



PRESENTATION

working document

AGORA
14 — 24 SEPTEMBER

HANGAR 14
20 — 24 SEPTEMBER

A G O R A
2017 DE
BIENNALE BORDEAUX



To accompany the far-reaching changes that have radically transformed Bordeaux since 1995, Alain Juppé, the Mayor of Bordeaux, created Agora in 2004, an architecture, town planning and design biennial. Since then this biennial has hosted to numerous leading architects and the greatest town planners.

Agora 2017 will be held between the **15th and 25th** – September 2017.

After "Stim: millionaire metropolis" curated by Djamel Klouche, "Heritage/Heresy" curated by Marc Barani and "Public spaces [Boundaries]" curated by Youssef Tohmé, Agora seventh edition has for theme the landscapes, with Bas Smets as the curator, Randall Peacock as the scenographer and Irma Boom as the graphic designer, an international team empowered to grasp the crucial stakes the landscapes raise.

Agora aims at giving citizens keys to understand the challenges contemporary cities and metropolitan areas must deal with, to seize the societal changes and find their place within it.

In order to shrink the gaps between the experts (architects, designers, town planners, etc) and the wider population, Agora is conceived to include a rich and multidisciplinary cultural program (Cinema, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Music, etc).



Mayor Alain Juppé visiting AGORA 2014

METROPOLITAN LANDSCAPES

In Bordeaux, nature and landscape are everywhere. They have, if I may say so, taken over the city since its urban shape has changed: the city-center has carried off course and widened and it now constitutes a wide natural space, the Garonne and seven kilometres (4,3 miles) of landscaped banks that create a frons scenae landscape for all the metropolis' existing or upcoming neighborhoods : Bassins à flot, Braza, Niel, Garonne Eiffel, the historic center ... This migration, shall we say, has only been possible through a switch in the image of Bordeaux in the collective subconscious. And the landscape wins in that process, adorned with the prestige we usually address patrimony. As it is true that Bordeaux landscape but also the metropolitan landscape have become our



Mayor Alain Juppé and Rem Koolhaas debating during AGORA 2012

shared heritage. The same certainly goes for a great number of metropolises in the world, in spite of the population density they host. This is why Agora looks abroad and collaborates with Bordeaux international partners and among them, Hyderabad. This rich cooperation enables us to share and compare experiences and perspectives.

That makes the landscape an unavoidable theme for Agora 2017.

Bas Smets, world traveller, architect, landscape architect and engineer, fond of men and artists, was the perfect match.

We look forward to his Agora 2017.

Bordeaux,
Alain Juppé



AGORA 2014



AGORA 2014



Sunken Garden, London, GB, © Bas Smets

METROPOLITAN LANDSCAPES

The fortified European city is the most vivid expression of the distinction between an «intramural» space, that is protected and frozen, and an «extramural» area where the movement of nature is constantly changing. The medieval city spread with the succession of fortifications, each time wider.

From the 19th century onwards, this extension has been integrating broad areas that define controlled portions of nature which, when open to the public, turn into «pleasure gardens», formerly known as «urban parks». These parks tend to organize the “nature in the city”, while maintaining the difference between a dense city and a cultivated countryside. The landscape becomes a tool for understanding this new condition of the relationship between city and nature.

Nowadays, all these European cities are becoming metropolises, and the opposition between town and countryside fades with their spatial expansion.



Curator of AGORA 2017, Bas Smets

Boundaries lose sharpness, and the relationship between the city and the nature changes. The movement of nature is seen outside and inside the heart of the metropolis, as the latter relies more and more on it. This upheaval comes with an evolution of the concept of landscape that becomes a project tool for the relationship between human activity and the movement of nature.

In the 19th century, parks and gardens constituted a support in cleaning up and beautifying the city. Nowadays, that's what landscapes, with more complex functions, mean for the metropolis' project. The metropolis, undergoing a continued growth, requires a process that internalizes the landscapes in order to create a new balance around an inhabited landscape.

Nicolas Forestier and Frederick Law Olmsted intervened around dense cities conceiving - a priori - «parks systems,» as to know networks of natural spaces which helped organizing the management of water for the metropolis. It means organizing, a



Château de Padiès, Lempaut, France © Bas Smets

hundred and fifty years after, the metropolis by acting – a posteriori – in its heart, through the invention of efficient landscapes organized as a strong form of a “landscape structure”. Such structures, still invisible, can gather all the visible elements that are likely to combine.

The «metropolitan landscape» provides the nature with a strong form, in the very heart of the metropolis.

INVENTING THE LANDSCAPE

What is a landscape? In Europe, the concept of «landscape» was invented to name a pictorial genre that emerged in the 15th century in Flanders. Those first «landscapes» were painted by inserting windows, which create an independent frame in the scene

depicted in the foreground, and give a view of the surroundings.

