

# Architectures of Place: Building on Legacy

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Architecture sets life up  
It animates the materials of place  
Of which it becomes an aspect, a moment  
Man is in a place  
Man needs to be somewhere  
To be born live and die

– Trans. from Phillippe Madec. L'EnVie<sup>1</sup>

There might be a surreal poetry to the landscape of highways, some uncanny beauty to ghostly no-manis lands, some savage vigor to wall graffiti, some voyeurist seduction to traces of violence on the pavement. There might be some subversive appeal to the clutter of billboards and *decorated sheds* scattered in fields of asphalt like unclaimed objects in the midst of barren roads and car parks. But most of us, most of the time, seek another kind of daily poetry, that of a place, which we could call ours however temporarily. *Place* is that portion of space that human beings inhabit and where they confront each other. Placelessness is disorienting and unsettling, precluding identification. It lacks the specificity that sets the stage for being and becoming.

Placelessness is enacted from without and within architecture. It may be an inevitable cultural expression of complex socio-economic global structures. But some architects, theoreticians and practitioners alike, challenge placelessness. In this paper, three theories of resistance — genius loci, critical regionalism, and tectonic theory — serve as framework to discuss projects that enact their premises: Berger's Coulée Verte in Paris, Falocci's Bibracte Museum in Burgundy, and Piano's Tjibaou Cultural Center in Noumea. The conclusion suggests how essential aspects of place may be woven into projects that build on the past to construct the future.

## PLACE AND PLACELESSNESS

**Placelessness from without architecture.** A global economy of production and consumption rules the world. Late-capitalist consumption of goods is not tied to any specific milieu; its link to production is intangible; exchanges rely on transfers of information that occur anywhere but in the streets. Post-industrial<sup>2</sup> consumption has reached an unprecedented scale and complexity. A mere sector of this economy, land development depends on abstract real estate and financial transactions bereft of the idea of place. Absentee landlords, faceless corporations have little or no investment in local communities. Even when landlords occupy their premises, it is temporarily: Americans live an average of seven years in a house.<sup>3</sup> Society is mobile; this is the *em of ephemerality*<sup>4</sup>, of fleeting fashion, or as architect Henri Ciriani<sup>5</sup> puts it, of the "*Do-your-own-thing-man*" syndrome. All this encourages detachment from place.

Places deprived of pedestrians and citizens become what sociolo-

gist Paul Virilio<sup>6</sup> calls *non-lieux* (non-place); they don't belong to anyone, they could be anywhere. Insecurity settles in as a result of people's isolation from each other. The social realm is empty, disaffected. In the US, the supremacy of the individual, enunciated in the Constitution (the right of each human being to pursue freedom and happiness) is reinforced by the American dream (individual success.) This condition finds its paroxysm today, rendering the task of creating collective places particularly difficult.

**Placelessness from within architecture.** Inevitably, buildings are estranged from the land. *Atopic* typologies (malls, offices, and centers of all sorts) are guided by profit. Introverted buildings ignore site, context and neighborhood; they are connected to the world through intangible networks. They stand, next to each other in the midst of their parcel, reaching high for attention, shouting loud with singularity; they dismiss passer-by, pedestrian, and citizen. Here they are, anywhere, built in the honor of their owner, who is elsewhere, and probably does not care.

In addition, US practices of franchised floor plans that are parachuted from corporate or bureaucratic headquarters, be it Mac Donald or USPS, reinforce this lack of site specificity. Site adjustments consist of uninspired technical or legal compliance. With global import/export of materials, building materiality seldom relates to the region. In the name of expediency, US suburbs enact the lessons drawn from Las Vegas.<sup>7</sup> Venturi's architectural language of *decorated sheds* and *ducks* (Figs. 1, 2) punctuate the American landscape. Clearly, one-liner signs or *simulacra* as Baudrillard calls them, meet market demands. Perceived in a glimpse, landscapes are at once consumed and forgotten. Hence the race for visual attention begins. Photogenic architecture prevails over lived architecture. Visual effects evince phenomenological richness. Materiality is staged rather than constructed. As Guy Debord<sup>8</sup> states, "the real becomes illusion and the illusion becomes real." The look of "place" matters more than its spirit. Historical pastiches multiply, obliterating the authentic with its copy. Tourism, whereby *places* become objects of consumption, rewards these strategies.

Are the socio-political and economical structures so intricate that they leave no room for places? Can buildings still dialogue meaningfully with their site? Can they be imbued with intentional materiality, congruence between appearance and content, and phenomenological richness? Or is such endeavor as Jameson<sup>9</sup> puts it, totally "anachronic," for existential concerns have no relevance to post modern subjects?

**Resistance to placelessness in architecture.** Many architectural strategies of place making have been devised, debated, and abandoned in the last 30 years. In reaction to the Modernist *tabula-rasa* and to the obvious failure of the 60s' urban renewal projects, postmodernists revived the idea of pre-existing site/regional conditions. Few believe any more that technology would redeem human-

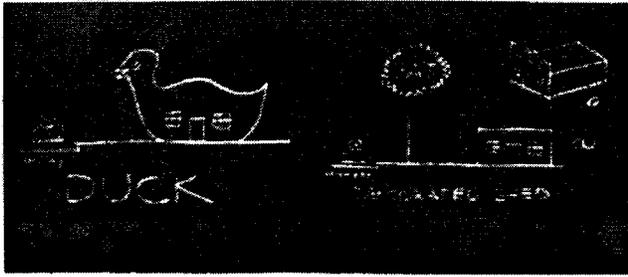


Fig. 1, 2. Venturi's duck and decorated shed. Source: Charles Jencks. *Post-modern Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1987), p. 45.

