



WORLD  
DESIGN  
CAPITAL

LILLE  
METROPOLE  
2020

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# Taking Stock

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**Before and After**

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by Didier PARIS,  
Professor of Urban Planning and Development at the University of Lille,  
Regions and Cities in an Environmental and Societal Laboratory.

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Turin, 14 October 2017. Lille was designated World Design Capital for 2020. Turin, Seoul, Helsinki, Cape Town, Taipei, Mexico City had all preceded it.

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And, the adventure continues. In 2017, when we submitted our application for Lille, we spoke of metamorphosis and hybridization<sup>1</sup>. This world capital functions in a tandem process that has dominated the region's evolution for the last several decades.

Here, metamorphosis refers to the profound transformation this former industrial conurbation underwent when faced with an economic crisis, particularly in textiles, in the 1970s and 1980s, and later when it bloomed into an international European metropolis. Lille sits at the crossroads of the Channel Tunnel, the TGV to London, Brussels, Amsterdam, Cologne and Paris; the Euralille intercity project (the largest in Europe at that time) and the Franco-Belgian Eurometropolis project were influential in establishing this urban distribution<sup>2</sup>.

Among all the European cities at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Lille is undoubtedly one of the most striking examples of post-industrial urban transformation. In this context, choosing Lille as a 2004 European Capital of Culture was an emblematic milestone. It is still, today, seventeen years later, one of the greatest reference capitals studied by researchers in the field<sup>3</sup>. Lille has served as an example to other cities which were later nominated, including the 2015 nomination of Mons, in Wallonia, a true «sister city» of Lille 2004, since the two were both nominated because of cross-border cooperation despite the eleven years gap.

Hybridization also brings a complex dimension to this urban objective. This region sits at the geographical crossroads between the Northwestern Europe plains and the Paris metropolitan area, as well as at a cultural crossroad (Latin and Flemish) and a shifting historical border between Spanish Netherlands and France. This is a border country and an invaded territory. This historical and geographical legacy has forged the hybrid character of Lille, binding its

commercial and industrial past to a future focused on creativity and innovation.

The new European Center for Information and Communication Technologies Euratechnologies is housed in a former textile factory. Its location reflects (like so many other new organizations) this hybridization between the past and the future, particularly in regards to the factory. The transformation of a textile factory into a digital factory is a way of anchoring our heritage in modernity.

This particular vision of the European city was at the heart of Lille's candidacy for the World Design Capital.

As in other European cities, these changes did not include all of its citizens at every step. The objectives of some also diverged from those of others. There are many agents in urban development: designers, engineers, developers, researchers, artists, architects, urban planners just to name a few. Too often too many residents feel excluded. Some of the main reasons why citizens withdrawal from others, their neighbors, and their community are academic failure, lack of qualifications, a feeling of marginalization or even stigmatization. This withdrawal undermines how we live together in a mutually supportive manner.

It is true that we are implementing public policies that promote social and urban solidarity. These policies are more present in French cities than in the other urban centers in other countries. But despite these policies, we must continue to investigate societal and urban models and question how we want to live. European cities can only successfully reflect their values if their communities unite and remain solidary with their citizen.

Lille World Capital of Design never forgot this.

<sup>1</sup> Paris D., 2017, *Lille Métropole, World Design Capital 2020*, in *Lille-Design paper n°3* pp 76-81 – Introduction in regards to candidature.

<sup>2</sup> Stevens J.F. & Paris D., 2000, *Lille et sa région urbaine. La bifurcation métropolitaine*. L'Harmattan, 265 pages.

<sup>3</sup> Paris D. & Baert T., 2011, *Lille 2004 and the role of culture in the regeneration of Lille métropole*, *Town Planning Review*, Liverpool University Press, Vol. 82, No. 1, *European Cities and Capitals of Culture (2011)*, pp. 29-43

Today new global issues are affecting us even on a local scale, at the urban level. Global warming raises important questions about how regions will adapt to increasingly violent meteorological events, whether they be heat waves, storms or floods. Continuous urban expansion has led to the deterioration of soil and the detriment of agricultural land and this no longer seems sustainable. Yet during the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of this century, no one was shocked when the land surrounding urban centers were seen as an inexhaustible resource and developed into new suburban districts. The increased use of the automobile changed our relationship to space.