Painters such as Joachim Patinir revolutionized the painting of landscape by reversing the hierarchy between the foreground and the background. They released the landscape from its framed window and made it the core of the painting. Those paintings were mental constructs. They represented landscapes that were depicted, as Le Lorrain did using Virgil's texts. The landscape is thus the perception of a reality, whether written or physical, but it is also a way of seeing and understanding the existing reality. Any landscape that emerges from the reality has been invented, imagined through the perspective that had decided to identify it. In "The decay of lying", Oscar Wilde mentions the impressionist painter Turner who painted and thus "invented" the mists of the river Thames.

For centuries, the mountain was exclusively perceived as a dangerous place. Photography reversed this perspective and was therefore the basis in the

conception of natural parks in the United States. Anselm Adams has proved them to be esthetical and tourist sites. Thanks to his photographs, Yellowstone and Yosemite were among the first national parks to be protected in the world.

This raises the question of contemporary landscape, which is visible, but yet not perceived, around us.

LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES

Nowadays, new perspectives such as Google Earth give us a new vision of the planet. Instead of being a two-dimensional map, the Earth is perceived as a continued and manageable item. This new mode of representation has an important role in erasing the boundaries and setting free the scope of landscapes. Henceforth, the planet becomes an object for the territorial project structuring the landscapes.

As the metropolis spreads, it integrates unbuilt spaces, such as railway areas, brownfield sites, Natura 2000 areas or flood plains. Landscapes have a

specific function in the fields of arts and engineering. This function may enable the constitution of a structure of the nebulous city that results from this expansion.

Nowadays, we must re-imagine the landscapes, where we did not see them before. How to imagine the landscapes that match the metropolitan project? If the landscape is a strong shape in the territory, how to imagine a "landscape structure" on the one hand based on Nicolas Forestier's and Frederick Law Olmsted's "parks system", and still coherent with the metropolitan perspective?

How to create «efficient» landscapes that may answer the questions raised by the metropolis today, as the traditional need for water management, agri-forestry or food-processing production or the need

for infrastructural works, to which we may add new demands as regulating outdoor comfort, increasing biodiversity, reducing pollution, switching to the energy transition.

The landscape structure may constitute the perfect tool in anchoring the metropolis in the territory.

AGORA 2017

After "Stim : million-strong metropolis" in 2010 with Djamel Klouche, "'Heritage/Heresy'" in 2012 with Marc Barani, and the "Public space" in 2014 with Youssef Tohmé, we suggest the theme "Metropolitan landscapes" for this seventh biennial. This theme completes this series of introspective reflexion by the metropolis on itself, and its future.

We have formed an international team to curate this 2017 Agora. Randall Peacock, scenographer, and Irma Boom, designer, will work with the curator. Six other disciples complete the curating team: philosophy of landscape, with Sébastien Marot,

climate engineering, with Wolfgang Kessling from Transsolar, botany, with Anne-Marie Fèvre, journalism with Eric Perez, also the founder of Myamo, real estate development company, and the field of law, with Luc Saucier, lawyer expert in Art law. They shall gather up in a committee that will explore their specialized perspectives on the questions of landscape, art, architecture, events and media coverage.

Brussels,
Bas Smets

Michèle Larué-Charlus - Agora general delegate and general planning manager

CURATING TEAM

Bas Smets - architect and landscape designer

Randall Peacock - scenographer

Irma Boom - graphic designer

François Parrot - associated scenographer

PRESSE

Noëlle Arnault - Canal Com

Julia Lagoardette - Canal Com

DEBATES

Rémi Cambeau - Cadre de Ville



Before the biennial : the five awards Agora Caisse des dépôts

Agora launched a call for ideas :

- Architecture Award, co-chaired by **Kersten Geers and Eric Lapierre**
- Design Award, chaired by **Pablo Reinoso**
- a call for ideas "Living on stilts", chaired by **Philippe Rahm**
- Video Prize, chaired by **Sam Stourdzé and Bas Smets**
- Association Award "Let's live the city together", chaired **Anne-Iris Poussièlgues**

The results will be disclosed on **February 20th 2017**



<
Prize winner of 2012,
«call for ideas»