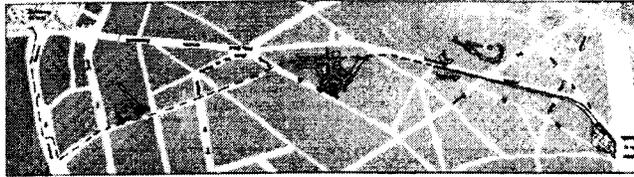


Fig. 3. Patrick Berger. Coulée verte or Viaduc de la Bastille. Avenue Dausmesnil, Paris. Site plan. Source: Patrick Berger: *Opere I Progetti* (Italia: I Catloghi dell'Accademia di Architettura. 1997), p. 62.

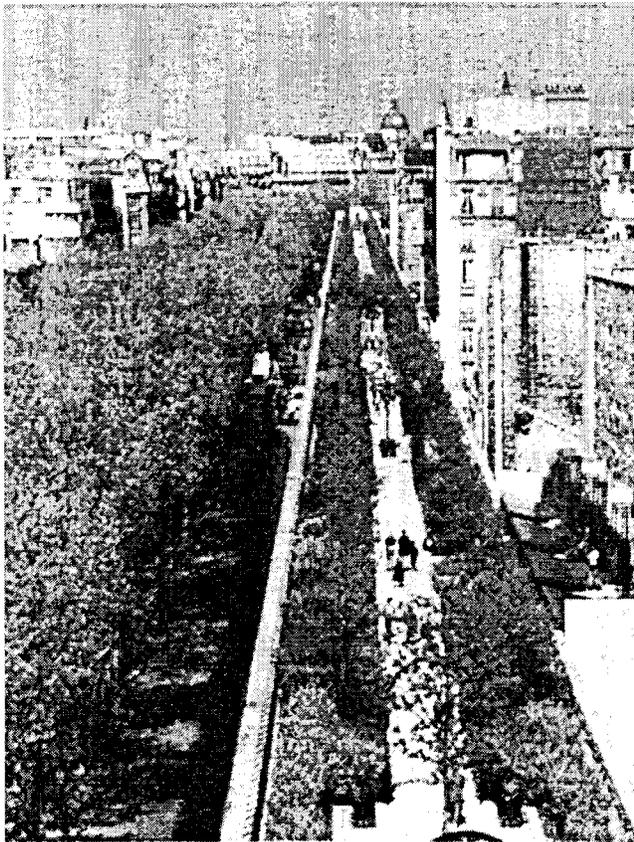


Fig. 4. The promenade viewed from above, showing the relationship of the park to adjacent dwellings and to the boulevard below.

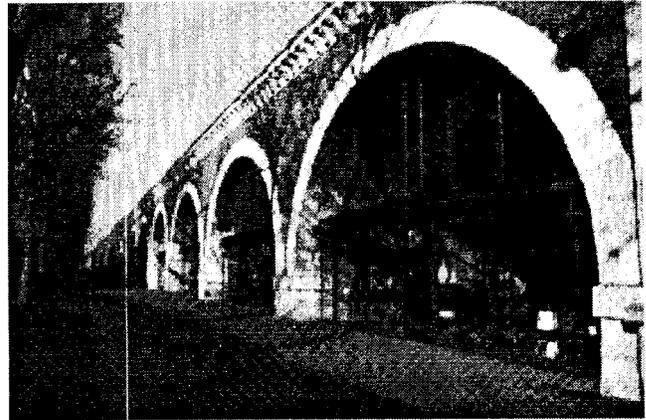


Fig. 5. Arts and crafts shops and galleries occupy spaces below the viaduc. Photograph by author.

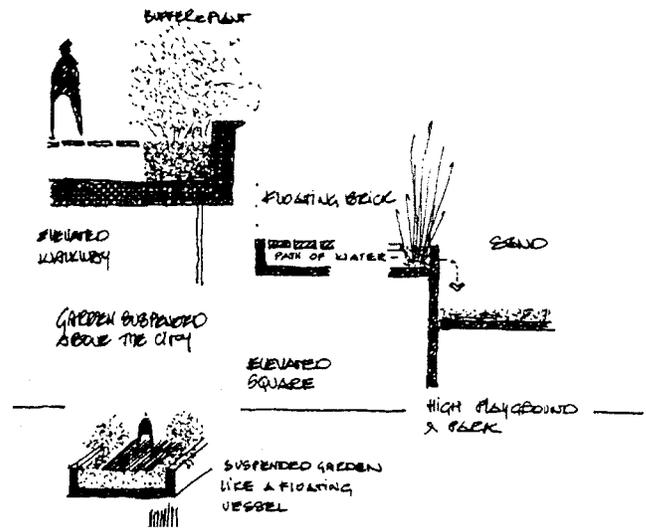


Fig. 6. The project materiality reinforces the experience of climbing from the street to the suspended garden. Sketches by author.

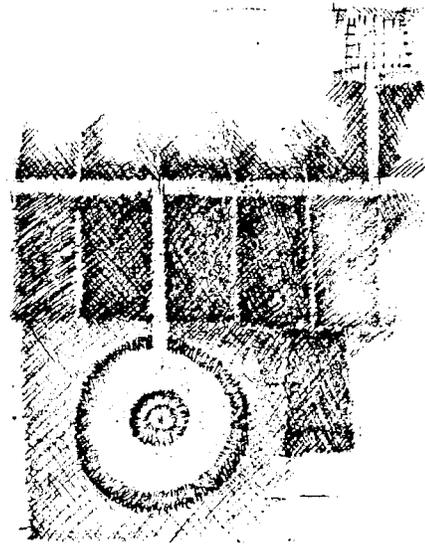


Fig. 7. The brick paving weaves streams of water that feed the trees and drain the courtyard. Sketch by student.

ity.<sup>10</sup> Opposing normative and corporate architecture, site specificity emerges in theory and reflective practices.

