

Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed

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Recycling has always existed, as proven by the Cathedral of Pisa...



1. How to dress to talk about recycling?

With recycled fabric!

2. How to recycle a quote?

«No complex entity comes to be or perish, but is formed by mixing and separating from pre-existing entities. Therefore one should more correctly describe the birth by mixing and the death of separation.»

Anaxagoras, fragment 17.

«Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed.»

Lavoisier, An elementary treaty on chemistry.

3. How to recycle a carpenter? 1986

One day, in my life as a carpenter, I met «The School of Life Fighting» by Susumu Takasuka.



I knew then that there existed a powerful, simple and serene contemporary architecture, the one I was waiting for.

All the wood used on this project comes from railway sleepers. The building is therefore also a perfect wood recycling.

This made me decide to go to an architecture school, in Paris.

4. How to recycle an industrial site? 1991

This is the purpose of this ornithological observatory project, built on an ancient gravel pit.

Architects Atelier de l'Entre.

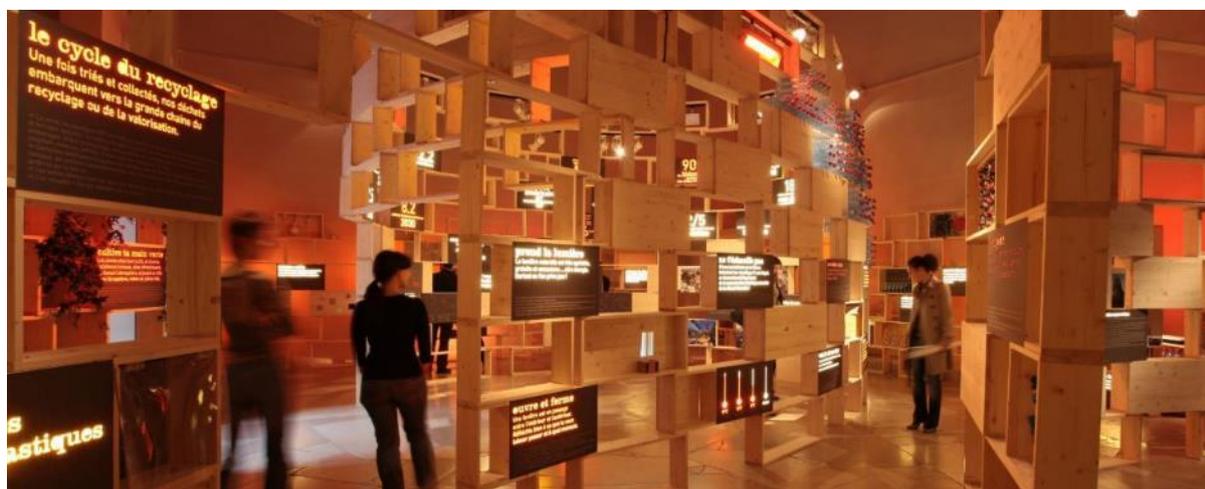


5. How to recycle an exhibition? 2010

The one organized in Paris at the City of Architecture, under the name «Don't throw away any more!»

The principle is that the whole structure is just a stack of boxes, open-bottomed or not, that the exhibition visitors are invited to take home as soon as the exhibition is over.

