The River Seine as a Great Garden: The Sources

Ecology & Habitability of the Seine and its tributaries

43RD PARIS REGION INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON URBAN AND TERRITORIAL CREATIVITY

FROM SEPTEMBER 9 TO 25, 2025

SESSION BOOK

les Ateliers
maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

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ECOLOGY & HABITABILITY OF THE SEINE AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

LABEL
LIVING WITH RIVERS
LIVING WITH RIVER - IAGF

43RD PARIS REGION INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
ON URBAN AND TERRITORIAL CREATIVITY

SESSION BOOK
FINAL VERSION OF OCTOBER 1ST 2025

More info: **www.ateliers.org**
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Les Ateliers thanks all partners who supported them in carrying out this session

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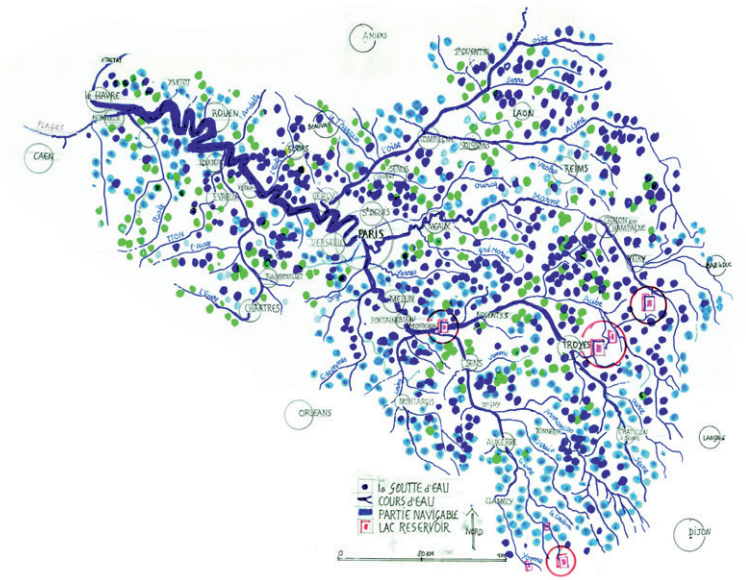
Preamble

BY BERTRAND WARNIER, CO-FOUNDER OF LES ATELIERS AND INSPIRATION BEHIND THE SESSION'S THEME

The **SEINE**, in the collective imagination, is most often associated with the **EXCEPTIONAL BEAUTY** of the river as it flows through Paris, and also with the spectacular nature of this long, winding waterway. It is bordered by striking chalk cliffs from the capital all the way to Le Havre. Moreover, it serves as an economic, residential, and tourist axis stretching over 200 km from the sea to Paris.
But **WOULD THIS IMAGE EVEN EXIST IF, UPSTREAM OF PARIS**, the entire basin weren't composed of a bouquet of tributaries—from the **OISE**, the **AISNE**, the **MARNE**, the **AUBE**, the **YONNE**, the **LOING**, and many others of various sizes? These are fed by thousands of springs and hidden reserves. It's no miracle that the river is navigable.
This basin spans a geographical area from the Ardennes to Burgundy, a region known for its rich and desirable habitability. The landscapes are highly diverse, and the economy is supported by a wide range of resources.



The river Seine and its tributaries © Bertrand Warnier

The Ateliers de Cergy have launched the initiative "A Call for a **GREAT SEQUANIAN GARDEN**," meaning the entire Seine basin. This forms the foundation of a trilogy: the central core—Greater Paris—will be the focus of a session in 2026, followed by the downstream section, structured around the Rouen-Le Havre axis, which will be the heart of the 2027 session.

This year, 2025, the reflection is led by teams of young professionals from diverse cultures and disciplines, focusing on the **UPSTREAM PART** of the **BASIN**. **THIS SESSION NOTEBOOK IS A SYNTHESIS OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS**.

FOREWORD

43RD PARIS REGION WORKSHOP

For over 40 years, the association Les Ateliers de Cergy has brought together students and young professionals from diverse nationalities and backgrounds each year in Île-de-France. Working on-site in multidisciplinary teams, they present their proposals and strategies at the end of the workshop to an international jury chaired by local authorities. These team proposals combine long-term territorial visions with illustrated action ideas, forming a portfolio of projects made available to local decision-makers.

From its inception to its current maturity—with a network of over 3,000 alumni— Les Ateliers has embraced the principle of freely exploring complex topics across multiple scales, allowing itself to step back from institutional constraints.

The Seine and its tributaries

For its 43rd session, Les Ateliers is launching a cycle of workshops focused on the Seine and its tributaries. The Seine basin is, by nature, a working landscape that crosses borders and disciplines, with representations that evolve according to the challenges of the time. Dozens of young professionals are exploring the basin and proposing visions and actions for its future, traveling from upstream to downstream over three years of workshops.

Inspired by work initiated in 2018 by Bertrand Warnier, co-founder of Les Ateliers, and the "Chicago Team" composed of Phil Enquist and Drew Wensley—which led to the publication of the book The Seine river basin as a great park system in 2022—these sessions invite the various stakeholders of the Seine and its tributaries to come together to address the ecological and habitability challenges of the basin.

In the face of simultaneous threats of water scarcity and flood risks linked to climate change, it is essential to rethink our relationship with water and the watershed. Water, the fundamental condition for life, becomes a matrix of relationships between geography, landscape, living beings, and the mineral world. How can we bring forth this Great Garden, rooted in the hydrographic network, the symbolism of water, and the narrative power of the garden?

The Seine basin is a vast territory stretching from Burgundy to Normandy, home to over 18 million people. Its many tributaries form a spectacular network that crosses, irrigates, and connects rural areas, metropolises, valleys, and plains. It is the result of nature's slow work, shaping the landscapes of our daily lives over centuries.

This first workshop aims to contribute to the invention of the Grand Jardin Séquanien by crafting narratives of desirable, resilient, and united territories for the inhabitants of this great living basin. While following the river from its sources to its estuary, the 43rd session focuses on the segment of the Upper Seine Valley—Seine Amont.

THE 43RD PARIS REGION WORKSHOP

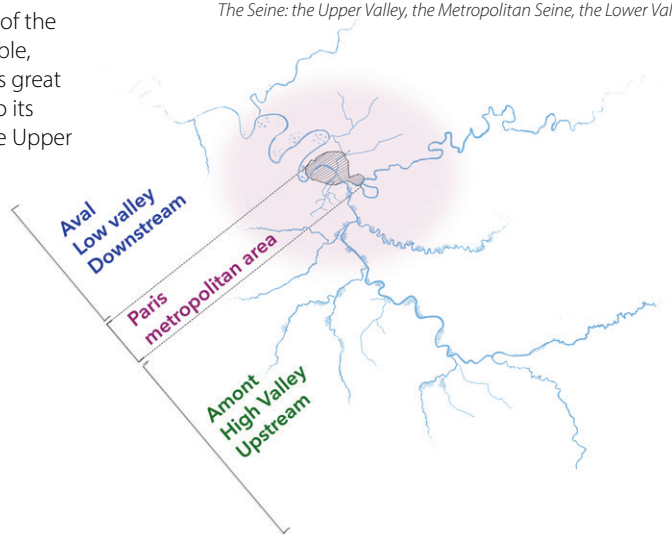
15 participants from complementary disciplines (urban planning, art, landscape, engineering, economics, sociology) and origins (India, Brazil, China, South Africa, Georgia, Argentina, Greece, France)

3 teams of 5 participants

3 weeks : September 9 to 25, 2025

In Cergy, Val d'Oise (95)

The Seine: the Upper Valley, the Metropolitan Seine, the Lower Valley



01

THE TOPIC

BY THE CO-PILOTS
ARMELLE VARCIN & CESAR SILVA URDANETA

FROM SOURCES AND TRIBUTARIES TO THE GREAT RIVER SEINE GARDEN

"The garden is the most powerful symbolic form for thinking about ecological issues – the most used and perhaps also the most desirable." (Quenet, 2024)

The Great River Seine Garden is first and foremost a proposed perspective : adopting the metaphor of the garden to envision the valley as a constellation of living, hydrated, and nourishing environments – where nature and culture intertwine. From sources to tributaries, the Great River Seine Garden offers a way to narrate and reclaim the territory – a collective storytelling practice that reconnects residents, practitioners, and decision-makers around a shared sense of belonging, capable of supporting the transformations demanded by the ecological crisis.

In this vision, the garden transcends its role as a landscape motif : it becomes a logic of attentiveness to processes (water that flows, matter that transforms, seasons that guide gestures) and a mode of engagement that respects the temporalities of living systems, the major uses of the territory, and the journey of a single drop of water through the entire watershed.
The Great Garden nurtures a desirable future through care. Beyond large-scale programs, it relies on the power of the commons and the capacity of narrative to embody place.
It prefers invitation over command, mobilizing imagery rather than administrative injunctions. Its horizon is one of conjunction : weaving connections between sensitivities and territorial needs, between collective imagination and everyday experience. It calls for recognizing watersheds as interwoven scales and landscapes – gardens in the making – a symbolic and ethical framework for thinking about coexistence : re-rooting collective attachment to place through imagination, and mobilizing knowledge and action in service of a shared future.


Source-Seine Côte d'Or Bourgogne

TOWARD A PLURAL AND MULTISCALE WATER CULTURE

Water – its scarcity, quality, or overabundance – is a central issue in our daily lives and societies, especially as ecological, economic, and political crises reshape our realities. Through its universality and life-giving force, water embodies a source of federating and inspiring values. It structures landscapes, organizes living basins, hydrates inhabitants, irrigates crops, enables the transport of goods and people, and nourishes countless beliefs and rituals – not to mention the amenities offered by its plastic, sensory, and haptic dimensions.

Developing a Water Culture means embracing the permanence of its impermanence : To cultivate a water culture is to understand the cycles of blue and green water, their temporalities, and the dynamic nature of both natural and human-made environments. It also means recognizing that landscapes are always in flux. Water transcends administrative boundaries; it calls for a perspective rooted in solidarity and interdependence.

Floods – natural phenomena intensified by climate disruption – powerfully remind us of the dynamic and interconnected nature of the watershed. They shaped ancient civilizations, dramatized the Mont Saint-Michel, and were elevated to art by the Impressionist painter Alfred Sisley. Yet floods can also be catastrophic for residents, buildings, and infrastructure. To mitigate their impact, priority must be given to actions that promote infiltration, slow down water flow, and facilitate circulation : depaving, restoring wetlands, urban hydrology techniques, and regenerative agricultural practices. These solutions exist; the challenge lies in implementing them.

The scale, physical and social realities of the watershed are complex to grasp – this is one of the core challenges of the workshop. It invites us to imagine the habitability of the basin by identifying levers of action that can generate narratives, allowing each inhabitant to feel a sense of belonging to their territory, to the Seine watershed, and to their place within the Upper Seine. Fostering this sense of belonging and engaging with a collective narrative are powerful tools to reduce vulnerability during future floods – whether minor or major – raise awareness of the urgent need to protect water resources in both quantity and quality, encourage solidarity, and cultivate appreciation for the landscapes of the Upper Seine and pride in living there.

Park of Versailles Palace © Thomas Garnier

Floods in the Yonne department © Maxppp

Often overlooked in major projects associated with the Seine, the Upper Seine territory and its tributaries – the Aube, Yonne, Marne, Loing – are assigned a service role for Île-de-France. They must supply drinking water (in both quality and quantity), food (grains, vineyards, livestock), enable the transport of goods and people via waterways, and meet energy needs – such as electricity production at the Nogent-sur-Seine nuclear power plant. They are also expected to retain excess water to prevent major flooding in Paris. A flood of the magnitude of 1910, with a peak of 8.62 meters in Paris and stagnant water for several weeks, would be a major social and economic disaster for the region and the nation.

Yet the Upper Seine territory is rich in culture, tangible and intangible heritage, living basins, ecological environments, and the knowledge and expertise of its residents and businesses. It also experiences its own tragedies – such as the exceptional flood of June 2016, which hit the Loing region with particular severity.

A narrative must be imagined and shared to valorize this territory. The metaphor of the garden – the River Seine as a Great Garden – offers a foundational matrix for this story.

A NARRATIVE FOR "THE RIVER SEINE AS A GREAT GARDEN – IMAGINATION IN ACTION"

A narrative is a "synthesis of the heterogeneous" (Paul Ricœur, 1983). It has the power to weave together multiple, even contradictory, temporalities, actors, and issues into a shared horizon.

From a territorial perspective, the narratives to be invented go beyond mere description : they aim to become tools of mediation between collective memory and future vision, between heritage and horizons, rooted in reality and designed for its inhabitants. These narratives must reflect actions and frameworks where fiction and imagination act as catalysts to transcend divisions and envision possible futures.
This currently absent imaginary will likely become both structuring and identity-forming through the recognition of key elements of memory and heritage – natural, cultural, material and immaterial, industrial, hydraulic…
These narratives can then support shared political projects for ecological transition. This ambition for narrativity raises several questions : Which group(s) should speak and carry the narrative? How should it be conveyed and disseminated? How can it be embedded in the landscape – in valleys, on plateaus far from rivers, in cities? At what scale? How can it be embodied and made collective?

Through the creation of these narratives, the workshop invites participants to imagine frameworks, forward-looking visions, and methods capable of bringing proven territorial approaches to life. It explores the levers – financial, institutional, cultural, and participatory – that will enable their deployment on the ground. Rather than seeking innovation for its own sake, the goal is to identify and activate the conditions that favor realization, stimulate cooperation among stakeholders, and co-construct implementation scenarios tailored to each local context.

Water shapes and reveals landscapes. The workshop focuses not only on riverbanks but also on the slopes and plateaus that form the basin, aiming to understand their dynamics across time and space.

Above, Allégorie de l'eau by Jan Brueghel l'Ancien (circa 1610)
Opposite, Le Pont de Moret by Alfred Sisley (1839)

CULTIVATING THE WATER OF THE GREAT GARDEN

- Develop a shared water culture as a common good
- Enhance the amenities and pleasures of water, balancing biodiversity with human uses
- Recognize and promote the well-being potential of aquatic landscapes and their uses
- Build riparian edges and expand the territories of river-related living
- Weave a sense of belonging along the water, grounded in imagination, practices, and stories
- Foster upstream–downstream solidarities : align responsibilities, prevention, and uses across valleys
- Restore blue and green water cycles, slow down flows, promote infiltration and evapotranspiration
- Reconnect rivers and wetlands to restore hydrological exchanges and ecological continuities
- Preserve groundwater circulation in relation to surface water

THE WORKSHOP TERRITORIES THROUGH THE LENS OF WATER ISSUES

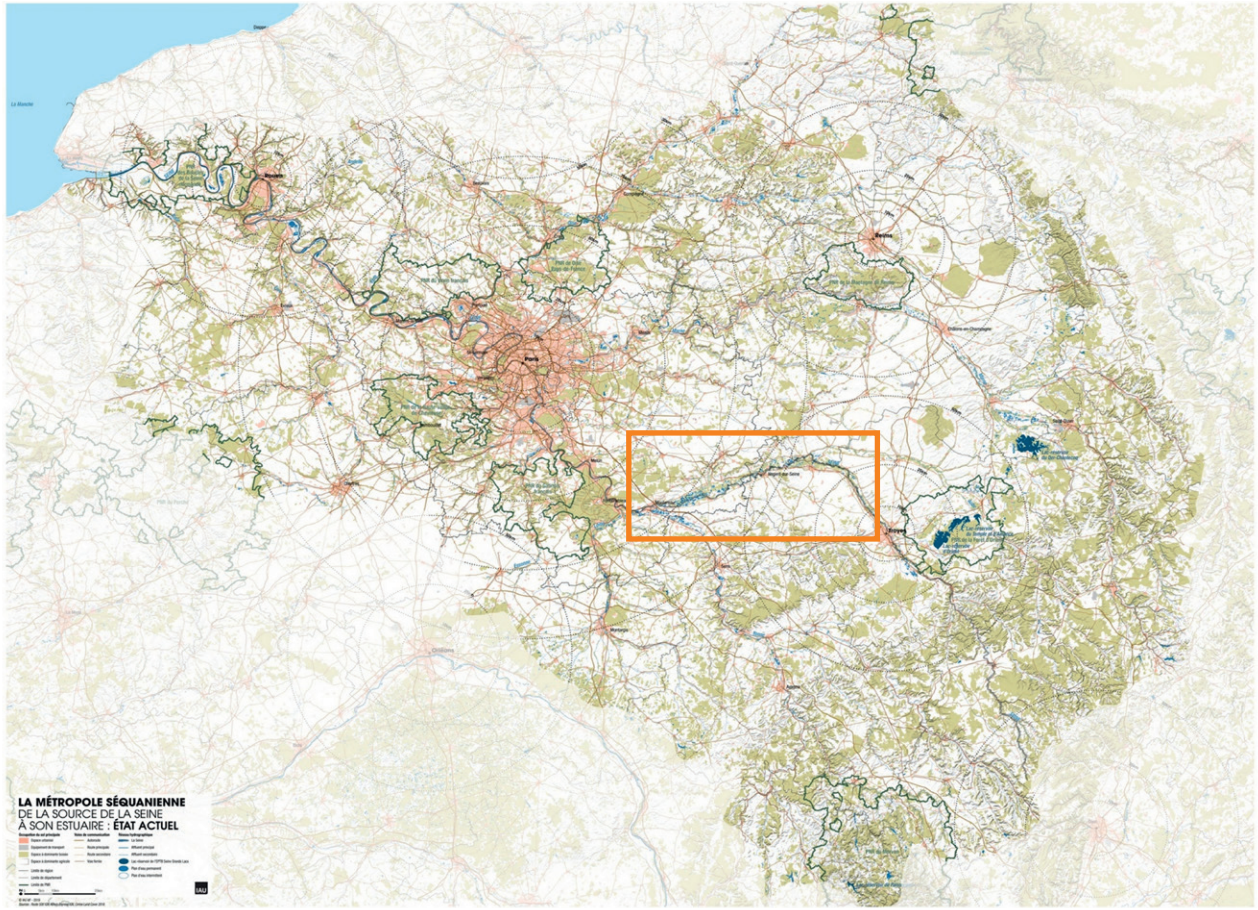
THE FACES OF THE UPSTREAM — CULTURAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND NATURAL HERITAGE

Each tributary – such as the Loing and the Aube – has its own distinct character. Each town possesses unique architectural and historical qualities, while also sharing common cultural and heritage challenges. These territories feature remarkable architectural ensembles, charming urban fabrics, and rich intangible heritage : the Camille Claudel Museum in Nogent-sur-Seine and the memory of landscapes immortalized by Impressionist painters like Alfred Sisley in Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne, which continue to fuel a vibrant artistic dynamic.

The "small hydraulic heritage" – bridges, locks, sluices, wells, washhouses, boat ramps – punctuates each of these territories. These elements serve as landmarks in the landscape, bearing witness to the presence of water and its integration into daily life, contributing to residents' sense of belonging.

However, water-related challenges are also present : agricultural and industrial pollution, large infrastructure developments, declining water quality, and increasing flood risks. These issues are particularly evident in the Aube, where industrial and energy activities enrich the territory but also heighten tensions around water resources.

The department has a strong industrial footprint, with a global leader in malting, paper industries, and the Nogent-sur-Seine nuclear power plant. Around this facility, questions arise regarding the EPR project, a potential MOX nuclear waste treatment plant, and the compensatory measures to be



Areas of interest in the Seine basin © Institut Paris Région, Laurent Perrin

implemented. The memory of the exceptional 2016 flood led to the creation of a public water management and planning authority (EPAGE), which now works on river restoration and wetland awareness – such as in Nemours, where a public space was developed in the city center in connection with riverbank preservation.

FROM THE AUBE TO THE LOING - WATER STRESS AND LOW-FLOW MAINTENANCE IN THE UPPER SEINE BASIN

Reflections and experiments are multiplying to highlight the importance of the "green water" cycle : hydrating soils, regenerating water infiltration in agricultural plots to prevent both floods and droughts – whose future frequency and severity are often underestimated. This approach, rooted in regenerative hydrology, promotes a new agricultural reconfiguration that integrates hedgerows, infiltration lines, grassed areas, and agroforestry. These landscape transformations could shape the territory as profoundly as the large monoculture zones and silos that have historically defined the Aube's agricultural identity.

Water scarcity is becoming increasingly common. This shortage stresses vegetation, crops, humans, and non-humans alike. It also concentrates pollutants (pesticides, nitrates), sometimes rendering water unfit for consumption. In some Loing watershed communities, bottled water (3 liters per person per day) is distributed to "vulnerable" residents.

Maintaining the low-flow level of the Seine is also critical for the operation of the Nogent nuclear power plant, whose reactors require sufficient flow for cooling. This need justified the construction of large upstream reservoirs, designed to secure the plant's water supply and mitigate downstream flooding. However, the discharged water warms the Seine, adding further ecological pressure to aquatic environments.
Finally, industrial projects and urban expansion raise questions about ecological compensation: restoring and creating wetlands, renaturing rivers – such as the Loing in Nemours or

Mariners' pardon - Longueil-Annel © Armelle Varcin

Hedgerow landscape in the Yonne department © Pierre Combier

Pont-sur-Seine © Armelle Varcin

an old mill channel near Nogent-sur-Seine. These initiatives, led by river syndicates, intercommunal bodies, and associations, aim to combine flood prevention with enhanced ecological functionality across the territory.

FROM BRAY-SUR-SEINE TO NOGENT-SUR-SEINE – GROUNDWATER : AN INVISIBLE YET ESSENTIAL HERITAGE

Often overlooked due to its invisibility, groundwater plays a vital role. Aquifers – true buried sponges – feed rivers, drinking water reserves, and vegetation. Preserving their quality and quantity is crucial, especially in the face of agricultural pressures and major infrastructure projects, such as the proposed large-gauge canal between Bray-sur-Seine and Nogent-sur-Seine, which could disrupt underground water continuity.

In the Aube department, protecting drinking water catchment sites has led to the promotion of crops with low input and irrigation needs, such as sainfoin, alfalfa, and hemp. These choices contribute to a virtuous cycle : alfalfa is used in animal feed, while a full industrial hemp sector has emerged – from textile fiber production to its use in construction materials.

FROM THE LOING TO THE BANKS OF MORET – THE SOCIETAL DIMENSIONS OF WATER

Beyond its vital functions, water is a common good with strong social and cultural dimensions. It brings freshness and well-being, and its aesthetic qualities have inspired many artists. The Impressionists – especially Sisley during his stays in Moret-sur-Loing – made the river landscape a central theme of their work. Yet this privileged living environment is also vulnerable. The Loing's accessibility, boosted by the Paris regional rail network and affordable fares, has led to uncontrolled "overtourism." In

Nogentais with a view of the nuclear power plant chimneys © Esta Weber

the newly formed commune of Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne, visitor numbers have reached up to 3,000 people on the narrow riverbanks, causing degradation and even tragic accidents. Water, as both a resource and a territory, is also the source of many conflicts – whether agricultural, industrial, recreational, or environmental. These tensions reveal a key structural issue : the need to establish territorial solidarity – or hydrosolidarity – as a central axis of reflection and action.

LA BASSÉE – LANDSCAPES IN RECOVERY: EXPERIMENTAL TERRITORY AND METROPOLITAN RESERVOIR

Downstream from the Aube, the territory of La Bassée connects the areas explored in this workshop. This vast alluvial plain of over 30,000 hectares serves both as a biodiversity reservoir and a material matrix for the Paris metropolis. Its sands and gravel, transported by river for centuries to build the city, coexist with natural heritage and recovering landscapes : floodable meadows, wetlands on former Seine channels, riparian forests, and marshes with high ecological and recreational potential. The Bassée pilot basin (360 ha, 10 million m^3), a unique

Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne © Alexandre Rossa

retention infrastructure, embodies this role : it helps protect downstream areas from flooding, with an estimated reduction of about 15 cm. Yet the plain remains subject to multiple pressures : extraction, agriculture, hunting, industrial uses, and infrastructure projects like the Beaulieu canal expansion. Among its diverse landscapes, the Monteuil water body in Nogent-sur-Seine – an old quarry converted into a floodable meadow – stands out as a laboratory for the future. Combining ecotourism and biodiversity conservation, this reservoir illustrates the opportunities and challenges at the scale of the Upper Seine basin : imagining landscapes that integrate flood management, ecological restoration, heritage enhancement, amenities, and hospitality for all living beings.

Spanning from the Loing basin to the Aube department, the workshop aims to envision the future of the Upper Seine basin – from riverbanks to interfluves, from urban flows to nourishing landscapes and biodiversity-rich wetlands. It draws on surveyed and characterized territories, strengthened by meetings with elected officials, experts, and technicians, to extract the attributes needed for a shared and desirable coexistence. Through a process of composition – blending nature and culture – it seeks to invent an imaginative framework for the River Seine as a Great Garden, capable of reconciling ecology and habitability across the Seine basin for the benefit of all its inhabitants.

Vitra Museum Garden © Piet Oudolf

WORKSHOP'S OBJECTIVES

- In every part of the basin, live with water as a common good and a vector of territorial solidarity
- Cultivate belonging along the tributaries : build narratives and imaginaries rooted in the hydrographic network
- Imagine action strategies : identify levers, explore implementation methods, and map out concrete steps
- Highlight the Upper Seine stream network as ecological, cultural, and landscape continuities
- Interweave tributaries and interfluves across scales and beyond sectoral approaches
- Envision the Grand Sequanian Basin as a network of continuities that transcends ineffective dichotomies : urban/rural, metropolitan/peripheral, natural/cultural, rich/poor

02
THE PROCESS

The workshop is a collective preparatory effort, bringing together the steering team with various partners and water stakeholders at each key stage. Preparation is paced by regular meetings of the "monitoring committee," which guides and supports the workshop's reflections.

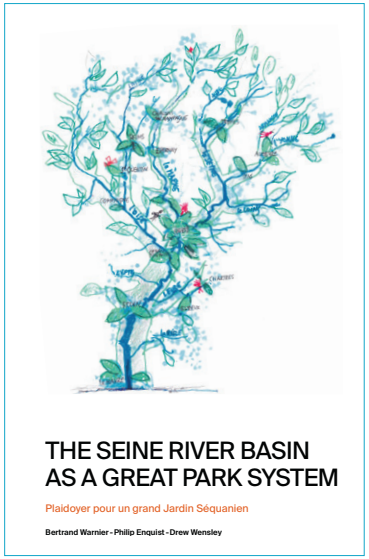
The Call to Action

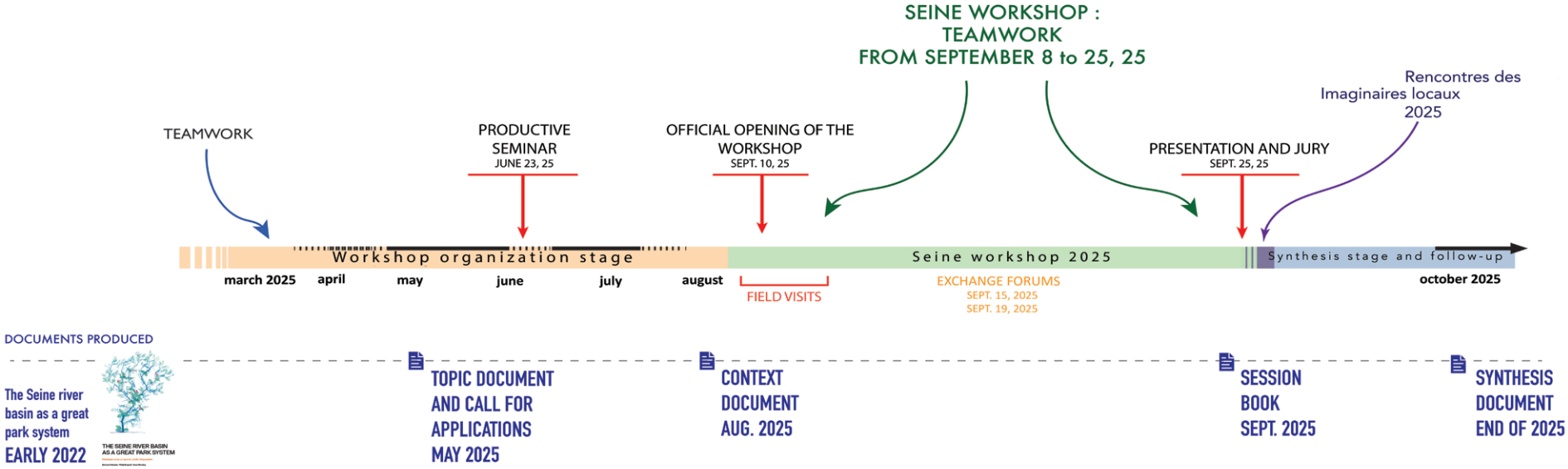
In early 2022, Les Ateliers and Urba2000, with support from the Institut Paris Région, published "A Call for a Great Sequanian Garden", written by Bertrand Warnier, urban planner and member of the Académie d'Architecture, in collaboration with Phil Enquist, a North American urban planner, and Drew Wensley, a Canadian landscape architect. The book is prefaced by Erik Orsenna.