Specifically, some theories resist the commodification of architecture. 1- Norberg Schultz<sup>11</sup> revives the genius loci or spirit of place. 2- Kenneth Frampton's<sup>12</sup> critical regionalism re-defines the region. 3- tectonic theory discussed by Kenneth Frampton, Marco Frascari, Edward Sekler<sup>13</sup> and others, seeks a "reality"<sup>14</sup> of architecture rooted in intentional materiality, i.e. its medium. They call for the necessity to reconnect with experiential or phenomenological aspects of architecture, as a means to connect with cultures and environments. "The work of Bachelard [teaches us that we live] in a space saturated with qualities, and that may even be pervaded with a spectral aura. The space of our primary perception, of our dreams, and of our passions" says Foucault.<sup>15</sup> Phenomenologists view the world not so much as an objectified universe independent of its subjects but as a primary set of relationships between subjects and objects. Hence Vico, Hegel, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Heidegger are frequently invoked.

**Notion of genius loci.** Norberg-Schultze<sup>16</sup> speaks of a total environment necessary for being in the world, where four essential modes of dwelling (natural, collective, public and private) can take place. He identifies two aspects of dwelling: 1- identification, i.e., experiencing the environment, is related to bodily form, and 2- orientation apprehends spatial order. His notion of orientation invokes cosmology, having the merit to point out fundamental relationships between space and our actions within them. For him, the genius loci can be translated through *morphology*, *topology* and *typology*. Morphology and typology are used in their well-known connotations. But topology, derived from the Greek *topos*, "is chosen to indicate that space derives from place rather than abstract mathematical space."<sup>17</sup> References to past European dwellings give the theory a problematic nostalgic and Euro-centered tone. Nonetheless Norberg-Schultz provides useful insights.

**Critical regionalism**, born in the 70s distinguishes itself from prior regionalist tendencies, namely from nationalistic neo-tribal aims such as the Nazis, and from the exploitation of tourism, whereby economic (rather than nationalistic) intentions justify the use of familiar forms. "It has little to do with the sentimental, scenographic, nationalist movements of the past, nor is it chauvinistic," writes Alexander Tzonis.<sup>18</sup> He explains that unlike previous nationalistic movements, it does not see the oppressor associated with any specific nation, but rather "with the expanding realm of bureaucracy, technocracy, and ...commercial forces liquidating life." Unlike romantic regionalism, rooted in the 19th century picturesque search for a genius loci, critical regionalism does not wish to preserve a nation's identity, nor to find refuge in nostalgia. Instead it challenges conventions and force us to see things anew, by defamiliarizing ourselves with familiar forms. It tends to establish architectures of place, by emphasizing local form determinants. Without adhering to any style, regional elements are identified, isolated and finally made new. While Frampton, father of the theory's seven points (Fig. 2) discards it today, many practitioners still abide by it.

**Tectonic theory.** Frampton now spearheads tectonic theory, which reclaims materiality as a meaningful constituent of architecture.

I have elected to address the issue of tectonic form for a number of reasons, not least of which is the current tendency to reduce architecture to scenography. This reaction arises in response to the universal triumph of Venturi's decorated shed; that all too prevalent syndrome in which shelter is packaged like a giant commodity."

Tectonic theorists call for consistency between whole and parts, for expressiveness of structural and material behavior, and for authentic connections between representation and construction. Directed against post-modernism, tectonic theory reaffirms the

essential, expressive role of architecture. Meaning resides beyond textual or symbolic representations in the medium itself. Frampton invokes a notion of poetry indebted to Vico, German Romanticism, and Russian Formalism. Frascari praises the art of building, crystallized in detailing. Seckler concedes several means of reaching tectonic expression (through negation, overstatement or faithful expression of construction means,) stressing though that poetry transcends construction consistency. They attempt at re-enchanting the world.

To that end, Vittorio Gregotti<sup>20</sup> and Jean Nouvel<sup>21</sup> insist that projects need to *modify* the environment. More has been built over the last hundred years as previously, with no time for sedimentation." Fighting architecture's lack of autonomy, three selected projects modify existing conditions, creating new places out of the old. Patrick Berger's Coulee Verte reinforces principles of phenomenology, enriching the physical experience of place with tactile impressions. Falocci's Bibracte Museum in Burgundy imbues the building of an intentional materiality and a tectonic integrity that is loaded with poetic and historical allusions. Finally, Renzo Piano's Noumea cultural Center resists easy mythical invocation by centering his work on a serious anthropological study of New Caledonian world views. Let's see how effective these strategies might be and the aspects of place they emulate.

## PROJECTS ENACTING NOTIONS OF PLACE

### A phenomenal promenade in Paris: La Coulée Verte

For most people, Paris evokes a postcard romanticism of trees where couples embrace, roofs where birds sing in concert. or the music of the gay Pigalle. However, the reality of living there is one of noise, congestion, and pollution. The scarcity of trees makes the recent construction of parks a welcome pleasure. Patrick Berger's *Coulée Verte*, Avenue Dausmesnil is one of the recent park projects started in the 90s. The disaffected Viaduc was remodeled, housing arts and crafts shops and cafes underneath, and a suspended garden above, where train tracks used to be (Figs. 3, 4).

La *Coulée Verte* creates a new place in an old fabric, which displaces pre-existing conditions. It perverts the Hausmanian typology by elevating a public space above the street. Apartment buildings from which one viewed (and heard) infrequent trains, are now opening onto a delicately flowered garden. Their privacy is negotiated thanks to taller bushes that flank the nearest dwellings. The garden is thus inhabited, creating the typical Parisian gaze between observers and passers-by, inhabitants and visitors. Unlike other deserted elevated plazas built in the 60s,<sup>23</sup> this project is popular. How?

The project scale is tailored to pedestrians. The width of the old tracks on top accommodates but a narrow stream of walkers. A band of plants on each side of the wooden path protects pedestrians from the city's noise, defining an intimate and rural respite from the boulevard below. Seating areas punctuate the walk encouraging larger gatherings; some are linked to pocket parks, other loom over the street, allowing Parisian *flâneurs* (wanderers) to observe what they left. The alternating rhythm of buffer plants and open vista creates a breathing sequence. It conveys Norberg-Schultze's sense of orientation and *identification*, allowing one to be successively part of the park and of the city.

