

GETAWAY→ OUTSIDE PARIS

BAGNEUX



INTO THE BLUE

DOMINIQUE COULON USES SOFT LIGHT TO TURN A NEGLECTED
POOL INTO A TRANQUIL URBAN OASIS BY LÉA-CATHERINE SZACKA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLÉMENT GUILLAUME & DAVID ROMEO-UZEDA

POOL



PHOTO BY CLÉMENT GUILLAUME

AS WITH ITS OTHER PROJECTS, THE FRENCH FIRM OFTEN USES COLOUR BLOCKS TO DEFINE VOLUMES. HERE, BLUE BLEACHERS REFLECT THE LAP POOL'S AQUATIC TONES.



PARIS IS RENOWNED FOR ITS RICH, eclectic swimming amenities, although a lack of maintenance over the past decades has taken its toll, eroding their original splendour. Last May, however, the legendary Piscine Molitor (where engineer and clothing designer Louis Réard introduced the bikini to the world in 1946) reopened after many years. Similarly, the public pool in Bagneux, a southern suburb, had seen better days before city council members decided to bring the facility into the 21st century. To do so, they commissioned Dominique Coulon et Associés to revive the pool's social and public relevance.

The Strasbourg firm refurbished and expanded the original 1950s building, retaining the main structure's 25-metre-long lap pool, along with a beginners' pool housed on the upper level; and adding to the ground floor a spa, two saunas, a hammam and an exterior solarium. These amenities transform the complex into a radically contemporary sports typology.

As one moves through the various recreational options, the right-angled world gives way to an airy ambience, soft lighting, fluid promenades and curves that suggest endless whirlpools. These gentle effects are intentional, according to Coulon: "When you are in a swimsuit, you are automatically more vulnerable. You become more sensitive and receptive to spaces and ambience." The main reception area is flooded with an aqua-tinged light from a frosted glass porthole in the ceiling, which is the bottom of the children's paddling pool area overhead; and a generous ledge in one rounded window doubles as a lounge seat. There is even a rooftop terrace for sunbathing in privacy.

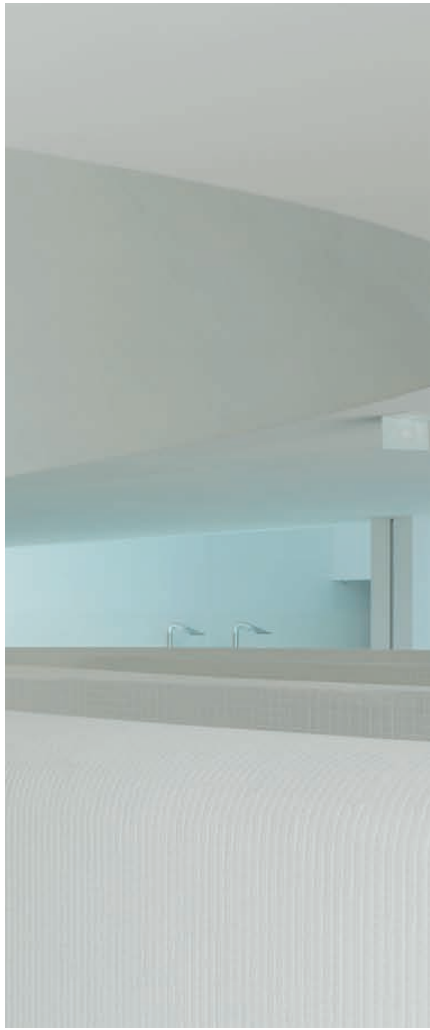
The children's pool, in all white, is among the most organic features, with curves that naturally reduce sound reverberation, giving kids the sensation of being wrapped in a cocoon. Embedded in a dense urban context surrounded by social housing towers, Coulon's elegantly realized public space provides a welcome getaway from everyday life. **AZ** coulon-architecte.fr

↑ THE CURVES OF THE PADDLING POOL REDUCE NOISE AND SURROUND CHILDREN WITH THE FEELING OF BEING ENCLOSED IN A COCOON.

→ COULON AND HIS TEAM GAVE THE ORIGINAL 1950 BUILDING A NEW ENTRANCE, WITH A ROOFTOP TERRACE FOR SUNBATHING.

