

RMA/AV-09-04-10

International competition - Arturbain.fr 2010/2011**in French, and translated into local languages - 19th session****2010-2011 Discussion topic for the Robert Auzelle seminar****Putting forgotten empty spaces to good use**

In 2010, to commemorate 25 years of the Robert Auzelle seminar, the discussion topic recalls “the importance of the void in urban art” evoked by Robert Auzelle¹, who adds “*It seems to me that an empty space, whether it be void, landscaped or grass-covered, constitutes the essential aspect of urban art - city architecture being nothing but the numerous walls that enclose a space*”. Thus, to improve the framework of our urban life, Robert Auzelle invites us to participate in the quest by Gaston Bachelard² when this philosopher tells us: “*In fact, we want to examine very simple images, the images of the fortunate space...*”.

Each country has to deal with the difficulty of creating a framework of life that respects the dignity of human beings. The era of globalisation has seen the disproportionate, disorganised and unrestricted growth of urban sprawl. The fragmentation of territories constitutes an obstacle to the continuity of a soft traffic under pleasant conditions.

Whether in large urban cities or in small towns, numerous empty spaces have been forgotten. They may be termed residual, interstitial, abandoned, intermediate, industrial wasteland or waste ground... there is no lack of synonyms and other expressions for them. They often abut defined public spaces, such as streets, places, squares, boulevards, esplanades, pedestrian malls, etc³. Based on all these existing spaces, the operations that are candidates for the National Prize arturbain.fr and the projects submitted to the International Competition arturbain.fr shall highlight the improvements they make to the framework of life. These concern:

- The link of these spaces with the urban fabric to create continuity between them and facilitate their accessibility to pedestrians and soft traffic.

- The programmes for these operations and projects are attentive to citizens' expectations while coordinating with the municipalities.

Under these conditions, the quality of the framework of life will be assessed as a priority with regard to the following criteria and references:

Architectural quality: Insertion into the surroundings and taking the landscape into account. Identity of the place and its heritage

Quality of social life: User-friendliness and accessibility

Respect for the environment: Respecting biodiversity (green and blue belt systems), waste management, management of nuisance, pollution and congestion due to cars⁴.

Definition of urban art according to the Robert Auzelle seminar:

All the multidisciplinary actions to be taken to improve the framework of life
with a concern for evaluation

of the architectural quality, quality of social life, and respect for the environment

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¹ *L'architecte*, Vincent et Fréal Editions, 1965 p. 79

² *La poétique de l'espace*, PUF Editions, 1970 p. 17

³ cf. Fiches du Vocabulaire français de l'Art urbain on www.arturbain.fr

⁴ cf. *Référentiel pour la qualité du cadre de vie*. Summary on www.arturbain.fr