While containing an intimate sanctuary of greenery, the imposing structure of the Viaduc has a strong presence on the boulevard below. It also has a recognizable history. Geographer Debarbieux<sup>24</sup> states that four types of representation must co-exist to create places: 1- synecdoche; 2- icon or cliché; 3- allegory; and 4- "condensation" synthesizing what the collective wants to reveal. Arches are both synecdoche and icon of the Viaduc (Fig. 5). The train structure is an allegory of the post-war era, a reminder of an older Paris. The aesthetization of the old dark and smelly Viaduc into fancy shops synthesizes what Paris wants to remember: a stable look deprived of

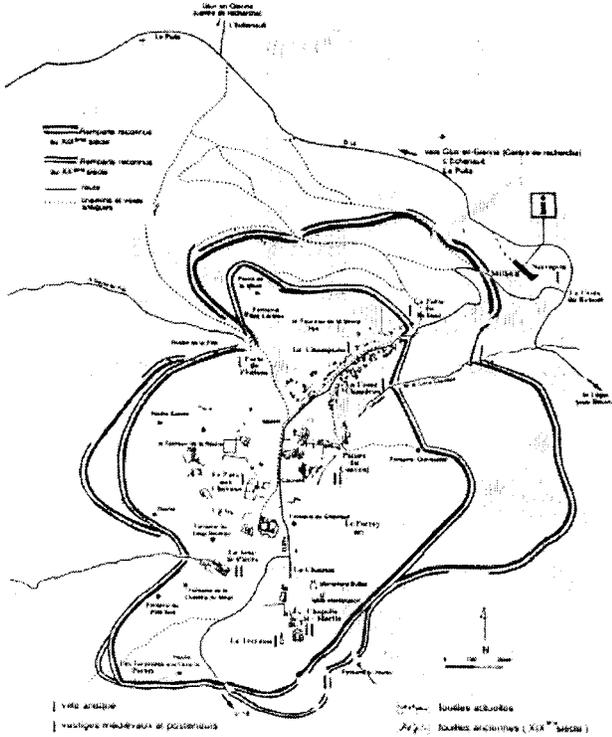


Fig. 8 Plan of the oppidum of Mount Beuvray, where the Bibracte museum is located. Site plan courtesy of Bibracte Museum.

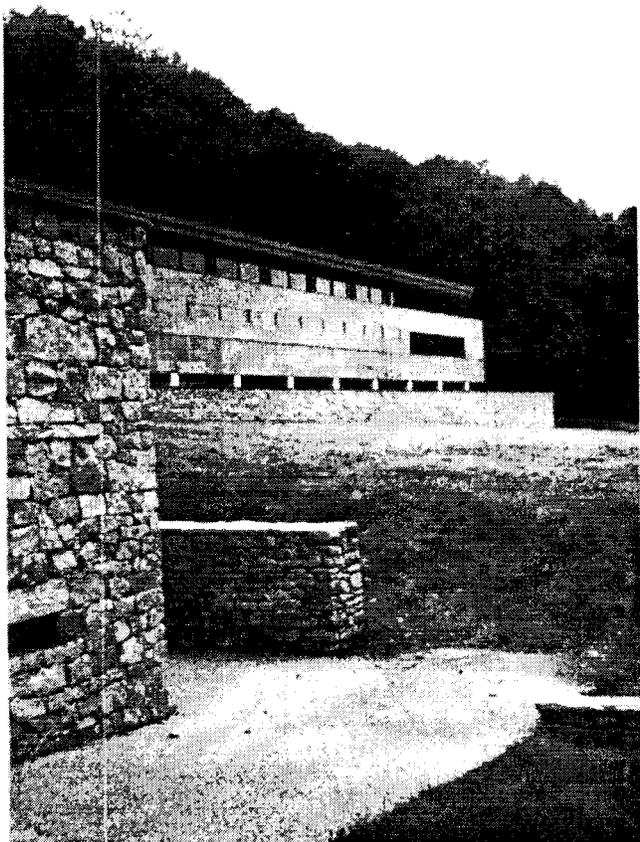


Fig. 9. Clean, abstract, yet heavily textured surfaces slice the ground and contrast with the forestry landscape. Photograph by author.

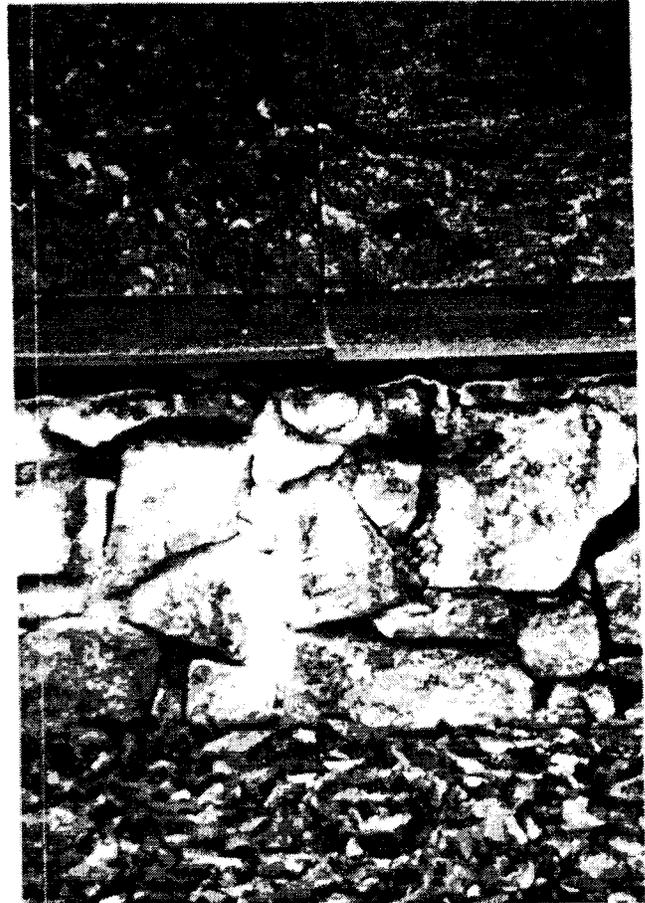


Fig. 10. The building materiality reveals the phases of humanity in their didactic juxtaposition. Here the leaves that are earth bound speak of origin, the rough stone wall of the age of the stone, and the polished granite cladding of the age of manufacturing. Photograph by author.

