

A10



#19

JAN/FEB 2008

€7.50

ISSN 1771-5753 / CHF 12.50 / DKK 65.00 / HKD 20.00

Start

— Environmental park,
Santomeria
— Bridge,
Antwerp
— Art gallery,
library and
conference
centre, Pécs
— Winery
complex,
Modra
— Distribution
centre,
Staffordshire

Ready

— Thermal spa,
Bad Aibling
— Fire station,
Den Helder
— Apartment
building,
Hveragerði
— Apartment
building, Paris
— River aquarium,
Mora
— Housing, Zagreb
— Villas, Pirogovo
— Library and
community
centre,
Barcelona
— Cultural
and sports
centre, Dole
— House and
studio, Scharans

&

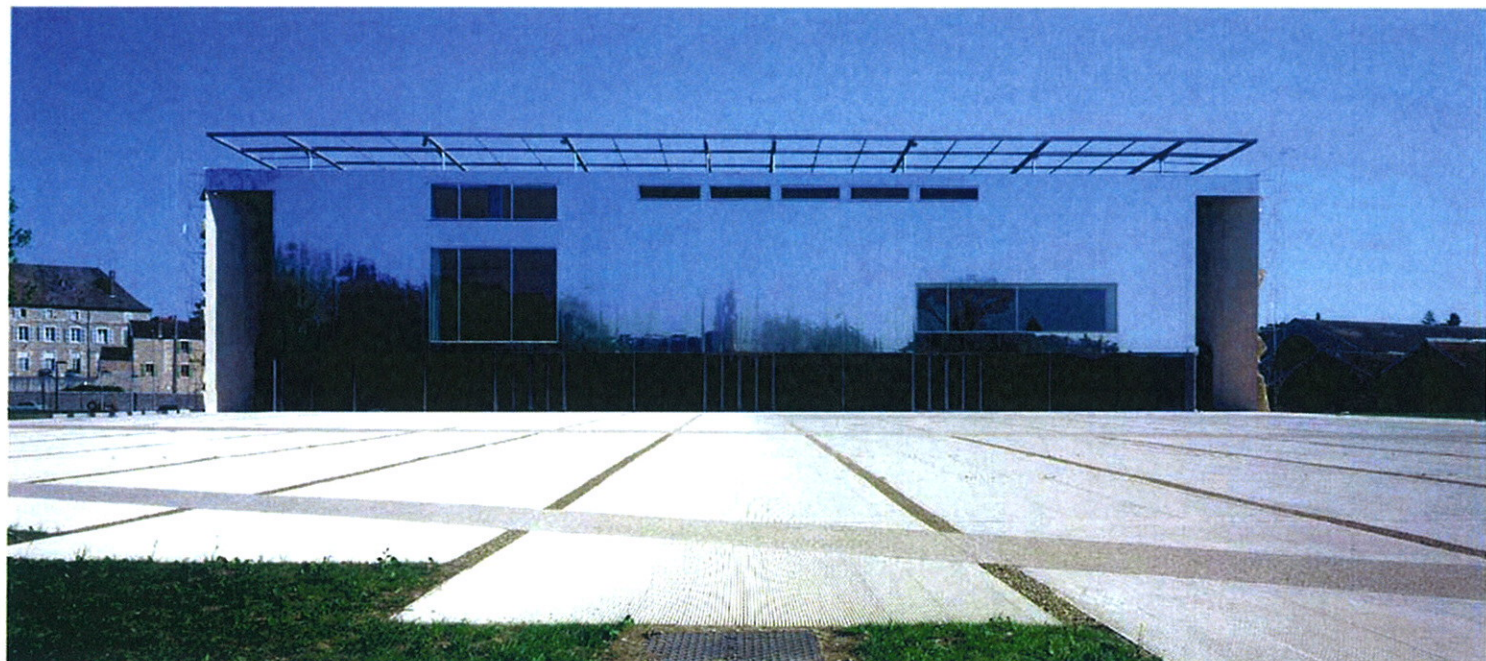
— Interview:
Svatoopluk
Sládeček draws
inspiration
from the Czech
periphery
— The architecture
of Euro-Islam
— Pilgrim-
photographer
William
Brumfield
— Architectural
tour guide: Rome
— Profile: UO
— Out of obscurity:
observatory on
Mount Snížka

Section:
**Flourishing
facades**

Clever
cantilever

→ page 40





↑ The north facade, clad in polished stainless steel, reflects the city on the other side of the river.

