

French Pavilion of the 17th Venice  
International Architecture Exhibition  
— La Biennale di Venezia

22 May — 21 November 2021



La Biennale di Venezia

17. Mostra  
Internazionale  
di Architettura

Partecipazioni Nazionali

# COMMUNITIES AT WORK

A PROJECT BY  
CHRISTOPHE HUTIN



INSTITUT  
FRANÇAIS

PRESS RELEASE — MAY 2021

Brunswick Arts — [frenchpavilion@brunswickgroup.com](mailto:frenchpavilion@brunswickgroup.com)

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## MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

“How will we live together?” This captivating and formidable question is quite simply the question of our common world and of its future. It naturally echoes the reflections and debates of those who, like me, have the task of representing their country on the international stage today. Especially since it involves a notion which is all the more urgent due to the great environmental upheaval and the pandemic crisis that are now central to our concerns: life.

Yet it was not to diplomats that Hashim Sarkis, the General Commissioner of the 17th Venice International Architecture Exhibition, chose to pose this question, but to his fellow architects! As we do in negotiation after negotiation, do they not also try to reconcile the necessities of today and the demands of tomorrow? In a world and in societies that are fundamentally *changing*, do we not share the responsibility of creating the conditions for a new coexistence? Do we not try, on a daily basis, to organize the development of our planet for the global commons?

Because of this proximity of vocation, Christophe Hutin, to whom we have chosen to entrust our Pavilion at the Biennale is, therefore, strictly speaking, *the ambassador of a certain French perspective* on the new challenges of the commons.

Based on the ways in which people *inhabit* the world, from Bordeaux to Detroit, via Soweto and Hanoi, his *Communities at Work* tells what it is like to live in the 21st century. When the time comes to build the *world afterwards*, there is no doubt that these possible solutions will be very precious to us, in their diversity and their inventiveness.

In my eyes, Christophe Hutin’s approach reflects today’s French architecture – committed and resolutely open to the world – architecture that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is proud to support and to promote, together with the Ministry of Culture.

We know what our influence and our ability to influence owe to the talent and creativity of our architects. Whether they are still in training or already known and recognized, they can count on our agency, the Institut français, to support them in all continents. And, since the world of architecture has once again come together in Venice, we will, of course, be there with them!

***Jean-Yves Le Drian, French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs***

## MINISTRY OF CULTURE

“How will we live together?” is the theme chosen by Hashim Sarkis for the 17th Venice International Architecture Exhibition. This question resonates strongly today in the context of the Covid-19 health crisis, because this period of epidemic will have many effects on our living environment, our relationship with others and our perception of the world. We are experiencing a profound transformation of our society, which prompts us to take up the triple challenge of economically viable, socially equitable and ecologically sustainable development. The art of designing buildings and cities must necessarily evolve in the light of these challenges.

Architecture is generally associated with large construction projects of an exceptional character. But architecture is also, and above all, everyday places that contribute to our well-being and our way of living together. The quality of our housing, our neighbourhoods and our public facilities, and their ability to foster encounters and solidarity, as well as to preserve our health and encourage access to nature, are major issues.

This year, the French Pavilion, which is always attentive to the transformations of the world, is entrusted to the architect Christophe Hutin and his multidisciplinary team, in order to exhibit the treasures resulting from a testing ground of “communities of residents at work”.

Christophe Hutin advocates an innovative architectural design method, resulting in the implementation of a “spatial contract” involving architects, public authorities and residents, in order to guarantee lasting support for the project. Christophe Hutin and his team remind us that architecture is above all at the service of users. It is by involving them that our living environment will be transformed to offer new places, whether public or private, collective or semi-collective, responding to individual and collective changes. The architect then becomes their guide who gives shape to their needs, desires and ideas.

This new, humble and collective vision of architectural creation, which participates in the renewal of thinking, practices and representations of space, is perceptible in the Pavilion designed by Christophe Hutin, through simple scenography based on video and supplemented by a catalogue which lists the richness and diversity of all these experiences.

This work opens a door to opportune possibilities for us and has its full share of poetry and emotion.

***Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, French Minister of Culture***

## INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

The times that we live in – which really and concretely test all our frames of reference – open an era in which we must invent new social, environmental and political paradigms together, and new aspirations for dialogue and solidarity.

In 2020, Hashim Sarkis, general curator of the 17th Venice International Architecture Exhibition, issued an invitation to the international architectural community in the form of a challenge: *How will we live together?* Christophe Hutin, curator of the French pavilion, responded with an optimistic contribution by inviting architects, communities of residents and citizens to reappropriate their living environment, to jointly give an active form to the action of residing or living in a place.

His proposal, *"Communities at work"*, highlights the uniqueness of both his career path and his working practice. These communities have developed for more than twenty years in France and throughout the world – very often in connection with the French cultural network abroad and the European cultural network – nurtured by founding experiences that touch upon equity and living together in harmony. Christophe Hutin's pragmatic, stimulating proposal invents open architectural narratives. It is part of a rich pioneering critical lineage.

*"Observe more, build less"*; improve and transform rather than destroy; strengthen and develop what exists already; create the conditions for appropriation through use, based on participative architecture, and so on. As an architect-mediator, Christophe Hutin overturns inherited, frozen situations, to renew imaginations, the discourses and the processes of realization. Committed to both action and research, he advocates an architecture of values, an architecture of what is necessary, both source and resource. He demonstrates a renewed, resolute commitment to the architect's social role.

In Soweto, Buenos Aires, Hanoi, Mérignac or Bordeaux, architecture becomes the place of a story of daily life and an experimental space for transformation. It is an open system, conceived and realized in multiple variants adapted to constantly changing situations. Architecture tells its story: the use of video and interviews offers the possibility of capturing the performative dimension of speech and of "the residents' active competence" and their power of action.

By reaffirming the dialogue between human action and the situations constructed in the service of a social and architectural ecology, in a conscious gesture, the French pavilion invites visitors to the collective construction of an inspiring encounter in which sharing opens towards a vision of the world full of exciting promise. In these times of anxiety, that is more crucial than ever...

***Erol Ok, General Manager of the Institut français***



# — COMMUNAUTIES AT WORK

## CURATOR'S STATEMENT

### CHRISTOPHE HUTIN

**The “Communities at Work” project aims to reflect on the meeting between architectural know-how and the inhabitants’ own experiences of their living spaces. This transversal approach to the profession is an attempt to shed light on the implications of architecture in a contemporary world subject to massive changes.**

The exhibition presents a journey of the spirit through architecture, by means of five specific case studies on different continents: in Europe, Asia, America and Africa. The aim is to offer an optimistic vision of a world where communities act directly on their living spaces and daily lives.