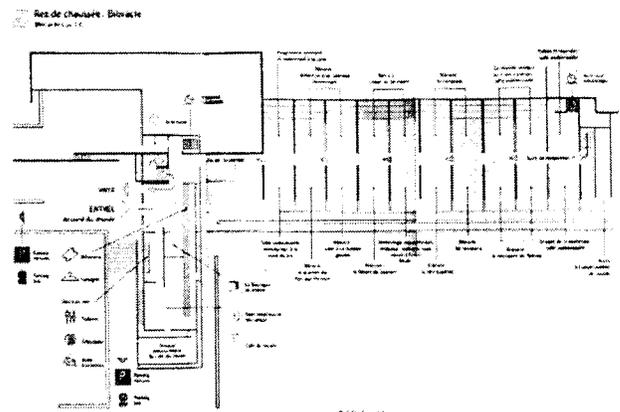


Fig. 11. The rationality of the museum layout, with the exhibit space wing abutting the service wing underscores the irregularity of the hill's contour lines. The regularly spaced fins in the exhibit spaces mark the sequence of visitors' journey through history. Floor plan. courtesy of the Bibracte Museum.

its old misery. The *Coulée Verte* builds on our remembrance of what was.

Moreover, Berger's intentional materiality is subtly powerful. The increasing lightness of the floor (Fig. 6) reinforces the experience of walking from the ground towards the sky. We leave the street's pavers and concrete to meet a sandy soft plaza at midair. Stone steps guide us to an elevated brick garden at the mezzanine level; there, regular strips of water are woven into the pavers; draining the courtyard, they also sing softly along with birds hidden in bamboo. A metal stairs brings us to the top wooden planks that recall Deauville's promenade, a prime vacationing area. The delicate new architecture contrasts with the existing stones' stability. This walk captures our dreams and senses.

The *Coulée Verte* transforms space into a place to be used, a place of social encounters, a place of dreams, and a respite from Paris's chaos. It emancipates the city's typologies, topologies and morphologies. Moreover, it emulates tactile impressions of hot and cold, moist and dry, smooth or rugged. Far from being literal Berger's physical place takes on phenomenal qualities that are needed in the District of Dausmesnil; he stays away from imitation and nostalgia. The project is very site specific without borrowing familiar imagery or pastiches. Instead, it provides the sensations that Parisians miss: soft sand under your feet, the respite of a suspended garden, the ship-like adventure of climbing metal stairs. This precludes a hermetic understanding of place, picking up universal phenomenal qualities as well as responding to local aspirations.

### Material manifestation of history: Bibracte

Burgundy on the other hand, is a remote rural area. The region of Bibracte at the edge of the Morgon is a ruggedland that has a tradition of earth-bound granite construction, hilly pastures defined by stone walls or sticky bushes, and evergreen forests. Burgundy, once the rival of France, has almost preserved its multi-cultural influence of a crossroad for Romans, Gallics, Celts, Saxons and French. Two thousand years ago, Julius Caesar referred to Bibracte as the typical Gallic town (in his commentary on Gallic Wars) where he kept Vercingetorix captive. Almost forgotten, popular customs would celebrate the place through a yearly festival. Bibracte had a legendary status until its discovery in the 1980s (Fig. 8). Prompted by President Mitterand's support, the construction of a museum and of a research center would celebrate years of scientific efforts to recover the site.

P. L. Falocci's Bibracte Museum (Fig. 9) was completed in 1995. Located on Mount Beuvray's Celtic *oppidum*<sup>25</sup> it refers allegorically and literally to the site's archeological remains, building on historical evidence to engage our collective memory. The building's materiality illustrates didactically the phases of humanity (Fig. 10). Built upon a cut stone plinth (referring to the age of stone), the museum is supported by a steel roof/structure (age of metal) and wrapped with a glazed enclosure (modern age) layered with a detached granite cladding (recalling the region's heritage). The stone plinth is constructed with the same blocks as the Celtic walls, albeit with a regularity that gives them a contemporary feel. The steel structure is simple and elegant, disappearing behind pure surfaces of the enclosure; in that sense, it may be a-tectonic, for it does not shout for expression; yet it is built with an intelligible integrity. The flat roof surface floats above the columns, separate from the granite panel that makes up the edge of the museum. A slot of water with a negative edge is inserted between the glass and the granite, bringing a calm serenity to the exhibit spaces. The building construction gives a reading of the historical progression that the archeological site and exhibits reveal.

The rhythm of history is accentuated inside the two levels of exhibit spaces by a series of fins punctuating the visitor's path that define different periods of Bibracte (Fig. 11). Each of these spaces is carefully detached from the fins, as if to stress its own identity; careful articulations through reveals and changes of material makes

the floor seemingly float, creating a subtle ambiguity as to where we stand: on a bridge between eras or in one phase of history? Transparency through the entire building suggests a connection between sequences of time, the nature of which is not revealed. One distinguishes the surrounding landscape only from afar, for the granite panel along the valley conceals views until the end of the path.

Modernist in its luminosity and clarity, in the choice of a crisp vocabulary and in the employment of abstract surfaces, the museum does not elaborate an abstract space but speaks of the site specificity. It is grounded in the region. Flanking the side of the *oppidum*, its elegant gestures reinforce its prominent position; the stone plinth picks up the contours like most pastoral walls do. The concrete walls on the upper side of the building about the hill's slope, disappearing into it. They define private exhibit courtyards contrasting with the open terrace at the end of the building that offers a panorama of the valley. Even the parking lot is carefully hidden by stone walls surrounding each terrace to minimize the cars' visual pollution.

