



Ronchamp Monastery Guesthouse | RPBW project | Photo by Lukas Kaufmann

Renzo Piano World Tour 2019 [in progress] Looking towards Europe

A few days ago, the European itinerary of the 6 young architects came to an end after a visit to Paris, many flights and different cities. One group landed in Oslo, Athens and Amsterdam, the other travelled to Switzerland via Ronchamp, Bern and Rhein, before heading to Santander and finally London. The story of the journey is told through shots, drawings and notes in their notebooks.

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Marcel Proust said that *"the real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes"*. And the eyes of Andrea, Raúl, Lukas, Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul Antoine, "armed" with Moleskine pads, coloured pencils, cameras and video cameras, are ready to capture every detail.



photo Elisa Cavaglion © professionearchitetto.it | at the Pathé Foundation

It is no coincidence that pillars of architecture such as Le Corbusier or Louis Kahn found their greatest inspiration during their travels. One of them, still a student, followed a *Grand Tour* itinerary for four years—from 1907 to 1911—to discover Europe, and drew everything that made an impression on him, from archaeological ruins to landscapes, to the details that we find reinterpreted in his architecture. The other undertook his "journey" in a more mature phase of his life; Kahn was already fifty years old when he arrived in Italy, thanks to being awarded the *Rome Prize*, and it was from this very visit, and from the observation of Mediterranean architecture, that his career as a designer hit a turning point.

But let's go back to the young people, who have already documented some of the most beautiful contemporary architecture in Paris, Ronchamp, Bern, Basel, Santander, London, Oslo, Athens and Amsterdam, amidst iconic architecture, exceptional guides, lost and found luggage, different temperatures and varying hours of light.

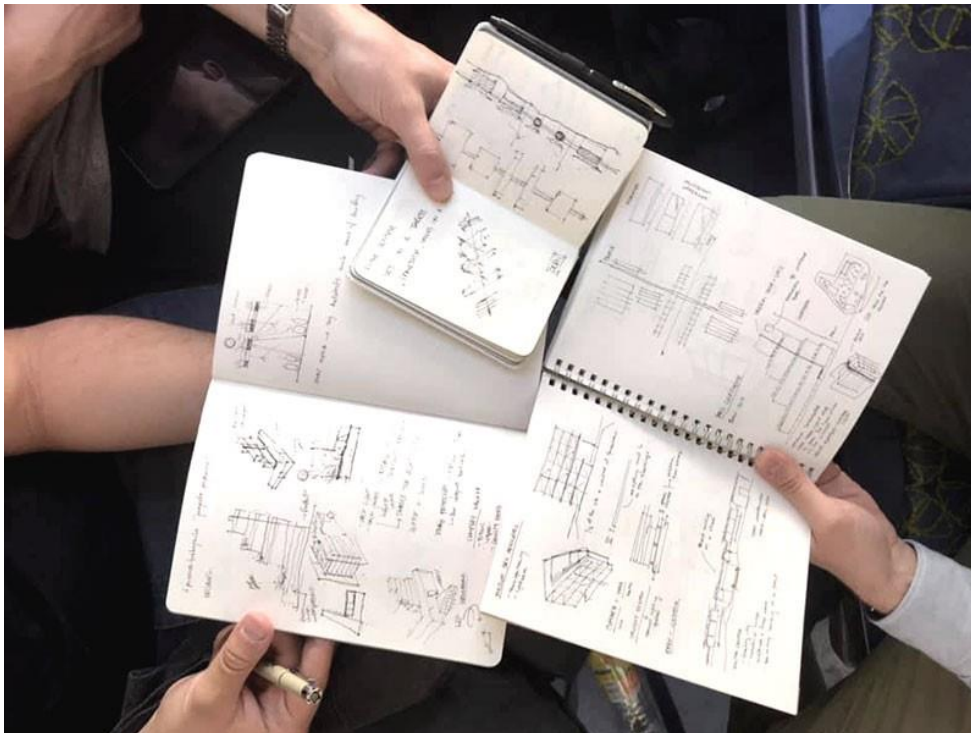


photo © Renzo Piano Foundation

* with the *quotation* we report the exact words of the youngsters and their impressions about the architecture

Paris, among construction sites and new symbols of the city

We left the young architects at the [Ens Paris-Saclay construction site](#). And the following day, for them there was another visit to an RPBW building under construction, the [MOdA - Maison de l'ordre des avocats](#), among the structural details and the lightness and transparency of the glass. This is followed by a guided tour of the [Tribunal de Paris](#), inaugurated last year, where the three superimposed volumes contain an intricate system of routes that allows the differentiation of three categories of audience.

Not to be missed was a visit to the [Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé Foundation](#), *"a heart-shaped building"* that tells the story of the homonymous film company in *"a modern metal shell with a soft wooden core"*.

