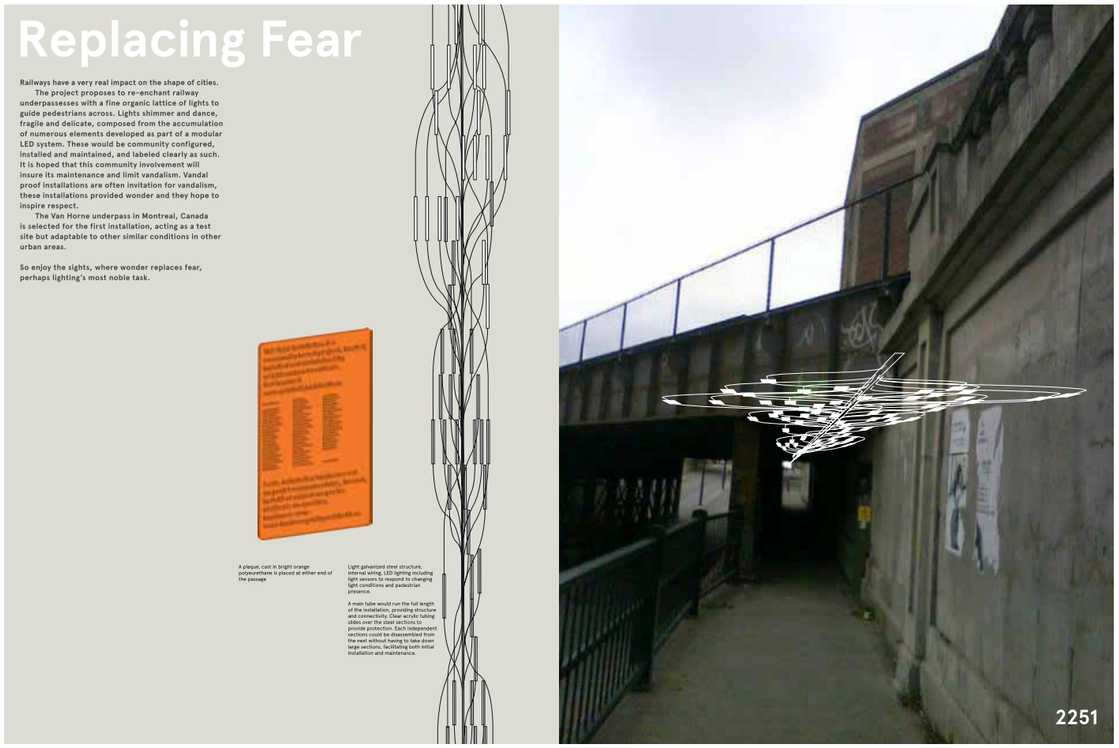

Competition entry

350 words for competition panel.
NOTE: The final panel text had to be reduced to 150 words.

Replacing Fear

Railways have a very real impact on the shape of cities. In Montreal as in many cities around the globe, the railways are first implemented away front the residential areas. But as city grows and manufacturing is displaced by the need for more housing, the densely populated urban grid often reaches the rails. They act as barriers for development, such as was the case for Le Plateau neighborhood, but soon enough, growth expands beyond the confines of the rail lines. The end result is a condition of vibrant development often scarred by the railway underpasses.

Cars find their way, but pedestrian passage is often difficult. In such instances, the city accommodates the cars and makes minimum provisions to allow passage for pedestrians. Dingy and dark underpasses results, and these experiences are rarely pleasant experiences. Light condition in these sites are often highly industrial, poorly maintaining, and the main quality is their apparent resistance to vandalism. The result is more often than not poor lighting conditions that still manage to get vandalized.

This project wishes to address this with a community-based solution, one that re-enchants these pedestrian railway underpasses.

A fine organic lattice of lights guides the pedestrians across. They shimmer and dance, fragile and delicate, composed from the accumulation of numerous elements developed as part of a flexible, off-grid LED system powered with solar panels. These would be community configured, installed and maintained, and labeled clearly as such. It is hoped that this community involvement will insure its maintenance and limit vandalism. Vandal proof installations are often invitation for vandalism, these installations provided wonder and hope to inspire respect.

An initial site, the Van Horne underpass is selected for the first installation. It is a difficult area along the ageing Saint-Lawrence Boulevard, perhaps the cities most historically important street, linking different neighborhoods from North to South. The project as presented here is but an approximation of a possible installation, implemented to give an idea of possible end results for a system that would in reality be configured by the community and crowd funded.

So enjoy the sights, where wonder replaces fear, perhaps lighting's most noble task.

"The works of the past always influence us, whether or not we care to admit it, or to structure an understanding of how that influence occurs. The past is not just that which we know, it is that which we use, in a variety of ways, in the making of new work`. The typology argument today asserts that despite the diversity of our culture there are still roots of this kind which allow us to speak of the idea of a library, a museum, a city hall or a house. The continuity of these ideas of type, such as they are, and the esteemed examples which have established their identity and assured their continued cultural resonance, constitute an established line of inquiry in which new work may be effectively grounded."

The Harvard Architectural Review, Volume 5, *Precedent and Invention. Between History and Tradition: Notes Toward a Theory of Precedent.* John E. Hancock.

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It will be difficult to find precedents for this project.
It deals with trust and fragility in the public realm, of collaboration, sustained, nurtured and ultimately of giving a sense of place to sites usually neglected and marginalized. The intention of the project does not reside solely on an architectural object, but rather in adopting architecture as a tool for change within a community.

So I do not know precisely where to start.

Surely there are is the history of the site or of similar sites, because although I have chosen a specific railway underpass situated on Saint-Lawrence boulevard in Montreal, this is a very common condition, anywhere urban growth has reached the previously isolated railway infrastructures. So I will start there, with a detailed description of the specific site, tracing its history as well as its current condition.

I could study similar lighting installation elsewhere, but I am not convinced that I will find answers in these objects. Rather it is in a community's willingness to come together where this project finds its' inspiration. Can I find objects that are clear signs of involvement and nurture? Can I find objects that resist urbanity's tendency of 'endurcicement' (literally of becoming solid, cold) and soulless? This essay will try to find anchoring in different analogous projects.

There will be 3 distinct investigations: Site, Collective projects and Form.

The first two categories will be selections taken from the specific cultural and social context of Montreal, focusing on objects and spaces that require some form of maintenance or care by the users. The last investigation into form will extend from industrial design precedents to as wide an array of forms as possible, from biology or other sciences or art. These are presented as a commented visual essays.

Combined, these three investigations will create a base to drawn on in the search for a larger understanding about the nature of projects in the public realm.

While looking at early maps of Montreal (see figs. 1&2), I was quite surprised at the apparent continuity of the urban grid as it meets the railways. Unlike streams or small rivers that affect the initial layout of individual plots, the railways were implemented as a right of way on existing properties. The city will progressively adjust to the railway (figs. 3-9), but the apparently unresolved meeting of the rail network and the city grid remains quite strong. Because engineers who were laying out the railways had to make sure that the trains could negotiate the terrain easily (without costly excavation in order to keep the climbs at a minimum), the path of the train is dictated much more by the topography than lot divisions.

As early as 1911, the underpass was designed to accommodate a ‘street subway’. Over the years, the structure of the rail bridge had to be reinforced to accommodate heavier loads, becoming much deeper (figs.10-11). The basic structure can be found today as it was at the beginning of its life. Perhaps this project could find a way for such an anachronistic object to be mediated, to be celebrated as part of the contemporary fabric of the city.

