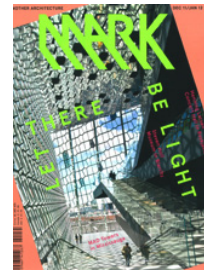


060

CROSS SECTION

COMMUNITY CENTRE



Colboc Franzen

plant roots for a civic centre

Text Rafaël Magrou
Photos Paul Raftery

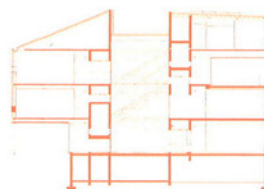
In an attempt to redeem a neighbourhood of forgotten garden-city pavilions and dingy dwellings from the 1930s, Colboc Franzen & Associés created a shimmering urban tree in the centre of Lille, a city in northern France. The 12-m-high community centre branches out from new foundations, offering space and opportunities for inspiration.

The central atrium is made of concrete and the space is meant to refer to the underground limestone quarries that can be found nearby. On its sides, the atrium opens up to a continuous corridor that encircles the core of the building. Light shines through randomly sized and spaced windows, revealing a central stairwell and showing connections between different levels of the building, which features rooms for meeting, dancing and reading – not to mention an outdoor amphitheatre. Rooms in the cantilevered volume have diagonal branchlike beams whose exposed concrete forms are accentuated by wood-framed windows. The building's programme is in harmony with its users, the youngest of which – children age four and under – find their activities at ground level. Occupying the top storey is a multipurpose event hall for weddings and similar festivities.

Rooms are close together, with single- and double-height spaces overlapping at points, creating a compact architectural composition that is surrounded by a large playground. The open green area accentuates the project's landmark status, while encouraging users to view the centre as a meeting point. A large wooden deck wraps the exterior, inviting people to survey peripheral views from ground level and ramping all the way to the roof, where the towers of Lille can be fully appreciated.

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Section.



Ground floor.

LILLE/FRANCE

COLBOC FRANZEN & ASSOCIÉS