

J JACQUES
F FERRIER
A ARCHITECTURE

Mutual influences

My work in China forms part of a universe of mutual influences. My approach is in no way that of a "Western" architect who seeks to preach the good word on the international stage. Instead, it is an approach based on a continuous dialogue on creation between two continents that is as old as Marco Polo's travels.

The East has always influenced the West, whether in the domains of art, philosophy or literature. And, indeed, it is from China that came the idea of the sensual city, a theme I am currently developing with Pauline Marchetti in a number of projects in France, in particular in our role as architectural and design advisers for the new stations of the future Greater Paris express metro lines.

All of our projects in China, such as the Lycée Français International de Pékin, in Beijing, seek to establish close links between architecture and the landscape. It is with the collaboration and assistance of Michel Hoessler, from the agency TER, that we are currently reflecting upon a new means of producing the city that avoids the pitfalls of the efficient but soulless "infrastructure city". The urgency of the question of how to build our cities always tends to lead to a bias in favor of the easiest solutions: an umpteenth version of the ideal functionalist city, about which nothing new can be said, hopeless in its monotony. We, on the other hand - by respecting topography and existing routes and channels, and by making use of local species and materials - aim to imagine a contemporary, contextual city that will create a prospective counterpoint in the frenetic urban extension that characterizes China today.

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