Bibracte's materiality combines cerebral and sensual memory, but it does not employ any familiar form of the past. Instead it makes a clearly contemporary statement, even though referring to the periods of man's humanity. Staying away from pastiches and imitation, it chooses to respond to the site breathtaking beauty by inserting a pristine and pure facility. While sculptural surfaces slice the landscape, they modulate the surroundings' materiality in a dialectical way. The building gives to read Burgundy's pre-existing physical, cultural and historical make-up without falling into arbitrary eclecticism.

### BEYOND CRITICAL REGIONALISM: TJIBAOU CULTURAL CENTER NOUMEA

True universality in architecture can be attained only through connection with the roots, gratitude for the past, and respect for the genius loci.<sup>26</sup>

Once viewed as a high-tech architect, Renzo Piano now adopts a much more perceptive and subtle vocabulary. His technological inquiry is modulated with sensitivity to place, resource and culture. Intricate rain-screen cladding systems (such as at the IRCAM or rue de Meaux) create a useful redundancy for breathing skin systems. Uses of natural lighting in museum employ sophisticated multiple skin roofing systems, (at the de Menil, Beyeler, and Brancusi's atelier). Moreover, recent works combine delicate site-specificity, awareness of the region's character, and subtle interpretation of vernacular constructions, cultures and of the spirit of place (as in Noumea.)

Completed in 1997, the Tjibaou Cultural Center respects the landscape and the climate of the New Caledonia island, but also its Melanesian cultural heritage — rituals, history, and patterns of settlements (Fig. 12). Ten slender woven "cases" (Fig. 13) emerge from the forest, as if reaching for the sky. They look ephemeral, susceptible to bend under the high winds of the region. Nestled along the edge of the forest, these "huts" as Piano calls them, form a village that opens up on a collective alley. Their delicate yet dynamic appearance is achieved thanks to a sophisticated yet standardized construction technology. Dedicated to traditional cultures,<sup>27</sup> the project is at once recognizing vernacular forms and current technological possibilities.

A symbol of New Caledonian Kanak culture, the building recalls its heritage. An anthropologist, part of the design team from the onset, provided a serious and thorough understanding of local culture. Piano had to "take off his European mental clothes" and steep into the Pacific world, one of ephemerality and of unity with nature. Buildings' continuity is not achieved through durability but through constant maintenance. Most local constructions use perishable materials. Hence the building had to look unfinished, dynamic, and fragile. Their complex geometry recall native constructions,

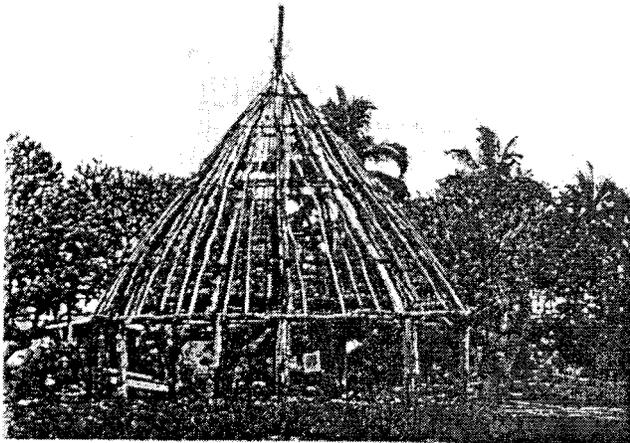


Fig. 12 Traditional kanak hut structure. It is not so much the shape but the spirit of connections that inspired Piano. Source: *A+U* #2 (Japan: Feb 1998)

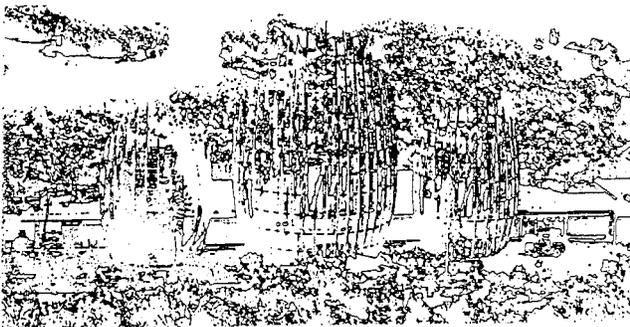


Fig. 13. "Cases" emerge from the forest. Interpretive drawing by author

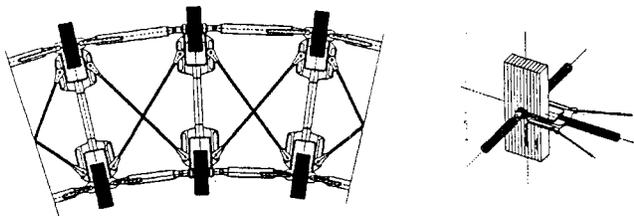


Fig. 14. Details of the double rows of glue-lam arcs and columns forming the shell (horizontal section) and of a typical built-in connection (axon). Source: *A+U* #2 (Japan: Feb 1998).

albeit at a larger scale (20, 22 or 28 meters tall) and more in spirit than in shape. Their louvered skins recall the intertwined plant fibers of local huts, employing a double row iroko glue lam, which is incidentally is a durable material (Fig. 14).