The different approaches do not follow a formal, theoretical schema designed by an architect, choosing instead to bear witness to the slow and multiple transformations of living spaces by their inhabitants. Communities appear to be the most relevant resources to transform lived environments, thereby producing new ways of considering “spatial” contracts using a bottom-up approach.

The performative aspect of the residents, of uses, of life in all its forms, is taken into account in the process of the project by a precise and indeterminate architecture. Improvisation is used as a possibility to transform living environments, considered here as “Works in Progress”. Through their actions, the communities at work appropriate their environments, thereby creating common spaces where the management of their living spaces is open to debate.

Faced with human and material waste, we propose a change of perspective on life that already exists everywhere, and the means for a discerning, precise and delicate strategy to enhance it. We present documentaries on communities at work in the transformation of their daily environments, in France, but also throughout the world: in Johannesburg, Bordeaux, Detroit, Mérignac, Hanoi... and other cases to be identified as so many nuggets that enlighten us about the world’s capacity for reinvention.

Through a kind of mirror-image, analogous situations inform us about the phenomena at work, by means of their deviation from the norms and standardisations of the world. How do they live together, and which spatial contracts do they imply? The lessons drawn from these different case studies should help us to develop a critical point of view on the ways in which we live together.

Press release  
May 2021

A project by  
Christophe Hutin

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House and natural nursery garden; Beutre, France - 2019 © Marion Howa



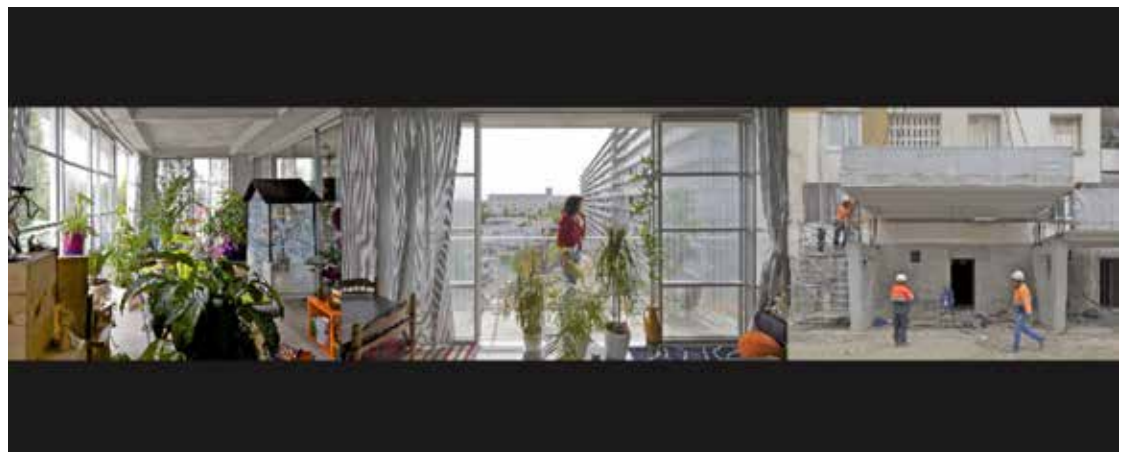
## — THE SCENOGRAPHY

**The scenography of the exhibition provides an immersive experience, made up of images in motion, whose immaterial dimension transcends the neo-classical architecture of the French Pavilion.**

The exhibited films are triptychs, in reference to painting, but also to the film “Napoleon” by Abel Gance, from 1927. Visually and aurally immersed, spectators visit the different case studies that make up the exhibition. The central image of each triptych is a tracking shot that travels through the lived environments. On either side, there are images of daily life, as well as images of the processes of transformation carried out in the spaces by the architects and residents.

This exhibition is a journey of the spirit through architecture: to Johannesburg, Bordeaux, Detroit, Hanoi. Thanks to this decentring, it becomes a matter of summoning the world, receiving the information and knowledge that it holds, and understanding its constant mutations. Thanks to different points of view, these video triptychs offer a new vision of spaces and places. Beyond a perspective, this form of narrative and representation of architecture provides a perception of movement, of the performative aspect of architecture, its uses, and the life that it accommodates. Each visit will be a unique experience and the multitude of documents projected in each room should stimulate the active interpretation of each spectator. We suggest moving from projection to projection, as from world to world, with no predetermined path, with no expected resemblance. The spectator makes the connections, produces the meaning, makes up the knowledge and forms their interpretation. It is a question of implementing, in the very scenography of the exhibition, the principle of emancipation which the experiences related in the documents lay claim to.

The intervention on the Pavilion will be minimal, with the projections being set up according to a video-mapping technique that makes use of the surface particularities of the space. The central space will be renamed “Tout-Monde” (“Whole World”), and will be used to host events. It contains a fresco depicting the life-size residents at work in collective building sites. The spectator (themselves a resident) blends in with the inhabitants of the projects, coming face to face with a democratic exercise, the construction of our living spaces, where we will live together. From a technical point of view, the scenography of the exhibition will reuse the elements of the Japanese Pavilion from the previous art biennale. The totality of built elements will be reused in situ. Finally, the furniture will be made up of adaptation devices for the Acqua Alta, which will subsequently be donated to manage these climate events in Venice.