This publication is a passionate appeal from committed professionals to those with political and territorial responsibilities across the vast Seine basin and its tributaries.

In Bertrand Warnier's words:
"This Call—which could well be a Manifesto—broadly addresses the issues of existing limits and boundaries. And it is in this context, through the eyes of a gardener, that there is the most to say—or at least to say very differently—than through the lens of an accountant, on matters as essential as gigantism and overconcentration, the role of water and the place of farmers, biological balance and the need for space, and quality of life in the 21st century."

After the conclusion of the workshop, the Rencontres des Imaginaires Locaux continue the reflections on the power of imagination and storytelling through events held in Cergy and Paris. You'll find the full program in the appendices of this document.





TEAMWORK

As part of the workshop's preparation, in March 2025, six European students from Warwick, Dresden, Ljubljana, and Stockholm collaborated with Les Ateliers over four weeks to explore the future of European rivers and contributed to the initiative's communication strategy.
Teamwork was designed to spark interest in the workshop and invited participants to explore the topic through various European perspectives, particularly the role and future of major rivers in Europe. Participants conducted research and site visits on waterways in their respective cities and collectively developed a communication strategy for social media and other platforms, incorporating creative elements. This multidisciplinary team engaged in deep discussions about rivers and, after four weeks, presented several proposals for the workshop's communication strategy, including:

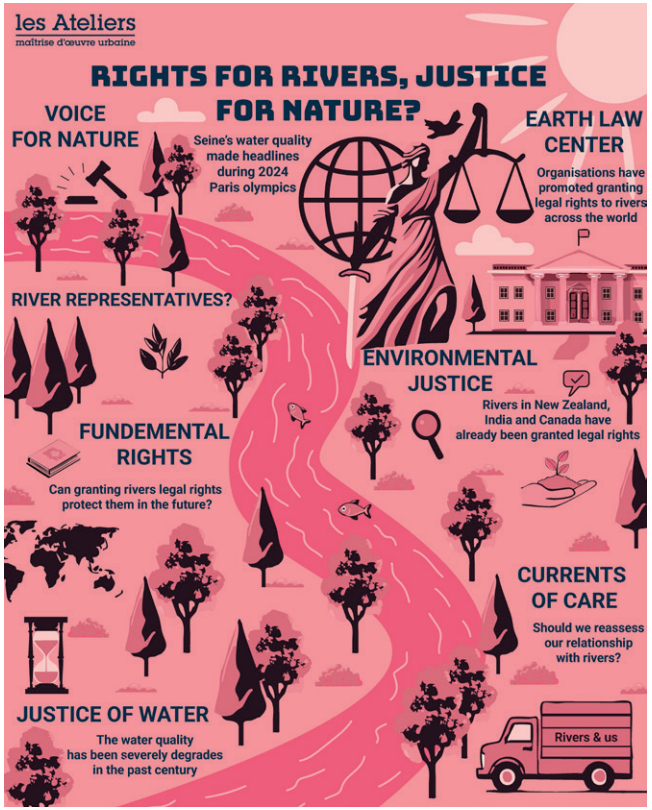
- A series of three infographics highlighting key aspects of river preservation
- A collection of forward-looking and cautionary images to draw attention
- A banner integrating infographics about the Seine
- A scientific article on the legal recognition of rivers

These materials were published on social media in the following weeks to raise awareness about water and river-related issues and to support the launch of the international call for workshop applications. All Teamwork productions are available in the appendices of this document.

Special thanks to Matej Gaberc, George Porter, Iorvik Verhoeven, Amelia Lee, Wiam Behidj, and Saima Begum for their participation and commitment to this international initiative.

The role of rivers in Urban Life © Teamwork

The legal right of rivers © Teamwork



Productive seminar

"HABITABILITY AND ECOLOGY OF THE SEINE BASIN AND ITS TRIBUTARIES: WHAT REPRESENTATIONS AND ACTIONS FOR THE TERRITORIES?"

To bring together national experts around the workshop's key issues and share their insights with participants, a productive seminar was organized by the workshop's steering team on June 23, 2025, at the Jean Jaurès Foundation. The productive seminar was a full day of discussions, round tables, and working groups, designed to explore the workshop's questions through a multidisciplinary lens and to share the reflections of water and territorial professionals with selected participants.

The goal of the productive seminar was to work on representations and actions for the territories. Through these exchanges, knowledge emerged to help participants become familiar with the major issues identified by the workshop's co-leaders : promoting a shared water culture, imagining elements of a territorial narrative, mobilizing knowledge to support territorial development, and raising awareness of hydrosolidarity.

Presentation of the workshop by the co-pilots, Véronique Valenzuela and Simon Brochard

QUESTIONING

How can we represent the water cycle and the evolution of aquatic ecosystems in the Seine basin?

How do land-use planning and human activities profoundly impact water dynamics?

What tools and actions can help preserve water and shift our collective and territorial understanding of it?

What are the specific characteristics of the Upper Seine?

Roundtable n°1

WATER CYCLE AND HABITABILITY OF THE SEINE BASIN – UPPER SEINE

9:15AM - 10:45AM
Speakers:

- **Stéphane Gillis**, General Director, Departmental Water Distribution Syndicate of Aube
- **Ludovic Faytre**, Head of Studies and Major Risks, Paris Region Institute
- **Ludovic Oudin**, Hydrologist and Geographer, Sorbonne University and PIREN-Seine
- **Emmanuelle Bonneau**, Professor of Spatial Planning and Urbanism, Bordeaux Montaigne University

The first round table highlighted the need for an integrated approach to the water cycle—one that connects resources, ecosystems, governance, and territorial practices.

To open the seminar, **Ludovic Faytre** presented the flood risk at the metropolitan scale: a major hazard whose impact is amplified by the concentration of stakes (housing, services, industries). He emphasized the idea of "working with risk," moving beyond a constraint-based approach to view risk as an inherent component of planning. He advocated for a territorialized risk approach and a holistic strategy structured over time—prevention, crisis management, post-crisis recovery—to guide planning choices that reduce exposure and foster local dynamics compatible with risk management through governance and planning.For the geographer-urbanist, risk-related challenges call for cooperative methods: the metropolis must collaborate with upstream territories to implement global strategies—flood expansion zones and nature-based solutions—that work in synergy. Flood risk cuts across all policies (economic development, nature conservation, housing, etc.); Faytre called for breaking down the segmentation of planning practices to build integrated

strategies. In response to a concept of resilience often diluted, he stated : "Accepting and understanding our vulnerabilities—both individual and collective—is the first step toward resilience." Resilience must be grounded in shared knowledge of vulnerabilities to guide governance toward coherent and collectively accepted actions.

Stéphane Gillis introduced the mixed syndicate of Aube's water services as a multi-skilled structure—flood management, sanitation, wetland stewardship—with strong local governance. From the project management perspective, he emphasized a culture of risk and deep knowledge of environments and uses, which are assets for daily decision-making (pricing, policy choices) and crisis response. The intercommunal format of the syndicate, which extends beyond departmental boundaries, allows for overcoming sectoral logic—a point especially noted by the workshop.
Gillis stressed the overlapping challenges : emerging pollutants (PFAS), seasonal alternation between water scarcity and excess, ash tree dieback and riparian forest thinning, debris blockages, and rising water temperatures affecting biodiversity. Among the signs of degradation, salmonid reproduction stands out as a particularly telling indicator. These interactions demand a paradigm shift: conceiving water through a systemic approach based on a triad—knowledge, governance, action—without governance overpowering knowledge.
The integrated management strategy presented—climate impact modeling, master plans, territorial engagement, participatory events such as the 2025 Water Observatory "La Seine en Partage"—illustrates a path leading to a conclusion that resonates with the theme of our workshop : addressing water challenges, adapting its management, coordinating policies, and resolving conflicts will require, upstream of action, shared and meaningful narratives rooted in the imaginations, values, and aspirations of the territories.

Ludovic Oudin provided an assessment of water resources and their trajectories. He highlighted the decline in aquifers and piezometric levels throughout the 20th century, the metropolitan pressure on water withdrawals, and the significant impact of irrigation, which contributes to sharp reductions in summer flows—up to –30% on the Seine in Paris. These usage tensions result in increasingly frequent withdrawal restrictions and drought decrees, forcing delicate trade-offs between domestic, industrial, and agricultural uses.
Looking ahead, climate projections suggest wetter winters and hotter, drier summers. While reservoir lakes help mitigate low-flow periods, current management rules do not fully compensate for the decline. Oudin outlined three possible trajectories: a baseline scenario, policy-dependent scenarios, and a transformative scenario centered on agroecology and regenerative hydrology. Only a profound shift in agricultural practices—reducing and reallocating withdrawals, rethinking irrigation, and embracing regenerative agriculture—appears capable of reconciling human needs, economic activity, and flow preservation.

During the proctuive seminar at Fondation Jean Jaurès

This path requires revisiting governance frameworks and fostering co-construction among researchers, managers, and users to better align water use and resource management with the challenges of a changing climate regime.

Emmanuelle Bonneau concluded the session with a conceptual and operational framework rooted in bioregional thinking and the Italian territorialist school. Using the watershed as a foundational matrix, she advocated for a reinhabitation of territory based on polycentrism and reticular networks that connect urban and rural centers, ecological and hydrological continuities, and elevate agroecological potential and localized knowledge.
Bonneau presented concrete tools : river contracts as governance levers, community maps and artistic mediation to co-create territorial identities and valorize intangible heritage, and the example of a multifunctional agricultural park—a weaving of ecological, agro-touristic, agroecological, and local transformation activities offering innovative and sustainable ways to reinvest in territories.
She explained how these tools fit within research-action loops—academics working directly with territories—to produce publications and operational knowledge that inform territorial planning and action. Anchored in bioregional thought (Magnaghi, Berg), her approach promotes retro-innovation (Stuiver): reinterpreting ancestral know-how to envision planning as a co-evolution linking knowledge and action.
The approaches presented by Bonneau reembed practices within territorial cycles to transform local potential into concrete actions that nourish territorial agency—articulating the cycles of water, food, ecology, and flows to sustain and enhance the legacies of place for present and future generations.

Presentation by Xavier Riveau on regenerative hydrology

Roundtable n°2

REPRESENTATIONS AND ACTIONS FOR THE CREATION OF A GREAT GARDEN

11:00AM - 12:30AM

Speakers :

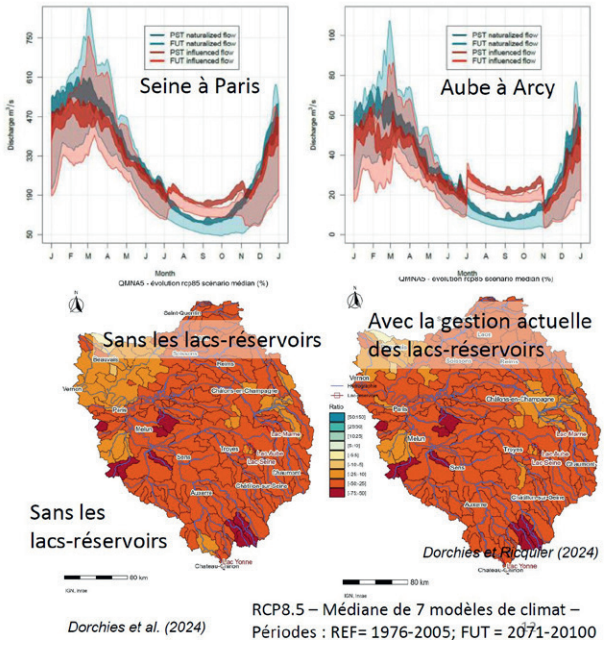
- **Nathalie Carcaud**, Professor of Geography and Landscape Studies, Institut Agro Rennes Angers
- **Camille Jouin**, Urban Planning Engineer, Thierry Maytraud Agency
- **Didier Larue**, Landscape Architect and Urban Planner, Founder of Atelier LD
- **Xavier Riveau**, Board Member, Association for Regenerative Hydrology (PUHR)

The second round table emphasized the diversity of water—its functions, forms, and temporalities. Drawing inspiration from the term "biodiversity," **Nathalie Carcaud** proposed the concept of hydrodiversity to reflect the plural nature of water, describing the various types of flowing waters and the ways they are perceived and used. She noted that hydrological representations—such as diagrams and block models—often lack human presence and usage, underscoring the urgency of cultivating a shared water culture among all stakeholders: elected officials, professionals, and citizens.

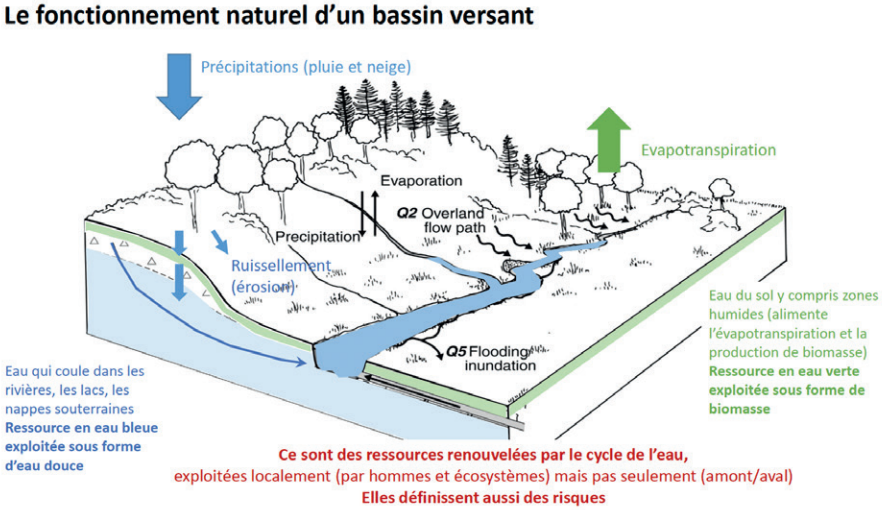
Urban hydrology specialists **Camille Jouin** and **Didier Larue** presented examples of open-air rainwater management at multiple scales—from neighborhood to watershed—that help prevent flooding, enhance biodiversity, and improve the living environment for both humans and non-humans. They stressed the importance of public authorities and elected officials integrating water-related issues—quantity, quality, flooding, drought, pollution—into long-term, cross-sectoral agendas.

Both speakers emphasized the interdependence between water culture and quality of life, encouraging a holistic approach to urban design, spatial composition, and the multifunctionality of hydrological infrastructure. This includes attention to daily uses, resident participation, and the educational dimension of water-related installations.

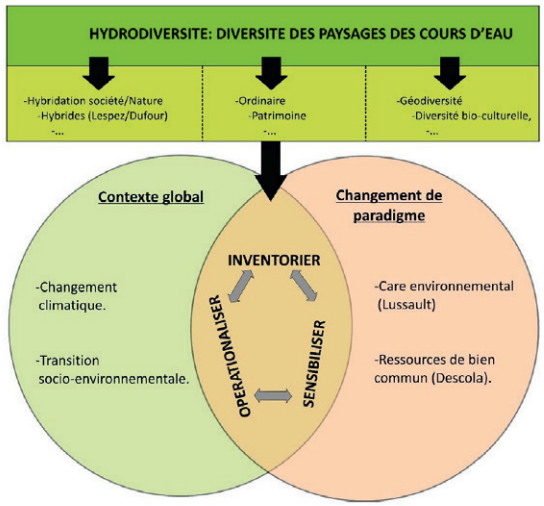
Finally, **Xavier Riveau**'s presentation revisited the origins and principles of regenerative hydrology, which applies to the green water cycle in agricultural practices. Regenerative hydrology is gaining recognition through numerous publications and demonstrative projects across metropolitan France.



Extract from Ludovic Oudin's presentation © Ludovic Oudin



Extract from Agnès Ducharne's presentation during the opening of the workshop © Agnès Ducharne



Extract from Nathalie Carcaud's presentation © Nathalie Carcaud

Collective Working Session

Following the round tables, two group discussions were held to generate questions and ideas for the workshop participants.

Working group animated by Cesar Silva Urdaneta in reflection

Building Hydrosolidarity

with Lena Soffer, Michel Jaouën, Caroline Maurand, Luc Raimbault, Philippe Delcourt

Hydrosolidarity is an appealing concept — but what does it truly encompass? And how can we act upon it? A common image suggests that upstream areas serve as reservoirs for downstream ones, or even that upstream regions are flooded to "save" Paris.
Clearly, there is water we don't want — floodwaters, polluted water — and water we do want: for drinking, hydration, irrigation, navigation, and industrial or nuclear processes. This water enhances the entire upstream territory, a less densely populated living basin than Île-de-France, yet active industrially, agriculturally, and culturally. It is also vital for flood prevention and maintaining low-flow levels, benefiting not only downstream areas and national interests, but also the upstream territory itself.

Seeking a form of hydrosolidarity — between upstream and downstream, right and left banks — aligns with the workshop's theme: how do we raise awareness about water here and there? How do we activate both theoretical and practical knowledge? How do we foster a culture of water cycles, including regenerative hydrology, which aims to restore soils and agricultural practices to preserve water in both quantity and quality, while also preventing floods and mudslides?

The entire network of waterways could become a marker of territorial identity and animate a shared vision. Management tools — flood prevention and planning schemes (PAPI), aquatic environment and flood risk management actions (GEMAPI) — are essential. Locally, when rivers are restored and ecological corridors maintained, all actions that reconcile local uses, ecology, and education contribute to building a water culture capable of fostering hydrological solidarity and understanding the nested scales it entails.

Beyond times of crisis — which also give rise to spontaneous mutual aid among and for those affected — sharing knowledge becomes a major challenge to objectify situations and foster dialogue around conflicting uses. Drought is a slow-moving disaster whose effects only become visible once it is fully underway: it demands far more pedagogical effort.

The group emphasized the invisibility of drought-related issues and the need to rely on the multitude of existing tools.

One hypothesis emerged: what if administrative boundaries were organized according to river catchment areas, starting from the many sub-basins, integrating geographically relevant entities based on visible and invisible flows, and reconciling valleys, slopes, plateaus, urban and rural zones?

A current topic was raised: the legal personality of rivers and waterways, in light of ongoing reflections and actions around the "Parliament of the Loire" model. This raises several questions: what personality for which segment of the Seine? For which tributary? With what legal representation and legitimacy?

While the question of granting rivers legal personality sparked debate, the group reached consensus on the need to build a water community that unites upstream and downstream — for the benefit of residents along the upper Seine and its tributaries, and for water in all its forms. This endeavor, as proposed by the theme of the workshop, calls for cultivating a sense of belonging carried by one or more collective narratives.

Tools and Narratives for Belonging to the Sequanian Basin Participants

with Eric Force, Camille Jouin, Caroline Motta, Michel Calvino, Bruno Jouyette, Didier Larue

During this working session, we first questioned the ability to work at such a vast scale without immediately resorting to surveying or close-up territorial approaches. Drawing, life scenario storytelling, and territorial practices and uses were later mobilized as fertile ground for reflection and the imagination of territorial narratives.

Building on this, the role of daily movements—the motives and rhythms of journeys that bring residents closer to the river—was considered a potential narrative matrix. We also explored the mental image of belonging to a territory's geography: nature, culture, topography, and hydrography. A key question emerged: what is the river's sphere of influence? How far does its mental image extend, what does it carry that is desirable, and what role does it play in the attractiveness of places?

From this perspective, the landscape becomes a project opportunity: what views does a given route offer? What atmospheres do we pass through? Do we enjoy choosing one path over another? What role does the river play in this experience? These elements feed into the sensitive construction of a territorial narrative.

In parallel, the relationship we build with water emerged as a recurring theme. Interest in the interfluve—areas distant from the river but shaped by it invisibly—was identified as a key issue: how to bring these spaces closer to the attention given to the river, its banks, and its tributaries, sometimes invisible but never truly distant.

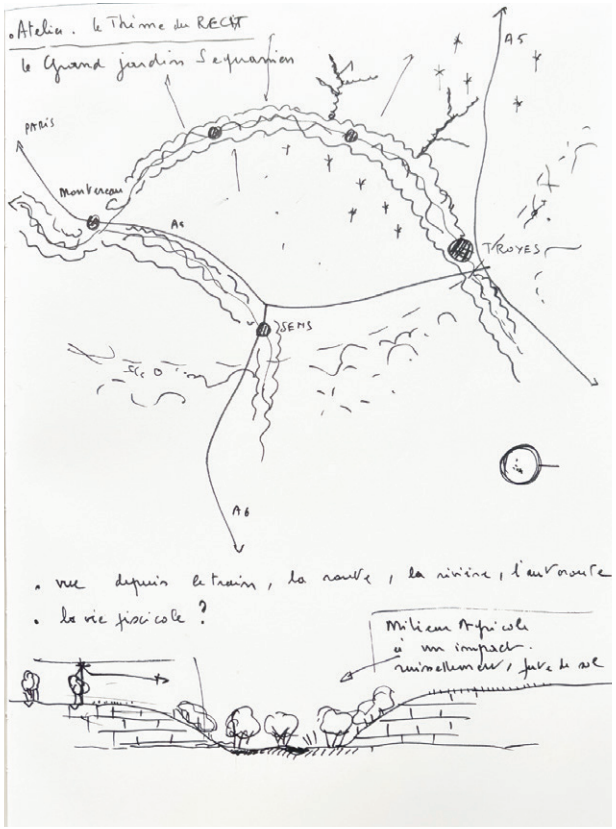
Seminar contributions drew on agricultural practices and regenerative hydrology approaches in rural settings. The focus was not only on valuing "blue water" (visible, daily, and heritage-rich resource), but also "green water," seen as a vector of ecological processes. This approach highlights the interdependence between water and human activity and affirms water's role as a matrix of territorial habitability.

Practically, the narrative project was expressed through drawing and agricultural planning approaches, rethinking crop organization based on water capture where it falls. For Didier Larue, earthworks and furrows must be designed with topography in mind, following rhythms parallel to the river to avoid excessive runoff. Such landscape planning, linked to resource preservation, could give rise to a landscape matrix and embody, through agricultural transformation, a narrative specific to the Upper Seine Valley.

Contributions also addressed material devices—information panels, signage, bronze markers embedded in the ground—that punctuate journeys with sensory reminders: how, 15 km from the river, do we build a relationship with water, a memory of its presence, or a call to animate its uses and potential? These devices help bring the "sphere of influence of the river" closer, in Caroline Motta's words.

Our work thus explored the materialities, means, and forms of the project in service of crafting shared narratives: stories rooted in the memory and practices of places, nourished by the aesthetic qualities of landscapes, and carried by the collective representations they evoke. Drawing, as a catalyst for this collective work, invites us to consider the garden as both a metaphor (an artifact of nature and culture) and a tool (plant selection, earthwork orientation). Like regenerative hydrology, a garden-based approach emphasizes the importance of composition and design in landscapes to maintain water as a guarantor of habitability.

In conclusion, our work calls for reflection on the shared nature of water and its transformative projects—for it is indeed around what we share that territorial narratives must and can be composed.



Drawing by Didier Larue

Opening of the workshop at La Caisse des Dépôts et des Consignations

THE WORKSHOP

Week of September 9-14, 2025

Discovery of the subject and the territory - Teamwork

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025
WORKSHOP KICKOFF

September 9 marked the official start of the workshop with the arrival in Cergy of 15 participants from around the world. After an introduction to Les Ateliers by Simon Brochard, Director of Projects, participants and Les Ateliers team introduced themselves one by one. Following a walk around the lake at the Cergy leisure base, everyone gathered for a picnic to get to know each other better.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2025
OFFICIAL OPENING AT THE CAISSE DES DÉPÔTS ET CONSIGNATIONS

Armelle Varcin et **Cesar Silva Urdaneta**, co-pilots of the workshop, presented the theme : "The River Seine as a Great Garden : The sources: Ecology and Habitability of the Seine and Its Tributaries." This first presentation was an opportunity to revisit the key questions shaping the workshop :

- How can we inhabit the Seine basin in light of contemporary societal, political, and climate challenges?
- How can we connect with water in its many forms?
- How can we approach this vast territory on a human scale?
- How can we consider the watershed as a meaningful scale for reflection?

Julie Gobert, researcher in spatial planning and geography at the Leesu lab (Water, Environment, and Urban Systems), followed with a presentation on the Bassée region, a focal area of the workshop. She highlighted its ecological features and historical significance, especially regarding resource use (alluvial, hydraulic) and flood prevention downstream. She introduced two major development projects : the large-scale upgrade at Nogent-sur-Seine and the pilot retention basin at Seine Bassée. Confronting the perception of being a "serving territory," she introduced the concept of territorial solidarity within Bassée-Voulzie and toward the downstream Seine. She proposed identifying redistributive mechanisms and solidarity-based strategies to build spaces for political, social, and economic interaction for Bassée's future.

After lunch at the Tuileries Garden, the afternoon session brought together Les Ateliers' partners and local stakeholders to express their expectations and questions. Participants also had the chance to engage directly with the speakers.

- **Opening Remarks** : **Pierre-André Périssol**, President of Les Ateliers, **Isabelle Laudier**, Head of Research Institute at the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations
- **Opening Lecture** : "The Water Cycle and Its Changes in the Seine Basin" by **Agnès Ducharne**, climatologist and hydrologist, CNRS
- **Territorial Challenges and Expectations Presented by Les Ateliers' Partners** :

Brice Gruet – Deputy mayor for Heritage and Tourism Development, Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne
Laurent Boullanger – Director of Territorial Planning and Biodiversity, SDDEA
Gilles Bouvelot – General Director, EPF Île-de-France
Jordi Delepine – Vice President, La Seine en Partage

Presentation of the workshop topic by the co-pilots during the opening session

Pierre-André Perissol, Agnès Ducharne, Gilles Bouvelot and Jordi Delepine

"Water issues aren't just about water. They involve a multitude of social relationships to water and usage sectors (agri-food, energy...) across spaces whose connection to this resource plays out across interwoven scales." — Barbier, Fernandez, 2024

Top photo: Participants crossing the Pont des Arts bridge to reach the Caisse des Dépôts et des Consignations
Bottom photo: Official opening session of the 43rd workshop

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2025
FIRST DAY OF IMMERSION AND EXPLORATION

Field visits and meetings from Bassée to Aube Upper Seine : Climate Challenges, Major Projects, and Agro-Industrial Uses

Visit 1 : Welcome in Nogent-sur-Seine at Place de la Halle de Nogent-sur-Seine by **Laurent Boullanger**, Director of Territorial Planning and Biodiversity at the Syndicat des Eaux de l'Aube (SDDEA). Presentation of the large mills in Nogent-sur-Seine, owned by Soufflet, as well as the Soufflet malt houses, by **Alain Boyer**, Mayor of Barbuise, a neighbouring municipality.

Visit 2 : Tour of the Monteuil water body by **Marie de Sainte Maresville** from the Nature du Nogentais association, a former quarry transformed into a large floodplain meadow with a rich biodiversity worthy of the Bassée wetlands. The area is dedicated to the preservation and discovery of natural heritage.

Visit 3 : Stop at Nogent Port. Presentation of the industrial zone and development project (Seine canal upgrade, port expansion)

Présentation of SDDEA and challenges of the Seine Valley, Presentation of the challenges facing La Bassée by **Laurent Boullanger**: industrial and agricultural activities, biodiversity conservation, drinking water production, and nitrate pollution. Presentation of the collective strategy of the SAGE (Water Development and Management Plan) for La Bassée-Voulzie by **Eric Bonnot**, SAGE coordinator.

