

Cité internationale
de la dentelle
et de la mode de Calais

**International City
of lace and fashion of Calais**



© A Deswarte pour l'agence Moatti-Rivière

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Cité internationale de la dentelle et de la mode
International City of lace and fashion of Calais
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Begun in July 2006, on the site of a former lace factory, in a structure typical of the industrial architecture of the town of Saint-Pierre in the 19th century, the international City of lace and fashion of Calais (Cité internationale de la dentelle et de la mode de Calais) will open its doors to the public in the spring of 2009.

The architects Alain Moatti and Henri Rivière wanted to highlight the heritage aspect while creating a link with contemporary design. The structure is on futuristic lines: a long screenprinted glass façade displaying the patterns of the Jacquard cartoons used with Leavers looms has been grafted onto the original building.

More than just a museum, bearing witness to the industrial history of Calais and Saint-Pierre and of the tulle and laces that brought them renown and wealth from the early 19th century, the international City of lace and fashion of Calais will also be an activities and discoveries venue.

A focus for the flow of knowledge, it will also be an outstanding showcase for the lace profession, thanks to the wide-ranging events that will be held there.

Its fundamental role is here and now, forming part of the economic and social fabric of a town, and of a whole region which was the birthplace of the famous Calais lace.

Note that the ongoing work on the site of the future City can be seen by visiting the temporary exhibition "Site open to the public", which runs at the Calais Fine Arts and Lace Museum (rue Richelieu) until the City actually opens.

THE LONG HISTORY OF CALAIS LACE

The lace and tulle industry came to us from England in 1816, when manufacturers based in Nottingham, distant heirs of William Lee who invented the stocking loom in 1586, vied with one another to find more ingenious and innovative ways to produce tulle.

Through the various changes and inventions contributed by Lindley, Heathcoat and Leavers, the English, the only ones capable of producing a smooth, even, hexagonal mesh, made their mark from the very start of the 19th century as the undisputed masters of machine-made lace production.

England jealously fought to retain the monopoly on this technique. Indeed, any person found guilty of exporting the famous tulle looms developed in the Nottingham workshops and of revealing their manufacturing secrets was liable to incur the death sentence.

However this did not take account of the perspicacity of the English manufacturers themselves who had been well aware for ages of the financial advantages that could stem from relocating their activities. These same manufacturers also counted on the boldness of the smugglers who, from both sides of the Channel, and particularly from the ranks of the Calais privateers, only needed a favourable tide to help them fearlessly break the strict British laws.

Together with alcohol, tobacco and other manufactured products, the smugglers embarked, preferably at night and in bad weather, to elude the coastguards, tulle looms broken down into parts and loaded on board their smuggling boats, fast, discreet long boats, easily capsized and easily righted, to transport them illicitly to the French coast.

Thus, the first tulle loom was assembled in the town of Saint-Pierre-lez-Calais at the end of December 1816 by an adventurous English mechanic, one Robert Webster, together with two of his compatriots Bonnington and James Clark.

Certain police documents in fact relate the seizure in Paris of forty-nine pieces of tulle produced in Saint-Pierre-lez-Calais in an illegal workshop by the associates Webster and Clark, originally from Leicester. This workshop was at the corner of the quai du Commerce and the present rue de Vic, just a short distance from the international City of lace and fashion of Calais.

A modest workshop, perhaps, but without a doubt the birthplace of the famous Calais lace, lace that has now conquered the world and weaves its magic to bring out the shining stars in the firmament of luxury, grace and fashion.



© Collection CIDM Calais

A FEW DETAILS ABOUT THE CITY

The international City of lace and fashion of Calais will evoke know-how and techniques, economic and social history, customs, as well as the more contemporary aspects of lace. A focal point of refinement and elegance, it will be a blend of memory and modernity.

The site of the museum, the Boulart factory, is one of the last great factories from the 1870s situated in the heart of Calais.

The architects Moatti & Rivière have preserved the ancient heritage, adding the finishing touch of an airy, crystalline structure, which perfectly conveys the transparency of lace.