Fig. 1 - Map of Montreal 1892, prepared by J. Rielle

Fig. 2 - Map of Montreal 1879

Fig. 3 - Map of Montreal 1913, showing electric railways

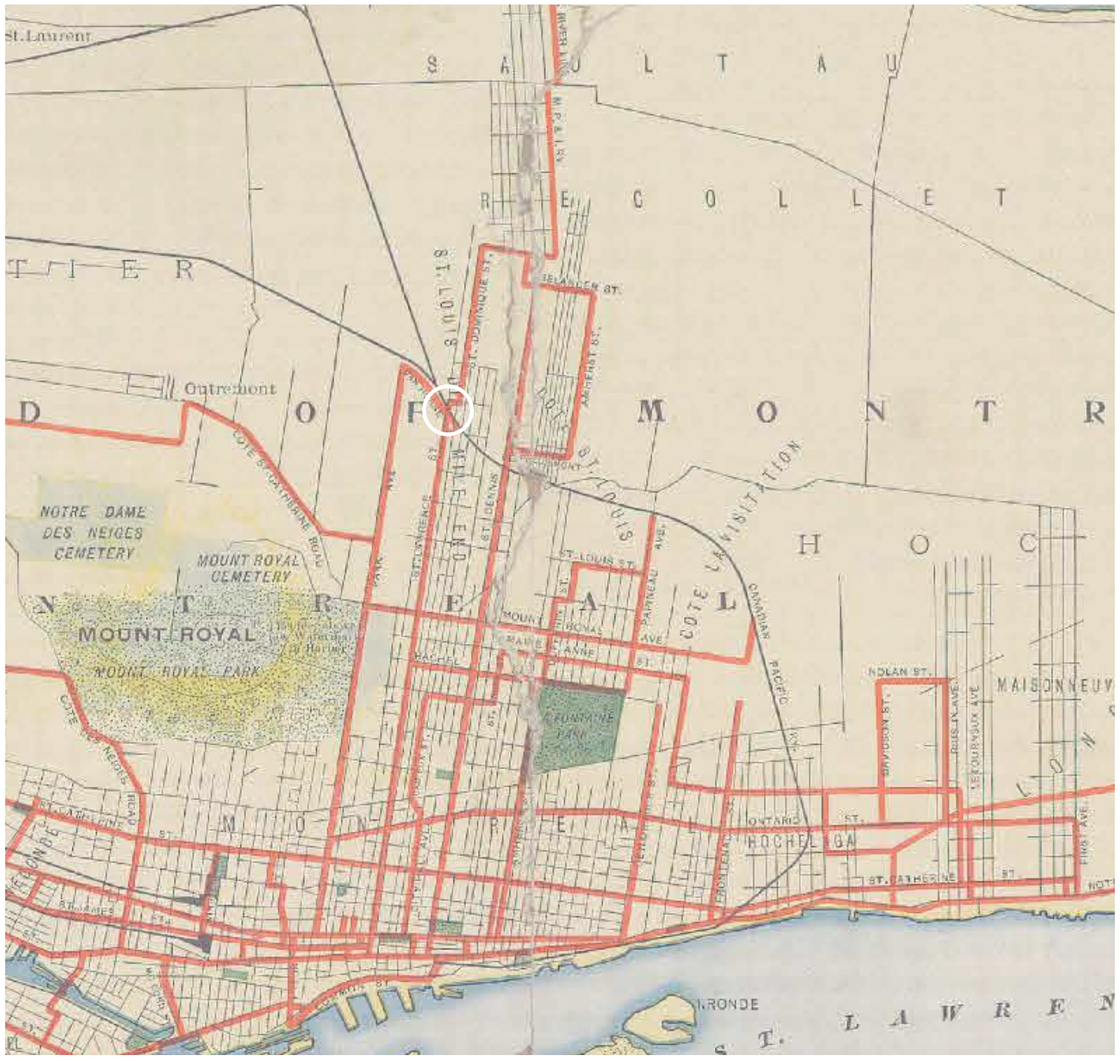

Fig. 4 - Montreal Street Railways, 1915

Fig. 5 - Map of Montreal, 1914

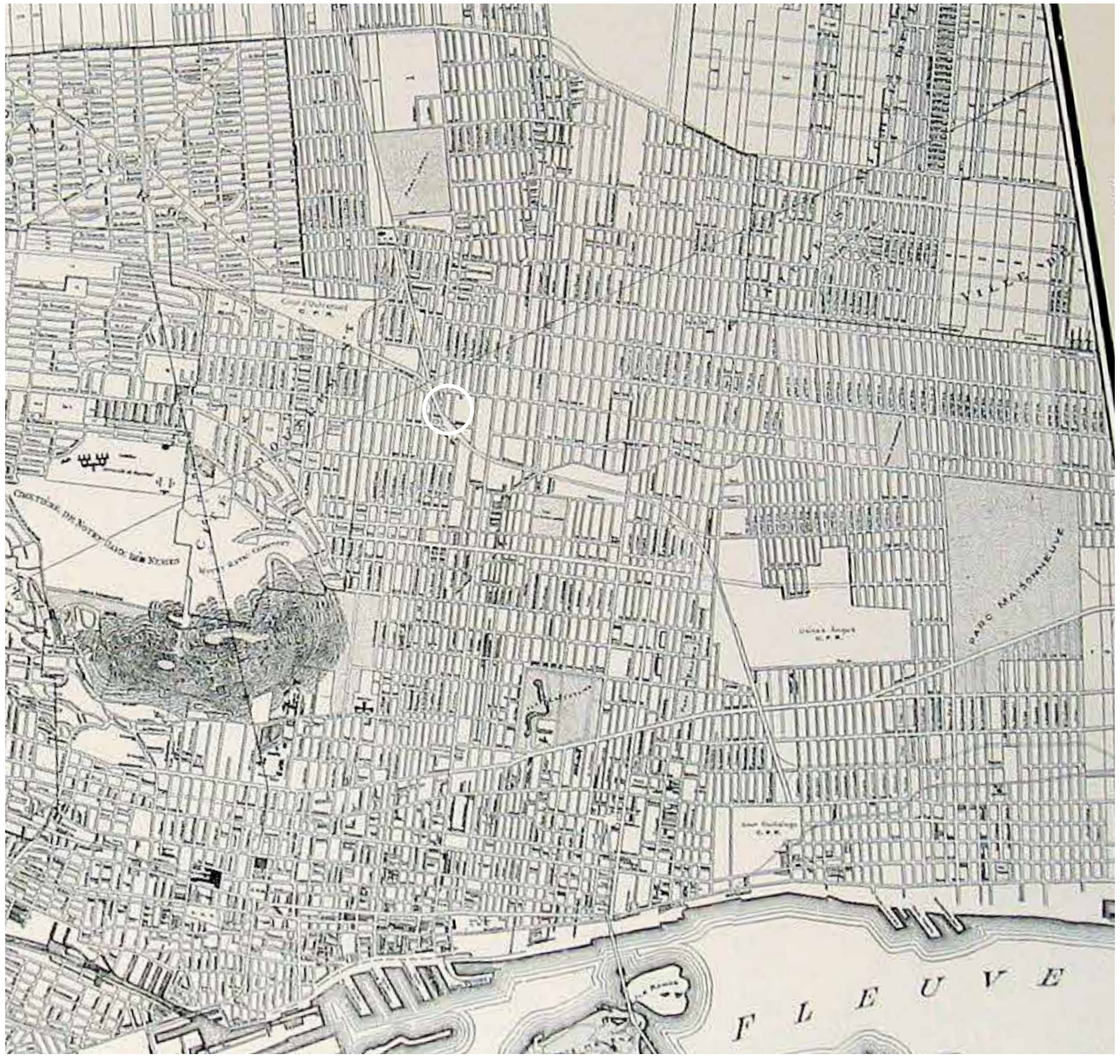

Fig. 6 - Map of Montreal 1939

Fig. 7 - Aerial view of Montreal 1958

Fig. 8 - Aerial view of Montreal 1958

Fig. 9 - Aerial view of Montreal, 2015

Fig. 10 - Post Card, 1912

Fig. 11 - View of site, 2015, Google Street view.

Railways have a clear presence when looking at aerial photographs or maps. Their continuity and specific geometry stand out from the orthogonal city grid. If their path seems rational and coherent when looked from above, the impact they have on our experience of the city is often one of disorder and perceived improvisation. As train cannot negotiate a steep grade, it is the cars and the vehicular road system that must find ways around them. Driving under a railway in a car is quite natural. But the effect that this same viaduct has on the urban fabric for other users (such as cyclist or pedestrians) is quite drastic. In order to keep cars moving, an extensive network of retaining walls, ramps, railings and walkways have to be erected. If you keep in mind that a change in grade greater than 1 meter greatly disrupts any public space, a trench 5 m deep and 20 meters wide has a very strong effect on any neighborhood. Cars usually speed up because there are no cross streets to watch out for, so the increased speed of the moving traffic and its associated noise creates a rather uninviting environment for pedestrians or nearby residents.

The experience of the site as can be experienced now is clearly one of discontinuity. As you travel North on Saint-Lawrence Boulevard, the nature of the activities and the diversity of the building fabric which occupies the grid in proximity to the railways is of such a different nature that you feel this passage as a clear interruption in the continuity of the city (fig 13).

In this specific condition, as one walks under the rails, the path is quite narrow, with a concrete retaining wall on one side and the steel structure supporting the railroad bridge to the other (figs 14-21). It is an old riveted steel structure, and the flange of the main beam is extremely deep and extends down to the surface of the walkway. Such underpasses are usually open on one side, overlooking the road, but here the structure of the railway bridge literally creates a wall, encasing pedestrians in a narrow corridor.

Fig. 12- Annotated map of site

Fig. 13 - Site, looking North, 2015 (Google Street view).

Fig. 14/15 -Site, detail of strucutre 2015 (Google Street view).

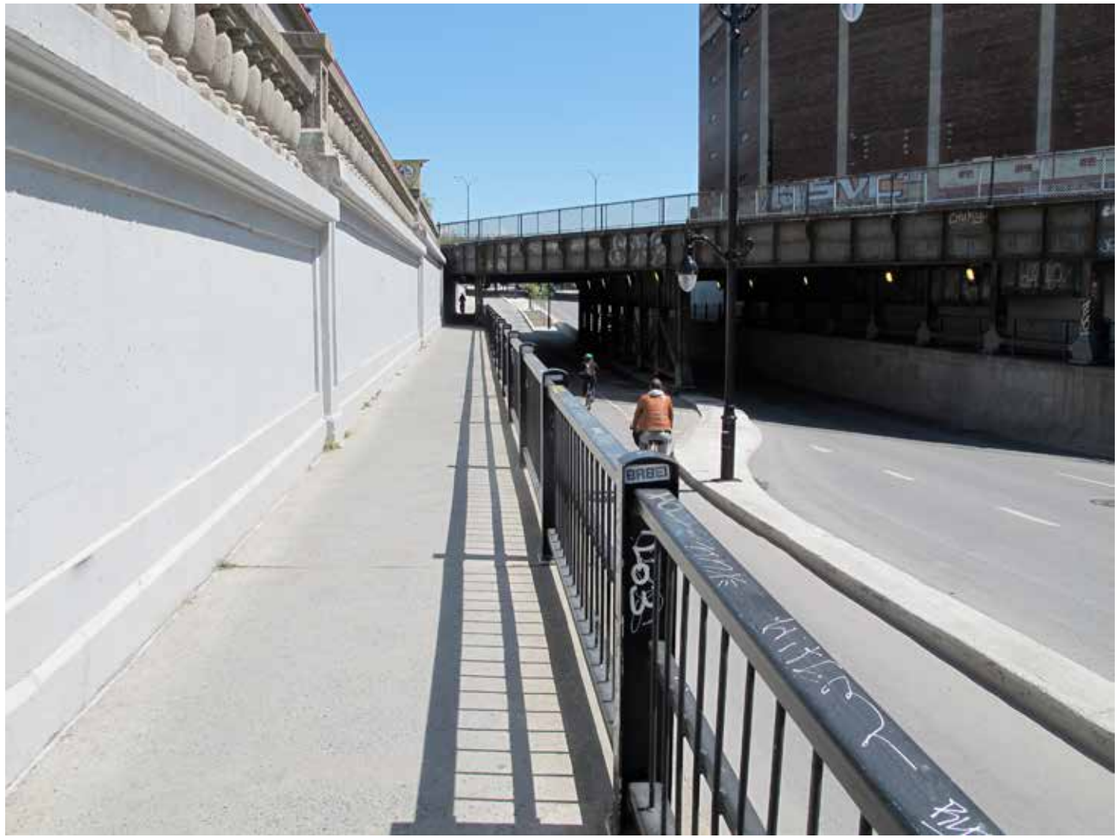

Fig. 16 - Site, looking South.

Fig. 17 - Site, looking South.

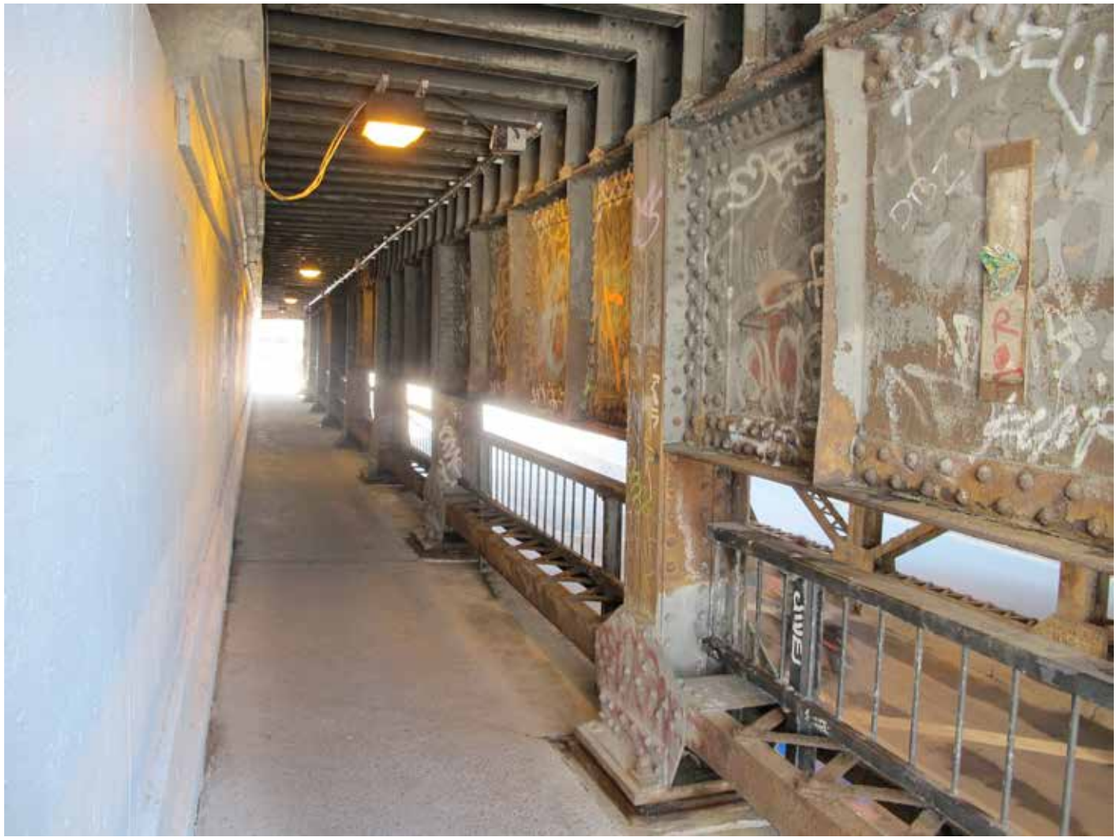

Fig. 18 - Site, looking South.