In a world that has become uncertain and yet interconnected, the ever increasing political, economic and social crises in the four corners of the planet has intensified the movement of people across borders. In particular, the richer countries of the North attract populations of the poorer countries in the South and this reflects not only a differential and but also places particular tension on border territories in Africa-Middle East/Europe and Mexico-Latin America/USA as well as in large cities (another space of immigration). The Hauts-de-France region, with the Pas-de-Calais strait and the gateway to England, is also concerned. Even Lille. Everywhere in Europe, how we welcome migrants is a matter of concern.

The global economy, which has increased over the past half century, has generated an intense displacement of people by sea, air or land (some call this the new Chinese Silk Roads), at least until the beginning of 2020. This free trade has

weakened European industries and impacted the entire working world. Industrial agglomerations like Lille are still suffering from the social, urban, and environmental scars (abandoned buildings and polluted soil), but they have also shown a great capacity for resilience.

But globalization also means pandemics rapidly spread across the globe, as we've seen with the SARS-COV 2 pandemic. It's not exactly the first one and it's certainly not the last. This pandemic has revealed our economies' dependence on global industrial production, especially production in China, which has become the world's factory for everything ranging from paracetamol molecules to masks. Has this raised a need for re-industrialization?

In March, the pandemic deeply affected the World Design Capital event in Lille on a local level: the planned opening was a little delayed. But if we look closely at this event, we can find certain similarities between what we were able to provide to the visitor and the global issues impacting us now with epic force?

## A Success! Despite Difficult Context has created a Certain Know-How.

Despite the unusual context of the pandemic, the event was an undeniably success, and this required everyone to react quickly and work together.

First of all, it was an organizational success. After Lille 2004, the city solidified its reputation as an organizer of major international events, whether they be one-off or recurrent events: the Annual Festival Series Mania (the international tv series festival) which looked at both Paris and Cannes, but in the end chose Lille who has the support of the Hauts-de-France region to ensure development; and *Video Mapping Festival*, which hosts the now unavoidable IBSIC - *Image Beyond the Screen International Conference*).

We proved it: Lille knows how to organize an event, even in 2020, a year of challenges. Major social movements disrupted the country in 2018 and 2019 and the COVID 19 pandemic and lockdown in the spring 2020 closed museums and other places of culture. But thanks to the everyone's dedication, the significance of what was offered and the visitors' curiosity, the World Design Capital was able to shine. The 200-page report<sup>4</sup>, published at the end of the event, demonstrates our success, even though exhibition attendance figures and POC house visitors were obviously affected by the COVID lockdowns and the very strict sanitary measures imposed by the authorities during the openings. These figures are obviously not significant. The national and international media coverage underscored the event's influence and were much more noteworthy.

Beyond these figures, our approach in Lille was so original because of our decision to show and demonstrate. To show, that is to say, to exhibit, is to propose a framework for references through a series of exhibitions, to take stock of current thinking. To demonstrate means involving the people, the citizens, by using design to propose solutions to contemporary issues.

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<sup>4</sup> Design is Capital. Lille Métropole 2020, World Capital of Design Summary. Coming Spring 2021

Showing, when we talk about design, is a traditional approach. Large exhibitions of private or public collections are constantly on display, particularly in dedicated institutions, throughout the world. Here it was a traditional approach, but also a necessary one. Behind each exhibition is a idea, a message that makes the visitor wonder; it might even provoke him. Particularly true in this first quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when we questioned past certainties in the face of global challenges and reshuffled the deck in terms of regional development: it was a complete paradigm shift. This was at the heart of Lille Metropolis 2020 Exhibitions for World Design Capital.

Since the World Capital of Design took place in France, it was necessary to present an overview of French design. This is the subject of the exhibition teacher and designer Jean-Louis Frechin curated at Tripostal. He entitled it *Design Designer(s)* and it presented a true opportunity to showcase French design, perhaps less publicized and underrepresented in comparison to other design (Italian, Finnish ....).

It was an opportunity to highlight the diversity of everyday French design, that which goes unnoticed but accompanies us throughout our lives: bus shelters, food processors, furniture, ect. The approximately sixty designers selected, from Starck to Fastrez and from Lehanneur to Le Bihan, are simultaneously creators, involved citizens, and vectors; they teach, help, and inspire the next generation. Also presented were companies that function as a platform to develop design, such as Dassault Systèmes and SEB, and of course, Decathlon, here on its home field.

