



« I hope that our new design centre will encourage us to launch ourselves into the future.

Thanks to R*Generation, we can work in greater harmony with our partners, stimulate our creativity and improve our performance, to create vehicles that are more beautiful and even better designed, so as to make life better for our customers all over the world! »

Laurens van den Acker

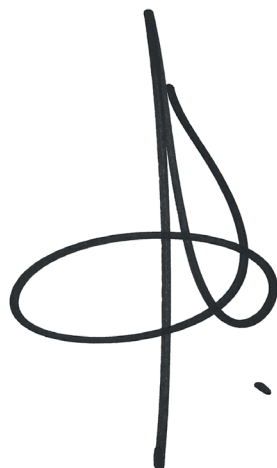
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurens', with a long, sweeping vertical line extending downwards from the end of the name.



« This project reflects a professional world that is changing, a world that is opening up and coming to terms with the fact that comfort and domesticity stimulate efficiency and creativity.

In this way the different spaces, initially programmed for a single type of usage, are now facing a complete revolution of use that is shaking up the way we think about our workspaces... »

Frédéric Chartier





Editorial

The motor industry is undergoing profound and rapid change. When we began the evaluation process for redeveloping our Design Centre in 2014, it was clear that the work-space designed in 1996, when the Technocentre was opened, would no longer meet our needs.

In 1996 we had a smaller design team, with 260 staff, in contrast to today's 500-strong team. We were only working for a single brand, Renault, as opposed to the current five: Renault of course, Samsung, Motors, Alpine and Lada.

Since the creation of the Alliance in 1999, we have developed partnerships with numerous manufacturers, working on cars and light utility vehicles. Our work methods and tools have become digital, with new professions emerging to be integrated into our working processes. Our mission is no longer purely to design the car itself, but to devise a complete experience for the passenger, from first ignition to closing the doors, and for the ecosystem surrounding the vehicle.

Above all, the design team used to work behind closed doors, whereas now we need to open up and be completely integrated with the other Technocentre departments, and even internationally.

The purpose of the project was clear: to become more creative, and more effective, working together.

Hence the name R*Generation

R for Regenerating, Revitalising, Reactivating, Recreating, Resourcing, Realising, Restructuring, Reconfiguring... Renault!

This was the mindset and these were the core principles when we embarked on this adventure with the ChartierDalix architecture practice.

Laurens van den Acker
Director of Design Renault Group





8 — 119

800
ROUTE

119 DESIGN INTÉRIEUR

03 — 007

MODELAGE NUMERIQUE 1

SALLE SAOUTCHIK

SALLE CHAPRON

006 SALLE KELLNER

007 MODELAGE NUMERIQUE 2



Genesis

The Renault Group Technocentre in Guyancourt, inaugurated in 1996 with around 12,000 people now working there, is one of the biggest research and development centres in France. Not far from the main «Ruche» (Hive) building designed by Valode and Pistre, «Avancée» by architects Chaix and Morel is the site of the Design hub redevelopment, a project taking its rightful place in the architectural lineage of this seat of French automotive design.

Winners of the architecture competition launched in 2014, the ChartierDalix practice has brought all its expertise to bear in successfully delivering the redevelopment of the design centre. The R*Generation project needed to give substance to Renault's ability to develop, to renew itself and turn to the future by creating a space with the capacity to evolve, a medium for creativity and innovation.

Simultaneously ambitious and detail-focused, the work was carried out in partnership with the Renault teams, showing full respect for building's metal structure, its abundant overhead lighting and remarkably generous spaces..



Key figures

The redevelopment of the Design Centre, which is a real working tool, follows from the reorganisation of the Design Department and the company itself. The refurbishment will meet the future challenges facing the automotive industry, adapting with all the flexibility that implies.

The project was able to create a better working environment, using natural light, a modular approach, and higher quality public areas. To encourage creativity and communication between departments, transparency became a requirement for all partitions on the site. A site that nevertheless must be perfectly secure, to protect the confidentiality that goes hand in hand with Design activity.

All the studios and social spaces now converge on the modelling workshop, the true crucible of Renault Design. With partitions removed and made transparent, activity in the workshop is now visible to all actors in the design process, who can constantly follow the progress of their projects.

R* Generation represents an area of about 28,000 m², with the existing 24,685 m² undergoing major refurbishment, 3,200 m² created, 14 new meeting rooms, 2 collaborative workshops, 2 exterior terraces, 1 press reception space, 566 m² dedicated to the Design Academy and the cafeteria expanded to 123 m² from its previous 30 m².

