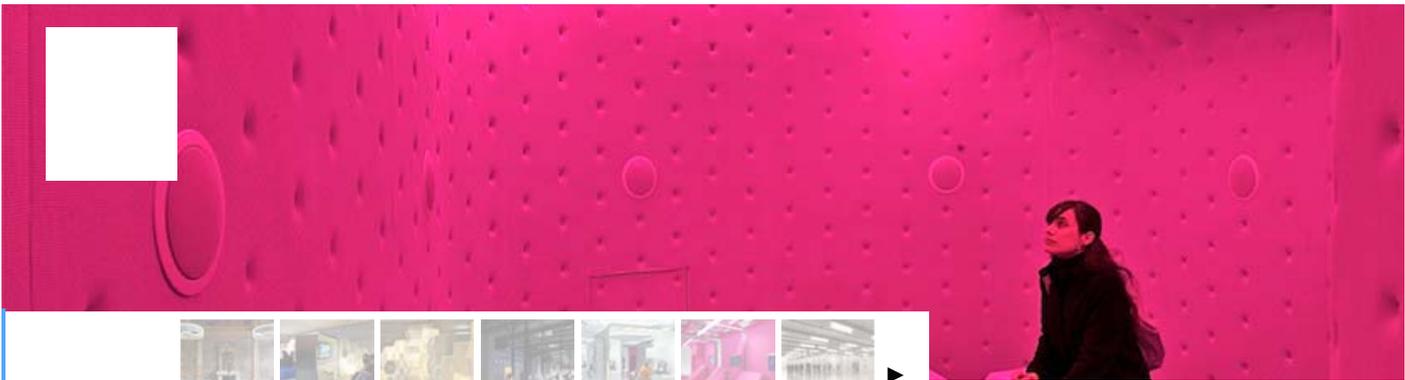


FAST COMPANY APRIL 18 NYC
INNOVATION UNCENSORED
 A gathering of the most influential and forward-looking minds.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE
 AMEX // Nike // KAYAK // Percolate
 Greylock Partners // Reddit // J.Crew
 MORE INFO



A 19th Century Theater, Converted Into a Monument to Digital Art [Slideshow]

1 170 0
 NOTES TWEETS LIKES

France has a gift for injecting its historic buildings with dashes of spectacular modernism, and with the freshly completed *Gaîté Lyrique*, in Paris, the nation has elevated this to a high art. A fussy old theater built at the height of Napoleon Bonaparte's rule and later abandoned (locals took to calling it "The Sad Mute"), the *Gaîté Lyrique* has been converted into a bright, experimental funhouse dedicated exclusively to the digital arts.

So, as the *UK Guardian* reports, in a building where Victor Hugo celebrated his 70th birthday and the Ballet Russes grand jeted across stage, now you've got interactive sound and light installations and an arcade with networked gaming and electric-colored mobile booths dubbed *éclairseuses* (literally, "girl guides") in which visitors can play, watch videos, read, or work. The place will host three concerts a week and 120 live and multimedia shows per year, not to mention countless exhibits, lectures, and film screenings. It's hard to pin down exactly what the 61-million Euro *Gaîté Lyrique* is -- a concert hall? An art gallery? A library? An unused set from 2001? Whatever you want to call it, one thing is certain: It's the future and the past rolled brilliantly into one.

It's now a space that readily adapts to new functions.

But mostly it's the future. When the architect *Manuelle Gautrand* first approached the building in the early aughts, little of the original remained; it had been gutted in the 1980s to make way for a cruddy (and short-lived) roller coaster. As a result, Gautrand had free reign to sculpt the innards into a warren of theaters, galleries, sound-proof studios, and public spaces spread over more than 100,000 square feet and seven floors. What's left over from the 19th-century building is meticulously preserved and showcased: There's a grand marble lobby and a cafe whose soaring, arched windows afford stunning views of Paris.

Available on the App Store

PRINT+TABLET EDITION
 Subscribe now and tablet access for iPad® is included. [CLICK HERE](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Co.Design
 business + innovation + design

03 / 23
 TWO THOUSAND AND ELEVEN

INFOGRAPHIC OF THE DAY



Infographic of the Day: Better Than A Van Gogh: NASA Visualizes All The World's Ocean Currents

EDITOR'S PICKS

incubate them.

Of course, how -- and more importantly, whether -- the building is used remains to be seen. An undertaking of this cost, scale, and ambition always runs the risk of being underutilized. That said, we're pretty confident that in a nation which fetishizes its leisure time and treats its philosophers like TV celebrities, people will find more than plenty to do here. ?I invite Parisians to come and explore la Gaîté lyrique and make it their own,? Christophe Girard, Paris?s deputy mayor in charge of cultural affairs, says in a statement, ?a place of interactive multi-sensory experiences, a place of experimentation and exchange, a place accessible to all generations. Without a doubt, a joyful effervescence waits for you there.? We believe him.

[Images courtesy of Manuelle Gautrand]



SUZANNE LABARRE

Suzanne is a senior editor at Co.Design. You may email her at suzannelabarre@gmail.com CONTINUED >

[Twitter](#)

LEAVE A NOTE

LOGIN

Please wait...

Say It

NOTES

S

KKDOG

04/06/2011 05:44 AM

nice!!!

FLAG | [RESPOND](#)



Next Design: 10,500 More Reasons To Enter Our Next Design Challenge



14 Great Ads By The Real Mad Men, And What Drove All That Cleverness



Facebook Agrees: The Key To Its Future Success Is Design

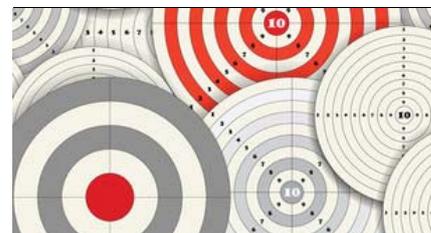
EXPERT PERSPECTIVES



Scott Anthony Discusses: A Small Businessman's Guide To Innovating Like The Pros



Daniel Sobol Discusses: Innovation Is About Arguing, Not Brainstorming. Here's How To Argue Productively



Sahil Lavingia Discusses: Pinterest's