

Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada Le Journal de la Société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada



Researching the Productive Archive A Glance into Luc Laporte's Paper Architecture

Emilie Banville

Volume 46, numéro 1, 2021

Current Research on Architecture in Québec
État de la recherche en architecture au Québec

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1082358ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1082358ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

SSAC-SEAC

ISSN

1486-0872 (imprimé)

2563-8696 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Banville, E. (2021). Researching the Productive Archive: A Glance into Luc Laporte's Paper Architecture. *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada / Le Journal de la Société pour l'étude de l'architecture au Canada*, 46(1), 14–29. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1082358ar>

© SSAC-SEAC, 2021

Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

é
rudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

RESEARCHING THE PRODUCTIVE ARCHIVE

A Glance into Luc Laporte's Paper Architecture¹

> ÉMILIE BANVILLE

ÉMILIE BANVILLE is a Montréal-based architect currently pursuing a double doctorate in Museology at the Université du Québec à Montréal and in Architectural History and Theory at the Eindhoven University of Technology, where she is a member of the Curatorial Research Collective. Her research focuses on archival practices that challenge knowledge production in the curation of architecture. She is also editorial coordinator for the peer-reviewed magazine *Muséologies : Les cahiers d'études supérieures*, and secretary of the board of directors of Portrait Sonore, a non-profit cultural organization that produces immersive podcast documentaries about Canadian cities and their urban fabric. She previously worked at the Flanders Architecture Institute as an intern in 2017, and as an architect at Provencher Roy and Martin Vincent architecte (former Atelier Luc Laporte) from 2010 to 2016.

He would have wanted to live in Paris, around the 1900s. He would always eat in restaurants, would spend a few weeks in Paris every year, sometimes in Italy. It was the minimum he considered to be normal. He was twenty-six years old in 1970 when he traveled to Europe for the first time. He was struck, fascinated by the civility of its places, whether they were Parisian brasseries, Viennese cafés, Italian trattorias—open to all, accessible at the street level. He dreamed for Montréal of such mythical amenities. He dreamed for Montréal of a vivid social urbanity, of a frantic cultural scene. He dreamed for Montréal of a grand concert hall.²

This paper draws from research conducted in 2017-2018 into the archives of Montréal-based architect Luc Laporte [1942-2012]. It examines Laporte's paper architecture through the case of L'Étoile, an unbuilt project for a one-thousand-two-hundred-seat theatre in Montréal, while attempting to reflect on the dynamism of architectural archives for the critical analysis and (re)interpretation of architectural works. In addition, this paper introduces the notion of the "productive archive," conceptualized as a potential site to uncover latent discourses and implicit philosophies behind the genesis of an architecture practice. As instruments of translation *par excellence* of the architect's thinking mind, drawings and models constitute archival elements "capable of summoning memory, if not renewing it, and thus capable of approaching the black box of design processes."³



FIG. 1. LUC LAPORTE IN HIS STUDIO, 264 RUE DU SQUARE SAINT-LOUIS (2012). | © ANDRÉ CORNELLIER.

Delving in Laporte's archives meant inhabiting, for some time, his studio at 264 Rue du Square Saint-Louis, where his ideas and beliefs still rest on paper sheets and hard drives, on the walls and shelves, in memento boxes and drawers (see fig. 1).⁴ This studio was an extension of his home, just as his work was an extension of his life. He would come down at night to work, when the last friends were gone, and would go back up to sleep in the middle of the day if he felt like it. He lived there alone for most of his life. The inner space was prude and discreet, reminiscent of the modesty and clemency of an oyster-like domesticity. He liked solitude, and the silence of the tiny inner courtyard enclosed between the back of the house and the volume occupied by his atelier, a former stable. Quite an astonishing silence, for that matter; a quiet plot of land caught in the midst of a hectic city centre. But he also liked this urban frenzy teeming with restless souls. For fifteen years he would not own a fridge and, once he did, it would remain empty; he would never eat at home. And sometimes he would host big, festive dinners in the studio. Today, it almost seems like everything remained untouched, as if he had never left the place. Models and archives of built and unbuilt projects stay alive in this space-time capsule.

Luc Laporte worked as a respiratory therapist in a hospital when he started studying architecture in 1968 at the Université de Montréal. After graduating in 1972 and gaining professional experience within established firms such as Société La Haye et Ouellet, urbanistes et architectes (1973-1975), Gilles Bonetto architecte (1976), and Sankey Associates Architects (1977), he opened his own studio in 1978.⁵ A series of residential and commercial projects quickly consolidated Laporte's practice, forging and refining a

formal vocabulary through a rational use of materials and a clever reinterpretation of archetypes. His arched bay windows and narrow steel doors became his trademark, and his unwavering commitment to local and slow craftsmanship over industrial production has earned him recognition from both the public and the architectural community. A nod to the Parisian bistro, the restaurant L'Express, his very first professional assignment, nested in a typical Montréal triplex since 1980 on Saint-Denis Street, as well as the former "multistore" Le Lux (1983) and former restaurant Le Sam (1989), both located on Boulevard Saint-Laurent, already embodied at that time Laporte's sense of daily urbanity and liveliness, whether at a street level or on the scale of a neighbourhood.⁶ While some of his projects have been direct impetuses for urban revitalization, with a few having reached the rank of cultural institutions, all of them imbued the city with vitality through their reshuffled classicism, timelessness, and clarity.⁷

UNPACKING THE ARCHIVE: FROM OBJECT TO CONCEPT

"I am not interested primarily in the archival objects. I am interested in the archive as a process."⁸ As argued by archivist and theorist Eric Ketelaar, "the archive" discussed within this paper goes beyond its sole existence as a material object. Within the last decades of the twentieth century, the archive was indeed "reborn as the 'theoretical archive,' almost completely dissociated from organizational practice and characterized as a conceptual domain for many disciplines."⁹ The archive is thus much more than a dusty and captive object; it is an epistemological site where the past is not apprehended as finite history, but as a reshaped and repurposed experimental entity whose present is

undoubtedly fragmentary. This ontological repositioning is concerned with archiving as a process more than with archives as products or things.

The "conceptual" archive thus transcends its own instrumental and pragmatic quality of document or historical source and evidence. While some may believe that the architectural archive is limited to drawings and plans, it is the wealth of means by which it is illustrated—3D models, sketches, photographs, personal notebooks, correspondence, etc.—that makes it unique and indispensable for research.¹⁰ The hypothesis that led this inquiry is that the architectural archive, considered a material and conceptual whole, houses a latent discursive potential for knowledge production. This potential is enabled if the passive archive becomes active and, eventually, productive, inasmuch as it participates in building conceptual narratives around the genesis of an architectural work. We therefore presume that the archive opens the possibility for historiographic and epistemological, historical and theoretical revisions, and generates new or renewed interpretations of a research object. With paper architecture, the archive is of crucial importance because it is the unique remaining trace of ideas which, although limited to what-could-have-been, contribute nonetheless to enriching architecture culture. The researcher, intimately involved in its exploration, holds a critical position by becoming a catalyst in the passive archive's mutation into a productive one. Indeed, the very concept of the archive "emerges at the meeting point of a document and a user, just as archives as documentary sources are the tangible result of an action taken by their creator."¹¹ As such, an archive is never "given" but, according to philosopher Paul Ricoeur, "sought, constituted, instituted."¹²

Genetic Criticism, or Process over Product

In what follows, the case of L'Étoile will be examined through the lens of "genetic criticism," a critical methodology developed to study creative processes based on a work's archived documentation. This approach was deemed relevant for addressing this architectural project whose fate was frozen in space and time, with no physical witness to build upon. Since the focus of its analysis shifts from product to process, this method is framed as a potential way to make the archive productive. The object of inquiry is thus virtual, that is, strictly limited to the architectural project, whereas the means through which its interpretation is made possible, the archive, is actual and material.¹³

Just as an epistemological distinction can be made between an architectural "oeuvre" and an architectural "work," the term *project* is here understood as an evolutionary *process* rather than a simple *product* or result of this process.¹⁴ Depending on the richness of its contents, an archive will sometimes allow for a true "autopsy of the project," in its whole or at least in its key phase of design.¹⁵ Once archived, the design drawings embody much more than mere documents that bear witness to the creative act. As a "direct, total and sovereign expression of thought," they translate the first reflexive postures of the architect and highlight the project's genesis through the various iterations of its dynamic evolution.¹⁶ In the act of projecting architecture, therefore, pre-eminence is given to ideas and their gestation.

The approach of genetic criticism is based on the hypothesis that the oeuvre, in its final perfection, remains the effect

of its metamorphoses and contains the memory of its own genesis: "in literature, as well as in science or art, the result of creation is the tip of the iceberg, that is, the tiny perceptible part of an immense block whose base remains invisible. This submerged part is the one that geneticists are interested in."¹⁷ Born in the literary field and first applied to the saved manuscripts of writers such as Flaubert, Proust, Valéry, and Zola, genetic criticism soon migrated to other disciplines of a more graphic nature, such as cinema and photography. A thematic issue published in 2000 by the scientific journal *Genesis*, in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Architecture, was devoted to architecture and introduced the idea of a genetic architectural criticism inspired by the paradigm of genetic textual criticism. In architecture, the preparatory documents produced by the architect, namely design drawings, are the counterpart of the writer's draft manuscripts. They must first be placed in a chronological sequence in order to be meaningful for analysis. Perhaps they are even genetically more productive than the manuscripts, since their modes of representation are more varied in nature (plan, section, elevation, perspective, etc.), each revealing a distinct type of information. The archives of architectural creation are meant to redefine the conditions of research on the history and principles of architecture as profoundly as the genetic approach to texts has renewed the knowledge of writing practices and literary works.¹⁸ However, aside from the *Genesis* issue and a doctoral thesis submitted in 2005, very few scholarship has been dedicated to expanding the architectural branch of genetic criticism.¹⁹ The research conducted in Laporte's archives calls into question this academic status quo related to an approach which, notwithstanding, seems theoretically and practically promising.