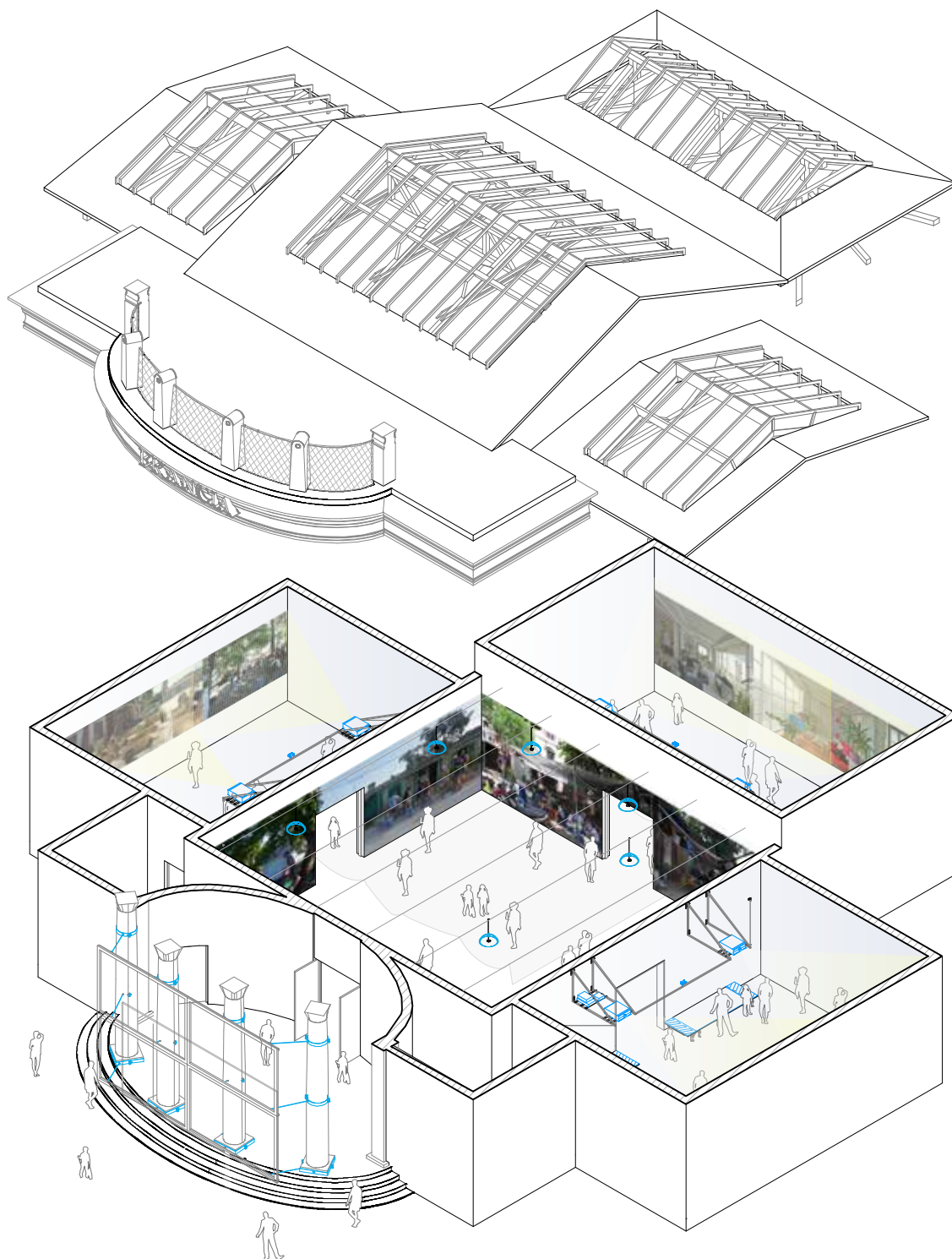
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## — THE SCENOGRAPHY

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## — THE CASE STUDIES

### **BORDEAUX - FRANCE: TRANSFORMATION OF THE G, H AND I BUILDINGS IN THE GRAND PARC IN BORDEAUX**

**This project, carried out by the team made up of Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal (leading architects), Frédéric Druot and Christophe Hutin (associated architects), won the Mies van der Rohe European Union Prize for architecture in 2019.**

The G H I project involved the transformation of three occupied social housing buildings in the Cité du Grand Parc in Bordeaux. The three buildings G, H and I, 10 and 15 stories high, contained 530 apartments with transformation potential. The addition of winter gardens and balconies in extension offered each apartment the benefit of more light, more comfort and fluidity, and a better view. From inside, the view of Bordeaux is panoramic and unique. It is an exceptional housing situation.

The general economy of the project was based on the choice of preserving the existing building as far as possible. This economic approach enabled the team to focus their efforts on generous extensions which significantly and sustainably improved the quality and dimensions of the apartments. These extensions increased the useable space of the apartments and offered the possibility of living outside whilst remaining at home, much like in a house. The apartments, extended by wide winter gardens and balconies, offer agreeable outside areas that are generous enough to be effectively useable.

Philippe Ruault has been documenting the daily lives of the residents of the three building since the beginning of the project. His work, based on permanence, documents each apartment, from its initial state, by way of the process of transformation, to its appropriation by the residents. This photographic work will be shown, not as an illustration of an architect's intention, but for its documentary value regarding the transformation of the residents' daily lives.

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**BORDEAUX  
GRAND PARC**

Winter garden; Le Grand Parc,  
Bordeaux, France – 2016  
© Philippe Ruault



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## — THE CASE STUDIES

### JOHANNESBURG, SOWETO - SOUTH AFRICA: THE INTERVENTIONS OF THE "LEARNING FROM" WORKSHOP

**The "Learning From" workshops – Christophe Hutin and Daniel Estevez – take place internationally and propose an intercultural dialogue on reciprocity and the ability of each context to teach us about the singularity of all architecture.**

The "Learning From" workshop teaches design through action in architecture. It approaches the project of architecture in international, working class contexts and supports intercultural collaboration and heterogeneity in the production of the contemporary city. Here, learning and doing are two sides of the same design attitude where the architect, a spirit traveller, is a reflexive practitioner.

Following the logic of emancipation teaching, the "Learning From" workshop maintains that everything that is done can be discussed, shared and thought-out. The fact is the shared element that places all intelligences on the same level. Architecture, like the city, is made up of constellations, not planification, and in this social production, everyone is welcome. The masters are ignorant and the real situations in society become "educating" institutions. Attention is given to what is already there at the beginning of each project, leading the students towards the need to inform themselves about the world through observation, relation, and experience.

This work enables us to begin thinking and debating about the role and implication of architecture in the face of social questions. Experiments were pursued on this topic throughout the teaching process. By means of multiple screens, the totality of the "Learning From" workshops documented on film will be presented at the French Pavilion in Venice.

Our proposal aims to create a debate on the question of architecture teaching in France, in the context of the Pavilion programme. It involves calling on teachers offering new, non-academic forms of education that are applied to architecture. To do so, French architecture schools will be called on in the framework of a partnership.



Screening at the "Sans Souci" cinema, Soweto, South Africa – 2014  
© Christophe Hutin

### THE SANS SOUCI CINEMA CONSTRUCTION SITE, SOWETO

On the 20th anniversary of Nelson Mandela's election, the first "Learning From" workshop was begun to rebuild the legendary "Sans Souci" cinema in Soweto. This important site in the struggle for freedom – where the freedom charter was signed in 1995, ratified by the African National Congress (ANC) – was a ruin, an abandoned and dangerous public space in the informal neighbourhood of Kliptown.

With the help of local communities, reconstruction work began in 2014. On the construction site, students met residents who volunteered alongside them. The cinema was part of the memories of all of the long-term residents of the neighbourhood, and more than a projection space, it was one of the most vibrant cultural venues during the struggle against apartheid. The singer Miriam Makeba, the pianist Abdullah Ibrahim and many other artists performed there regularly.