This exhibition was held at the Tripostal, which has been an emblematic place in Lille's cultural life

since the European Capital of Culture in 2004. It was accompanied by a second, equally original exhibition on science fiction, or more precisely how it influences our imagination (*Sens Fiction*, curated by Ramy Fischler). The exhibition presented all that the human mind has been able to invent in futuristic stories, gathered from 20<sup>th</sup>-century scientific magazines, comic books and animated films.

## Well Done

Design is a *project discipline that requires one to look ahead*. Fiction functions as a tool to explore and allows us to discern potential futures: we walked on the Moon, but Tintin, Captain Haddock and Snowy, revealed it to us since 1950. Certainly, they foreshadowed Neil Armstrong's first steps of in 1969. But above all, their iconic red and white rocket – a true object of design – which stood vertically on the planet's surface, seemed to the reader, after the Apollo mission and its LEM, undoubtedly impossible and even a little far-fetched. It foreshadowed Elon Musk's Starship rocket tests, not yet fully developed, but which seventy years later, are now nearing that same goal.

In addition to the Tripostal, the former Saint-Sauveur train station was used for two exhibitions and they were both particularly significant in view of current global issues. The 21-hectare site at the heart of the Flanders capital is currently under consideration for urban development. Its massive halls were preserved and provide the ideal setting for hosting major events of this type. It is the city's other cultural hub. The exhibitions *La Manufacture, a Labor of Love* on the one side, and *Les Usages du Monde* on the other, were able to attract a large audience when the pandemic lockdown was lifted at the end of spring 2020.



The former (which was curated by trend forecaster Lidewij Edelkoort,) showcased young designers in the field of textiles, the role of reusing, and the manufacturing processes. Perhaps their experiments will become the norm tomorrow. Environmental and social concerns underlie all these experiments. We focused on the tool as an extension of the hand. We examined the tools of today – for example, the computer and the 3D printer – and revisited the tools of the past – the loom.

Beyond tools, Edelkoort also investigated nature's capacity to produce design in a forward-thinking approach, a «culturing design» (or the design of culture): objects produced when man's desires interact with natural processes (plants, mushrooms, salt concretions...). Beyond these techniques, it was also about exploring the process of making in collectives. Ultimately, object's value was investigated here and not simply in terms of its market value but also its social value and use value.

The latter's mission, *Les Usages du Monde*, curated by Bordeaux architecture firm Arc en Rêve, was to ask on a global scale, How do people live? How could they live better? The notion of living is considered here in the broadest sense. Ultimately, the most relevant understanding was residing in a region and not simply a dwelling, being part of the system around us, working with our surroundings. It meant transforming gardens, building shelters with natural disasters in mind, and storing water storage as ice to enable the survival of a village in Ladakh. These are all subjects that are part of living on this planet and how we do so is developed through collective and community-based solutions.

Alongside these four flagship exhibitions, other exhibitions opened throughout the Hauts-de-France region, including one at the Lace Museum in Calais that showcased *different forms of lace* and ENSCI textile design students' work. Another one was devoted to glass, *L'Envers du Verre*, and was held in Fourmis-Trélon in the eastern part of Nord Department, which is a region that historically produced glass. Another show highlighted Desvres, the Mecca of ceramic production, which is situated near Boulogne-sur-Mer. However it was shown in Lille at the headquarters of the Regional Council, which houses the work of the *Desvres Design Ceramic Camp*. Here young designers confronted this demanding material. These exhibitions revealed the region's potential and how to develop support in the community. In this way, Lille Metropolis 2020 World Design Capital was a practical event for the region.

These POC's were probably the most original part of the *Lille Metropole 2020 WDC* process and certainly the one where the Flanders capital left its mark on contemporary design. This world capital seized an opportunity. **POC (Proof of Concept)** «demonstrates feasibility» the form's purpose was to show the feasibility of a process or an innovation» according to French Wikipedia. Demonstrating feasibility was at the heart of Lille's projects: our goal as to involve the residents and region participants as well as to ask companies, universities, cultural places, associations, citizens, to experiment with their design approach. It was a success, beyond all our expectations.

