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# LBE Fall 2014 Newsletter

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The official newsletter of the Library Buildings and Equipment Section of IFLA

December 6, 2014



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## Joint Satellite Meeting in Paris, France

Group photo of the attendees at the “Space and collections earning their keep: transformation, technologies and re-tooling” satellite conference held on August 13-14, 2014 at Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (BULAC). The conference was a sell-out with 64 attendees.

The Building and Equipment Section of IFLA held its 2014 annual meeting in Lyon, France at the WLIC. Before attending the annual conference, the IFLA Sections of *Library Building and Equipment* (<http://www.ifla.org/about-the-library-buildings-and-equipment-section>) and *Acquisitions and Collection Development* (<http://www.ifla.org/about-the-acquisition-collection-development-section>) held a satellite conference in Paris, France on August 13 and 14, 2014 at the Bibliothèque Universitaire des Langues et Civilisations (BULAC), France. The twenty seven papers presented can be accessed at this URL: <http://iflasection20.org/paris-papers-and-presentations-2/>

**The CTLes, France: a Repository library with extended mission in a context of greater storage capacity**

by Bernadette Patte,  
Deputy director of the CTLes  
(Centre technique du livre de  
l'enseignement supérieur)

The CTLes (Centre technique du livre de l'Enseignement supérieur, or Technical Center for book for Higher Education), is a self-standing public body, controlled and funded by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. It is administered by a governing board with at its head a director and a deputy director.

It is the only repository library in France and was created in 1994 in order to provide with distant storage to academic and research libraries located in Paris and in the Île-de-France region. As a matter of fact, the lack of premises for university libraries specifically located in Paris and in the Île-de-France region has been significantly considered a pressing concern for decades. Thanks to this repository, those academic and research libraries are now in the position to free up and effectively use space for displaying current collections and for offering reading rooms to their patrons.



**An organizational model inspired from foreign examples:**

First, we have to mention the Harvard Depository Library, in Southborough, Massachusetts, and secondly, in Europe, both the National Repository Library of Finland, located in Kuopio and the Reserve Library of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in München.

Basically, the idea is to use some affordable storage spaces remoted from campuses and to pull materials in off-site, frequently high-density, facilities.

Located in Bussy Saint Georges, 35 kilometers East of Paris, the CTLes has been constructed and equipped between 1994 and 1996, with credits from the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. It is sharing with the French National Library a building which has been designed by the architect Dominique Perrault.

Most of the materials are stored in boxes and sorted by size. For those of them which are stored in high fixed shelves stacks, manual retrieval is processed by an operator using a mechanical order-picker. The services provided are the unpacking, shelving and retrieving of the materials but also basic cleaning, barcoding,



**The CTLes' equipment is entirely composed by two, 12 meter-high industrial stacks and six traditional fixed shelving stacks, in addition to office areas. The total storage capacity of the facility is 76 linear kilometers.**

labeling, delivery as well as managing of the control data. The repository uses its own materials-control system; it also participates to the *Système universitaire de documentation (SUDOC)* catalogue, which is a French union catalogue, displaying nearly 10 million of bibliographical records relating to all type of materials.

### Mission

The CTLes's main mission is to provide with storage to low-use printed collections transferred to the facilities, with excellent conditions of preservation, in terms of temperature and humidity, and a dust-free environment. Thus, the CTLes is in charge of collecting, processing, storing and delivering materials of scientific and archival interest which are transferred as deposits or donations from the academic and research libraries located in Paris and surroundings.

In the meantime, the CTLes is able to build its own collections, thanks to some partners' donations. The Center can also provide short-term storage for materials from libraries facing temporary space shortage such as those implied in refurbishing works, for instance.

In 2014, we store almost 69 linear kilometers of printed materials, representing 3 million items in total:

- ▶ Collections donations represent 48% of the total. In this case, the CTLes de-duplicates holdings in order to maintain one reference collection and to rationalize storage;
- ▶ Collections warehoused, whose ownership is still libraries' 50 % of the total;
- ▶ And a tiny proportion, 2%, of temporary storage, for collections, needing to be stored for a very limited time period.

Subsequently, the CTLes takes up the mission of delivering documents—via the interlibrary lending system—first and foremost to our partners in Paris and surroundings within 24 hours, by a daily shuttle. Document delivery service operates also by regular mail, in France and all over the world. In 2013, more than 10000 items have been loaned; we expect for this year 2014 a dramatic increase of this activity.

Last but not least, the CTLes fulfills the mission of providing expertise about preservation, collections transfer and de-duplication issues. Those are traditional tasks a repository library is expected to fulfill. In addition to them however, the CTLes plays a key role in pooling initiatives such as shared preservation programs.

Considering that the annual increase of collections is currently of 4 linear kilometers a year, we can safely say that the CTLes is close to saturation. In 2010, an official report stated that the CTLes should be extended by 100 linear kilometers to offer a relief to the lack of space within university and academic libraries located in Paris and Île-de-France region. The goal is, to free up space for reading rooms, learning environments and collaborative working places for students. The report shedding light on the predictable saturation of CTLes premises helped build impetus towards the construction of an additional building in order to increase significantly its own total storage capacity.