The first stage of the genetic approach is devoted to the constitution of the "genetic file," that is, a chronologically ordered set of documents drawn from records that relate to the conception of the oeuvre—in the present case, the architectural project. Whether paper or digital, the archives of an architectural project are essentially made up of graphic documents (cartographic surveys, sketches, diagrams, corrective layers, plans, sections, elevations, perspectives, axonometric views, technical drawings, etc.), visual documentation (site photos, iconographic sources), technical documentation (material descriptions, commercial product catalogues, etc.), and three-dimensional representations (working mock-ups, presentation models).²⁰ After having carried out a complete inventory of the documents available, the researcher/geneticist must make a selection to define the genetic file, and register and describe every drawing, "each for itself and in its relations with those that precede it."²¹ The graphic traces of the project then become objects of interpretation which, according to the genetic terminology, will be referred to as "drafts," and be measured against various structuring variables known as "morphogenic entities" (M.E.). Whether they have to do with the recurrence within the specific genetic file of *generative principles* (formal and architectural composition), with the *project requirements* and the order in which constraints are addressed, or again with the involvement and persistence of *external references*, the morphogenic entities inform the project either spatially or conceptually.²²

Within the theoretical apparatus of genetic criticism, a distinction is made between two types of genesis, that is, *endo-genesis*, which in architecture can be traced in the design and construction documents, and *exo-genesis*, which

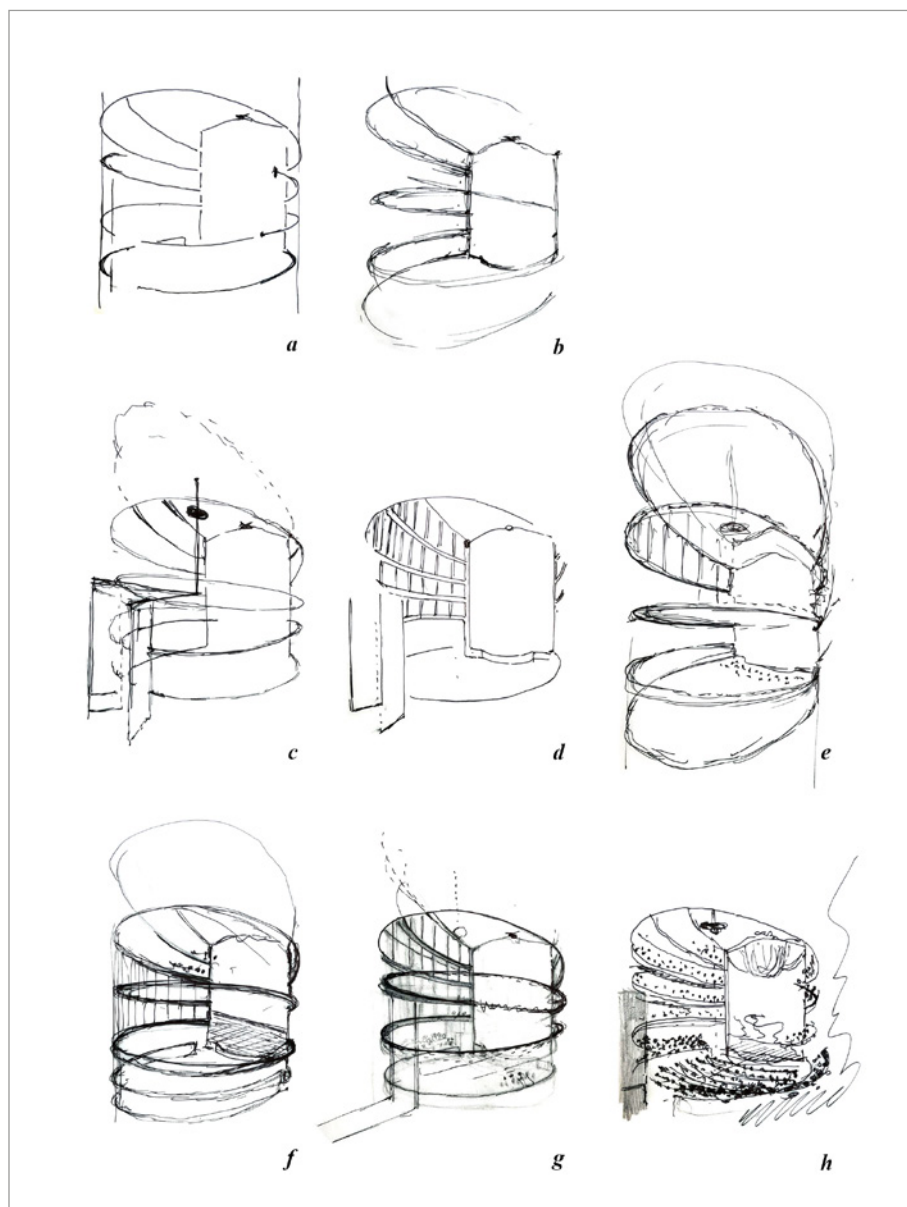


FIG. 2 (A TO H). EVOLUTION OF THE CORE DRAWING "A THEATRE LIKE AN OYSTER" (1986). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTOSHOP MONTAGE E. BANVILLE).

is related to the influence of references and material external to the design itself. However, for the purpose of this paper, both endo- and exo-geneses will be discussed indistinctly through an analysis rather structured around the three categories of morphogenic entities mentioned above.

L'ÉTOILE, OR THE ANATOMY OF AN OYSTER THEATRE

In the beginning there was only a shell. An empty shell. But we could already sense the contours of its elliptical shape, its multi-layered protective envelope, stratified, laminated, just like the bark of a tree [fig. 2-a].

Slowly, the outer flaps of the carapace would move away from each other, vertically sweeping the space around as if to swallow a bit of it [fig. 2-b]. At some point, a pair of tangential planes appeared, framing some kind of aperture facing the dilated hinge which formed the backdrop [fig. 12-c]. Within the breadth provided in between the overlaid oval hoops as they were stretching themselves out, a series of vertical divisions arrayed, drawing endless sequences of adjoining cells [fig. 2-d].

Later on, when the diaphragm of the shell seemed to have reached its acme, a cluster of tiny dots showed up on the inner side of the bottom flap [fig. 2-e]. We were not exactly sure what or who they were; it looked a bit like an impromptu gathering of nosy heads who would have just gotten the scoop on something that had yet to come. And from that moment on, the floor and the ceiling of the shell started to move again closer to one another. And the flat plane which hinged them both together suddenly grew into a volume, giving way to an extra floor, an elevated platform, shrunken, circumscribed, the same width as the backdrop it leaned on [fig. 2-f]. Boxes multiplied along the superimposed elliptical galleries, hugging each other tightly. In the vastness of the shell's belly, everything suddenly felt homely, velvety. Amplitude strangely gave way to coziness [fig. 2-g]. And then, there we were. Obscurity brightened, unveiling hundreds of tiny dots. Everywhere. In every one of those duplicate sheltered boxes up there, down there. On the shell's bottom flap, horseshoe shaped crowded surface. Even on the stage, which came to life in symbiosis with the hinged scenery [fig. 2-h]. Whether actors or spectators, the tiny dots cohabited in this comforting microcosm, suspended in time. In this shellfish time capsule, hollowness became inwardness. Coldness transformed into warmth. Void converted into nest. Vacancy became intimacy. A shared intimacy, a lair of togetherness.²³

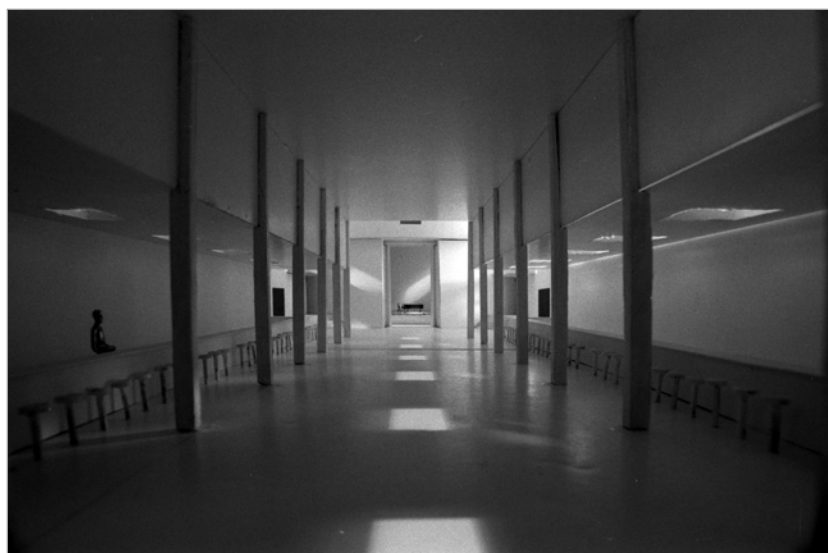


FIG. 3. PERSPECTIVE VIEW LOOKING TO THE STAGE FROM THE LOBBY, TAKEN FROM INSIDE THE MODEL (1986). | © ANDRÉ CORNELIER.



FIG. 4. DRAFT NO. 3: OYSTER SKETCH IDENTIFIED AS "UN THÉÂTRE COMME UNE HUITRE. L'ÉTOILE." BLACK FELT PEN, NO SCALE (C. 1986). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

The idea of designing a concert hall in the heart of Montréal emerged in 1985, five years after the opening of L'Express in 1980, Laporte's first landmark achievement in the Montréal landscape.²⁴ An initial detailed study for the development of a one-thousand-two-hundred-seat amphitheatre was completed in 1986, first referred to by Laporte as "Théâtre de l'huître" (The Oyster Theatre). To him, the oyster embodied a protective and protected arena, a safe space, an almost unassailable entity, an autonomous and highly independent character. But his clients thought the name was not convenient for what they intended it to be: more than just a spectacle venue, it was envisioned as a place destined to become a landmark, a sign of recognition in the city, a bright shiny star in the blackness of the night.²⁵

The project was meant to be directly connected to the street through an impressive lobby space outspread along an axis that led to an auditorium volume. Street, lobby, auditorium. When the doors

of the latter were open, one could catch sight of the stage curtains from the street (fig. 3). With its dramatic dimensions, the lobby was in fact much more than a lobby. It would be open all day, even if no shows were scheduled: it would be a welcoming café where people could have a bite, as well as a bar where they could discuss business or gather with friends. The lobby played the role of a lively hyphen between the world of spectacle and the daily flow of passersby. It was meant to pull the theatre culture out from its microcosm and make it a part of the urban pace and space.²⁶ Hence the will to merge the outside and the inside through spatial ramifications, connecting volumes. Regardless, the conceptual party had less to do with the closeness of an oyster and more with the outgrowths of a starfish.