We received more than 600 proposals from the region, proving how well the *Lille Metropolis 2020 WDC* project was received in the area. The innovative and engaging «POC Houses» platform featured 350 proposals. They were organized into six major themes: Public Action, Circular Economy, Housing, Mobility, Care, and a Collaborative City. While each theme investigated its own issues, the experimental approach was similar and featured the following steps: 1) understanding needs 2) imagining answers 3) experimenting with ideas and 4) implementing solutions.

Seventy-seven POCs attracted special attention from «scouts» and were selected as projects with definite added value that were eligible for submission to an international jury. Among these, the jury awarded six first prizes, six second prizes, six special mentions and a special «Design is Capital» prize.

The other technique was to present these POCs in locations dedicated to each of the six themes, the «**POC houses**». Each one thus explores a particular field, offers a vision of the changing world and questions how design can contribute to this transformation. Thus:

- How design can foster collaboration in the city to create more inclusive lifestyles (POC house «Collaborative City», curator: François Jegou).
- How to make public policies more accessible to citizens? How can we invite them to take part? What could the public service of tomorrow look like? (POC House «Public Action», curator: Luther Quenum).
- What are the connections between healthcare ethics and design? How can we better healthcare in the face of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century challenges? (POC House «Taking Care,» curator: Cynthia Fleury).

- What model reduces the use of exhaustible resources, where waste is no longer waste, and it can be re-used? What are positive practices in this area? (POC House «Circular Economy,» curator: Giovanna Massoni).
- How to rethink the use of mobility in the context of energy transition, climate challenges and for a healthier environment and air quality. (POC Mobility House, scenographer: Laura Bodénez).
- How to rethink the way we live, the way we design public spaces, housing, and furniture? (Maison POC «Reside,» curator: WAAO, Architecture and Urbanism Center).

It is important to note that POC houses were the undeniably original creation of Lille as compared to other world capitals of design. In 2004, when it was the European Capital of Culture, Lille featured Maison Folie de Wazemmes, places for free cultural expression in all its forms. What is the connection? It is the question of space.

Twice, Lille has hosted an emblematic event, classically characterized by large exhibitions, conferences, installations. Lille has taken it a step further and anchored the event in its region through

the symbolic use of house. These houses represent the region's soul and also represent the citizens and residents as much as possible. These places for experimentation create a bridge between 2004 and 2020: notably with Maison Folie de Wazemmes hosted the POC «Taking Care.» They walked the same path, one of creativity.

The house is also the main place where we live. It can be closed or open. In both these cases, these houses were open to everyone. They were meeting places and places to exchange news. But today, our planet/our house is burning. If you think about it, *Lille Metropolis 2020 WDC's* whole approach was based on this one question: how to put out the fire? No whining or complaining, but a serious look (showing) and hard work towards finding solutions (demonstrating).

Lille 2004 left a legacy: it heightened cultural phenomena (technology, practice, influence) and consolidated economic sectors (image sector, training in cultural fields...)⁵ And the now complete Lille World Capital of Design has done the same. After having shown and demonstrated, Lille is building the momentum and using to it as a tool to transform the region in the coming years.

Already, design professionals have pointed out that Lille Metropolis 2020 WDC has brought a **new level of activity never before experienced** by independent designers. Not that design function wasn't in the city before, but Lille is above all a stronghold of «integrated» design, or design as a department in companies. Decathlon is the most accomplished example of this, with 200 of the 250 designers employed living in the Lille metropolis area. Other companies have followed, such as Leroy-Merlin. Although France is centralized, after the Paris region, Lille is the seat of the largest concentration of these companies.

Lille Metropolis WDC 2020 has proven its legitimacy. It is now a question of strengthening this reputation so that Lille may benefit from more high-level jobs in design and R&D, which is still an economic weak point for this former industrial agglomeration. But along with the T.I.C. (Euratechnologies, etc.), visual and audiovisual professions (Pôle Image), and technical textiles (CETI), design now contributes to the developing urban economy.

And beyond these large groups, independent designers have also found a new legitimacy, and also a new market: SMEs, institution participants, associations, and academics. Lille Metropolis WDC 2020 was only a starting point for this development. From an economic policy point of view, everything started there when Lille capitalized on this event.

