



## Architecture | A Faux-Brick Skin by Manuelle Gautrand Architecture

**SAINT-LOUIS, France** — From a distance it looks like all 13 volumes of the Forum Associative community center are covered in brick. Upon closer inspection, you see the illusion: the building is skinned with a copper-colored metal, stamped to mimic the color and texture of brick. Upon even closer inspection, you notice the added effect of the building appearing through thousands of perforations in the metal.



*Photograph by Guillaume Guerin. [Click to see a larger image.](#)*



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Parisian firm [Manuelle Gautrand Architects](#) told [ArchDaily](#) that the goal was to have a global theme for the complex. It's once you're through the doors that you realize the skin followed you inside, referencing itself in little riffs on the original pattern. Some of the metal skin carries through to the lobby area. The walls of the gymnasium quote the design and, as you can see from the pictures from the roof, any view outside is colored by the skin.

The whole of the building is meant to recall brick chimneys on old industrial buildings, a reference to the city's past. Manuelle Gautrand describes her work as a third way between tradition and modernity.



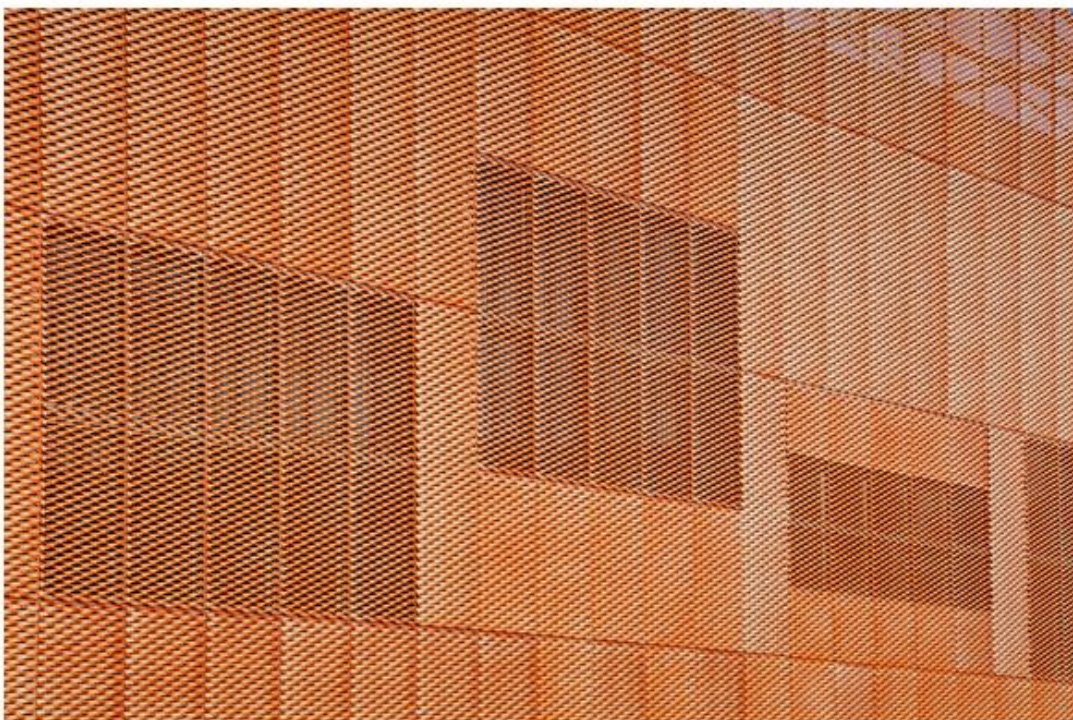
*In her approach to architecture, Manuelle Gautrand explores the crisis of modernity, in which 'our rich and sated industrialised society is torn between extreme modernity and a reactionary return to the past'. Manuelle Gautrand has devised pairs of opposites to address this threat...*

*To bring people into this world and – more important still – to open it up to them, Manuelle Gautrand employs different strategies, which are themselves divergent.*