Wind is the prime design criterion (Fig. 15). The island is exposed to cyclones, with winds of up to 300km/hr. Hence the slender shapes resist strong winds through a double natural draft, playing on the roof

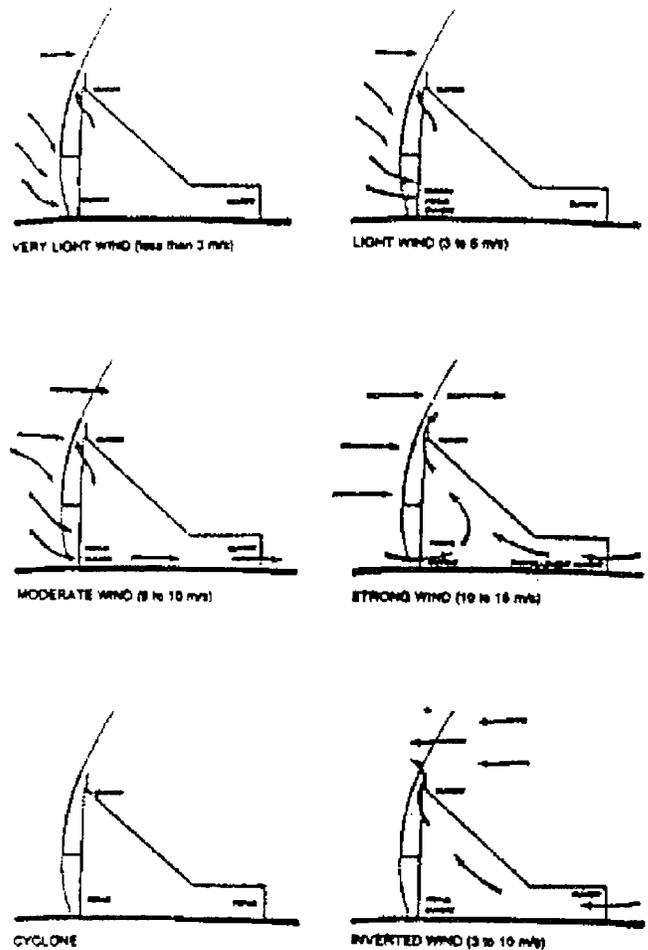


Fig. 15. Wind studies. Source: *A+U* #2 Op. Cit.

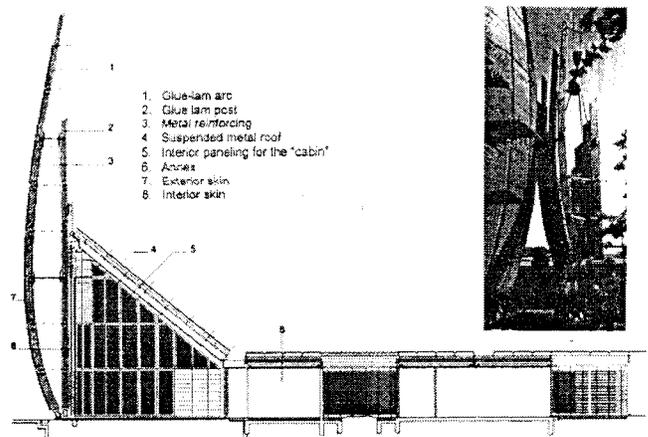


Fig. 16. Building section and detail of cases' shell. Source: *Cahiers Techniques du Bâtiment* #184 (France: Nov 1997).

double structure and on the adjustable opacity of the facade louvers. Wind tunnel testing validated design principles. Lateral bracing is accomplished through stainless steel ties between arcs and columns, and through triangulated grid of cast steel members connecting the two rows that make up the skin of the shells. Connections required for lateral bracing are built in the glue-lam and welded to the rods tying arcs together. This allows a discreet connective system, despite

the large number of cross-bracing and tension rods. Wood and steel weave this wickerwork of tradition and modernity.

Yet these truncated cylinders (Fig. 16), each different from each other were fabricated in series. The shells were formed in the same mold, simply positioned differently to make slightly different shapes. They make use of only eight families of pieces in cast steel to realize multiple assemblies that allow greater freedom of expression on the exterior skin. While many panel types make up the skin (fixed glazing, louvers, perforated wood panels, doors, cupboards and shelves) they all fit a regular grid, 2.25 m tall and 0.9 m wide. This brings order to the intricate geometry but also facilitates construction.

Beyond the physical aspect of the region — both visual and tactile — Piano engages the cultural landscape of New Caledonia. In that sense, he goes beyond the critical regionalism articulated by Frampton, for he recognizes the mental quality of place, the spirit with which he imbues the buildings.

## CONCLUSION: DESIGN TACTICS AND STRATEGIES FOR MAKING PLACES

The three selected projects respect places' pre-existing conditions, establishing "reciprocity" with the land and society. In doing so, they become "stewards" of cultural heritage, bearers of places' visible and invisible identities, building the future on the past. They convey the richness of architectures that weave perceptual and cognitive sensitivity with skill and rigor. They validate several aspects of existence — past and present and presumably future. They contribute to constructing places that resonate for both insiders and outsiders. They mediate three essential dimensions of a place.

1. *Its physicality*, which is both visual and tactile.

2. *Its conceptual identity*, that which distinguishes it from others culturally and socially, made up of visible signs and invisible symbols.

3. *Its imaginal quality*, evoking a collective memory that may be real — as in history — or dreamed — as in legends, myths and stories that float in people's minds.

These aspects of place may not be equally decisive for all projects. Yet, the focus on one to the detriment of others can only be reductive, generating materialistic, cerebral, or arbitrary projects that singularize the body, the mind or the spirit.

Each case study herein has a special role to fulfill: one helps Paris to breathe, the second reflects a two-thousand-year-old past, and the third symbolizes ethnic identity. But are these unique strategies? Several pitfalls await architects seeking multi-dimensionality: historicists may stage and cannibalize the past by abusing pastiches; mythical charmers trivialize history by manufacturing tradition; regionalism has dangerous nationalistic or nostalgic connotations. Even the best intentions may be transmuted and plagiarized. For instance, historian Allan Plattus<sup>28</sup> explains how in the 70s, *Contextualism* became prey to its own game:

Contextualism, initially a response to the sterility of orthodox modernist urbanism and a defense of the cultural and spatial homogeneity.... became complicit with rather than resistant to the very forces against which it formulated its own agenda, producing not only the radical difference of critique but the consumable difference of commodity.

