

Practical information

Cité du design

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Acces

The Cité du design is also known as Ancienne manufacture d'armes de Saint-Étienne (city's old armaments factory of Saint-Étienne) on GPS

- From Saint-Étienne Chateauxreux train station : Take the tramway n°2 direction « La Terrasse » Stop at « Cité du design »
- By A72 highway :
 - From Clermont-Ferrand or Paris : Exit n°12 (Stade Geoffroy Guichard)
 - From Lyon: Exit n° 14 (Zénith Saint Étienne Métropole)

Opening Hours

Tuesday - Sunday : 11 a. m. – 18 p. m.
Closed on: 1st January, 1st May, 8th May, 14th July, 15th August, 11th November and 25th December.

Guided tours (in French only)

Length : 1h30
On Saturdays and Sundays
15 p.m. guided tour of exhibitions

Admissions

Individual visit
Full rate : 4 euros
Reduced rate : 2 euros
Free for all every 1st Sunday of the month

Guided tour

Full rate: 5,60 euros
Reduced rate: 4 euros



1. Exposition *La Ville mobile* / 2. Exposition *Comfort* / 3. platine Agora - © Pierre Grasset



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Visitor's guide

La Ville mobile et Comfort
Until 13 March 2011



La Ville mobile

Until 13 March 2011

Curator: Constance Rubini

Scenography: François Bauchet and Benjamin Graindorge

Production: the Cité du design within the 2010 Saint Étienne International Design Biennial

How environmental challenges influence our transportation modes? In a constantly moving world, where can we spend time wasting it? How do the applications of the digital revolution shape new urban behaviours? How can designers, urban planners, or elected officials act on such moving organisms as cities? All these questions are in the field of urban culture. The exhibition keeps questioning this, in an attempt to picture what future cities will look like.

The exhibition entitled *La Ville mobile* is intended as a trip within modern, expanding big cities, in which the rules and requirements related to mobility imply a novel view of our environment. Through hundreds of pictures, atypical objects, and ambitious projects, the six-step exhibition invites us to dive into our own world in perpetual motion.

The city: a thrilling, collective, and shared space

Millions of people meet, live, work and move within cities every day. Cities are not only living environments; we seize them collectively, in regular or exceptional big symbolic events. Marathons across New York or Paris, music festivals, carnivals, Gay Pride: all these activities contribute to defining the identity of cities, and help inhabitants appropriate their own cities.

Despite overcrowded streets, enjoy moving around in cities

In saturated big cities, where public transport does not always meet all expectations, and where driving depends on the traffic, the need to move around cannot be reduced to a limited activity. City-dwellers can choose many different transport options, according to their wishes and time schedules. Hybrid vehicles, eco-friendly innovating public transport, bicycles, urban sports, etc. all these options make mobility a new field of freedom.

How cities impact our perception of time?

Urban space is the field of a race for time efficiency. Distances are no longer calculated in miles, but in amounts of time. This capitalistic approach leads to designing ever faster and efficient transport solutions. So do new

technologies. Couldn't we imagine some kind of "slow motion"? Moving around in cities would not be an obligation any longer. We could enjoy contemplating urban landscapes, strolling around the streets, doing physical exercise. Current urban policies do comply with this demand. Pedestrians are the main focus of many ongoing projects: open spaces, parks, banks, and urban walks are enhanced.

Reviving the essence of public space - a place for sharing, meeting people, free of charge

In cities, you can enjoy meeting people by chance. Dwellers regularly appropriate public spaces, enjoying their free access. Spontaneous football games on squares, the Centre Pompidou esplanade turning into a street stage, chairs on Broadway during summertime. Squares change with what happens on them: markets, pétanque games, outdoor cinema, etc. Although malls and train stations are the new urban centres, squares still symbolise cities as places of conviviality and collectivism. Designers and architects do their best to make it welcoming. A city should also offer opportunities for a lunch break, between appointments, or a nice and quiet spot to do some work.