Those who participated in the World Design Capital agree, especially those who developed a POC, that undoubtedly, Lille Metropolis World Design Capital 2020 will also leave an important legacy.

The Science Department at the University of Lille, in Villeneuve d'Ascq, the Learning Center LILLIAD and documentation service ULILE are a good example. They are in the former university science library which, after a complete transformation, reopened in 2016. This facility now rivals the best learning centers in Europe, such as the Rolex Learning Center at EPFL in Lausanne. Within LILLIAD, the XPERIUM showcase research being done in Lille.

As soon as it was announced that Lille would be the world capital of design in 2020, those in charge immediately took an interest in the «Republic of POC.» After the first few sessions featuring this new platform for showing Lille's scientific research, they decided to further the visitors' experience with the help of designer, Claire Casedas, from the Roubaix-based agency Fun in Museum. Her intervention was crucial in the creative workshops with the staff. Her method, based on her analysis of the public, allowed

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<sup>5</sup> Liefoghe C, Mons D, Paris D (dir.), 2016, Lille métropole créative ? Nouveaux liens, nouveaux lieux, nouveaux territoires, Lille, éditions du Septentrion, 348p

her to completely overhaul the system, in particular changing the process to give greater freedom to the team when executing new exhibitions.

Finally, the Xperium has benefited from a redesigned layout, now also adapted, thanks to the creation of a specific tool, a playful «passport» that accompanies each person and frees visitors, who until then were only allowed in groups. From now on, thanks to this POC, the presentation of scientific research in Lille will provide visitors with a completely renewed experience.

What also seemed essential and very encouraging to the XPERIUM POC leaders was the fact that they were able to find other joint initiatives within the «Taking Care» POC house, to which the project had been attached. This inclusion in a POC house has contributed to the visibility of the XPERIUM project, for visitors to the house, but also for other project leaders.

Another example concerns the participants **who executed public policies in MEL**, the European Metropolis of Lille. Indeed, the World Design Capital played the role of catalyst in the transformation of the process.

As early as 2015, MEL set up an R&D department responsible for renovating internal practices. Then in 2016, it opened a place for innovation and creativity: the CREABOX. After Lille Metropolis was named WDC 2020, it accelerated: a program («a transfo» in the specific vocabulary) led by a national leader in transforming public policies and an interdisciplinary associative group»the 27<sup>th</sup> region» were established. This group coached local authorities and was made up of about twenty MEL agents who all and with different specialties. The operation attempted to build the institution's first POCs and to imagine what a public policy design laboratory might look like within the institution. Another initiative, MELtamorphose, attempted to put agents in contact with participants before the agents begin working on projects, and not afterwards, as it is the current consultation process. World Capital 2020 helped boost the momentum of this transformation process thanks to the arrival of designers at MEL, the implementation of experiments, and the Public Policy POC House. Building on this momentum, the new Public Policy Design Laboratory will open in 2021 and has the goal of continuing this transformation. It is currently composed of four people and is part of the Innovation and Dialogue Unit, in direct contact

with the general management, located at Institution Biotope headquarters on the first floor.

Three examples illustrate how certain public policy topics were launched during the World Design Capital (WDC) and continue on today:

1. A process has been undertaken to examine the future of vacant spaces in the MEL region, suggesting development scenarios and inviting residents to give their opinions. For example, they are exploring the transitory occupation of wasteland. At the time of publication, three pilot sites were being defined.

2 Another initiative concerns the installation of user-friendly furniture in the Heron Park, a large urban public space located in Villeneuve d'Ascq. The goal is to discern new uses and redefine public need. Launched as a POC during the World Design Capital, the team of designers continue to explore and work on this subject.

3 A POC based on the idea of calming opened on Grand Boulevard, which is a major axis that was the city's heart in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and connects Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing. However, its road-like character distracts from its original purpose. An urban study began in 2009 but was unsuccessful. The POC used this study to redefine how to possibly reduce cars and redesign public spaces with temporary structures, allowing the mayors and residents to test solutions before implementing them permanently.

In any case, the underlying idea is that we cannot change public policies if we do not change the culture of the people who manage the institution. We are talking here about a public interest design and not a communicative design.