Fig. 19 - Site, looking South.

Fig. 20 - Site, looking North.

Fig. 21 - Site, looking North.

This is an investigation into community lead public installations. They are present in many neighborhoods in Montreal, mostly medium density residential / light mixed use. One has to know the neighborhood in order to experience or even see most of these projects. They are mostly quite small and clearly anchored in the daily life of the neighborhood. Some are structured around a commercial street, others imbedded within the residential sectors. Most are seasonal, removed for the winter and reinstalled each year. What makes them so effective is their proximity to other activities. They are often, if not at the very centre (because more official function hold that ground) always in close relationship with some form of civic life.

The projects presented here are taken from a neighborhood slightly to the North of the site chosen for the competition proposal. The neighborhood is called Villeray; it is where I live with my family. My kids, Romane (9) and Max (7) attend a nearby school that we walk to almost everyday. Surely there are other collective projects in Montreal, but they are always quite modest and are generally difficult to appreciate unless you encounter them while walking, so these local interventions are the ones I can best describe and study.

There are several street gardens in my neighborhood. There are the usual community gardens on large lots set aside by the city for this purpose. But there is also a vibrant network of small gardens installed on sidewalks or at the foot of existing trees (figs 22-27). Residents tend them in the summer. Some even have small greenhouses kept through the year, and after a snowfall, people passing by are encouraged to remove the snow that has accumulated on the glass (with a provided snow brush) so that the sun can shine in. They are made of wood, often in a fairly crude but sturdy construction. Some were damaged by snow removal equipment over the winter but they have been repaired now, re-using the old wood, mended and reinforced with new materials. In a specific one (figs 25&26), there is a small free library (complete with a tiny solar array and lights) and a bench. I have sat there with my kids, stopping to look at the books on our way home from school. I had not noticed that this bench actually holds all the gardening tools. It is not locked and seems to remain safe nonetheless.

Fig. 22 - Initial stages of a small sidewalk garden, South West corner of Drolet and De Castlenau streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 23 - Initial stages of a small sidewalk garden, South West corner of Drolet and De Castlenau streets (Villeray, Montréal

Fig. 24 - Small sidewalk garden, South West corner of Drolet and De Castlenau streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 25 - Small sidewalk garden, South East corner of Drolet and De Castlenau streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 26 - Small sidewalk garden, detail of storage bench, South East corner of Drolet and De Castlenau streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 27 - Small sidewalk garden, North West of De Castlenau and Lajeuness streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Small community library boxes where you are invited to ‘take a book - leave a book’ are an interesting precedent. Some are built by individual citizens, placed on their own property or in a public places (figs 28&29). There is also a specific province wide effort called ‘Croque-Livres’, sponsored by the Lucie et André Chagnon Foundation (which has the mandate of fighting poverty through education). These are purchased by the local municipal board and installed in various places in close collaboration with their respective communities (figs 30-33). The ones in my neighborhood are a bit quirky; they have been decorated by either school children as part of a community event prior to installation, or on site at the unveiling. I think that this process of appropriation is important, these small libraries belongs to the community. They are not imposed from someone outside who claims to know what is good for us. They are a reflection of the different places.

Such devices, if they are to last and either survive the winter or be reinstalled each year, have to be very simple and straightforward to install / maintain. In one instance, the hardware that was used for anchoring the structure to the ground was different for each of the four legs... installers probably did not have access to even the most basic of tools (fig. 34-&35). This is surely something to keep in mind when proposing such installations.

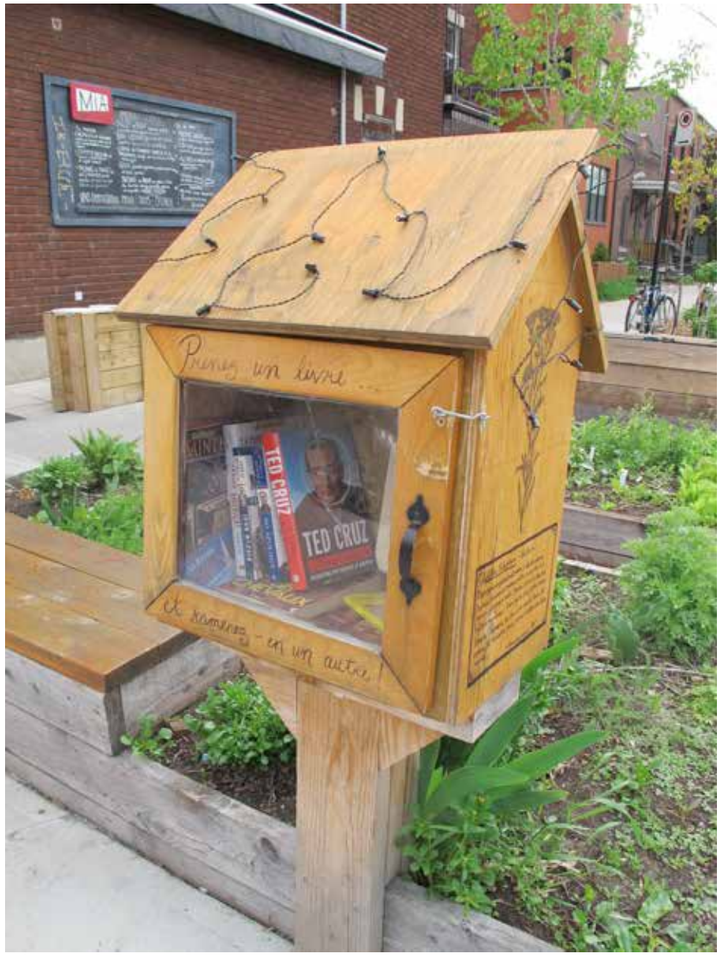

Fig. 28 - Small free library as part of a sidewalk garden, South East corner of Drolet and De Castlenau streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 29 - Small free library as part of a sidewalk garden, South East corner of Drolet and De Castlenau streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 30 - Small free library in front of community centre (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 31 - Small free library in front of community centre (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 32 - Small free library in public playground (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 33 - Small free library in public playground (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 34 - Anchoring detail, small free library in public playground (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 35 - Another anchoring detail from the same small library as fig. 34.

In my neighborhood, along with the various street gardens, sometimes there are larger interventions. Last year, a community group painted the sidewalk in various shades of blues and greens. Restaurants or cafes took the cue and installed terraces, creating a very lively streetscape. In order sites, some non-essential segments of the street were closed off to reduce the impact of vehicular traffic and allow appropriation for other activities (figs 36-39). These interventions change the experience of the street, giving them a more intimate scale that defined the street as a place for humans and not only for cars.

Fig. 36 - Re-appropriation of the street, Lajeunesse / Villeray streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 37 - Re-appropriation of the street, Lajeunesse / Villeray streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 38 - Re-appropriation of the street, Lajeunesse / Villeray streets (Villeray, Montréal)

Fig. 39 - Re-appropriation of the street, Lajeunesse / Villeray streets (Villeray, Montréal)

One important consideration in planning an eventual light installation under the railways bridge is seasonality. Most of the precedents shown are seasonal; they go dormant for the long Montreal Winters. This is problematic as a light installation would be most useful during the cold season where days are shorter. Could we devise perhaps other manifestations that would celebrate winter and thus engage with the site year round? This would create a setting that is more likely to offer continuity in care. We have seen that community project are anchored in the activity of their neighborhood. In this site, there is no adjacent activity so the project needs to generate its own attractions.

Large parts of our cities cannot be nurtured. They are places designed to be so robust that they push away any possible appropriation by humans. These places are often the result of well-meaning organization wishing to build long lasting intervention, advocating the responsible use of public or private funds. We erect spaces to survive abuse but ultimately end up encouraging it somehow. Surely public construction should be able to withstand the rigors of time and climate, but by making this the ONLY criteria, or the one that ends up defining the aesthetics of a given place, we are defining our communities as hostile places. We need to accept that there is no such thing as maintenance free objects or sites. No matter how solidly you build them, they will degrade if they are not maintained, if they are not somehow celebrated, part of (daily) life.

So the light installation proposed for this competition chooses to oppose this somehow. I can suggest the installation of fragile, poetic objects in public spaces. What I cannot do is design the community that will take care of it. What I would have to do instead of designing objects, is to solicitate help for projects that would be built in the community, for the community, built out of a collective of people that could eventually support the project.

Looking at the various projects, it seems clear that their collective nature seems to protect them from constant vandalism. It is particularly poignant that these installations have not been vandalized in an area where graffiti and tags are commonplace. So there is something in the form that speaks of a collective project, something tailored to its moment and collectivity.

This section explores different inspirations. They can be seen as precedents, some exploring form in general, others concerned specifically with light, with music/ structure / time, each having the potential of informing the project in meaningful ways. The final section entitled Wild grasses proposes a meeting between form and the nature of the specific site chosen for the project.

Ingo Maurer[1] (1932-), is a long time inspiration. In his practice, light is an excuse to explore life. Everyday objects are made into celebrations of how we live.

Porca Miseria is constructed by broken porcelain tableware (fig. 40&41). Mistakes become new creations in this fabulous contraption. With his *YaYaHo* lighting system, he single handedly redefined what residential lighting could be. There are two wires, one carrying positive current, and the other negative current; by bridging the two with a conducting wire, he has created a new lighting device. It is made simply of wires and a bulb, no structure other that the walls of the room it is installed in. Light becomes ethereal, no longer encased forcefully. A similar system is used for his *Jour et Nuit* installation, where mundane light bulb are given wings (fig 43).

His appropriation of the everyday could provides a clear inspiration to community installations, showing how objects can be given new life or how simple materials old poetic value when conjugated with light (fig. 42).

Another important figure in lighting design is Yann Kersalé[2]. He has a similar career, but one focused more on exterior installations and numerous collaborations with architects. His projects could also be a source of inspiration.

1 see: Maurer, Ingo,,Centre d'Art Santa Mònica (Barcelona, Spain), *Ingo Maurer : Pasión Por La Luz = Passion for Light.* (Barcelona: Actar, 2001).

2 see: Yann Kersalé, *Yann Kersalé.* ([Paris]: Gallimard, 2008).