Visit 4 : Stop at CAPDEA agricultural cooperative's dehydration unit (low-impact farming, alfalfa cultivation). Crossing the agricultural plain to illustrate key issues.

Visit 5 : Renaturation site of the Ardusson in Saint-Martin-de-Bossenay

Soufflet malt houses located on the banks of the Seine

The Great Mills of Nogent-sur-Seine

Visit to the Monteuil water body

Visit to the Ardusson renaturation site in St-Martin de Bossenay

Welcome to Nogent-sur-Seine by Laurent Boullanger

Tour of the port of Nogent-sur-Seine

Dehydration unit

Presentation of the Monteuil waterbody by Marie de Sainte Maresville

Stone bridge on the road to Port-Saint-Nicolas, Monteuil waterbody

Farmland in the Nogentais region

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2025
SECOND DAY OF IMMERSION AND EXPLORATION

Field visits and meetings in the Upper Seine region of Île-de-France
Living in the Seine Basin : Water Use and Conflicts

Visit 1 : Visit to the restoration project on Perthuis Island and the creation of a bypass channel for the Loing River in Nemours, with the EPAGE (Public Establishment for Water Development and Management) of the Loing Basin, represented by **Anne Pruvot**, Director of the EPAGE, and **Stéphane Bik**, Head of Aquatic Environments and Head of Wetland Management for the EPAGE territory. Perthuis Island is a Natura 2000 classified wetland. EPAGE is continuing its work to preserve and restore aquatic environments on the site with two major projects: the creation of an educational boardwalk and the establishment of a bypass channel for the Loing.

Visit 2 : Tour of the banks of the Loing and the town centre of Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne by **Brice Gruet**, councillor responsible for culture, heritage and tourism development. Presentation of the Loing-Orvanne confluence and the EPAGE's development project for the banks of the Loing. Discussion on flood risks, tourism and uses of the Loing, particularly in summer.

Welcome by Mayor Dikran Zakeossian. Presentation of the municipality, intercommunal structure Moret-Seine-et-Loing, and major water-related challenges.

Visit 3 : Stop at Episy village (valley view) and Sensitive Natural Area of the Episy Marsh

Visit 4 : Stop at the Voulzie aqueduct footbridge

Visit 5 : Stop at Saint-Mammès : river port and Seine-Loing confluence

Accompanying Experts :
Leo Landau, Coordination EAU Île-de-France
Anna Mathis, France Nature Environnement
Anne-Marie Romera, La Seine n'est pas à vendre
Camille Chu Van, master EDD UPEC
Louis Moutard, architecte et urbaniste, Les Ateliers member
Jean-Claude Rault, Les Ateliers member

Welcome by the mayor of Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne, Dikran Zakeossian, in the former municipal council chamber of Moret-sur-Loing

View of the Moret bridge from the banks of the Loing

Presentation of the Episy marsh by Brice Gruet, deputy mayor

Presentation by Anne Pruvot and Stéphane Bik from EPAGE du Loing

Barley Sugar Museum in Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne

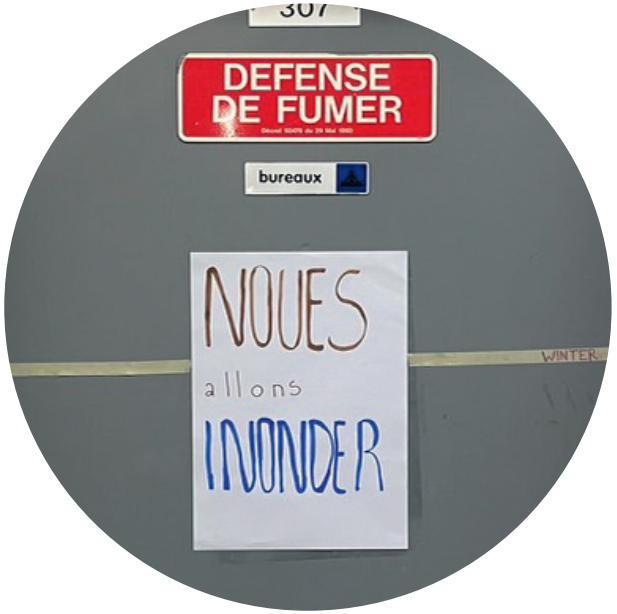
Exchanges on Perthuis Island "Working together to protect our rivers"

Confluence between the Loing and the Seine at Saint-Mammès

Entrance to Perthuis Island

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2025
INSTALLATION AT THE ÉCOLE NATIONALE SUPÉRIEURE D'ARTS DE PARIS-CERGY

After two full days of visits, participants—organized into three multidisciplinary and international teams—settled into the art school. They began exchanging ideas, sharing notes, reflections, and questions.



Door to team B "Noues allons inonder" - We will flood

Week of September 15–21, 2025

Teamwork and exchange forums

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025
FIRST EXCHANGE FORUM

This forum allowed teams to test ideas, propose initial hypotheses, and benefit from feedback and insights from experts, partners, and Les Ateliers members. Coming shortly after settling into the art school, it encouraged participants to tap into their imaginations and propose one or more narratives for the territories.

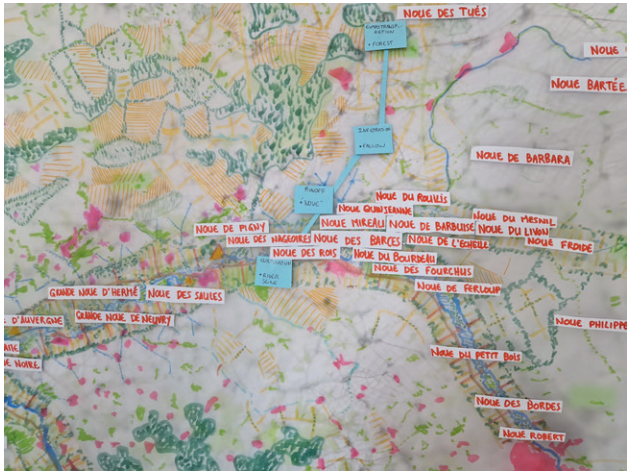
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2025

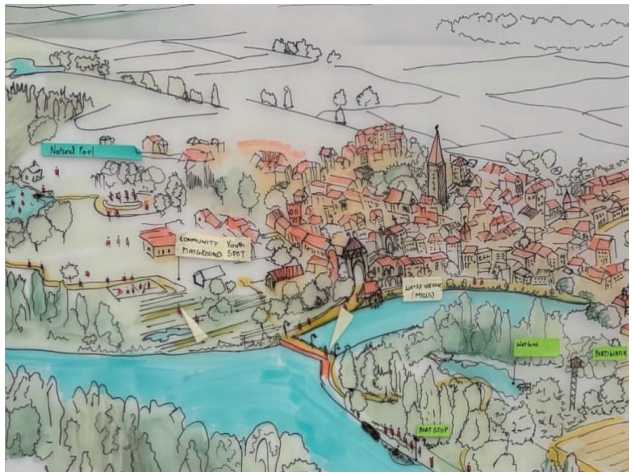
Conference and Virtual Exchange with **Marlies Van der Maarel**, strategic urban planner for the City of Rotterdam, "Rotterdam and the New Meuse : An Integrated and Collaborative Approach to Urban Development, Water, and Climate Adaptation" Presentation of Rotterdam's strategies for adapting to climate change and rising water levels.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025
SECOND EXCHANGE FORUM

Presentation by Marlies Van der Maarel, city of Rotterdam

Participants of the 2nd exchange forum





TEAM C

Making the invisible visible

Celebrating the power of water

WATER CULTURE

SANCTIFY THE FLOODPLAIN

TEAM B

THE ART OF LIVING AROUND SWALES

Adaptability of territories

TROPICAL SEINE

RECONCILIATION OF USES

TEAM A

HUMANS AND NON-HUMANS

Interconnected city

MULTIPLY CORRIDORS

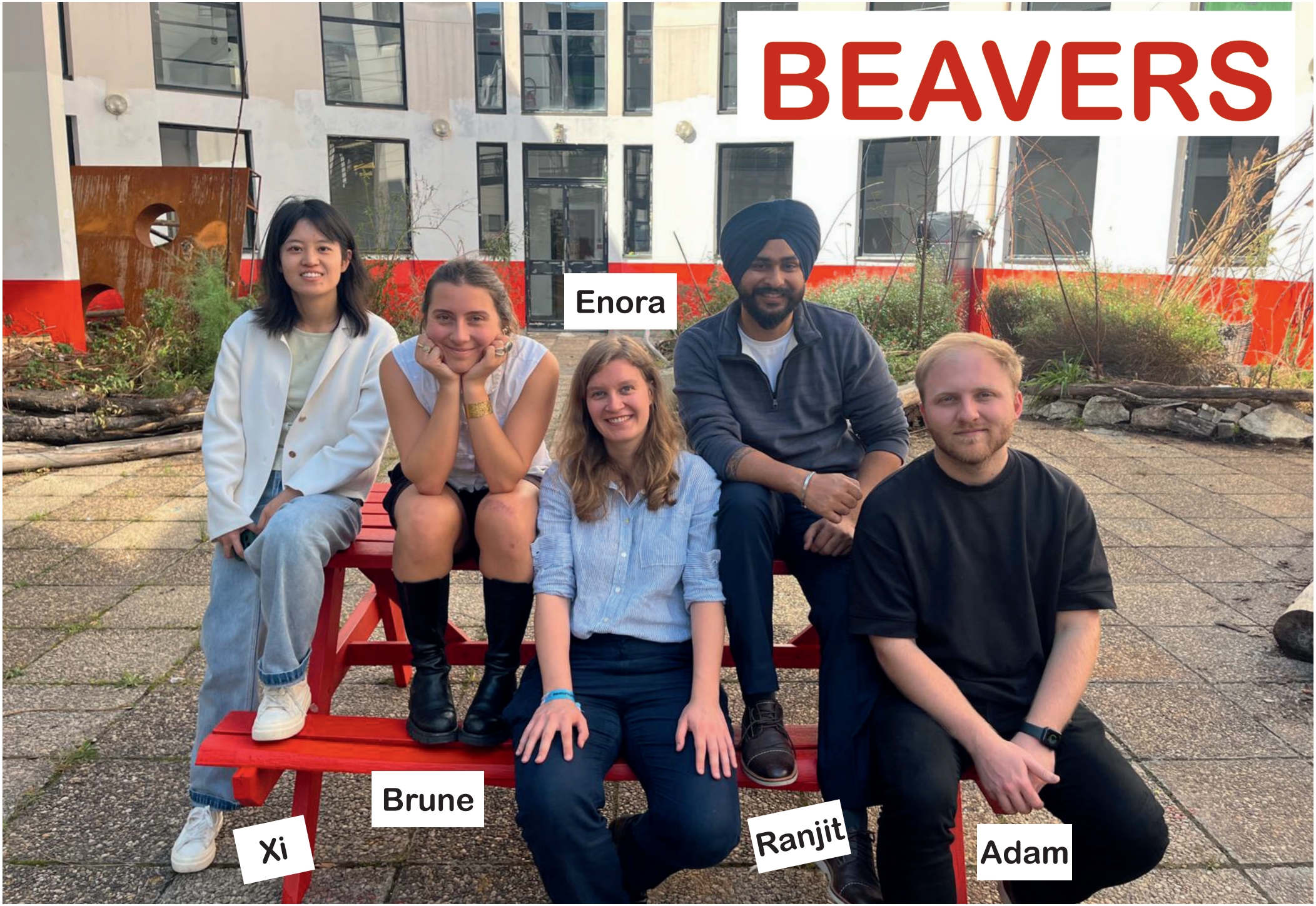
WEAVING USES FROM THE SENSES

03 TEAMS' PROPOSALS

TEAM A
BEAVERS

TEAM B
NOU(E)S

TEAM C
KI LU CRUE


BEAVERS
Enora
Brune
Xi
Ranjit
Adam

The Sequanien Path(s)

Creating shared pathways towards socio-cultural and hydro-ecological renewal

Call for action

We acknowledge that :

1. Our survival depends on our hydro-ecosystems, supporting our vital needs by providing drinking water, fertile soil and climate regulation.
2. The rivers support the existence of a wide variety of species and ecosystems.
3. The river basin depends on many factors, including the condition of the surrounding floodplains and wetlands.

We worry that :

1. Human activities have caused devastating damage to the hydro-ecosystems. Industrial pollution, terraforming, canalsing, destruction of ecological habitats, and declines in aquatic biodiversity have had profound consequences on human and ecological health.
2. Climate change is exacerbating droughts and floods, impacting ecosystem balance in the region.

We call for :

1. Expressing the bio-cultural potential of rivers - hosting programmes that encourage interaction between people and nature through shared ecological spaces.
2. Access to ecological and aquatic amenities as a right for all, regardless of age, class, race, gender, sexuality, (dis)abilty, territory.
3. Social-cultural regeneration that emerges from the ecological restoration of \ hydro-ecosystems.
4. The creation of new legal, cultural, economic, and social paradigms based on living in harmony with nature and protecting the commons, and in this case, all the rivers of the basin.

Manifesto

We are the **weaver beavers**. Our aim is to weave together the upper Seine Basin for all its inhabitants: humans and non-humans alike.

We aim to move beyond the dominant hydrological paradigm that views water merely as a resource – a single, scientific construct that can be controlled. Instead, we propose viewing **water as a living, polymorphic entity grounded in place** through its social, ecological, economic, spiritual, and political dimensions. The modern idea of a singular water is transformed into a plurality of 'waters', networks of socio-hydrological landscapes that reflect and shape the specific contexts in which they exist.

To achieve this, we envisage **weaving together socio-cultural (human activities) and ecological (green-blue) spaces**, creating shared pathways for socio-ecological regeneration. This aims at reconnecting humans with their environment, and going beyond the separation of nature and culture. Humans are as much a part of the ecosystems - of "nature" - as the other animals and plants that share the territory with them.

We see these continuities as interconnected, cyclical systems within the same hydrological territories. Where beavers can regulate water flows through building natural dams, where people can swim and meditate, and where wetlands filter and recirculate polluted water. By restoring these links between society and its waters, we can foster deeper connections between humans and nature, reestablishing a sense of place and responsibility for hydroecological spaces. We refer to this concept of weaving sociocultural and hydroecological continuities as ***hydropaths***.

Figure 1: Conceptual diagram of our proposal.

The Sequanien path(s)

The Sequanien Path(s) is a project of **reestablishing lost human-nature connections along the Upper Seine basin**. A substantial body of research exists on the potential of biophilic and regenerative theory to help reconnect people with the natural world. This process typically entails addressing placelessness, or the absence of vernacular (localised) associations with natural and man-made environments. In spacemaking, a place should be designed in accordance with its natural context and address the specific social, cultural, and ecological characteristics of that site. This view is opposed to the contemporary homogeneous approach to designing for nature and people, which tends to paint different contexts with the same brush. By bringing nature closer to the everyday lives of people, and by designing these spaces to reflect their localised

Figure 2: Concept diagram of the act of weaving.

conditions, we can renew **a common sense of place**, fostering ecological stewardship.

Proposal

We propose redefining the relationships between society and nature, leveraging social spaces for ecological regeneration. **Existing human-nature relationships emerge from the interface of three distinct layers: the urban built fabric, critical ecologies, and hydrological features**. These intersections become sites of socio-ecological transformation, and will guide the creation of socio-cultural and ecological corridors - spatial continuities of blue-green and social spaces that aim to reconnect people and nature along a shared path. Sustainability must be systemic - acknowledging the intersectionality of the natural world.

Strategies

These paths traverse diverse landscapes, expanding like a web and weaving together the basin's multiple waters into a hydrosocial tapestry. To accurately analyse and design for these complex territories, the proposal employs the following core design strategies:

Firstly, using continuity as a driver to connect not only people with nature, but also nature with itself and people with others. There must be a spatial continuity of all habitats, including unified movement paths for people and contiguous hydro-ecological areas for migrating animals and natural cycles like sediment circulation. Spatial continuity is crucial for weaving a territory that guarantees free movement for all.

Secondly, by introducing nature-based public amenities along these pathways that bring people closer to nature. These spaces could include swimming pools, rest areas, outlooks, community gathering spaces, sport and recreation facilities, or cultural venues.

Thirdly, by expressing the contextual dimensions of distinct waters. The pathway should represent the local qualities of each section of the river by traversing and connecting important hydro-historical, hydro-cultural, and hydro-industrial landmarks.

And finally, by treating nature as a co-participant in the design process. Interventions along the pathway should take into consideration natural solutions for design problems, and should give voice to concerns of non-human actors. Reintegration with the natural systems is a critical requirement for a socio-ecologically regenerative approach.

In essence, **the primary goal of the Sequanien Path(s) is to break the isolation between socio-cultural and ecological landscapes**, creating intertwined human and non-human continuities. The pathways go beyond traditional sustainability and conservation, aiming to address the separation of nature and culture. Humans are as much a part of the ecosystem as the animals and plants that share the territory. Their cultural heritage and historical landmarks are as much a part of nature as the beavers' dams or the nests of birds. By reintegrating society with nature through inhabiting shared space, we create a sense of belonging and respect between the different species, transforming our relationship from one of coexistence to one of symbiosis.

Context

Waters are inherently different. Every bank, bend, and confluence creates a unique environment that is imbued with unique informants. To understand the specific contexts that comprise the various waters of the river basin, we visited multiple urban settings, industrial zones, and ecological sites along the basin.

- Nogent-sur-Seine
Nogent-sur-Seine is an area marked by a strong industrial heritage (the silo, the nuclear power plant, the river port, and the paper mill) that gives way to a patchwork of preserved ecological areas like wetlands at its periphery (compensations).
- Nemours
Centred on the Loing River, Nemours balances a precarious relationship between environmental conservation and social activity. As the town sits along the lower reaches of the river, it is frequently at risk of devastating flooding. The Perthuis island is the green lung of the town, though it also faces challenges of isolated ecological and socio-cultural zones.
- Moret-Loing-sur-Orvanne
The town of Moret-Loing-sur-Orvanne has not only a storied socio-cultural history but also a hydrological heritage that is clearly evident in its built fabric. Within the municipality, Moret-sur-Loing has a significant tourist draw and was a frequent inspiration for painter Alfred Sisley. It faces concerns of overcrowding during the summer months - an aspect which has led to the closure of historic swimming spots.
- Bossenay
Saint-Martin-de-Bossenay is crossed by the Ardusson River, an arm of the Seine. It has undergone renaturation and restoration projects aimed at improving the quality of hydro-ecologies while reconciling rural agricultural activities.

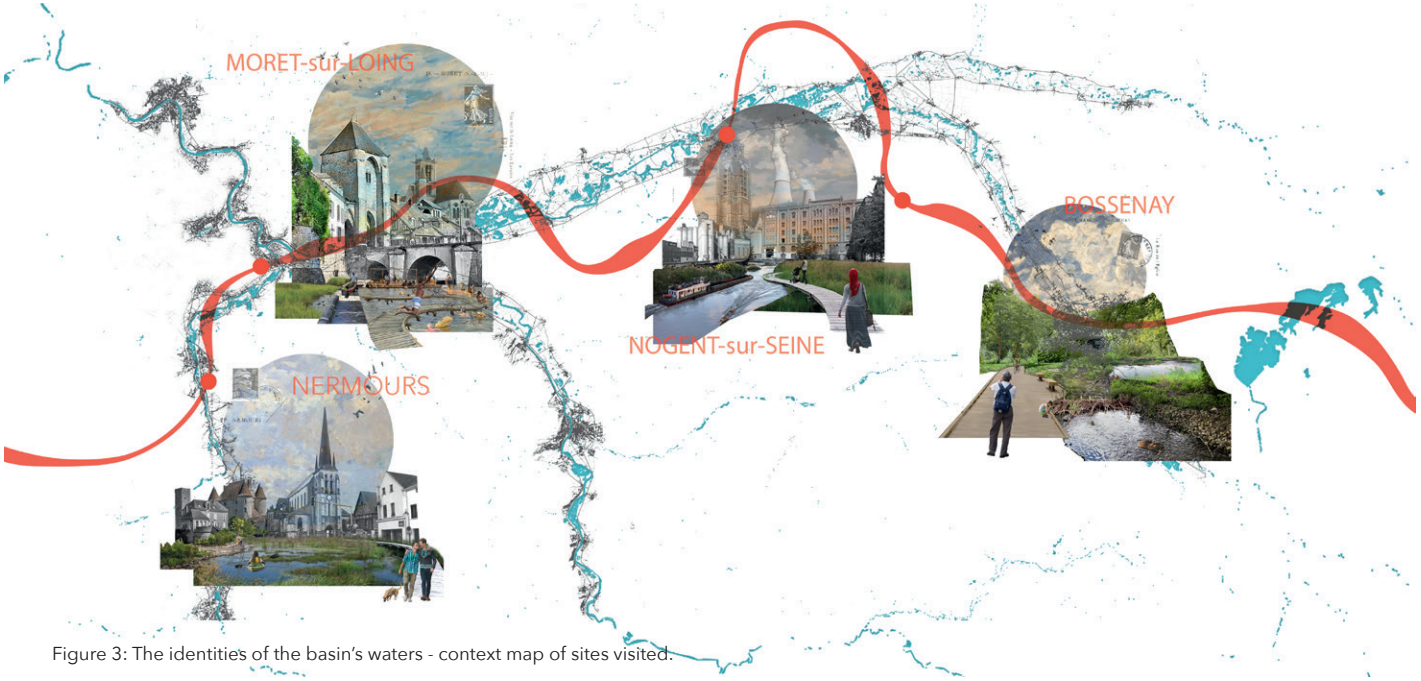


Figure 3: The identities of the basin's waters - context map of sites visited.

After the visits, as we started working on this project, we came to the following conclusions :

- The various territories:
We were asked to think about the various scales of hydrosocial territories. There exist three noticeable scales along the basin. Firstly, the territorial scale (Upper Seine Basin), where a distinct hierarchical relationship exists between Paris and the towns "serving" it (through agriculture and water provision). Secondly, the regional scale, where there is some collaborative hydrological planning between towns, but rarely visions for deeper socio-ecological integration. And finally, the local, where towns like Nemours are attempting to bridge socio-ecological spatial divides.

- Multi-scalar approaches:
Inhabitants rarely relate to territorial ambitions, as these usually act to serve interests outside of their local contexts. Territorial planning often favours major population centres, writing socio-cultural and historical narratives that do not represent outlying spaces. From a hydrological standpoint, as taken in this proposal, each section of the river has its own unique context and personality.

It is for this reason that we chose to take a bottom-up approach, applying our path-building methods at a local scale that resonates with local identities, which will then generate consensus-building and broader socio-ecological change at the basin scale.

Defining Connections

To define the types of connections we have to design for, it is important to understand the various relationship types that exist along the river. We have identified three types of connections across the river basin, each characterised by its relationship to natural spaces:

Urban/nature: Socio-culturally driven territories where urban residential and commercial areas meet water and nature.

Agriculture/nature: Ecologically driven territories where rural farmlands and villages meet water and nature.

Industry/nature: Economically driven territories where industrial activities meet water and nature.

On the map, we have illustrated the locations of important urban, agricultural, and industrial connections to nature, with the intention of producing a catalogue of sites for intervention. These points will function as acupuncture points to catalyse broader transformation.

The following chapter will explore what these connection points look like and how they can respond to their individual contexts. They are not meant to represent any specific town or location, but serve to illustrate design strategies for similar connection points across the river basin.

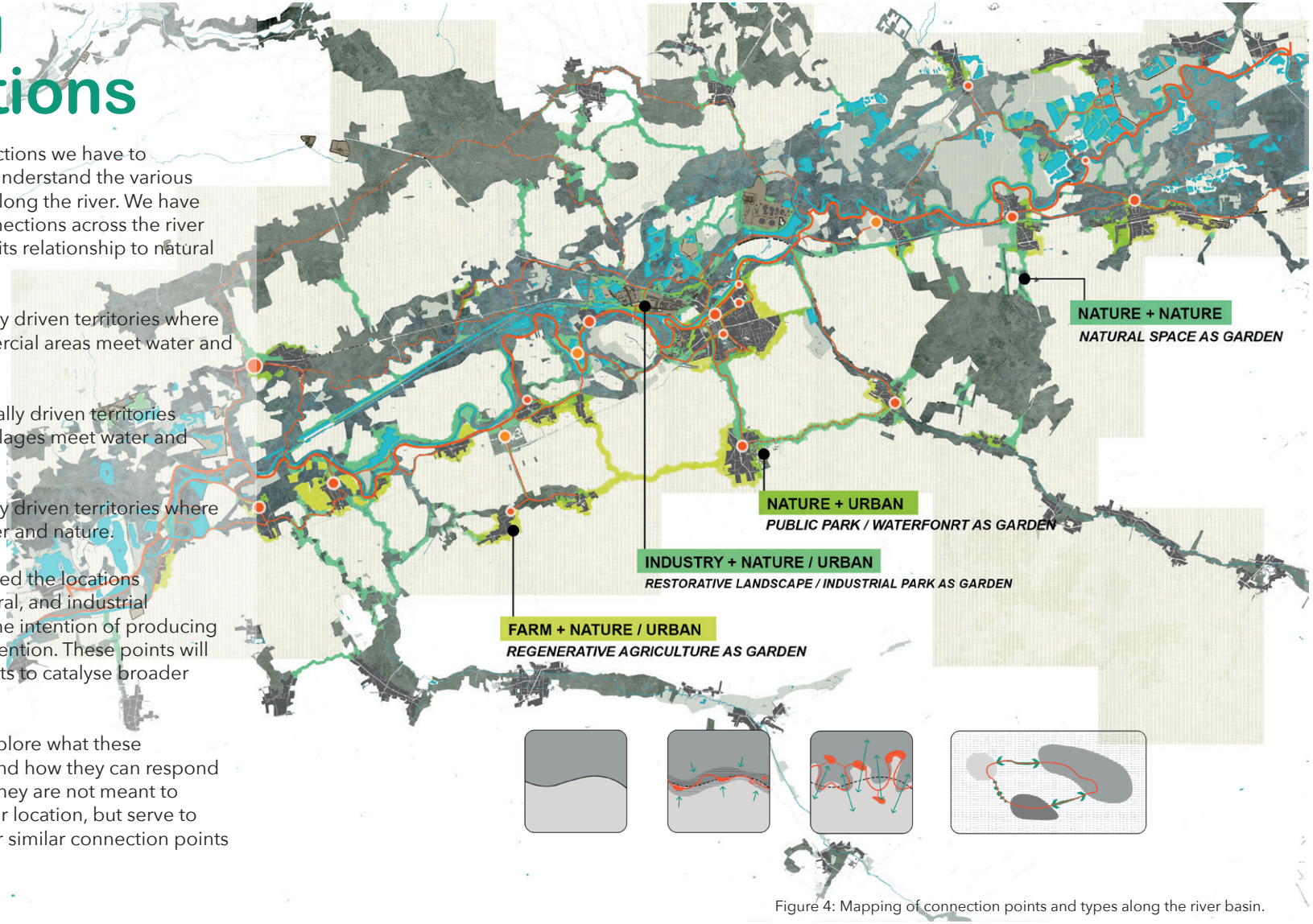


Figure 4: Mapping of connection points and types along the river basin.

Connection 1
Urban / nature

The first connection we explore is between urban spaces and blue-green ecologies. Our proposal weaves new wetland areas into existing urban areas along the Sequanien path, allowing for the insertion of socio-ecological recreation spaces such as wetland swimming pools, splash puddles, boardwalks, animal viewing hides, and picnic areas. **These areas will be used not only for ecological leisure by people, but also as habitats for local wildlife**, allowing for some interaction between human and non-human life. The path will further mediate the relationship between culture and nature by passing historical landmarks (bridges, towers, dungeons, and foritifcations), leveraging these spaces for their heritage value and the viewpoints they may offer.

Hydro-ecological continuity will be created through linking new wetlands to older, surviving pockets of critical biodiversity, and by introducing water features like public fountains and water channels into the urban fabric. Spatial continuity will be ensure through adapting the path's construction techniques and materials to echo those used in the local environment.

"In summer, on the hottest days of the year, the river is filled with locals and animals bathing under a centuries-old bridge. Picnicking on a soft blanket, you'd feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, hear the splashes of the glistening water, and eat melons and tomatoes that fill the air with their sweet smell. "

Figure 5: Urban/nature condition as it is today.

