

Press pack

Kanal-Centre Pompidou

**Signing of the structural partnership agreement
Presentation of the preliminary year of cultural activities**

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1/ PRESS RELEASE KANAL-CENTRE POMPIDOU

SIGNING OF PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN BRUSSELS-CAPITAL REGION, FONDATION KANAL & CENTRE POMPIDOU

CREATION OF THE KANAL-CENTRE POMPIDOU CULTURAL CENTRE

On Monday 18 December 2017, the Brussels-Capital Region, the Fondation Kanal and the Centre Pompidou signed a structural partnership agreement that lays the foundations for the creation of a new, multidisciplinary cultural centre in the former Citroën garage on Place de l'Yser in Brussels.

The collaboration between the Centre Pompidou and the Brussels-Capital Region thus enters a new phase today, following the signing of a first memorandum of understanding on 29 September 2016 and a preliminary agreement on 19 July 2017.

TEN YEARS OF COLLABORATION

The agreement signed today, covering a period of ten years from the date of signing, determines the main arrangements for cooperation between the project's three actors - the Brussels-Capital Region, the Fondation Kanal and the Centre Pompidou - in connection with the creation and running of the future Kanal-Centre Pompidou cultural centre.

It will be recalled that the centre will host a museum of modern and contemporary art, CIVA (the International Centre for Urbanism, Architecture and Landscape) and a number of multipurpose public spaces open to all and characterised by interdisciplinarity, educational activities and spaces for relaxation.

The museum of modern and contemporary art will include a space for the presentation of the permanent collections organised around displays (three in five years) exploring the history of 20th and 21st century art, and a space dedicated to temporary exhibitions. These permanent displays and the two temporary exhibitions that will be put on each year will be designed on the basis of the Centre Pompidou's collections and draw on the expertise of its curators. The agreement also provides for the possibility of other exhibitions being organised by the Fondation Kanal.

The Centre Pompidou has undertaken to lend works from its collection, one of the two most important in the world for modern and contemporary art, with nearly 120,000 works covering every creative discipline: painting, sculpture, the graphic arts, photography, new media, experimental cinema, architecture and design.

The Centre Pompidou will be involved in defining the new centre's cultural and scientific mission. It will also advise and assist with the acquisition strategy for permanent collections. It will contribute its expertise and cultural engineering in all its specialist fields. The clear objective of this partnership is thus that the Centre Pompidou should give this new regional cultural centre a boost, on the understanding that the latter's long-term goal is to be autonomous.

The partnership represents a true co-construction project; as such, it is a first for both the Brussels-Capital Region and the Centre Pompidou.

PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME: MAY 2018 – JUNE 2019

Pending the opening of the centre after the completion of the work scheduled to begin in autumn 2019, a preliminary cultural programme will be offered to the public from 5 May 2018 until the end of June 2019 in the garage 'as is'. The programme will be multidisciplinary in nature, and will reflect the character of the cultural venues of the Brussels arts scene. It has been designed to occupy the entire building in anticipation of its redevelopment and in line with the future cultural centre's philosophy; among other things, there will be an important role for public spaces and the various offerings will prefigure the future presence in the cultural centre of a Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art and of CIVA.

This preliminary cultural programme has been designed by Bernard Blistène, director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, the department of cultural development and IRCAM at the Centre Pompidou, in cooperation with the Brussels cultural scene, partly through the work of a Scientific Steering Committee.

It will penetrate the spaces temporarily left unused, using different artistic offerings to explore the nature and functions of the place - those of this emblematic location when it was still a garage.

The Centre Pompidou – which has nearly 2,000 works by Belgian artists in its modern and contemporary collections – already has strong links with Brussels and Belgium. With the Brussels-Capital Region, it will integrate this new project into the existing cultural network by working with the cultural and social organisations operating throughout the region.

Thus in this preliminary year, commissions will be awarded to Brussels artists (chosen by an independent panel) for work to be exhibited during preliminary exhibitions, and in this way a start will be made on forming a collection for the future Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art.

Live shows will be another feature of this preliminary year, with a close partnership being forged with the Brussels cultural scene in order to co-produce a programme of performances at the cultural centre. Operators with which partnerships could be formed include AB, the Beurschowburg, the Botanique, Bozar, Flagey, Les Halles de Schaerbeek, the Kaaaitheater, Kunstenfestivaldesarts and la Raffinerie.

