BEFORE THE FLOOD

A world in Le Havre

Architecture & Experience

WORKBOOK

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Before the flood – a world in Le Havre

After having tested the hypothesis to build a world in Arc-et-Senans, Guise, Clairevivre and Firminy, we settle this year in the city of Le Havre.

We are interested in this city for many reasons and particularly for its capacity to condense several dimensions able to inform the projects. Due to its singular geographic position, at the estuary of the Seine, Le Havre is one of the most important European ports. Built at the beginning of the 16th century, the growth of the port goes alongside with the fast economic development of the city and the rise of pre-industrial brick and tile workshops. Some see this port as the entrance port to Paris, like the Piraeus for Athens. Le Havre is at the crossroad of landscapes, in-between land and sea, the Seine and the Channel, clear and saltwater, giving it a special quality. Thus, the city is also imbued with the imaginary of Perret who actively participated to the post-war Reconstruction.

Nevertheless, its geographic situation is also the sword of Damocles of Le Havre. Following the most pessimist projections of the IPPC (GIEC), the average water levels could rise by one meter until 2100. This rise of water levels increases the risk of water submersions, permanent or temporary, the risk of coastal erosion, increases salt intrusions into coastal aquifer, thus increases the risk on coastal and port infrastructures. Le Havre is then on the frontline facing environmental issues that makes it a representative subject to study the question of the coastal fringe. This question is even more relevant that by the year of 2040, in France, coastal regions could gather a third of the population.

By the interest on the coastal fringe landscape, the aim of a world in Le Havre is to evaluate the consequences of such a situation on the architecture and how this situation opens a huge field of experimentation that leads us to question the definition of architecture. In other words, the question is to understand how the architectural form could be deeply redefined in relation with the environmental issues and then generate unexpected results. Environmental imbalances create a strong paradigm shift that forces us to radically think about our relations to the territory, the construction, the mobility, the uses, etc. and thus to define new balances within the architectural form. In addressing the subject of environmental issues through the means of architecture, we affirm our attachment to the definition of architecture as a knowledgeable and exploratory discipline while outlining the contours of a possible disciplinary approach of the environment in order to propose new standards of comfort.

These explorations on the definition of the architectural form and new standards echoes with the work of Perret for the Reconstruction of Le Havre. He developed the “Immeuble standard” or “Appartement modulaire” both based on the use of a constructive grid of 6,24 meter offering at once standardization of the construction and flexibility of uses in order to “inscribe city in measure, like a musical harmony”, to use his words.
Explorations

Seaside culture
Learning from constraints
L'abris souverain
Pilotis
Seaside culture

Thermes de Caracalla, Rome, Italie, 212-216 ap. J-C
Seaside culture
Pier Luigi Nervi, Piscine d'Ostia Lido, Rome, Italie, 1950
Seaside culture
Alvaro Siza, Piscine Leca da Palmeira, Matosinhos, Portugal, 1966
Seaside culture
Aurelio Galfetti, Piscine, Bellinzola, Italia, 1967
Learning from constraints
Château de Chenonceaux, France, 1513
Learning from constraints

Le Corbusier, l’asile flottant, Paris, France, 1929, (flooded in 2018)
Learning from constraints

Carlo Scarpa, Fondation Querini Stampalia, Venise, Italie, 1960
Learning from constraints
Rem Koolhaas, Piscine flottante, 1978
Perret - L’abris souverain

Perret - L'abris souverain

Pavillon d’entrée de la librairie centrale des beaux-arts, exposition internationale des Arts Décoratifs Paris, France, 1925
Perret - L’abris souverain
Église Saint-Joseph, Le Havre, France, 1957
Pilotis
Le Corbusier, Hôpital, Venise, Italie, 1964
Pilotis
Lina Bo Bardi, MASP, Sao Paulo, Brasil, 1968
Site 1 - CLIFF

Site 2 - CITY CENTER

Site 3 - HARBOR

Site 2 - SWAMP
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03 CLIFF SIDE SWIMMING POOL p.75
04 OYSTER FARMING p.83

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19 PERFORMING ART CENTER p.203
DAY 1
05 BOAT REPAIR p.91
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13 CASINO p.155
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07 CANNERY  p.107
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DAY 2
14 L. HAVRE’S ATTIC  p.163
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**DAY 1**

10 SALT WATER FARMING  

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**DAY 2**

11 CANAL MAINTENANCE  

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12 OCEANOGRAPHIC CENTER  

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01 Le Havre Citizen School
Maxence Heidert, Clément Paillon, Marie Przopiorski de Cay, Quentin Toulemonde
Site 1
Cliff

02 Bodycare - Solarium
Gregoire Lortie, Laura Neumann, Louis Chessé
03 Cliffside swimming pool
Agathe Convert, Alexis Da Costa, Camille Perillat

Site 1
Cliff
04 Oyster Farming
Mariam Bedraoui Drissi, Nelu Dragomir, Casey Isidor
05 Boat repair
Flore Derouen, Mariana Monteiro, Victor Payen
06 Another brick in the wall
Simon Cheritat, Valère Hognait, Cynthia Tréport
07 Cannery
Enzo d’Auria, Gabriel Flor de Oliveira, Melhing Roselet
Site 3
Harbor

08 Books by the Ocean
Khadija Barkani, Myriam Berthier, Shaojun Luo, Eva Morin
09 Sorting center
Helena Kocik, Bouchra Larbi Bouamrane, Gabriel Santos
10 Salt water farming

Margot Sustat, Soline Lengaigne, Thibaut Vilcoq
11 Canal & water maintenance
Anne Branchereau, Sirine Damir, Axel Eugene
Site 4
Swamp

12 Oceanographic research center
Florian Brehin, Flore Daurel, Clémence Hugues
13 Casino

Maxence Lelievre, Sarah Rodriguez, Lucas Vaudoux
14 Le Havre’s Attic

Kelly Chhour, Loic Castelotto, Thibaut Ruix
15 Smoke on the water

Antoine Jellimann, Mathilde Marsoudeau, Augustin Michel
Site 3
Harbor

16 Floating Market
Sophie Curty, Claire Vachetti, Inssaf Zinelahidine
17 Le Havre Rowing Club
Angela Da Silva, Ange Lemée, Théo Miquel
18 The Octopus garden - An outdoor athletic club
Guillaume Grégoire, Arianna Migliarino, Lucas Nény
19 Performing Arts Center

Célia Codja, Solène Frémont, Yasmine Mañber