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The relational network is examined between two actors: one French abstract painter, and a group of three Catalan architects (RCR), in the creation of a single artist museum – Musée Soulages.

Architecture that bows to the artist: Musée Soulages

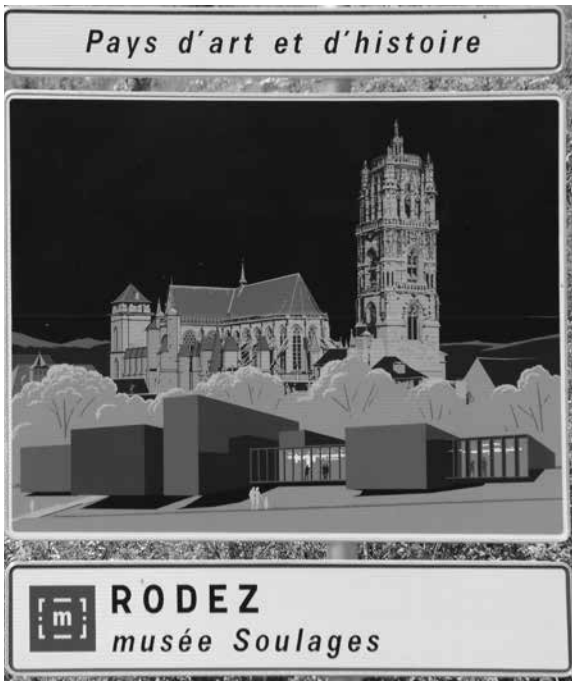
Andreas Luescher

Background

In May 2014, French President François Hollande opened the Musée Soulages in Rodez, dedicated to the life's work of one of France's most recognised living abstract artists, Rodez-born Pierre Soulages, known as 'the painter of black and light' in the art world. Soulages coined the term '*outrenoir*', or beyond black, as his abstract art signature, similar to what blue was for Yves Klein or white for Robert Ryman.[1] The museum project was born thanks to the donation of approximately five hundred works and documents in 2005 by Pierre and Colette Soulages.

This article examines the relationship between Soulages, the city of Rodez, the Forirail Garden (which is the site of the museum), and the ideas and practices realised by Catalan architects Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem, and Ramon Vilalta (RCR). Rodez is located in a sparsely populated area of Aveyron, a two-hour (110 miles inland) drive from Montpellier on the southern Mediterranean coast via a white motorway in the sky known as the Millau Viaduct, a cable-stayed bridge designed by French structural engineer Michel Virlogeux and the British architect Norman Foster.[2] Rodez is framed by the lush winding river valleys and high plateaus that form the Massif Central. On one of these plateaus lies the centre of Rodez, directly across from the Notre-Dame Cathedral in a large public park known as the Foirail Garden.

Once a car park, the Foirail Garden is a reflection of the people of Rodez's effort to create sensible public and green spaces in their town. Upon completion, the garden was awarded three flowers from the Concours des villes et villages fleuris (meaning flower-decked cities and villages contest) which is administered by the French state. Within the park there is a nineteenth-century bandstand that overlooks a 1980s mini-Louvre pyramid, which had been the town's pinnacle of architectural innovation for decades. The park's revitalisation made it an ideal location for the Musée Soulages, a dramatic line of giant boxes in rust-patina sheet steel cresting a newly planted slope of moorland grasses and flowers a stone's throw from the cathedral. Catalan architects RCR designed the museum to blend in with the landscape, inviting the visitor to take a journey through the light, reflection, transparency, and fluidity of this composition which celebrates both the outside and the interior display spaces. They were successful; this museum has elevated little Rodez, population of 25,000, to a cultural travel destination *[1]*.[3]



1 Marker for the Musée Soulages with Cathédrale Notre-Dame in the background, 2015.

Artist's museum as architectural project

The creation of a monolithic museum brings unique challenges due to high public expectations for such a commission to generate a signature design; this results in what is known as the 'Bilbao Effect'. With that in mind, in 2007, an initial call for the project competition was launched that included a list of 98 candidates, including mostly French star architects

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2 Exterior rendering of Marc Barani's proposal for the Musée Soulages, 2007.

3 Aerial view of Rodez with the Cathédrale Notre-Dame in the background, Musée Soulages in the middle ground, and the Cap' Cinéma in the foreground.

like Dominique Perrault, Jean Nouvel, and Christian de Portzamparc, among others.[4] In the end, the committee, chaired by Paul Chemetov, a French architect and urbanist, invited four distinguished architectural firms to the design competition: Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, from Tokyo, known for reinterpreting the tradition of Japanese buildings; two French architects, Paul Andreu in Paris, recognised for his designs of multiple airports, and Marc Barani, in Nice, acknowledged for his thoughtful architecture that borrows from all disciplines; and the Catalan architects RCR, a team of three who founded the firm in 1987 in Olot, Catalonia, Spain after graduating from La Escuela de Arquitectura del Valles, known for the poetics of minimalism.[5] Three out of these four architectural firms are solo-practitioners; all except for RCR architects.