### A new building by 2016:

Programming and pre-designing the new premises was on the agenda from spring 2011 to summer 2012. The new building is to take place in the actual site, where sufficient land building is available and will be equipped in two phases by 110 linear kilometres: 55 linear kilometres when it opens and 55 in addition ten years later.





As a result, the new premises will be equipped by 10 linear kilometres of fixed shelving dedicated mostly to collections warehoused, and, specifically, oversize documents. Compact shelving stacks will be divided in simple height, more than 60 linear kilometres for collections donated and those relating to shared preservation programs; double height compact shelving, about 38 linear kilometres, dedicated to store theses and dissertations. Replacing fixed shelving stacks by compact mobile ones in the future is a possibility, since every storey will be equipped by rails in order to face further needs. It appears also a necessity to provide with sufficient space to processing materials and convenient horizontal and vertical communications as well, as the processing chain will remain in the existing building. The works are to begin last trimester of 2014, the end and delivery of the whole building is due to the beginning of 2016.

#### TECHNICAL FACTSHEET

- ▶ Architects: Antonini & Darmon, Anthony Roubaud
- ▶ Project development Advisor: EPAURIF (public body for spatial planning of universities in Paris and Île-de-France region)
- ▶ Net floor area: 10 400 square meters
- ▶ Total cost: 33 million €
- ▶ Delivery of the fully equipped buildings
  - ▶ - Building A: 2016
  - ▶ - Building B: 2026
- ▶ Premises:
  - ▶ - Fixed shelving stacks: 10 linear kilometres
  - ▶ - Compact shelving simple height: 60 linear kilometers
  - ▶ - Compact shelving double height: 38 linear kilometers.

Up to this year, the CTLEs has been operating on a regional level, strictly speaking. However, since March 2014, its mission turned to the national sector and this new direction was confirmed by a decree (March 10<sup>th</sup>, n° 2014-320). Meanwhile, its expertise on shared preservation program was recognized and strengthened.

## The new Umeå City Library

by Inger Edebro Sikström  
Member of Library Buildings and  
Equipment Standing Committee  
Director of the public libraries in  
Umeå 1996-2013.

### Curiosity and Passion – the Art of Co-creation

Co-creation can be said to be the key word for the development of the new Umeå city centre which accommodates meeting places, cultural activities, small-scale business, restaurants, cafes and other establishments contributing to raising the quality of life and making the city safe and full of life all year round. The new cultural centre, located on the bank of the Ume River, in the heart of the city centre, is seen as an important catalyst for Umeå's urban regeneration.

Ever since the seventies, the city of Umeå has worked determinedly to develop and strengthen its cultural profile. By appointing Umeå the European Capital of Culture in 2014, the Council of the European Union has certainly made the efforts worth while. Under the theme "Curiosity and Passion — the Art of Co-creation" the annual program is divided into the eight seasons that embody the Sami's calendar (the only indigenous people living in the EU).



Photo: © 2014 Fredrik Larsson

## The Cultural Centre with the new City Library

The inauguration of the new City Library is held on November 21, coinciding with the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> Sami season "Tjaktjadálvve" – the season of a journey, which has been described like the following:

"The sun wanders away, leaving us in silence and longing. The reindeer are sorted into smaller herds. Cautiously they wander to their winter grazing lands; the ground is sensitive and we must tread on her with care. She sleeps under the glittering blanket of snow; the northern lights – the light of the eyes of those who have left us – watch over us; the stars gather in recognizable patterns so that we find our way back, to the new year that is coming".

The building is made of several elements, which together form an organic structural body. Each store has its own unique shape, overhanging the ground and providing the building with terracing. The ground and first floors are divided into two buildings intersected of a street, but are connected on the second floor. The southern part of the building opens out towards the quay and the river, with large glazed sections and doorways.

The birch tree's white trunk, with its characteristic black graphic details, has been an inspiration for the design of the exterior white glass façade with black billowing windows. The building has six public entrances, allowing easy access and enabling flexible opening hours.

The building is designed by the Norwegian architectural firm *Snøhetta* in collaboration with *White Arkitekter AB*. Perhaps the most famous design project of *Snøhetta* is the new library of Alexandria. *White Arkitekter AB* has recently won an international competition of one of the biggest urban transformations of our time; moving the city of Kiruna two miles east from its current location. In November the building was awarded the Kasper Salin Prize 2014, the most prestigious architectural prize in Sweden.

The new cultural centre building is financed by a so-called private-public partnership where the city of Umeå owns 50 percent and the other half is owned by one of the major private property owners in the city.

In the very beginning of the planning process a group of children was asked about how they wanted the new library to be. A girl, aged 10, said that:

"The most important thing is that it is big enough so that there is room for everyone who wants to get in".

Her dreams will come true. The City library is a major part of the building (25,000 square meter in total and 15,000 rented by the city) and the co-location with other activities provides the potential to use the space effectively.

### The coloring principle

for the interior design is based on all the different colours of the leaves of a birch tree, from very light green in spring to yellow and orange in the autumn. The general areas have a calm and understated colour scheme with a more colourful feature of loose furniture and fittings. The large public areas have soft wood floors and detachable ribbed wooden ceiling with accessible technology supply.