Plattus confirms Tafuri's assertion that "ideology is useless to capitalist development."<sup>29</sup> The instant perversion of cultural artifacts into commodities transforms significantly the task of making places, the "where" of human life. Complex economic structures constrict architectural production and strategies of resistance. Yet, Berger, Falocci and Piano avoid many traps by focusing on the spirit and essence of the past. They may be constructing new paradigms.

Making places is a matter of negotiation. The richness of architecture lies precisely in the mediation of seemingly irreconcilable

preoccupations that range from the most practical to the most poetic. In an age of plurality and fragmentation, synthesis is difficult, risking an excess of pragmatism or an ineffective idealism. Moreover, the focus on site-specific pre-existing conditions need not exclude universal dimensions of architecture. Architect Fuhimiko Maki insists that architecture needs to tap into our collective subconscious, in a Jungian sense. He invokes the imaginal part of the brain that is embedded in our animal mind, the one that gives joy to all children of the world. Site-specificity is no substitute for global considerations; in fact, it may be the root of universal resonance. Places where human beings are born, live and die are places themselves in the process of becoming, that have a past a present and a future, at once visible and intangible, specific and universal.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Philippe Madec, *L'En Vie* (Paris: Epure, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Bell defined *post-industrial* in opposition to *pre-industrial* and *industrial*. "A pre-industrial sector is primarily extractive, its economy is based on agriculture, farming, fishing or other resources such as natural gas and oil. An industrial sector is primarily fabricating, using energy, and machine technology, for the manufacture of goods. A postindustrial sector is one of processing in which telecommunications and computers are strategic for the exchange of information and knowledge." *The coming of Post-industrial Society* (New York, 1976), p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Ellen Dunham-Jones on ephemerality and durability cites numerous specific statistics that reinforces this idea (GSD Oct 97).

<sup>4</sup> For Gilles Lipovetski in *L'Empire de l'Ephémère* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987).

<sup>5</sup> Henri Cirani, "La Question des Styles," *Ville et Architecture Sommet culturel Franco-Japonais* (Paris: Maison du Japon, Nov 13–14, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Paul Virilio, *L'insecurite du territoire* (France: Stock, 1976).

<sup>7</sup> Venturi et al. *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972).

<sup>8</sup> Guy Debord *La Société du Spectacle*. 4th Ed. (Paris: Gallimard/Folio, 1992) 1st Ed. 1967.

<sup>9</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Post Modernist Culture* (Durham: Duke UP, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> Lyotard claims that "technology has now taken its own momentum, independently of the benefices to human beings," *Le Post-Modernisme Expliqué aux Enfants*, (Paris: Gallimard 1988).

<sup>11</sup> Christian Norberg-Schultze, "The concept of dwelling," *Intentions in Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Frampton, "Critical Regionalism" *Modern Architecture: a Critical History* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1992) pp. —. "Critical regionalism Revisited," *Critical Regionalism: The Pomona Meeting- Proceedings*. Ed. Spyros Amourgis. California: College of Environmental Design, Cal poly Pomona, 1991. —. *Out of Site: a Social Criticism of Architecture*. Ed. Diane Girhardo (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Frampton, "Rappel à l'Ordre: The Case for the Tectonic," *Architectural Design* V60 #3-4 (New York: St Martin's, 1990) and *Studies in Tectonic Culture: The Poetics of Construction in 19th and 20th Century Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT, 1995) 251; Edward Seckler "Structure: Construction, Tectonics," G. Kepes Ed. *Structure in Art and in Science* (New York: Braziller, 1965); Marco Frascari, "Tell the Tale Detail," *VIA* 7 (Cambridge: MIT, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> the term is invoked in Michael Benedikt, *For an Architecture of Reality* (New York: Lumen, 1987).

<sup>15</sup> Foucault, "of other space" Joan Ockman Ed., *Architecture Culture 1943-1968* (Columbia: Rizzoli, 1993), p. 421.

<sup>16</sup> Christian Norberg-Schultze, 1985 Op. Cit.

<sup>17</sup> Christian Norberg-Schultze, 1985 Op. Cit. p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre, *Architecture in Europe:*

*Memory and Invention since 1968* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), p. 17

<sup>19</sup> Frampton *Rappel à l'Ordre*, 1990 Op. Cit., p. 1

<sup>20</sup> Peter Wong Trans. *Inside Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT, 1996).

<sup>21</sup> Sommet Culturel Franco-Japonais, *La Ville et L'Architecture*, Op. Cit.

<sup>22</sup> *Sédimentation* in French refers to the many layers of history that make a city; it infers the notion of successive constructions and demolitions.

<sup>23</sup> such Le front de Seine nicknamed the *Affront de Seine*

<sup>24</sup> Bernard Debarbieux, "Le lieu, le territoire et trois figures de rhétorique" *L'espace Géographique* #1 (Belin Reclus, 1997) Four types of representation are: a synecdoche-like evoking one of its constituents; 2- the use of icon or cliché; 3- an allegory of the social group (a generic aspect); 4- and "condensation" syn-

thesizing what the collective wants to reveal (as monuments do).  
<sup>25</sup> an *oppidum* is a natural rock formation that builds an isolated mound.

<sup>26</sup> *A+U* #2 (Japan: Feb 1998): 93.

<sup>27</sup> Exhibit on Renzo Piano Building Workshop's work (Beyeler Museum, Basel, October 97).

<sup>28</sup> Alan Plattus, "The Architecture of Difference" *Scogin Elam and Bray* (New York: Rizzoli, 1992), p. 190.

<sup>29</sup> Manfredo Tafuri *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (Cambridge: MIT, 1994) 1st Ed 76, original text 73. P. X preface.

<sup>30</sup> In his exposé entitled "Universality and Architecture," *Ville et Architecture Somnnet culturel Franco-Japonais* (Paris: Maison du Japon, Nov 13 & 14 1997).