

## Renzo Piano World Tour 2019: like Piano's career, the journey starts from the Beaubourg

discovering the Ens Paris-Saclay construction site and Renzo Piano's office at Le Marais

*The six young architects set off on their 40-day trip around the world. We meet at the start of their great adventure and discuss architecture with them in front of the Centre Pompidou, visit the office on Rue des Archives and follow Renzo Piano's advice on the building site of the École Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay.*

published on 03.07.2019

Paris, on June the 20th, marked the start of this year's Renzo Piano World Tour, the great journey around the world now in its third edition that took six young architects to look at and explore masterpieces in the history of modern and contemporary architecture.

We went to meet **Valentina, Andrea, Raül, Lukas, Renos** and **Paul Antoine** in person. Then, together, on the first two days of this adventure, we took an almost symbolic journey that led us to discuss architecture and expectations in front of the Centre Pompidou. After which we met Renzo Piano in his office at the Rue des Archives and followed his advice on the first leg of the journey: the construction site of the École Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay.

### RENZO PIANO WORLD TOUR 2019

promoted by [Fondazione Renzo Piano](#), [Stavros Niarchos Foundation](#), [Fundación Botín](#), [Selvaag Gruppen](#), [Vitra Design Foundation](#), [Taschen Publications](#) in conjunction with [ProViaggiArchitettura](#), [Habitat 2020](#), [Lettera22](#) e [professionearchitetto.it](#)



## Centre Pompidou. The journey begins where it all began



photo Elisa Scapicchio © professionistaarchitetto.it | 19.06.2019 at the Centre Pompidou  
waiting for Valentina ... with Raúl, Eirinaios, Lukas, Paul Antoine and Andrea

We first meet the six protagonists of the RPWT 2019 on the square of the Beaubourg. In the shadow of that revolutionary architecture, 166 metres long and 42 high, which marked the start of Renzo Piano's career, we discover the travellers' profiles, different yet complementary. We find they're ready to steal as many ideas as possible from what all six agree in describing as a matchless experience.

We exchange the first words with the young people then look up to scan the tangle of immense coloured ducts that distinguish the façade. They look pleased on observing the multiple inclusive uses of the square, with children free to run about, eager tourists and groups of people who have come out for a break after work.

A living and dynamic space, difficult to imagine for anyone who has studied it only in photographs. It now becomes the first trial of the young architects' powers of description. They have the task of **sharing the experience**, as in previous editions, through **short texts, photographs and drawings in their sketchbooks**.

#### PROTAGONISTS OF THE RPWT 2019

**2 groups, 2 different itineraries, with Paris, New York, Entebbe and Genoa in common**

**Heading for Japan: Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul-Antoine**

**Valentina** (25), the youngest of the group, comes from Syracuse and has just completed a work experience in her father's studio. Hers is the profile of a theorist. She loves writing about architecture and hopes to enrol for a PhD. She has travelled widely, above all in Italy, except for two month-long stays in Morocco and Britain.

**Paul-Antoine** (26) has already had numerous formative and professional experiences abroad. He has studied in Paris, Hong Kong and Oslo, where he now works, after a three-month internship in Copenhagen with BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group. Widely travelled, he has already visited almost all the countries on the tour and is looking forward to completing his personal map of architectural works seen.

**Eirinaios** (27) is from Kos. He has studied and lived in Athens for 9 years now. He is fascinated by the most artisanal aspects of architecture and currently works for a firm that designs private housing. He has travelled little to date and is eager to discover Japan.

**Heading for Australia: Andrea, Raúl and Lukas**

**Andrea** (26) hails from Treviso and is a researcher at the University of Padua. He is interested in projects in the existing heritage and graduated with a thesis on roofing for an archaeological site. His university years instilled in him a markedly engineering vision of the project and it is this point that he wants to explore on the tour.

**Raúl** (26) lives in Valencia, where he works for an office that specialises in structures. His vision of architecture is technical, focused on detailing and constructional solutions, which he likes drawing, recording them in his sketchbook.

**Lukas** (29) is the eldest of the group. After graduating from Munich his work took him to Berlin. He loves photography and of course travel. After studying abroad on an Erasmus grant in Valencia, he visited Australia, Colombia and Turkey, among other countries.