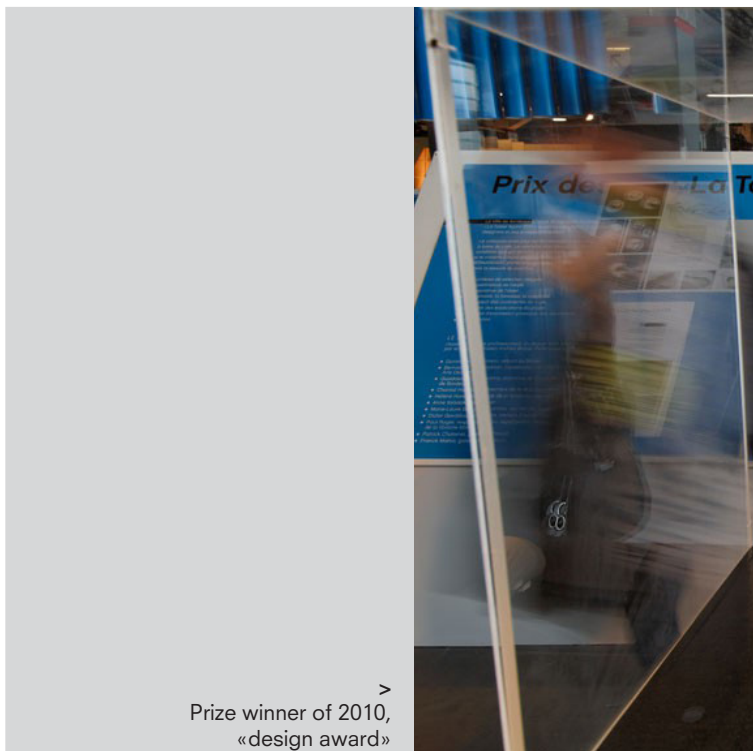


>
Prize winner of 2014,
«photography award»





< Visiting the extension of a kindergarden for the «architecture award», 2014



> Prize winner of 2010, «design award»



Second prize of 2014, «association award»

TEAM CONTACT

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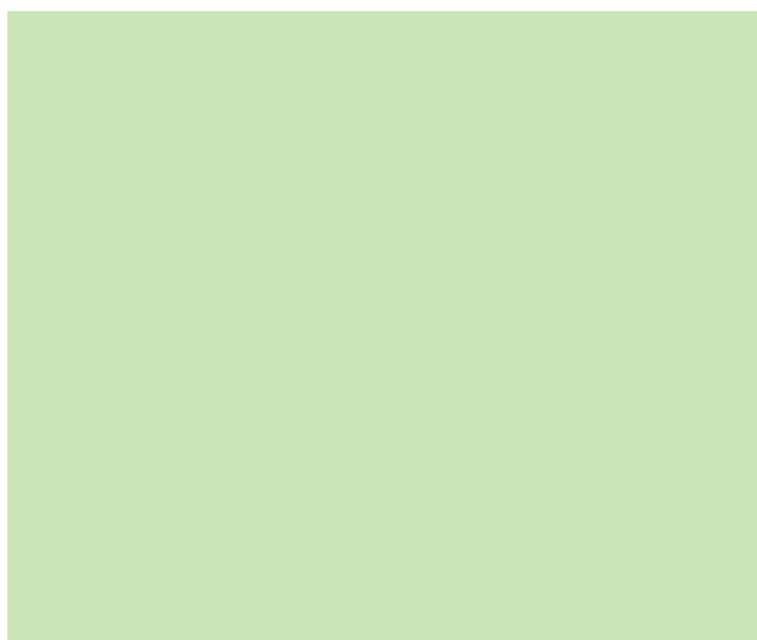
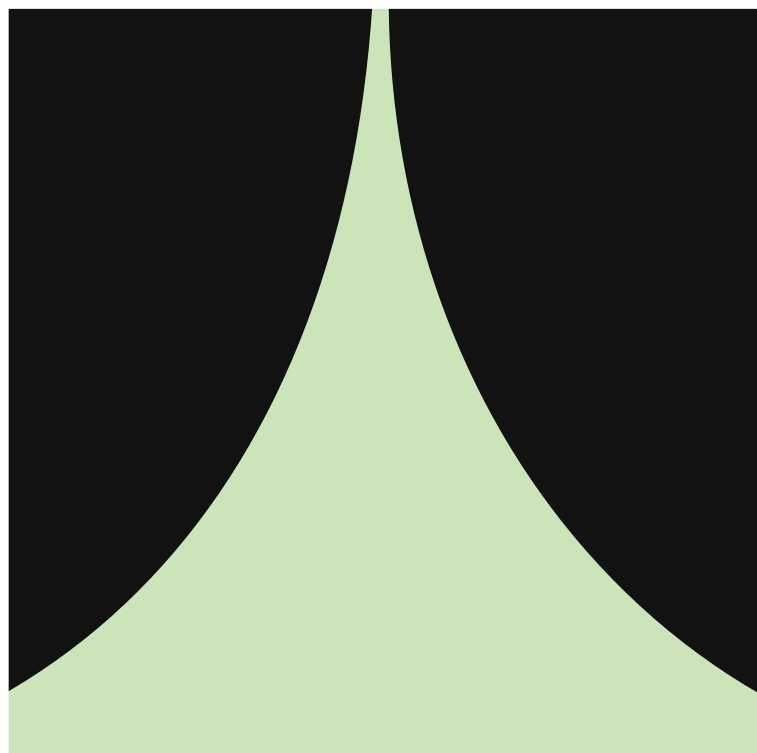
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