To achieve these results has taken three and a half years of work, with 20 months on an occupied site, 80 site meetings and hundreds of project meetings. Not forgetting 80 tons of steels, 3,782 m² of glazed partitions, 4,000 m² of solid partitions...







A collaborative project

From the first studies, the ChartierDalix practice instituted a series of preliminary interviews with the Renault tertiary departments involved (security, buildings, maintenance) and representatives of the various design professions (designers, modellers, quality experts and so on).

These meetings aimed to perfect our understanding of the site and how it is used, to narrow down the detail of its needs, and to take on suggestions from its users about their future work space at the earliest opportunity. They also served to explain our approach and anticipate people's questions about the forthcoming changes.

Mathieu Terme, project leader architect for the ChartierDalix practice, based himself three days a week at the Renault teams' premises, so as to be able to work as closely as possible with the client. This arrangement had several advantages: a clear understanding of challenges and working practices, through every day familiarity with the premises and staff, and real time savings, with the ability to speed up consultation and validation processes without having to travel backwards and forwards.

In keeping with the culture of team work promoted by the Design Department, close collaboration was established between the Renault teams and ChartierDalix and its partners, including Joran Briand Associés and the engineers from Egis, with numerous workshops and consultations.

This idea of «ensemble» design, based on exchange and dialogue, seemed to correspond perfectly to the R*Generation project mindset.

The entire project team, including financial control and specialists, took advantage of these numerous meetings so that the project schedule was punctuated with multi-disciplinary consultations: the final project became everyone's project.



A tool

A modern workspace, especially in the case of a design hub, could no longer be simply an «environment»; it had to be considered as a fully functioning instrument or tool, like a computer, workbench or lathe.

Il devait en effet participer à renforcer la cohésion, l'échange et la créativité au sein de l'entreprise, en étant un acteur à part entière du processus de création des véhicules.

It had to contribute to encouraging cohesion, exchanges and creativity within the company, playing a fully active role in the process of vehicle creation.

It can be used, for instance:

- To create meeting places between the various professional disciplines, to encourage spontaneous collaborative work,
- To provide social spaces, but also opportunities for concentration and isolation,
- To facilitate the presentation and understanding of models, drawings and presentations, generating varied view points and the necessary distance.

The unique nature of the design centre derives from the communal presence of several professions, from digital modelling to design, by way of quality expertise.

This was both the strength and limitation of the system. Strength, because the complete creative process takes place within the design centre, from idea to form, with each profession enriching the others with its specific expertise. But also limitation, because having different identities alongside one another, generating multiple status levels, can create internal tension and become counter-productive.

The job for us therefore, at the architecture and design level, was to bring out the positive aspect of this proximity, in particular by providing connected work areas that are inter-active and non hierarchical.

Within this system, we paid special attention to two key principles for the project's success: managing grades of confidentiality and organising the spaces to encourage creativity.







Confidentiality

One problem in the existing set-up was managing confidentiality. The original organisation of the design centre involved a large number of enclosed spaces. Numerous people were authorised to move through the Design enclosure, which generated a significant risk of breaches in professional secrecy.

A buffer zone has been created at the entrance to the centre, outside the confidential area, for meetings between exterior contractors and design staff. Working with the security department, exterior-facing confidentiality has been guaranteed. To ensure effective operation and reduce the risk of leaks, badge-zones are limited to the strictly necessary, mostly at the level of the «airlock» entrances to the design centre.

Another aspect, as sensitive as it was essential to the success of the project, was finding a solution to the conflict between maintaining the necessary confidentiality within the structure itself, and establishing the team dynamic required for creativity. For this we developed two ideas, that can be transformed directly into architecture.

Active confidentiality

This concept aims to give staff working within design the option of moving into a space that is configured to be conducive to discretion.

Generally, the work spaces are bright, open areas and workshops that are full of clarity. But great care has also been taken to develop alcove spaces suitable for working in small groups. The dense and intimate morphology of these spaces (in contrast to the open-plan areas) encourages information exchange in an atmosphere that is both relaxed and confidential.

Seeing and being seen

Or how to create visibility, a vector of communication, without giving an impression of surveillance, avoiding the negative Big-Brother effect. For this, the visibility needs to be reciprocal, temporary and sought out by the staff. From linking areas and the studios' open levels, these views are only hinted at and filtered; and in contrast, are open from the alcove work-spaces.



