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River Landscapes

This project emphasizes the mutual dependence of urban planning and architecture. The great river landscape brings the extended museum promenade within the range of our experience. It leads round the Palais de Tokyo past a window display of the senses into the interior.

• The central urbanistic idea of this proposal was to integrate the Seine in the project by placing two structural interventions on either bank: the Visitors' Center to the north and the Pavilion (service center) to the south. The Passerelle Debilly connects these two points, forming a link that becomes part of the museum promenade, integrating the river in the museum landscape and allowing visitors to reach both embankments. At the Rive Gauche, a new ferryboat stop provides a ship connection with the city's other museums. There is a series of ramps on the south side providing access for people with disabilities.

A Belvedere

The Pavilion on the embankment forms the southern bridgehead. This building is envisaged as a resting place as well as a starting point for people arriving by bus, car or boat. Here, too, is the belvedere with views of the river landscape. The placement of the Pavilion is a response to the direction of the river: one is prompted to look both upstream and downstream.

The angle to the embankment is orientated towards the opposite Palais de Tokyo. The Pavilion contains a workshop, a counseling office, a panorama bar and a rental service for wheelchairs and bicycles.

On the opposite embankment, a prominent oriel announces the Visitors' Center and the new main entrance. This is situated at the northernmost courtyard of the Palais de Tokyo. A new auditorium projects off the upper floor of the west façade and creates a clearly visible canopy over the entrance. The new footpath crosses the Passerelle Debilly, wraps itself round the Palais de Tokyo, romps along the Avenue Wilson and ends in the driveway of the museum. This pathway elegantly avoids the steep flight of steps and creates new and surprising views and perspectives of the city. The courtyards on the west side have been lowered to the level of the pathway, and the building's interior has been enlarged and glazed.