## — THE CASE STUDIES

### JOHANNESBURG FLORENCE HOUSE



Illegal dwelling in the abandoned maternity ward at Florence House;  
Johannesburg, South Africa – 2011 © Christophe Hutin

Interviews were organised with long-term residents, and the students recorded, identified, mapped, and drew up an inventory of the spontaneous spaces and institutions. They collected narratives from the past, the histories of daily lives in Kliptown. This was essential work, since there can be no architecture without stories. La chanteuse Miriam Makeba, le pianiste Abdullah Ibrahim et bien d'autres artistes s'y produisirent régulièrement.

### FLORENCE HOUSE, JOHANNESBURG

In 2010 and 2011, "Learning From" travelled to the Hillbrow neighbourhood, in the centre of Johannesburg, to work on Florence House, an old abandoned maternity ward. The seven-storey building is next to Constitution Hill, a central site in the history of emancipation in South Africa, where the new constitution was drafted. Despite its strategic position, and associated political weight, the neighbourhood remains overwhelmingly abandoned.

Florence House, deserted at the end of apartheid before being gradually reoccupied, illegally, by hundreds of families, houses a wide variety of stories, struggles and cultures. Our study aimed to provide a reconstruction process of Florence House that would integrate its current inhabitants, who were constantly being threatened with eviction.

In a critical context of intervention, any improvement project applied from outside, and any attempt to amplify spontaneous dynamics, needed to be carried out cautiously and evaluated with precision, so as not to disturb the existing balance. We needed to reuse what was already there and to support emerging dynamics.

### THE SKY ORPHANAGE PROJECT, SOWETO

The association Soweto Kliptown Youth (SKY), founded by 16-year-old Bob Nameng in 1987, helps and houses children from the Kliptown neighbourhood. It organises educational, artistic and care actions.

The "Learning From" Masters' group from ENSA Toulouse organised a workshop in 2012 with Kinya Maruyama (architect, Japan), and Carin Smuts (architect, South Africa). The project began with the existing state of the orphanage and sought to improve it. Technical problems had been identified from the beginning, before the workshop proper. Their resolution enabled the construction of the spaces and the support of several existing workshops – the orphanage – children's comfort, daily life, education, hygiene – dance and music workshops, retention gardens, and a collective canteen.

### SOWETO SKY



Dancing by Kliptown residents during the SKY orphanage project;  
Soweto, South Africa– 2012 © Christophe Hutin

## — THE CASE STUDIES

The workshop was organised as a professional training session. One hundred people from the Klijptown community came to work voluntarily. They received a certificate attesting to the skills that they developed there. All of these people ensured the prolongation of the work and the maintenance of the site after construction was finished. The method of building-design was based on an idea of multiplicity. Different topics were approached and treated simultaneously. In the final building, the elementary actions are to be considered as projects in their own right, which extended and improved what was positive about the site.

### MÉRIGNAC - FRANCE: THE TEMPORARY SETTLEMENT OF BEUTRE

**Two emergency settlements were built in Beutre in 1968 and 1970 to house repatriates, “migrant workers”, and to accommodate residents that urban renovation had excluded from the centre of Bordeaux. From being temporary and rudimentary, the settlements became permanent. To live there, or rather to survive, tenants transcended their status of precarious occupants and took control of the improvement of their living conditions.**

From coating the floors which were bare on their arrival, to various works of improvement and extension, they maintained, embellished, and constructed their habitat. They created kitchen gardens and extended them beyond the spaces which were allocated to them. Over nearly fifty years, they have transformed the precarity and relegation which they were subjected to into a capacity to act on their living environment in a manner that commands respect (100% of the apartments are occupied, 76% have been for over 20 years, there has been no rotation for ten years and there are very few outstanding debts).

The social housing landlord Aquitanis was well aware of the situation. But rather than responding to the apparent dilapidation of the property with a classic demolition-reconstruction operation, it suggested that a solution be sought in concertation with the inhabitants and by means of their participation in the definition of a project which foremost concerned them, but which could also be a catalyst for transformation in the neighbourhood as a whole. In doing so, the landlord was acting in line with an innovative approach initiated a few years ago, in which “making the urban and social project must concretely integrate the skills of the residents, be concerned with collectively cultivating urban nature, and make manifest the capacity to co-develop essential habitats”.

The social and urban project in Beutre, which combined habitat renovation, resident participation, the natural capacities of the site and densification objectives, was the opportunity to experiment with the concept of a permacultural garden-estate, which could then spread throughout the country and beyond.

From the perspective of the development of a local agricultural economy and edible landscapes, the urban planning was based on existing natural capacities and the development of the soil to seek an economy of means. By adding value to what the inhabitants had already created, by reflecting on the agro-ecological potential of the site, we were able to rethink the renovation of each apartment and to contribute to conviviality.

MÉRIGNAC  
BEUTRE

House in Beutre, France -2019

© Christophe Hutin





## — THE CASE STUDIES

### HANOI - VIETNAM: VERNACULAR EXTENSIONS OF KTT APARTMENT BUILDINGS

From 1954, after Vietnamese independence, the collectivist State began to resolve the housing crisis with the urban planification of collective housing neighbourhoods, KTTs, “Khu Tập Thể”. Over time, extension work on individual or familial initiatives was carried out on a case-by-case basis to respond to evolving daily needs.

These were mainly different-sized extensions, built with various light materials, and treated as interior furnishings. With the first liberal economic reforms, the “Doi Moi” of the 1980s, there was a transfer of jurisdiction initially held by the State towards the private sector, and certain buildings became joint-ownership properties. The cooperation protocol entitled “State-People” began a process of legalising informal housing and self-production, which was finally abandoned in 2000.

An analysis of the extension of KTT buildings by residents in Hanoi enables us to understand, from a transversal (technical, thermal, architectural, urban) perspective, that the taking into account of resident’s capacity to act can be operational in a transformation project.

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HANOI  
KTT

Overall view of a KTT apartment  
building; Hanoi, Vietnam  
© Christophe Hutin



## — THE CASE STUDIES

### DETROIT, UNITED STATES: RESILIENCE AT WORK

**A Franco-American cultural exchange programme with the architect Christophe Hutin took place from October 21st-26th 2013 in Detroit.** A project was carried out at the intersection of Avis and Elsmere in the South West neighbourhood (known as Springwell), in collaboration with the team from the Design Collaborative centre, the students, and the neighbourhood residents. This project was supported by the cultural department of the French consulate in Chicago, as well as by the Institut français.

The site chosen for the project had some peculiarities, namely the presence of a building which has now been demolished – a Vietnam war veterans' club – of which traces of the walls remain. Part of the site was made up of cement paving. Under this paving, there was a damaged city water pipe, creating significant water retention. Numerous plants developed, wetland plants, but also spontaneous vegetation in the cracks and holes in the ground, and in the unpaved parts of the ground.

