

Jacques Coulon

Le Parc de la Seille



This 20-hectare park makes good natural and urban use of an industrial waste dump along a tributary of the river Moselle.

An archaeological dig in search of the ancient course of the river Seille uncovered the oak and elm posts of its medieval dockside. Moving 4590300 ft³ of rubble has softened the banks and widened the riverbed near its confluence with the Moselle.

In recovering the ancient riverbed, an island has been gained, where the local flora and fauna can develop unmolested.

Reedbeds, lagoons, retention docks and watershed meadows slow down the river's flow. The yearly floods justified this extensive re-levelling of the landscape. These technical decisions visually opened up the river Seille, which no longer flows by, unremembered within its sad concrete channel.

Two hills made of the riverbank rubble rise 6 and 11 meters above grade, offering a better view of the surroundings. No rubble has been removed from the park.

The nature-culture borderline is a 3¾-mile path along the maximum waterline reached during the floods. A wooden railing follows the path and articulates the new riverbank, with its ecological filter of wet meadows and reeds.

Information panels that explain the biology of the site express the "cultural" side of the park.

The trellised hops fields, rows of vines and yellow plum trees represent local agriculture.

For financial reasons, no extra vegetable substrate has been imported (2118600 ft³ would have been needed). Fertilization of the existing slopes has restarted the natural cycle on the soil already available.

The Parc de la Seille complements other public facilities, by linking installations such as the swimming pool and the sports stadium.

The park furniture is of wood. The path is paved with cobblestones recovered from the train station. The more garden-like beds grow upon the sandy local soil. The lower paths, which will require cleaning after each flood, are of concrete. The lighting was designed to underline the shapes and make the park visible from the town. Rocks of Jaumont stone mark the landscape like milestones.

By introducing few trees, the concept remains unsaturated and allows the sky to breathe.

Various footbridges are foreseen, to give access to the surrounding neighborhoods, but there is no hurry to finish the park. Landscape is constructed by time. The designer establishes the rules of a game that local life will develop.

This newly born place is only just beginning to speak to us.

LOCATION:

Metz (Moselle) France

ARCHITECT:

Jacques Coulon

DESIGN TEAM:

Laure Planchais (Landscape architect)

Yves Adrien (Illumination)

SINBIO, (Hydro-ecology)

INGEROP, (Geotechnical study)

CLIENT:

City of Metz

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION:

2000 - 2002

SURFACE:

20 hectares

COST:

5,71 M. € HT

PHOTOGRAPHS:

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