L'huître thus became *L'Étoile*. But the oyster remained. There from the very start, the sketch "Un théâtre comme une huître" corresponds to what is termed the "core drawing" (draft no. 3 A Theatre Like an Oyster; see fig. 4); the

one which crystallizes critical areas of the design and evokes the distinctive features of an overall form that will subsequently resurface. Thereby, in its most achieved tridimensional expression (draft no. 10; fig. 5), *L'Étoile* obviously epitomizes every element featured in the oyster sketch: the vastness, tallness of the central space, enhanced by the stacked galleries and boxes and, at the same time, the self-contained and cozy atmosphere generated by the natural encounter of the U-shaped volume and stage shaft. Although less poetic, more static, this much detailed axonometric rendition materializes the architectural language held in latency within the oyster.

UNCOVERING L'ÉTOILE'S GENETICS

The data collected in relation to *L'Étoile* are of two types: graphic traces (architectural drawings) and written traces (personal notes, correspondence, contracts, promotional documents, etc.).²⁷ A total of fourteen original sketches and technical

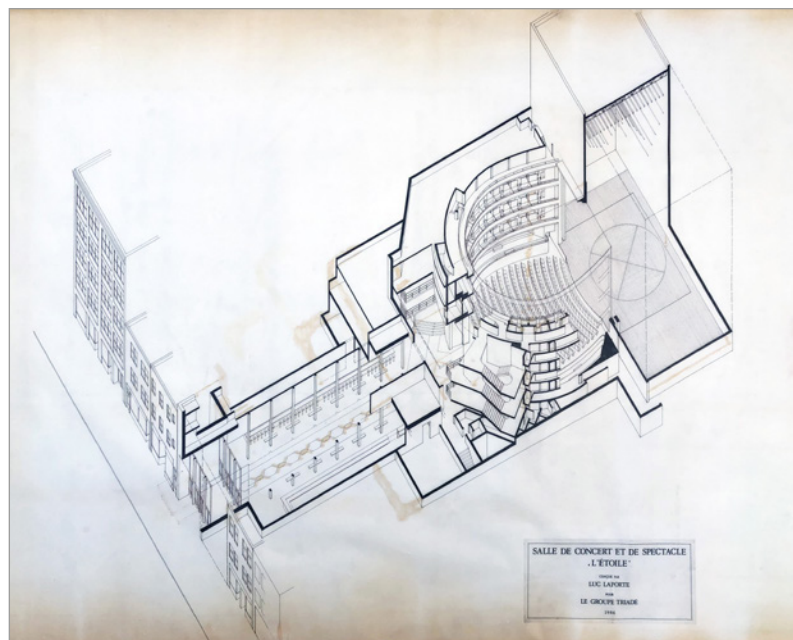


FIG. 5. DRAFT NO. 10: AXONOMETRY. BLACK INK, NO SCALE (1986). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).



FIG. 6. DRAFT NO. 1: FIRST COLOUR SKETCH IDENTIFIED AS "REX. PREMIER DESSIN DU THÉÂTRE DE PIERRE ET COLETTE." LEAD AND COLOUR PENCILS, NO SCALE (C. 1985). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

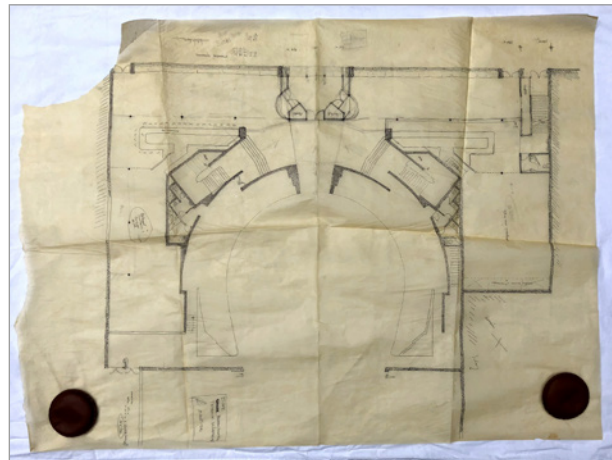


FIG. 7. DRAFT NO. 4: PRELIMINARY PLAN STUDY IDENTIFIED AS "ÉTUDE TERRAIN SAINT-LAURENT." BLACK INK, NO SCALE (SEPTEMBER 11, 1986). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

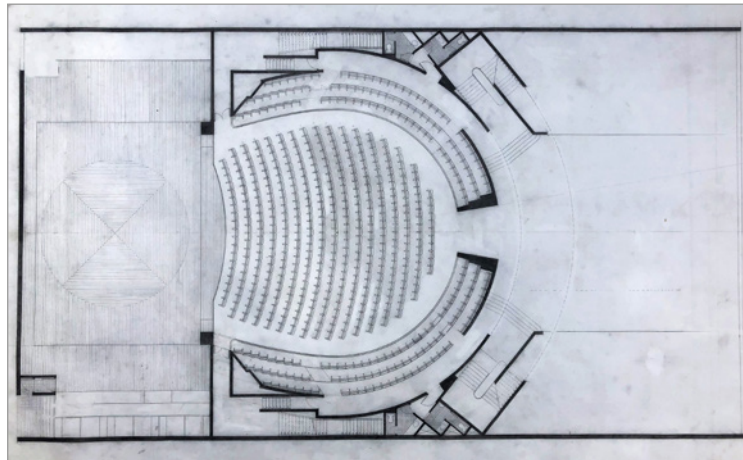


FIG. 8. DRAFT NO. 5: GROUND FLOOR PLAN (PARTIAL). LEAD PENCIL, NO SCALE (1986). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

drawings were chronologically determined as "drafts" to constitute the "specific genetic file."²⁸

1. First colour sketch identified as "REX. Premier dessin du théâtre de Pierre et Colette." Lead and colour pencils, no scale (c. 1985)²⁹ (fig. 6).
2. Horseshoe plan study identified as "REX Étude." Lead pencil, no scale (April 15, 1986).
3. Oyster sketch identified as "Un théâtre comme une huître. L'Étoile." Black felt pen, no scale (c. 1986) (fig. 4).
4. Preliminary plan study identified as "Étude terrain St-Laurent." Black ink, no scale (September 11, 1986)³⁰ (fig. 7).
5. Ground floor plan (partial). Lead pencil, no scale (1986) (fig. 8).
6. First balcony plan (partial). Lead pencil, no scale (1986).

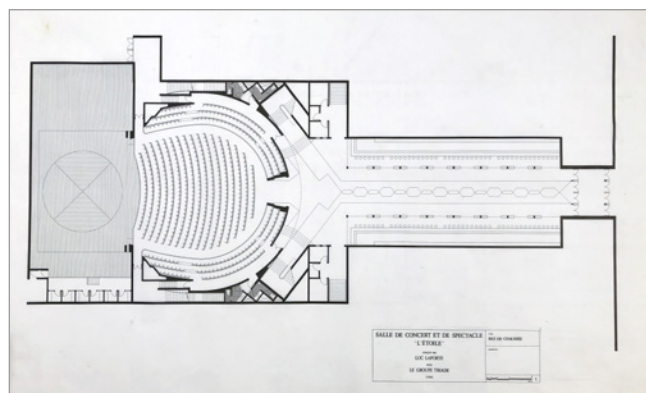


FIG. 9. DRAFT NO. 7: GROUND FLOOR PLAN (FULL). BLACK INK, GRAPHIC SCALE (1986). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

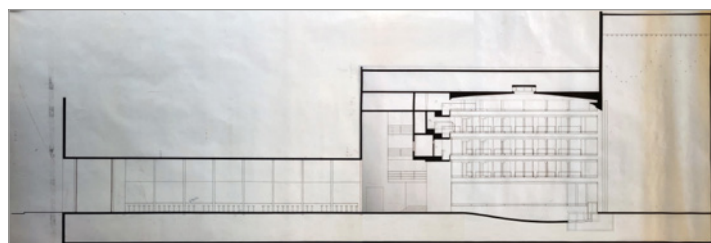


FIG. 10. DRAFT NO. 9: LONGITUDINAL SECTION. BLACK INK, NO SCALE (1986). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

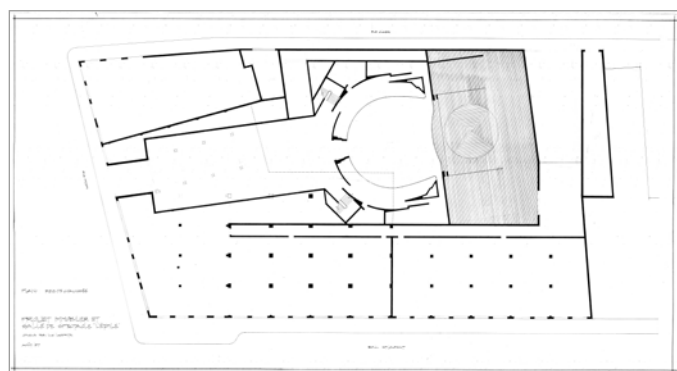


FIG. 11. DRAFT NO. 11: GROUND FLOOR PLAN, L'ÉTOILE INTEGRATED TO REAL ESTATE PROJECT. DIGITIZED COPY, NO SCALE (AUGUST 1987). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