### The encounter with Milly and Renzo Piano and the RPBW in the Rue des Archives

Next morning in the Marais, the street-front window of the atelier de maquette (model workshop) shows we have reached our destination. This is an important stage on the tour, the cradle of most of the RPBW projects and the official start of the Renzo Piano World Tour 2019. We cross the threshold of the firm's historic Parisian branch, where we're welcomed by the **architect Milly Rossato Piano**, director of educational programs and conservation of the Renzo Piano Foundation's archive.

Sitting around a table in the bright patio-library, Milly reminds us of the importance of exchanges between cultures of different countries and sharing experiences. "Today," she stresses, "it's easy to share these experiences, so from the very first year we asked for a day-by-day account." This year the travellers will also have two video cameras they can use.

"During the construction of the Beaubourg," Milly Piano recounts, "Renzo met Rossellini, who advised him, 'Don't look at the building; look at the faces of the people looking at the building.' So now we're very interested to see these buildings through the eyes of a group of young architects."



The account of an architecture and of sharing is a very important theme for the Foundation. For years it has been committed to preserving and making available its rich collection of drawings, sketches, documents and models that record more than fifty years of work by Renzo Piano and the RPBW.

In keeping with the mission of the Piano Foundation, special emphasis is laid on visiting the building sites, which are far more numerous this year. The young architects, guided by an architect, will discover in detail the RPBW's architecture and the construction sites still active. *"It is of course interesting to study a project, read the drawings, understand what was behind it," says Milly "But being able to visit a building is certainly different, because it enables us to understand things a drawing fails to convey. And there are not many opportunities to visit a construction site today."*

The tour of the office continues. Drawings of plans, sections and construction details pattern the vertical surfaces of the studio. The RPBW team explain some of the projects on display, the design method, the materials and technical solutions adopted. They illustrate the models made in the workshop and the parametric models for managing complex structures. Everyone is struck by *"the meticulousness with which the constructional details are studied, the mindset that nothing is too difficult to be built. You just have to know how,"* says Valentina. The design process of each work starts from a single sketch and is completed with a model on a scale of 1:1.

### A meeting with Renzo Piano

In Rue des Archives 34, Renzo Piano has the last word. After shaking hands all round and encouraging the architects as they prepare to set off, he surprises them with a question: "Have you got a measuring tape with you? You have to measure things," he continues, "because measuring means knowing!"

This wraps up the morning in the Rue des Archives. The suggestion will be immediately put into practice on the next stage of the day, the ENS Paris-Saclay construction site.