Showcase for the Senses

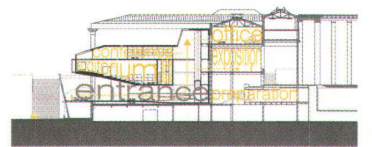
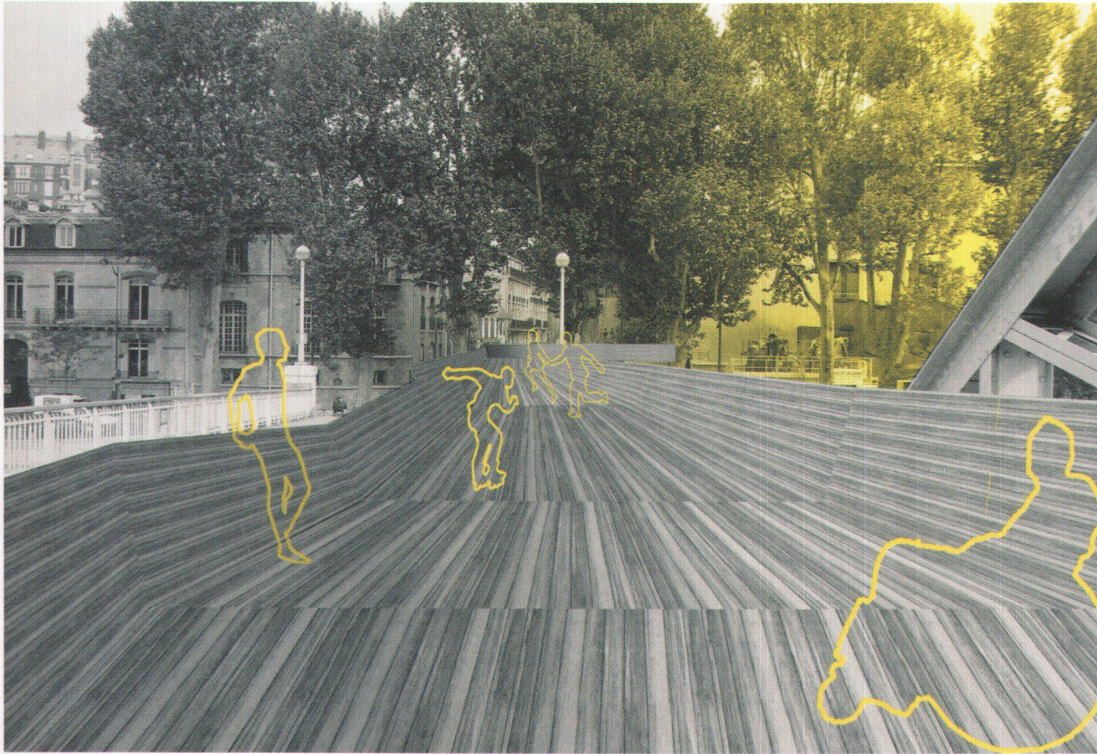
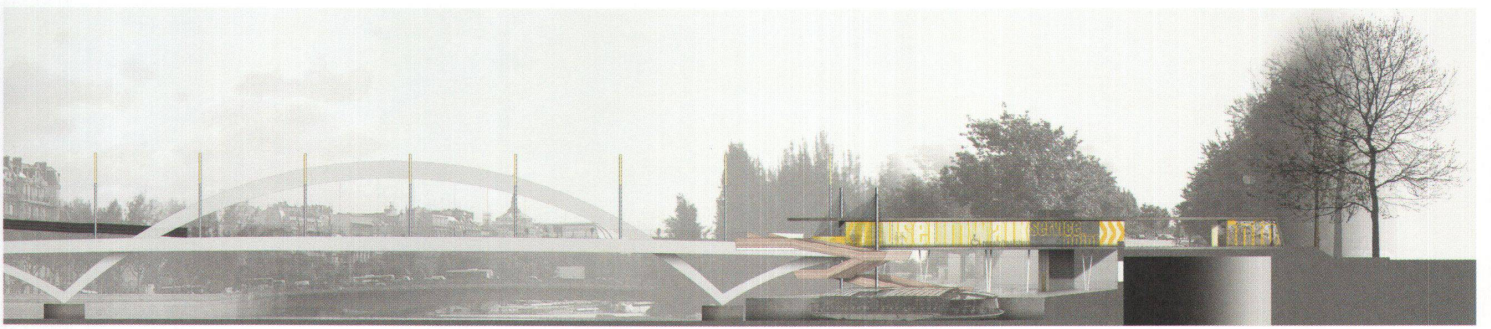
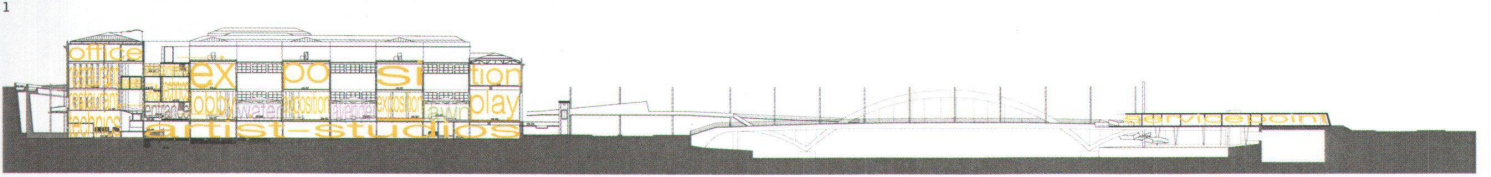
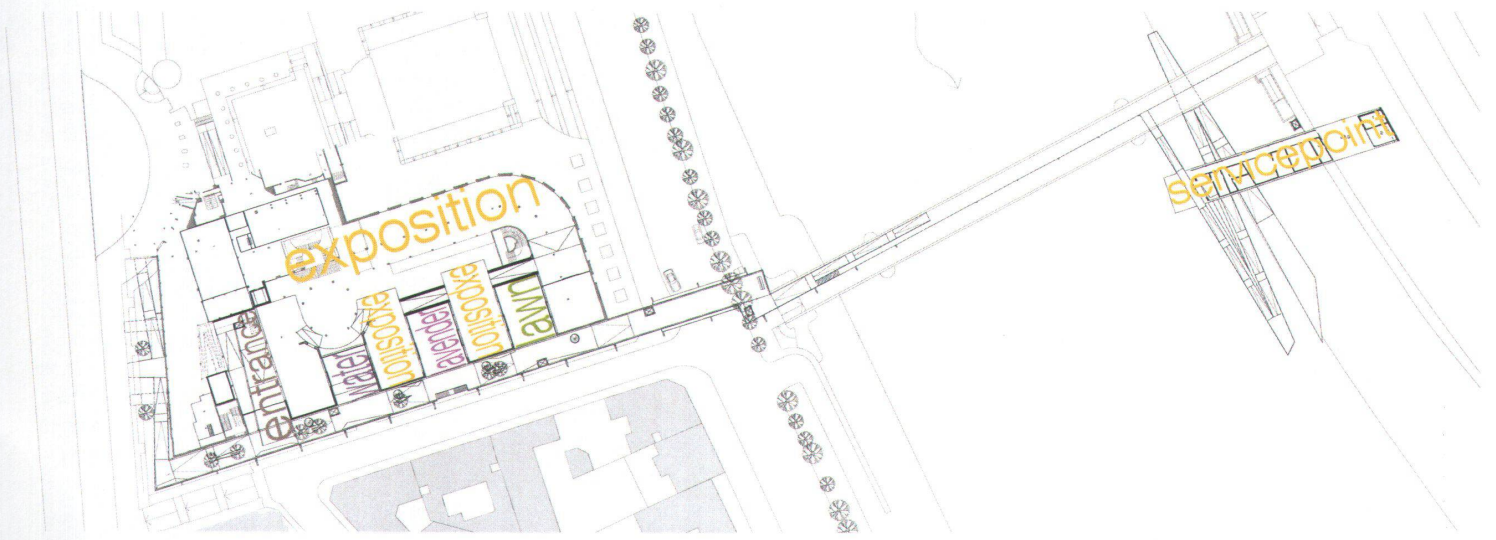
The jury appreciated the quality of the new outdoor public spaces. The opening of the courtyards permits direct access from the ramp. In between are three pocket parks: a water garden, a lavender cabinet, and a patch of lawn. Together with the wooden surface of the museum path, the senses of sight and smell are brought within the range of our experience. The interaction between the interior and exterior spaces and the sequence of the pocket parks change the formerly dreary rear of the Palais de Tokyo into an exciting showcase for the senses.

The existing entrances to the Palais have been left untouched. In the interior, a new central room provides a connection to all the storeys and facilitates quick orientation within the building. The insertion of new ramps in the existing building and their connection to the existing formal staircase and rotunda are, although architecturally convincing, less functionally efficient for disabled visitors. The jury would have appreciated further exploration of the exhibition concept; how, for example, do the authors envisage the stimulation of the senses? A project whose strong point is the intelligent design of the pathway. •

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- 1-2 The pathway begins at the Pavilion, crosses the Seine, embraces the Palais de Tokyo, and ends in the driveway.
- 3 The Pavilion is a resting place on the museum promenade, as well as a belvedere and boat station.
- 4 The former dreary back of the Palais changes into an exciting showcase for the senses.
- 5 The integration of an auditorium projecting over the façade creates a clearly visible signal for the new main entrance.