Figure 6: Urban/nature condition after Sequanien Path(s).

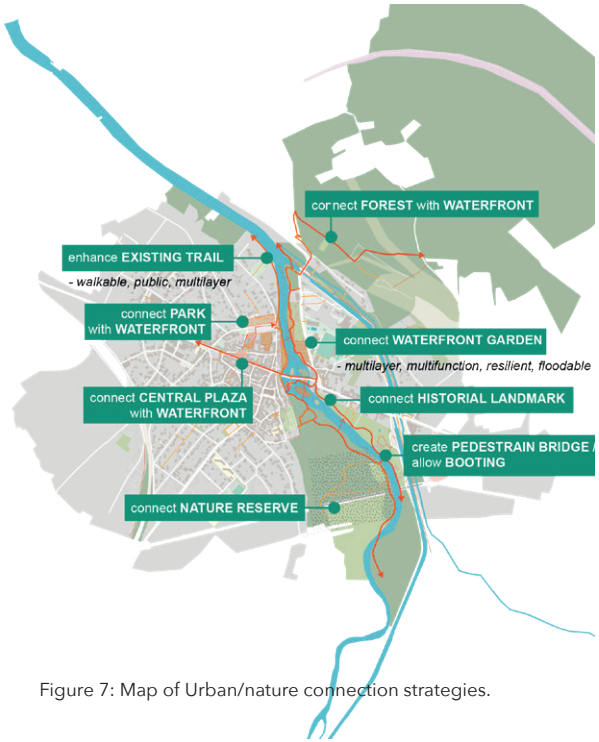


Figure 7: Map of Urban/nature connection strategies.

Figure 8: Pools and riverside boardwalk

Figure 9: Agriculture/nature condition as it is today.

Figure 10: Agriculture/nature condition after Sequanien Path(s).

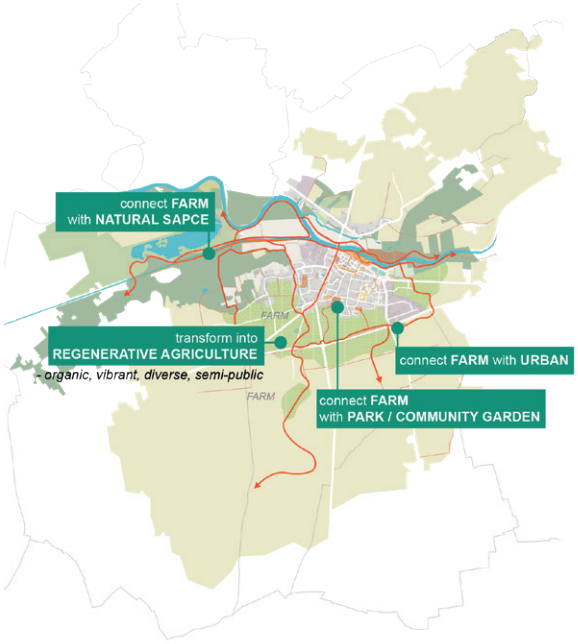


Figure 11: Map of Agriculture/nature connection strategies.

Figure 12: Agriculture/blue-green pathway.

Connection 2
Agriculture / nature

The second connection we explore is between agricultural areas and blue-green ecologies. The Sequanien Path will mediate the, often blunt, spatial transition between commercial farming and green corridors, returning some ecological diversity to areas where monocultures has flattened natural landscapes.

The shared health of all living beings is of critical concern. To preserve the quality of water and soil, all farming activity adjacent to the path will be **regenerative**, **agroforestry-based or employ traditional** (hedges, no monocultures) **and organic** (no monocultures, pesticides, growth enhancements, or hybrids) **farming techniques**. This will allow a wider diversity of plants cultivated, creating new ecosystems and habitats in agricultural areas. Following the floodplain, soft mobilities like walking paths, boardwalks, and cycling lanes will connect these corridors to the wider blue-green continuity.

"In autumn, you could feel the fresh air while reaching for a bunch of grapes and blueberries to taste, or delve deeper into the forest to collect mushrooms. Walking down the aisle of yellow and red leaves, you would smell chestnuts roasting nearby and hear kingfishers chirping along with other birds."

Connection 3
Industry / nature

The third connection we explore is between historical and contemporary industrial areas and blue-green ecologies. Many historic industrial zones have been repurposed and have important socio-cultural value (bridges, locks, and factories), while others that are still in use (nuclear power plants and river ports) create good job opportunities, ensuring prosperity in the towns along the basin.

The Sequanien Path aims to connect people to these zones and to **transform former ecological wastelands into flourishing habitats** for both human and non-human life. Abandoned **industrial spaces can become multipurpose cultural spaces** along the length of the path, **reaqcuainting people to the industrial heritage** of their towns. Sites like nuclear power plants can become artistic projects, while former quarries (typically filled with water) can become new wetland habitats for birds, amphibians, and insects.

"In spring, the endemic green frogs emerge from their winterseason hibernation, croaking in the ponds they inhabit. As the waters leave the floodplains to flow back into the stream bed, the dragonflies sparkle in bright colors amidst the clucking of gray herons, you would travel over a muddy terrain to reach a black sedge, smelling of peat and sod."

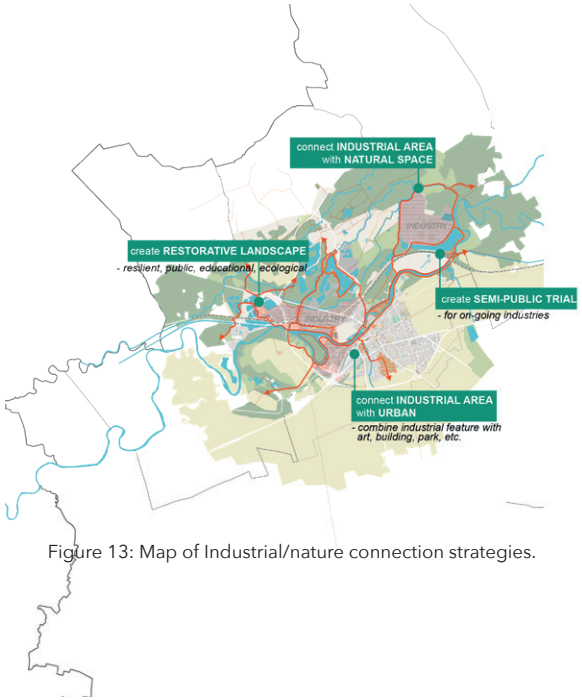


Figure 13: Map of Industrial/nature connection strategies.

Figure 14: Awareness raising intervention at the nuclear power plant.

Figure 15: Industrial/nature condition as it is today.

Figure16: Industrial/nature condition after Sequanien Path(s).

Community Activations

(We believe that) the process of reconnecting humans with the ecosystems in which they live must be accompanied by mediation efforts.

This would take the form of activities that enable local people to **reclaim this unique territory and reconnect with the waters** and the environments that make up the river basin. Beyond simply visiting the trail, they create spaces for discovering wildlife, raise awareness of the environments that surround them and create a sense of belonging.

Among them, the **Water festival** is an event that takes place over three days in September, in the heart of the upper Seine basin. It engages various local actors such as schools, nature associations, cultural facilities, community centers and artists to **offer activities and events centred around the basin, its rivers, and the path.**

Inhabitants and visitors are invited to participate in a rich program of animations: nature walks, illustrated hikes, photo exhibitions, river cruises, contemporary sculpture unveiling, popular theatre, river utopia workshop, historical recreations (i.e. around the towpaths) and more. Through these encounters, participants are encouraged to engage in respectful cohabitation, where human and ecological continuities intertwine harmoniously.

More broadly, the Sequanien path(s) could be a way for local populations to connect with the environment they belong to - by roaming along the banks, sailing on the river, riding in the countryside, meditating near wetlands. To make the access to those ecological amenities effective, it may also be necessary to involve social intermediaries such as activity and community centers, schools or nature associations.

More sensitive and artistic approaches to waters can be based on activities organised by these local stakeholders. For instance, when it comes to children, we imagine a discovery journey that would take place in schools. It would offer them activities such as nature walks to get to know the local wildlife and the hydrological heritage. In conjunction with local associations, teachers could also partake in the creation of a participatory art project which includes sensory maps, aquatic environment observation journals, photo exhibition, and projects on water-related professions. The form and shape of these activities would be open to interpretation depending on local contexts, allowing the Sequanien path(s) to encourage young people to discover the hydrosystems that surround them.

By cultivating these interactions, **warious mediation initiatives promote harmonious coexistence between humans and non-humans in the watershed.**

Figure 17: Poster for a proposed water festival to encourage hydrosolidarity.

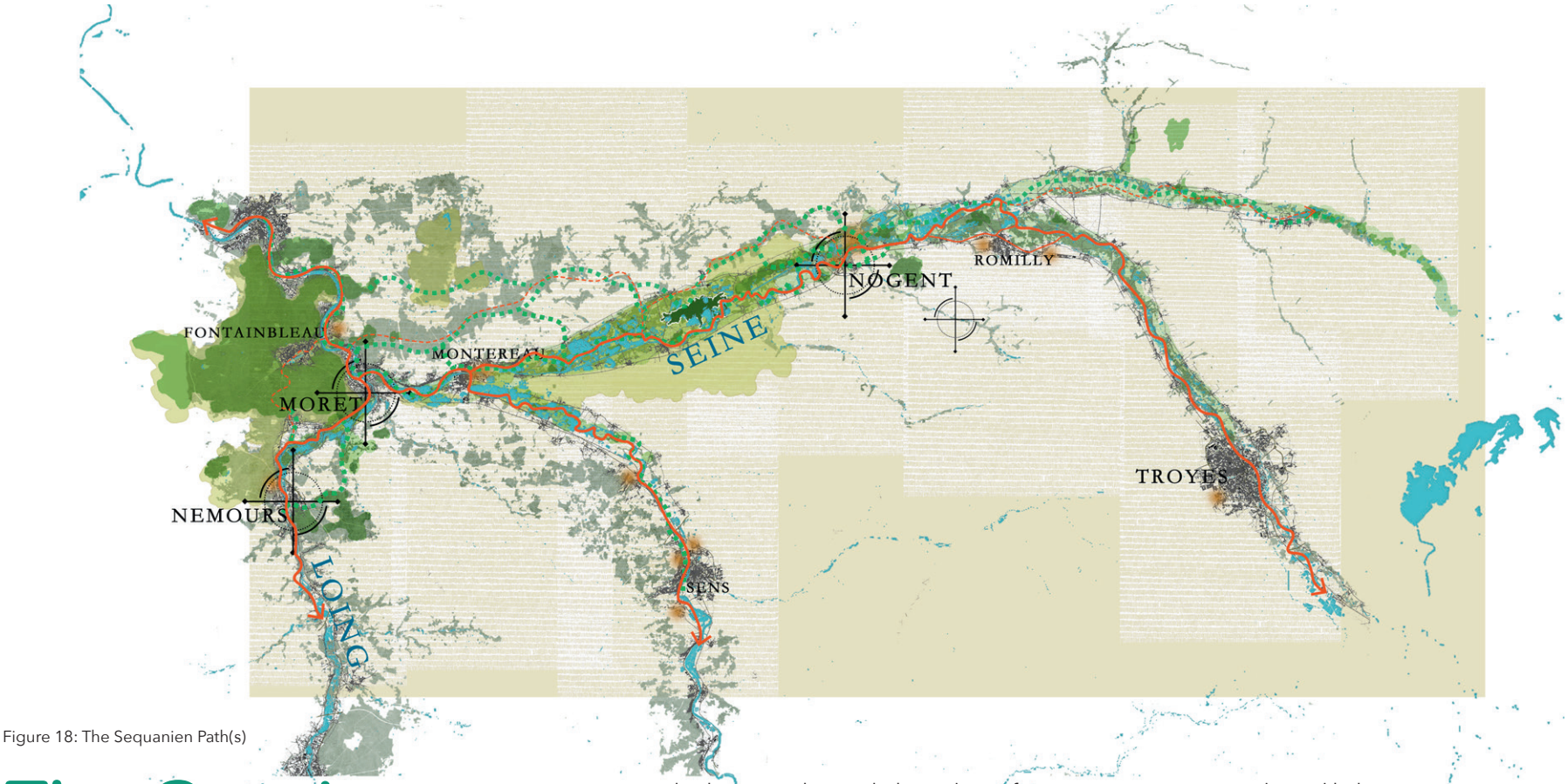


Figure 18: The Sequanien Path(s)

The Great Garden Path

We treat the **river as a living being** - a story teller who holds the memory of people, animals and culture across time. Flowing through the centuries, it connects the past, present, and future into a single, contextual tapestry.

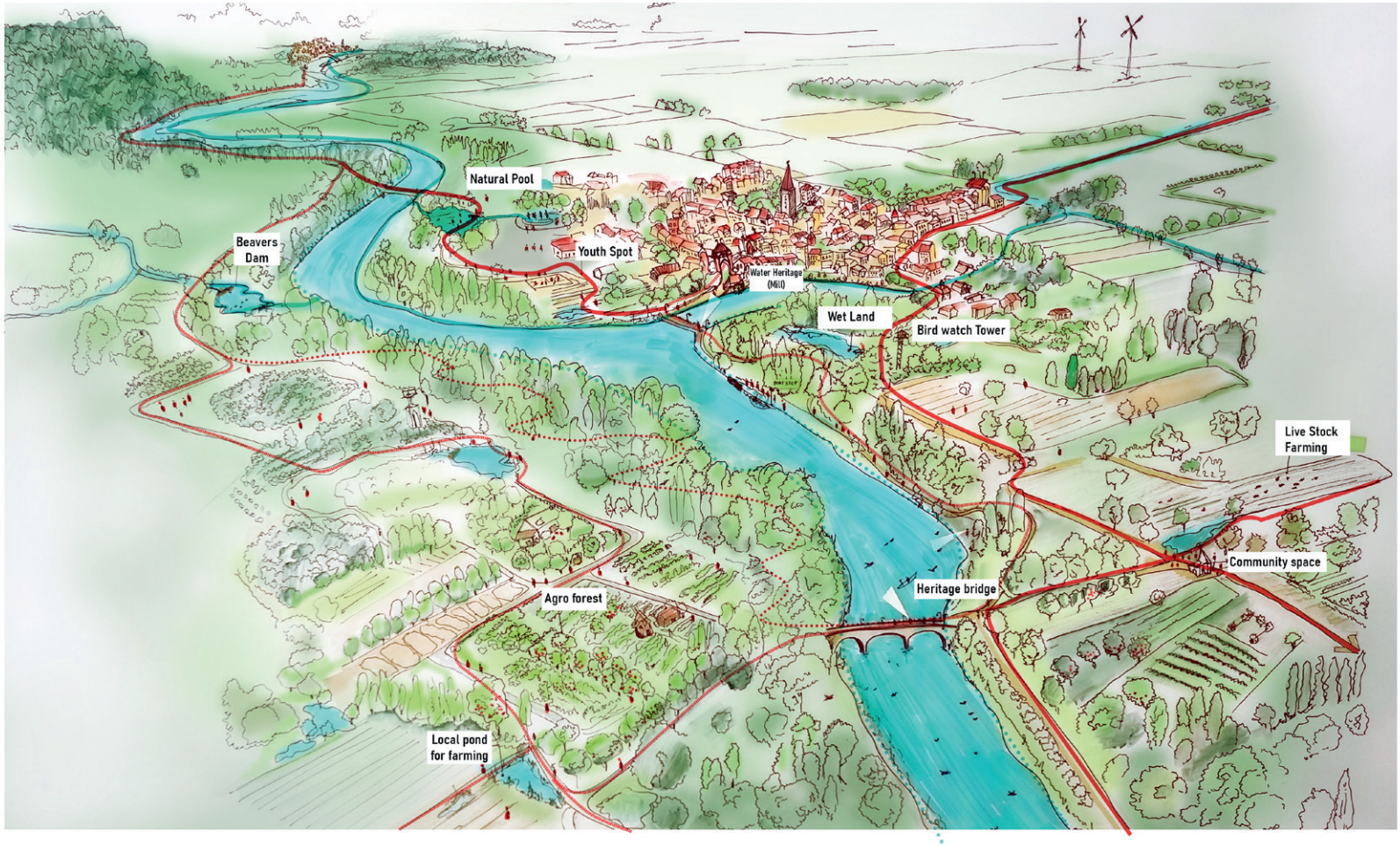
It acts as both a metaphor and physical manifestation of connection, shared existence and continuity across generations. It joins human heritage and culture to the protection of the natural world, producing a symbiotic relationship where **social regeneration comes about through ecological restoration**.

It learns from nature, replicating the natural systems that regulate the environment. It **gives a voice to previously silenced non-human beings, folding their well-being into the well-being of humanity**. It rewrites a narrative of human domination, creating a shared socio-ecological habitat.

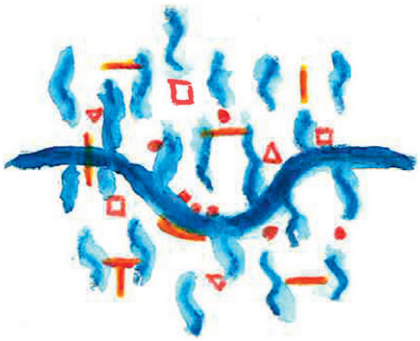
By treating the river basin, and all its individual waters as living, connected landscapes, the Sequanien Path envisions a future where nature and humans share space, agriculture supports diverse ecologies, and heritage empowers environmental renewal. In this way, the basin becomes of mosaic of blue-green and socio-cultural spaces - **a great garden path that encourages shared stewardship over the health of our planet**.

The Sequanien path(s)

Where waters weave us together



Nou(e)s



Nou(e)s allons Inonder

La Bassée, October 2045

Once again this summer, many visitors had traveled upriver to cool off in the humid air of the woods, or in the clear waters of the gravel pits, all while watching the flight of banded demoiselles and marsh harriers returned from oblivion.
A few onlookers also came to see the noue York, the Grand Canal and the pilot basins, now left fallow and unfinished and covered with solar panels. Others came simply to breathe, wander through the new Zanaroff Museum, fish in the shade of oaks and elms, or enjoy the products from the many market gardens.

With the first autumn rains, the yearly drought comes to an end. Along the riverbanks and its tributaries, beside the ponds, the noues Ricières, and all the way up to the hedgerows of the hillsides, the vegetation regains, for a brief moment, a burst of vitality before exploding into shimmering colors. On the limestone plateaus, between the wind turbines, farmers are harvesting this year's hemp and sorghum, which barges are preparing to load. The last old-generation reactor at the power station has been restarted, and its chimney is once again sending its familiar plumes of steam in the grayening sky.

In a few weeks, after the torrential rains of December, the river and its tributaries will overflow their banks and seep into the folds of the landscape and geological layers, saturating them with precious water. From the noues Gatines to the noue Cléaire, volunteers and drones will ensure that floods remain under control or come to the aid of any affected residents, while additional hydro turbines will be installed to produce the electricity needed by the region's rapidly growing industries.

La Bassée, like the rest of the watershed, had been living for several years now to the rhythm of new tropical seasons -direct consequences of climate change. After the financial crash of 2029 and the great drought of 2033, the local populations (citizen collectives, technical experts, associations, businesses, public institutions, etc.) had in fact resolved to adopt an original approach.

TROPICALISATION OF THE SEINE

Like the rest of the globe, the upper Seine basin and its inhabitants have experienced the tangible consequences of climate destabilization. The ancient cyclical rhythm of seasons quickly eroded. Episodes of drought and flooding became more severe and frequent, inflicting more and more destruction and suffering in the region.

By the start of the 2030s, the Seine and its tributaries were in many ways becoming increasingly tropical. This new reality was certainly as much about climate as it is about culture, in terms of identities and subjectivities. The tropical manifests itself in ways of living with heat and wetness: in the dampness of dishcloths, in the burning sensation of the sun at five in the afternoon; in the sudden outburst of a storm that pours 75 millimeters of rain within three hours, turning the very street one walked down toward another job into a river. The modes through which these phenomena inscribe themselves into daily life have the potential to shape a person's disposition and affective landscape.

Naturalist Modernity reached its breaking point, calling for new ways of inhabiting and experiencing life. Taking inspiration from previous reflections (Grand Jardin Séquanien) and other ontologies, the idea of Tropical Seine quickly came to forefront to refer to the appropriation of what is given, but from a critical standpoint -one that acknowledges the very processes that have brought us into this context. It proposed to transform the situation into an instance of learning : to learn how to make the tropical climate one's own- not merely to adapt to it, but to live with it and thus finally end the fear of climate change.

One of the first decisions taken by those involved and affected was to recognize waterways as singular forms of life - entities that breathe, exude and yearn. This new foundation called for the composition of an entirely renewed relationship to both culture and nature. In practical terms, this entails a renewed environmental management that acknowledges the permeability and fluidity of the landscape, conceiving of territory not as a fixed and stable surface, but as a dynamic system of exchanges between land, water, and the diversity of life.

But, how can we once again imagine territories that breathe? How might we live and thrive among tropical lands, under diluvian rains or a burning sun? And where to start?

Dryness in Nogent-sur-Seine, 2030

3 Dimentional water cycle 2025

Flood in Moret sur Loing et Orvane, 2030

NOUES

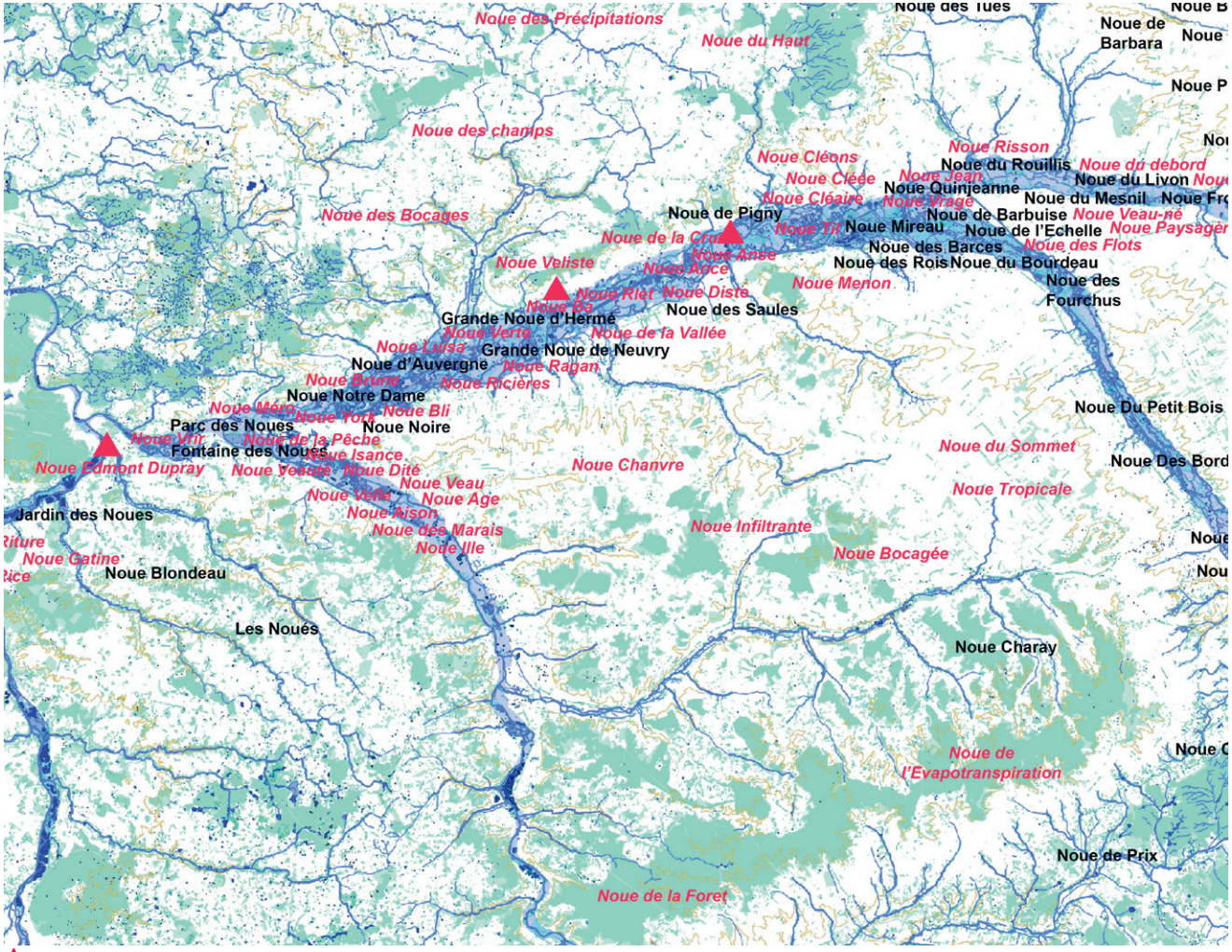
(from Gallo-Roman nauda : marshy meadow)

1. Rich, marshy land.
2. An old river branch, a hollow or shallow depression that frequently collects rainwater.
3. A piece of carpentry or roofing at the intersection of two slopes forming an internal angle.

For most city dwellers of the early 21st century, noues were little more than a landscape feature designed to allow rainwater to infiltrate between impermeable surfaces. The word evokes little else for them. One likely has to return to the countryside -to historically water-rich, marshy regions like the Upper Seine- to rediscover their quietly poetic nature and their cultural and ecological importance.

Interwoven into the tangled mesh of the river's meanders and its tributaries, countless noues still stretch along the length of the valley, many of them with names of their own. There are, for instance, the great noues of Hermé and Neuvry, the noues of the Willows and the Kings, the noues of the Slain and the Barces, the noues of Bourdeau and Petit Bois, the noues of Ferloup and Échelle, and also noues named Gérard, Robert, Philippe, Quinjeanne, and Barbara. A whole society of noues that often communicate with each other in secret.

By carrying rain and floodwaters, promoting infiltration, and supporting the diversity of nearby flora and fauna, the noues also facilitate as ecotones countless connections with the rest of the living world. They allow the valley to breathe with the rhythm of the seasons, regulating successive periods of abundance and scarcity. Far from being just a natural landform, the noue also represents a possible relationship between humans and their environment -a form of biocultural ripariality.



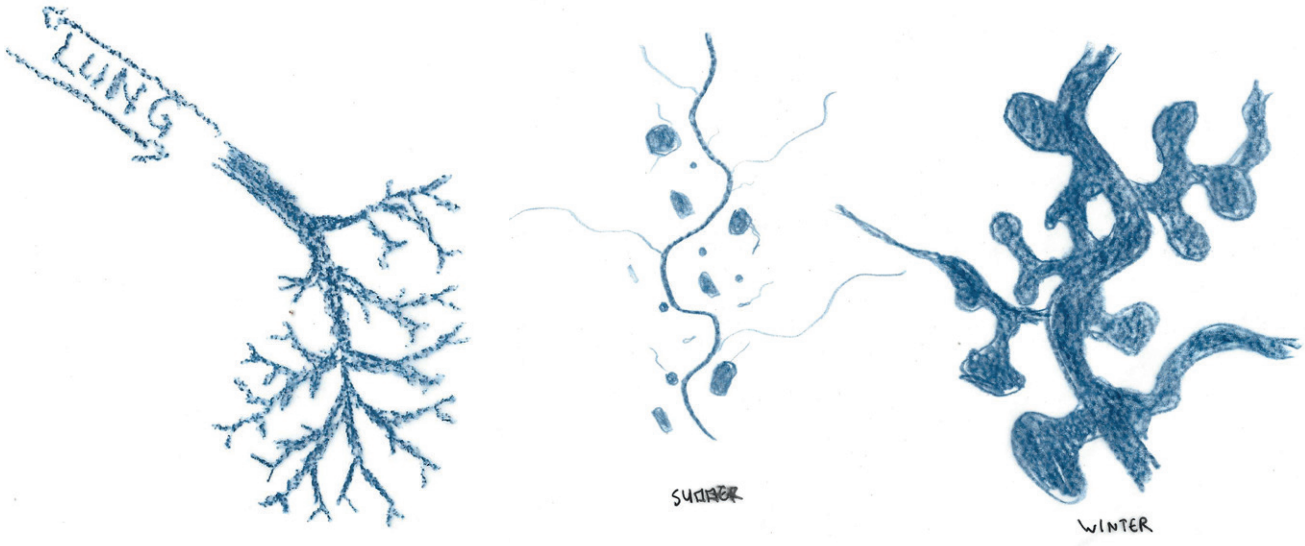
Case Studies Existing Noues Prospective Noues

Map with the Noues of La Bassee

View of the Future Valley

RENOUEMENTS

Beginning in the latter half of the 2030s, local stakeholders reached a consensus to implement a comprehensive territorial planning program structured around the integrative concept of the noue. Designed within a flexible and participatory framework, the program enables intervention across multiple spatial and administrative scales, from governmental institutions to individual citizens. Intended to evolve over extended time horizons and in alignment with seasonal cycles, the initiative is underpinned by the strategic objective of promoting multifunctional land use and enhancing biodiversity through coordinated, adaptive management practices.



