

Manuelle Gautrand Architecture

La Comédie de Béthune

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By: Manuelle Gautrand Architecture

Bethune - 2014



Photo: Luc Boegly

In 1994, the agency Manuelle Gautrand Architecture won the competition for the construction of the National Drama Theater, "La Comédie de Béthune."

From the beginning, the project anticipated what has now become an extension: it already was in the form of two functional sections, the first one containing most of the program, which was then carried out, the second one immediately unrealizable because it was positioned on the corner of the plot, involving the demolition of a house.

From 2009, the corner house having been demolished, the extension of "La Comédie De Bethune" was able to be realized at the same time as the renovation of the existing theater.

The agency Manuelle Gautrand Architecture, laureate of a new architectural competition for this extension, took advantage of this unique opportunity to improve and complete the global functioning of the theater and endow it with a rehearsal room allowing the presence of the artists on the site.



The building delivered by the agency in 1999 included most of the features, but compared to a conventional theater, there was still missing a rehearsal room for the artists (provided by the current extension).

The building represents a very large volume entirely in concrete varnish in dark purple. The shape of this volume is slightly curved and rounded, giving it an almost precious appearance and certain softness.

Manuelle Gautrand did not attempt to hide the important volume of the building, but to assert this shape, and improve it by rounding it and dressing it entirely in purple varnish. This warm color used several references: the theater, often red through the ages, a timeless and strong color. It is also a reference to the Northern bricks, to the colored facades that goes from red to brown through purple. When the color of the bricks is not bright enough to contradict the gray sky, they are often painted, reinforced with large flat glowing which is brightening up the city.

The facades thus present a monumental aspect and distinguished themselves by their purple satin color. The surface of the varnish is covered with a pattern from stencil, drawing very graphically a frieze of black glazed bricks, from the floor to the top. This stylized frieze has allowed giving a certain scale to the facades of this part of the project.

Lien internet : http://www.world-architects.com/architecture-news/submitted-works/La_Come_die_de_Be_thune_2601