

Site Analysis

Out of three very interesting, yet quite different places in downtown Brussels, we decided to work on the Putterie Square. On the contrary to the very majestic Jardin de l'Albertine and the prominent forecourt to the impressive cathedral Saints-Michel & Gudule, the area in front of the Central Station is not clearly labelled. Although it is an important transition zone to some of the major tourist sights of the city, it lacks clear orientation. Coming from the historic centre one would naturally pass by without paying much attention. Also, when entering the square via the train station one is pretty unoriented. If not familiar with the city, one will not naturally know where to go.

The Putterie Square cannot compete with the cosy atmosphere of Downtown Brussels' narrow streets with their restaurants and cafés. It also cannot refer to such representative design that one can find at many other places in the city. The square appears as a grey transition zone, a place one passes through. Naturally it will have a more friendly appearance in the summer, but still one misses colours besides the brown and green tones of the planted trees.

Nevertheless, there lies an opportunity within the structure of the site. While it lacks representative architecture, it does not get crushed under the weight of monumental shapes. It isn't over-designed to the point that one is afraid of sitting down on a bench. The Putterie Square is an important gate to the city, yet it looks very unpretentious which makes it likeable. In our opinion, it is the perfect site to create a friendly, light design in opposition to the heaviness of the two other proposed sites. The square needs an artistic highlight that serves for orientation and makes the people identify with the place and the city.

Statement of Intention

.What

We are proposing an installation of ten colored plexiglass boards for the Putterie Square, guiding the way from the Central Station to the historic city centre. Using the colors of the national flags of the EU member states, the boards throw colored shadows across the alley, that vary over the day. Each board contains one letter, together they form the phrase "BRUXELLES »". The installation emphasises the colorful role of Brussels as home to many different people, cultures, languages and the capital of Belgium and the European Union.

.Why

The Putterie Square is a highly frequented transition zone to Brussels' historic city centre. Although at a quite prominent location, it lacks labelling, colors and orientation. There is no indication of where you are in the city or what path to choose. With our installation we react to these needs. When entering the square from the Central Station, one will now be welcomed by a light, colorful installation that guides the way towards the city centre. The different colours represent the variety of Brussels with its rich cultural life, many different nationalities, languages and institutions as well as the European Union with Brussels as its capital city. Depending on the position of the sun, the form and direction of the coloured shadows change over the day, taking up the drive of the people passing by. In opposition to the monumental design of many other squares in Brussels, we create a light and friendly urban intervention, that does much more justice to the mentality of the cities inhabitants.

.How

A composition of ten colored plexiglass sheets, held by a L-shaped steel frame in black matt will be placed at Putterie Square along the path from the exit of the Central Station to the historic city centre. With their angles changing over the distance, the passer-by will eventually be able to connect the big letters to the phrase "BRUXELLES »" As the sunlight touches the boards, they throw coloured shadows across the alley.

Resumé

A composition of ten coloured, transparent plexiglass boards will be installed at the Putterie Square, guiding the way to the historic city centre. Each board is laminated with a different coloured foil, containing one big letter. When walking from the Central Station towards the city centre, the passer-by will eventually see the reflection of the phrase “BRUXELLES >>” in the sunlight. A former grey and uninviting site will now be highlighted by colourful shadows that change their shape and direction depending on the situation of the sun, taking up the drive of the people passing by. Influenced by the national colours of the EU member states, the installation emphasizes the diversity of Brussels as a home to many different nationalities, languages and institutions as well as the capital of the European Union with all its variety of cultures. The “Ode á la Couleur” is a light urban intervention that offers identification with a great European city.

Cost Calculation

.Construction , Transportation and Rights

all prizes including Swiss VAT (8%)

plexiglass sheets

10 Plexiglas sheets 2000 x 1200 x 20mm, 9500 CHF = 5930 €
laminated with transparent colorfoils

L-shaped frame structure 2000 CHF = 1250 €

10 angle sections, hot galvanized

10 steel sheets, hot galvanized

10 concrete bases with anchor rods

further material incl. Nuts and screws

lacquering

lacquering of the metal parts in black matt 500 CHF = 315 €

transportation

Zurich to Brussels incl. customs clearance 720 CHF = 450 €

rights of use for Rotis Semi Sans 65 Bold 42 €

SUM 7987 €

.Installation

aproximately 1 1/2h for two workers per board,

based on Swiss wage 300CHF per board 3000 CHF = 1900 €

Production and Installation Planing

.Production Details

The plexiglass sheets including the supporting holes will be produced, sized and laminated according to the technical drawings at "PERPLEX?", Zurich. The L-shaped frame structure of hot galvanized angle sections and steel sheets with factory-made holes, threads and neoprene support for the plexiglass sheets will be produced at "TANGEMANN AG", according to the technical drawings. The firm will also supply the concrete bases with fixed anchor rods as well as further material such as nuts, screws and supporting steel plates. All metal parts above ground will be lacquered in black matt at the paint shop of the Gebrueder Jenal AG in Valendas/ Switzerland.

The logisitcs and transportation company "Kuehne + Nagel AG" will transport all material from Zurich to the site at the Putterie Square in Brussels.

.Installation Details

For the installation of the plexiglass boards two workers will need approximately 1 1/2 hours per board. The cobblestones will need to be removed in an area of 1,5 x 0,5m, a hole of approximately 60cm depth will need to be dug in order for the concrete base to be placed in the ground. The lacquered and hot galvanized angle sections, supported by a metall sheet will then be fixed on the anchor rods using hexagon nuts. The cobblestones will be put back in place and the ground surface be restored. With the angle section being fixed and the ground tidied up, the plexiglass sheets can now be placed within its supporting structure. As one worker holds the sheet, the other worker can fix the screws, which connect the angle section with its steel plate counterpart, that form the L-shaped frame holding the plexiglass sheet.

Company Contact Details

.Plexiglass Sheets

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.Lacquering of the Steel Parts

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