

VISIONS : THE ATHÉNÉE ROYALE RIVA BELLA IN BRAINE L'ALLEUD

The VISIONS. Architectures publiques collection arose from the wish to promote public architecture in Wallonia and Brussels by developing the connections that architecture maintains with photography and writing. It offers up an approach to the different aspects of architectural language: the eye of a photographer, the perception of a writer, the testimony of the user, the critique of a specialist, the conversation with the designers, i.e. so many entry points that are open to anyone according to his or her individual experience or preference. Since 2002 the collection has been edited at the rate of one publication a year or once every two years.

To provide pupils and teachers with a suitably designed learning environment, to signify the school's presence in the landscape, to regenerate an obsolete piece of school infrastructure in a climate of saving : the renovation carried out at the Athénée Royale Riva-Bella comprehensive school in Braine l'Alleud in the province of Walloon-Brabant responds on all points to the challenges of school buildings renewal in French-speaking Belgian education. More broadly, this plan designed by the Atelier d'Architecture Alain Richard, which won an architectural competition held by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation Architecture Unit, carried fundamental ambitions : to focus greater attention on the places our pupils frequent daily is to impart to them the importance of the position they hold in the society - and to which they will be the main contributors in future. Through this project, architecture becomes a concrete indicator of how our educational policies are gaining momentum.

Photographer Nicolas Bomal has captured the transformation of this building between town and campus, which now accommodates mainstream school teaching alongside community education classes. Author Caroline Lamarche and critic Paul Delaby invite you to explore the premises, while Michaël Ghyoot of the organisation ROTOR gives an account of the remarkable reclaim strategy initiated by the architects. Finally, from the research chair he holds at the University of Montreal, Jean-Pierre Chupin offers an enlightening scrutiny of how necessary it is to work in collaboration, to achieve quality in school architecture.

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