We could cite other examples, such as the **University of Lille**, whose merger-creation <sup>6</sup> happened at the same time as preparations began as the events for Lille Metropolis World Design Capital 2020. Very quickly, the university named a liaison to the organization team who had been the director of the Cultural Venue at the Science Museum. This approach, agreed on by the participants, allowed for the identification and support of 15 POCs proposed by professors-researchers in various fields. These houses stemmed from important research and featured strong societal dimensions, from cognitive sciences to urban planning. For example, they focused on questions regarding the role of physical activity in improving individuals' mental health, or the evaluation of the accessibility of public spaces. The POCs leaders expressed their satisfaction at integrating design into their projects and confirmed that they wanted to continue the process they began at Lille Metropolis WDC 2020, and to expand it to new subjects, such as the welcoming students to campus.

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<sup>6</sup> Lille 1, 2 and 3, were set up in the 1968-1969 reforms, and today are united in a unique institution and the biggest university in France. The University of Lille is the historical heir of the University of Douai created by Philippe II of Spain in the 16th century, and became University of Lille in the 19th century.

In addition, Research, Design and Ethics Days organized by the University as part of Lille Metropolis 2020, World Design Capital, demonstrated the appetite and creativity of local and national participants to collaborate together and share their approaches to societal issues and practices at the POC Houses. Designers, researchers and companies co-built the collaborative research workshops and forged desirable paths for a changing world.

<https://designresearchd.sciencesconf.org>

Now that the event is over, the question of **a place dedicated to design** is justifiably raised. The show/demonstrate logic has revealed its potential during this year of the World Design Capital. Now the question is how do we build on this approach. More than just leaving a legacy, we want to project ourselves into the future through a place that houses new experiments, a place that allows for fresh exchanges between designers, professionals and residents, and civil servants. A place where project leaders can share of experiences, starting with those who led a POC in 2020, a sort of «right of passage.» This place could also feature new exhibitions that would help promote design and underline the new challenges of design in energy transitions and global warming, as well as grow Lille's cultural influence. A recurrent event could help maintain this momentum.

The existence of such a place could be **a strategy to improve education** in Hauts-de-France school and universities (for example: in Valenciennes, EBA, ISD, ESAD, in Lille, ECV, ESDAC, ENSAIT, Pôle IIID, E.Artsup, to name a few). This development would encourage growth in design in the region

Moving on World Design Capital, how do we move forward? How can we move on to a new future? There are a number of paths, some we've known for a long time, while others have only just emerged.

Montreal is an example. The city joined UNESCO's «Creative Cities» network. This network created in 2004 promotes cooperation between cities that identify creativity as a tool for sustainable development. It features 246 cities around the world and offers important opportunities for cultural and informational exchange.

[ <https://fr.unesco.org/creative-cities>]

We know that the concept of the creative city has been criticized, especially when it claims to rely on a «creative class» disconnected from the real society. This would constitute a sort of urban elite that would act as the backbone of the urban market. This approach, sometimes promoted in the Anglo-Saxon world, is obviously the antithesis of the approach that should be taken. On the contrary, we must rely on the human value of «living together» to promote creative approaches, including those stemming from design. Only then will we be part of the necessary urban transition towards sustainability objectives now required in development.

The network includes seven creative fields: crafts and popular arts, digital arts, cinema, design, gastronomy, literature and music. In France, only two cities belong to this network: Lyon for digital arts and Saint-Etienne for design. In Belgium, Ghent belongs to the network for music.

The city of Montreal has been a design member of this network since 2006. Indeed, Montreal is ahead of its time in terms of integrating this design approach in its public policies and in respect to its residents, thanks in particular to a dedicated

service, «Design Montreal». For example, the city used design to develop strategies for trade and to assist the city's (permanent) construction sites so that they became more accessible to residents. «In awarding *the title of UNESCO City of Design to Montreal, UNESCO has recognized designers' potential to better Montreal's future. Montreal's commitment and determination, governments and civil society are capitalizing on this strength to improve the quality of life of Montreal residents. Neither a badge nor an endorsement, this distinction is an invitation to develop our city around design creativity.*» [DesignMontréal.com website]. 2021 is the year of renewal. A submission has been made to UNESCO in 2020.