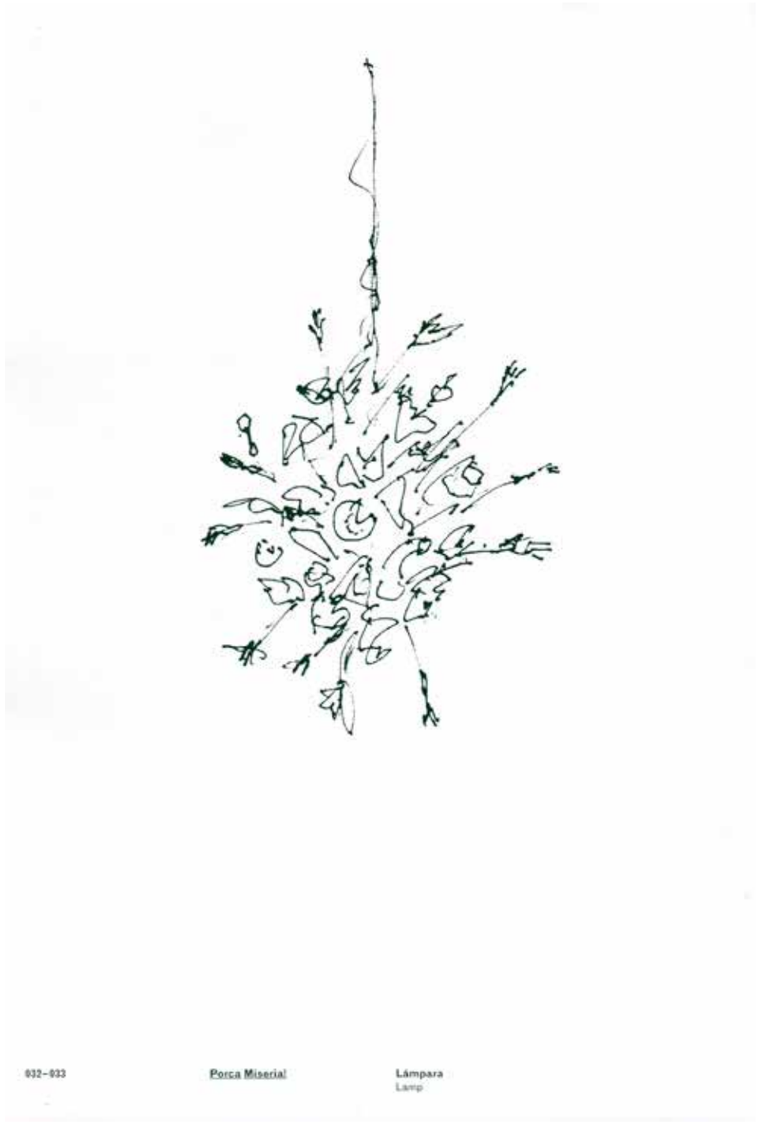

Fig. 40 - Porca Miseria lamp , sketch

Fig. 41 - Porca Miseria lamp, 1994

Fig. 42 - Paragaudi, light sculpture for the conference room of a bank, 1990

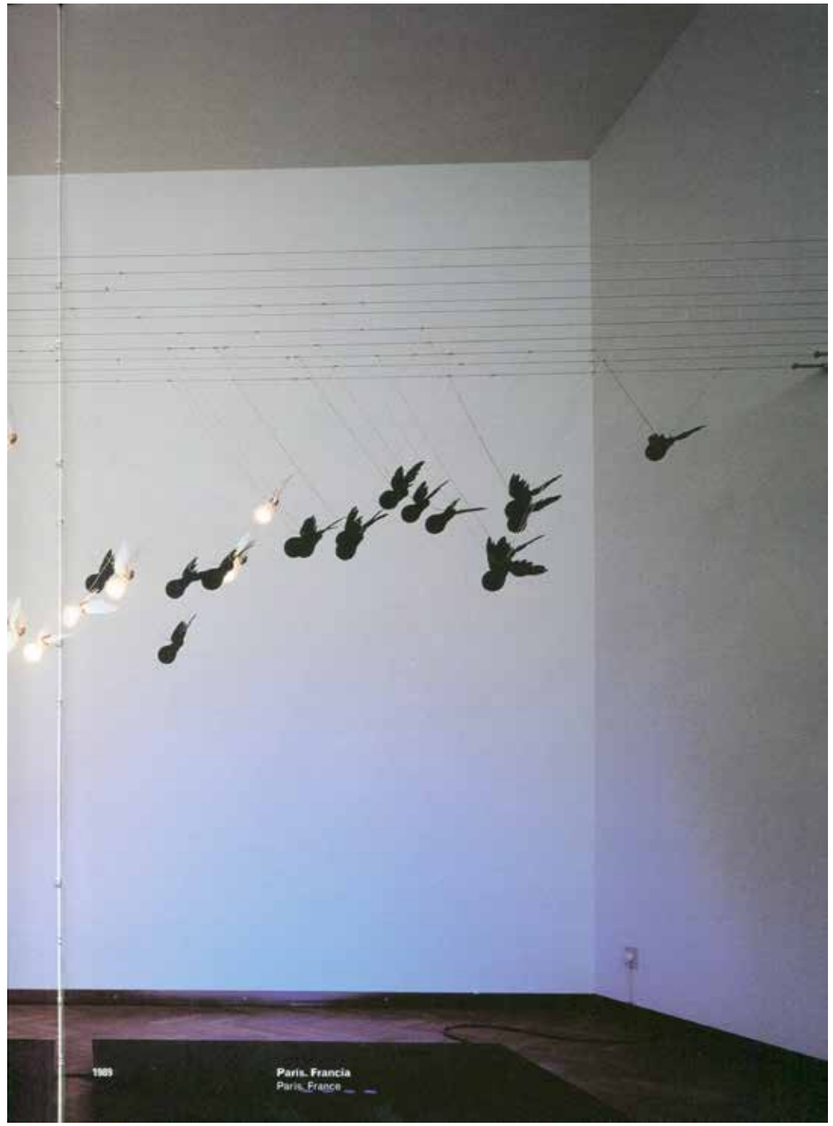

Fig. 43 - Jour et Nuit, installation at Fondation Cartier, 1989

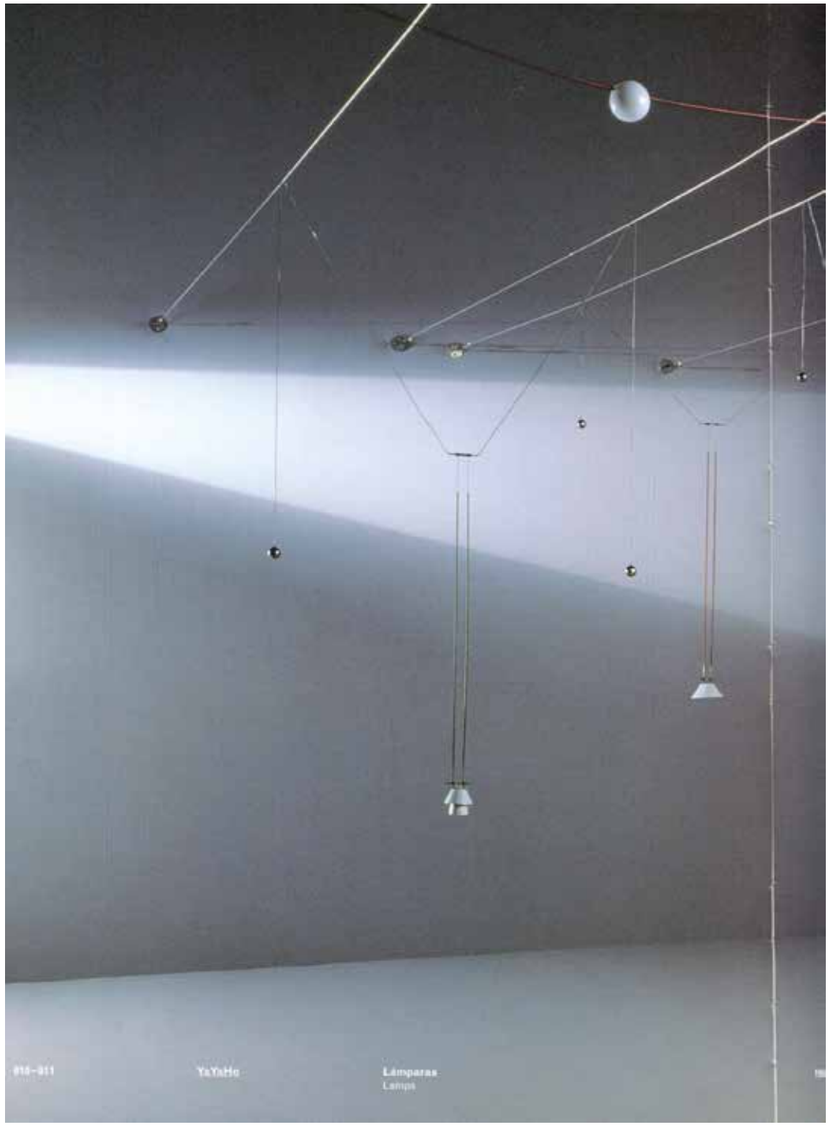

Fig. 44 - YaYaHo lamps, 1984

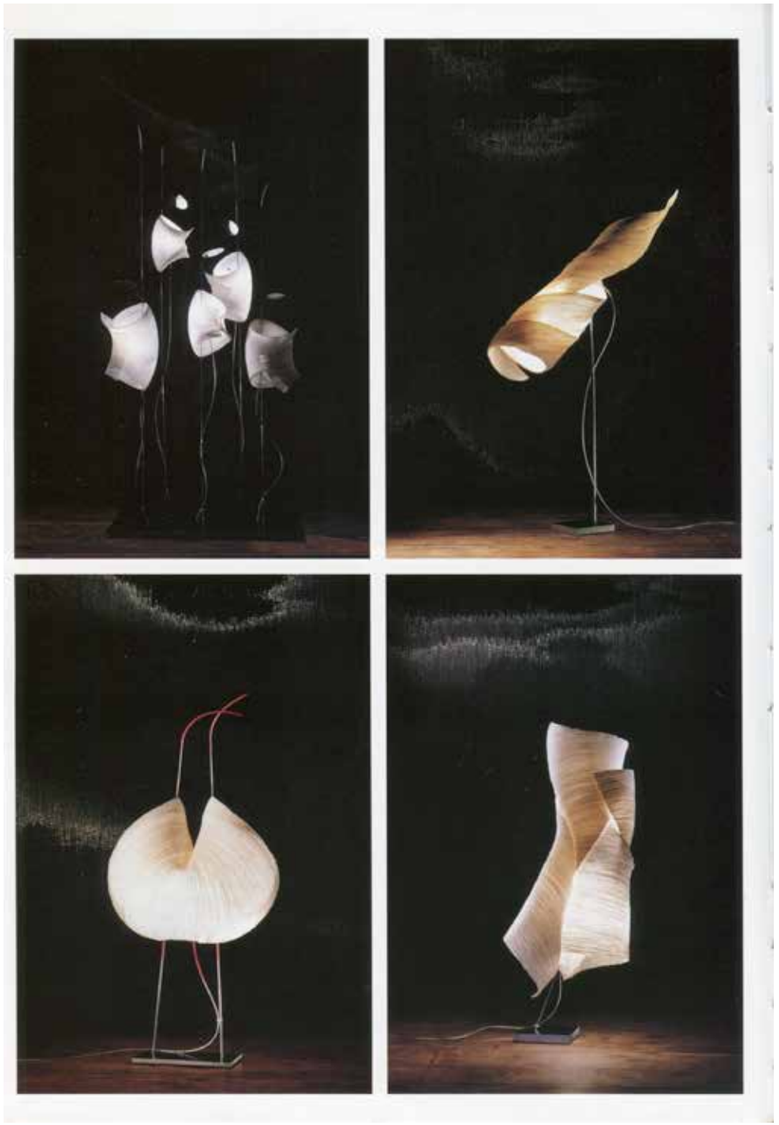

Fig. 45 - Les MaMo Nouchés, Lamp Collection, 1998

Fig. 46 - Les MaMo Nouchés, Lamp Collection, 1998

We are quite lucky in Montreal to have an original Paris subway entrance designed by Hector Guimard (1867-1942) and given to us by the French capital in 1967 as a gift. It is installed at metro Square -Victoria, complete with its white Parisian tiles (figs. 47&48).