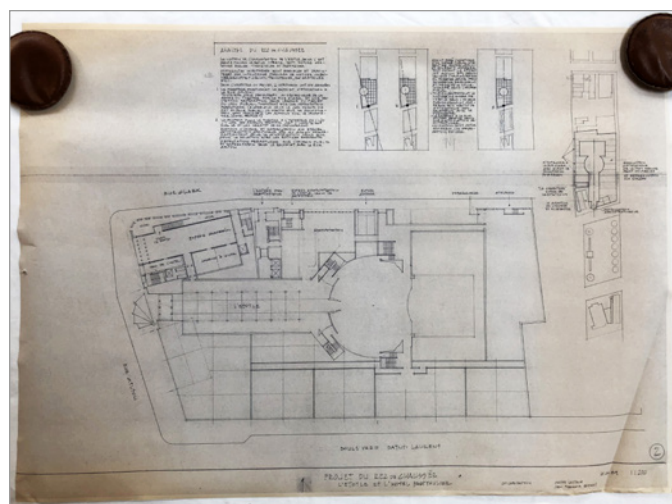


FIG. 12. DRAFT NO. 12: GROUND FLOOR PLAN, L'ÉTOILE INTEGRATED TO REAL ESTATE PROJECT. DIGITIZED COPY, SCALE 1:200 (JUNE 15, 1989). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

7. Ground floor plan (full). Black ink, graphic scale (1986) (fig. 9).
8. First balcony plan (full). Black ink, graphic scale (1986).
9. Longitudinal section. Black ink, no scale (1986) (fig. 10).
10. Axonometry. Black ink, no scale (1986) (fig. 5).
11. Ground floor plan, L'Étoile integrated to real estate project. Digitized copy, no scale (August 1987) (fig. 11).
12. Ground floor plan, L'Étoile integrated to real estate project. Digitized copy, scale 1:200 (June 15, 1989) (fig. 12).

13. Ground floor plan, L'Étoile integrated to real estate project. Digitized copy, scale 1:200 (July 3, 1989) (fig. 13).
14. Ground floor blueprint plan, L'Étoile integrated to real estate project. Digitized copy, scale 1:200 (January 1990)³¹ (fig. 14).

In addition to these drawings, a part of a presentation model of L'Étoile was found during archival research (fig. 15). Crafted in 1986 and preserved in the studio since then, it was restored in 2014 for the purpose of the exhibition *Luc Laporte : réalisations et inédits*

held at the 1700 La Poste gallery from October 17, 2014, to January 17, 2015.³² However, within the terminology of genetic criticism, a presentation model is to a working model what the completed building is to the architectural project, that is, a product rather than a process. As a synthetic and aesthetic outcome, the presentation model does not bear the many layers of successive experimental stages.³³ For this reason, the model could not be considered a "draft" within the specific genetic file. Nonetheless, having a physical device to rely on was valuable for the interpretive analysis of the project.³⁴

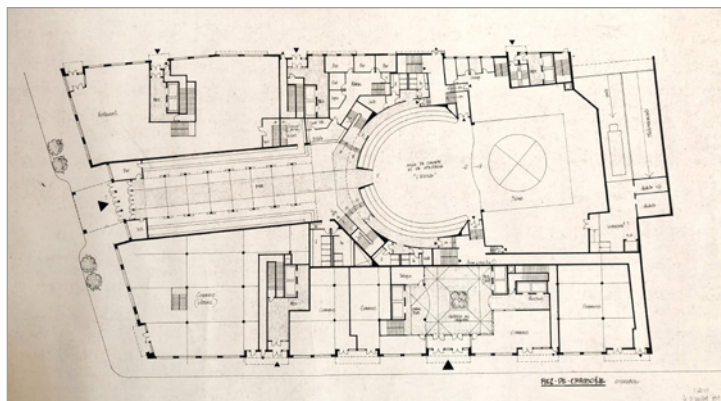


FIG. 13. DRAFT NO. 13: GROUND FLOOR PLAN, L'ÉTOILE INTEGRATED TO REAL ESTATE PROJECT. DIGITIZED COPY, SCALE 1:200 (JULY 3, 1989). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

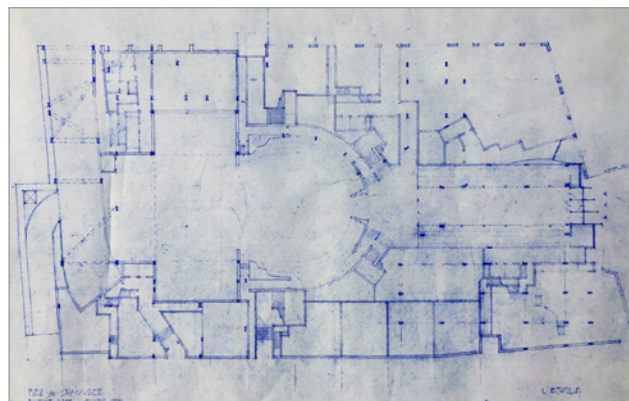


FIG. 14. DRAFT NO. 14: GROUND FLOOR BLUEPRINT PLAN, L'ÉTOILE INTEGRATED TO REAL ESTATE PROJECT. DIGITIZED COPY, SCALE 1:200 (JANUARY 1990). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

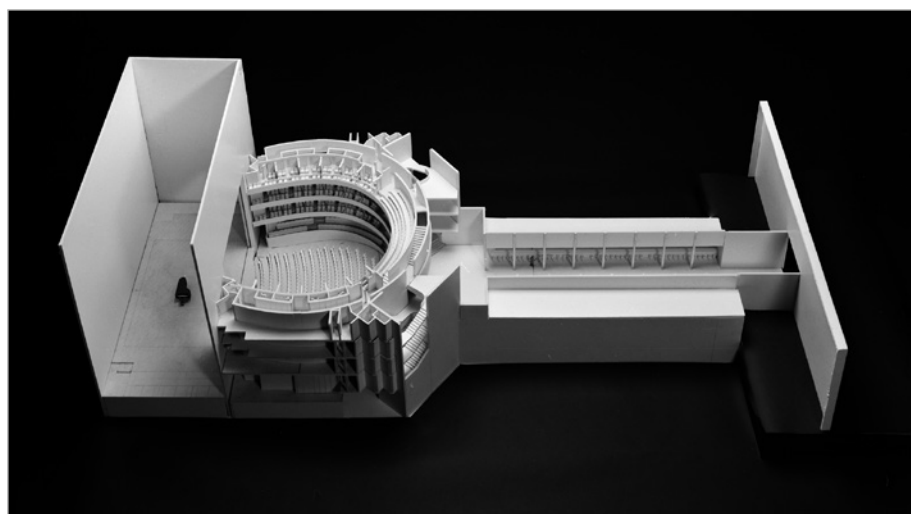


FIG. 15. COMPLETE PRESENTATION MODEL OPEN ON THE 3RD FLOOR. ONLY THE AUDITORIUM VOLUME REMAINS TODAY (RESTORED IN 2014). | © ANDRÉ CORNELLIER.

Regarding the morphogenic entities used to genetically assess the drafts, the three categories (generative principles, project requirements, external references) served as a structure to be filled with variables related to the specificities of the project itself, established after the scrutiny of the documents and drawings. Unsurprisingly, the analysis of the fourteen drafts revealed that the final appearance given to the project was latently contained in the very first design sketches (figs. 4 and 6),

as is often observed in architecture; while “lines of force” emerge, “critical zones” are gradually defined.³⁵ The following section will highlight the main findings for each of the three categories of morphogenic entities.

Generative Principles

Considering the projects carried out by Luc Laporte prior to L'Étoile, certain generative principles are obviously recurrent:

for example, the concern for material and spatial continuity between inside and outside was already present in Laporte's first achievement, L'Express (1980). Figure 16 shows the floor mosaic of L'Express, which covers the entire outside pavement and continues all the way indoors without any interruption or change in level. The continuity between outside and inside is accentuated by the generous floor-to-ceiling fenestration on the façade (fig. 17). Laporte's intention to minimize the crossing of thresholds increases the impression of walking through an osmotic flow, an uninterrupted rhythm between the city and the internal world of the project. In addition, the straight volumetric sequencing of the lobby, the auditorium, and the stage, from the street to the backstage area, creates a spatial continuum. A photograph taken from the lobby inside the model convincingly illustrates the desired effect, that is, a see-through perspective all the way to the stage (fig. 3).

As for urban integration, little information could be drawn from the records preserved. The much detailed axonometric depicted in draft no. 10, where the façade on Milton Street can be seen, is the only drawing that hints at a larger urban fabric (fig. 5). On draft no. 12,

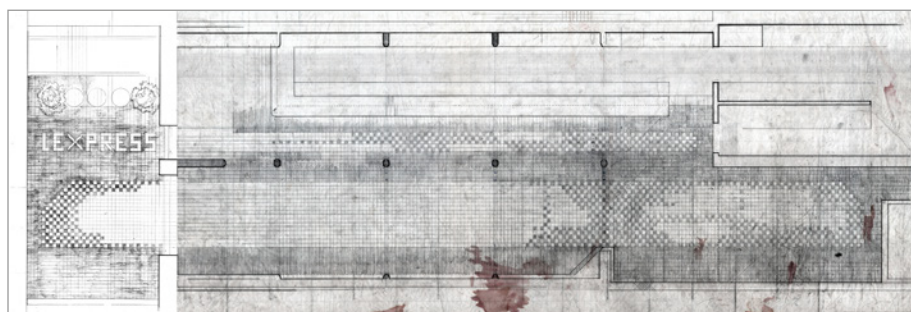


FIG. 16. PLAN OF THE MOSAIC ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF L'EXPRESS RESTAURANT. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE.