After being named World Design Capital and Lille's transforming economy over the last twenty years (Capital of Culture 2004, development of ICT at Euratechnologie, the visual division at the Union, the Mapping Festival and Série Mania, etc.), a Lille application to UNESCO for the title of design seems natural.

In addition to this UNESCO network, a new opportunity has just emerged at the European level. On January 18, 2021, President of the European Commission Ursula Van der Layen launched a new initiative, ***the New European Bauhaus***. The Bauhaus is an aesthetic movement, originating just after the WWI at the architecture and arts school (under Walter Gropius) in Weimar, the city the new German Republic was named after. The school then moved to Dessau and then Berlin, depending on the political context, until Mies van der Rohe dissolved it in 1933 according to Nazi demands. For Goebbels, the Bauhaus was «the most perfect expression of degenerate art.»

This movement concerns principally architecture and design, but also photography, dance and textile creation. Bauhaus laid the foundations of



modern architecture. The International Congresses of Modern Architecture (CIAM, 1928-1956), headed by Le Corbusier, held its fourth Congress in Athens in 1933, which became the Bauhaus Chapter. This movement is still considered the international style basis for architecture in the modern city.

*The New Bauhaus* as proposed by the European Union aims to move the European Green Deal into the hands of the citizens. It wants to be a creative and interdisciplinary movement, a platform for experimentation, a bridge between science and technology, art and culture. Its goal is to bring together citizens, experts, companies and institutions and propose solutions for affordable and accessible living solutions. It also solicits designers, architects, engineers, scientists, students, and creative minds to reinvent more sustainable ways of living.

*The New Bauhaus* will provide financial support for experiments through coordinated programs within a multi-year financial framework. The process is now in its first stages, that of co-design, and calls for proposals are open until summer 2021. Then a selection phase starting in September 2021. The last phase, that of broadcasting the emergent ideas and actions to the general public, will begin in January 2023. All this will be done through a call for proposals open to all of Europe and at least five pilot regions will be selected to house these new Bauhaus projects.

[ [https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index\\_fr](https://europa.eu/new-european-bauhaus/index_fr) ]

Clearly, by virtue of its geography and urban history, the Lille metropolitan area is fully entitled to take part in the process and put forward its region as a pilot region. Lille has the creative potential. Lille Metropolis 2020 WDC just demonstrated this once again. Indeed, Lille Metropolis has always been a home of urban innovation. Let's just remember:

- The development of major boulevards and the tramways in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century between Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing that some would term visionary when later compared to other cities.
- The invention, just after the Second World War, of the «1% housing.» This system has become systematic throughout the whole country as a social model for financing housing construction by companies.
- The creation of a new city, Villeneuve d'Ascq, «the green technopolis,» and the invention of the first automatic metro in the world in the 1970s.
- The conceptualization, in the years 1990-2000, of the «renewed city» and the implementation of urban renewal, as a practice, which also became systematic to urban planning in France.
- The governing approach that has encouraged, over the last twenty years, the engagement of local leaders from the economic, community, cultural, academic and political worlds, around two major international events: the European Capital of Culture in 2004 and the World Design Capital in 2020. Each time it raised the benchmark in their field.
- The transformation of an economic fabric following the deindustrialization during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The local economy regenerated itself by developing new sectors and skills. For example, in ICT, Euratechnologies, the driving force behind a large-scale urban project for a completely new district in Lille-Lomme. Another example this time in the visual sector is the Visual Center in the Union District of Roubaix-Tourcoing. Yet another example, CETI in the field of new textiles is another major urban project in that same Union District. Each time, the economic project serves as a springboard for the urban development and urban renewal.

This legitimacy organically lends itself to the new European Bauhaus.

If we objectively analyze what happened in 2020, when Lille was the World Design Capital, we see that we are in an ideal position to welcome such a project. In particular, the POC approach as a method for developing solutions, and POC houses as a tool for mediatization and dissemination of ideas, is particularly fruitful. The New Bauhaus, like the old one, strives to be interdisciplinary. Being World Design Capital 2020 proves that Lille has the potential to interconnect disciplines and participants. Lille offers a long list of fields, including urban planning, architecture, landscaping, design (furniture, objects, processes...), visual arts, fashion, and the digital world. Lille's ability to involve its residents in projects has been proven time and again; they include the academic world, creators, institutional leaders, companies, associations, civil society, and citizens.

