

UPFRONT | PROLOGUE

MOSAIQUES : A NEW SPACE IN PLACE DE L'ACADIE ☺

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IN APRIL 2011, NIP PAYSAGE won a landscape architecture competition organized by the City of Montreal for the design of a *place fraîcheur* – cooling park – in Place de l'Acadie. The focus of the project is the development of a new public space designed to mitigate localized urban heat islands. The park is part of a larger project that includes the demolition of 550 substandard housing units and the construction of around 1,300 new units.

Inspired by the various elements in the project brief and the recent history of the site, the design of the new space hinges on random patterns reminiscent of the stone floors in the recently demolished buildings.

Titled *Mosaïques*, the proposal is much more than just a square or a park. Emmanuelle Vieira, a reporter for the Montreal daily *Le Devoir*, wrote that “it is a landscape that embodies the values of both the past and present, a space that truly expresses culture and nature, a cocoon resembling the primeval forest, with a subgrade layer that efficiently captures runoff and cools the air. In short, it is a perfect example of what can be achieved with contemporary landscape architecture: building intelligent ecosystems while giving pride of place to human and natural expression. No other discipline can accomplish as much.”

Amidst the renewal of a sensitive urban zone, the landscape architects succeeded in proposing technical solutions that meet today's challenges in urban design. To take one example of an innovative approach, the project's rain gardens will enable *in situ* management of runoff from exceptional rainfalls (100-year events). In addition, the gardens will allow the percolation and evapotranspiration of more than 70 percent of annual rainfall.

In the words of Ms. Vieira, “This park is a hyper-natural response to a hyper-urbanized setting. It employs and intensifies natural processes to expressive and contemplative ends, as well as for the purpose of achieving the ecological, recreational and participatory goals inherent in a hyper-natural urban space.”

The project, whose aims include contributing to the public dialogue over the design of urban space in Montreal, coincides with the fifth anniversary of the city's designation as a UNESCO City of Design. Construction is scheduled for completion in the fall of 2012.

1+2 WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 3 WINTER SCENE 4 VIEW OF THE PUBLIC PLAZA

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS: NIP PAYSAGE; CIVIL ENGINEERS: VINCI CONSULTANTS; CLIENT: VILLE DE MONTRÉAL, ARRONDISSEMENT D'AHUNTSIC-CARTIERVILLE; FINANCING: IN PART BY LE FONDS VERT D'ACTION 21. PLAN 2006-2012 SUR LES CHANGEMENTS CLIMATIQUES DU GOUVERNEMENT DU QUÉBEC www.nipaysage.ca and www.mtlunesocodesign.com
Read the article in *Le Devoir* (in French): <http://www.ledevoir.com/societe/actualites-en-societe/320736/l-hypernaturel-supplante-l-hyperurbain>



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