

Istres is like Calvino's Venice. She has countless faces, with each one telling a different story.

She is a historic city. The urban texture expanded by the fortress-like city center divides the urban space, making the public space and green space fragmented. Thus, they are unable to be integrated into a site that attracts citizens.

She is a modern city. The rapid development of modern industry in the process of urban development has brought pollution and destruction to Lake Berre. The architectural form established to adapt to the surge in population is relatively simple, and public space cannot meet the requirements of a high-density population.

She is a city of the future. In the era of urban expansion of Marseille, it is necessary to use clearer sustainable urban planning strategies to form a charm different from other places, so as to increase the city's attractiveness, develop tourism, and drive the city's economy.

The site CEC is like this city. It has various faces and great potential.

It is a transportation hub

The scale and texture of the city contribute to the following characteristics of the site. It is very close to the city center while next to the Heures Claires Wharf, which is the main route for future water traffic. Consequently, it will be a landmark entrance to the city, and CEC will be the first stop for tourists to Istres.

It is the activity center.

Various activity centers are gathered here, with different functions. CEC has always been a utopia where young people gather.

It is the ecological center.

CEC is a transitional area from city to nature and connects the natural ecological corridor of the waterfront, presenting the potential to radiate green space to the inner streets of the city. It is also the starting point for us to call for the revival of Berre.

The digital age is an opportunity. It allows every city to stand on the same starting line again. Cities that can embrace the digital age more quickly would become homes for young people.

How can the site carry the memories of a new generation in the future, become a place where young people are willing to stay, and be the core of activating the city in the digital age?

The answer lies in ecology.

Given an increasingly severe issue in the process of globalization (also as an issue that can drive the tourism industry in the city where the site is located), we recommend that the site be used as a demonstration site to improve the water quality of the lagoon as well as an educational demonstration and public display. Thus, the site, and even the city, could become a demonstration of ecological improvement in South France.

Research has revealed that the planting of *Zostera marina* and microalgues in a small area can effectively improve the oxygen content of the lagoon and the air environment in the city. Therefore,

we use the building of the middle school to be relocated as a cultivation base for *Zostera marina* and microalgues needed to improve the ecology of the lagoon, as well as a corresponding exhibition and education demonstration center. The newly added digital totem enables the site to be visible at the far end of the city and digitally connected to people's mobile phones. As a result, people can see the progress of ecological improvement in real-time and even interact, and it would become a beacon of ecological improvement demonstration.

On the scale of the site, each building itself has set up fences to enclose its own exclusive outdoor space, making the relatively abundant public space of the base fragmented. The continuity on the main avenue is also visually interrupted.

Therefore, we propose to break the previously enclosed public spaces of each building and merge the fragmented spaces. Moreover, the extra lightweight large-scale plastic panels are adopted as the unified large-scale style of the site. These clearly defined large-scale public spaces are void while visually forming a sequence of large-scale public spaces with a unified style, just like the classic city plazas in traditional Roman cities. They can host various public events, such as outdoor art exhibitions, concerts, outdoor film screenings, markets, and venues for civic cultural events.

Finally, we connect the gentle roofs with lightweight planting roof and strolling platform. In this way, the north-south passage originally blocked by the building fence is reopened, and the planar and vertical spaces are integrated to form a coherent streamline covering the site.

We believe that the site will become the ecological core of the city, the core of public space, and the core of digitalization. It will continuously produce vitality to the city, even the entire Marseille region.