The «New Bauhaus» would also benefit from the support of an interdisciplinary research program working on the subject of living, such as **Better Living Tomorrow** (a research group still being defined). With its university and schools, the Lille metropolitan area has the necessary structure and platform. A research program, at the institutions (University, MEL, etc.) would make it possible to refine approaches in urban and mobility design, in social and public design, and in circular economy design. It would be part of the necessary reflection on urban development during current global challenges.

The city would benefit from its involvement in this New European Bauhaus and in the research program Better Living Tomorrow. It would develop a consolidation perspective and mobilize appropriate academic partners to training students and perform research. In particular, the city offers a new **Urban School of Lille**, which works with the University of Lille, at the Department of Geography, Urban Planning and Development in the new Faculty of Economics, Sociology and Territories (FEST), the

National School of Architecture and Landscaping in Lille (ENSAPL), the Institute of Political Science in Lille and the Ecole Polytechnique de Lille. It also offers degrees in urban engineering and other studies. This initiative is part of both the I-site Foundation and the new University of Lille, called University of Lille 2022.

[ <https://www.universitedelille2022.fr> ]

The University of Lille, for its 2022 project, will bring together the current university with the ENSAPL, ENSAIT, ESJ Lille, and IEP Lille schools. Each school has important influence in its field.

The goal of the Urban School of Lille is to build a platform for exchange, project management and research (via its laboratories where professor-researchers develop their work, T.V.E.S. E.A.4477 for urban architects and geographers, LACTH at ENSAPL, etc.). They work not only on the subject of urban planning in the strictest sense (a subject that closely corresponds to the former format of the I.A.U.L.), but also on all urban issues. The subject of habitation, which is already covered by a specific course (Habitat-Habitation) in the master's degree in urban planning in the Department of Geography. Urban Planning and Development typically presents a problematic that brings together teachers and researchers from different social sciences, notably urban planning, political science, architecture and engineering.

Indeed, the ultimate objective is to promote teamwork between academics, professionals, politicians and citizens on the new issues related to the city: to urban living, moving and working, to urban design and management, and to its shaping it, within the framework of solidarity, and the necessary transition imposed by the reality of climate change. Undoubtedly, this Urban School of Lille can be a useful interlocutor within a pilot city for a «New Bauhaus.»

*The New European Bauhaus* and the research program Better Living Tomorrow would provide the city with first class visibility in terms of design research and improving urban living.

<sup>7</sup> The former Institut d'Aménagement et Urbanisme de Lille - I.A.U.L. - founded with Geography, as part of an internal restructuring of the University of Lille.

From this perspective, Lille could position itself as this New Bauhaus project and rapidly mobilize the necessary leaders. For example, Lille would need to organize a flexible prefiguration structure of an informal or associative nature, to manage the reflection and programming. Lille must then ask: what is the institutional perimeter of such an operation: the MEL region? The Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai Eurometropolis? This would already constitute, in itself, a new element in this project initiated by the European Union.

**In conclusion**, the event Lille Metropolis 2020 World Design Capital marks an important step in the economic and social trajectory of the city. It builds on the foundation laid during the European Capital of Culture in 2004, which represented a springboard for developing cultural activities and the neighboring economic sectors.

The same can be said here for design, despite the very particular historical context of the pandemic. Just as it did in 2004 for culture, Lille and its urban area have acquired recognition in the field of design. It would be a great opportunity to capitalize on this achievement: Lille has the support of local institutional leaders (MEL, municipalities, Department, Region etc.) in designing public policies, the investment of regional companies in design and growth, and the involvement of associations in the use of design as a springboard for social action to transform society.

This system dynamic needs a strategy to guide and channel this energy into the creation of a dedicated place or places and the organization of events, either recurring (biennial type?) or singular (exhibitions, thematic or designers).

The dynamic energy around the theme of living (including the New European Bauhaus project and the new Lille Urban School) and/or around an activity such as textiles (CETI, ENSAIT, collections of the La Piscine Museum in Roubaix, etc.) is palpable. We could add sports and healthcare, given the local potential (leading sports companies, Decathlon, the Eurasanté cluster, university research, etc.) and the societal issues of the public healthcare in the Hauts de France region.

The adventure begins!