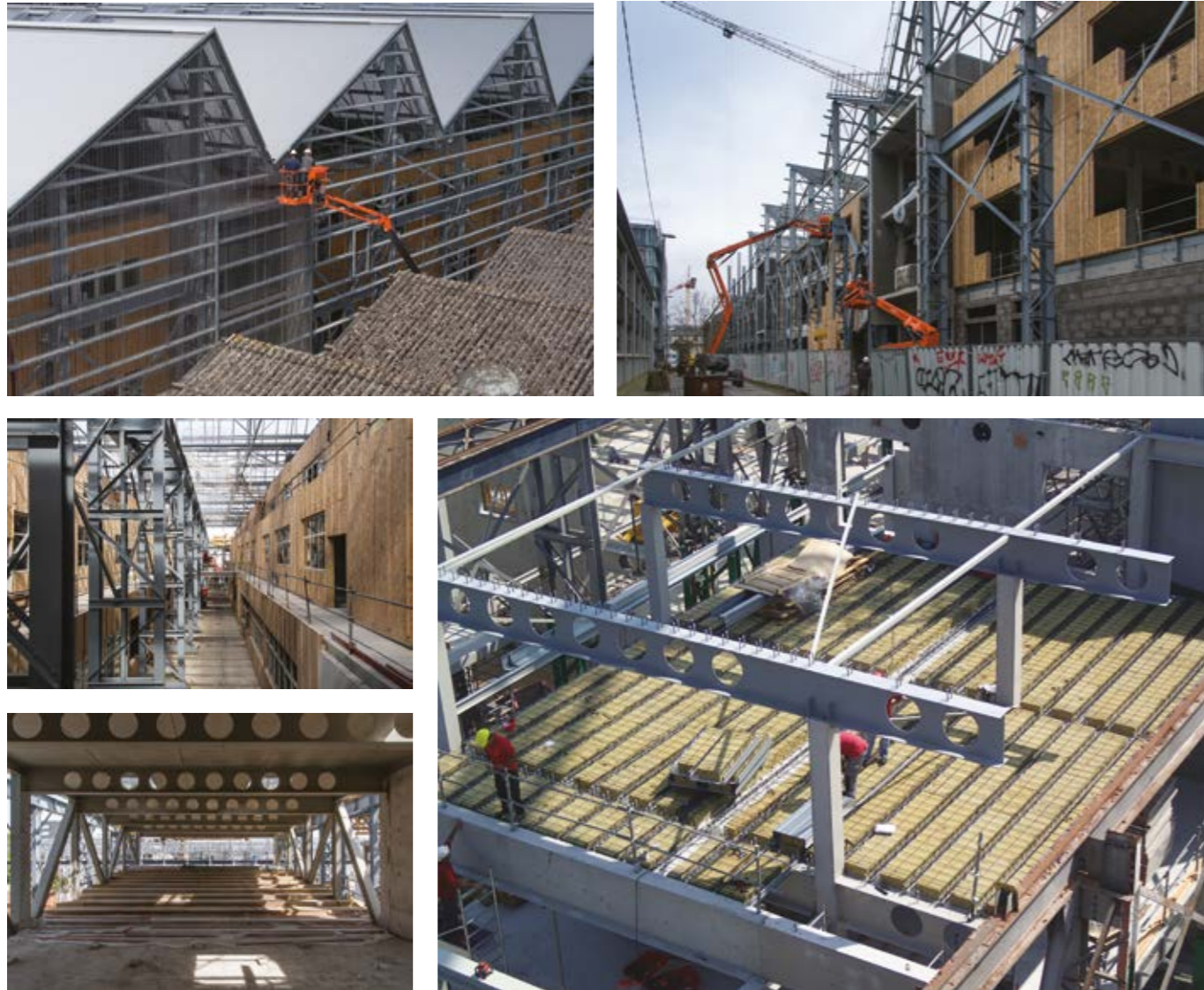


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