Partitions

Managing proximity

To separate and demarcate the various spaces, in particular the studios, linking areas and workshops, we decided to work with grades of partition. Depending on their purpose, they are opaque, translucent or transparent. When opaque, these dividers are functional, creating opportunities for storage, display and projection. Particular attention was paid to acoustics for purposes of peace and concentration.

Translucent partitions create «air-locks» that encourage informal encounters to stimulate exchanges and consultation, and hence creativity. When transparent they are a window into a workspace, providing distance and a visual comfort that stimulate team cohesion and conviviality.

Materials

With a view to imbuing the world of work with a certain «domesticity», these partitions are made of materials that are relatively natural and simple. We believe that the simplicity and «rustic» nature of the materials used in the design hub's architecture are an excellent counterpoint to the sophisticated materials used in automotive design today, and so a real source of mental refreshment. We have mainly made use of two materials in different forms.

Wood in a range of shutters, panels and screens. This is used for the alcove group work-spaces, storage units and shelving. As much as possible we have used natural wood, its warmth and solidity providing a timeless appeal.

Textiles in a range of screens and curtains. These are used for visual filtering and the designers' individual «bubbles». Several layers of net-fabric, from the most transparent to the most opaque, are used to obtain the desired effect. At the same time, work has gone into the acoustic performance of the material, strengthening the impression of a domestic space, creating a cocoon effect.







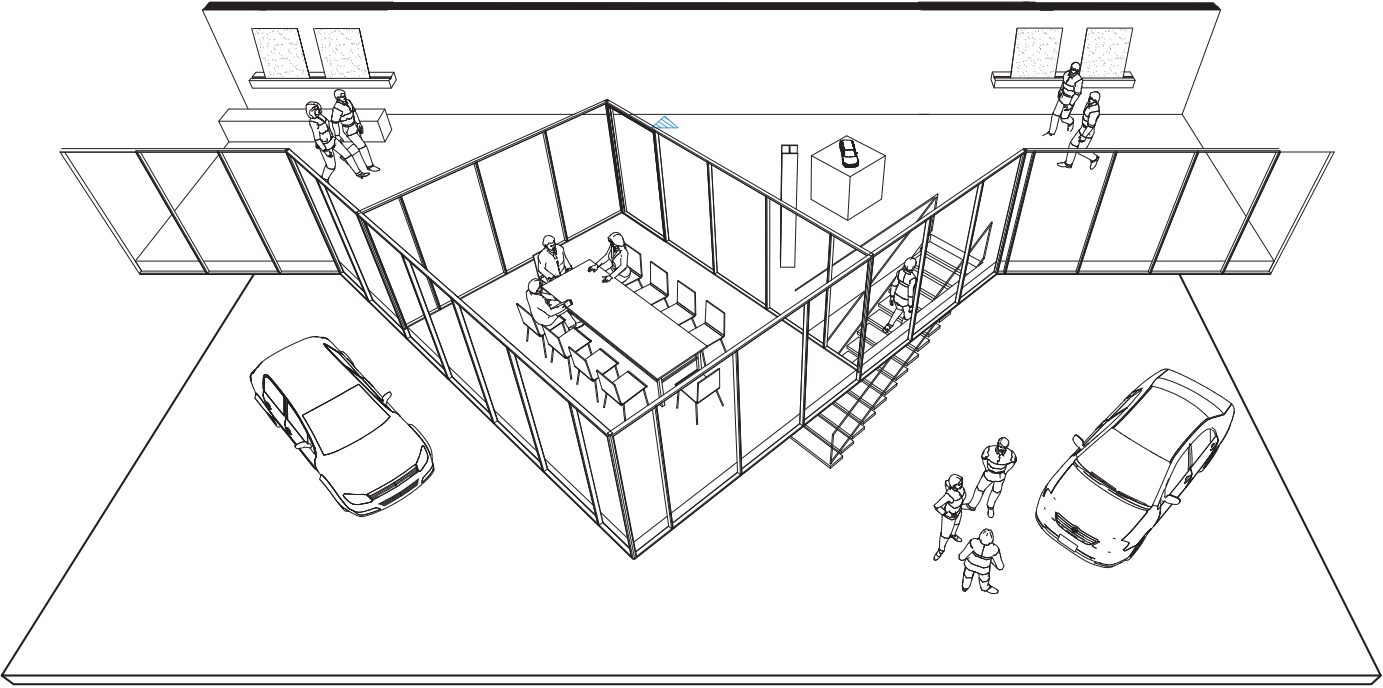
Spaces to meet

Places to talk

We have chosen the areas where levels change and link, which offer opportunities for a different and unexpected viewpoint, to create the various collaborative work spaces for each studio. These new spaces take several forms, depending on how they are to be used. There are steps and tiered seating that offer a place to sit for a moment or for a longer reflective pause.