La Bassee Now and in 2045
Inside the circle it is represented the present, and outside the future. At the present we can recognize the four seasons while in the future we just have two seasons

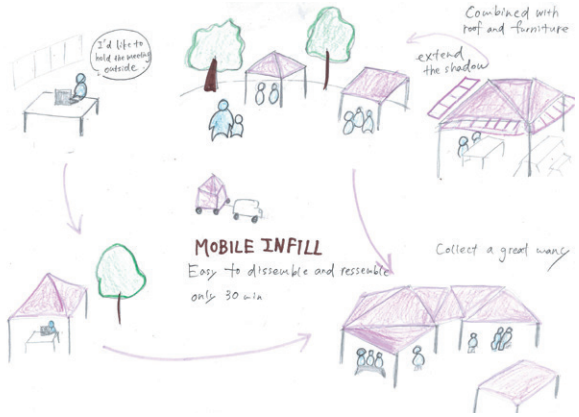
Noue Anse // The Tropical Trade

Winter in Noue Anse, on the Seine

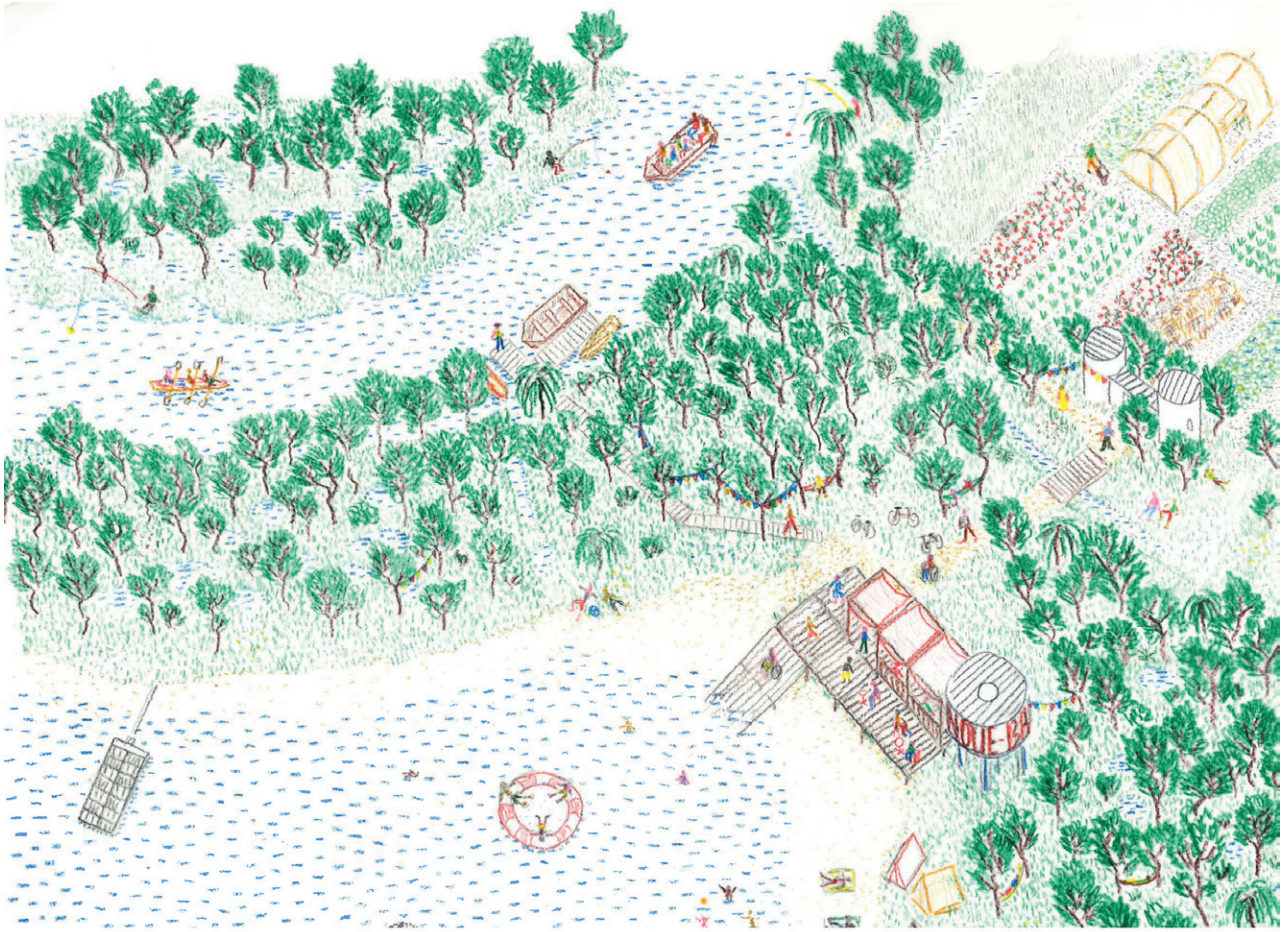
How do you "tropicate" a port? Is it the materials, the scales or the ideals? A twist to local production isn't led only by the people's demands. The capacities and opportunities that designed space makes possible, guide norms, stimulate imagination and expands the communities belief of what is possible. In Noue Anse, we are guiding a vision of a living system instead of fixed boundaries, down to interwoven spaces where different scales of agricultural markets and trade, workers, visitors, moving farmers and their goats can co-habit. Transportation adapts to the fluid nature of wetness, just as seasonal production embraces the natural fertility brought by floods. Our "tropical port" becomes a collective ground of support and shared growth having easy access to transportable agents of transformation.

Summer in Noue Anse, on the Seine

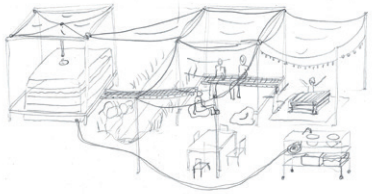
Noue Ba // Plouff!

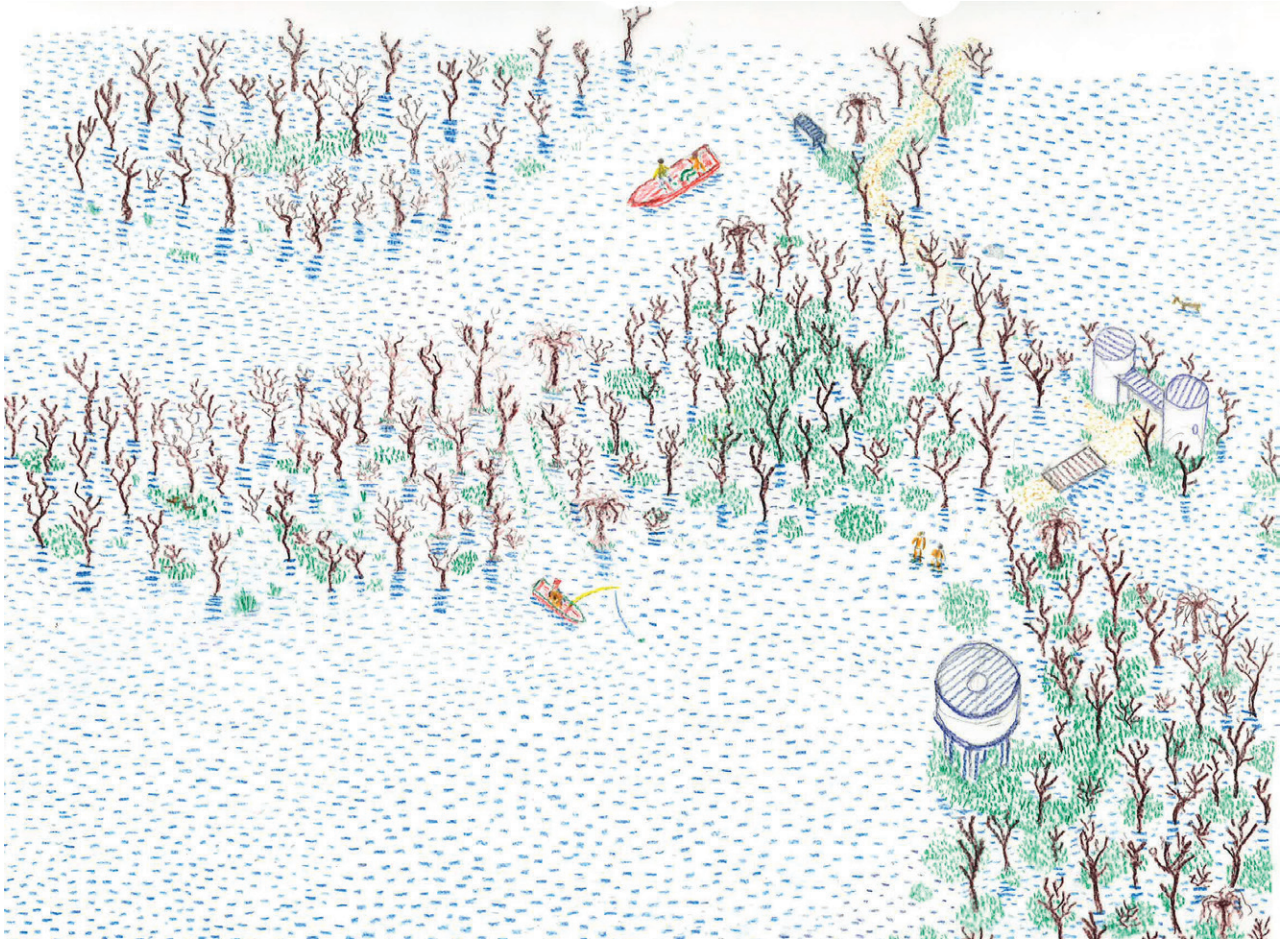


Individuals, citizen collectives and NGOs were the first to embrace the noues. Some rehabilitated old ones across cities and villages while others arranged new ones. Noues proliferated everywhere, from private gardens to river banks and agricultural fields, as ecological refuges, water management devices and leisure spaces. The Noue Ba, between a former river branch, an abandoned gravière and gardens, was for instance highly sought after on sunny days and even became a trendy destination for outsiders. During the wet season, on the contrary, the place was let to rest mostly underwater to regenerate the underground aquifer.



Summer in Noue Ba





Winter in Noue Ba

Noue Edmond Dupray // Amphibiousness

In the same way as the river, human settlements have had to learn to "breathe" in order to live with the new climatic conditions linked to tropicality.

During the rising waters, populations living along the riverbanks have had to inhale, retreat, contract, gather, and move upward to make way for the water which, as it spreads, "expires" in turn. Accustomed to this seasonality, the inhabitants of the valley quickly reconnect with the customs of their transhumant way of life: the boats are brought out of their summer storage, temporary bridges are installed, and the residents voluntarily mobilize. Such an Amphibious lifestyle…

The Noue Edmond Dupray fills with water in winter, becoming an abundant wetland network when the river decides to recede into its minor bed. When summer arrives, the soils nourished by the previous flood yield rich market garden crops, and the summer transhumance unfolds its customs and practices in turn.

In order to oversee and support the development of the noues, the stakeholders decided to bring together all relevant services within the Public Development Authority for the Nouissement (EPANouissement).

Summer in Noue Edmond Dupray, on the Loing

Winter in Noue Edmond Dupray, on the Loing

DÉNOUEMENTS

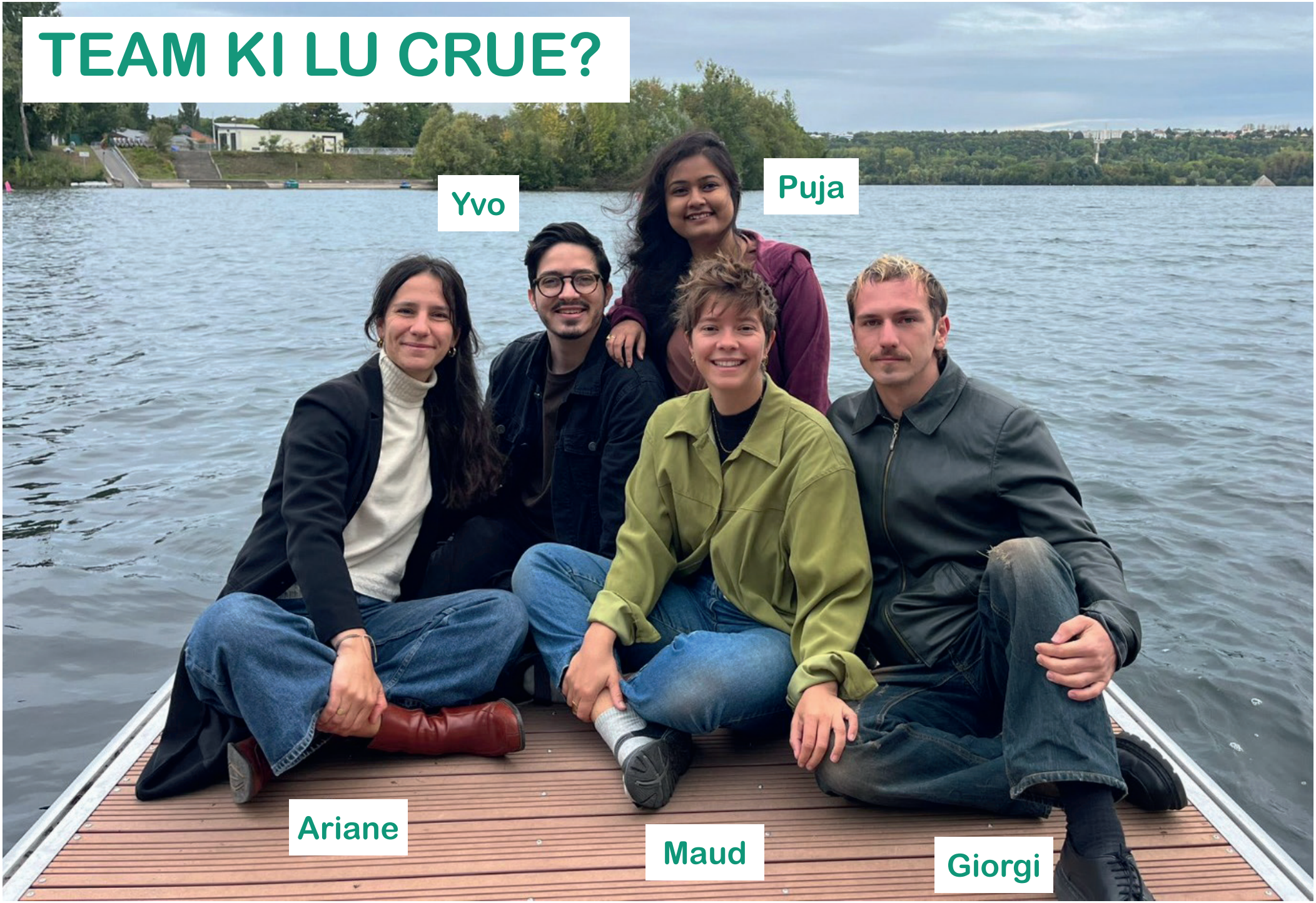
Standing by the noue Vauté, we reflect on the journey that brought us here. The numerous crises we experienced certainly taught us the necessity of recognizing ourselves as part of the environment, not as being separate from it. Before them, we expected the environment to adjust to our aspirations, rather than the other way around, fearing the unpredictable forces of nature instead of placing them at the very center of guidance.

Over the past twenty years, we have learned to live - and even to thrive - not only in spite of, but sometimes thanks to, tropical episodes of drought and flood. We have learned to align our aspirations with the cycle of the seasons and with the rest of the living world. We have learned to breathe in rhythm with the river and its tributaries.

Of course, noues were only the beginning. But now that we have learned to care for them, we are finally able to understand - and to live alongside - the Seine and embrace the whole complexity of its basin. In the end, a valley is often just a kind of noue, hidden in plain sight. What we call utopia is often nothing more than a question of perspective.

Today, as the first drops of autumnal rain gently slide at the bottom of the noue, we reunite once again with old friends and colleagues to reflect on what the future holds - and how to prepare our homes, our cities, and our territories for what lies ahead.

TEAM KI LU CRUE?



Talking Landscape

To re-enchant: etymologically, to give back song, to give back voice, to make resonate again what had ceased to vibrate.

In a word:

Our approach is drawns from a continuity of **vernacular sacredness**, rooted in the territory of the upper Seine watershed.

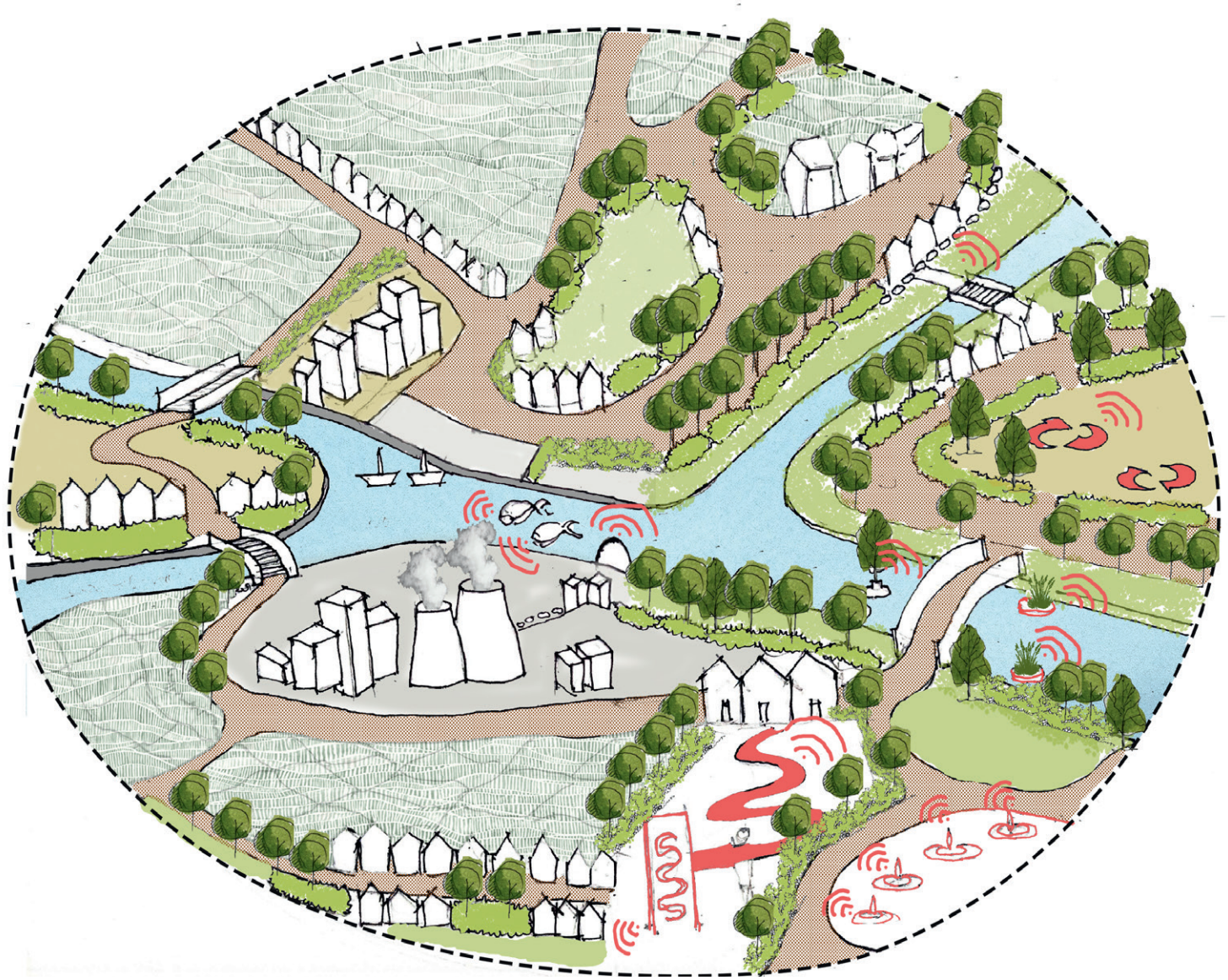
The landscape of a watershed emits many signals. Forms, colors, sounds, smells, traces, presences or absences of non-humans are all **Sentinels** that inform us about the state of an environment, the arrival of a flood, the health of a groundwater table. Yet the language of Waters has become inaudible to our modern ears.

On a territory facing critical water issues, (re)learning to hear it opens the possibility of restoring their place in the city: to care for them, to defend them, to inhabit them differently, to weave symbiotic alliances.

We have the intuition that **making the invisible visible** allows a community of inhabitants to reclaim its environment, cultivate a sense of belonging and thus to better **Inhabit it**. We have the intuition that sacredness makes the invisible visible.

We propose a collection of gentle interventions: **sensitive devices** to revitalize the sacred dimension of the territory, **and amplify the signals of its ecosystems.**

The challenge is to reveal the hidden dimensions that sustain the basin's resilience, opening space for new relationships and regenerative alternatives.



The Sequanian Upper Basin seems deeply marked by anthropogenic transformation, shaped by urban expansion and the dynamics of modern capitalism (intensive agro-industry, nuclear energy production, extraction of gravel and industrial exploitation). While these activities have been crucial to sustaining the Parisian metropolis and its surrounding areas, they also impose significant environmental and social costs, directly impacting the region's aquatic ecosystems and exposing the humans and non-humans to climate threats (floods, drought, drinking water pollution).

Our project addresses the possibility of a shift of narrative for the Upper Seine Bassin : from risk to symbiotic belonging.

Our hypothesis is that our sense of belonging is linked to our ability to read and understand our milieu : to hear its signals so that communities can reclaim ways of being with their watershed, its cycles, and ongoing transformations. We believe that drawing on the realm of sacredness can strengthen cultural ties to water as both a vital resource and a symbolic presence.

Why?

First, because stories move us more easily than numbers.

Second because the sacred still haunts these landscapes…

"Living in harmony with natural cycles requires listening to polyphonic stories that defy simplification."

Isabelle Stengers (2017).

Revitalizing the scared in our relations with the living and its invisible dimension

In unknown times, a chariot drawn by six horses and filled with travelers sank into the Abyss of Borneau, on the left bank of the Loing. This Abyss, which likely takes its name from the pre-Celtic term born meaning "hole, a natural cavity," is fed by the Ru des Trémorts, which flows into the Loing just before Moret. It is said that if you walk along its banks, the sound of galloping horses can still sometimes be heard when the water level is at its lowest.

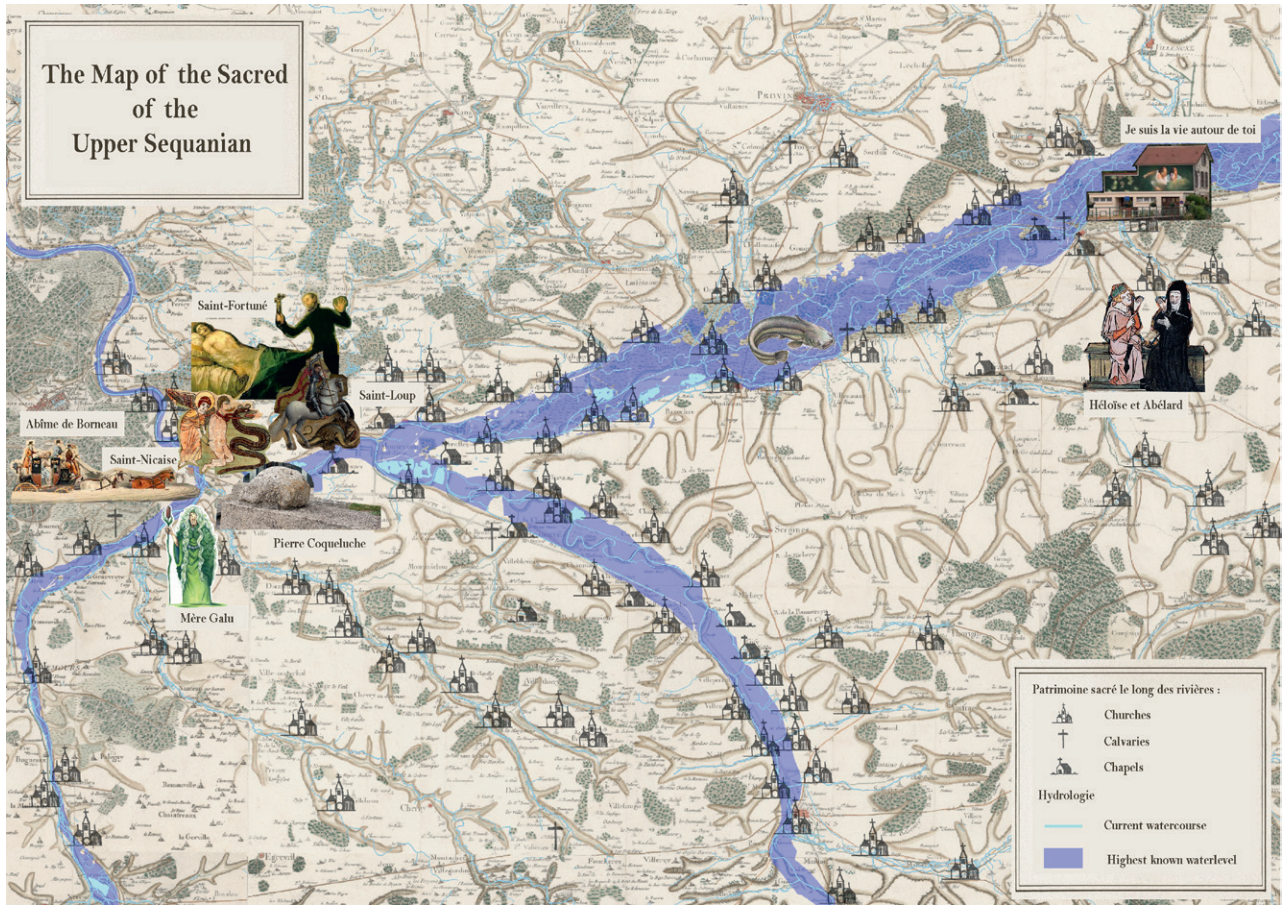
St Loup, © Archive Departementales

Between fiction and reality, local legends carry within them the memory of a land and its vernacular wisdoms when it comes to learning how to dwell in an environment. This legend recalls the dangers of drowning in deceptively shallow bodies of water and transmits to us a grammar of the Waters' language: if one can hear the pebbles sounding like horses' hooves, it means the river's level has dropped. In the canton of Moret-sur-Loing, people would often invoke the presence of Mother Galu—a Green Witch dwelling in ponds, stagnant waters, and wells, devouring the reckless who passed too near—to discourage children from approaching the mudflats.

Even if local legends have been reshaped by the succession of civilizations that have inhabited this territory, there is a **continuity in the topography of the sacred** (cf map of the sacred next page).

Sanctuary of Sequana, © Jean-Claude Golvin

The Celts who lived in the interfluves of the watershed venerated water deities on riverbanks and confluences. In these places, Christians later built statues and churches to replace paganism. An example is goddess Sequana who was worshiped for her healing powers. Along the riverbanks, inhabitants would immerse body parts shaped relics to cure wounds. In Moret-Sur-Loing, a sacred stone symbolising St Nicaise's victory over the waters served the same purpose: parents would have their children drink from the fountain or touch the stone in hope of healing. This syncretism between traditional medicine, Christian belief, and older magical-ritual practices forms a kind of geographic palimpsest into which we wish to inscribe our proposals.



With Catholicism, the Sauroctones Saints redrew the narrative of cohabitation with the Waters. These biblical figures vanquish giant serpents - symbols of untamed Waters. By slipping a collar around their neck, these stories recount the mastery of chthonic forces through the progress of human civilization.