Its organic form contrast with other urban elements that are more likely to have been produced by an assemblage of standard, generic extrusions or built out of stone. We read this object as the product of a craft, of deliberate intentions not subjected to a wide standardization of its constituting elements. At the same time, we understand that is made with industrial processes, that each piece is the result of a cast and that they were produced in a series, not literally 'shaped' by hand but still distinctive. This is the lesson that this work teaches us; maybe we sometimes go too far in standardization. There should be some degree of site specificity (both cultural and physical) to the materials and methods we use to produce the objects that surround us everyday.

Karl Blossfeldt[3] (1865-1932) was a contemporary of Guimard. In his series of photographs of plant life, documented with scientific precision, he points the way towards a new appreciation of nature as model to understand the appropriateness of form. They can of course be taken literally as inspiration, but it is the concept of growth and variety that can most sustain our explorations into form (figs. 49-52).

3 see Blossfeldt, Karl,. Sachsse, Rolf,. *Karl Blossfeldt : Photographs* (Cologne, Germany: Benedikt Taschen, 1994).

Fig. 47- Guimard, Metro Square-Victoria entrance, Montreal

Fig. 48 -Guimard, detail, Metro Square-Victoria entrance, Montreal

Fig. 49 - Bloosfeldt, Adiantum pedatum

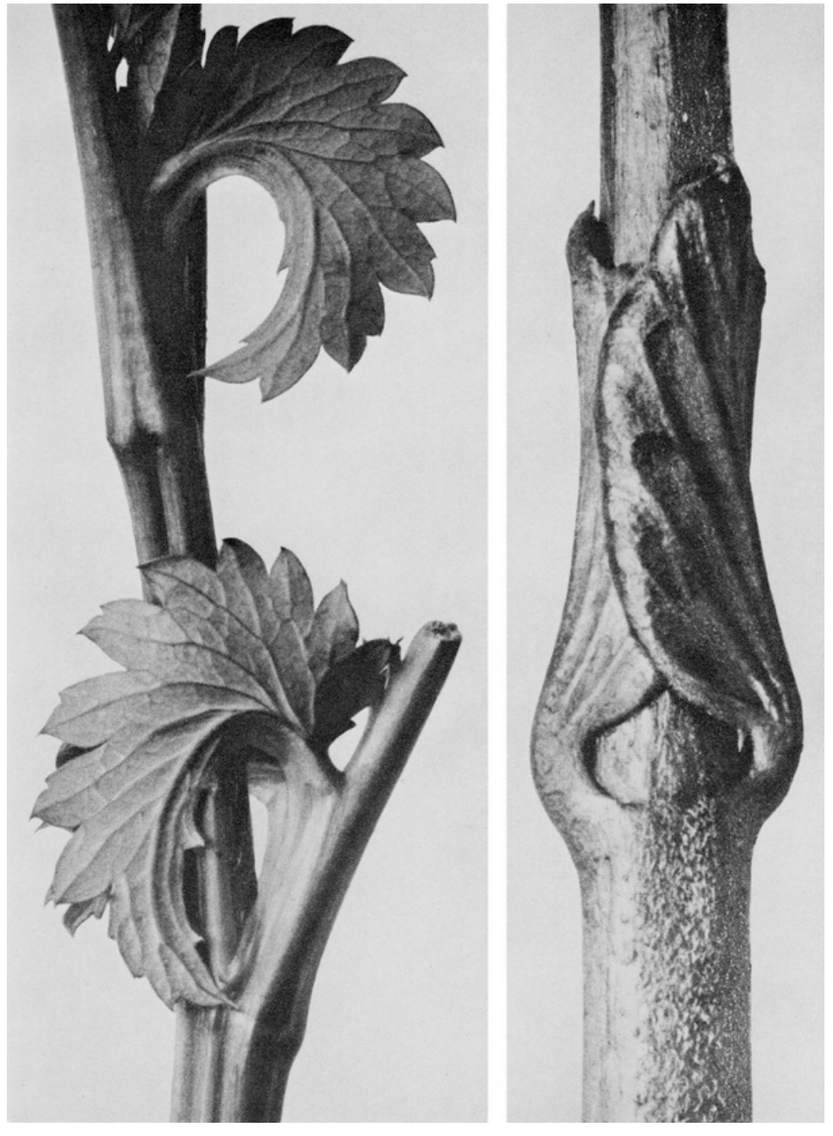

Fig. 50 - Bloosfeldt, Aristolochia clemantitis

Fig. 51 - Bloosfeldt, Allium Ostrowskianum

Fig. 52 - Bloosfeldt, Aconitum

Xenakis[4] (1922-2001) has always intrigued me. He worked with Le Corbusier, notably on the La Tourette monastery where he devised the articulation of the glass curtain walls. What fascinates me is how time becomes a material for the building of architecture, how the movement of our bodies through space can become a material in its own right. This will seem like an incredible cliché, but architecture is to me very much like music, in that it takes us somewhere, it allows us to experience the world around us in a heightened state. Also, neither is purely functional, no one needs music to survive, but we certainly benefit from it in order to live, to live a rich life.

It is then natural for me to turn to Xenakis at this time because of these investigaions into time and sound. Furthermore, I love his drawings; they are annotations of intent and effect, and have a value in their own right. Including such drawings and an attitude that includes time would certainly enrich the project.

Should a discussion arise between the different people involved in conceiving and building the project around Xenakis' work, surely everyone would see the project differently. This could lead to very interesting inflection of an installation from a solid, to a more fluid understanding of space (figs. 53-60).

4 see: Xenakis, Iannis,, Kanach, Sharon E.,Lovelace, Carey., *Iannis Xenakis : Composer, Architect, Visionary* (New York: Drawing Center, 2010).

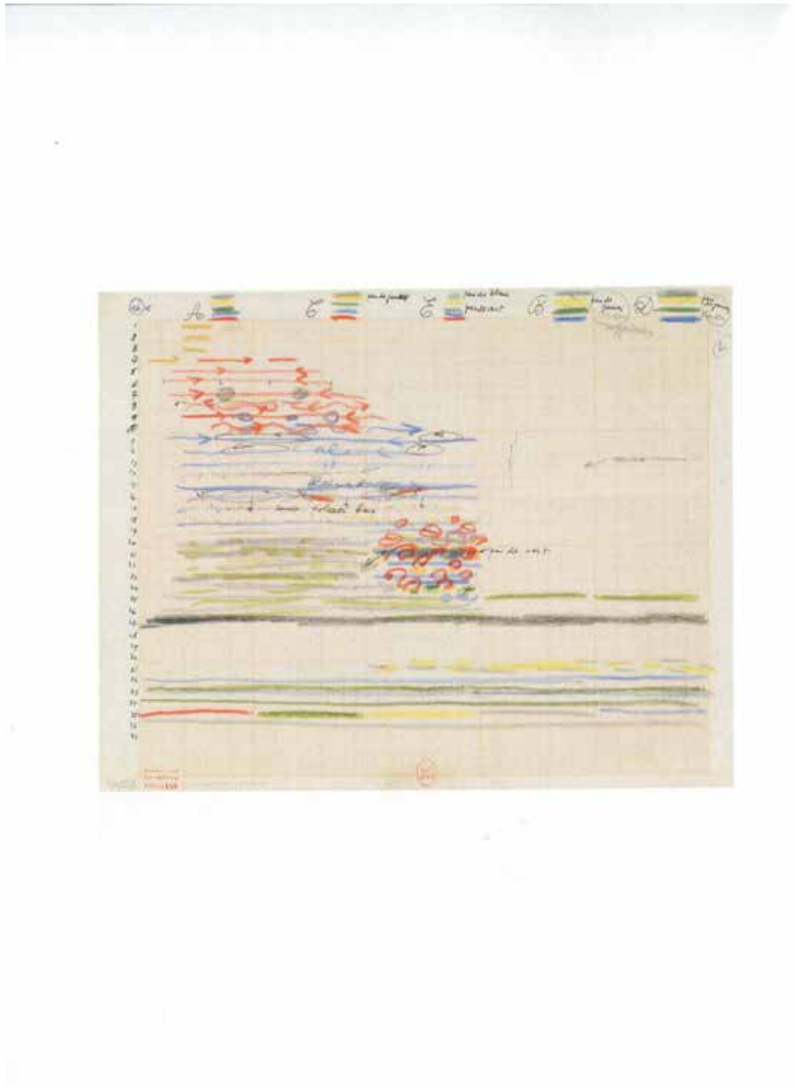

Fig. 53 - Iannis Xenakis, Study for Polytope de Montréal (light score), c.1966

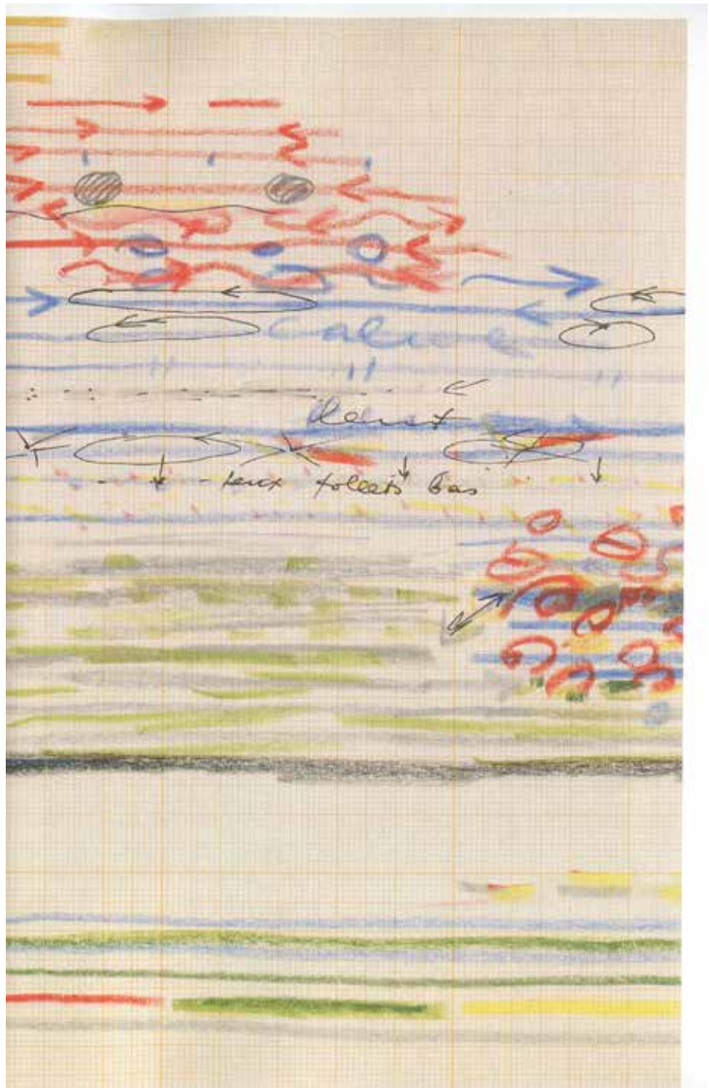

Fig. 54 - (detail)