The 2500 m² permanent exhibition area will offer the visitor five sequences devoted to hand-made lace, the story of industrial lace production in Calais, the machine-made lace trades and the production workshop, where four Leavers looms will operate for the public, lace fashions in the 20th century, lace in the present and the future.

A 500 m² area, flooded with light through its imposing screenprinted glass wall evoking the Jacquard lace cartoons and forming the building's main façade, will be reserved for temporary exhibitions.

The City will also and above all be an active venue: an auditorium, a room for fashion shows, a specialist library, workshops for learning various lace-making techniques, how to look after lace, and fashion and design techniques...

It will also be a training City, with workshops for the young, an area dedicated to the profession, a shop and a restaurant. Regular meetings will be scheduled with amateur and professional members of the public.

THE CITY'S ARCHITECTURE: A BLEND OF MEMORY AND MODERNITY

THE ARCHITECTURE: HOW THE PROJECT EVOLVED

The Alain Moatti & Henri Rivière team of architects, which designed the head office of Jean-Paul Gaultier Couture, was selected by a jury of councillors and professionals in the spring of 2004. The Pascal Payeur studio is responsible for the scenography and museography. At the same time, the SEPAC was tasked with assisting the contractors.

The preliminary stages, from pre-project summary to calls for tender, proceeded until the end of 2005.

On-site operations were launched on 3rd July 2006, and building delivery is scheduled for the end of 2008. The curator and the museum team have been involved with every phase of the project.

A PLACE OF MEMORY



© CIDM Calais

The museographic circuit is deployed on an exceptional site: a former collective factory dating from the 1870s, which was still operating in 2000.

Composed of three buildings in a U-shape, this structure housed several workshops and offered communal services: energy produced by the steam engine, movement via external gangways reached by twisting staircases... The spatial layout of the activities tells us how the work was organised: the design of the models and preparation of the raw materials happened on the ground floor and the third floor, with production on the first and second floors.

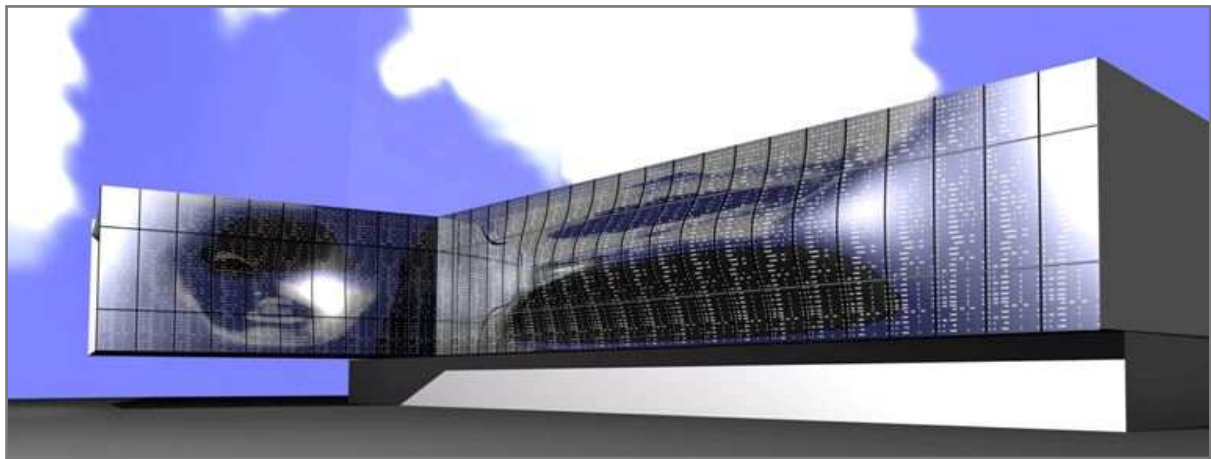
This establishment was situated in the new town which, in the 19th century, enjoyed a tremendous economic surge based on the lace industry. The original town layout underwent successive extensions, with the juxtaposition of production workshops, homes (employers' houses, workers houses or town houses), associated workshops and trading establishments.

AND MODERNITY

A contemporary construction facing the quays, the town and the port acts as a figurehead to complete this structure.

On the façade, a screenprinted design of Jacquard cartoons symbolises machine-made lace and emphasises the project's emblematic aspect.