A meeting with the residents enabled a definition of objectives based on their desires, needs and narratives: a garden, shade, children playing, a public meeting place...

The plants on the site were called "weeds", yet they attested to a remarkable level of biodiversity. A precise inventory of the plants enabled them to be named and valued. It was a "ready made" botanical garden. Labels were put in to identify the plants, so that users and passers-by could learn something about nature.

It was a question of recognising the value of the things that surround us, of transforming people's gaze. Sacramento Knoxx, who documented the project using video, is of Native American origin, from the Ojibwe tribe. The project spoke to him: "Native Americans have always known how to live with nature, they would have a lot to teach us about our lifestyles and the way in which we plan our cities. I dreamed that the Native Americans came to save Detroit..."

DETROIT  
SOUTH  
WEST



Public development site  
in the South West  
neighbourhood; Detroit,  
United States – 2013  
© Christophe Hutin

# — THE CATALOGUE

**The catalogue of the French Pavilion at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia is a tool for reflecting on the different urban situations that form the backdrop of the exhibition. The book is structured around the eight international sites chosen by the exhibition curator, that bear witness to the vitality of daily community action in the effective production of contemporary architecture.**

Each site is described in detail, with reference to their historical and human contexts. Each of the case studies gives rise to an editorial montage stimulating the knowledge of the environment and the conditions of expression of the different actors who worked in the field. A close relationship is established between the images and the texts (sometimes in the form of narratives, poems or extended captions). These interventions adopt the point of view of the people living there, and are translated into English.

The book is also enriched by theoretical articles commissioned from researchers. These articles, sometimes in the form of dialogues, decentre the gaze and seek to give the narratives substance by making the lived environments tangible and placing them in a reflexive perspective. These articles listen to, share and convey the different processes of appropriation. They call into question the position of the “everyday architect” and their relationship to residents’ expertise. They offer tools for knowledge, necessary to act on what already exists. The book is illustrated with more than 250 iconographic documents.

## THE AUTHORS

— **Christophe Hutin** is an architect and lecturer/researcher at the École nationale supérieure d’architecture in Bordeaux.

— **Daniel Estevez** is an architect, computer engineer and professor of “Theory and practice of architectural and urban design” at ENSA in Toulouse.

— **Tiphaine Abenia** is a structural engineer, architect and Doctor of architecture. She teaches construction (ENSA, Toulouse) and the project of architecture (ENSA, Toulouse and the École polytechnique fédérale in Lausanne).

— **Marion Howa** is an architect, political science graduate and part-time lecturer/researcher at ENSA in Toulouse.

— **Eric Chauvier** is a Doctor of anthropology, supervisor and professor at ENSA in Toulouse and Versailles.

## THE EDITOR

As part of the Éditions La Découverte, the Éditions Dominique Carré is developing a catalogue on the topics of architecture and the city: architects’ monographs, monographs of French cities, thematic, scientific books (*Les Grands ensembles*, *Les Lotissements*), exhibition catalogues (*AUA*, *Une architecture de l’engagement* and *La Modernité, promesse ou menace ?* catalogue of the 2016 Venice biennale). Recently published: *Lire la Ville. Manuel pour une hospitalité du service public* by Chantal Deckmyn.

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## — THE ASSOCIATED AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCER

**Grand Angle Productions** is a French audiovisual production company created in 1994, operating in Paris and Bordeaux. It produces more than 200 hours of programmes per year for French and international channels. Its activities also include the production of museographic and immersive content (La Cité du vin/Bordeaux – La Cité du chocolat/Tain-l'Hermitage).

The eclecticism of the areas explored, the particular writing styles, the strength of the chosen characters, and the productions involving society all bear witness to the authors' point of view and to the search for an original form.

Grand Angle asserts its identity and vocation through its ambitious films and documentary collections, favouring a strong involvement on the topics of History, Society, Culture and Discovery.

Grand Angle, which has been working with Christophe Hutin since the first reflections on the project for the Pavilion, has accompanied his unique approach with the production of "large format" films and content for the digital platform.

## — THE DIGITAL PLATFORM

**The reflection developed by Christophe Hutin for the French Pavilion will be extended online by means of a digital platform for the duration of the Biennale.**

This platform will allow visitors to delve deeper into the understanding of the issues surrounding "Communities at Work". It will feature complementary videos on the topic of conviviality, extracts from the film montages presented at the Pavilion, and finally, short videos on highlights from the Pavilion.

As an educational tool, it will leave a trace of this 17th French Pavilion online, but it also aims to be a platform offering various resources for people interested in the topic of conviviality.

[www.communautes-biennale.fr](http://www.communautes-biennale.fr)



## — BIOGRAPHIES

### CHRISTOPHE HUTIN

Christophe Hutin set up his architecture studio in 2003 in Bordeaux. He is an architect, a researcher at the École d'architecture in Toulouse, and a senior lecturer at the École d'architecture in Bordeaux.

He studied and documented the townships of Soweto near Johannesburg and developed a renowned expertise about housing and habitats. As the founder and coordinator of the Eunic Studio in Johannesburg (2008-2010), he co-founded the "Learning From" workshop, editions of which have taken place in Detroit, Soweto and Uzeste. He is the author of "L'enseignement de Soweto", published by Actes Sud in 2009.

Specialised in sustainable architecture based on the economy of construction, he has carried out a number of projects in the housing field, but also in the field of cultural facilities. Together with the architects Anne Lacaton, Jean-Philippe Vassal and Frédéric Druot, he won the Mies van der Rohe Award 2019, for the transformation of 530 social housing apartments in the Cité du Grand Parc in Bordeaux.

Christophe Hutin is also a director of short films, a scenographer, and an exhibition curator. His photographic work was exhibited at the Recontres d'Arles in 2010.

### DANIEL ESTEVEZ

Daniel Estevez is an architect, engineer and professor/supervisor at ENSA in Toulouse. He is currently supervising several doctoral theses on the development of architectural design tools in the face of the current ecological, political and social emergency. He has written several books on contemporary forms of informal design in architecture. In 1990, his architect's diploma focused on the contributions of artificial intelligence to design processes in architecture. Inspired by the works of Christopher Alexander, Noam Chomsky and Seymour Pappert, he pursued this research for his engineer's diploma in 1995, and then in a first report in 2001, published by the Éditions du CNRS. In parallel, his numerous collaborations with the art world also inspired him to develop critical research on formalisms at work in the field of architecture and its teaching. In 2010, he founded the Masters workshop "Learning From" with Christophe Hutin at ENSA in Toulouse. It was in this space of experimentation that the two researchers began to test, through action, the pragmatic and emancipatory hypotheses of a pedagogy of informal design in architecture.