FIG. 18. "ÉTUDE PARC ESSO N.5." APRIL 1988. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

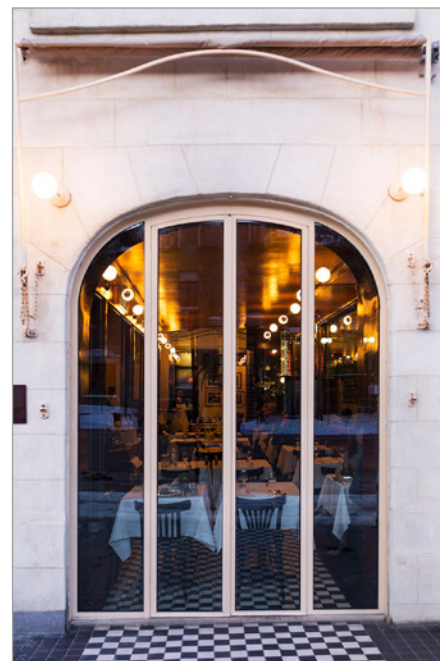


FIG. 17. FLOOR TO CEILING FAÇADE OF RESTAURANT L'EXPRESS, 3927 SAINT-DENIS STREET. | © VALERIA BISMAR.

small-scale site plans drawn above the main ground floor plan explicitly detail three scenarios regarding the alignment of L'Étoile in relation to the block (fig. 12). A first option positions the main volume at a perpendicular angle to Milton Street; a second maintains an oblique axis, though not exactly perpendicular, in order to contain the whole volume within the block—as expressed in drafts nos. 5 to 11; and a third scenario favours an orthogonal plan aligned parallel to Boulevard Saint-Laurent. Another colour sketch dated from April 1988 and titled "Étude parc Ezzo N.5" shows the intention to expand on the urban integration of the project (fig. 18). At the time, the idea was to create a public square on the corner of

Sherbrooke Street and Boulevard Saint-Laurent, on the parcel south of Milton Street—which today houses a gas station—and to fit an underground public parking. This way, the pedestrian traffic crossing this square, bordered by greenery on both sides, would be an extension of the oblique axis along which the project would spread out.

Laporte's own definition of an architecturally well-designed auditorium depended on an equivalent quality of view for each spectator. The typology of the Italian theatre, thanks to its horseshoe plan and superimposed galleries, allows for no seat to be located at more than seventy feet (22 metres) from the stage.

An entire stack of sketches (dated from September 1989) relating to the study of views, both in plan and section, was discovered during the archival search. Potential arrangements and locations for seats on the parterre and in the boxes and balconies had been scrupulously studied by Laporte (fig. 19).

The ground floor plan depicted in drafts nos. 5 and 7 as well as a sketch found in the archives show a geometrically woven pattern within the wooden floor stage (see figs. 8, 9 and 20). A very similar motif conceived in 1983 can be found in the hall of the multistore Le Lux under an impressive central dome, which probably directly inspired the one for L'Étoile

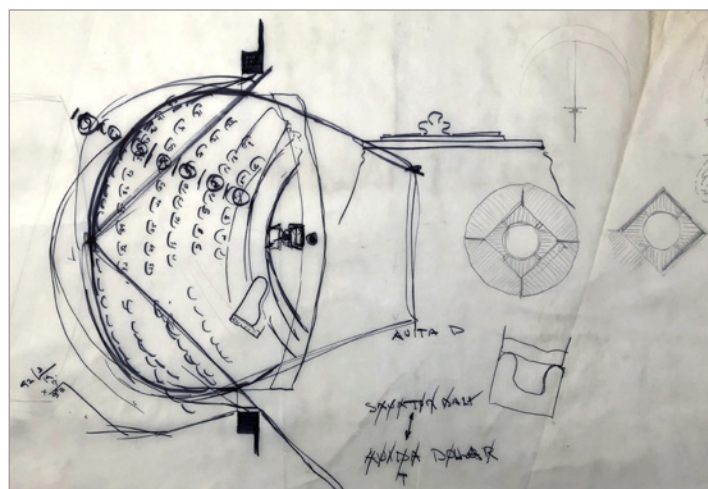
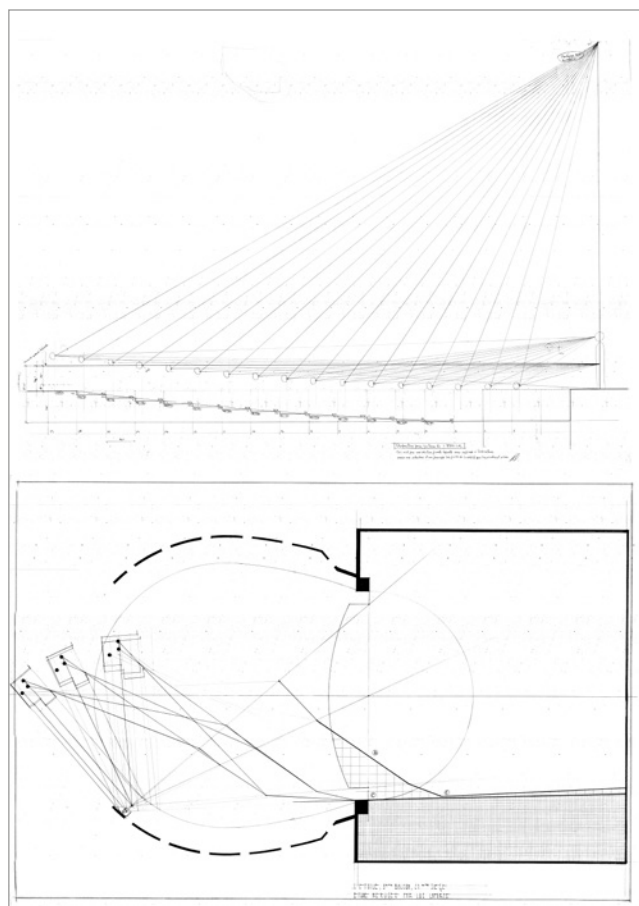


FIG. 20. SKETCH RELATED TO DRAFT NO. 5; GEOMETRIC PATTERN STUDY FOR THE STAGE FLOOR. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

FIG. 19. STUDIES OF VIEWS DATED FROM SEPTEMBER 1989. SECTION OF LAYOUT FOR PARTERRE, WHICH READS: "CECI N'EST PAS UNE SOLUTION FINALE LAQUELLE SERA RAFFINÉE À L'ORDINATEUR, MAIS UNE INTENTION ET UN PRINCIPE TRÈS PROCHE DE LA RÉALITÉ QUE L'ON VOUDRAIT VOIR" (TOP). SKETCH PLAN OF THE 21ST SEAT ON BALCONY 3 LEVEL (BOTTOM). | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE.

(fig. 21). Likewise, the ground floor plan depicted in draft no. 7 along with additional sketches found in the archives show a linear sequence of adjacent rectangles and triangles merged together, forming yet another floor pattern (fig. 22). This exemplifies the architect's will to create rhythms specific to different spaces by enlivening floors and turning them into "*lieux de représentation*" (places of representation), into horizontal surfaces of expression.

Project requirements³⁶

Programmatic components and technical requirements such as the restaurant, café, landing dock, room capacity, rehearsal

rooms, boxes, and galleries are all clearly expressed in the design drawings. Draft no. 4, although depicting a project iteration located elsewhere, is the first layout to outline the main programmatic components, namely two twenty-four-seat bars symmetrically positioned, areas on either sides of the plan potentially devoted to commercial use, and the lobby, here dramatically smaller than the one later retained, which will instead be laid out in a long axis connecting street and auditorium (fig. 7).³⁷ On the subsequent draft (no. 5), one can note the first appearance of the stage, with a proscenium following the curve of the first seat row, as well as that of backstage spaces and functional equipment

such as washrooms and staircases, arranged symmetrically (fig. 8). The project specifications are all depicted in draft no. 7: the entrance on Milton Street, opening onto a vast multifunctional lobby equipped with forty-three-seat bars on either side, leading in its centre to the auditorium's parterre (fig. 9). The longitudinal section (draft no. 9) reveals the height of each of the three volumes: double-height lobby, four floors of galleries, and a forty-eight-foot stage cage (fig. 10).³⁸ The axonometric (draft no. 10) provides additional data such as the integration of standing tables fixed on the columns in the lobby, and the articulation of the staircases, foyers, and auditorium (fig. 5).



FIG. 21. FLOOR PATTERN IN THE HALL OF LE LUX (1983), 5220 BOULEVARD SAINT-LAURENT. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE.

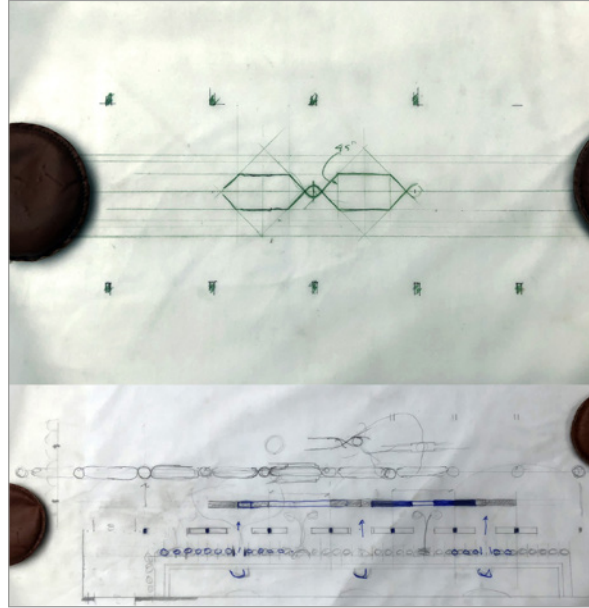


FIG. 22. SKETCHES RELATED TO DRAFT NO. 7; PATTERN STUDIES FOR THE LOBBY FLOOR. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