Through the magic of a "Jacquardised" façade, the architects stamp their style on the museum and give the site other interpretations. They have met the challenge boldly.



© Moatti Rivière

As the plan was to create the Calais Lace City by revealing the museum side but also by establishing a new centre offering the potential for studies, research, meetings, creativity and reactivity.

These new areas house collection preparation workshops, the temporary exhibition room and fashion shows, the auditorium, as well as a restaurant and a shop.

THE PERMANENT COLLECTIONS GALLERY

IN THE ERA OF HAND-MADE LACE



Before machines came into the picture, lace was the fruit of long and meticulous manual work. The chronological circuit of this gallery evokes the main stages in the history of hand-made lace in Europe, insofar as they influenced French production and fashion, from the 16th to the 19th century. Changes in the silhouette and the wearing of lace are retraced through costumes, iconography and multimedia terminals. Lace pieces are enhanced by a bold use of color... There is also an area where visitors can touch and try out lace-making techniques.

© Register of collections
CIDM Calais

THE INDUSTRIAL LACE ADVENTURE IN CALAIS

This gallery retraces the establishment, in the early 19th century, of the lace-making industry in the Calais region, and its subsequent surge made possible by the innovations of the engineers and trade links with England. The display of a large number of sample registers shows the vitality and the many aspects of production over more than one hundred years. Lace outlets are evoked with several examples from the fields of ready-made clothes and furnishings. Finally, the focus moves to the emergence, encouraged by the success of this mono-industry, of a new town, outside the traditional precincts of Calais.

THE WORKSHOP AND THE LOOMS

Four fully operational Leavers looms enable visitors to grasp the complexity of machine-made lace production, which mobilises a very specialised team with whom the public can converse. A large screen shows in detail how the thread is passed through the loom. The thirty stages required, from the design stage right through to the finishing, are also displayed through a number of workstations.

LACE FASHIONS

The "Lace fashions" gallery focuses attention on lace outfits from the 20th and 21st centuries in order to illustrate the many stylistic, technical and aesthetic changes that have occurred throughout the century. On display are dresses from prestigious couture houses, including Paul Poiret, Madeleine Vionnet and Jeanne Paquin for the early part of the century and Christian Dior, Givenchy, Chanel and Jean-Louis Scherrer for the contemporary period. Screenings, themed cases, fashion magazines, a frieze evoking the changing silhouette and a virtual changing room round off the presentation of the museum's exhibits.



© F. Kleinfenn

PRESENT AND FUTURE OF LACE

"Present and future of lace" is designed as a dynamic space that requires the public's active participation. Technological innovations explained in mini-laboratories, a "carte blanche" area dedicated to the most unexpected uses of the "lace effect", as well as multimedia terminals that visitors can consult to find out about the museum's clothing collections and topical information on the profession or even workshops on lace themes – couture – creativity, there is something for everyone!

HOW THE CITY WAS FUNDED

Cost of the works: €15,625,140.16 excl. V.A.T.



Town of Calais

21%



State: DRAC
Regional Cultural Affairs Department

20%



Europe: ERDF
European Regional Development Fund

30%



Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council

20%



Pas-de-Calais General Council

09%

A surcharge should be envisaged for additional work linked in particular to unknown factors arising during the renovation operations.

VISUALS AVAILABLE

The digital version of this file is available for your use, as well as the following visuals.

This list of visuals is not exhaustive.

All this can be transmitted on request in the form of a CD-Rom or by e-mail (attention: images in 300 dpi, around 1.5 to 3.5 Mb).



01



02



03



04



05



06



07



08



09

Visuals captions

01 - Façade designed by Moatti-Rivière

© Moatti - Rivière

02 - Temporary exhibition room

© Moatti - Rivière

03 - Screenprinted façade

© CIDM Calais

04 - Aerial view of City –

December 2006

© Collier

05 - Jacquard Cartoon

© CIDM Calais

06 - Calotype, Fox-Talbot

© CIDM Calais

07 - Leavers loom

© CIDM Calais

08 - Carven ball gown

© C. Thériez

09 - Lacroix short dress

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