The Brussels-Capital Region has decided to support this ambitious project in order to further enhance the cultural dynamism of Brussels, making the cultural centre a focal point and catalyst for contemporary creativity in Brussels. Over and beyond its intrinsic interest and importance, Kanal-Centre Pompidou must promote the revitalisation and regeneration of this area and renew the links between the two banks of the Canal.

Quotation from **Rudi Vervoort**, Minister - President of the Brussels-Capital Region:

“A Romanesque crucifix was not a sculpture to begin with, Cimabue's Madonna was not a painting to begin with, even Phidias' Pallas Athene was not a statue to begin with. The role museums play in our relationship with artworks is so important that we find it hard to realise that they do not exist and have never existed.”

These are the opening words of André Malraux's “Le Musée Imaginaire”. Malraux's line of thinking could be developed still further on the occasion of this press update on the Citroën Museum project.

Before being selected to host this project, this magnificent place, this garage which impresses the city's inhabitants and visitors alike with its size and its surprising architecture which is so emblematic of its era, was not a museum, and maybe not even a work of art.

And yet it is certainly those things now; and it is also one of the achievements of which my Government is proudest. Because through it, we will give a boost to tourism and cultural activities in Brussels. '

Quotation from **Serge Lasvignes**, President of the Centre Pompidou:

'The Centre Pompidou is an open place, born of an ambition for art and for creativity. Since 1977, it has reached out to the public, promoting encounters with every form of artistic expression.. As a key multidisciplinary cultural centre, it has helped define France's position in an open, global art scene; it has emerged as an interface with a fast-changing society; it has embodied a new model for an institution, invigorated by cross-fertilisation between different artistic disciplines; it has represented a new developmental direction, between historic district and urban transformation. On all these levels, it has become the driving force of a new cultural approach, working with the city, the public, the artists and the world. This is the experience that the Centre Pompidou wishes to share today with Brussels and its region, by participating with passion in the creation of an innovative and multidisciplinary cultural centre.

As part of a network including both the most important museums and the new actors of art and culture, the Centre Pompidou contributes to the cultural fabric around the world, especially in the most active settings, such as here in Brussels, Europe's capital, a place entirely open to global diversity. To ensure the success of this approach, it seeks to work closely with each of its partners to develop offerings in conjunction with the local artistic scene. Such offerings are the fruit of experimentation, research, and work based on relationship and dialogue. The mobile Centre Pompidou which was set up for two months in Saudi Arabia, presenting the first exhibition of modern and contemporary international art in that part of the world, was a key experience. The same is true today of our cultural engineering consultancy work in connection with the Abu Dhabi Louvre. The Centre Pompidou Malaga, meanwhile, represents a first experiment with a temporary set-up to deploy the collection, engage in exchanges with the Spanish cultural scene and showcase our wide-ranging expertise. Along the same lines, plans are under development to set up a Centre Pompidou in Shanghai. For the future, our ambition is to come up with different collaborations in different artistic settings, working in each case with the actors present in the local region, just as we are doing right now here in Brussels. '

2/ THE PROJECT

2.1 THE SITE: THE FORMER CITROËN GARAGE

The Brussels-Capital Region purchased the former Citroën garage, built in 1934 by the French architect Maurice-Jacques Ravazé, in collaboration with the Belgian architects Alexis Dumont and Marcel Van Goethem, as the site for a major cultural project.

Openness, transparency, flexibility, horizontality, functionality and light are important aspects of the design of this building which, for a time, was the largest garage in Europe. This huge complex, extending over 1.6 hectares of land, is a cathedral of glass, steel and concrete, and closely reflects the modernist spirit of the time. The garage's history is also one of close ties with France: it was the last construction project to have been commissioned by André Citroën himself.

Located at the intersection of Place de l'Yser and Quai de Willebroeck, the garage benefits from excellent visibility and good accessibility, close to the Canal and the historic centre of Brussels. With a total floor space of 37,000 m², it is structured around a monumental 7,200 m² showroom with ceilings 21 m high. The workshops and offices measure 24,000 m² and 5,800 m² respectively.

After a period of redevelopment, this new and vast cultural space will host the new cultural centre. The museum of modern and contemporary art should extend over 15,000 m², CIVA over 10,000 m², and the interdisciplinary and educational cultural public spaces over 10,000 m².