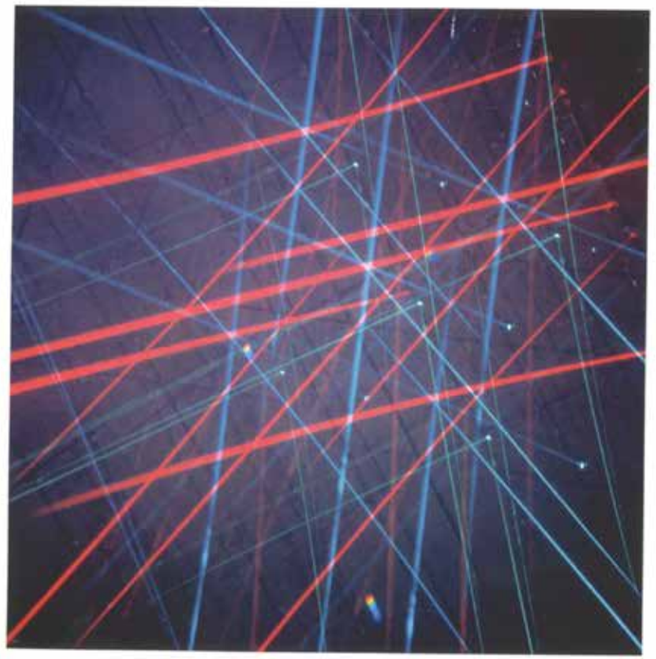

Fig. 55 - Iannis Xenakis, Polytop de Cluny (laser light show). 1972-73

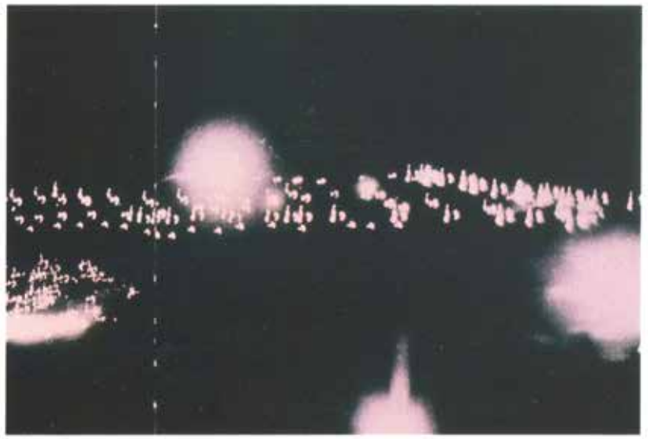

Fig. 56 - Iannis Xenakis, Polytop de Persepolis, 1971

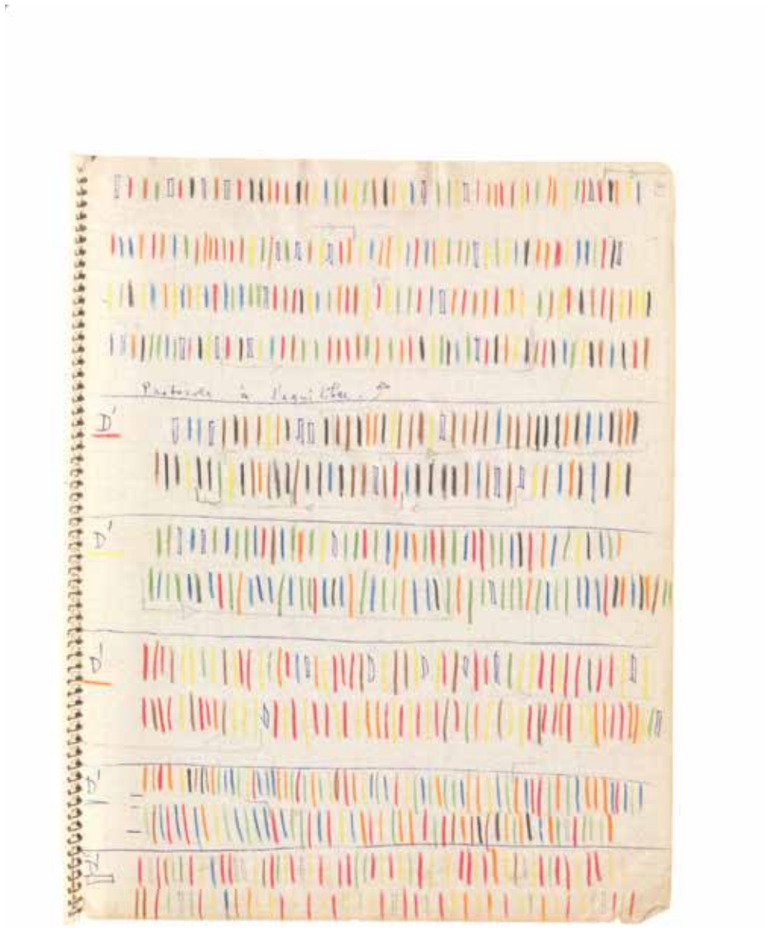

Fig. 57 - Iannis Xenakis, Page from notebook, 1959

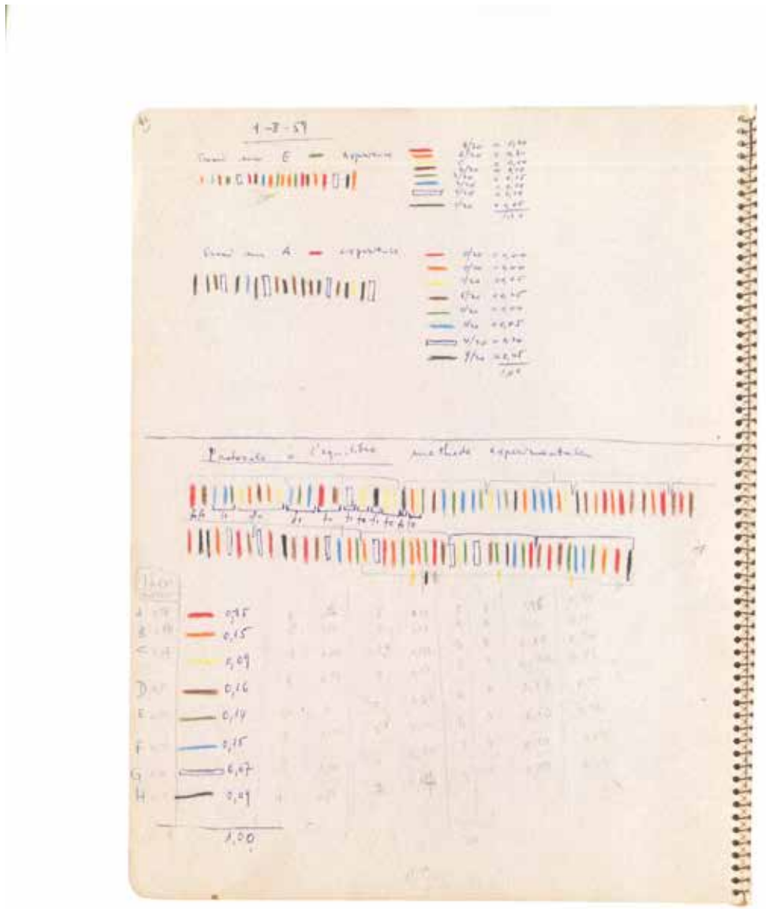

Fig. 58 - Iannis Xenakis, Page from notebook, 1959

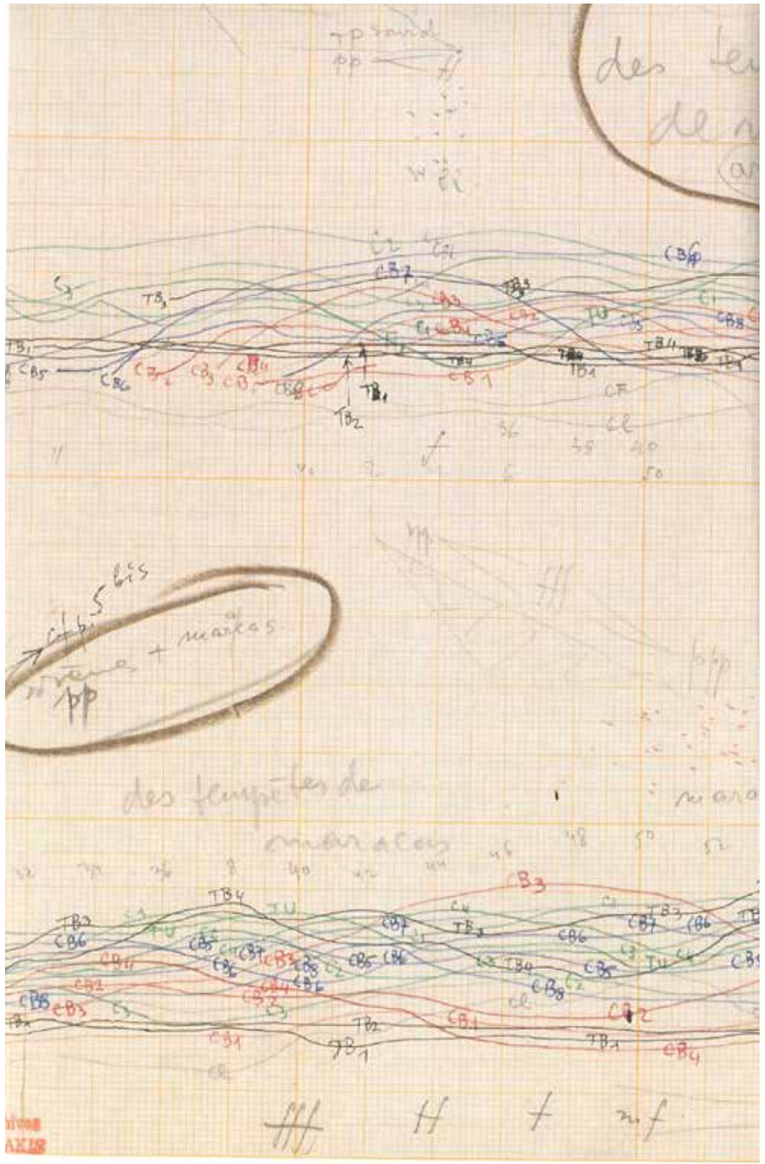

Fig. 59 - Iannis Xenakis, Study for Terretektorh, c.1965-66 (detail)