Cultural and sports centre, Dole

Brigitte Métra's first solo project is a landscape building.

FRANCE — TEXT: XAVIER GONZALEZ, PHOTOGRAPHY: PHILIPPE RUALT

Dole, a splendid medieval town of 26,000 inhabitants in the heart of Burgundy, is particularly famous for its hilltop basilica, which preserves the memory of the Knights Templar. Below it flow the River Doubs and the Rhine-Rhône canal; the presence of so much water serves as the prelude to a beautiful natural landscape.

In 2002, a competition was launched to provide the town with a multi-functional facility. The winner, architect Brigitte Métra, had been an associate for the last 20 years in the practice of Jean Nouvel, with whom she has sometimes worked in direct partnership (the Philharmonic competition in Paris). She has been in charge of numerous important projects, including the concert hall in Lucerne,

and recently won an important commission for an office building in Paris. The cultural and sports centre in Dole, her birthplace, is her first solo project.

Métra set out to realize the city's ambition to develop the left bank of the river by creating a cultural and sports centre and a large park. Responding to the poetry of the situation – two river banks, one urban, one natural, facing off across the water – the architect proposed a landscape building, a chameleon architecture that plays with sensitive materials: the building appears and disappears depending on the angle of view, variations in light and the changing seasons.

The volume – a parallelepiped 59 by 56.5 m and 12 m high – is set back from the river;

it constitutes the mainstay of the new landscape that is now emerging. In keeping with its context, the monolith is clad on three sides (east, south and west) with rough, locally quarried stone and is reminiscent of the artificial ruin or 'folly' of a romantic English park. An irregular metal mesh screen placed 90 centimetres in front of the rock facade serves as a support for climbing plants that will gradually cover the wall and create a natural envelope, its colours and textures changing with the seasons.

The fourth (north) side is oriented towards the city; the panels of polished stainless steel that cover it mirror the landscape so that the building doesn't seem to have a facade. 'It is the simplest tricks that produce the greatest

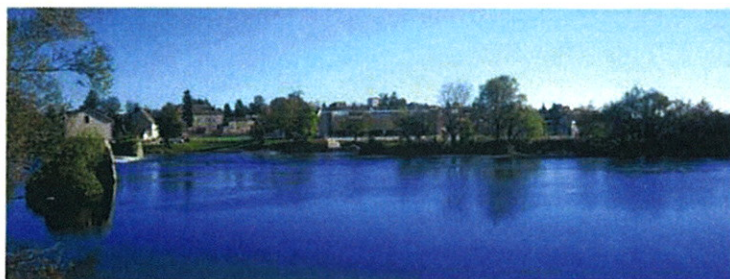
effects,' silent-film maker Méliès used to say, and it works... the camouflage is effective.

The surroundings are projected onto the wall of the building and, through the mirror effect, become its scenery. From the right bank, the complex is invisible as such, thanks to the reflection of the materials used, the plants, the steel and the glass – the building is dematerialized, as though absorbed by its surroundings.

This impression works from inside as well: the entrance lobby, open during the day and for special events, is treated as an extension of the newly created external public space to which it is directly linked by one long sliding horizontal window that takes up the entire width of the building. This device allows not only great transparency at the ground-floor level, but also panoramic framings of the basilica in the distance and the park in the foreground.

Conceived as a huge 'toolbox' for performances, sports, conferences and exhibitions, the hall is a very large (44 by 39 m) space free →

↓ View from across the river



↓ Multipurpose hall



↓ Entrance lobby





↑ West facade

↓ Ground floor

(Cultural and sports centre, Dole)

from support columns and therefore very flexible. Using a set of movable partitions, the hall can be variously configured to accommodate anything from 200 to 3000 spectators. A roof-light system allows natural light to be admitted as appropriate. Covered during musical or theatrical performances, the panels are opened for sporting events or exhibitions.

This spatial and technical optimization does not detract from the elegance of the interior decoration, composed primarily of birch panelling. To improve the acoustics, the wood of the walls has been perforated, and textural variations are accentuated by nuances in the

varnish. Two shades have been used: light in the outer hall, dark near the stage. The ceiling contributes to the overall sense of unity with its consistent nine-metre height.

The architect prefers nuances to colours and has completed the chromatic harmony by using a grey monochrome for the seats, creating an atmosphere of serenity that complements her discreet and yet very contemporary architecture. ←

CULTURAL AND SPORTS CENTRE, 2002-2006

Architect: Métra + associés
Client: Ville de Dole
Info: www.brigittemetra.com