### Co-creation and Cooperation

The ambition for the development of the public libraries in Umeå has been to strike the right balance between safeguarding traditional activities and accommodating the new challenges library services are faced with. The aim is to keep the confidence from old users and at the same time attract new groups of users. One way to achieve this is to encourage to co-creation. In the planning process for the new building more than 70 people from 36 different organisations participated in workshops to identify and analyse which services, activities and facilities the building should offer to attract more people. The key words for the dialog were “explore”, “discover” and “create”, combined with “participation”, “commitment” and “curiosity”. One result from these workshops is that the building now offers a couple of creative digital laboratories and rooms that can be used for activities such as craftwork and cooking.

The name of the building, Väven (The Weave in English), is reflecting the ambition to support a seamless co-operation with all hosted activities.

One idea in the planning process has been that libraries can attract new groups of users by cooperating with other activities that can support and/or complement the library's services. The ambition has been to make the facilities generally available for flexible and sustainable use. Sport arenas, that can be used for different kind of sports (thanks to the many lines painted in the floor and different goal cages hanging on the walls), were the first inspiration for how the building and the interior design could support co-operation between different cultural activities.

### Sport Arenas – an inspiration for cultural buildings?

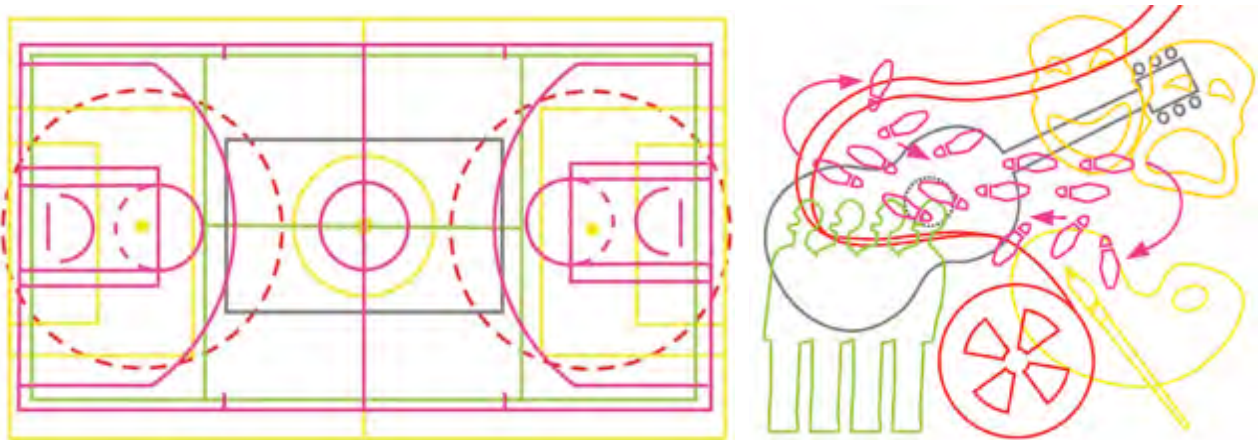


Illustration: © 2014 Stig Bergqvist

Various activities are grouped in “blocks” and along “streets”. In the Art block you will find exhibition areas, a guest studio, facilities for art education and picture workshops. In the Experience block you will find the story telling room and a big room equipped for multi-functional usages such as poetry readings, dancing, lectures etc. In the Digital block there is a digital lab and workshop aimed for various kinds of interactive activities. In the Creative block, located close to the children’s literature, you can work in a pedagogic way with art and design. There is also a music room where visitors can record their own music. Folkets Bio (“the Cinema of the People”) will be responsible for distributing and screening a wide range of contemporary quality film at the two theatres (that can also be used as conference halls). The big scene, the Black Box, is facing the river and can be opened up lengthwise along the foyer space and further out onto the quay. Another side of the Black Box has been prepared with media supplies for outdoor events. The building also hosts a restaurant, a café, shops and a hotel with a new concept based on the possibility to “spice up your stay by adding items, experiences and events”.

### The library

The aim of moving the City library is twofold. The first is to increase the accessibility to the library’s 300 000 volumes of media and the second to attract new groups of visitors. The, now open, depository library will give visitors the opportunity to “browse” among the older (or more seldom used) books. It will also give the library the opportunity to promote books that are not usually marketed by the bookstores.

The cooperation with other cultural activities will make the library’s services more visible for people who not necessarily use the library today. The library’s books on art, design and architecture are located in the area for the “art block”, literature about sociology and genus is located in the area for the Women’s History Museum (the museum is the first of its kind in Sweden).

When I visited the library in October all the staff members were very busy getting everything ready for the opening on November 21. The picture below to the left, shows the Rainbow shelf. At IFLA in Lyon you might have listened to the speech of Maria Lindgren and Christer Edeholt explaining why the Umeå City Library have launched this initiative and how they work with the Rainbow Library on the web and on social medias.



The Rainbow Shelf



Cinnamon Bun Cushions

Last, but not least, some words about the library for the children. A lot of effort was made during the planning process to secure both a children's perspective (what adults think is best for the children) and a perspective of a child (what children think is important). Some children said that they wanted the library to have bright colours and "funny things". Let's hope they will like the cushions designed as the famous Swedish cinnamon buns.