### TIPHAIN ABENIA

Tiphaine Abenia is a structural engineer (Institut National des Sciences Appliquées in Toulouse, 2011), an architect (École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture in Toulouse, 2013), and a Doctor of architecture (Université de Montréal and Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès, 2019). She teaches construction (ENSA Toulouse) and the project of architecture (ENSA Toulouse and the École Polytechnique Fédérale in Lausanne). Her research interests include open tools for representation and design that accompany the transformation of built environments over time. Her doctoral thesis, entitled "Architecture Potentielle de la Grande Structure Abandonnée. Catégorisation et Projection", identified the limits of the conventional methods of projection in architecture.

# — GENERAL COMMISSIONER

## THE MINISTRY FOR EUROPE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs develops and implements French foreign policy. It promotes global diplomacy through its geography, domains of action and by means of its various instruments.

It strives for peace, security, and the respect of human rights in the context of its bilateral relations and within international organisations. It contributes to the organisation of a globalisation that will ensure the sustainable and balanced development of the planet. It supports the promotion of French companies in foreign markets as well as the attractiveness of France abroad. It practices cultural diplomacy and influence based on three main missions:

- the promotion and diffusion of the French language and French teaching abroad, namely by means of the overall plan for the French language and for multilingualism,
- French artistic and intellectual influence, the diffusion and export of its cultural and creative industries and the promotion of its cultural expertise,
- the development of academic and scientific partnerships, as well as attracting and training foreign students in France.

To carry out these missions, the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs relies on its diplomatic and consular network (179 embassies and permanent representations, 112 consular sections and 89 general consulates and consulates) and its network of cooperation for cultural action, distinguished by its variety and transversality (131 departments for cooperation and cultural action, 98 Instituts français, 26 Instituts français de recherche, 363 affiliated Alliances françaises and 297 French-curriculum schools).

[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr)

## THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE

The Ministry of Culture defines, coordinates and evaluates State art policy in the areas of monumental and archaeological heritage, archives, museums and architecture, by means of the General Directorate of Heritage.

Article 1 of the 1977 Architecture Act defines architecture as the “expression of culture”, and specifies the public interest of architectural creations, the quality of constructions and their harmonious integration, with respect for natural and landscapes, and heritage.

The Ministry of Culture’s actions also involve the knowledge, protection and enhancement of architectural, urban and landscape heritage. It ensures that they are taken into account in the development and implementation of regional planning actions.

The General Directorate of Heritage is in charge of the economic, cultural, scientific and technical developments of the conditions for the exercise of architecture. The National Order of Architects is under the auspices of the General Directorate of Heritage.

It supports the profession, and especially young professionals, by means of promotion initiatives in the fields of architecture and landscaping, on national, European and international levels: the organisation of the “Albums des jeunes architectes et paysagistes” prize, Europan, Fablabs in the Ecoles nationales supérieures d’architecture, presence at MIPIM, etc.

[www.culture.gouv.fr](http://www.culture.gouv.fr)

# — GENERAL COMMISSIONER

## THE INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

The Institut français is a public establishment in charge of French foreign cultural relations. Its actions are situated at the intersection of the arts, intellectual exchanges, cultural and social innovation, and linguistic cooperation. Throughout the world, it supports the promotion of the French language, and the circulation of artworks, artists and ideas, thereby fostering a better understanding of cultural issues.

It presents and represents French excellence in architecture, urbanism, and landscaping at major global events and in projects co-developed with the external cultural network and its local partners. It works in close collaboration with the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture – the General Directorate of Heritage and Architecture (DGPA) – by means of several joint programmes and actions, the most emblematic of which is the French Pavilion at the Venice Biennale of Architecture and the work carried out to promote this project in France and abroad.

This promotion is carried out on several levels: within the Giardini, where the Pavilion is a meeting place for different architectural actors; outside of the exhibition, in partnership with the external cultural network which reappropriates the selected project; from Venice towards other countries, such as the Biennales in Seoul and Chicago, which the cultural network also mobilises for.

Christophe Hutin's project "Communities at Work" was selected in 2019 by the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture. This selection was made following a call for projects, and on the proposal of a commission of experts and professionals representing the diversity of practices in the field of architecture, urbanism, and landscaping. Presided by Philippe Madec, this commission brought together the professionals Stéphanie Fabre, Camille Juza, Yves Lyon, Corinne Vezzoni and four other institutional members representing the two ministries and the operator.

The Institut français favours a dialogue that is both professional and educational, between art and territory, a prospective axis that it intends to develop more widely in the future. In the United States, in Detroit, the *Insoutenable Architecture* cycle, connected to the cities of Grenoble and Saint-Étienne, took place in three neighbourhoods as part of the Design Festival. In India, the Indo French Urban Lab pursued its reflections and exchanges on the Indian city and countryside of Chandernagor and Pondicherry, and on 20th century architecture in Chandigarh. In Russia, the Institut français has been accompanying the urban transformation in Saint-Petersburg and in Krasnoïarsk for a number of years.

Finally, the Institut français works to promote the AJAP, the young generation of architects and landscapers whose career paths are now in resonance with their Russian and Argentinian counterparts, two countries with local versions of the biannual French concours.

# — THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN VENICE

Aside from the *Communities at Work* project, presented at the French Pavilion, the French presence in Venice extends to a variety of spaces and projects.

## WITHIN THE CENTRAL PAVILION, GIARDINI

### ONE PLANET

**S.E.L** (Cambridge, États-Unis ; Paris, France) Verena Paravel ; Lucien Castaing-Taylor  
*(How) Will We Live (Together) ?*

#### Contact

invalidepaire@gmail.com

**TVK** (Paris, France) Pierre Alain Trévelo ; Antoine Viger-Kohler  
*The Earth is an Architecture*

#### Contact

Noémie Benkrim  
+33 6 51 19 67 07  
presse@jigsaw.family

### STATIONS

**Across Borders** (Londres, Royaume-Uni) Justinien Tribillon - The Barlett School of Planning  
*Welcome to Bordeland*

#### Contact

Justinien Tribillon  
justinien@tribillon.com

## WITHIN THE CENTRAL PAVILION, GIARDINI

### — EXTERIOR INSTALLATION

**Le Consortium – Land** (Dijon, France) Franck Gautherot; Seungduk Kim; Catherine Bonnotte;  
Géraldine Minet in collaboration with Patrick Berger, Aristide Antonas, Junya Ishigami  
*Grancey, living in a world on the outskirts*