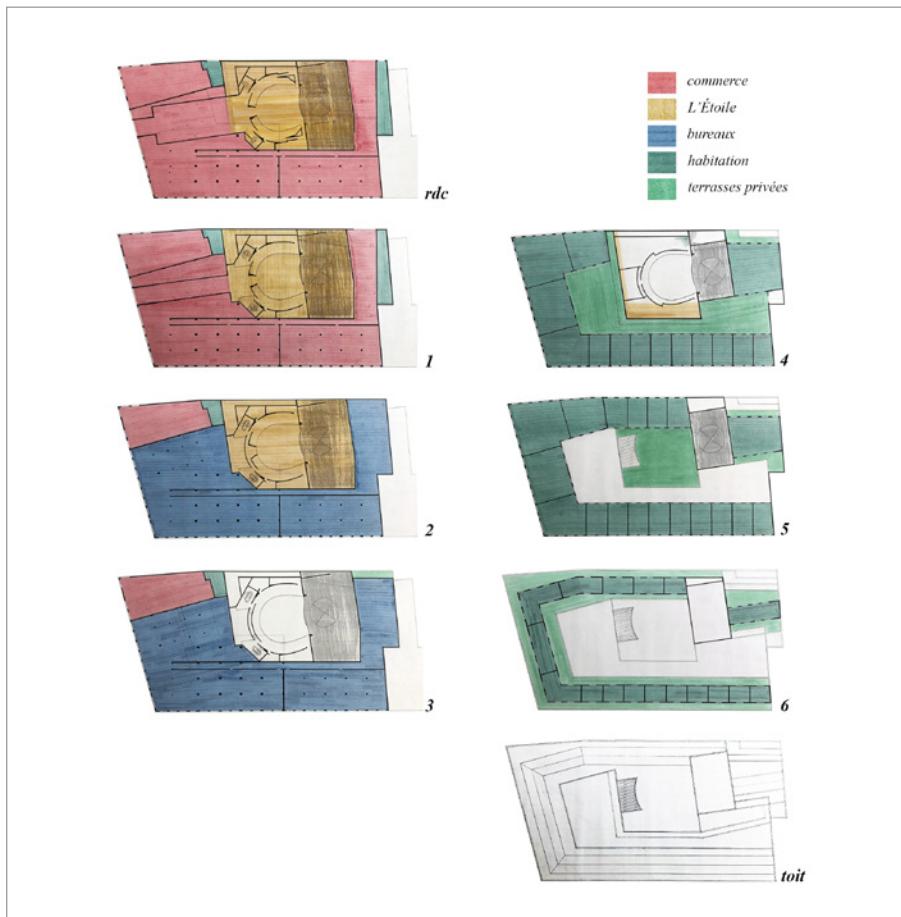


FIG. 23. SERIES OF 8 PLANS OF L'ÉTOILE INTEGRATED TO THE REAL ESTATE PROJECT, SPACES COLOURED ACCORDING TO THEIR FUNCTIONS: L'ÉTOILE IN YELLOW; COMMERCIAL SPACES IN RED; OFFICE SPACES IN BLUE; RESIDENTIAL UNITS IN DARK GREEN; PRIVATE PATIOS IN LIGHT GREEN. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (MONTAGE E. BANVILLE).

Until draft no. 10, L'Étoile stands as a project on its own. However, from August 1987 onward, it figures as a component of a larger real estate project housed in a building spread across the island head comprised between Boulevard Saint-Laurent, Milton and Clark streets (fig. 11). A series of small-scale colour sketches shows the distribution of diverse functions throughout the seven floors, namely commercial spaces, offices, and residential units (fig. 23). Extra functional components are thus added in draft no. 12, such as workshops, administrative quarters, rental spaces, and even a hotel lobby (the latter will not remain) (fig. 12). These are even better defined in draft no. 13, where one can locate a bookstore projected on the corner of Milton Street and Boulevard Saint-Laurent, a restaurant on the corner of Milton and Clark streets, and a sequence of commercial rental suites along Saint-Laurent (fig. 13). A landing dock and underground parking accessed through Clark Street are projected at the back of the stage cage, and five side entrances to access the residential units on the upper floors are added (three on Clark Street and two on Saint-Laurent). The last draft (no. 14)



FIG. 24. PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF THE AUDITORIUM TAKEN FROM INSIDE THE MODEL. | © ANDRÉ CORNELIER.



FIG. 25. POSTCARD OF TEATRO SAN CARLO IN NAPLES DATED MAY 4 (YEAR NOT SPECIFIED). ONE CAN READ: "LA CARTE N'ÉTAIT QU'UN PRÉTEXTE POUR AUGMENTER TA COLLECTION DE THÉÂTRES. JE SAIS QUE TU ADORES LES COLLECTIONS DANS LE FOND." | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

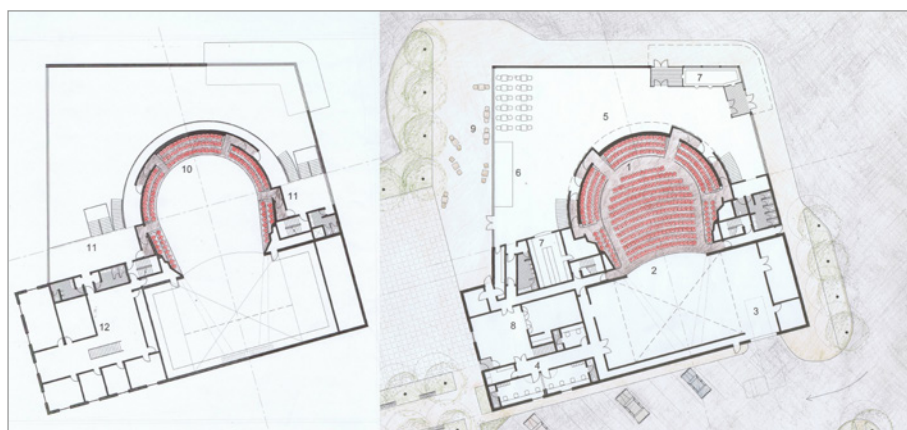


FIG. 26. PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR THE VIEUX-TERREBONNE THEATRE ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION, 2002. FIRST BALCONY PLAN (LEFT); GROUND FLOOR PLAN (RIGHT). DIGITIZED COPIES. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE.

Laporte's sustained interest in these historical and architectural gems (fig. 25).⁴⁰

The horseshoe plan will incidentally be expressed in several subsequent projects designed by the architect, namely the Cabaret Juste pour rire in 1990, a puppet theatre (a prototype that he refined throughout his life but never ended up building, and which was finally materialized by his collaborators for the posthumous tribute exhibition held at the 1700 La Poste gallery in 2014), and the competition proposal for the Théâtre du Vieux-Terrebonne in 2002, which was anecdotally referred to as "La Petite Étoile." Amongst forty-three competing teams, only Laporte's entry embodied the Italian style theatre typology (fig. 26).⁴¹

Luc Laporte was obsessed with La Fenice de Venezia, to a point where he once scrupulously measured the interior dimensions. He went to visit it many times. Emblematic of the Italian style theatre, its typical horseshoe plan undoubtedly pervaded Laporte's creative mind and highly influenced the design of L'Étoile. The inquiry through his personal archives uncovered many collected architectural representations of the building, namely an expanded floor and gallery seating layout, with the upper left quarter cut off (fig. 27).

does not convey as much data, other than the reduction in length of the lobby space (fig. 14). Regardless, the project as a whole is ultimately defined not so much by its programmatic components as by its conceptual orientation, much fueled by influential external references.

External references

The Italian style theatre typology is architecturally characterized by a scene of illusion in perspective connected to an auditorium with several floors of boxes or galleries arranged in a U-shape around an oval or semicircular parterre. L'Étoile fully rests on this typological intention which

Laporte had in mind at the very start of the design process (fig. 24). Typical examples of the Italian style theatre typology in the eighteenth century include the Teatro San Carlo in Naples (1737), designed by Giovanni Antonio Medrano and Angelo Caresale, and the Teatro alla Scala in Milan (1778), designed by the architect Giuseppe Piermarini, of which a hand-drawn plate showing the main façade was retrieved from Laporte's personal archives.³⁹ Likewise, the serendipitous discovery of an assortment of postcards collected over time, all portraying iconic Italian style theatres (Teatro San Carlo, Napoli; Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux; Vienna State Opera), further reveals

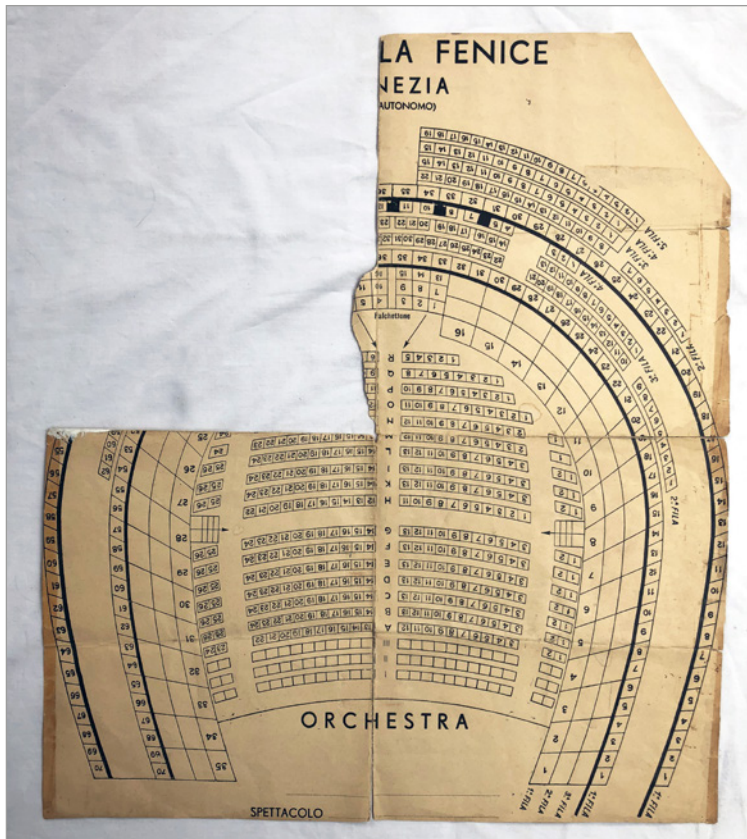


FIG. 27. LA FENICE DI VENEZIA. ENLARGED AND UNFOLDED PLAN OF PARTERRE AND GALLERY SEATING LAYOUT, WITH THE UPPER LEFT QUARTER CUT OFF. | ARCHIVES LUC LAPORTE (PHOTO E. BANVILLE).