The key words "Curiosity and Passion – the Art of co-creation" will continue to drive the development of the cultural life of Umeå. If you are curious and want to know more I would like to welcome you to visit Umeå, only one hour flight from Stockholm.

## The Jewels and the Crown: The National Library of Latvia

by Janine Schmidt,  
Director Mukurta Solutions,  
Brisbane, Australia

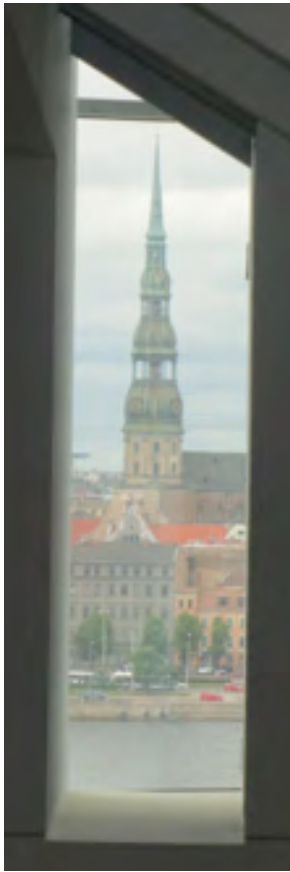
The National Library of Latvia soars above the surrounding buildings, dominating the skyline and the city of Riga itself. Located on the left bank of the Daugava River and opened in 2014, the year in which Riga itself was designated one of two European cities of culture, the striking contemporary structure contributes significantly to the iconic buildings of the UNESCO classified World Heritage site of Old Riga and the magnificent Art Nouveau buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The history of the design and construction of the Library building dubbed the Castle of Light is as chequered as the history of Latvia itself. The republic of Latvia was declared in 1918 and its independence regained in 1990. The Library was founded in 1919, and the first plans for a new Library building began in 1947, with an invitation eventually issued to American Latvian architect Gunnar Birkerts in 1988. The design focused on the metaphor of lost wisdom which would rise again. The proposed construction of a National Library was supported by a UNESCO resolution in 1999 and work began on the building in 2008.



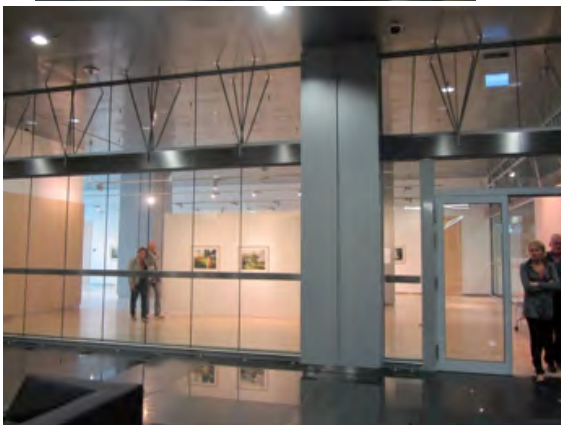
With construction costs of almost 200 million euros and furniture and equipment exceeding seventeen million euros, the project was Latvia's largest and most complex public building. It houses the jewels of Latvia's cultural documentary collections and exhibition areas on the lower floors reveal the gems. The spaces also provide opportunities for commercial uses and together with a conference centre on the lower ground floor provide significant opportunities for community engagement. There are fourteen levels (with one underground) of monolithic concrete, with glass panels and stainless steel sheets. The building is artfully crowned and the top floors are used for special events and functions. The total floor area is almost 43,000 square meters. The reading rooms accommodate 1000 users and an auditorium seats over 460.