#### Contact

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## WITHIN THE ARSENALE

### NEW HOUSEHOLDS

**Atelier RITA** (Paris, France) Valentine Guichardaz-Versini  
(Emilie Bonnaire, Gaspard Brousse and David Boureau – video and interviews), with the support of  
Genere and Pro-Tech System; People Are Sound; 31 Db; HC acoustique; K-array; Emmaus solidarité;  
Le Pavé – Sasminimum  
*Listen up !*

#### Contact

contact@atelierrita.org  
www.atelierrita.org  
[https://www.instagram.com/atelierrita\\_architectes/](https://www.instagram.com/atelierrita_architectes/)

**LIN Architects Urbanists** (Berlin, Germany; Paris, France) Finn Geipel  
*Bremer Punkt, 2011*

#### Contact

press@lin-a.com



**Lina Ghotmeh — Architecture** (Paris, France) Lina Ghotmeh, with the support of Peter & Nathalie Hrechdakian; Rony Zibara; Marwan El Khoury; S2T ingénierie; Ariss Lumière Group Sal; Sultan Metals  
*Stone Garden. Resilient Living*  
*An Archaeology of the Future.*

**Contact**

press@linaghotmeh.com

**Nicolas Laisné Architectes (Montreuil, France) Nicolas Laisné**

*One Open Tower*

**Contact**

Pascale Cayla

pcayla@artendirect.fr

**EMERGING COMMUNITIES**

**MDP Michel Desvigne Paysagiste** (Paris, France) Michel Desvigne with Martin Basdevant;

Taro Ernst; Elisa Bormioli

*Transforming Landscape*

**Contact**

communication@micheldesvigne.com

**Ronan & Erwan Bouroullec** (Paris, France) Erwan Bouroullec; Ronan Bouroullec

*Urban Reveries*

**Contact**

press@bouroullec.com

**OTHER NATIONAL PAVILIONS**

**THE LEBANESE PAVILION**

*A Roof for Silence (Un toit pour le silence)*

Commissaire : Hala Wardé

In tribute to Paul Virilio, in collaboration with Etel Adnan; Fouad Elkoury; Alain Fleischer/Le Fresnoy and Soundwalk Collective.

*A Roof for Silence* benefited from support from the Ministry of Culture and the Department of Seine Maritime.

**FRINGE EVENTS AT THE VENICE BIENNALE**

**TEATRINO DI PALAZZO GRASSI**

*AFEX 2020 & 2021 Grand Prix*

**Further information**

San Samuele 3231, 30124 Venice, Italy

75-person maximum limit, reservation only

Broadcast on Zoom

**Contact**

afex@afex.fr / www.afex.fr

**WILMOTTE FOUNDATION**

**REMAKE**

Based on a reflection on ways of rethinking architecture, the "REMAKE" exhibition will open its doors on May 21st at the gallery of the Wilmotte Foundation in Venice. It will present the winning projects of the 2020 Prix W, devoted to the Château de la Tour d'Aigues. The gallery will also be showing the prestigious "Refuge Tonneau" designed in 1939 by Charlotte Perriand and Pierre Jeanneret, a replica created by Cassina.

**Further information**

Wilmotte Foundation

Fondamenta dell'Abbazia, Cannaregio, 3560-30121 Venice, Italy

Vaporetto : Ca'D'Oro - Madonna dell'Orto

Gallery opening hours: Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00-1:30 - 2:00-6:00  
(reservation required on weekends)

**Contact presse**

victoire.liagre@wilmotte.fr

**Gallery Contact:**

silvia.gravili@wilmotte.fr  
+0414761160

**The Shared City - PACT- EU Platform for Alternatives in City and Territory**

*Inhabiting Big Spaces – images and representations of working-class neighbourhoods*

**Calendar****Biennale Session: September 2021**

5-12 September 2021 - Inaugural exhibition at the French Pavilion

10-12 September 2021 - Biennale session in the form of one-day seminars: exchanges and reporting on different research projects by teams of students from various disciplines (political sciences, social sciences, architecture and urbanism...), workshop

September 12th, 2021 - Round table discussions with elected officials, researchers, urban stakeholders, residents... led by students from the workshops

**Contact**

lavillencommun@gmail.com

**CA'ASI – Architecture Studio's shared home in Venice**

*Young European Architects*

**Further information**

CA'ASI - Palazzo Santa Maria Nova, Venice, Italy  
www.ca-asi.com

**Contact**

contact@ca-asi.com

**Zuecca Projects and Coldefy - Alessandro Possati; Thomas Coldefy**

*Tropicalia - Architecture, Materials, Innovative Systems*

With the support of Autodesk; Eiffage Construction; Lenovo; Tarkett, Novaxia; Hausbrandt Trieste 1892 S.p.A; EOC - Eckersley O'Callaghan; Projex, Terraotherm; WAAO; Nhood

**Further information**

Squero Castello, Salizada Streta 368, Castello 30122, Venice, Italy

Open from May 22nd to November 21st, 2021, 10.00 am - 01.00 pm / 02.00 pm - 06.00 pm, closed on Mondays. Press review on May 20th and 21st, 2021.

For visits from Tuesday to Friday, reservations are not required but they are strongly recommended. For visits on Saturdays, Sundays, and during school holidays, reservations are required a minimum of 12 hours in advance.

Reservations at tropicalia@zueccaprojectspace.com

**Contacts**

zueccaprojects.org  
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# — PARTNERS & SPONSORS



## SAINT-GOBAIN

Saint-Gobain develops, produces and distributes materials and solutions in the service of the markets of construction, mobility, health and other industrial applications. Developed in a dynamic of permanent innovation, these solutions are everywhere in our living spaces and daily lives, bringing comfort, performance and security, whilst meeting the challenges of sustainable building, efficient resource management, and the struggle against climate change. This strategy for responsible development is guided by Saint-Gobain's *raison d'être*: "Making the world a better home", which is a response to the Group's collaborators collective ambition to act each day to make the world a more beautiful and more sustainable collective home.

Saint-Gobain therefore naturally chose to associate itself with the French Pavilion at the 17th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, and to support Christophe Hutin's "Communities at Work" project. Saint-Gobain is particularly attuned to concepts of sustainability, social housing, and the rehabilitation of living spaces that Christophe Hutin focuses on, with great conviction, at the heart of his project. These are so many preoccupations for the Group, which for several years has been carrying out a reflection on "the new conviviality". Saint-Gobain can only commend the generosity of the architectural gesture in the case study of the Cité du Grand Parc in Bordeaux, where the architect chose to place glass at the centre of his meeting with the users, of the requalification and reappropriation of their space.