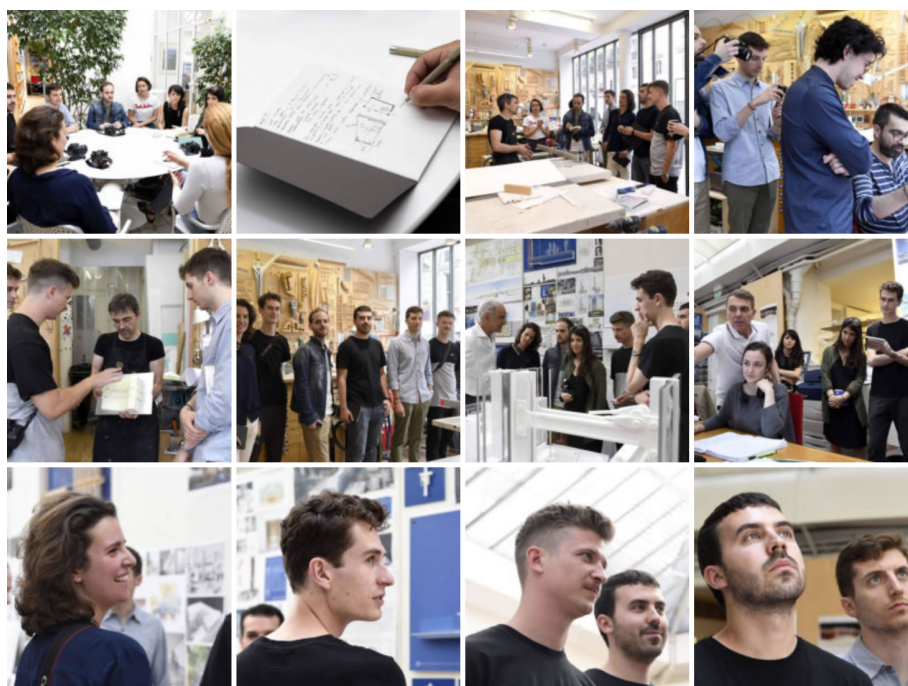


photo gallery Francesca Avanzinelli © Fondazione Renzo Piano

## Construction site of the École Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay

From the Centre Pompidou, a leap of over 40 years takes us full circle, bringing us to one of the RPBW's latest buildings under construction. The **Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay, winner of the BIM d'Or 2015** (a prestigious French accolade for the most distinguished project for the innovative use of BIM systems), is the first of the numerous site visits on the RPWT '19.

Just as in 1977 the Centre Pompidou marked the great change in the conception of museum use, so here, a few kilometres outside Paris, albeit with new tools and new technologies, the design goal remains the same: to **create to a place capable of creating inclusive connections with the city.**

**Jean-Bernard Mothes** (associate and project manager) and **David Bricard** (project architect) show us over the site, starting from the large central park covering over one hectare all the way up to the fifth and topmost level.

The outstanding structure, set within a broader complex comprising Rem Koolhaas's École Centrale/Supélec, housing by LAN architecture and the Lieu de Vie by the Studio Muoto, is notable for its outstanding concern with sustainability, from natural ventilation to the innovative heating system and passive cooling, subjects of great interest to the group members.

Strolling along the paths in this immense construction site, between the areas nearly completed and those still to be finished, arouses great enthusiasm in the visitors, who are busy photographing all the details. With Piano's advice still echoing, the young architects turn their attention to lengths, spans and technical details.



photo Elisa Scapicchio © professionearchitetto.it



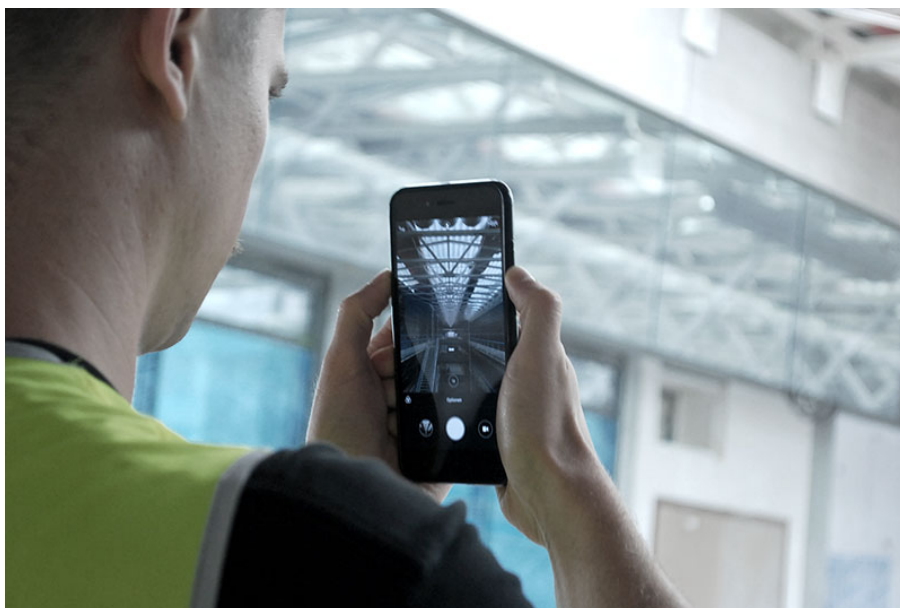


photo Elisa Scapicchio © professione architetto.it

## the tour continues...

on instagram [@rpwt\\_40days](#)

on facebook [@rpwt40days](#)

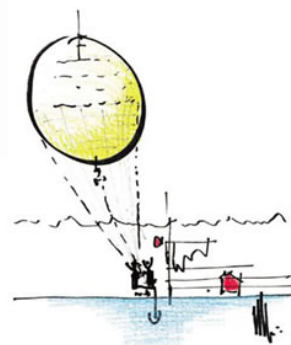
RPWT 2019  
**Renzo Piano World Tour in 40 days**  
Award Art of Construction: the importance of structural details



**vitra.**

**TASCHEN**

**SELVAAG**



© ALL RIGHTS RESERVED