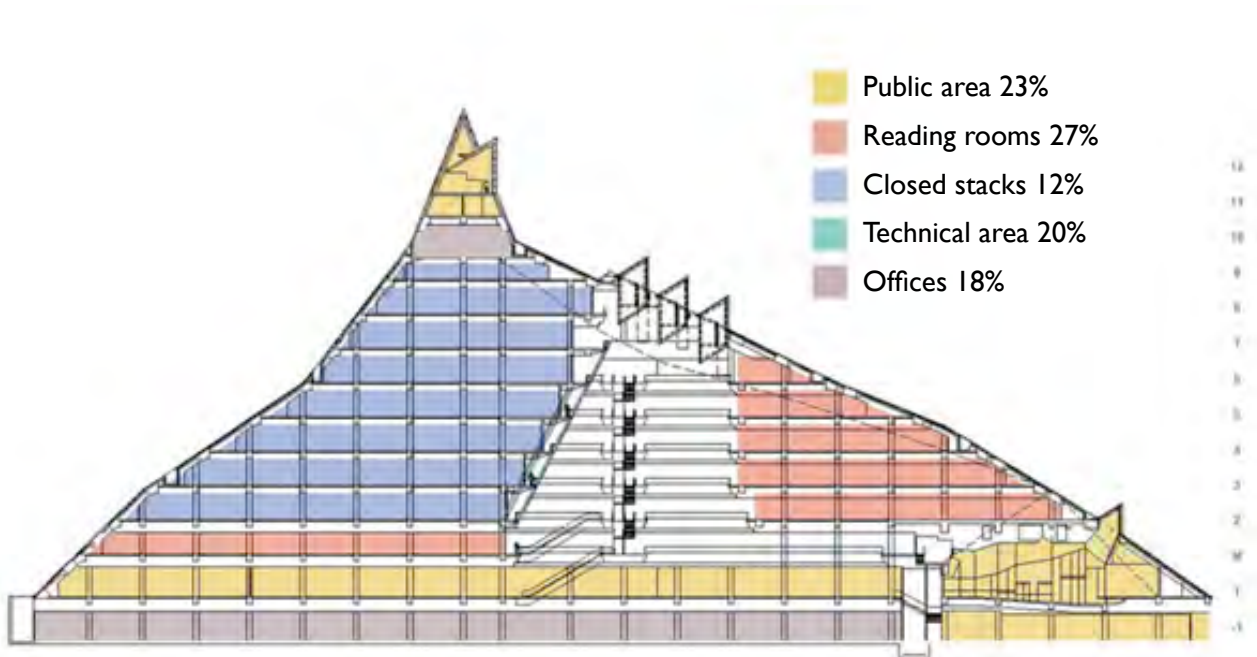




Views of the city are clearly visible throughout the building. Timber dominates the interior which is full of light, reflecting around the entire structure. Canadian maple flooring and Latvian birch panelling for the walls emphasize the openness and assist in creating a luminous ambience. The open stairs of timber afford views of the collections as well as of other floors. Levels 2 – 8 contain reading rooms, closed stacks and offices on each floor. There are 350,000 books in open access and the closed stack has a capacity for 6 million items



The building consists of public areas, reading rooms, closed stacks, technical area and offices in the following proportions:



Many events have marked the opening of the Library, including Open Days and tours for members of the public. In January, a chain one mile across comprising 15,000 people passed 2000 books by hand in temperatures well below zero to the new building across the River Daugava. Cartoon signs appeared throughout the building on the open days describing the uses and services of the building.



The National Library of Latvia crowns Riga. It provides a magnificent structure to house Latvia's heritage and stands as an iconic symbol of culture, liberty and learning in a city which has seen significant battles and much determination to maintain all three – and to construct the building.

#### Further Reading

National Library of Latvia. NLL new building. <http://www.lnb.lv/en/nll-new-building> Viewed 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Vilks, Andris The Castle of Light: the New National Library of Latvia. *National Central Library Bulletin*, vol. 102 pp.115-31 (2013) <http://www.ncl.edu.tw/upload/PI021204003/cats/8-Andris%20Vilks--The%20Castle%20of%20Light%20the%20New%20National%20Library%20of%20Latvia.pdf> Viewed 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Vilks, Andris and Baklāne, Anda The long road to the Castle of Light: the National Library of Latvia. Presented at the IFLA Library Buildings and Equipment Section Preconference. Space and collections earning their keep: transformation, technologies and re-tooling, Paris, August 2014 <http://iflasection20.org/paris-papers-and-presentations-2/> Viewed 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2014

Wright, Herbert Motown to mountain: Gunnar Birkerts's new National Library of Latvia *Design/Curial* 20 August 2014 <http://www.designcurial.com/news/motown-to-mountain-4346260/> Viewed 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2014



## Library visits to the Mediterranean

by Dr Dorothea Sommer  
 Chair, IFLA Library Building and Equipment Section  
 Acting Director, University and State Library Sachsen-Anhalt, Halle, Germany.

For the past couple of years the IFLA Congress has ended with an offer of library visits to diverse places within the respective guest country. After having spent most of the time in Paris and Lyon, where the Satellite Conference of the Library buildings and Equipment Section and the Main Congress took place, Jeffrey Scherer (fellow LBE committee member) and I thought we might complete our stay in France by crossing the country on one of its classic routes. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2014 we went together with other IFLA delegates from Lyon towards the Mediterranean to explore current library architecture in Marseille which, thanks to the French high-speed TGV trains, is easily accessible.

In Marseille we visited the Alcazar Municipal Library (Photo 1) which is situated not far from the impressive historical Railway station. The Alcazar used to be a very famous music-hall and variety theatre until the 1960s. It was named together with its Parisian counterparts Bobino, Olympia and

Photo 1  
 Alcazar Municipal Library



Photo 3  
 Art Nouveau Façade

Moulin Rouge. Stars such as Fernandel Tino Rossi, Maurice Chevalier, Yves Montand, Georges Brassens and Johnny Hallyday performed here. Nowadays, this quarter of the city is rather characterized by problematic neighborhoods



(Photo 2 to the left). The old music theatre was completely remodeled behind its original Art Nouveau façade (photo 3) and a new building for one of France's largest regional libraries was erected there with the aim to revitalize the surrounding urban district. The library serves both researchers and a wide range of public patrons. It aims to provide culture and education also to those parts of the multicultural, often African and Arab inhabitants of Marseille, who have limited opportunities to participate in the local cultural offerings. Alcazar Municipal library was built in 2004 and opened by the French President Jacques Chirac. Today it forms, together with eight other municipal libraries (Le Panier, Cinq-Avenue, Castellane, Bonneweine, La Grogarde, Le Merlan and Saint-André), the library system "Bibliothèques municipales de Marseille à Vocation Régionale" (BMVR). The municipal libraries, which have a total staff of approximately 300 people, provide not only access to printed media, but also to music, films and other digital and information

technology related media and databases. However, users can access the very modern library only at rather restricted times: on Tuesdays to Saturdays from 11am until 7pm. The library serves 3,000 – 4,000 visitors a day, about 18,000 items are lent each month. The library is highly visible and the users appreciate that they can use the library in a secure space—the building is safeguarded by a staff of 30 security people, which is paid by the French government on the basis of an Antiterrorist law (Photo 4).