They acknowledge the importance of Waters in the order of the world, while containing them in their proper place. Saint Loup and the cocatrix of Troyes, Saint Samson and the dragon of the Seine, Saint Nicaise and the water serpent near Moret tell at once of Christianity's triumph over paganism, the establishment of the city and its order in a once-hostile environment now mastered, and the ambiguity of natural forces—dangerous but also bearers of fertility and energy that can be harnessed.

The founding of cities was thus accompanied by a exorcism of nature's forces, tearing the divine out of the fabric of the world in order to sanctify the spirit, separating culture from nature. With industrial modernity and Cartesianism inherited from the Enlightenment, theology gave way to reason, the sacred to technique, resulting in what Augustin Berque calls acosmia—the loss of the sensible world in modern experience.

In the Upper Seine territory, rivers have been "straightened," banks concreted, aquifers pumped, Waters polluted. From divinities, they have become our trash bins.

But this model is reaching its limits. Between floods and droughts, **the aquatic dragons break their chains, inviting us to change paradigms** and invent new forms of symbiosis in order to live with them.

Hydrosensibilities: the territory's issues

The Upper Sequanian watershed is thus threatened by several water-related challenges. We have selected 4 of these hydrosensibilities, linked within micro-cycles on the territory that reinforce each other. We identified indicators as compass to guide the development of proposals to address these issues locally.

KEY FIGURES

49% of drinking water in the Seine basin comes from groundwater and 51% from the Seine and its tributaries

The **flow** of the Seine and its tributaries could **decrease by 30%** by 2100

4.8 million people are vulnerable to flood risk, representing 25% of the basin's population, along with 3 million jobs

Warming of water

The warming of freshwater today is intensified by two combined factors: the general rise in air temperature due to climate change and the discharge of cooling water from nuclear power plants. Yet warmer water has several negative consequences. Ecologically, it disrupts aquatic ecosystems: oxygen solubility decreases, which weakens sensitive fish species (trout, grayling, salmon) and affects aquatic vegetation. From an energy perspective, a critical threshold exists: beyond a certain temperature, nuclear power plants can no longer release their cooling water into rivers, as this would further aggravate thermal stress. They must then reduce or even halt production. To avoid this, upstream hydroelectric dams play a role in regulating low flows, artificially maintaining a certain volume of water available for cooling. But during droughts, this strategy quickly reaches its limits.
The indicator we chose for this issue is **water temperature**.

River low flows: floods and droughts

In a natural setting, floods fertilize soils through the deposition of sediments (natural minerals such as sodium, among others). However, these floods pose risks to homes located in the floodplain, risks worsened by the concreting of riverbanks, which prevents the soil from absorbing water. Droughts, meanwhile, are intensified by over-pumping and threaten nuclear plants, which must halt production if river discharge is too low to allow the release of their cooling water (which, as noted above, further warms rivers).

Drought also kills biodiversity and agriculture, which requires greater and longer irrigation at a time when water resources are already under stress. Over-dried soils lose their ability to absorb rainfall, leading to heavy runoff, floods, and landslides.
The indicator we chose for this issue is the **water level of the river**.

Disapperarance of groundwater and watertables

Water infiltrates into water tables at different rates depending on the soil. Due to increasing use of concrete, droughts and intense rainfall on dried soils, rainwater is no longer absorbed but instead runs off without recharging aquifers.

Rising air temperature also increases evapotranspiration, further limiting infiltration. In some areas, digging a canal or installing impermeable embankments can constrain groundwater and raise its pressure. The aquifer may "resurface" elsewhere and evaporate.This threatens not only water supply across the basin, but also has disastrous consequences for agricultural sustainability, ecosystem health, and human livelihoods.
The indicator we chose for this issue is **watertables level**.

Water and groundwater pollution

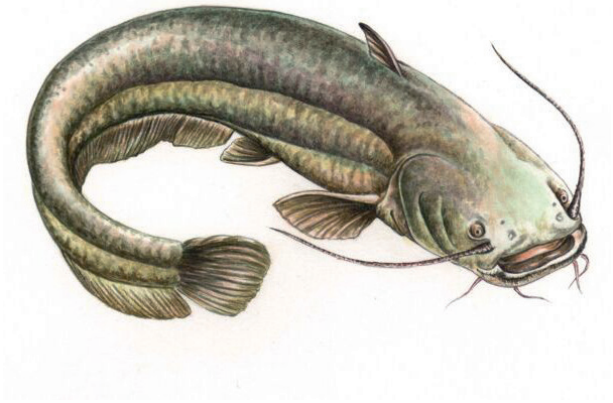
The intensification of agriculture in the Seine basin since the post-World War II period has massively introduced chemical inputs, with significant consequences for groundwater resources: water quality has been progressively deteriorating due to high concentrations of pesticides and nitrates, often above the regulatory threshold. The Aube and Marne are the French departments that consume the most pesticides and synthetic fertilizers.

Due to the slow absorption rate of certain soils, aquifers still contain pesticides that have been banned for decades. Some abstraction points have been abandoned due to excessive nitrate and pesticide pollution. Droughts also reduce river flows, decreasing dilution capacity for discharges and leading to higher pollutant concentrations. Rising water temperature and pollutant concentration can also increase the risk of eutrophication, causing excessive plant proliferation, degraded water quality, oxygen depletion, and ecosystem imbalance.
The indicator we chose for this issue is **water quality**.

Toward an Ecology of Attention

These indicators (water temperature, level, water quality, aquifer levels) make it possible to preserve fragile ecosystems, anticipate disasters, and contest ecocidal projects. But they remain invisible to our modern senses, captured mainly by the scientific world through measuring tools, numbers and statistics and technical vocabulary.

Whereas the realm of the sacred and the transmission of legends help decipher the code lines of a landscape, making it meaningful for local communities, most of us today have become disconnected from these vernacular knowledge. We no longer speak the language of the Waters. Yet, giving them a place within the city requires understanding their forms, their signs, their grammar.



Silure.

How can the language of the Waters be made perceptible to the communities of the Upper Sequanian floodplain?

To foster the reappropriation of the invisible languages of their environments by the inhabitants of the Upper Sequanian region, it seems fertile to invoke Sentinels.

Sentinel entities are landscape features, animals, and sometimes even humans that transmit signals of alert or well-being linked to nature and the phenomena that shape it. They have always existed within territories, whether through physical markers (traces of exceptional floods), stories and observations (such as the mass ascent of insects and ants onto trees or rooftops before a flood), or popular sayings ("Red sun at sunset, wind at sunrise").

Yet these reference points, once widely shared, have gradually been forgotten, eclipsed by the dominance of numbers, scientific indicators, and technical data. In a sense, the excess of rationalization has deprived us of a vernacular knowledge, once essential for understanding our territories and for sharing a common language with our neighbors.

In the face of climate change, it has now become crucial for populations to reclaim this knowledge and rediscover the phenomena that characterize their environment. The sentinel entities of today, however, are not necessarily the same as those of the past. This is why, for each challenge, we have identified one or several examples of sentinel entities worth exploring in the context of the Upper Seine.

For each sentinel, we propose urbanistic solutions, whether transitional or permanent, as well as participatory actions designed to amplify the signals emitted by nature. Such initiatives could be replicated across the territory as needed, making these signals audible and perceptible not only to scientists, experts, and decision-makers, but to the entire population. The goal is to foster a sense of shared responsibility among inhabitants and to inspire them to engage at their own scale.

These proposals are based on:

- Sentinel entities or objects transformed into local divinities: animals, plants, abiotic elements that carry messages about the state of the environment;
- Installations inspired by sacred practices, to support the visibility of the landscape's invisible signals;
- Collective places (Temples of the Sequanian Waters) to give rise to a shared aquatic destiny—a community that becomes ambassador of co-constitutive relations with its environments.

Several contemporary philosophers (Isabelle Stengers, Vincianne Despret, Anna Tsing, Donna Haraway) insist on the need for an **ecology of attention** to weave co-constitutive relationships with our environments. Beyond the dominant scientific, economic, or political approaches that replay gestures of mastery (to catalogue, to classify), it is a set of civic practices that reinvents observation, slows down the gaze and the listening, and grasps details, interactions, cohabitations. This implies an ethical and sensitive disposition: being attentive to discreet voices, fragile forms of life, and the interconnections unfolding in the margins.

Making visible the invisible

Warming of the water

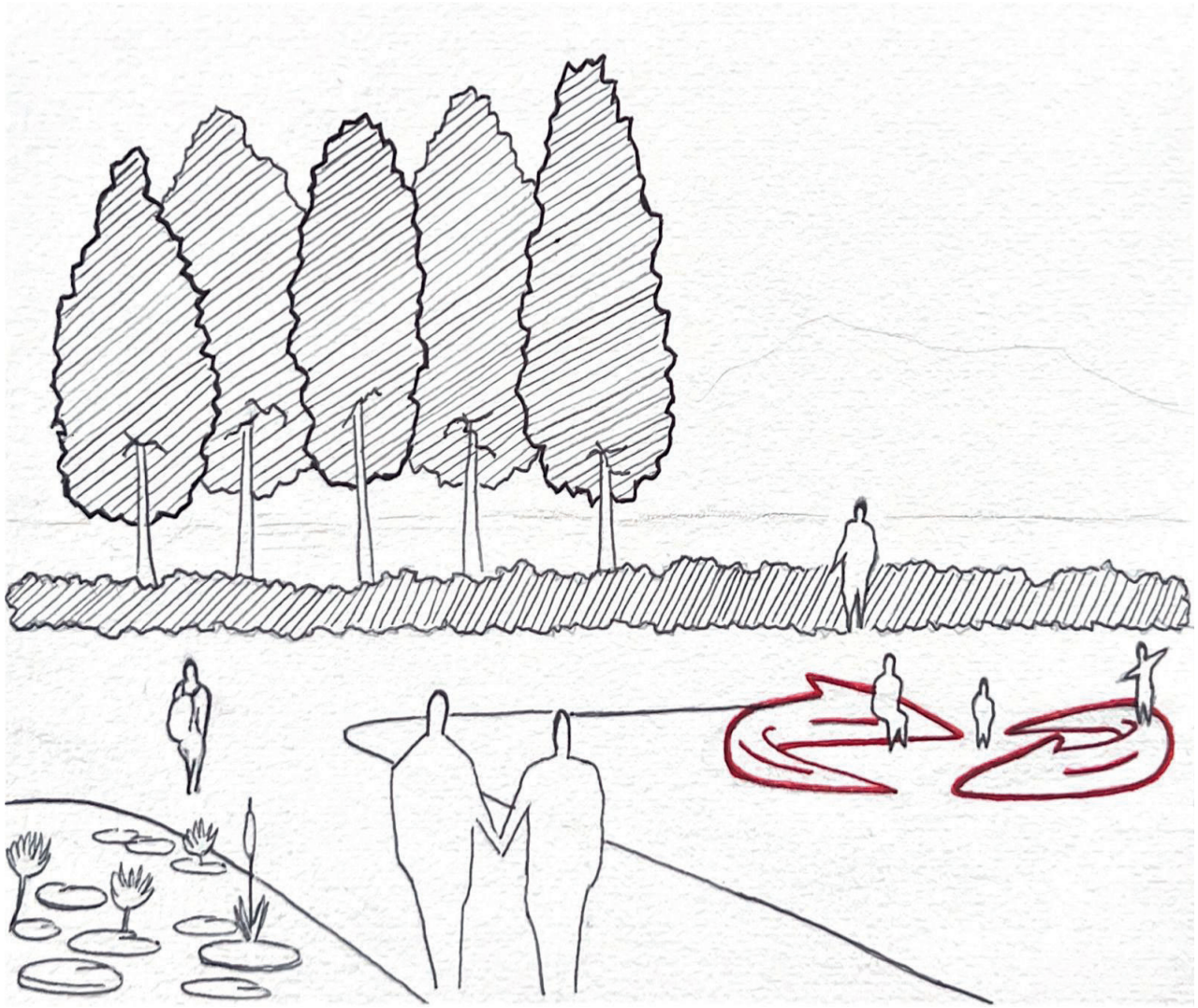
The silure stands out as a sentinel animal : since it thrives in warmer watersits, its expansion in French rivers makes the warming of waterways visible.

Venerated in some countries – in Japan and Burkina Faso – it occupies a more ambiguous place in this territory. Often labeled a “trash fish”, it embodies contrasting perceptions: fascination on one side, rejection on the other. Its impressive size and terrifying appearance feed a strong symbolic imagination. Amateur fishermen love it for its spectacular size and urban legends circulate, claiming for instance that a silure once dragged a young boy into the depths of a river.

A controversial animal, at once feared and respected, the silure materializes the silent transformation of aquatic environments and serves as a living signal of climate upheavals.

To amplify the signal carried by this animal, we propose that riveredges cities install life-sized benches shaped like silures. These installations would allow the public to tangibly grasp the sheer size of this creature.

Information panels integrated into the armrests would explain the reasons behind their increasing presence in the river. These benches could also be incorporated into children’s play areas, combining education, awareness, and playful use.



We want to put these benches near the nuclear power plant which releases hot water in the river

Flood and drought

A "hunger stone" (from the German Hungerstein) is an engraved block placed in the bed of a river, visible only during periods of very low water. They are found mainly in Central Europe, particularly along the Elbe in Germany. These hydrological markers, installed or carved during major droughts, commemorate or forewarn of famines: they serve as reminders that a lack of rainfall or insufficient irrigation leads to crop failures and consequently to food shortages.

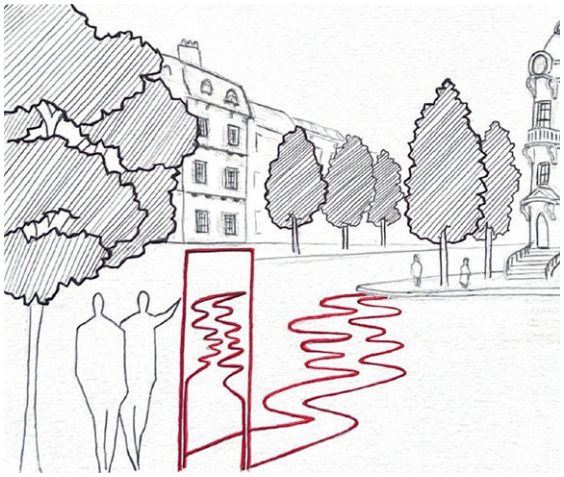
Most of these stones bear the dates of extreme low-water events. Some also carry more explicit messages: in Děčín, Czech Republic, an Elbe stone engraved in 1616 warns future generations: "Wenn du mich siehst, dann weine" – "If you see me, weep." Other stones are inscribed with dates marking the years they reappeared, including 1417, 1616, 1707, 1746, 1790, 1800, 1811, 1830, 1842, 1868, 1892, and 1893.

We wish to draw inspiration from these landmarks to highlighttwo features of the territory:

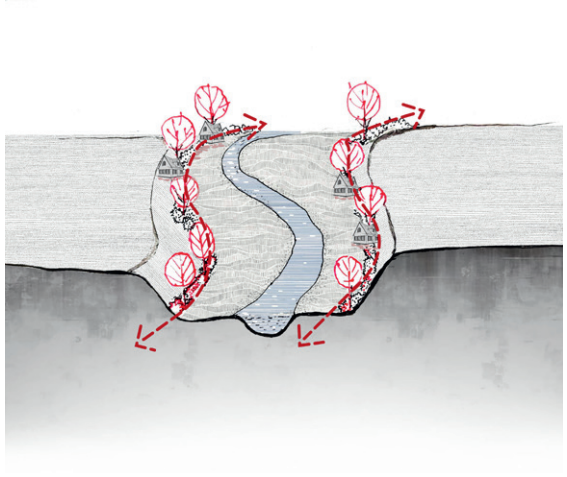
The buried rivers beneath urbanized areas, often invisible in cities: to make these realities perceptible, we propose tracing a line on the ground in urban spaces, marking the course of underground rivers. Similarly, the low-water threshold required for the power plant could be represented by a continuous line, thus creating a symbolic continuity across the territory.

The major bed line which limits the area of the Seine's floodplain: today, many residents considere the minor riverbed as the "normal size" of the river, whereas it is only a temporary state in the natural breathing cycle of the Seine. To shift this perception, we propose materializing the boundary of the floodplain with a vegetal line of hedges and trees. This landscape feature would serve a dual purpose: marking the presence of the floodplain and providing habitats for bird and insect species, thereby helping to restore ecosystems that are currently weakened by intensive agriculture.

Hunger stone in Děčín, Czech Republic.



Path of the ghost river.



Major bed line.

Disappearing watertables

Wells have historically been sentinel entities: they made it possible to directly observe the level of groundwater tables. But today, since they are no longer in use, it has become difficult to gauge their depth simply from the rim.

For this theme, we drew inspiration from the Initiation Well at the Regaleira Palace in Sintra, Portugal, as well as from the stepwells (vav or baori) found in Indian temples, which symbolically invite one to descend "into the depths of the earth".

We therefore propose to rehabilitate certain unused old wells, such as those in Misy-sur-Yonne or Héricy, by enlarging them so that the public can descend via steps and directly observe the water level. An artistic sound and visual installation could accompany this experience: if the well were completely dry, the effect would be all the more striking in raising awareness of water scarcity.

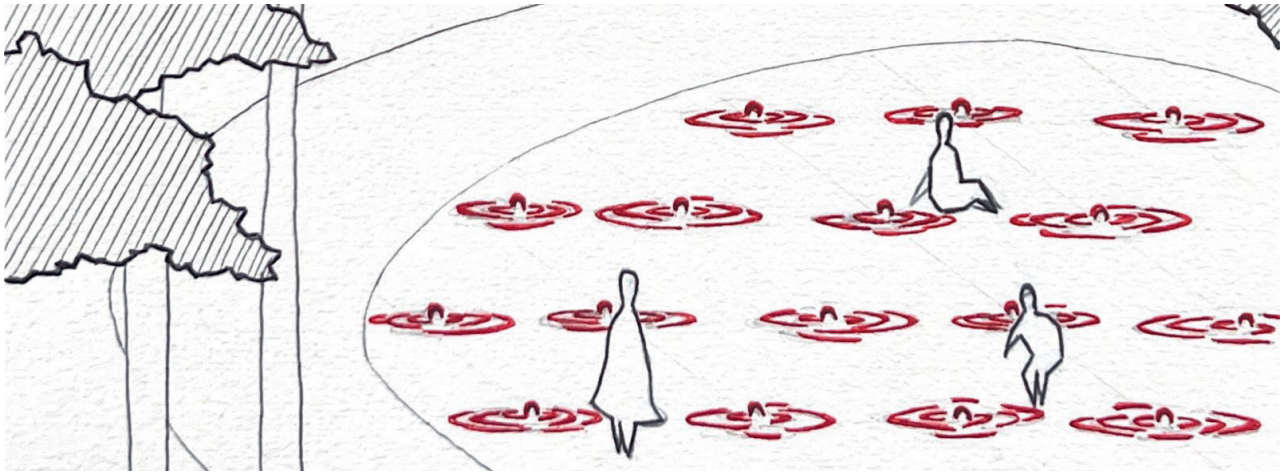
In parallel, to symbolize fluctuations in groundwater tables, we suggest installing interactive fountains whose jet height and water color (red or blue) would reflect critical periods: low or high levels. These devices would provide a visual and tangible translation of the otherwise invisible state of groundwater.

We want to add the fountain to places where the watertables are rising to the surface and the wells shall be on existing table.

Palace of Regaleira, Sintra.

Chand Baori, Rajasthan.

Well at Misy-sur-Yonne.



Signal-fountain from the depth.

Water pollution

Among the sentinel entities of pollution, the first to appear are algae: their excessive proliferation (eutrophication) reveals itself through the characteristic green color of river waters.

Another precious sentinel is represented by freshwater mussels, or naiads. These bivalves play a crucial role thanks to their ability to filter and clarify water. Their presence enhances light penetration, aquatic plant growth, and consequently the life of the entire ecosystem. Yet their populations are in steep decline due to pollution, river modifications, and droughts.

For this issue, we drew inspiration from the artist Yan Tomaszewski, co-drafter of the Declaration of the Rights of the Seine. He conceived a ritual using activated charcoal to purify the river by absorbing certain pollutants. The charcoal pieces, later entrusted to scientists for analysis, had been cast in the form of arms, legs, or heads - echoing the offerings once made to Sequana, goddess of the Seine, to heal ailments.

In the spirit of the artist mentioned, and also inspired by the floating forest installation observed in Rotterdam, we propose to use activated charcoal as both a purifier and a witness to river pollution. Placed around buoys, it would be highly visible to the public and passersby, while the floating tree would also absorb part of the pollutants through its roots.

A variation of this device could also serve as a refuge for freshwater mussels, which would attach themselves to it and thus contribute to the natural filtration of the water. This flotting forest could be put where eutrophisation is strong.

The tree species considered:

- Black alder (Alnus glutinosa): a wetland tree whose roots host nitrogen-fixing bacteria, helping to improve water quality without nutrient overload;
- White willow (Salix alba), or other willows: highly tolerant of immersion, with strong root-based filtering capacity, effectively absorbing nitrates and phosphates.

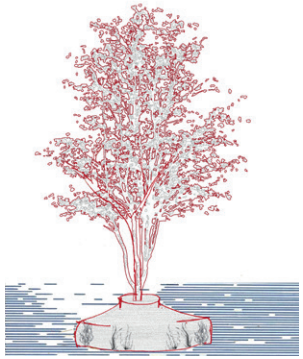
We propose to apply the concept of Pollution ranger, an air quality sensor, to the eutrophication of waterways. The disc could be green and transparent, and if the water takes on the same color as the circle, it would indicate excessive eutrophication. Partnerships could be established with scientists to measure oxygen levels and water pollution, with results directly reflected on the device in varying intensity. This device could be put in lake La Bassee.

Another participatory solution could invite residents to engage in a ritual action when the water is polluted:

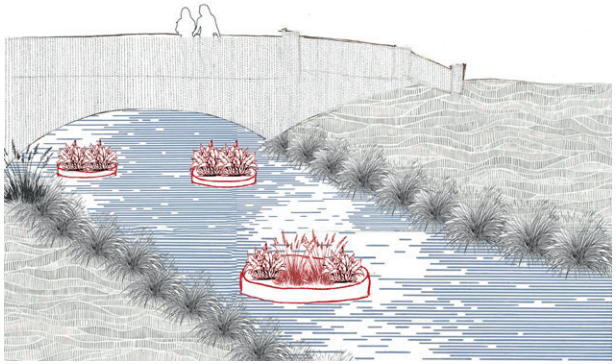
- Use the street as a "canvas": trace shapes of waves, algae, or fish on the ground using biodegradable paint;
- When pollution is detected, these shapes multiply in public spaces (ephemeral painting campaigns, chalk, stencils).

In this way, the visual propagation of algae echoes their real-life spread.

Sequana, by Yan Tomaszewski.

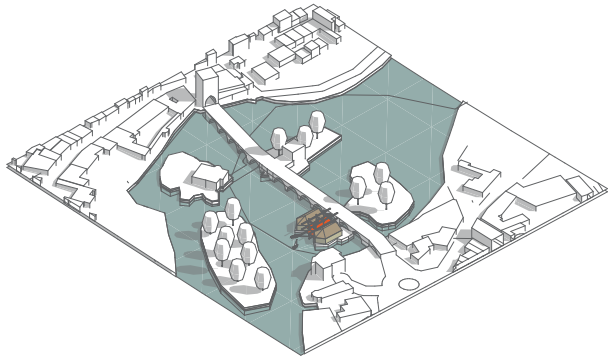


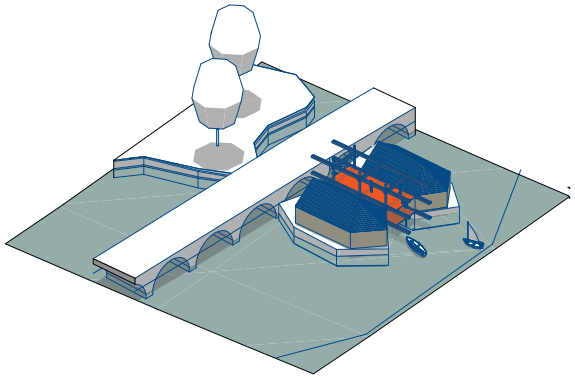
Flotting forest #1

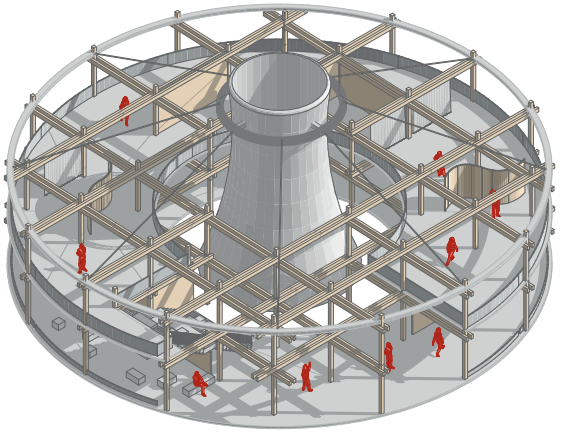


Flotting forest #2

Pardailhan, Beaucaire.







Team's 3D models.

Water Temples

Scattered along the river, a constellation of temporary and adaptive temples emerges. These are not religious sanctuaries, but open structures dedicated to gathering, reflection, and learning. The temples stand, float, or become partially submerged with the rise of floods, turning risk into spectacle. Their forms reinterpret familiar landmarks, transforming them into contemporary outdoor sanctuaries.

Certain historic sites along the Seine – mills in Moret-sur-Loing, lock houses near Nogent, old washhouses, disused industrial buildings, or barges – are reinvented as temples. Rather than remaining frozen as heritage, they become living classrooms, where visitors can observe flood systems, water levels, and protective infrastructures. Educational and artistic installations demonstrate how communities can adapt and how water cycles evolve with the seasons.

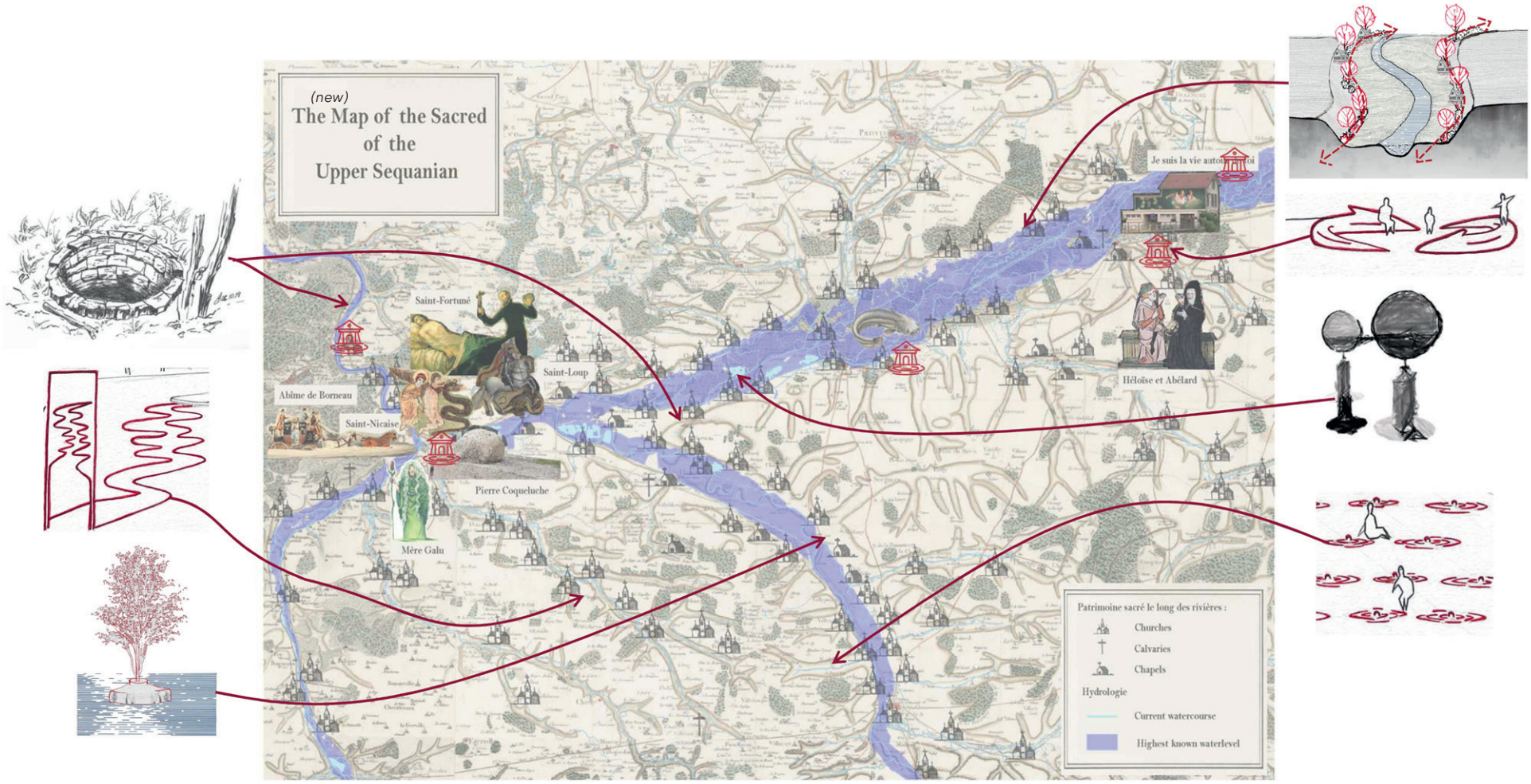
The **Floating Temple** is envisioned as a timber-built, circular sanctuary, drawing inspiration from the archetypal round forms of ancient dwellings and ritual spaces. The circular plan symbolizes continuity, unity, and the cyclical rhythm of nature, making it a fitting geometry for a structure dedicated to both community and resilience.

