



GROUP OF SCHOOLS SIMONE VEIL

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This group of schools is part of the response to the shortage of school premises in the center and northern parts of the town of Villejuif, on the outskirts of Paris. The reservoir site where it is located is exceptional in the town on two counts: it is protected from sound disturbances, and it has a number of large trees in addition to its water feature.



The topography and geometry of the plot are also very unusual: the very small, almost interstitial, site occupies a set of platforms. Although the building takes up only a minimal amount of space, it offers views out over the landscape in the distance. Its compact deconstructed façades soften the overall effect and make it easy to discern the different levels. Their languages, the materials used, and their overlapping give the appearance of a collage and reassert the status of the building as a school facility for the population.

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Within this enclosed site, three different access routes preserve fluidity of circulation by offering several destinations, including a shared forecourt. The nursery school and space for afterschool activities occupy the ground floor, opening out onto a large playground. A library, next to a central patio, occupies a double height, thereby introducing a visual link with the elementary school on the upper levels. These may be accessed by stairs leading directly to the playground on the first floor. A very large overhang frees up space and provides a panoramic view towards Paris. It is remarkable for its span and its materiality. Thus this upper playground is designed as a large empty space stretching out beneath the wooden volume that houses the elementary classes.

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The different shades of green that are used are in keeping with the wooded site. The building echoes the landscape, creating harmonious relationships.

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The clear geometry of the classrooms provides the students with landmarks and makes it possible to install lighting and visual systems that add quality to their use and appropriation. The nursery classes look out onto the large trees, as do the cafeteria areas on the garden level; the elementary

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classes are also well equipped with windows.



There is abundant natural light throughout the building, even in the wide circulation areas, turning them into areas that are playful as well as functional. The school offers a great diversity of situations, and its varied component parts gain in value from their natural contrasts.

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