Photo 4  
Alcazar Municipal Library security guards



Photo 5  
Legal depository for Provence

The municipal library is a legal depository library for the area of the Provence (Photo 5), including Corsia. It also houses a Rare Book Collection of about 20,000 items. The building was designed by the architects Adrien Feinsilber and Didier Rogeon. It extends about 5 floors and covers a surface of about 22,000 m². The building and facility management system was developed by Sauter. The library houses 1 million books. Only parts of the collections are displayed according to thematic collections. (Photo 6 below).





All media are secured by RFID. Each thematic collection has a service desk, worktables, comfortable armchairs, photocopy and printing services and computer stations providing access to the catalogue, electronic resources and the Internet (Photo 7 below).



Photo 8

The print or audiovisual items are grouped in major thematic categories on each level of the building. The majority of the holdings are stored in closed stacks, which comprise about 30 kilometers of shelving.

In the afternoon the IFLA delegates went to Vitrolle, a small city in the vicinity of Marseille, in order to visit and learn about an interesting building project: *The Intermediathèque à Vitrolle*. They were welcomed by the Mayor of the town Loic Gachon and the co-ordinator of the project. Vitrolle is a complex town, built as *ville nouvelle* for the working class of Marseille about 14 years ago with an infrastructure laid out for originally about 200,000 people. Today, there are only 14,000 inhabitants with a poverty rate well above the national average. Since 2004 the town has mobilized teams against poverty and the devaluation of neighborhoods. A central project and focal point of the town structure shall be the new Mediathèque, which is erected on former premises that were demolished since they were not longer used for housing. Thus it is aimed to constitute a new urban square in Vitrolle, which relates to the landscape as well. The construction of the building by Jean Pierre Lott is well under progress and it shall be opened in 2016. The Intermediathèque is an ambitious project – it shall be an architectural sign for the town: an iconic building that creates a central urban situation. The outline of the project regarding to science, education, culture and sociality (PSECS) is intended to be a seamless approach: it was stressed that one wanted to avoid borders between supports, between “noble and poor” genres, between different publics, between public and private spaces, between functions and services. The building shall provide seamless connections, services and support. The approach builds on Dick Higgin’s concept of intermedia, the idea of media and art crossing boundaries, and deriving from that the perception of the library as a media mix – a space where letters, pictures, books and their extensions on the internet mix and converge. It was explained that the concept of intermedia puts tension between media. It does not merely juxtapose or confront the media, it creates a space where writing, sound, visual interact closely as to compose a common language. The Mediathèque will encompass a space of 3000 m<sup>2</sup>, building costs amount to 8.3 million Euro. The exterior envelope of the Intermediathèque will be shaped in various ways. A special effect within the building shall be provided with the inclusion of a space shaped like an egg, which serves as visiting and listening space for children. An

auditorium will be provided as well. The construction is laid out in a way that the building can be extended as well as flexibly used for other services in the future. As an extended service the interlibrary will develop a memory of the inhabitants of Vitrolle, since the archive will collect photographs, recordings of families, of the city, letters, postcards, videos etc. of the inhabitants of Vitrolle. Thus, the inhabitants of the town shall identify with the building. However, the new Mediathèque shall not bear a special name – to allow for other uses in future times. (Photos 9, 10, 11 below)



All photos: © 2014 Dorothea Sommer



## Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BnF) library visit

by Charles Forrest  
Library Buildings and Equipment  
Standing Committee member  
Director, Library Facilities  
Emory University  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

At the IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Lyon, France, in August 2014, the Library Visits Programme on Friday, 22 August 2014, offered a tour of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). The afternoon featured the historic 17<sup>th</sup> century Richelieu-Louvois Library, while the tour started in the morning at the 20<sup>th</sup> century François Mitterrand Library.

### Richelieu Library

Designated as “The National Library of France” in 1994, the BnF is one of the world’s largest libraries with collections built up since the late middle ages and its legal deposit since 1537. The historical site, also known as Richelieu, has collections in performing arts, maps, photographs, medals and coins, and manuscripts, and other formats. The digital library of the BnF, Gallica, has around 2 million documents.