And finally, two symbols of Le Corbusier's architecture - the Immeuble Molitor and Villa Savoye, different examples of the concept of residential space, which mark the end of the French stage and the separation of the youngsters who will follow two different routes: [Switzerland, Spain and England](#) and [Norway, Greece, and Holland](#).



Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé Foundation



Bye bye Paris by Eirinaios, Valentina, Andrea, Lukas, Raúl waiting for Paul Antoine

The first stage. From Switzerland to Norway

While **Andrea**, **Raúl**, and **Lukas** take the first plane to **Switzerland**, **Valentina**, **Eirinaios** and **Paul Antoine** have a longer and "higher" flight. Arriving in **Norway** is a bit like *"landing in another world soaked in greenery, with a much calmer pace of life, and a sun that shines in a very different way"*. And it's no surprise hearing this from the youngsters, considering it's still light at 11pm!

The trip to [Switzerland](#) engages the first group in a visit to **Ronchamp**, where sister Maggy Léonard guides the youngsters through the bright surroundings of the [Monastère Sainte-Claire](#). Nestled in the hill, where *"everything is built in relation to the context"*, the monastery stands at a lower altitude than the LeCorbusian chapel of **Notre Dame Du Haut**, a timeless masterpiece *"with those curved walls that seem almost to embrace the visitor."*

The [Belfort-Basilea-Riehen](#) route leads to the [Fondation Beyeler](#), a building designed by RPBW to house one of the most enviable art collections in the world. Then we head for [Bern](#), for the [Zentrum Paul Klee](#), *"a sculpture in the landscape"* that is evocative of the poetic traits of the artist to whom it is dedicated.

And finally, before changing the subject, the last stop is in [Weil-am-Rhein](#) to visit the [Vitra Campus](#), where, in a compact planimetric surface, the architectures of Zaha Hadid, Tadao Ando, Frank Gehry, Herzog & de Meuron and Álvaro Siza, SANAA, Jean Prouvé and other world-famous architects are masterfully concentrated.



Lukas and Sister Maggy Léonard,
an exceptional guide when visiting the Monastère Sainte-Claire

No less impressive a trip for Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul Antoine, guided in [Oslo](#) by **Ole Gustavsen** of the **Snøhetta** studio who accompanies them in the fascinating spaces of the

AHO - Oslo School of Architecture and Design and the Holmenkollbakken (by JDS Architects)—the extraordinary architectural work *"that stands out against the city like a light steel ribbon"*—and in the white **Opera House** *"an iceberg that emerges from the sea, uniting landscape and building"*.

Between the **Vigeland Park**, the two industrial buildings of **DogA** and **Setralen** (recently converted into exhibition and meeting spaces) and the headquarters of **Gyldendal**, there is also the **Astrup Fearnley Museet**, consisting of three pavilions, joined by a single glass roof in the shape of a sail. A continuous reference to the maritime environment, amongst columns of intertwined steel cables—which recall the masts of boats—and the silver-grey coating that evokes the stormy sea.



RPBW, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo | photo Valentina Macca © Renzo Piano Foundation

Stage two. Major centres of culture, from Spain to Greece

After a trip with a stopover in Madrid (including losing suitcases, which were fortunately found) here emerges, in unity with the treetops of the nearby Pereda gardens, the [Botín Center](#) of RPBW in [Santander](#): on the ground floor, an open space connects the old town with the sea, on which the two imposing volumes dedicated to art and cultural activities stand out, connected by the *Pachinko*, a structure of squares and walkways, which leads to the roof terrace *"to enjoy a unique view of Santander and its bay"*.



RPBW, Botín Center, Santander | photo Lukas Kaufmann

At the same time, the second group, travelling south, leaves Oslo to arrive in [Athens](#). A building similar in concept and function to the Botín Centre, the [Stavros Niarchos Cultural Centre](#), awaits them. The great architectural work designed by RPBW overlooking the Saronic Gulf is a magnificent gift to the city, and also houses the **National Library of Greece** and the **Greek National Opera**.

Eirinaios is on home ground here; he takes his colleagues on a tour of the Acropolis and inside Bernard Tschumi's **New Acropolis Museum**, walking through the "forest of statues and relics of ancient times, a building full of natural light that seems to give life to the exhibitions".



The youngsters at the entrance of the Stavros Niarchos Cultural Centre, RPBW, Athens

Stage three. From London skyscrapers to the Dutch Science Museum

In the last European stage, the imposing **The Shard** welcomes the youngsters to the **London capital**, *"like a beautiful piece of glass immersed in the skyline, with ever-changing reflections of the sky and the surrounding buildings"*. A privileged view, which frames the urban layout of the city and its *"obvious mix of old and new architecture"*, from which you can also see in the distance the colourful **St. Giles Court**, the building of apartments and private offices, set in a public square.