*In fact, it is their divergence that suits them to the function of unmasking and it is what makes her projects very different one from the other.*



*Click to see a larger image.*



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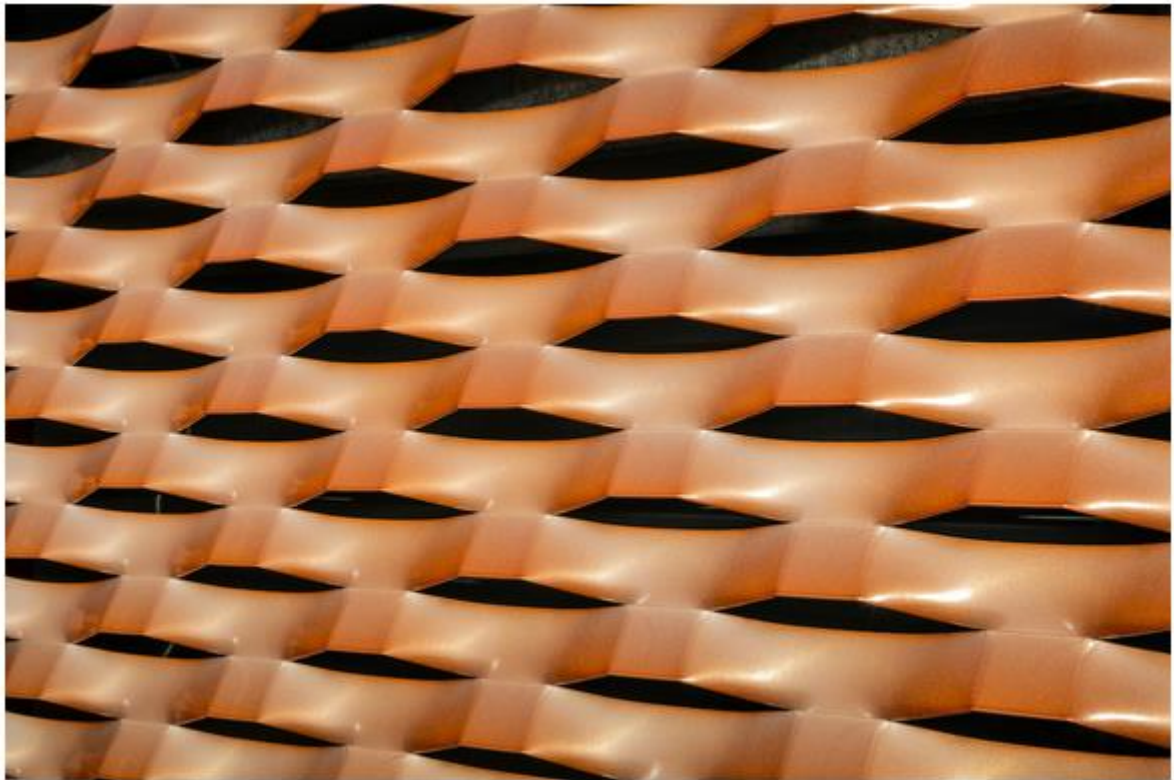
In addition to experimenting between the past and future iterations of it, the skin guarantees both thermal and acoustic insulation. The studio states that the envelope increases the building's energy efficiency.

The studio is a Parisian based architecture firm founded by Manuelle Gautrand in 1991, according to its biography.

Manuelle Gautrand is the principal architect and director of the agency. Marc Blaising, partner, financial and administrative director has been involved in the general management of the agency since 1992.

The team of more than 15 architects develops projects for public contracting authorities as well as private firms both in France and abroad. Under the leadership of Manuelle Gautrand, each architect-project manager is in charge of a project.

Do you love or loathe this spin on contemporary brick architecture? Let us know in the comments.



*Click to see a larger image.*

(excerpt)

**Lien internet :** <https://cfileonline.org/architecture-forum-associative-manuelle-gautrands-not-quite-brick-building-contemporary-brick-architecture-cfile/>