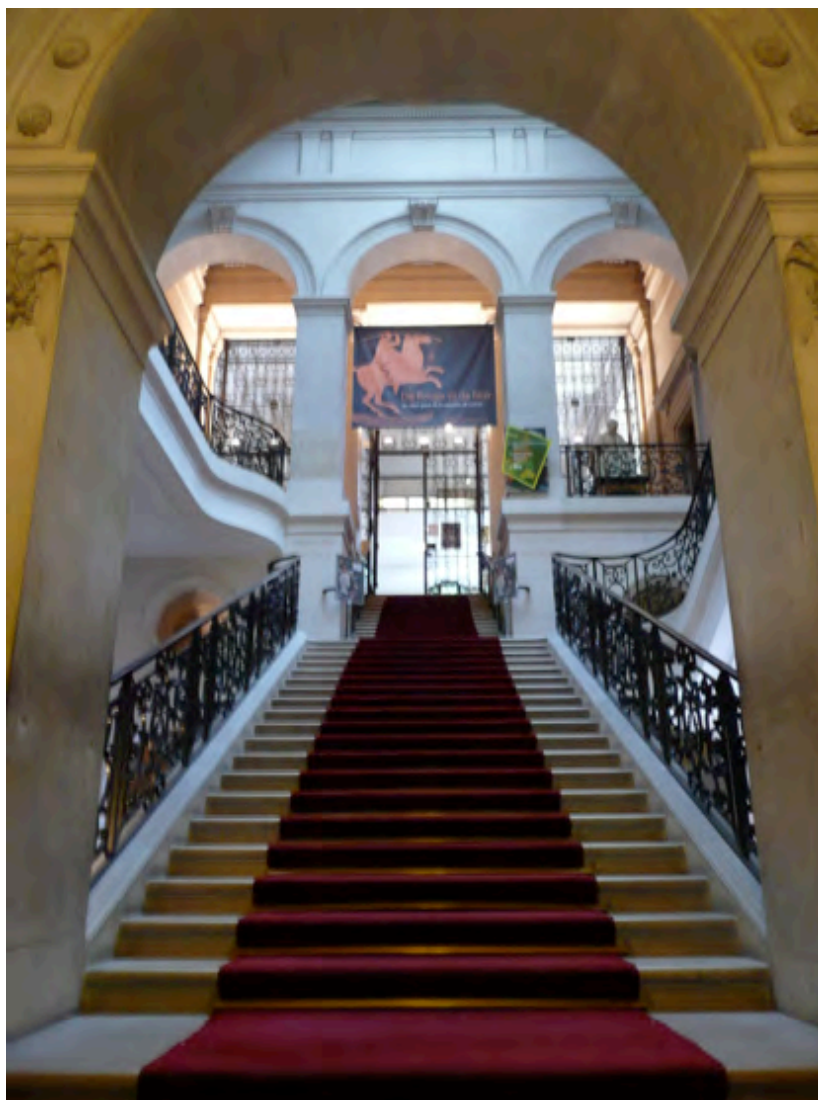
Image 1. **Richelieu Library** occupies an entire city block near the Louvre. It is currently in the midst of an extensive multi-year renovation. The three-story box on the right in the photograph contains temporary staff offices and workspaces inserted in a historic courtyard.



Image 2. **The Maps Department** reading room showcases a rich collection of historic globes, maps and atlases.



Image 3. At the top of the main staircase to the right one can admire the plaster cast of Voltaire's statue (the base contains the heart of the philosopher). This beautiful staircase is slated to be demolished as part of an effort to optimize traffic flow into and through the **Richelieu Library**, weaving the library into the fabric of the neighborhood as an important destination rather than an obstacle that must be circumvented.



## Mitterand Library

The main site of seven BnF sites, the site François Mitterand or Tolbiac houses more than 10 million documents, incunabula, maps and plan, musical works, audio materials, videogames, photographs, medals and coins. Opened in 1996 on the left bank of the Seine on a site between the Bercy and Tolbiac bridges, it is named for France's 21st president Francois Mitterand (1916-1996). Architect Dominique Perrault was conferred the Mies van der Rohe award in 1997 for his creation of the BnF.

Image 4. Built around a 1 hectare (2.5 acre) landscaped courtyard on the scale of an urban park, this model in the lobby shows the four 22-story book towers that anchor the four corners of the library.

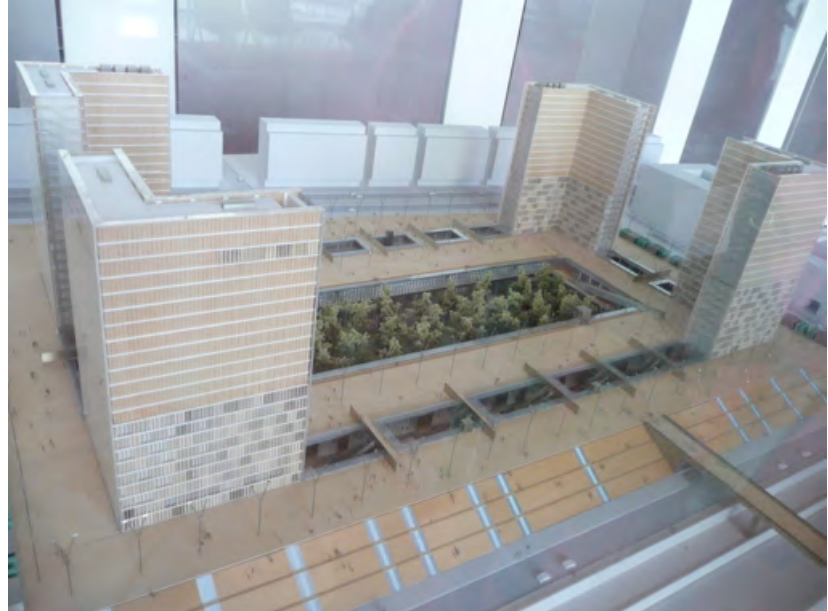


Image 5. The **Mitterand Library** consists of a series of subject reading rooms surrounding the central park, reached by descending to the courtyard level.

