



Project Description

The initial theater, the agency built in 1999, represented a very large volume entirely made of concrete, slightly curved and rounded, giving it a certain softness. The purple varnish enhances and asserts this shape. The use of this color also refers to several ideas: the theater, often red through the ages, as well as the red/brown colored bricks usually seen in the North of France, designed to brighten up the gray sky of this part of Europe.

For the extension, Manuelle Gautrand realized in 2014, she took the architectural concept of a simple corner piece volume, almost rectangular. The conception of the façades had to integrate the highly visible part of the initial project.

Facing the difficulty to juxtapose a renewed style, the agency decided to coat the extension in black: a deep color to enhance this powerful volume. To create a soft link with the initial volume, this black is implemented in the form of weaving metal panels, which are drawing large rhombuses in crossed metal cladding – assembled on an innovative diagonal frame – to remind the ones Manuelle Gautrand stenciled in black on the initial building.

Inspired by Soulages's works in which the black can become as bright as white, the façades here become extremely light and shiny – almost crystalline – when the daylight faces it, thanks to the glossy metal panels.

One of the last choices in the draft was to think about progressively erasing the presence of the former facade of a 1930's movie theater preserved and restored in the initial building, as a part of the historical heritage of the residents of Bethune. As if a generation was chasing away the previous one, the facade has been completely covered with the purple lacquer when the extension was built, as if the rounded hull had swallowed it.