



Architected landscape

■ **MARSEILLES (FR)** – Taking the composition of the initial project by René Egger as a starting point, the extension of the Ecole d'Architecture de Marseille-Luminy needed to reflect the duality of the existing site. Mathieu Barbier Bouvet, co-founder of PAN Architecture, together with Jean-Luc Fugier, explains how this large box that has been installed on the site of the Luminy university campus pays tribute to both the architecture of the 1960s and the pine forest which surrounds it. The site is well-known to the winners of this design-build competition, as both graduated from the school a couple decades ago. Now, their extension to it has just been completed.

Having returned to the campus for the occasion, they constructed three identical single-storey workshops which cover a total surface area of 450 square metres. They have opened everything up along the southern facade, along a terrace measuring 150 square metres. This is sheltered from the sun by a wooden vine arbour, made using the same type of natural chestnut-rush barrier used to fence off the pine forests. While this provides protection from the sun to students working outside, it also gives an architectural specificity to the building, which features twelve-metre-long metallic structures that are reinforced by sandwich panels made according to the OBM system. By applying this efficient and industrialized construction process, the architects were able to stay within the target budget of around €1200 per square metre for this modular construction, which will eventually be dismantled as part of the future relocation of the entire Luminy campus.

In the meantime, students are taking advantage of the new extension and going to study in the pine forest. Even though they are happy to voice criticism about the project, the students appreciate its functionality, which is a compliment to what PAN Architecture has achieved, in fact. The architects have soundproofed the ceilings, designed a new aluminium cladding finish, and given students an 'architected landscape'. (SOPHIE ROULET)

Info www.panarchitecture.fr



MOVIEGOER 11

Speculation Nation *****

The same message has been displayed for seven years on the billboards of real estate broker Basico: 'If you're looking for a home, call us!'. Behind the sign stand the housing blocks, empty and dilapidated. This is Seseña, an urban suburb with 13,500 apartments, one of the most notorious rogue development projects of Madrid.

Seseña was built with permits – but without gas and water lines – under the leadership of the corrupt mayor, José Luis Martín, in collusion with a greedy developer, Francisco Hernando. Neither were ever prosecuted for their crimes.

In Seville, the banners of the Corrales Utopia ('Revolutionary women live here!') hung for years on a block of flats. It is the most famous example of the new squatters' movement in Spain, with homeless families inhabiting empty apartment buildings. Prior to squatting, they were put out of their homes because they

could no longer pay the mortgage, and their remaining debt continues to rise in the meantime. Without plumbing and electricity, they gathered water daily using a pump, played games by candlelight, and took meals together. This group of families has by now – after much public outcry – been forced to vacate the complex. Why, because squatting is obviously a crime that should be prosecuted?

The first fifteen minutes of the documentary film, *Speculation Nation*, show what we see constantly nowadays in the news: relatively innocent errors of common citizens are severely punished, while the head honchos of banks, corporations, and governments who commit flagrant crimes go scot-free. These two worlds only interact via regulations and attorneys, and thus also in the real estate projects seen in the film. Its owners are difficult to trace: a network of anonymous investors, developers based in tax havens, and bank directors in the city. They are not approachable, except through their lawyers and using legal language, let alone that they feel responsible for the daily management and habitability of their stone capital buffers. It certainly questions the role of the investor. In which 'underperforming projects' are your savings? And

it also challenges the role of architects and urban planners. Do they simply say, 'Your wish is our command'?

Film-maker and artist Bill Brown has been travelling all over the world for many years (mainly in the United States), and has a nose for border locations (fringes) and abandoned towns. Thus far, this film has been his most investigative work. The backgrounds of the projects are told in voice-overs, while interviews with residents and images of their living situations give a glimpse of their talent for improvisation. The documentary is, in fact, a protest against unacceptable speculative practices, but above all it offers an intimate portrait of

the vibrant squatters' culture that has emerged in Spain. There is plenty of vacancy to choose from: besides brand-new apartments, squatters occupy large abandoned complexes in the city centre, caves on the outskirts of Granada, and even individual homes, depending on their willingness to battle against lawyers or undertake considerable renovation work. Watching the film, one can only encourage them. A city does not benefit from empty stone capital buffers, but from vibrant hotbeds. (WIES SANDERS)

Sabine Gruffat, Bill Brown, United States. 2014, 74 min. *Speculation Nation* will be screened during the Architectural Film Festival Rotterdam (8–11 October 2015). Info www.affr.nl



ON THE SPOT

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