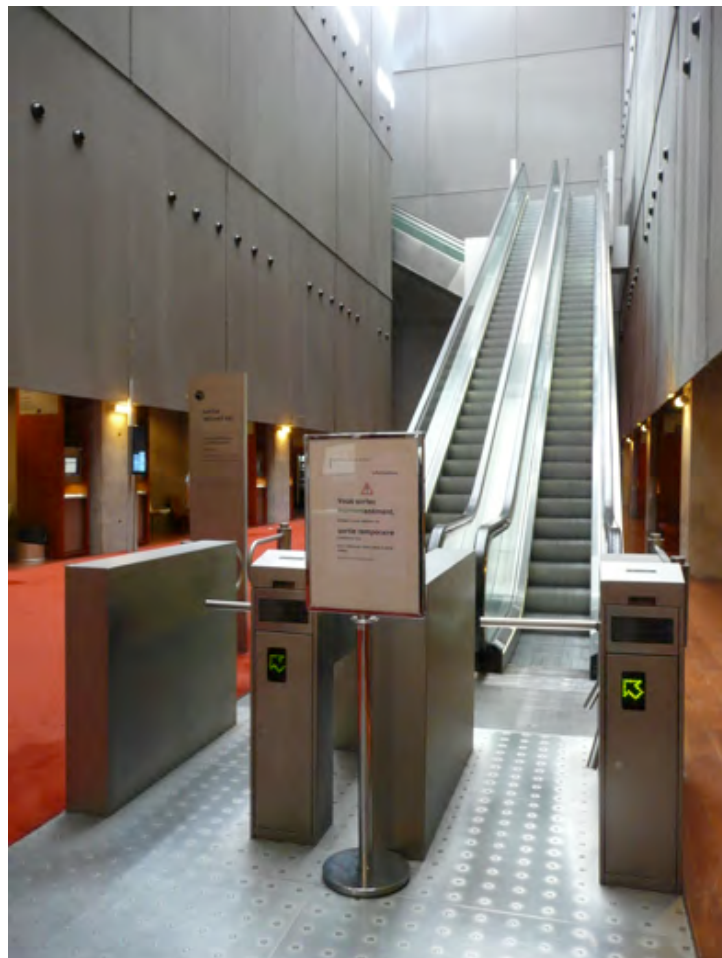




Image 6. A desk serves each reading room, where items are delivered upon request.



Image 7. The **Mitterand Library** offers over 54,000 square meters (580,000 square feet) of reading room space.

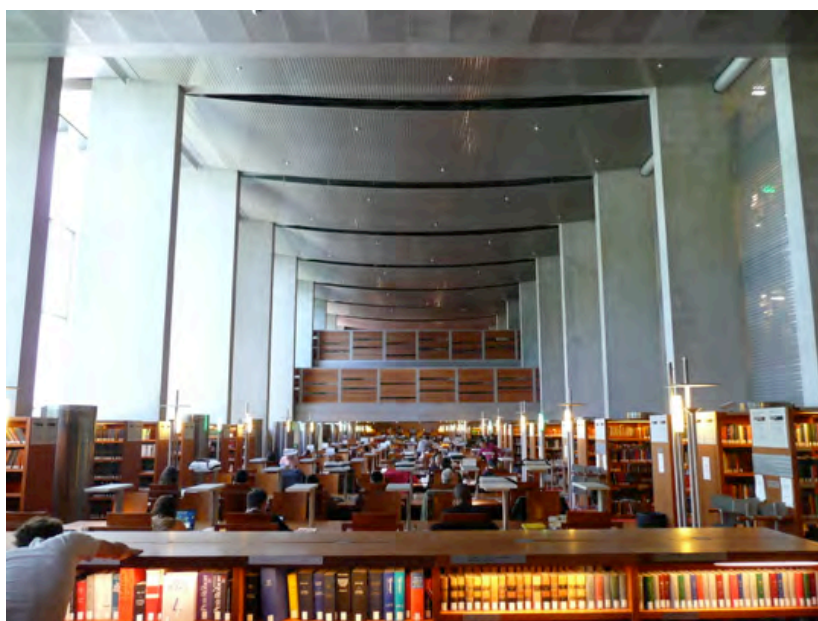


Image 8. Some of the 400 km (250 miles) of on-site shelf capacity.



Image 9. Staff offices are located throughout the Mitterand Library.



Image 10. With more than 350,000 square meters (3.7 M square feet) of public, staff and collection space, the Francois Mitterand Library is a quiet refuge for research and knowledge that seems far away from the busy city just outside its borders.

All photos: © 2014 Charles Forrest