Architects Nicola and Adelaide Marchi



6. How to recycle a theatre? 2011

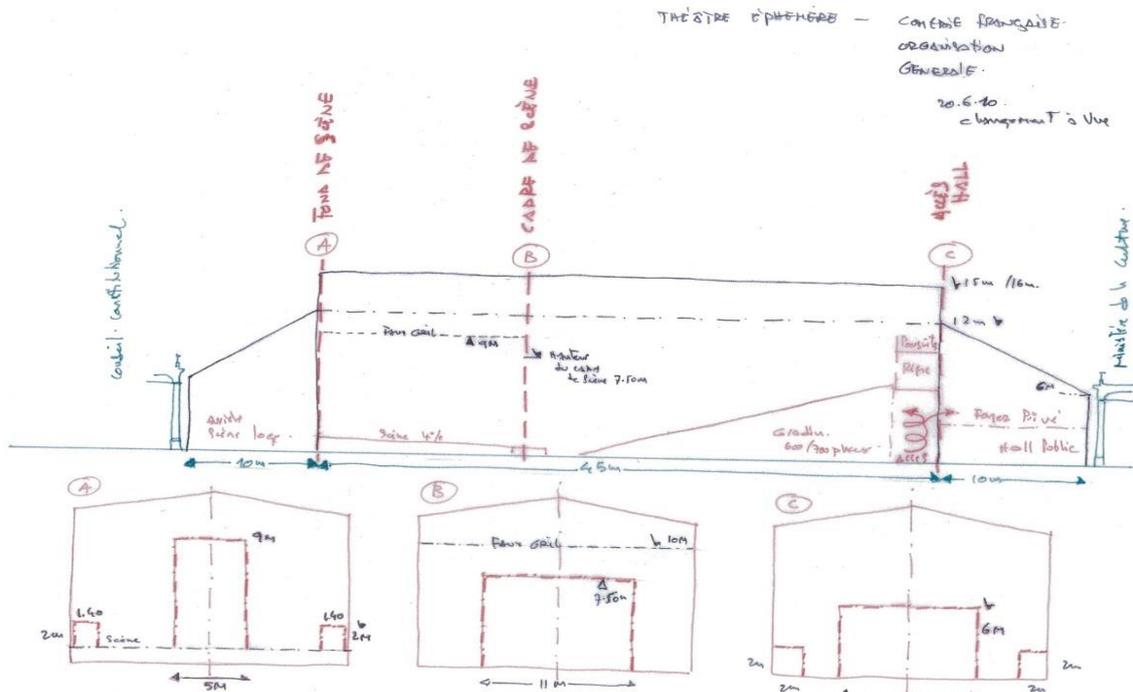
The construction of the ephemeral theatre of Comédie Française at the Palais Royal in Paris in 2011 was based on the initial idea of a resale.

The aim was to temporarily replace the historical Richelieu Theatre for a year and a half, as it was going under reconstruction.

All the assemblies of the main structure, and the prefabrication that followed, are designed according to a dismantling, and a subsequent reassembly.

The difficulty was similar to that of getting a boat into a bottle.

The study started with these elements, purely scenographic, which guided the entire design.



Our references were the *temporary museum* built by Auguste

Perret in Paris in 1924, but also the *music halls* that we've built in Crolles (the wood structure), the project in Fontaine (for the principles of prefabricated high walls), and the *Music Hall* in Pontet (with the walls out of boxes filled with clay balls).

The CLT-type panels, already used 60 years ago by Jean Prouvé, were the basic element, because of their mass favoring good sound insulation, highly necessary for a theater. This place is prestigious, and obviously does not allow permanent construction.

No foundation was possible: the structure is only laid over, with the exception of the anchors of the stage frame, which stabilizes a large part of the structure. The prefabricated wall and roof elements are rasterized to the rhythm of the underlying vaults. They are also the largest elements that can be passed through the narrow entrance of the site.



The fact of bringing prefabricated roof panels already waterproofed made it possible to advance each day by more than 120 m² (*hundred twenty squared meters*) covered and closed.

In the end, the whole complex was delivered on time, creating a theatre with all the stage installations and chairs in less than 5 months.



After a year and a half of service, the theatre was sold to the city of Geneva for a rather paltry sum. For the Grand Théâtre de Genève, which is an opera house, also facing reconstruction work, an ephemeral hall was favoured, in exchange for a precarious installation in another part of the city.

But this required:

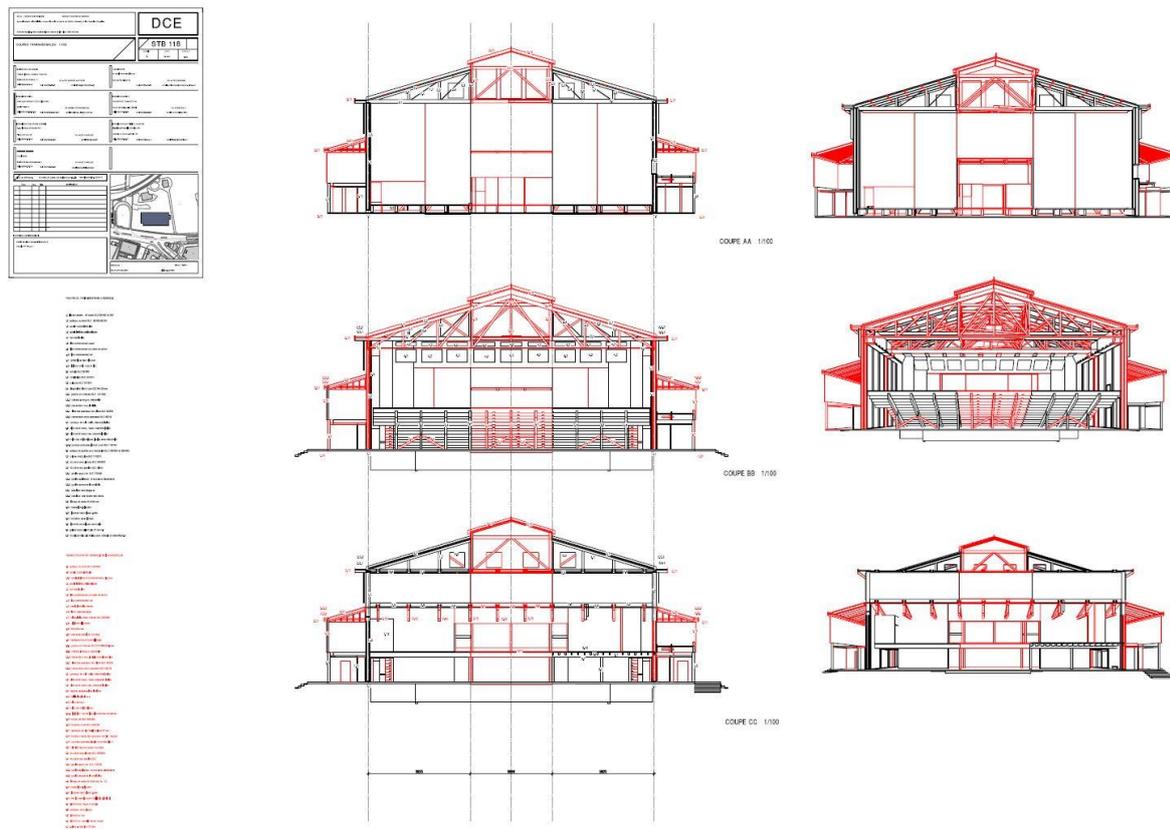
Increase the gauge from 750 to 1000 spectators.

To add an orchestra pit.

Finally, to increase the width from 20 m to 28 m.

If you want shoes size 45, here is a tip: don't buy in size 38, to enlarge them.

However, I did imagine structural solutions: a large longitudinal lattice beam, where the roof sections of the first hall could be hung up, in particular. Solutions that were finally adopted, after many tremors. The plans made for the contractors show how little of the original elements was finally saved, compared to those modified or added.



Among the elements not preserved, after the first architect, the scenographer, and the company, finally the engineer!

My friends at Charpente Concept, once in charge of the rest of the project, decided to use glued rod joints for the new elements, which are the least demountable in the world.

The Theatre was born, in Swiss style.

Then it was sold in 2018, on the way to China this year.

Good luck with that! Since 2015, I was starting new adventures as well.

7. How to recycle an engineer?

After these theatrical adventures, the return to engineering life lacked spiciness.

A lucky encounter will allow the creation of a transversal agency, with engineers and architects, breaking this habit, unfortunately very French, of separate agencies.

From this collegial conception, many projects were born, for the most part demonstration projects, including:

The footbridge on the Restonica in Corte, made of laricio pine and local chestnut.



The Lamure sur Azergues hall, made of local Douglas wood, supported on monolithic stone pillars, and bearing stone tiles.



The Vinsobres childcare building, with massif wood structure, straw insulation and earth and lime plasters on the walls.

