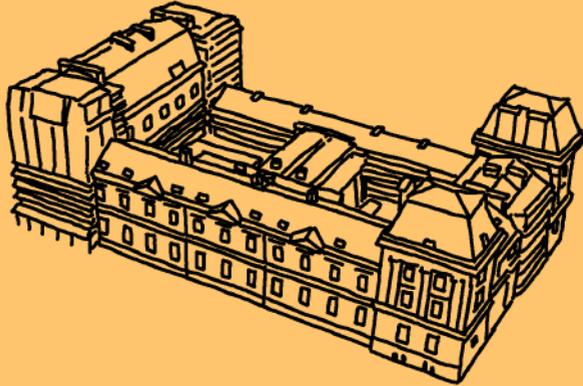


# Hotel Pasteur

A community laboratory for everything  
from 2012



Place Pasteur, 2  
35000 Rennes  
France

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Hotel Pasteur is a former science faculty that has been converted into a space for learning and experimentation, organized collectively by community members. The word Hotel recalls the variety of activities that are welcomed: a true “laboratory for everything”, Hotel Pasteur is a space for experimenting, sharing knowledge and for developing multidisciplinary projects that reflect the transformation of society. After years of neglect, the building underwent a renovation and rearrangement in 2013. The then-mayor of Rennes enlisted architect Patrick Bouchain and Sophie Ricard to manage a participatory process involving local entities and citizens, with the goal to redesign the space to better suit the activities it would host.

In 2014, the premises of the Pasteur building were peacefully occupied and opened to the community, testing their potential through everyday use and artistic experimentation. All these activities, defined as “Université Foraine” (UFO), convinced the City of Rennes to launch a new phase of the project that included the financing of renovation works, completed in 2021 in continuity with the implemented experimentation, the creation of a public nursery school inside the building, and the maintenance of the “Pasteur Project” as a place of cultural and social experimentation.



## WHERE

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Hotel Pasteur is located in a building of considerable importance in the center of Rennes, along the Vilaine River. Built in 1888, it was used until 1967 by the Faculty of Science and then by the Faculty of Dentistry.

In 2013, after years of neglect, the building became a place to experiment with temporary uses outside of any traditional framework. The building was reopened in 2021, after a restoration that did not change its original structure, focusing on the use, functionality and reversibility of spaces over aesthetics, in order to retain a flexible character.

### LOCATION

Urban

### TYPE OF SPACE

Building

### ORIGINAL FUNCTION

Educational (school)

### YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION

1888

### SURFACE

5,000 sqm

### OWNERSHIP

Public

### CONCESSION

Free cession

### CONDITION BEFORE ACTIVATION

Underused

### COMPOSITION OF THE SPACE

Two courtyards

Reception

Gallery

Foyer

Salon

Big room

Vestibule

Small laboratories

Apartments

Offices

The ground floor, the first and second floor and two towers are currently in use.

## WHEN

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### TIME OF DAY USED

Morning ..... 7am - 1pm 50%

Afternoon ... 1pm - 7pm 40%

Evening ..... 7pm - 1am 10%

Night ..... 1am - 7am 0%

### PUBLIC USE:

Workdays 50%

Weekends 50%

### WORKERS USE:

Workdays 95%

Weekends 5%

### OPENING HOURS

Open all day (workers)

Open until 6pm (public)

### AVERAGE USERS PER DAY

The number varies from one season to another.

## WHAT

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Today the space is configured as a hybrid environment that meets the needs of the partner institutions and the owners of the building and the community by performing three functions: on the ground floor there is a nursery school, with a reading room, a psychomotor room and a canteen; upstairs there is a lab for experimentation with new educational technologies to promote sharing knowledge with the community; and in the remaining areas there is the Hotel Pasteur, a space for artistic, creative and social research with a positive impact on the community.

### SURFACE IN USE

2,500 sqm

**THEMATIC AREAS**

Culture and arts  
 Design, crafts and production  
 Education and training  
 Welfare  
 Other: research

Hotel Pasteur is an all-round creative research laboratory that prioritizes residencies and artistic productions rather than public exhibitions and shows.

**USER DEMOGRAPHIC**

The activities are open to everyone, with a special focus on people in difficult conditions.

Associations and collectives  
 Young people  
 Professionals and companies  
 Other: general public

**COLLABORATIONS**

Artists and creatives  
 Associations and collectives  
 Citizens and local community  
 Companies  
 Public administrations and public authorities  
 Universities and schools

**NETWORK**

Local  
 Regional  
 National  
 International

**WHO****MANAGING ORGANIZATION(S)**

I. Hotel Pasteur (association, 2016)

**PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT**

Around 30

**HOW**

In 2019 the City granted the management of Hotel Pasteur to the Association Hôtel Pasteur with the goal of implementing an open governance model that actively integrates citizens, public institutions and the private sector in the management of its daily activities. Specifically, the governance is organized around five collegial bodies where decision-making is based on the consensus method.

**NATURE OF THE INITIATIVE**

Codesigned

**TYPE OF MANAGEMENT**

Horizontal

**ECONOMIC RESOURCES**

Regular public contributions  
 Self-funded

**TYPE OF ACTIVITIES**

100% Free

Watch the documentary of the experience of Hotel Pasteur





## How did your story begin?

One of the first reasons we started this project was to respond to architect Patrick Bouchain's call to give the inhabitants of Rennes the possibility to use this vacant site to create a space without a defined program. Hotel Pasteur was a response to this call: the goal was to raise awareness about vacant buildings and vacant spaces. In no time, we had art students in search of rooms to exhibit their works, people who needed a space to host sporting activities, psychotherapists from groups who wanted to take their practices out of hospitals, aspiring woodworkers who wanted to get some practice with furniture, etc.

I met Pasteur because I used to work in the realm of "spectacle vivant" (performing arts) at the Theatre National de Bretagne, but I was also a researcher at the Paris Institute of Political Studies under Bruno Latour. This made me change my perspective: in theater, art is the center of attention, while at Hotel Pasteur it

is people who are the core of the project, because of the interdisciplinary nature of the activities.

"Even though there were many people doing activities in the building, we had only one key that we had to pass along to each other. [...] it was a symbol, a way to spread trust and of responsibility, because sharing the key meant trusting all the people who had access to the building for their activities, and at the same time giving them responsibility for what they were doing"

### **Is there a practice or value that represents you and you think may be an inspiration to others?**

There are several. We had a very interesting experience just one year after the renovation of the Hotel was completed, when we took part in the Venice Biennale of

Architecture in 2019. We had the chance to get out of our daily routine, out of our space, and see our work from a different perspective, understand other dynamics and see the work of other commons. We were hosted by Caserma Pepe and it was an interesting moment to reflect upon our activity and on urban commons. The time we spent in Venice was special because for the first time we were not only working together, but also living together. And then we had the time to write a paper "The Act of Venice": a declaration of the principles of what we do and the core of our activities.

## What is the secret ingredient that makes your story unique?

The secret tool for us is something that everybody knows really well: the key, the only one that we received from the City at the beginning, to access the building. Even though there were many people doing activities in the building, we had only one key that we had to pass along to each other. This continuous contact between the people involved in passing the key helped us to form relationships, and at the same time it was a symbol, a way to spread trust and of responsibility, because sharing the key meant trusting all the people who had access to the building for their activities, and at the same time giving them responsibility for what they were doing. Now we have more copies of the key, so we can access the building independently, also on the weekends, and we have electronic systems to control access to the building, prevent fires, etc... but the key for us is still something that symbolizes the trust in each other and the responsibility that each person takes for the management of the Hotel.

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*Interview with: Gwenola Drillet*