At the top of these features, with an overhead view of the workshops, one might for instance attend a presentation in a little improvised theatre. Close to circulation areas, alcoves provide meeting spaces that encourage reflection and concentration, or peace and quiet for a short break. Like the upper tiers of seating, these more intimate conversation niches offer framed views down into the workshop below.

Floor sunk electrical sockets are available to plug in a laptop or tablet. A wifi connection gives access to the intranet for this third place. Where possible, natural light bathes these spaces for optimal working conditions. Fixed and modular artificial light sources complete the system.



Functional organisation

The new arrangement of the design centre aims to confirm a pattern of functional organisation by profession that was first instituted in 2009. It groups the various studios on the first floor, keeping modelling and the workshops at ground level, making for clearer legibility of the different centres of activity.

It also aims to organise each profession around communal spaces, divided into two categories: informal work spaces and relaxation areas. These used to be constrained, with limited access and only limited natural lighting. The project has been able to multiply and spread out these shared spaces within the various studios, so as to encourage exchange while reducing the need to move about within the design centre.

Identifying journeys

The project has rationalised the various journeys for each profession (Designer, Modeller and so on), starting from the exterior access and passing first through the social spaces (cafeteria) connected to the central patio, before arriving at their respective studios. Journeys are made using the new walkway or by moving through the studios.

Movement that encourages exchanges

After analysing the various flows of all the professions, and with the aim of reducing distances travelled within the centre, we inverted access to the studios, which used to be along the exterior wall, switching it to passing the workshops. We were able to observe that a «journey loop» was developing, at the interface between the studios and around the workshops. As well as reusing natural light from wall-openings directly in the studios, this access route has become a new communication space, particularly visually between the workshops and studios.

Making use of constraints

We noted that the floors to be linked were at different levels. There was also the requirement for part of the journey to retain clearance of 3.60 m overall, to allow vehicles to move about. To ensure fluidity in the loop linking all the studios, we identified connection areas between these different levels. These gentle changes in level were handled with ramps, ensuring full accessibility to the whole hub. These «topographic nodes», often at the interface between two studios or with the cafeteria, naturally become places of exchange.







Liberating creativity

Knowledge of the body's experience of work teaches that well-being is necessarily linked to familiarity, to relaxation, with pleasure becoming the prime condition for drive and creativity. We were guided, through the identity of the new premises, by a desire to make work more «domestic»: reproducing the simplicity of working at home. To do so, we explored several avenues:

First, by creating situations for contact and exchange, for moments outside work, while remaining on site, to encourage constructive and beneficial breaks. This involves places to meet others on a non-professional level, through sport or relaxation, leisure or self-improvement within the company itself.

At the same time, creating domestic comfort in a workplace means using simple and warm materials, as you would at home. Particular attention is paid to the materials, and the overall organisation provides opportunities for a personal treatment of a given area that may have a more domestic feel or be more suited to a subjective style.

The design centre ecosystem rests on a complex phenomenon that we have addressed by considering all possible interactions and projections; in other words by creating situations that enable the complexity to settle, to get organised and generate the long term well-being to contribute to developing ideas.







Studio Joran Briand Associés

Joran Briand Associés collaborated with the ChartierDalix practice on the large scale Renault Design Centre redevelopment project.

Joran Briand Associés provided the signage and furniture design for the design centre.

For the signage, Joran Briand Associés designed a graphic system using coloured backgrounds of varying density. Screen printed onto glazing throughout the centre, this technique was able to generate different levels of exchange to correspond with the spaces' usage and confidentiality constraints.

We used the Renault group graphic charter, divided for location and directional signage. Location signage is minimalist and applied by screen printing or as a sticker. Directional signage comprises glass panels on wooden wall tablets, providing a warm and creative touch.

Joran Briand Associés designed a lightweight, informal stool, a seat pad for use on the tiered seating, and a range of lighting comprising an overhead unit and a desk lamp.

The stools and seat pads are accessories for work and relaxation spaces. The light fittings resemble vast petals, providing the ideal light level and a necessary intimacy in the big open-plan areas. This range of furniture was manufactured and produced by Ligne Roset.