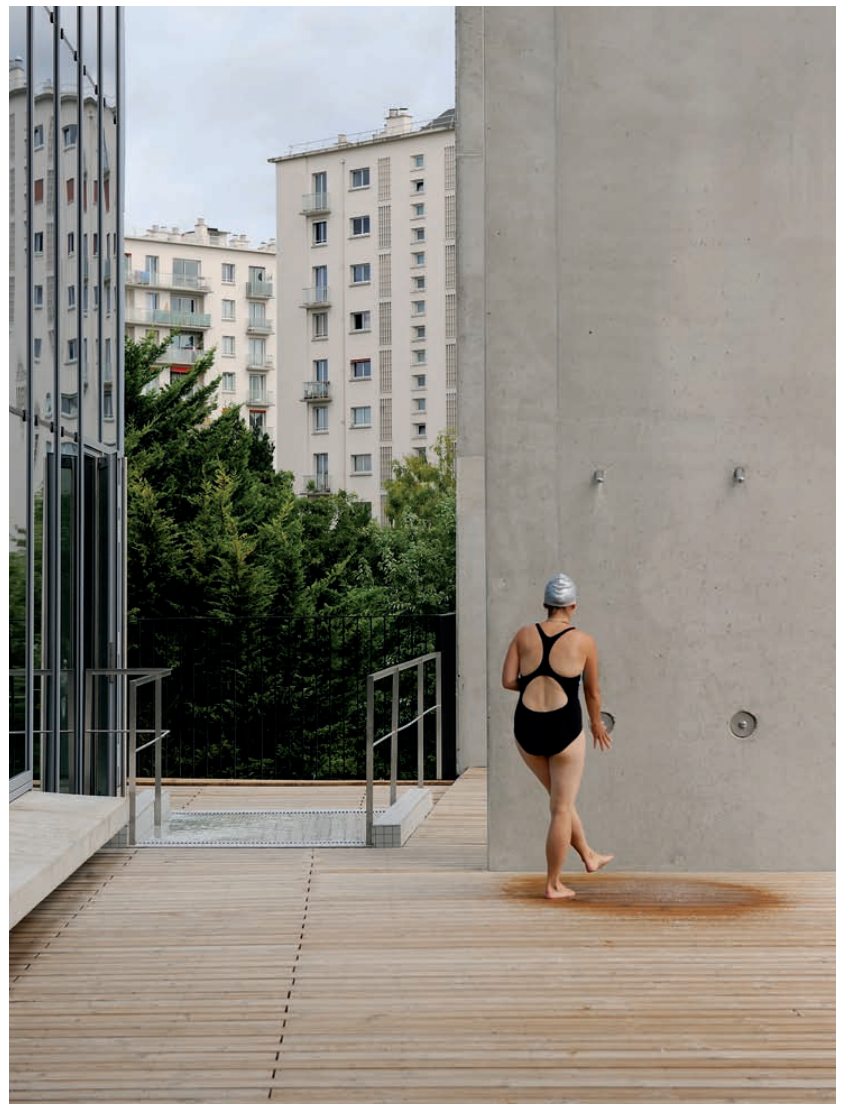


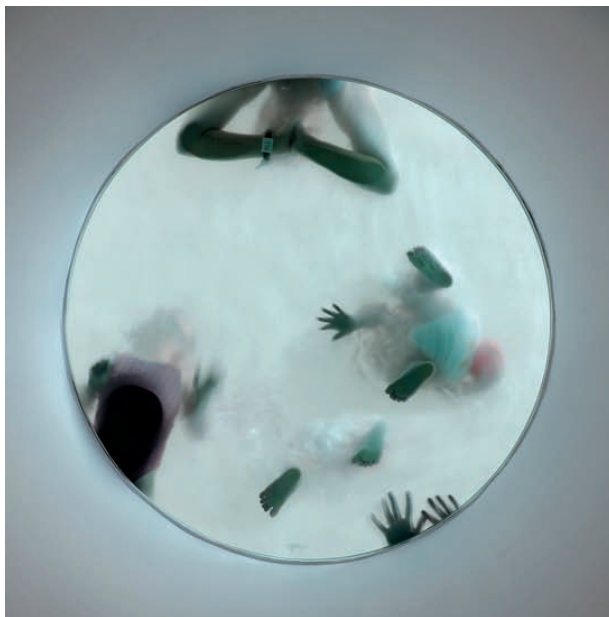
PHOTOS BY DAVID ROMEROUZEDA



→ A ROUNDED WINDOW
LOOKING OUT TO A
GARDEN DOUBLES AS A
BUILT-IN LOUNGE SEAT.

↘ SWIMMERS AND
SUNBATHERS FIND
OUTDOOR PRIVACY
ON THE SOLARIUM DECK,
EVEN THOUGH APART-
MENTS SURROUND
THE AQUATIC CENTRE
ON ALL SIDES.

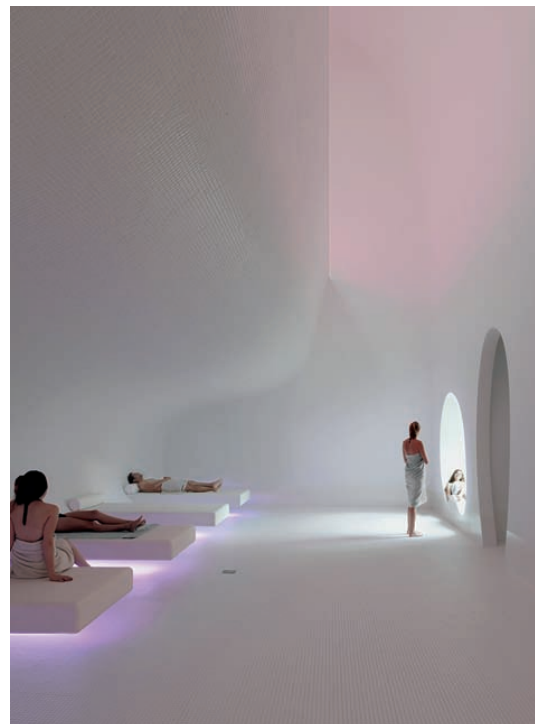




↑ THE ORIGINAL LAP POOL AND A BEGINNERS' POOL HAVE BEEN FULLY REFURBISHED.

← A FROSTED GLASS PORTHOLE, SEEN HERE FROM THE RECEPTION AREA, DOUBLES AS THE BOTTOM OF THE PADDLING POOL ABOVE.

→ FIVE BEDS IN THE RELAXATION AREA OFFER BATHERS A PLACE TO UNWIND.



TOP PHOTO BY CLÉMENT GUILLAUME, BOTTOM PHOTOS BY DAVID ROMEO-UZEDA

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