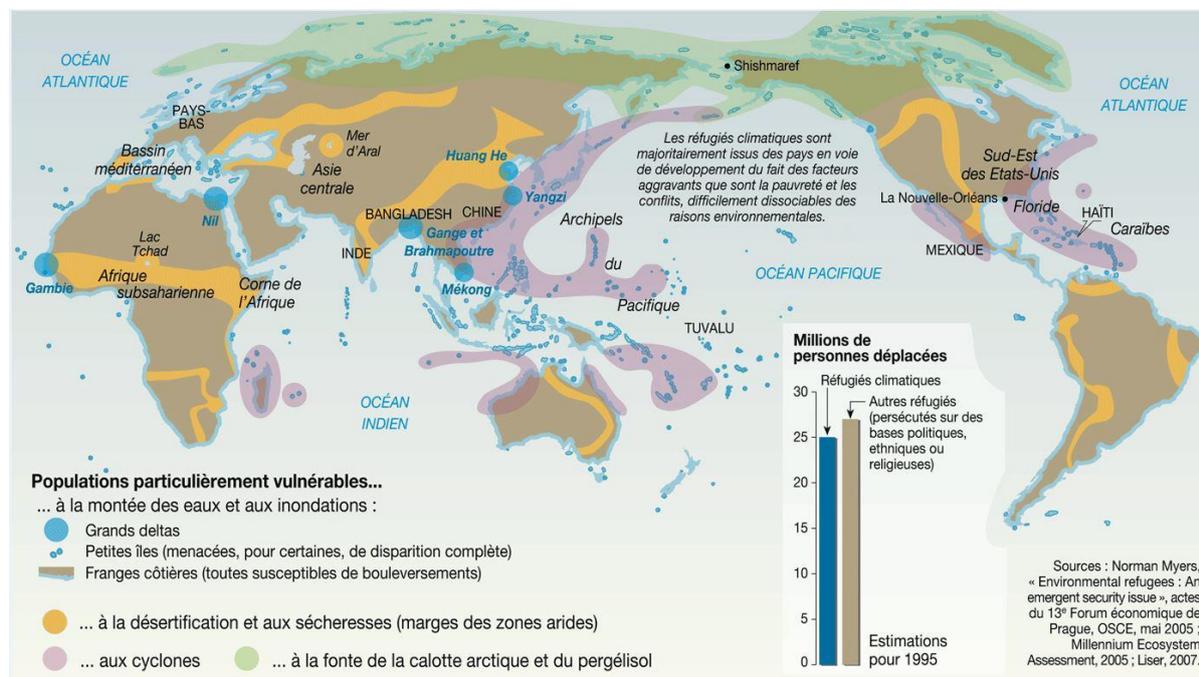


The Faverges hall, all wooden, up to the roof. This project gives a second life to the heart of the village, by recycling an old tower, which marked an ancient fortification.



8. How to recycle a world? Now!

We are on the eve of major changes that the use of wood, as I learned 32 years ago from Wolfgang Winter, can certainly slow down a little, but without this being decisive. It is not even a given that forests are resistant to these changes. Let us broaden the scope of our reflections a little, and prioritize the emergencies.



Populations in danger.

To summarize in two quotes, here recycled:

Walter Benjamin

«*In Homer's time, humanity made a spectacle of itself to the gods of Olympus; it is to itself today that it makes a spectacle of itself. It has alienated itself enough to be able to experience its own destruction as a first-rate aesthetic pleasure.*»

The work of art at the time of its technical reproducibility, 1936.

Man, which is after all only a form of recycling of monkeys (and lots of other life forms) is in danger of disappearing, leaving (well, we can suppose) place for others...

Unless we consider in a cold way the crime of non-assistance to people in danger that Benjamin already envisaged, it is time to think together on how to organize the arrival of climate migrants, especially in Europe.

Here is a small shelter for 6 people, built illegally in France: it is time to build 6 million of them, legally, and in the best possible ecological conditions, for, and with, the climate refugees we will welcome.

This raises questions of an urban, agronomic, hydraulic, sociological, anthropological, philosophical, religious, political, geographical, etc. nature.

I hope to spend the rest of my time on this now.

Yes, other alternatives are possible:

Let's listen to Philippe Descola

«*What I am calling for is quite simple: it is that real collective intellectual dynamics emerge that are capable of thinking about the organization and propagation of new forms of collectives in order to better inhabit the earth and accommodate, with more justice than in the current capitalist system, the human and non-human occupants of our common home.*»

A common ground, 2019.

To start another story is to try first of all to tie another relationship with all living beings: other animals, human and non-human, plants, etc.

Humanism, which is very necessary, has become a very narrow form of thought.

Decentering: this is undoubtedly the key word: the attitude that consists in getting into the skin, the clothes of the other.

Leaving the anthropocentrism. To renew another contract, another contact with the living world around us.

For the last project we, Atelier NAO and Ugo Nocera, are working on, the Argelliers school, we use wood, straw and earth of course, but what has also mobilized our energy was to organize a day for the children : the future pupils of the school came to get acquainted with the other inhabitants of the site, these trees that we have tried to protect as much as possible.

We have asked them to choose a companion, a partner, from among these trees. This young girl chose a pine tree, and gave it something to drink.



This gives me hope. To you too?