At its heart rises a conical tower, a deliberate metaphor for the nearby nuclear power plant. Beyond its symbolic role, this tower functions as a water reservoir designed to store and provide resources during periods of drought. It becomes the central anchor of the project – both visually and technically.

The temple is situated in a flood-prone landscape, transforming potential risk into an opportunity for renewal. During flood events, the structure is accessible only by small boats, canoes, or kayaks, allowing it to become a unique place of gathering and reflection amidst the rising waters. The timber superstructure is ingeniously designed to "float" around the central tower: equipped with guiding hangers, it can move vertically in response to changing water levels. This ensures that the temple remains usable throughout varying hydrological conditions, symbolizing adaptability and coexistence with natural cycles.

Examples of spaces suitable for Water Temples: old wash-houses (Nogent, Moret), barges, riverbanks, old industrial buildings and fishermen's huts.

A **participatory and experiential process**:
The integration of these temples relies on the collection of local knowledge: meeting naturalist associations, former residents, fishermen, riverside neighbors, and landowners hosting rivers on their properties. Their stories, observations, and sentinel entities feed into the project. Workshops on sensitive mapping allow this knowledge to be translated into community maps, serving as tools of identity and memory, further enriched by artistic mediation throughout the territory.


(new)
The Map of the Sacred of the Upper Sequanian
Saint-Fortuné
Saint-Loup
Abîme de Borneau
Saint-Nicaise
Pierre Coqueluche
Mère Galu
Héloïse et Abélard
Patrimoine sacré le long des rivières :
Churches
Calvaries
Chapels
Hydrologie
Current watercourse
Highest known waterlevel

04
THE JURY

The jury for the 43rd International Workshop on Urban and Territorial Creativity met on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at the Fabrique de la Cité, marking the end of the workshop. This jury is composed of elected officials, local representatives, French experts, and partners of the association. They will attend presentations of proposals made by each of the three teams of participants. After these presentations, discussions and debates took place to identify ideas that stand out for their creativity, innovation, and relevance, and that can serve as avenues for the future of the Seine basin and its tributaries.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES & PARTNERING INSTITUTIONS

PERISSOL Pierre-André

President of the jury
Chairman of Les Ateliers,
Mayor of Moulins,
Former Minister

GRUET Brice

City Councilor responsible for culture, heritage, and tourism development
Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne

OLIVA Jean-Claude

Elected representative of **Est Ensemble**
Director of the association **Coordination Eau Île-de-France**

JUNIUS Anne

Deputy Director of European and International Affairs
Ministère de la Transition écologique

BOULLANGER Laurent

Director of Land Use Planning and Biodiversity
Syndicat des Eaux de l'Aube

GUENET Marie

Regional Director, Upper Seine
Agence de l'Eau Seine Normandie

DARSAUT Frédéric

Director of Ecological Transition
EPTB Seine Grands Lacs

MAURAND Caroline

Vice-president
Urba2000

GUIGOU Brigitte

Head of Training, Partnerships, and Research
Institut Paris Région

HERPSON Catherine

Sustainable City Manager
Caisse des dépôts pour la recherche - Groupe CDC

GONZALEZ Jessica

Head of Research and Partnership Projects
Etablissement public foncier d'Île-de-France (EPFIF)

GUERLAND Samuel

Workshop Managers - Woodworking
Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris Cergy

EXPERTS NATIONAUX

MARMIROLI Bruno

Director
Mission Val de Loire

DELEPINE Jordi

General delegate
La Seine en Partage

WARNIER Bertrand

Co-founder, honorary member
Urban architect
Les Ateliers Internationaux de Cergy-Pontoise

M'SALLAK Hanaà

Urban architect, Associate Director
Wukang Architectes
Secretary of **Les Ateliers**

SOFFER GRUMBACH Lena

Landscape architect
Antoine Grumbach's team
Seine Metropole: Paris, Rouen, Le Havre

SCIAMMA Dominique

Founder
CY School of Design
(CY Cergy Paris Université)

LAMBERT Charles

Urban planner, Doctor of Social Sciences, European Grand Prize for Urban Planning

EXPERTS INTERNATIONAUX

VAN DER MAAREL Marlies

Strategic urban planner and designer
City of Rotterdam

USYCHENKO Svitlana

Co-Founder
Ro3kvit - Urban Coalition for Ukraine

KALRA Ripin

Senior Research Fellow
Université de Westminster

THE 43RD WORKSHOP JURY PROCESS

- **Opening remarks by Pierre-André Périssol**, President of Les Ateliers,
- **Introductory remarks by Brice Gruet**, City Councilor responsible for culture, heritage, and tourism development - Moret-Loing-et-Orvanne et **Laurent Boullanger**, Director of Land Use Planning and Biodiversity at SDDEA
- **Presentation of the workshop topic and issues by the co-pilots**
- **Presentation of proposals developed by the three teams**: Each team has 20 minutes to present the essence of their work and the proposals they have developed. The presentations are followed by 40 minutes of discussion with the jury to explore the ideas in greater depth.

JURY DELIBERATIONS, DEBATE, AND CLOSING CEREMONY

After the three teams presented their proposals, the jury met behind closed doors to discuss the proposals received. The workshop leaders, Armelle Varcin and Cesar Silva Urdaneta, presented a summary of the jury's deliberations to the audience and the three teams. The jury praised the effectiveness of the workshop method, which enabled the production, in a limited time, of proposals enriched by the multicultural and multidisciplinary backgrounds of the young participants. This 43rd edition was promising, with three very different but complementary proposals presenting original and new approaches. The participants strove to adopt an optimistic vision that turns the gaze back, transcending political, temporal, and often spatial boundaries. The teams' creativity, using drawing as a working tool, touched everyone's sensibilities and raised collective awareness of the challenges of tomorrow, reminding us of the importance of involving the population in projects that affect them. The teams proposed an approach to territorial narrative that each basin can use to build its identity.

The day ended with the traditional presentation of diplomas to the participants and the steering committee to congratulate them on their participation in the workshop.

05
THE PARTICIPANTS

TEAM A : BEAVERS

GIRARDON Brune

France - 25 years old

Food Democracy - City of Paris (DEVE - AEU - Sustainable Food Division)

Local public action, Land use planning, Public policy design

brune.girardon@gmail.com

Initially trained in territorial public action and spatial planning, I discovered the field of public transformation during a work-study program at one of the best schools: La 27e Région. I then resumed my studies to specialize in public policy design methods and am currently working in a work-study position with the city of Paris on issues of food democracy. In line with this edition of the Ateliers de Cergy, I am committed to taking part in multidisciplinary, reflective and experimental projects to build desirable, fair, and ecological futures for our territories.

LEGOUIS Enora

France - 25 years old

Water policy consultant

Water (drinking water, sanitation, flood prevention)

enora.legouis@essec.edu

As a consultant for local authorities, I have specialized in the field of water management within the financial advisory firm Calia Consiel. The firm's role is to support municipalities in their decision-making, financing and implementation of water-related policies. A former student of the Urban Economics Chair at ESSEC and a young professional, I have found in this profession the opportunity to serve local communities while continuously learning.

LIU Xi

China - 29 years old

Urban Designer

Urban Design

jslx0623@gmail.com

Landscape architect & urban designer holding dual master's degrees, with 2 years of international working experience. A dedicated and creative thinker committed to contributing innovative ideas to this workshop. Eager to collaborate in creating vibrant, sustainable urban environment enjoyable to all.

OOSTHUIZEN Adam

South Africa - 29 years old

Master student, lecturer

Architecture

adamjoeoos@outlook.com

My name is Adam Oosthuizen and I am a Master of Architecture student at the University of Cape Town. I specialise in ecological and regenerative architecture and am currently developing my thesis, tentatively titled "Reviving the water'scape", which is an architectural investigation of human-water relations in Cape Town, South Africa. I have a particular interest in public spaces, and how waste landscapes can be transformed into future nodes of ecological resilience.

SINGH Ranjit

India - 30 years old

Architect - Urban Designer

Urban Design

ar.ranjitsingh02@gmail.com

I'm an architect and urban designer with over five years of experience, drawn to the delicate dialogue between cities and water. In my project The City and Water, I explored a city's descent from river to sewer—and its hopeful return, from sewer to river—through design, research, and empathy. This journey embodies my enduring passion for water-sensitive design, participatory planning, and resilient urbanism, where landscapes heal, communities reconnect, and rivers are restored as living, breathing parts of the city.

TEAM B : NOU(E)S

FERLA Violette

France - 24 years old

Architect

DSA Architecture and Major Risks

violettefrl@yahoo.com

Graduated from ENSA Versailles (architecture school), I have developed a growing interest in water-related issues and flood risk. My academic path has been built around this theme : a thesis on drought in Brasilia, followed by a final project on housing in flood-prone areas. The DSA Architecture and Risks, which I will begin in September, is a natural continuation of this trajectory. Experiences such as the workshop you propose would enrich my reflection by bringing new perspectives for analysis and design.

KITAMURA Kazu

Japan - 22 years old

Master's student

Urban Planning and Housing Policy

st25666c@st.omu.ac.jp

I am a Master's student in Human Life Science specializing in housing policy and urban regeneration. My experience includes collaborating with Osaka Municipal Housing Corporation on public housing renovation projects, conducting resident surveys, and developing data-driven rent estimation models. I won a student competition for sports and healthy city design and have presented policy proposals directly to local government leaders. I am passionate about creating sustainable communities through evidence-based planning and resident engagement.

LAHEURTE Louis

France - 29 years old

International Projets Manager

Architecture and development

laheurtelouis@hotmail.fr

Architect passionate about social sciences, history, and literature, I recently returned from remote tropical islands. I wish to pursue my research and professional commitments at the intersection of territorial, urban and architural scales, with an approach that is as geo-ethical as possible.

LERMAN Luisa

Argentina - 29 years old

Independent Graphic Designer, Artist

Visual Arts, Graphic Design

lululerman@gmail.com

My name is Luisa; I am a visual artist and graphic designer from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Through drawing and painting, I explore landscapes as sites of interaction between human and non-human forces, memory, and transformation. My research focuses on the relationship between Buenos Aires and its water bodies—a connection that has shaped the city and remains conflictive today, with limited coastal public access and many streams enclosed underground, revealing ongoing tensions between urban development and nature.

VENLENTZAS Mavrianos

Greece - 23 years old

Student

Architecture, Urban Design and Planning, Landscape Design, Urban Sociology

mvelentz@gapps.auth.gr

Captivated by how cultures shape ways of inhabiting, I explore the interplay between urban form, memory, and everyday life. My research spans European suburbs and Asian mega-cities, blending academic inquiry with grassroots engagement. I've completed my specialization on landscape design with "Thes REMA", a water-sensitive urban renewal framework in Thessaloniki. I am also contributing to StreetSmart, a social-impact climate-action startup that uses street-level data and community input to help cities become more liveable, inclusive, and climate-resilient from the ground up.

TEAM C : KILUCRUE

DAS Puja

India - 29 years old

Landscape Architect

Landscape Architecture

pd201196@gmail.com

I'm a landscape architect with two years of experience and a keen interest in river-centric development. My academic thesis, "Reconnecting Kolkata City with the Hooghly River," displays my understanding of environmental restoration and cultural continuity. Collaborative design is crucial for generating sustainable and inclusive urban landscapes that integrate water and communities. I wish to participate in transforming the Seine into a living landscape. This workshop's collaborative, territorial approach aligns with my desire for substantial river-city interactions.

GALVÃO Yvo

Brazil - 29 years old

Monitoring and Control Coordinator – Department of Urban Planning, Housing and Environment of Sobral

Architecture, Urban Planning and Environmental Management

yvogabriel@gmail.com

Young Architect and Urban Planner, postgraduated in Public Environmental Management, with a technical background in Environmental Studies and 3+ years of experience in sustainable urban planning. Works at the Municipality of Sobral's PRODESOL Program, funded by CAF, coordinating initiatives in monitoring, control, and participatory planning. Experienced in designing, implementing, and monitoring climate change mitigation projects, in collaboration with local, national, and international partners. Skilled in applying nature-based solutions and participatory methodologies to support equitable and sustainable urban development.

GOGOLADZE Giorgi

Georgia - 28 years old

Student

Modern architecture and sustainable development

giorgigogoladze1997@gmail.com

Architect with international education and professional experience in Georgia, Germany, and Norway. I've worked on sustainable urbanism, land use planning, and public space design, including roles at Tbilisi City Hall and the Department of Sustainable Urbanism in Braunschweig. I've participated in international workshops and congresses focused on sustainability, landscape, and environmental design. Passionate about multiscalar territorial approaches, I bring both technical skill and a critical understanding of urban and ecological complexity to collaborative design.

PLANTEC VILLENEUVE Maud

France - 30 years old

Art worker

Gender Studies, Sociology of imaginary

maud.idee@gmail.com

Maud is an art practitioner and independent researcher based between Brittany and La Réunion. She is interested in the stories told by aquatic spaces and the relationships that local communities weave with these places. From oceanic abysses to flowing waters and forgotten washhouses, shes offers narratives at the crossroads of real-world sciences and imaginaries. With a background in social sciences, she draws on hydrofeminism in her research, sensitive materialization, and transmission. Sine 2018, she has been giving lectures, leading workshops, and teaching in art and design schools.

LOZON Ariane

France - 26 years old

Operations Manager

AMO Building and urban projects

lozonariane@gmail.com

I graduated in Urban engineering from the University of Technology of Compiègne and currently work in project management assistance on building and urban planning projects, focusing on functional programming, territorial diagnostics, and the facilitation of participatory workshops. Passionate about interdisciplinary approaches and urban sociology, these themes have taken on an increasingly important role in my life over the past two years. I now wish to give them a stronger framework and commitment through involvement in this workshop, as well as through my associative engagement with the Shifters.

ATELIERS' TEAM

SILVA URDANETA Silva

France

Architect

Co-pilot

cesarsilvaurdaneta@gmail.com

A graduate architect from the École Spéciale d'Architecture and holder of a DES (Diplôme d'Études Supérieures) in Environmental Architecture, he is currently conducting project-based research at the ENSP's Landscape Project Research Laboratory, where he is interested in the ecological potential of the upper Seine valley in a metropolitan context. With thirteen years of experience at the Hamonic+Masson agency, he now leads a project management practice committed to programmes with a strong ecological and territorial dimension, at the crossroads of experimentation and design.

VARCIN Armelle

France

Landscape-architect

Co-pilot

armelle.varcin@gmail.com

DPLG-certified landscape architect, practising until 2005, lecturer at ENSP Versailles since 1999 and ENSAP Lille since 2007. PhD student at LET-ENSAPLV. Holder of a DEA (postgraduate diploma) in the history of alternative sanitation techniques. Her research and teaching focus on water in new towns, large-scale architecture, the links between hydrological risks, heritage and landscape, and urban and regional project design, bringing together landscape, technology, history, uses, water, ecology, global warming and risks in France, Europe, China and Senegal.

VALENZUELA Veronique

France / Chile

Geographer

Director of Les Ateliers

veronique.valenzuela@ateliers.org

I'm Véronique, French and Chilean geographer. I have always been interested in the social and urban issues of large cities, first through the recovery of historical memory and the study of mechanisms of exclusion and socio-spatial segregation. My personal experience allowed me to discover and study urban and social dynamics of Latin America, Africa and Europe. I worked in public institutions and associations, and have been active in Ateliers since 2010 as an assistantpilot, participant, coordinator, project manager, director of projects and director.

BROCHARD Simon

France

Geographer

Director of project

simon.brochard@ateliers.org

Geographer, urban planner, and historian, I am interested in city representations and the evolution of our lifestyles. I have worked in a middle school as a history and geography assistant teacher, but I spent more time organizing and facilitating international urban workshops these last years, involving local and international actors around complex urban and territorial issues. I also love making music and biking.

BAYLE Victoire

France

Communication & Management Officer

victoire.bayle@ateliers.org

With a background in marketing, I wanted to combine my interest in the social and solidarity economy, ecology, sustainable lifestyles, and travel with my professional career. At Les Ateliers, I am learning a great deal about land use planning and urban development in response to current environmental challenges. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time in nature, going on adventures, and discovering the world.

MALGUETA Lydia

France

Architecture

Logistic assistant

lydia.malgueta@ateliers.org

I am a young architect who recently graduated, interested in territorial dynamics and ecological issues. My final year project focused on the redevelopment of an industrial wasteland on the banks of the Seine in Mantes-la-Jolie, with a strategy of plant-based decontamination and a multi-scale approach to the landscape. Participating in this workshop is an opportunity for me to enrich my thinking about the river as a lever for urban transformation, by exchanging ideas with others and testing hypotheses collectively.

ADENKA Carole

France

Geographer

Pilot assistant

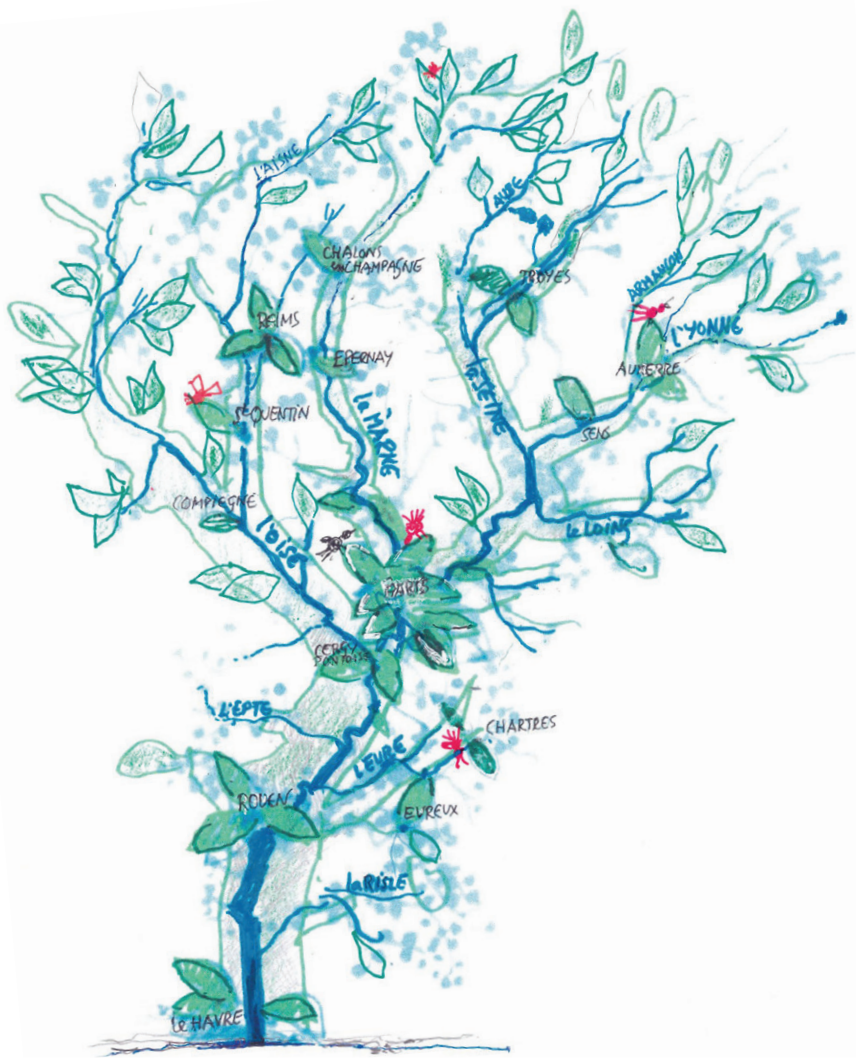
carole.adenka@ateliers.org

Captivated by urban life, I chose to study geography in order to better understand the environment around me, its social dynamics, and its power relations. I explored the notion of the right to the city through the concepts of social justice and spatial justice. My personal and professional experience has also broadened my geographical horizons internationally, particularly in West Africa. I really enjoy exploring the city and taking photographs. For the past year, I have been assisting Les Ateliers with scientific preparation and workshop organization.

TENZIN Lhakey

France - Logistic Assistant

lhakey.tenzin@ateliers.org



TEAMWORK'S TEAM

GABERC Matej

Slovenia

University of Ljubjana

matej.gaberc@eestec-lj.org

I am a multimedia student from Ljubljana. I love to travel, make friends from all around the world and explore different cultures. That's why I was so excited to take part in the EUTOPIA Teamwork project where I contributed with my media making skills. It gave me the opportunity to collaborate with amazing people from diverse backgrounds, learn new perspectives, and grow both personally and professionally.
This experience has inspired me to keep working in international environments and continue building connections across borders.

VERHOEVEN Iorvik

Germany

Bachelor in Media Communication

Master student in Applied Media Research

iorvik.verhoeven@hotmail.de

As a media research student and aspiring journalist in Dresden, I am fascinated by the diverse perspectives people from different disciplines bring to a single issue. Merging these viewpoints and tailoring them to specific audiences is a key part of modern science communication. Exploring the future of the Seine River water system has been a valuable addition to my interdisciplinary experience, deepening my understanding of how complex topics can be communicated effectively across various fields and contributing to shaping sustainable solutions.

PORTER George

United Kingdom

Philosophy

gporter014@outlook.com

I am a 1st year Philosophy (BA) student at the University of Warwick with an interest in applying philosophy, history and ethics to real-world issues. I am passionate about participating in multidisciplinary projects as well as enriching work by approaching it from a variety of perspectives. I also enjoy engaging with new and complex challenges, including contributing to this workshop!

LEE Amelia

United Kingdom

Master's student at the University of Warwick (MSc Medical Biotechnology and Business Management, BSc Biomedical Sciences)

s20991s2@gmail.com

I am a Master's student at the University of Warwick, passionate about content creation and science communication in environmental science. With an academic focus on food systems and sustainability, I aim to raise awareness through engaging, accessible, and visually appealing content. Beyond academics, I have worked as a graphic designer for DEI initiatives and medical writer. Having lived in multiple countries, I love travelling, connecting with people from diverse backgrounds, and listening to their inspiring life stories during a spontaneous trip.

BEHIDJ Wiam

United Kingdom

Université de Warwick

BEGUM Saima

United Kingdom

Université de Warwick

Six étudiants européens ont collaboré avec Les Ateliers de Cergy via TeamWork, programme international d'expérience en ligne qui connecte les organisations à des équipes multidisciplinaires d'étudiants. Ils ont travaillé en mars 2025 sur l'avenir des rivières et fleuves européens et ont proposé du contenu pour nourrir la communication autour de l'atelier.

Document 1 : article scientifique sur la reconnaissance juridique des fleuves écrit par George Porter.

Should we give rivers legal personhood or legal rights?

A study to support the 'The Seine River: A Great Metropolitan Garden' workshop by Les Ateliers Internationaux de Maîtrise d'Oeuvre Urbaine de Cergy-Pontoise.

A picture of the River Seine in Rouen.

When the Olympic and Paralympic Games came to Paris in 2024, one of the primary projects of the games and its legacy in the region focused on an eventual €1.4bn project to clean-up the River Seine (Ville de Paris 2024). This followed a century of swimming in the river being banned. During the Olympic and Paralympic Games themselves, it was also a significant location, with several Olympic and Paralympic events taking place on the river (Triathlon, Marathon Swimming and Para-Triathlon). Moreover, the Opening Ceremony of the Olympics saw athletes floating down the Seine, passing the many famous Parisian landmarks along its course. Nonetheless, in the long-term, the project to clean-up the Seine envisioned swimming areas "along the Seine at the Bras Marie, Bras de Grenelle and Bercy" that would be accessible to the public for generations to come (EEA 2024).

Despite this, the Seine became the centre of some of the prominent stories of the games for the wrong reasons, with concerns over the pollution of the river raised before the first athlete entered the river. Whilst these concerns were attributed to the existing drainage system that predated the clean-up process, the consequences of the pollution impacted the Games and made headlines across the planet. Both the first event on the river during the Olympics and the Para-triathlon events during the Paralympics were postponed due to the high levels of E. coli present in the Seine when tests were done prior to the scheduled start of the events (Lofthouse 2024) (Smith 2024) (FitzGerald 2024). Although all these events would take place following better water quality results, the delays reinforced questions and concerns about the future of public swimming in the river. Moreover, could the additional pressure of the project having to be finished in time for the 2024 Games have been mitigated by a relocation of these events which, according to Lambis Konstantinidis, the operations director for Paris 2024, was possible (Lofthouse 2024)?

It seems obvious to ask more generally what should be done in order to resolve these issues and dilemmas in terms of (1) what is being done, (2) what needs to accompany this work and (3) how can it be maintained into the future? These concerns are the focus of the rest of this piece.

In the case of the Seine, regeneration and restoration will be central to efforts made to improve the basin. With more than 18 million inhabitants living in proximity to the rivers' course from Source-Seine to Le Havre (roughly a quarter of the population of France), its course is already of significant social importance to the country (Les Ateliers 2025). However, as the estuary of the Seine receives 30% of the discharge of the total French population as well as 40% of discharge from national industry, mass human activity and an overreliance on the Seine has come at a large cost to the ecological health of the river (Les Ateliers 2025). Naturally, these factors contributed to the issues at the heart of the headlines surrounding the Seine during the 2024 Paris Games.

As a result, the questions being raised at the Les Ateliers workshop are timely, both in terms of being an exploration of the same river which generated such massive attention within the last year but also as an opportunity to analyse these issues and contribute to the efforts to tackle these issues. The Seine is not the only river being subjected to the issues that climate change and human activity have contributed to, all rivers encounter the same issues. However, an analysis of one of Europe's most well-known rivers offers a candidate for this workshop a rewarding opportunity to address the pertinent issues and consequences of a changing climate in the modern and future world. A world where, according to Climate Central's projections on the River Seine, most of the Seine's (lower) course between Rouen and its mouth at Le Havre is expected to be under the annual flood level as well as below 1 metre of water (Climate Central).

In order to respond to these issues, we need to consider what is crucial to a proposal focused on how we can improve and preserve the quality of water in the short and long-term. First, scientific facts and illustrated proposals are significant in analysing and

planning a proposal that is informed by such information and can thus have a positive impact. Furthermore, the importance of recognising how 'human activities are so large nowadays that they override natural processes' is significant in any approach to the study of the future of rivers (Flipo et al. 2021:2). In the case of the Seine specifically, the success of the clean-up project relies on how it addresses and improves existing infrastructure as well as attempting to diminish all activity which has contributed to the poor ecological health of the river. It must address how "water quality has been severely degraded in terms of oxygen levels, ammonia and nitrate concentrations" as well as the presence of "bacteria over a section of river extending from 100 to 250 km downstream from Paris" if it is going to have a positive impact (Flipo et al. 2021:7). These aspects all point towards the importance of a multidisciplinary approach is addressing how we are going to improve the quality of water in rivers such as the Seine as well as preserving it in the long-term.