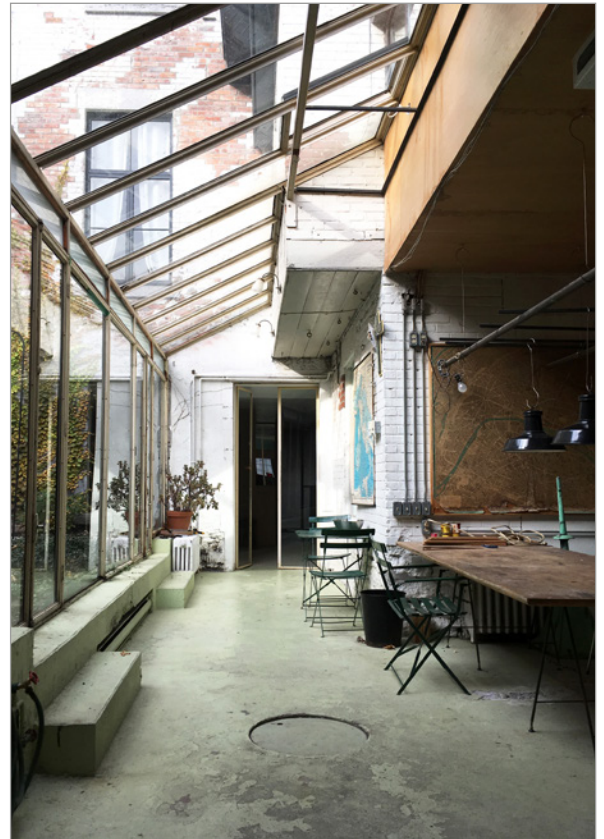


FIG. 28. PHOTOGRAPH OF LUC LAPORTE'S STUDIO TAKEN FROM UNDER THE GLASS ROOF; MAPS OF ITALY AND OF PARIS (1978) ON THE WHITE BRICK WALLS. | © EMILIE BANVILLE.

Laporte's European soul, on the other hand, is a structuring element which cannot be directly expressed through drawings. However, many testimonials gathered for the book and documentary short film produced for the tribute exhibition in 2014 corroborate the significant impact of recurrent trips to Europe on the architect's vision and designs:

[Luc] has always dreamed of building a theatre. We have done 1000 theatre projects together . . . We traveled and visited dozens of theaters around the world, especially in Germany and Italy. We were even taking measures at La Fenice the day before the big fire! We were passionate about the project for ten years, and we came up with an object called L'Étoile, which would have been a wonderful place in the heart of Montréal.⁴²

The European spectacle culture, that is, the way of life associated with the "cultural product" embodied by concerts, shows, theatre plays, and expressed through an increase presence and integration of venues within the urban fabric and life, was a crucial social dimension which L'Étoile was meant to transmit. In a clipping from the daily newspaper *La Presse* found in the archives, dated from June 7, 1986, one can read: "The promoters of the new concert hall want not only to provide Montréal with an exceptional acoustic venue, but also to perpetuate the old European social tradition of theatre and concerts."⁴³ Conquered by the "European way of life" which "integrates entertainment in a natural way into the city's nightlife, and even daytime," Laporte wished to convey,

through L'Étoile, the spirit and pleasure one can experience in living in a city.⁴⁴ Like a cabinet of curiosities undisturbed for ages, the architect's studio at 264 Rue du Square Saint-Louis could bear witness, through various collected artifacts such as historical maps and travel mementos, to the imprint of his European fascination on his architectural practice (fig. 28).

Many books relating to the architectural design of theatres and concert halls were found in Laporte's personal library, a few of which still contained bookmarks. Some were exclusively devoted to emblematic Italian style opera houses (La Fenice di Venezia and the Teatro Farnese di Parma); others were reference works on the history and design of theaters, such as *Theater Design* by George C. Izenour

published in 1977 and *Buildings for Music: The Architect, the Musician, and the Listener from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* by Micheal Forsyth, published in 1985.⁴⁵ Finally, the influence of Laporte's prior achievements is discernable, for instance, in the layout of L'Étoile's lobby, whose long and narrow bar counters are reminiscent of a spirit close to that of L'Express.

IS THIS ALL THERE IS?

"An unused archive is not an archive. An archive is only an archive when it is entered, or, more precisely, when things come out."⁴⁶ Architectural historian and theorist Mark Wigley here concisely evokes the essence of the "productive archive," that is, the idea that archives become meaningful only when activated into dynamic entities, enabling new networks and relationships to form.⁴⁷ By confronting a theorized method—but yet little explored—to a corpus never studied before, the research project leading to this paper aspired to evaluate the relevance of genetic criticism for analyzing an architectural project's design phase, and this solely through the researcher's interpretation of the project's remaining traces. This paper remains, however, a tiny piece of exploration of Laporte's unbuilt work. While this research into the depth of his archives was the occasion to test a methodological approach per se—and to take its inner limits and subjective bias into account—it mostly provided a realistic insight of the scope and complexity of dealing with unprocessed architectural archives, especially in a non-institutional framework.

Although the above analysis drew from the method of genetic criticism as a gateway into archival holdings, it is certainly not the only way to make an archive productive, as exemplified in many

contemporary curatorial practices that engage with archives while challenging established modes of historical and theoretical knowledge production. However, in the case of Luc Laporte's work, it could reveal facets and features that conventional methods associated with historical and archival research would have perhaps ignored. As a form of reminiscence, genetic criticism captures the complex logic of the design process and revives its chronological history, which sometimes differs from what the architect—when still alive—will be able to depict in retrospect.

Art critic Hal Foster, in his seminal paper "An Archival Impulse", suggests that working *from* the archive is like transforming "an excavation site into a construction site," turning "belatedness into becomingness."⁴⁸ As such, from acts of retrieval to ones of making, the productive archive transforms the "no-place of the archive" into alternative scenarios, into growing clusters of knowledge generated around existing materials and brought together through new connections. Given the massive accumulation of records inherent in contemporary architectural practice, the making of future historiographies will increasingly rely on productive archival ethnographies. For archives always await new eyes.

NOTES

1. This paper is based on my thesis submitted in 2018. See: Banville, Emilie, 2018, *Mémoires d'architecture : préservation et valorisation du patrimoine archivistique. Anthologie génétique de la conception chez Luc Laporte*, master's thesis in museology, Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal. Part of this research was previously presented at the 45th Annual Conference of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada, held in Halifax in May 2019. In addition, this paper also draws from a shorter text about one of the drawings included here, "Un théâtre comme une huître," which was selected as a

winning entry in the Drawing Matter Writing Prize (2020). Banville, Emilie, 2020, "A Shared Intimacy, or the Anatomy of an Oyster Theatre," Drawing Matter: [<https://drawing-matter.org/writing-prize-2020-a-shared-intimacy-or-the-anatomy-of-an-oyster-theatre/>].

2. Collected biographical impressions about Laporte (filmed and written excerpts from interviews with friends and clients), freely assembled. See: Boulos, Robert and Sébastien Gros, 2014, *Luc Laporte : architecte. Parcours*, Montréal, 1700 La Poste & FarWeb.tv, 22 min 12, [<https://vimeo.com/113121209>], accessed September 2018; de Mévius, Isabelle, 2014, *Luc Laporte architecte : réalisations & inédits*. Montréal, Les Éditions de Mévius, coll. "Art et essai."
3. Blain, Catherine, 2002, "Pour comprendre la démarche de projet : l'entretien réitéré et interactif," *Colonnes*, no. 20, p. 54-56, at p. 55.
4. At the time of writing this article (2020), the studio is still used as an architecture office space by long-time friend and collaborator Martin Vincent. Laporte's former apartment above, however, is now occupied by tenants.
5. Although he obtained his architect licence from the Ordre des architectes du Québec only in 1991.
6. The "multistore" Le Lux, located at 5220 Boulevard Saint-Laurent, existed from 1983 to 1993. Open 24 hours a day, the building was part restaurant, part bar, part library, and part night shop; it injected a New York East side vibe and gave a second wind to this section of the Montréal Main comprised between Laurier and Saint-Viateur streets, known as the "Mile End."
7. Laporte's other prominent works comprise the design for Place du Québec in Paris, Saint-Germain-des-Prés, with the sculptor Charles Daudelin (1984); the design of a chapel, with architect Peter Rose, for the Abbey of Saint-Benoît-du-Lac in 1990-1991; the transformation of the former Eckers brewery into the musée Juste pour rire on Boulevard Saint-Laurent in 1990; the development of the Bassin Bonsecours and its pavilion in Montréal's Old Port in 1991-1993; the Café du Nouveau Monde on Sainte-Catherine Street in 1997; the 650-seat theatre Club Soda on Boulevard Saint-Laurent in 2000; an entry to the international architectural competition for a cultural and administrative complex housing the new Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) hall on the Balmoral Island, downtown Montréal (2000); the café-bistro Leméac on Laurier Street in 2001. In 2011,