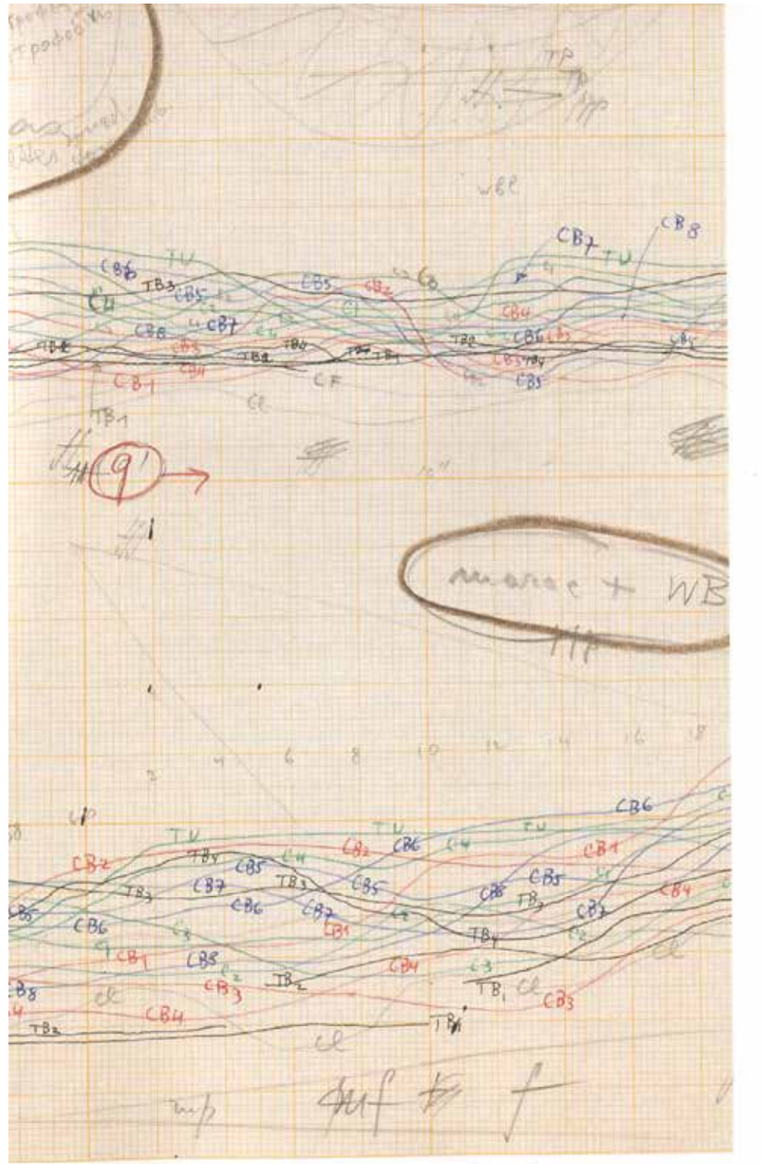

Fig. 60 - Iannis Xenakis, Study for Terretektorh, c.1965-66 (detail)

I have selected in closing this section a short film entitled *Can City*, by Studio Swine (Super Wide Interdisciplinary New Explorers - co-founded by Architect Azusa Murakami and Artist Alexander Groves). It ties in different concepts explored by the other precedents as well as celebrating the importance of process in form giving.

Here, casting becomes literally a way of extracting form from the context. Both fuel and raw materials are sourced from the neighborhood, and the casting takes place on the streets. The aesthetics of the stools produced with this process is mesmerizing. They are both contemporary and of another time. This is one example of how form gains meaning, - here by being literally built out of its site (figs. 62-91).

Fig. 61 - 0:13_Opening title

Fig. 62 - 3:41_Expedition with protable equipment

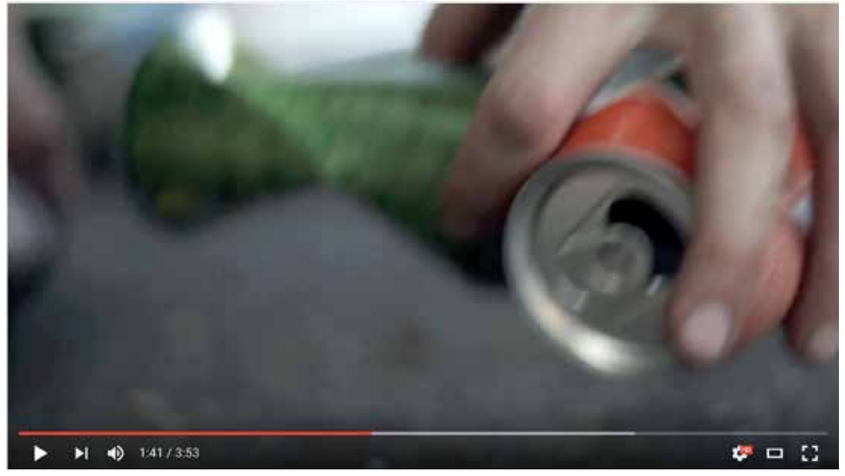

Fig. 63 - 1:41_Gathering aluminium cans

Fig. 64 - 0:39_ Gathering aluminium cans

Fig. 65 - 0:50_Carrying fuel container

Fig. 66 - 0:52_Local food vendors - market

Fig. 67 - 0:53_Local food vendors - market

Fig. 68 -- 0:54_Local food vendors - market

Fig. 69 - 0:58_Local food vendors - collecting used cooking oil

Fig. 70- 1:00_Collecting used cooking oil

Fig. 71 - 1:08_Collecting raw material as form

Fig. 73 - 1:17_Collecting raw material as form

Fig. 74 - 1:20_Unpacking material

Fig. 75 - 1:22_Unpacking material

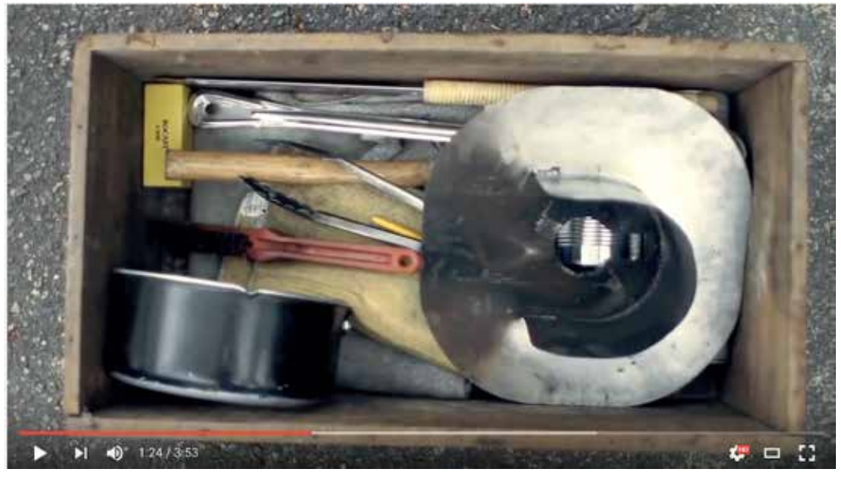

Fig. 76 - 1:24_Unpacking material

Fig. 77 - 1:26_Unpacking material

Fig. 84 - 1:27_ Preparing a first mould

Fig. 85 - 1:30_Preparing a second mould

Fig. 86 - 1:39_Preparing a third mould

Fig. 72 - 1:47_Collecting raw material to start furnace

Fig. 81 - 1:49_Preparing the furnace

Fig. 78 - 1:53_Filling reservoir with collected used oil

Fig. 79 - 1:51_Preparing the furnace

Fig. 80 - 2:13_Starting the furnace

Fig. 83 - 2:18_Inserting the crushed cans in the furnace

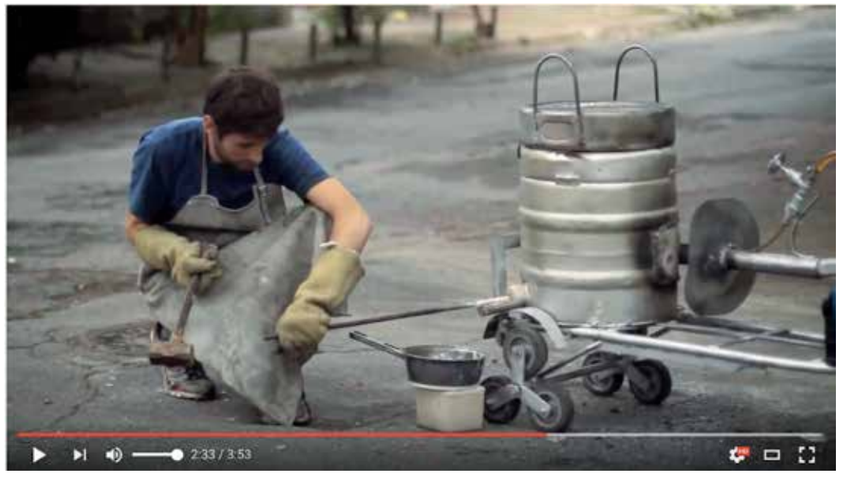

Fig. 87 - 2:33_Releasing the molten aluminium

Fig. 88 - 2:35_Releasing the molten aluminium

Fig. 89 - 2:41_Pouring in a first mould

Fig. 90 - 3:14_Finished stool - first cast

Fig. 91 - 3:20_Finished stool - second and third cast

Fig. 92 - 3:37_End credits

Fig. 93 - Albrecht Dürer, *Das große Rasenstück* (*The Large Piece of Turf*), 1503

As we look at an aerial view of the site for this proposed lighting installation, we see how the urban fabric is dislodged by the passage of the trains. It follows it own tracks, its own geometry of travel that is about gentle long radii curves. In these interstices between the city and the train, all sorts of conditions take root. Open lots, linear parks, numerous illegal passages create an alternative experience to the planned city. In these zones, often vegetation will take over, growing along the fences or in the dislocated parcels that dot the railway corridors. Wild grasses and small trees grow, always quite disorganized and free. This idea of wild grasses, of their freedom and adaptability, is for me a beautiful precedent. What if the installation that we conceive belongs to this language ? As an extension of the vegetation that takes over all unofficial spaces.

So we come full circle. Blossfeldt and Guimard have provided a formal language, Maurer and Kersalé provide an attitude and technique, and the idea of wild grasses takes root, not as an independent formal language but more how form relates to the sense of place, to its very essence as a ‘friche’, a form that is natural to its community.

