

ROBUST HERITAGE

This is a project for a skate park in Brussels. The biggest concern of the project was to embed a rather mono-functional program in the capital of Europe in a sociologic and morphologic way.

The project was designed on an urban tunnel, constructed for the North-South railroad connection in Brussels, mid 20th century. This tunnel as a whole can be considered as an extreme robust urban element, since it supports all kinds of public, private and built space throughout Brussels. It's not coincidental that this tunnel is made out of concrete.

A second element that we inherited from is an existing skate network in Brussels. Over 40 squares, streets, buildings, are used as 'skate objects-and-routes from the public space'. The Kunstberg with its stairs and railings, is one of the most powerful skate places in Brussels. Being a strong skate (identity), the project inscribes itself into this culture of the skate network, connecting the Kunstberg to its own site.



Entrance of North-South railroad tunnel



Brussels' skatenetwork: places, routes

BUILDING + SQUARE + AXIS = ROBUST ENTITY

In modern cities robustness can be read in three layers: the built space, the common square and the mobile axis. The built space is enduringly robust by its conversion on a long term. Squares enable cities to generate immediate flexibility: concerts, markets, manifestations... The axis forms the somehow timeless connection in between building and square.

This project is robust in all three ways. It is building, square and axis at the same time. In the project the three layers interact and complement each other. In this way, the sum of these three layers results in an urban robust entity. As the pictures below show, this project can be seen as such a robust entity.



The robust entity



The robust entity as square



The robust entity as building



The robust entity as axis



Model of robust entity as axis between Kunstberg and site



Model of robust entity as axis between Kunstberg and site

ROBUSTNESS THROUGH CONCRETE

Concrete here is considered as the ultimate material to physically merge the three layers (building, square, axis) and make them work together as one robust urban entity. It is in fact through the unique formal possibilities of concrete that this robust entity is conceived by freely folding, thickening and stretching six strips. Being robust and flexible in three fundamental urban ways, the project itself reaches the same level of robustness as the railroad tunnel that supports it.

Another property of concrete that we use is erosion. Tracks of oxidation will add flavour to the identity of the project. By using future processes as a strategy, the robust entity will be embedded in the grey history of its railroad surroundings.

In this way, concrete is not only used as some material, but as a meaningful urban strategy.



Model of robust entity as building and square



Model of robust entity as building and square



Model of robust entity as building and square



Model of robust entity as building and square



Skateline 2



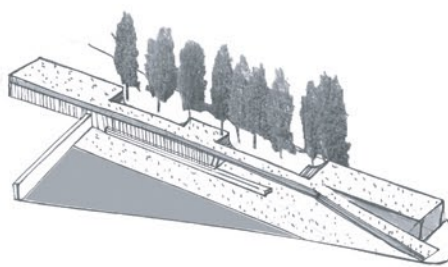
Skateline 3



Skateline 5



Skateline 6



Overall view of robust entity as building and square

Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Section 4



Section 5



Section 6



SECTION 1



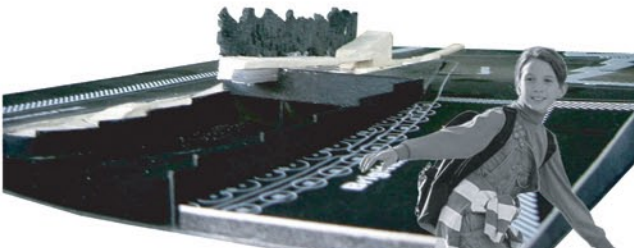
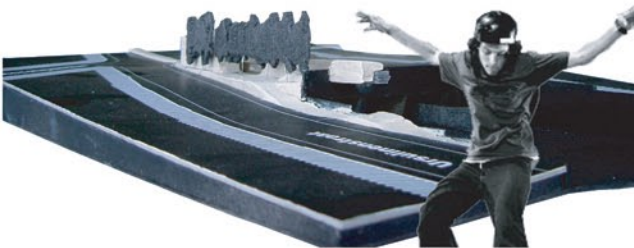
SECTION 2



SECTION 3



SECTION 4



ROBUST USE

The project is first of all designed to be an urban skate park. Designed as a robust entity rather than a traditional monofunctional skate park. As embedded in the definition of a robust entity (building + square + axis = robust entity) a differentiated use became a logic consequence.



The project is (as a cafeteria, flexible open area space, and a polyvalent room) a shelter for many individuals and associations such as skaters, youth from a nearby school, elderly, business men, passengers, the parish... In a long term, the robust entity can be reconverted in order to keep up with an ever changing civic society. In a short term the project can assure a flexible use for little concerts, street-events, or cultural activities, while the axis-part will somehow timelessly and functionally serve the robust entity itself and the surroundings that flank it (such as the youth hostel, the public library...)



THROUGH CONCRETE BUILDING + SQUARE + AXIS = ROBUST SKATE PARK