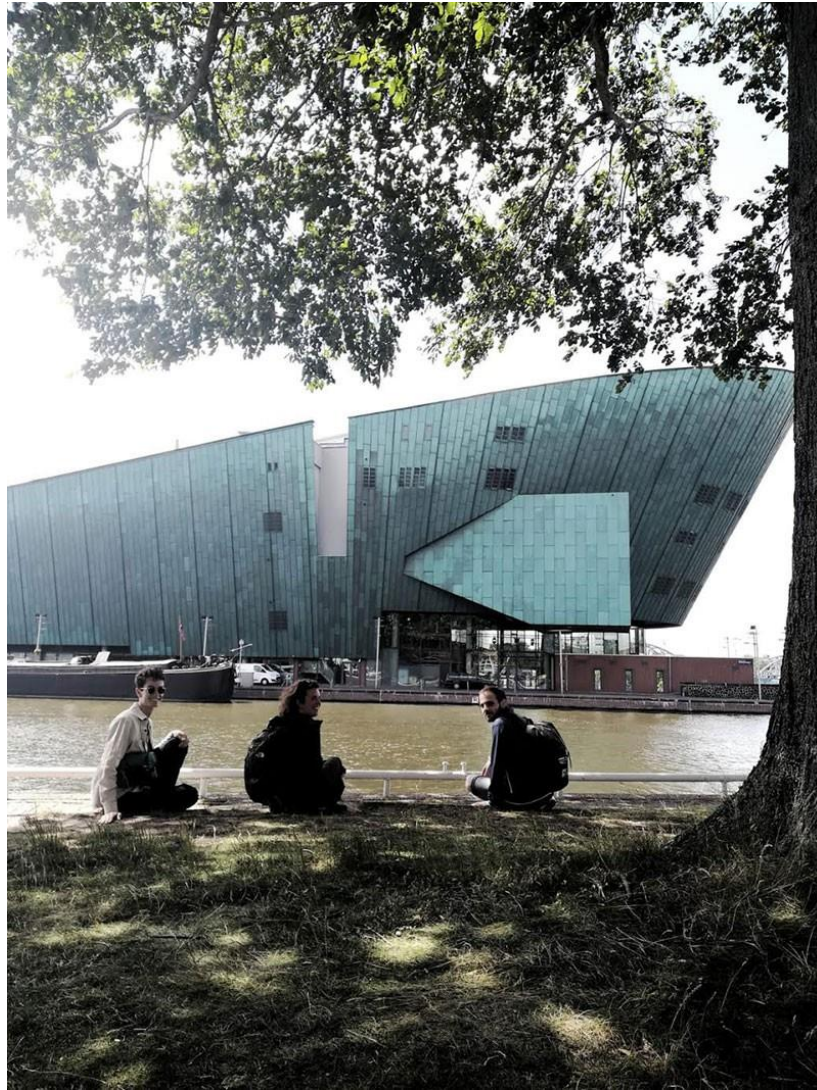
In **Amsterdam**, Valentina, Eirinaios and Paul-Antoine, on the other hand, like real Dutch cyclists, follow an itinerary full of architectural works marked out on the map: after the Rijksmuseum, the Van Gogh Museum and the Stedelijk Museum, RPBW's **NEMO** appears, *"a building covered in aged copper that looks like a giant ship detached from the pier"*.



RPBW, The Shard, London



Eirinaios, Valentina and Paul Antoine at the NEMO with Allard and the other team members



Paul Antoine, Valentina and Eirinaios in front of the NEMO, RPBW, Amsterdam

The European stages are over but, as Schopenhauer says, *"when we are travelling: one month seems longer than the four spent at home"*.

Coming soon, news from Australia and Japan!

Europe | RPBW architectures visited

France PARIS • [MOdA Maison de l'ordre des avocats](#) [in progress] • [Tribunal de Paris](#) [2018] • [Jérôme Seydoux-Pathé Foundation](#) [2006-2014]

Switzerland • [Ronchamp Gatehouse and Monastery](#), RONCHAMP [2006-2011] • [Zentrum Paul Klee](#), BERN [1999-2005] • [Fondation Beyeler](#), RIEHEN [1991-1997]

Norway OSLO • [Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art](#) [2006 - 2012]

Spain SANTANDER • [Botín Centre](#) [2010-2017]

Greece ATHENS • [Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center](#) [2008-2016]

England LONDON • [The Shard](#) [2009-2012] • [Central St. Giles Court](#) [2002-2010]

Holland AMSTERDAM • [NEMO](#) (National Center for Science and Technology) [1992-1997]

the journey continues...

on instagram [@rpwt_40days](#)

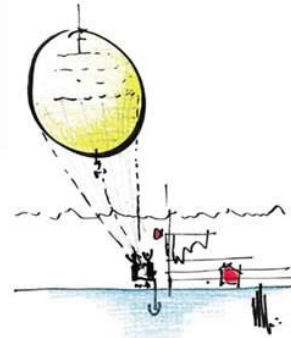
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RENZO PIANO WORLD TOUR 2019

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RPWT 2019 Renzo Piano World Tour in 40 days

Award Art of Construction: the importance of structural details



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