2.2 AN INTERNATIONAL ARCHITECTURE COMPETITION

The site's redevelopment is currently the subject of an international architecture competition. Ninety-two projects were submitted in spring 2017, and seven finalists were short-listed in July 2017.

Each of the seven short-listed candidates was invited to present its project to an international panel; after deliberating, the panel will announce the winner of the competition in March 2018.

Selection panel:

Chair: Roger DIENER (CH) Architect

Guest experts:

Patrick BERGER (FR) Architect

Sofia VON ELLRICHSHAUSEN (CHL) Architect

Members:

Serge Lasvignes, President of the Centre Pompidou

An architect representing CIVA (International Centre for Urbanism, Architecture and Landscape)

The Project Coordinator of the Government of the Brussels-Capital Region for the creation of the Cultural Centre

The Chief Architect of the Brussels-Capital Region

The management of SAU-MSI (Urban Development Corporation)

The management of BUP-BSE (Brussels Urban Planning and Heritage)

The seven short-listed candidates

1) 51N4E (Belgium) / **CARUSO ST JOHN ARCHITECTS** (United Kingdom)

- 2) **ADVVT** (Belgium) / **AGWA** (Belgium) / **6A** (United Kingdom)
- 3) **DILLER SCOFIDIO + RENFRO** (United States) / **JDS ARCHITECTS** (Belgium)
- 4) **LHOAS & LHOAS** (Belgium) / **ORTNER & ORTNER** (Germany)
- 5) **NOA** (Belgium) / **EM2N** (Switzerland) / **SERGISON BATES** (United Kingdom)
- 6) **OFFICE** (Belgium) / **CHRIST & GANTENBEIN** (Switzerland)
- 7) **OMA** (Netherlands) / **WESSEL DE JONGHE** (Netherlands)

2.3 TIMETABLE

//October 2015

Purchase of the Citroën Yser building by the Brussels-Capital Region

//April 2017

Launch of the international architecture competition

//January 2018

Citroën relocates

//March 2018

Designation of the winner of the international architecture competition

//5 May 2018 – June 2019

Preliminary programme

//Autumn 2019

Work starts

3/ PRELIMINARY PROGRAMME

KANAL-CENTRE POMPIDOU

(5 May 2018 - June 2019)

For a year, a multidisciplinary programme will unfold in the vast spaces of the former Citroën garage, which stopped being used as a garage only recently and has been left largely as it was. Many of the artistic offerings will reflect the identity of the place - its unique aesthetic qualities, typical of the industrial architecture of the 1930s, but also the human and social history that is tangibly and intimately associated with the workshops and offices. Run with the need in mind for integration into the urban fabric and for dialogue with local partners, this preliminary year will provide access for a broad public, in a single location, to a varied cultural programme without precedent in Brussels.

A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMME THAT KEEPS PACE WITH THE BRUSSELS CULTURAL CALENDAR

Placed under the overall curatorship of Bernard Blistène, director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou, and discussed by a Scientific Steering Committee, the programme of activities and events is deliberately structured around the highlights of the Brussels calendar, such as the Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Design September or Performatik. It reflects the multidisciplinary dimension that characterises both the project supported by the Brussels-Capital Region and the Centre Pompidou itself. Given the conservation conditions offered by these 'raw' venues, the exhibitions will focus mainly on sculpture, installations, photography, film, video, design and architecture.

The moving image will be celebrated in particular through a programme of immersive exhibitions that will be presented on the top three floors of the former showroom. One of these will explore the notion of orientation – a subject which particularly resonates with the outsized proportions of this location.

With the same idea of prefiguring the future cultural centre, CIVA will present an architectural programme with a variety of different offerings, including exhibitions, the use of the reception areas of the building to design furniture intended for use by the public and in common areas, or the establishment of an applied construction workshop on the ground floor and first floor of the showroom.

Live shows will be central to the overall programme. Scenographic installations will be presented, such as *Beaubourg La Reine* by Sophie Perez and Xavier Boussiron: these will be brought to life by a regular programme of performances, concerts and shows. A number of projects developed in partnership with the organisations involved in the creation of live shows in Brussels will present performances and new pieces inspired by the history and architecture of the garage, as a place that meets the requirements of artistic creativity today. The venue will also host a rich and varied musical programme which will be developed with the big names of the Brussels music scene; in particular, contacts have been established with the AB, the Botanique and Flagey. Throughout this preliminary period, Kanal-Centre Pompidou must be a tool at the disposal of creative artists, offering spaces that are eminently suitable for the Brussels metropolitan context.