In collaboration with the ChartierDalix practice, we designed the custom furniture: display benches, reception desk, tiered seats and a modular shelving and screen system in Batyline fabric (manufactured by Ligne Roset).

This storage system, by combining various modules, offers horizontal and vertical display surfaces, storage areas and tucked-away corners. The semi-transparent fabric of the shelving system complements the graphic background of the glazing.

Additional overlays generate the different levels of opacity needed for the building's functions.



The team

About the Renault technocentre

The Renault technocentre in Guyancourt was inaugurated in 1996, and with around 12,000 people working there, is now the biggest research and development centre in France. The R*Generation project rethinks the work spaces for the entire design division. We start from the premise that a modern workspace cannot be limited to being simply an «environment», but must also be considered a fully functioning working tool: it must contribute to encouraging social cohesion, exchanges and creativity within the company, by playing a fully active role in the process of project manufacture. Our dual focus is on notions of active confidentiality and co-visibility, while cultivating an almost domestic atmosphere, creating opportunities for privacy and spaces suitable for re-centring. Concepts of comfort, pleasure and sharing help stimulate research and creativity.

About ChartierDalix Architectes

Since its foundation in 2006 by Frédéric Chartier and Pascale Dalix, the ChartierDalix firm has delivered a dozen buildings. Earning recognition at several international competitions, the practice has received numerous prizes, including in 2009 the Première Œuvre (First Work) Prize awarded by the leading French architecture publication *Le Moniteur*, and and Europe's «40 under 40» prize for young archi-

itects in 2012. With three major projects delivered in early 2017 (a logistics hub, offices in Batignolles and the Renault Design Centre), the practice is continuing its explorations, with work on several innovative office and housing developments, as well as public projects (the Courneuve station for the Grand Paris Express, and the conversion of the Lourcine former barracks in the 13th arrondissement for the University of Paris).

www.chartier-dalix.com

About Studio Joran Briand Associés

Created by designer Joran Briand in 2011, with Arnaud Berthereau joining in 2016, the studio works in the field of object design, interior architecture and graphic design. Its philosophy can be stated in a few words: achieve the maximum with the minimum. This approach, which can be qualified as «frugal», aims to achieve perfect balance between form and function, while optimising responses to the financial and environmental constraints that are inherent to each project.

www.joranbriand.com

Photography: Takuji Shimmura





Technical sheet

Location: Guyancourt [78]

Client: Renault

Lead: ChartierDalix

Project manager: Mathieu Terme

Graphic design, signage and furniture design : Studio Joran Briand et Associés

Tech. cons.: Egis (gen. contracting) et Vpeas (costing)

Cost: € 11 M before tax

Area : 29,000 m² NIA

Phase: delivery in april 2017

Mission: Complete

Project: Refurbishment of Renault Design centre premises

Photos: Takuji Shimmura

<http://takuji-shimmura.fr>

Vidéo: Kofesku

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Since its creation in 2008 by Frédéric Chartier and Pascale Dalix, the architecture office ChartierDalix has delivered a dozen or so buildings. Taking part in various international competitions over the years, the office has attracted a great deal of attention and has won several prizes, including the Moniteur First Building prize in 2009, the European prize for young architects «40 under 40» in 2012, and has been recently honoured with the «Le Soufaché» award by the French Academy of Architecture. The workers' hostel at Porte des Lilas, Paris, was nominated in 2014 for the Équerre d'argent prize and for the Mies van der Rohe Award. Winner of the international competition Réinventer-Paris in 2016 for the Ternes-Villiers site, the office is now in charge of several significant public projects, including the metro station La Courneuve of the Grand Paris Express project, the transformation of Lourcine, a former military site in the 13th arrondissement of Paris (currently under construction).

The office is also signed to several private contracts, notably several tertiary operations and a hotel. Three construction projects have already been delivered in 2017: an office complex in the urban development zone Paris-Batignolles, a logistics center in the 18th arrondissement of Paris, and the redevelopment of the Renault design center in Guyancourt. The office is currently one of the finalists (with «La nouvelle AOM») in the international competition «Demain Montparnasse» for the complete overhaul and renovation of this famous tower. The multiplicity of programmes in which the office works simultaneously, as well as the diversity of practical solutions it provides, form a set of reflections representing the evolutions of modern day life. For this young team, architecture is seen as a constructed system combining poetry and the common good.