Public space and street furniture policies

Although the street seems to be the last truly free space, it is still not a place where everyone is free and equal. Debatable choices are made in public policies, between the need to supply pedestrians with the necessary equipment for life in an urban environment, and the fear of seeing populations deemed as undesirable taking hold of such equipment. Dissuasive furniture, VCR, and authoritarian signs make the street a space where bodies have to keep moving. Some artists and designers highlight the need to consider these marginalised populations, by denouncing their exclusion and offering mobile accommodation or shared space solutions.

How can we act on cities ?

Interfering in the city atmosphere does not only happen by installing new structures or furniture. The relation to cities is changed sensibly through slight, diffuse signs of courtesy and care given to inhabitants by policy-makers. Beyond the infrastructure already in place, occasional interventions here and there, or quiet signs on micro-phenomena insure the success of urban projects. Designers are observers. Their projects are successful when resulting from good comprehension and good understanding between them and cities. Five designers, graphic designers, architects, and urban planners show how they perceive cities, through five specific projects :

- Laurence Madrelle in Yverdon- les- Bains, Switzerland
- Ruedi Baur in Montréal, Canada

- Urban Think Tank in Caracas, Venezuela
- Michel Corajoud in Bordeaux, France
- Alexandre Chemetoff in Saint Étienne, France

Feasible utopias

Cities have been the objects of dreams, scenarios, and fantasies through the ages. From Albert Robida's aircrafts hung on the Saint-Jacques Tower to Archigram's Walking Cities, from futuristic American illustrations in the 1950s to enhanced reality, cities initiate amazing inventions and critical fictions. Even though some of these visions may sound senseless to us, they are a hotbed of future ideas and utopias, some of which could come true...

Biography

Design historian, Constance Rubini was editor in chief of the design and research magazine *Azimuts* since 2004 conceived with Post-Graduate students of the Saint Étienne higher school of art and design and published by the Cité du design. She also participates in various collective pieces of work and journals, including the magazine *Numéro*. Since 2010, she is also a lecturer on design culture at the School of Decorative Arts in Paris.

Comfort

Until 13 March 2011

Curator and scenography: Konstantin Grcic

Production : the Cité du design within the 2010 Saint Étienne International Design Biennial

Modernity is comfort. Yet, with every new accomplishment of comfort the prospects and expectations are increasing even further. Sustaining comfort of our modern lifestyle is becoming a provokingly complex scenario; keeping up with its ongoing development is creating fundamental challenges to all of us. One of the most striking phenomena related to comfort in the western world is the progressive dematerialization of our physical environment, even to the extent of defying the limitations imposed by gravity, geography and time. Comfort is the ability to be here and there at the same time. Comfort is having access to information always and anywhere. Comfort is when difficult things are becoming easy. Comfort is the assurance of safety, and health. Comfort is being independent of constraints (whether they are physical and mental).

The exhibition tries to decode the material aspect of comfort by showing the tools and devices which are its warrants. A series of very tangible objects will help the visitor to relate the abstract subject

matter back to their very own life reality.

Interview between Eckhart Nickel, German journalist, and Konstantin Grcic

EN : Comfort is a feeling – do the things which you are exhibiting show us the way there ?

KG : They are aids, vehicles, which enable comfort to happen. Many of the things in the exhibition are to do with the luxury of freedom and independence.

EN : Are those things which make something easier for us? Things which work on the basis of the quite old-fashioned but correct idea of progress, which inclines towards the view that our lives are made easier, improved and made more comfortable by technology ?

KG : Simplicity is very important, as is simplification. Which itself gives you a new freedom. You no longer need to bother about certain things. Have more time and room to move. I believe that central to comfort is the feeling of well-being, a form of ease. The term comes from the English : to comfort someone describes a type of care for which many of the objects of the exhibition are representative.

Biography

Konstantin Grcic is a German designer, who studied design at Royal College of Art in London from 1988 to 1990. After his studies, he joined the studio of Jasper Morrison in 1991 and then set up his own organization in Munich: Konstantin Grcic Industrial Design (KGID). He works for publishers like littala, Magis, Moroso, Flos, as well as industries such as Krups, Whirlpool, etc.