- Laporte granted Montréal's Quartier des spectacles with a now iconic silver dome, part of an extension for the Société des arts technologiques (SAT). The privately owned art gallery 1700 La Poste, located in a former post office on Notre-Dame Street in the southwest of Montréal, was his last project; started in 2009, it was completed by his collaborators shortly after his death in 2012. In 2014, the gallery hosted the exhibition *Luc Laporte architecte, réalisations et inédits*, curated by his friend and former collaborator Luce Lafontaine and gallery owner Isabelle de Mévius.
8. Glaudemans, Arnoud, Rienk Jonker, Frans Smit, and Eric Ketelaar, 2017, "Beyond the Traditional Boundaries of Archival Theory: An Interview with Eric Ketelaar," in Arnoud Glaudemans, Rienk Jonker, and Frans Smit (eds.), *Archives in Liquid Times*, Amsterdam, Stichting Archiefpublicaties, p. 294-305, at p. 298.
 9. Bussel, Geert-Jan Van, 2017, "The Theoretical Framework for the 'Archive-as-is,'" in Glaudemans, Jonker, and Smit (eds.), *Archives in Liquid Times*, id., p. 17-71, at p. 23.
 10. In the eyes of a forward-thinking institution such as the Canadian Centre for Architecture, for example, archives are "interdependent bodies of raw and secondary materials." See: Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1988, *Canadian Centre for Architecture: The First Five Years: 1979-1984*, Montréal, CCA.
 11. Klein, Anne, 2014, *Archive(s) : approche dialectique et exploitation artistique*, doctoral thesis in information sciences, École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information, Université de Montréal, Montréal.
 12. Ricœur, Paul, 2000, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Paris, Seuil.
 13. The analysis is a condensed version of my master's thesis in museology. For a fuller explanation of the theoretical and methodological frameworks, see: Banville, *Mémoires d'architecture*, op. cit.
 14. The architectural "oeuvre" refers to the architectural project, whether built or not, whereas the architectural "work" corresponds to its concrete realization. The former would be a product of the discipline, and the latter, a product of the profession. See: Dadour, Stephanie and Léa-Catherine Szacka, 2014, "Exposer l'architecture : enjeux, institutionnalisation et historicisation," *Les Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne*, vol. 128, p. 3-11; Bois, Yve-Alain, Denis Hollier, Rosalind Krauss, and Jean-Louis Cohen, 1999, "A Conversation with Jean-Louis Cohen," The MIT Press, *October*, vol. 89, p. 3-18.
 15. Genetic criticism, applied to architecture, is similar to an "approche raisonnée of the architectural project" or to an "archeology of the project." For the former, see Texier, Simon, 2001, "La doctrine à l'œuvre : les architectes à l'épreuve de la génétique," *Colonnes*, nos. 16-17, p. 11-13. For the latter, see Klein, Richard, 2002, "La fonction de l'entretien dans l'archéologie du projet," *Colonnes*, no. 20, p. 42-43.
 16. de Biasi, Pierre-Marc, 2015, "Le dessin de l'architecture et la genèse de l'œuvre," *Livraisons de l'histoire de l'architecture*, vol. 30, p. 93-102.
 17. de Biasi, Pierre-Marc, 2011, *Génétique des textes*, Paris, CNRS Éditions [National Centre for Scientific Research].
 18. de Biasi, Pierre-Marc and Réjean Legault, 2000, "La clarté des archives," *Genesis (Manuscripts-Recherche-Invention)*, no. 14, p. 7-12.
 19. Meziou Baccour, Olfa, 2005, *De l'ante-projet au processus de conception. Étude de genèse d'une œuvre architecturale*, Ph.D. thesis in architecture, École nationale d'architecture et d'urbanisme (ENAU) de Tunis, Université de Carthage. For a very condensed version of this thesis, see Meziou Baccour, Olfa, 2015, "Étude génétique et architecture. De l'ante-projet à la commande. Les tribulations d'une casa rustici à Belleville," *Littérature*, vol. 178, no. 2, p. 93-104.
 20. de Biasi, Pierre-Marc, 2000, "Pour une approche génétique de l'architecture," *Genesis (Manuscripts-Recherche-Invention)*, no. 14, p. 13-65.
 21. Peyceré, David, 2001, "La génétique à l'assaut du projet d'architecture : des archives passées au banc d'essai," *Colonnes*, nos. 16-17, p. 10.
 22. Meziou Baccour, Olfa, 2017, "Le style : pour une approche génétique de l'architecture," in Pierre-Marc de Biasi and Anne Herschberg-Pierrot (eds.), *L'œuvre comme processus*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, p. 329-339.
 23. Banville, "A Shared Intimacy, or the Anatomy of an Oyster Theatre," *Drawing Matter*, op. cit.
 24. The owners of L'Express, Pierre Villeneuve and Colette Brossoit, were also Laporte's clients (co-investors, more exactly) for L'Étoile. The project was entirely sponsored by private investors through a limited partnership named Groupe Triade (administered by Villeneuve, Brossoit, and Laporte), unlike other Montréal theatres with a similar capacity, for instance the Théâtre Maisonneuve, which is part of the Société de la Place des Arts, a state-owned enterprise reporting to the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec.
 25. de Mévius, *Luc Laporte architecte : réalisations & inédits*, op. cit.
 26. Description freely adapted from a promotional text found in the archive, written in French in 1987.
 27. In total, 324 design drawings, corresponding to approximately 264 linear metres, were found in the archives related to L'Étoile, partly preserved in the studio and partly stored in a warehouse. Documents other than architectural drawings were found when browsing through the archives, such as: vertical files containing correspondence, estimates, brochures, budgets, business plans, localization certificates, etc.; personal photos; one model; postcards; newspaper clippings; small format sketches; collected images and drawings of architectural precedents.
 28. Although some of these drafts (nos. 5 to 10) come from the same set of drawings produced in 1986, it was nonetheless decided to consider each of them as a separate draft informing the genetic analysis in a different way, that is, displaying different components and/or dimensions of the project.
 29. The dating of the drawings is relative rather than absolute, since the indications to that effect were not equally precise for every drawing. For instance, although undated, this coloured pencil sketch on tracing paper easily stands as the first within the chronological development of the project, in relation to other drawings that appeared later. Before L'Étoile, the project was originally known as the REX, named after the clients' (Pierre Villeneuve and Colette Brossoit) theatre production company at the time.
 30. Since the clients (Villeneuve and Brossoit) were also the main investors—this was an exclusively privately financed initiative—they sought for several years, sometimes simultaneously with the development of the project, to acquire contiguous lots in the city centre. More than one site in the city of Montréal was being considered at the time for L'Étoile.
 31. As mentioned earlier, L'Étoile only existed on paper and remained an unbuilt project. The project aborted in 1990, due to administrative and legal disagreements regarding the purchase of the plot. Another location in Montréal could have been envisaged, but for

- reasons that remain undisclosed, the limited partnership created exclusively for the design, construction, and operation of L'Étoile, the Groupe Triade, was dissolved.
32. The complete presentation model, from which the black-and-white perspective views produced to promote the project were taken, no longer exists. Only the horseshoe-shaped volume of the auditorium with its four floors of galleries remains. The scale of the model is 3/16"=1'0"; the dimensions of the auditorium volume are 32 x 48 x 17" (h). It is made from white foam board and cardboard.
 33. Montès, Fernando and Pierre-Marc de Biasi, 2000, "Le calque et l'écran. Genèse architecturale et nouveaux médias. Entretien," *Genesis (Manuscrits-Recherche-Invention)* no. 14, p. 129-152.
 34. What was found closest to a working model during archival research was a loose piece of L'Étoile's horseshoe-shaped parterre dated from August 9, 1986, and signed by Laporte, which bears a hand-written note addressed to Colette: "Pour Colette ce morceau de salle. P.S. Je te le donne parce que je le trouve beau mais il est manqué."
 35. de Biasi, "Pour une approche génétique de l'architecture," *op. cit.*, p. 58.
 36. Although there was no official "Functional and Technical Program" (project requirements) to be found in the archives, the morphogenic entities were established according to other documents retrieved, such as a promotional brochure titled *L'Étoile. Un lieu dans la ville* produced in 1987 (unpublished, preserved in Archives Luc Laporte); development cost analysis; limited partnership agreements; estimates and budgets; technical documents addressed to investors and engineers; land certificates; etc.
 37. A group of contiguous lots between Boulevard Saint-Laurent and Saint-Dominique Street—almost facing the chosen site, the corner of Milton Street and Boulevard Saint-Laurent—indeed was amongst the scenarios considered for the development of L'Étoile.
 38. This specific information appears in the above-mentioned promotional brochure *L'Étoile. Un lieu dans la ville*.
 39. A section of the Teatro Regio in Parma in Italy (scale 1:100) and copies of longitudinal and lateral sections of the Théâtre musical Châtelet in Paris (dated March 16, 1989) were also found in Laporte's personal archives.
 40. On the Napoli postcard, dated May 4 (no mention of year), one can read: "La carte n'était qu'un prétexte pour augmenter ta collection de théâtres. Je sais que tu adores les collections dans le fond." And on the Bordeaux postcard dated July 13: "Je n'arrive pas à trouver une carte côté scène mais ne désespère pas il reste encore demain, après on quitte Bordeaux pour un peu de mer."
 41. For a complete list of competitors and their respective entries, see the Canadian Competitions Catalogue Website: [http://www.ccc.umontréal.ca/fiche_concours.php?lang=fr&cld=70], accessed November 4, 2020.
 42. Transcript of an excerpt from Pierre Villeneuve's testimony for the documentary short film produced for the exhibition *Luc Laporte : réalisations et inédits*, presented at the 1700 La Poste gallery in 2014. Directed by Farweb. Available online: [<https://vimeo.com/109081938>], accessed December 2018.
 43. [Translated from French] Clipping from the daily newspaper *La Presse* dated July 6, 1986. Found in a vertical file among the preserved archives of L'Étoile.
 44. Information retrieved from the 1987 brochure *L'Étoile. Un lieu dans la ville*.
 45. Izenour, George C., Vern Olivier Knudsen, Robert B. Newman, and Alois Maria Nagler, 1996 [1st ed. 1977], *Theater Design*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press; Forsyth, Michael, 1985, *Buildings for Music: The Architect, the Musician, and the Listener from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day*, Cambridge, The MIT Press.
 46. Wigley, Mark, 2005, "Unleashing the Archive," *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, vol. 2, no. 2, p. 10-15.
 47. Miessen, Markus and Yann Chateigné (eds.), 2016, *The Archive as a Productive Space of Conflict*, Berlin, Sternberg Press.
 48. Foster, Hal, 2004, "An Archival Impulse," *October*, vol. 110, p. 3-22.