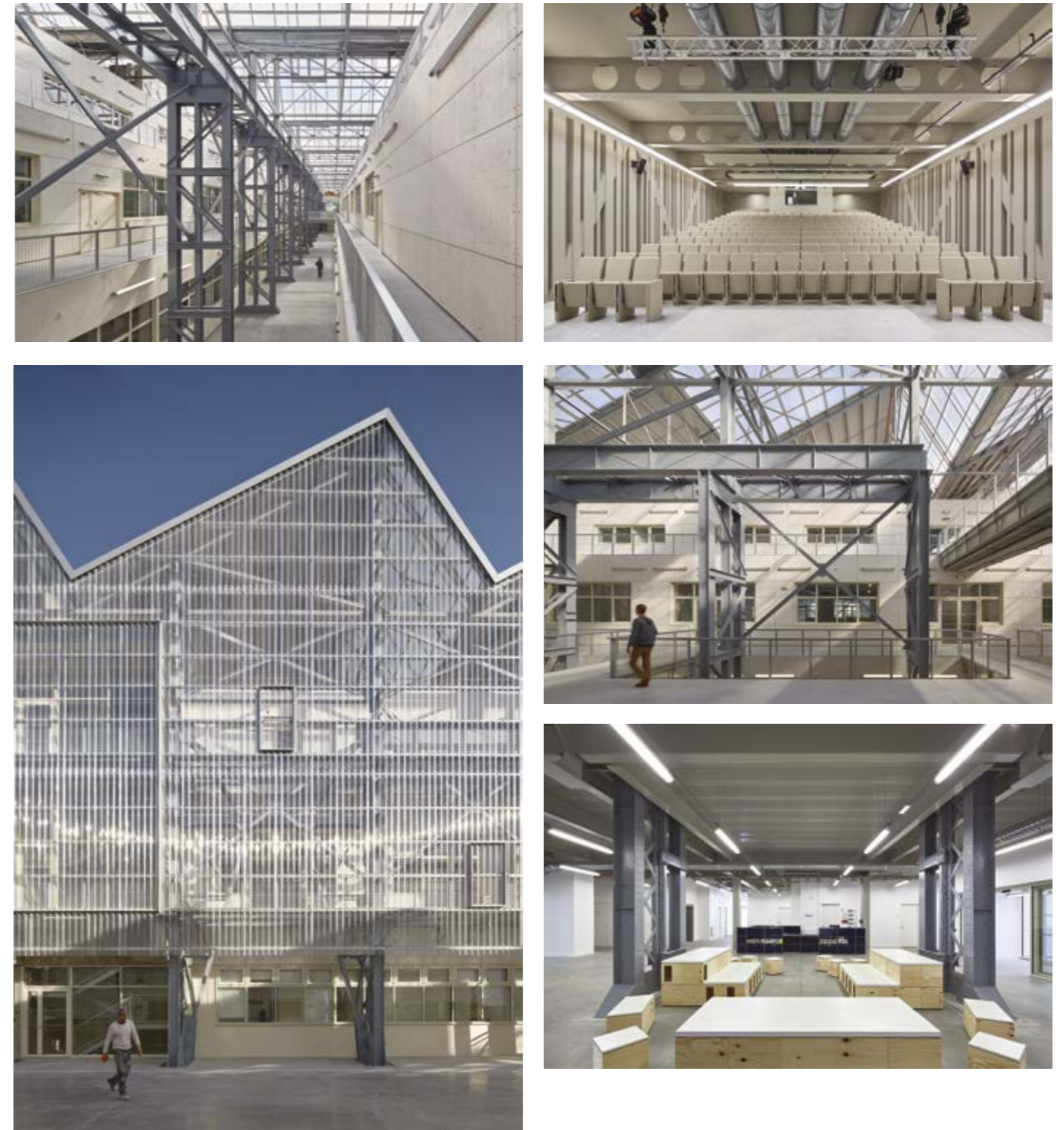




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