Due to this, I will now explore a philosophical proposal on how to contribute to the long-term preservation of the Seine Basin from reconfiguring our relationship with the Seine. This will focus on the question of whether we should grant rivers legal personhood to address and resolve these challenges.

We might consider granting legal personhood to a river as a type of environmental personhood where we confer a river the ability to exercise its rights in accordance with existing law. These may include the ability to "sue, own property, and enter into contracts" (Suresh 2023). This could be successfully implemented, for instance, by appointing "representatives with a legal responsibility to "speak for" the river in decisions about water use" (Strang 2020:206). The concept of river 'personhood', as to speak, emphasises a reconfiguration of the existing relationship that humanity has with rivers and river ecosystems (which I will speak about later). This may involve an expectation to maintain the quality of the river in terms of both a collective clean-up project, such as the one undertaken for the 2024 Paris Games, as well as a personal obligation to not throw fast food into rivers on an individual level.

Granting rivers legal personhood as a way of producing a long-term plan to preserve the river Seine can be considered as part of a proposal, or at the very least can inform one. This is demonstrated by how several rivers across the world have been granted legal rights as part of an effort to improve the welfare of these rivers and to promote sustainable use. These include the River Amazon being granted rights by the Colombian Supreme Court in 2018 as well as the Magpie River in Canada in 2021 (Bryner 2018) (Berge 2022). More recently, the Scottish Parliament has been considering a petition to 'Grant Scottish rivers, including the River Clyde, the legal right to personhood' since December 2024 (The Scottish Parliament 2024).

Granting legal personhood to rivers has been part of the mission of the Earth Law Center and its belief in "aligning our laws with Nature's laws" (Earth Law Center). The organisation developed the 'Universal Declaration of the Rights of Rivers,' eventually including 9 premises, of which premise 3 established that "all rivers shall possess, at minimum, the following "fundamental rights":

(1) The right to flow,

(2) The right to perform essential functions within its ecosystem,

(3) The right to be free from pollution,

(4) The right to feed and be fed by sustainable aquifers,

(5) The right to native biodiversity, and

(6) The right to regeneration and restoration;"

(Earth Law Center 2017:2-3)

Granting rivers across the world these "fundamental rights" will allow for the development of legal systems which can hold us more to account for our impact on rivers (Earth Law Center 2017:2). If someone or a group infringes on these rights, then we can use these rights to uphold justice for the river as well as the ecosystems it is a part of. Moreover, by granting rivers "legal standing in a court of law" as "living entities", as premise 2 suggests, we also see a change in the previously unquestioned relationship between humans and rivers (Earth Law Center 2017:3). Instead of allowing humans to believe their rights should always be prioritised over rivers, the Earth Law Center encourages the view that rivers and humans co-exist on "our shared planet" (Earth Law Center 2017:2). Thus, it seems logical to focus on the "best interests" of a river in decision-making about rivers and river ecosystems (Earth Law Center 2017:3).

Moreover, the declaration also allows for the development of a river ethic. Whilst we have seen a development of an environmental ethic or an animal ethic, a 'river ethic', as to speak, is still emerging as an individual idea and is thus still malleable as an ethical concept. Nonetheless it should begin with, as Veronica Strang pointed out, moving on from an "anthropocentric belief that humans are the 'brains of the planet'" or as "mere assets [..] for human purposes" (Strang 2017:212) (Strang 2020:204). The view that rivers and other "non-human beings" are "co-inhabitants" with humans rather than "assets" provides a framework for which the relationship between humans and rivers can be less damaging for the latter (Strang 2020:204,206). It should also recognise how rivers must be considered important even when removed from any human factors which may influence a policy or ruling.

The concept of river personhood makes it obvious that we should not consider rivers as simply carriers of sewage or places to throw our waste in. If we continue to apply an anthropocentric belief to rivers and the environment, would this be ethical? The answer to this question, in the context of my exploration of river personhood here, seems obvious that it would not be.

So how would a river ethic achieve this?

Ultimately, the creation of a river ethic, in the words of Zhang et al., "necessitates a shift from altering and conquering nature" to "adjusting human behaviour and rectifying past mistakes" in order to improve the "human-water relationship" for our contemporaries and future generations (Zhang et al. 2025:23,22). A river ethics would involve looking at how we reached this point in our relationship with rivers, exploring how our attitudes towards rivers have been shaped throughout history, responding to these attitudes and then applying the ethic to proposals concerning future water use. Thus, when we address the issues facing rivers, from the discharge and waste to the sustainability of the ecological health of the rivers in the future, the development of a river ethic is part of the solution.

As a result, shifting attitudes towards where responsibility lies for addressing these questions over climate change and the future of rivers is clearly required from a river ethic. This also helps to provide a framework for how humanities can participate in multidisciplinary projects on rivers and other environmental issues. In this case, it involves taking the lead in how we "re-imagine the river" for future generations, beginning from an ethical and legal perspective before applying it to other disciplines (Strang 2020:206).

Returning back to the Seine Basin and Les Ateliers, the workshop being held by Les Ateliers this September (September 1st to September 19th 2025) looks for candidates interested in developing a collective proposal aimed at addressing the following questions:

1. How can our territories ensure the long-term preservation, accessibility, and quality of water in the Seine watershed and its tributaries?
2. How does our relationship with water reconfigure our territories and lifestyles to address the major challenges of this century, at both the Seine and local scales?
3. What renewed relationship can be established between the river, its tributaries, and our human activities (energy, food, mobility, leisure, etc.)?

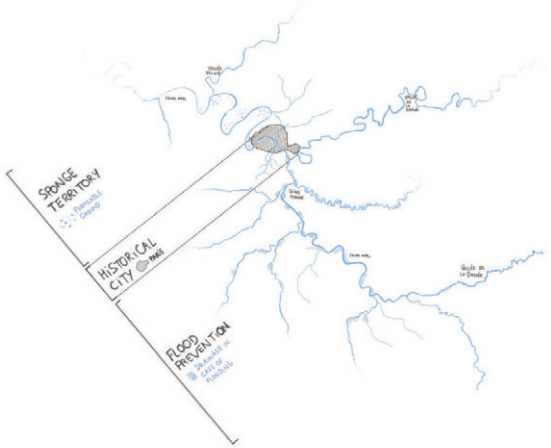
As I hope to have shown, responses to these questions involve the input of every discipline despite the fact that I have primarily focused on the role of humanities subjects, primarily philosophy, in contributing to the future of rivers. The more variation in disciplines represented at the workshop by candidates, the more substantiated and enriching the proposals made at the workshops become. Everyone has something to contribute to resolving the issues presented by these three questions because everyone is impacted by the consequences of our "artificial interference" in ecosystems (Zhang et al. 2025:25). Irrespective of whether you live in the catchment of the River Seine, or even if you ever see visit the Seine, it is important that everyone can put forward a vision for the future of rivers as the analysis done of the Seine is applicable to all rivers.

15 candidates will be selected to be part of this year's workshop. The workshop gives as much to the people who participate in it as it does to the local officials who receive these proposals and implement strategies and policies based on them. Consequentially, the Seine Basin, its population and the future of rivers alike the Seine benefit from your input!

For more information and to register, please visit the information page for this workshop at https://www.ateliers.org/en/workshops/243/.

George Porter

A 1st year Philosophy (BA) student at the University of Warwick.



This study was part of the EUTOPIA TeamWork 2025 programme for Les Ateliers Internationaux de Maîtrise d'Oeuvre Urbaine de Cergy-Pontoise and its workshop on the Seine River Basin 2025. It is titled 'The Seine river, a Great Metropolitan Garden: Living in the AnthropoSeine: Preserving the Seine Watershed and Its Ecosystems.'

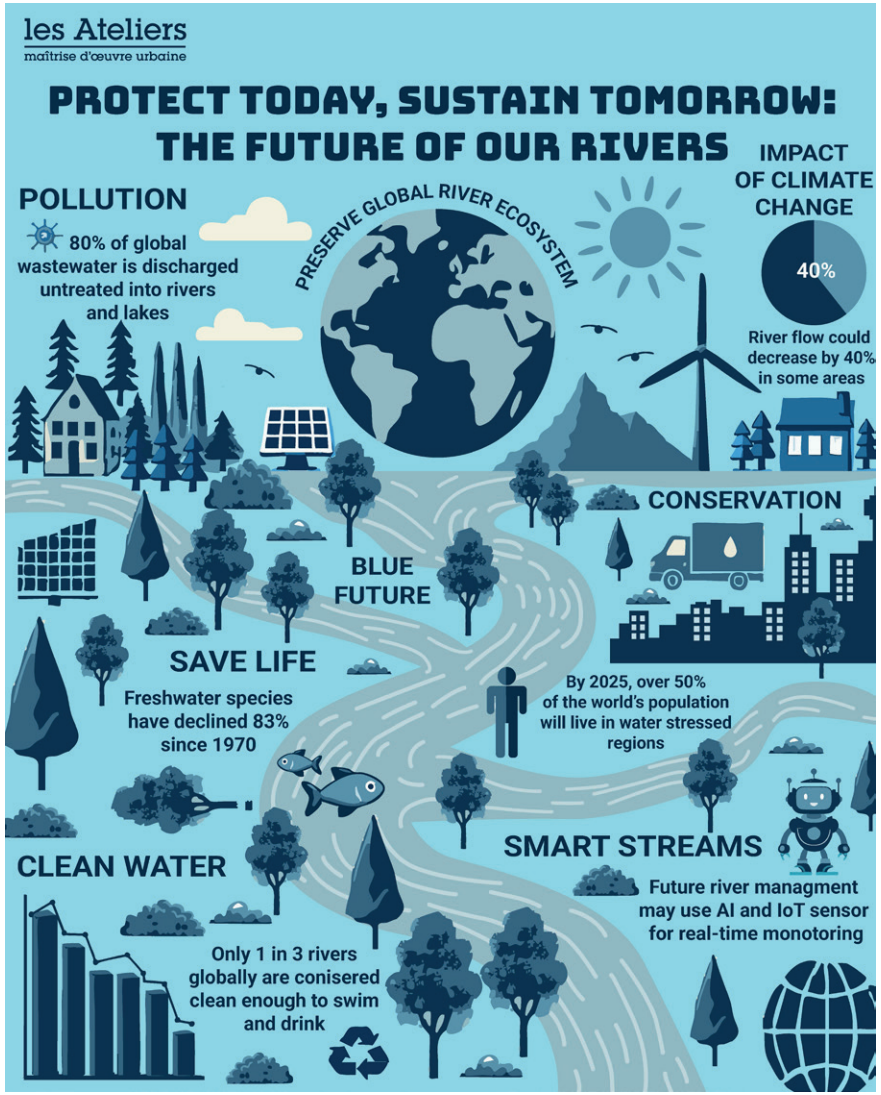
As part of the workshop, 15 selected candidates will be asked to make proposals on the future of the Seine River system, focusing on how long-term preservation, accessibility and quality of water in the Seine basin can be ensured amongst other questions. Candidates will work on this between September 8th to September 25th, 2025, and these proposals will be presented to cities stakeholders.

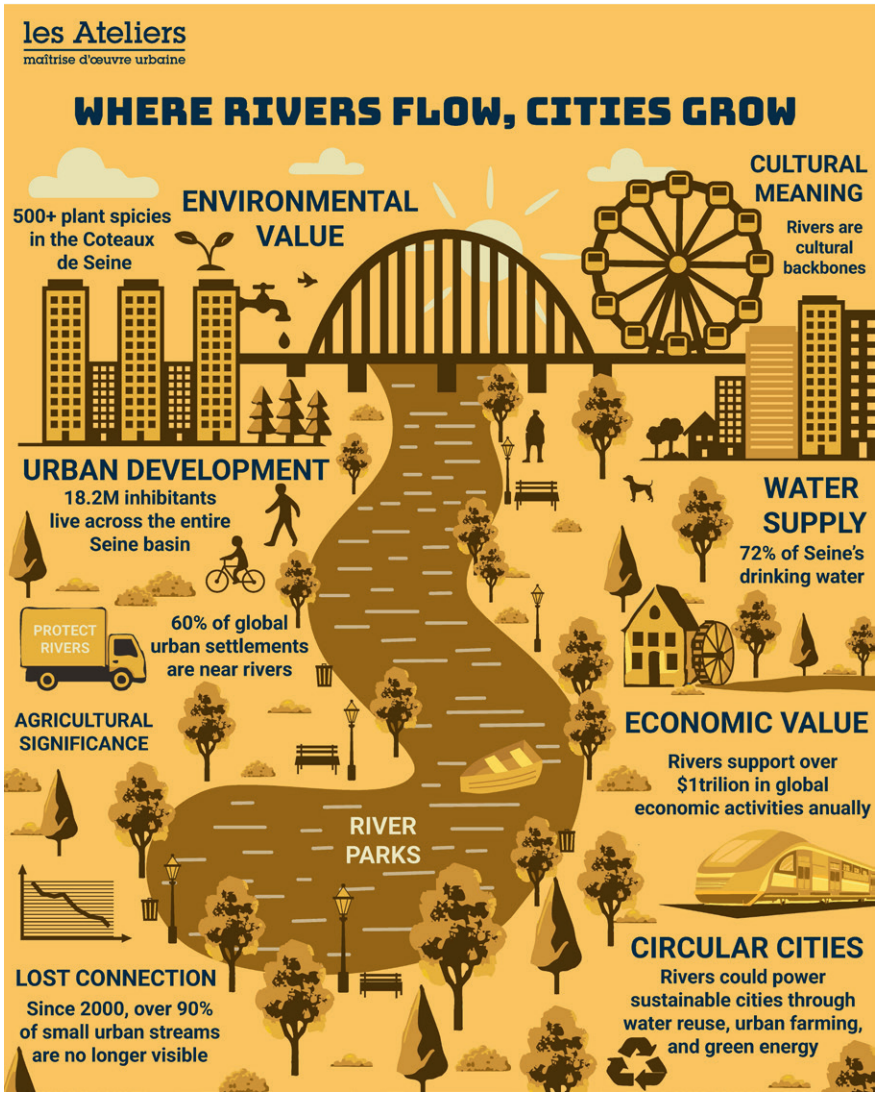
Whilst this might take the form of artistic designs to work around these issues, Les Ateliers' workshops seek to produce work that has been the result of a collective effort made from multidisciplinary teams.

This project hopes to demonstrate that students, from all disciplines, are able to contribute to this workshop. On top of this, the varied perspectives and disciplines of the candidates will add more depth to the innovative proposals made at the workshop.

Document 2 et 3 (ci-dessous) : infographies mettant en lumière les aspects clés de la préservation des rivières.

Document 4 (page ci-contre) : bannière intégrant des infographies sur la Seine



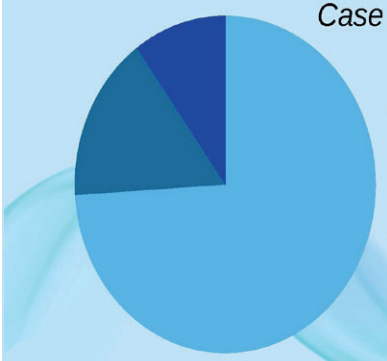


ROLES OF RIVERS IN CITIES

Rivers form and develop cities—many famous cities are by rivers, such as the Seine (Paris, France) and Thames (London, England). Rivers are integrated into the landscape, shaping the overall structure of the city for urban development [1]. Whether flowing through or around the city, urban rivers have a closer relationship with human life than natural rivers [1].

IN URBAN LIFE, RIVERS OFFER:

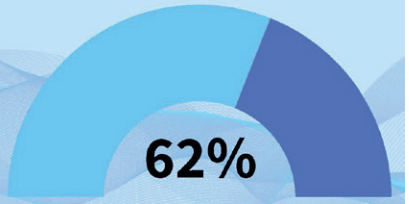
Case of the Seine River, France



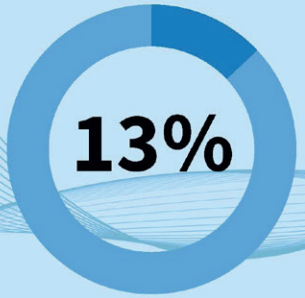
74% of drinking water is from groundwater of the Seine [2].

- Drinking Water Production (74%)
- Industrial Purpose (16%)
- Irrigation by the Agricultural sector (10%)

62% of the basin of the Seine contributes to agricultural activities in France (representing 25% of French agricultural activities [2].



20-35% of the national industrial activities are by the basin of the Seine [2].



20M tonnes of cargo per year are transported through the Seine [3].

Assuring **13%** of good supply for Île-de-France [4].

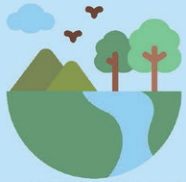
18.2M inhabitants across the entire basin of the Seine [3].

500+ plant species in the Côteaux de Seine [3].

MAIN VALUES OF RIVERS INCLUDE:

Water Supply

Economic Value



Environmental, Recreational & Aesthetic Value

Social, cultural, and urban development value

References
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2. [Internet]. [cited 2025 Mar 22]. Available from: https://water.jrc.ec.europa.eu/pdf/seine-fs.pdf
3. Lestel L, Meybeck M, Carré C, Belliard J. The Seine, the river dedicated to Paris. River culture: life as a dance to the rhythm of the waters. 2023;673–97. doi:10.54677/cgdx8656
4. Port de Paris, economic benefits through water-rail connection [internet]. 2010 [cited 2025 Mar 22]. Available from: https://www.railwaypro.com/wp/port-de-paris-economic-benefits-through-water-rail-connection/

Les Ateliers de Cergy, en partenariat avec de nombreuses autres institutions, ont participé à l'organisation de la première édition aux Rencontres des Imaginaires Locaux.

Document 5 : Programme des Rencontres des Imaginaires Locaux

Les rencontres des imaginaires locaux

Cergy-Pontoise & Paris

26 & 27 septembre 2025
15 octobre 2025

Au moment où de multiples transitions nous appellent à repenser nos territoires, où nous cherchons un nouveau souffle citoyen pour revivifier nos démocraties et où il est si urgent d'écrire ensemble le récit heureux de nos devenirs communs, les imaginaires peuvent être l'outil enthousiasmant et efficace de ces trois grandes réinventions : territoriale, démocratique et politique.

Accueillie par l'agglomération de Cergy-Pontoise, l'école nationale d'arts Paris-Cergy et la Fondation Jean-Jaurès, la première édition des Rencontres des imaginaires locaux illustrera, par de multiples formes de réflexions, d'interpellations et d'échanges, l'idée essentielle selon laquelle notre futur passe par un usage utile, partagé et passionné de tous nos imaginaires.

Programme

Le vendredi 26 septembre à Cergy-Pontoise

10h00 – 12h00 Atelier

→ à LabBoite

Et vous, comment imaginez-vous votre cité ?

Acteurs du changement, étudiants et urbanistes, citoyens des fablabs et des tiers-lieux, venez partager vos rêves et idées d'action. Cet atelier d'échanges et de prospective créative, animé par Richard Collin et Ariel Kyrou, lance le programme ARCADIA du collectif les Transitionneurs, pour une transformation concrète et positive des territoires.

14h – 18h Tables rondes

→ à la salle Hubert Renaud, Communauté d'agglomération de Cergy-Pontoise

14h – 15h

Ouverture des rencontres et table ronde sur l'inégale désidérabilité des territoires

Ouverture

Raphaël Llorca, Essayiste et consultant, autour du « *Roman national des marques* » (L'aube, 2023) (en visioconférence)

Échange sur la désidérabilité des territoires

Jérôme Fourquet, Essayiste, directeur du département opinion de l'IFOP

Ariella Masboungi, Architecte-urbaniste, autrice de « *Les territoires oubliés* » (Le Moniteur, 2025)

Vincent Gollain, Economiste, spécialiste du marketing territorial

15h – 16h30

Les imaginaires, qu'en faire et comment les partager ?

Une table ronde pour cerner l'importance et le rôle des imaginaires aujourd'hui, avec des think tanks nationaux et l'ESSEC :

Jérémie Peltier, Co-directeur de la Fondation Jean Jaurès

Lucile Schmid, Présidente de la Fabrique écologique

Blanche Leridon, Directrice éditoriale de l'Institut Montaigne

Xavier Pavie, Philosophe, professeur à l'ESSEC, directeur du centre iMagination

Frédéric Dabi, Directeur général de l'IFOP, auteur de « *Parlons-nous la même langue, comment les imaginaires transforment la France* » (L'Aube, 2024)

16h30 – 18h

Les imaginaires, partout dans nos territoires et dans nos vies

Une table ronde pour voir vivre les imaginaires au cœur des territoires, avec :

Jean-Laurent Cassely, Essayiste et consultant (Maison Cassely)

Johanna Rolland, Maire de Nantes, Présidente de France urbaine

Benjamin Demailly, Président du Parc naturel régional du Vexin

Jérôme Saddier, Président du Crédit coopératif

Hélène Reigner, Responsable du programme territoires du POPSU)

Francis Brochet, Journaliste, auteur de « *Quand le parisianisme écrase la France* » (L'aube, 2025)

19h30 – 21h30 Agora citoyenne

→ au conservatoire de Cergy-Pontoise

Les imaginaires, on se les raconte! Visages et paysages

Un texte écrit et mis en scène par Joël Dragutin ouvre un échange citoyen sur les imaginaires.

Avec le regard d'Annie Ernaux, Ecrivaine, prix Nobel de littérature, Clovis Prévost, Cinéaste, photographe et auteur et Claude Mollard, conseiller spécial du président de l'IMA, ingénieur culturel, photographe plasticien

Sur l'Axe Majeur de Cergy, une jeune femme et un jeune homme (Clara et Antoine) se rencontrent, se promènent, se séduisent et leur conversation, un peu à la manière d'un Rohmer, glisse d'une réflexion sur l'art et la ville, sur la nature, aux confidences et aux rêves.

Au fil de leur balade amoureuse, l'œuvre monumentale conçue par Dani Karavan devient un livre à ciel ouvert sur la ville où les paysages, les histoires et les émotions se répondent et s'entrelacent

Écrit et mis en scène par Joël Dragutin, cet impromptu théatrâl tisse des dialogues comme on assemble des fragments de mémoire et d'imagination, il nous rappelle que chaque lieu, chaque geste, chaque rencontre porte un imaginaire qu'il nous appartient d'entretenir.

Et lorsque la promenade s'achève, ce sera à vous d'entrer en scène, pour un échange citoyen sur nos propres imaginaires, savoir où ils se logent dans nos vies, comment les connaitre et les partager et peut-être en inventer de nouveaux. Un moment précieux pour regarder autrement ce que l'on croit connaître et essayer ensemble d'inventer une suite…

Le samedi 27 septembre à Cergy-Pontoise

9h30 - 12h30 Ateliers

→ école nationale d'arts de Paris-Cergy

9h30 - 11h

L'eau, c'est à voir !

Un grand atelier interactif où l'on débat, on invente, on interpelle, on imagine… en partant des travaux des jeunes professionnels des Ateliers de Cergy :

Grands témoins : Dominique Sciamma (Fondateur de CY, école de design) et Suzanne Husky (Artiste, co-autrice avec Baptiste Morizot de « *Rendre l'eau à la terre* » chez Actes-Sud)

Avec le regard de Bertrand Warnier, Architecte-urbaniste, membre de l'académie d'architecture

11h - 12h30

Le fleuve, quel personnage !

Une table ronde sur la façon dont les fleuves sont au cœur de nos vies et de nos territoires, dans le passé, le présent et l'avenir, avec :

Jordi Delepine, Délégué général de La Seine en Partage, président de la Fédération des Associations de l'Habitat Fluvial

Svitlana Usychenko, architecte-urbaniste Ro3kvit (coalition urbaine pour l'Ukraine), a contribué au projet « Vision intégrée du fleuve Dnipro »

Phil Enquist - en vidéo, architecte-urbaniste, Chicago et les Grands lacs

Lena Soffer, Architecte et paysagiste

Jean-Luc Gleyze, Président du conseil départemental de Gironde (en visioconférence)

Le mercredi 15 octobre à Paris

18h - 21h Tables rondes

→ à la fondation Jean-Jaurès

18h - 18h30

Accueil et introductions

Laurence Lemouzy, Directrice scientifique de la revue Pouvoir locaux (retour sur les travaux tenus les 26 et 27 septembre à Cergy-Pontoise)

Gilles Finchelstein, Secrétaire général de la Fondation essayiste (les imaginaires, la démocratie et le ressenti)

18h30 - 20h

Les imaginaires, une lecture citoyenne et sensible des territoires

Une table ronde sur ce que les imaginaires apportent pour une appréhension sensible, humaine et partagée des territoires de vie, avec :

Jean-François Caron, Président de la Fabrique des transitions (sur le patrimoine minier du Nord et son inscription au patrimoine mondial de l'humanité)

Manon Pengam, Linguiste à l'université de Cergy (sur les imaginaires territoriaux dans les cahiers de doléances du mouvement des gilets jaunes)

Richard Collin, Délégué général des transitionneurs

Avec le regard de Boris Vallaud, Député des Landes et Amandine Lebreton, Directrice du pacte du pouvoir de vivre

20h - 21h

Conclusions des rencontres 2025

Un dialogue pour conclure et mettre en perspective ces trois jours d'échanges et de travaux, en posant notamment la question de ce que la société peut faire des imaginaires aujourd'hui, avec :

Robert Zarader, Président de Bona Fidé

Jean-Paul Jeandon, Président de l'agglomération de Cergy-Pontoise

Guénaëlle Gault, Essaysite et Directrice générale de l'ObSoCo

Laurence Lemouzy, Directrice scientifique de l'institut de la gouvernance territoriale et de la décentralisation

Les partenaires des rencontres

Renseignement pratiques
Se rendre aux Rencontres

Cergy-Pontoise

LabBoite
Parvis de la Préfecture, Cergy

La communauté d'agglomération de Cergy-Pontoise
Parvis de la préfecture, Cergy

Le conservatoire de Cergy-Pontoise
Parvis de la préfecture, Cergy

L'école nationale supérieure d'arts Paris-Cergy
2 rue des Italiens, Cergy

Pour tous ces lieux à Cergy-Pontoise, RER A (arrêt Cergy-Préfecture) et A15 (sortie Cergy-Préfecture)

Paris

La Fondation Jean-Jaurès
12 Cité Malesherbes, Paris

Métro station Pigalle, ligne 2 et ligne 12

Contacts

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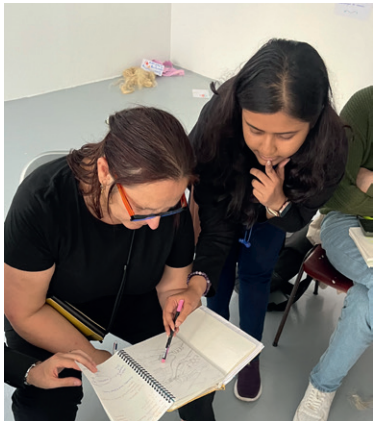
SNAPSHOTS FROM THE WORKSHOP

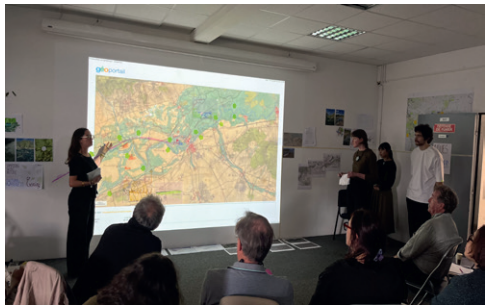

SORTIE
DEFENSE DE FUMER


MANIFESTO


water pollution
les Ateliers
CREATIVITY
COLLECT




THE SEQUANIEN(S) PATH(S):
CREATING SHARED PATHWAYS TOWARDS
SOCIO-CULTURAL AND HYDRO-ECOLOGICAL RENEWAL
TALKING LANDSCAPE
MAKE INVISIBLE-VISIBLE
Temple of water



les Ateliers
maîtrise d'œuvre urbaine

The River Seine as a Great Garden: The Sources

ECOLOGY & HABITABILITY OF THE SEINE AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

Les Ateliers extend their heartfelt thanks to the workshop participants, the members of the steering committee, the Teamwork students, the contributors to the productive seminar, the facilitators, translators and interpreters, the team and workshop coordinators, the initiators of the Great Garden, and the institutions and partners who made this workshop possible.

More info: **www.ateliers.org**
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