A PROGRAMME THAT REFLECTS ITS CONTEXT

The former Citroën garage is a gem of 1930s industrial architecture in Brussels, but also carries the memory of a history of hard work. The programme of this preliminary year is built around these two essential points.

Exhibitions will nestle in each area of the site, offering the visitor a cultural route and a walk through this extraordinary building at the same time. The aesthetic qualities of the site, which are particularly evident on the first floor of the workshop, will be highlighted by the presence of large-scale works such as Jean Prouvé's *Maison tropicale*, Toyo Ito's *PAO II*, Buckminster Fuller's *Radôme* or Ross Lovegrove's *le Pavillon*, all from the collections of the Musée National d'Art Moderne-Centre Pompidou, which will be presented as structures to welcome the public. These major pieces will form the basis of an ad hoc programme. The presentation of the *Maison tropicale* will stimulate broader reflection on colonialism.

In situ performances and shows created in partnership with operators from the live show season in Brussels, especially in the fields of dance and performance, will also take the measure of space.

The garage's social history will be evoked through a series of exhibitions which will be set in various work spaces – workshops, offices, kitchens, cloakrooms – and revive their functions. Thus, as early as May 2018, the body shop will host a huge exhibition of sculptures and metallic environments, including some of the masterpieces of the collection of the Musée National d'Art Moderne, by the likes of Alexander Calder, Robert Rauschenberg and Martin Kersels. Likewise, the administrative area will be the setting for a series of exhibitions reflecting on its former functions.

More broadly, the garage's urban setting will be taken into account through the implementation of artistic offerings designed to draw in a wide range of communities. For example, the 'Amateur Film Factory'¹ could be installed for a year on the ground floor of the workshop. This superb device for strengthening social ties and bringing artistic creativity closer to the general public would invite people in the Brussels region to come and make their own films in the poetical world of filmmaker Michel Gondry.

A PROGRAMME ROOTED IN THE BRUSSELS ARTISTIC SCENE

Throughout this preliminary year, a series of commissions awarded to ten artists living and working in Brussels will be gradually unveiled. The artists' projects will be designed to reflect the preliminary programme and the architecture of the place. The projects will be selected by a panel including Bernard Blistène, Laurent Busine, Philippe Van Den Bossche and various Belgian cultural actors. The list of ten selected projects will be revealed in January, and the Foundation Kanal will oversee their production. The plan is that all projects will be presented once the cultural centre has opened. In this way a start will be made on forming a collection for the future Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of the Kanal-Centre Pompidou project.

In addition, numerous artistic offerings will be produced in partnership with various operators from the Brussels cultural scene, such as the Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Flagey, the Botanique, the Kaaithheater, la Raffinerie, the Beurschouwburg, Ancienne Belgique and so on. These *in situ* projects will highlight the cultural centre's future role as a venue that is open to the diversity of contemporary practices and that gives Brussels the international platform it needs for a Region that is the capital of the European Union.

¹ <http://www.usinedefilmsamateurs.com>.

4/ The Centre Pompidou

The Centre Pompidou is a French public administrative institution overseen by the Ministry of Culture and Communication. Featuring iconic architecture designed by Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers, it was opened in 1977. The Centre Pompidou brings together in a single venue one of the world's most important museums, holding Europe's leading collection of modern and contemporary art, cinemas and shows, educational spaces and a research library on 20th and 21st century art. It is associated with a public reading library and a music research institute (IRCAM).

With more than 120,000 works, the Centre Pompidou holds one of the world's leading collections of 20th and 21st century art. From its large historical collections to its more recent acquisitions, it covers the fields of the visual arts, the graphic arts, photography, new media, experimental cinema, architecture, design and industrial foresight.

A platform for exchanges between society and contemporary artists, the Centre Pompidou is a popular venue which receives more than 3 million visitors a year. Its mission is to reach an ever wider audience, offering access to the latest contemporary creativity and forming close ties with the artists.

Today the public is invited to experience the Centre Pompidou in various places:

- Centre Pompidou Metz since 2010
- Centre Pompidou Malaga since 2015

A partnership is being finalised in Shanghai.