Press release  
May 2021

A project by  
Christophe Hutin

French Pavilion of the 17th Venice International  
Architecture Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia

# PARTNERS & SPONSORS



## NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE REGION

The Nouvelle-Aquitaine region is extremely proud that the French Pavilion at the 17th edition of the Biennale is being implemented by an architect who lives and works in its territory. Christophe Hutin's reputation was built over several years, namely thanks to the projects in Bordeaux and the surrounding area, both in terms of social housing and cultural facilities. He also contributes to the region's influence through his teaching work at the École d'architecture et du paysage.

Based on an unusual career path, his strength is to be both clearly part of a territory and broadly open to international exchanges. His "Communities at Work" are a decisive contribution to the reflection on what the building gesture can be today, with the dual concern of the economy of means and the space attributed to residents in collective building operations. It is a respectful and efficient approach that should and must inspire our ideas and practices in public action, in its broadest sense.



## BORDEAUX MÉTROPOLE

With more than 800 000 inhabitants spread over 28 communes, Bordeaux Métropole is located in Nouvelle-Aquitaine. For several years, it has benefited from significant attractiveness thanks to strong economic development, numerous investments in the fields of mobility and the organisation of international events. In the context of the Venice Biennale, the Métropole is accompanying the "Communities at Work" project led by Christophe Hutin for the French Pavilion. The renowned architect has a special relationship with Bordeaux, his native city having taken part in the urban study for the "50 000 logements" project, and the renovation of the town hall and buildings in the Grand Parc neighbourhood.



## THE CITY OF BORDEAUX

The city of Bordeaux, whose historical city centre is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to the exceptional Enlightenment architecture, has been undergoing an unprecedented urban transformation since 2007, accompanied by an inventive and creative cultural policy, embodied by the cultural seasons, summer highlights that began with the arrival of the high-speed train in 2017. In the context of the upcoming 2021 season, and in resonance with Christophe Hutin's exemplary work in the Grand Parc neighbourhood, the city of Bordeaux has the great pleasure of associating itself with the French Pavilion at the Venice Biennale which he is developing on the subject of communities at work.



## AQUITANIS | COOPERATION FOR LIVING

An urban and social operator since 1920, Aquitanis, the Public Habitat Office of Bordeaux Métropole, has the vocation of developing, producing and sustainably managing habitat sites adapted to the challenges of our society. It accompanies local public habitat policies and the necessary ecological and societal transitions in Nouvelle-Aquitaine in the service of those who live there and who bring it to life. In coordination with local actors, it follows three axes that distinguish its innovative projects as a social landlord, public developer and regional urban planner: inhabitants' power to act, the development of nature, and the production of a frugal and essential habitat.



# — MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS



## FRANCE MÉDIAS MONDE

### — LISTENING TO AND LOOKING AT THE WORLD

RFI (Radio Mondiale), France 24, the 24h news channel, and Monte Carlo Doualiya, an Arabic-language radio station, provide open information about the world and cultural diversity, in French and in 19 other languages. These three international French public service media outlets had 240 million listeners every week and a total of nearly 2.5 billion video views in 2020.

francemm.com



## LIBÉRATION

For nearly 50 years, *Libération* has played a major role in the French press, thanks to its headlines, its inimitable style, its battles, its stances...

***Libération* has a weekly readership of several million people, who come to discover exclusive investigations, revelations, reports, opinion pieces...** Every day, the editorial board examines cultural and societal changes, launches debates, or takes an active part in them, and shakes up the powers that be.

On the occasion of the 17th edition of the Venice Biennale of Architecture, *Libération* is lending its support to the French Pavilion.

Press release  
May 2021

A project by  
Christophe Hutin

French Pavilion of the 17th Venice International  
Architecture Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia

# — PRESS VISUALS

Press release  
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**BEUTRE, FRANCE**

Houses in Beutre – 2019 © Philippe Ruault



House and natural nursery garden; Beutre, France – 2019  
© Marion Howa



House in Beutre, France – 2019 © Christophe Hutin



**BORDEAUX, LE GRAND PARC, FRANCE**

Before and after the transformation of Building H; Le Grand Parc,  
Bordeaux, France – © Philippe Ruault



Winter garden; Le Grand Parc, Bordeaux, France – 2016  
© Philippe Ruault



View from the top floor; Le Grand Parc, Bordeaux, France – 2016  
© Philippe Ruault



Balcony on the top floor of Building H in the Grand Parc, Bordeaux;  
Film still - 2020 © Christophe Hutin



## DETROIT, UNITED STATES

Public development site in the South West neighbourhood; Detroit,  
United States - 2013 © Christophe Hutin



## HANOI, VIETNAM

View of an apartment extension in a KTT apartment building; Hanoi,  
Vietnam - 2018 © Christophe Hutin



Apartment in a KTT apartment building; Hanoi, Vietnam - 2018  
© Christophe Hutin



Overall view of a KTT apartment building; Hanoi, Vietnam - 2018  
© Christophe Hutin



Playground, Film still; Hanoi, Vietnam - 2020 © Christophe Hutin



Hanging washing, Film still; Hanoi, Vietnam - 2020  
© Christophe Hutin



View of an apartment extension in a KTT apartment building,  
Film Still; Hanoi, Vietnam – 2020 © Christophe Hutin



## JOHANNESBURG / SOWETO, SOUTH AFRICA

Construction site of the “Sans Souci” cinema in Kliptown, “Learning From” workshop; Soweto, South Africa – 2014 © Nicolas Hubrecht



Mosaic created during the “Learning From” workshop in Kliptown;  
Soweto, South Africa – 2014 © Nicolas Hubrecht



Screening at the “Sans Souci” cinema in Kliptown after the renovation, “Learning From” workshop; Soweto, South Africa – 2014  
© Christophe Hutin



The residents of Kliptown at work during the SKY orphanage project,  
“Learning From” workshop; Soweto, South Africa – 2012  
© Christophe Hutin



The residents of Kliptown at work during the SKY orphanage project,  
“Learning From” workshop; Soweto, South Africa – 2012  
© Christophe Hutin





Dancing by Kliptown residents during the SKY orphanage project,  
“Learning From” workshop; Soweto, South Africa – 2012  
© Christophe Hutin



Development site of the abandoned maternity ward, Florence  
House; Johannesburg, South Africa – 2011 © Christophe Hutin



View from the abandoned maternity ward at Florence House;  
Johannesburg, South Africa – 2011 © Christophe Hutin



Illegal dwelling in the abandoned maternity ward of Florence  
House; Johannesburg, South Africa – 2011 © Christophe Hutin



# — CONTACTS

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*Il Mondo Novo, 2020, French Pavilion © Christophe Hutin*  
— La Biennale di Venezia



*Il Mondo Novo, Giandomenico Tiepolo, 1791*  
— Ca' Rezzonico Venezia