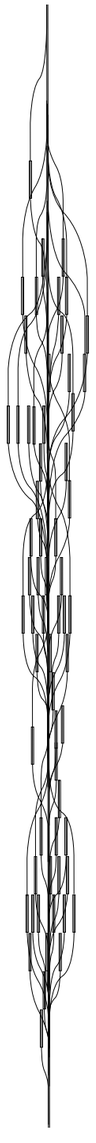

Fig. 94 - Light structure, initial competition proposal

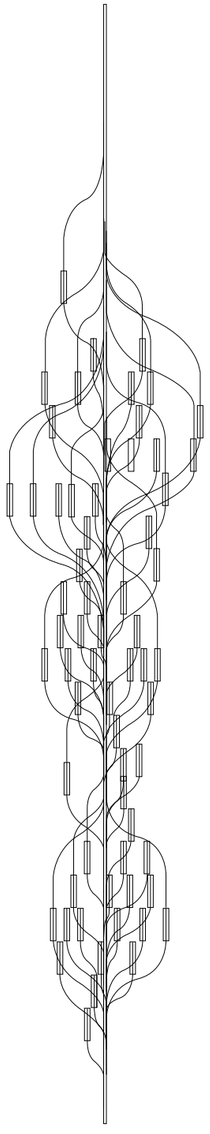

Fig. 95 - Light structure, initial competition proposal

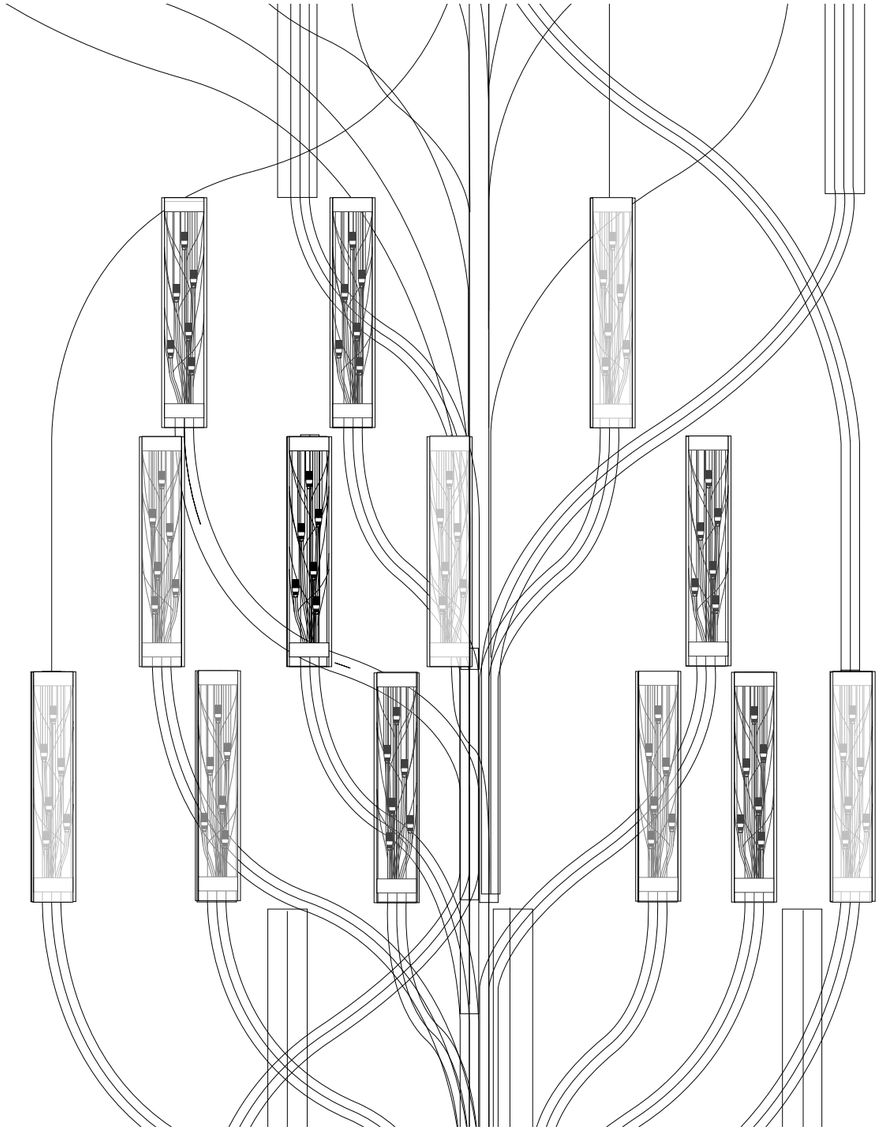

Fig. 96 - Detail, light structure, initial competition proposal

This research conducted in order to better understand the underpinnings of the competition submittal has brought to light various issues previously unexplored. One would have to redesign the project using this new understanding of the forces of the site and how collective projects are born.

One thing I would change about the submittal is the title: 'Replacing Fear' seemed like a great title at first, it was alluding to the power of design to affect its environment. And yes, the site can seem dangerous or unwelcoming at night or in winter. But at the same time, evoking fear as a justification now appears to be the wrong attitude. The project doesn't want to promote itself by implying that fear is the defining quality of the experience. Yes it is unpleasant and can be scary at times, and does induce a certain level of fear. It also implies that the project is reacting to the condition, while it tries ultimately to create a new one. Should I have the chance of changing the title, the new one would be "Infusing wonder into daily life" or something to this affect. Wonder doesn't need a pre-existing condition of fear, it is welcomed everywhere, anytime.

Which brings me to another change in attitude.

The installationshould be as much about the building of form through a communal activity as it would be about light. For such a project to be successful - its form, visible day or night / its evident collective nature, would be key aspects of its ability to evoke wonder. And as stated previously, its perceived collective nature seems to greatly increase its chances of resisting time and discouraging abuse.

So maybe the structure is not simply a careful assemblage of standard, off the shelf components as is presented in the original competition panel. Perhaps, as in the Guimard Metrolitain subway entrance or Can City video, the project wishes to propose another aesthetic, one where the base materials used are somehow 'extracted' from its specific contexts (both physical and social) for intent and resonance rather than being generic. A transformation of the norm into something else is in the right spirit for such projects. Proximity with other activity often defines the feeling of safety (what Jane Jacob's refers to as "Eyes on the street"[5]) and isolation often defines the strong sense of risk or unease. So along with form and process, finding a program, either ponctual or more permanent, would be a key component of the overall project.

5 see: Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961).

Fig. 97 - Team, first image of ‘Passion for Light’, Ingo Maurer.

The project has another aim; simply to inspire.
The ultimate quality of any project is its ability to gather support and engagement.

One example.

I worked on the initial *Tree City* proposal made by Bruce Mau / OMA /Oleson Worland / Inside Outside for the Dowsview site development. The consortium ended up wining the competition against other very competent projects. I spoke to someone who had worked on another team and he was very critical of the scheme as presented by Mau & Co. He felt that is was superficial, that it was not believable. He proceeded to explain the numerous strategies that his team had devised, all time sensitive and extremely inspiring. I had not doubt that their proposal was genuinely a great proposal. What Mau & Co had achieved was the ability to build consensus. From there everything was possible given the involvement of the right person. This is what the other teams were not able to do. Surely you could claim that *Tree City* was not a project but an image, and that, of course it seduced people, but would be a disaster if ever built. But that would be unfair, because *Tree City* purposefully did NOT propose a final scheme because they knew of the complexities ahead. This is dangerous if you don’t trust the decision makers that were to steer the project in coming years. But if you do, if you invest yourself, and nurture the project through these stages, building up on the strength and finding the right people, you would succeed. That is how our conversation ended, I suggested to my friend who had worked with another team to get involved, not to undermine but to steer, to guide according to his values the project being developed, that it was an open project that benefited from peoples’ enthusiasm, and that would go a long way in the right hands, such as his. “Humm, … “ he said.

I wonder if this is not how we should always see design, as simply a process of building consensus.

A final note:

At the onset, I was interested in this competition because it allowed me in some measure to do a project I had always dreamed of, namely of creating a beautiful light installation in the most difficult of places, under a railway underpass. I imagined finding a form, finding funding with different manufacturers that would also maintain the project. It would be presented to the City for approval; funds would come from elsewhere, a private initiative making our city better. I then realized that it was going to run a very high risk of vandalism, being a fragile object, having rejected a 'bullet-proof' aesthetics. If I was to make something fragile, somehow, it had to come from the community itself, so that the users would respect it and sending a message to those inclined to vandalism that this was a community action, possibly worth respecting. From this developed the idea of community involvement but still dictating precisely what to do, in a typical architect's conception of himself as a 'master builder'.

Through the research and consideration of the great values of community lead projects, I have realized that I should take on another approach, less as form giver (form-imposer) and more as a facilitator, someone who launches an idea, and nourishes the process through his / her knowledge, bringing the full richness of the different allied arts and experience to benefit the conception of something whose form would remain open to change.

The *Can City* project, Guimards' idiosyncratic vocabulary and the importance of form as an extension of a collective enterprise has changed my idea of what it means to do a project.

If, from the outside, I could feel that community projects often lacked formal coherence - from a point of view of someone 'on the inside', concerned with building this project and insuring its success through the years (through its maintenance and adaptation and repair), I see a true realization of our goals as designers, not one of control but inspiration and stewardship, a process imbedded in the long term.

I have been involved with numerous signage projects, where we worked extremely hard to redefine the possible benefits of such a system, going beyond simply directing people to consolidating the institutions' identity and mission. This we had achieved in two key project, the Place des Arts and Ecocentre projects. Five and ten years on respectively, no matter how hard we worked at communicating our ideas clearly to everyone involved during the conception and production, from the directors to the employees and manufacturers, I have to admit that we have failed. Failed because the people in charge have changed, the memory of the project has been lost, the ideas and concepts have been diluted if not contradicted by the current administrators and staff. Where it was designed to evolve and adapt, it has been corrupted and taken in other directions that fail to bring about the continuity that we had developed with the initial client. Facing this decline, against all our careful collaboration and clear communication, is probably the most significant experience of my professional career. It has made me realize the pressing need to install our project in the long term. Our most valiant efforts (and even past successes) will ultimately fail if we don't promote a culture of continuity. We need to make it our business as designers to extend our responsibility beyond the initial actors or first stages of implementation.

This competition and subsequent essay and research, have brought out possible means of addressing this.

Thank you.
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Replacing Fear

Railways have a very real impact on the shape of cities.

The project proposes to re-enchant railway underpassesses with a fine organic lattice of lights to guide pedestrians across. Lights shimmer and dance, fragile and delicate, composed from the accumulation of numerous elements developed as part of a modular LED system. These would be community configured, installed and maintained, and labeled clearly as such. It is hoped that this community involvement will insure its maintenance and limit vandalism. Vandal proof installations are often invitation for vandalism, these installations provided wonder and they hope to inspire respect.

The Van Horne underpass in Montreal, Canada is selected for the first installation, acting as a test site but adaptable to other similar conditions in other urban areas.

So enjoy the sights, where wonder replaces fear, perhaps lighting's most noble task.

A plaque, cast in bright orange polyeurethane is placed at either end of the passage

Light galvanized steel structure, internal wiring, LED lighting including light sensors to respond to changing light conditions and pedestrian presence.

A main tube would run the full length of the installation, providing structure and connectivity. Clear acrylic tubing slides over the steel sections to provide protection. Each independent sections could be disassembled from the next without having to take down large sections, facilitating both initial installation and maintenance.