Perhaps even more important is the obvious physical and artistic attraction between the RCR architects and Pierre Soulages. Olot, where RCR is located, shares a similar setting and atmosphere with Rodez. Both towns are situated in rural areas on a plateau surrounded by mountains and valleys; they are similar in population size as well. Adding to the physical, there is also a very strong connection to the proponents of the Basque School of Sculpture of the 1950s; Eduardo Chillida and Jorge Oteiza, are both known to work with space enclosed by spheres and lines, and with materials that evoke the Basque heritage and landscape, such as granite and rusting ship steel.[6] That kind of sculptural rationale can be related to Pierre Soulages's thinking regarding structural energy and the planet. RCR had already been studying Soulages and were well acquainted with his black paintings featuring rifts of light, which RCR documented in their scrapbook of core

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inspirations well before they were selected to design the museum.[7] This kind of indirect knowledge and approach made its way into their design competition brief that included the jury's three criteria to identify the winner: the integration of the museum into the city's architectural context, accessibility for the visitor to and from the museum, and the cost, estimated at about 12 million euros; in the end, however, the cost reached a total of 21.46 million euros (almost $30 million).

The jury chose RCR's project over Paul Andreu's linear scheme design, Kengo Kuma's oversized glass roof, and Marc Barani's villa museum, which he would have placed in the middle of the park. Barani's concept embodies Palladio's Villa La Rotonda, based on the symmetry of architecture, which also allows for the asymmetry of landscape *[2]*. In contrast, RCR's suspended prisms of different sizes successfully met the stated criteria, making the jury's final vote unanimous. RCR's design submission for the museum is an unpretentious space which acknowledges the mystical quality of Soulage's works, embodied by the force the colour black and its application on the built form and texture.[8] RCR's architectural and design philosophy is expressed in the denial of boundaries between different artistic disciplines and traditions. For example, his unique prints and sculptures are composed of layers of different materials (wood, iron, aluminum, etc.), which are synthesised into the architecture of their buildings. One can see analogies to Soulages in the landscape details and the construction of buildings on horizontal layers; soil, geological screens, litter, and metal are all direct references to the natural environment.

RCR's winning design, which relies on abstraction, suggests there is something beyond the mere appearance of the contextualised building. RCR's own words have been shaped by the dynamic of nature, cast out to the earth's surface from the viscera of the earth by the volcanoes that surround their hometown into one compelling design manifesto:

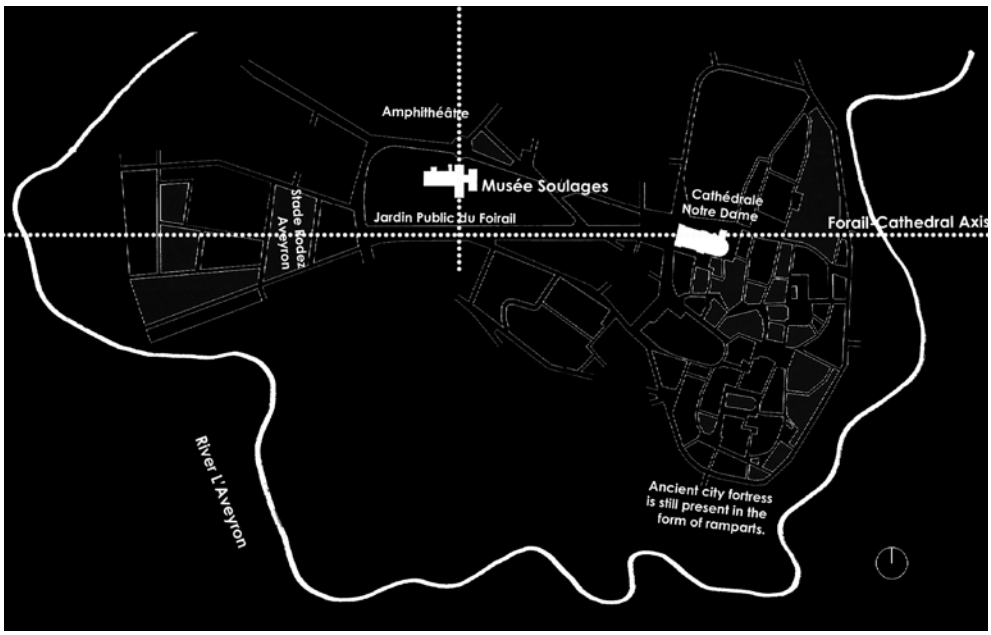
> *The basis of relationships in architecture is found in permeability. Boundaries are overstepped, experiments are performed with depths, contexts are related to one another and experiences are shared. The basis of innovation in architecture is, therefore, at the root, a constructed philosophy of life.*[9]

RCR was clearly drawn to Soulages's idea of 'Un musée dans un jardin' (museum in a garden), which became the central thesis for their design response. Specifically, to articulate Soulages's dream of a museum in a garden, they realised a sensibility of alliance with the garden of Foirail, the importance of highlighting the Forail-Cathedral axis, *[3]* and an interpretation of Soulages's metaphysically potent canvases that feature slashing black architectonics that have similarities to RCR's telluric architecture.

Forail-Cathedral axis

RCR's design for the Soulages museum creates a strong datum in support of the relationship between the stone architecture and heritage of the city, the public garden, and the entertainment complexes represented by the Forail-Cathedral axis *[4]*. Placing the museum on the north side of the garden fully rehabilitated the former parking lot and is perpendicular to the axis. RCR's team of architects understood the importance of this site that acts as a bridge between the historic centre and the new districts *[5]*. The transformation occurred in the capital of Aveyron, because this large urban space was left fallow, and was originally intended to host the regional livestock fairs. Over time, however, it became an open, free parking lot; a no man's land where no one stopped. That was the opportunity for the municipality to transform the heart of its town with the creation of this museum to honour the city's favourite son.

The central theme behind RCR's design is the Foirail park, an almond-shaped public space a few metres from the old city as well as from the square where the Gothic cathedral is located, the most recognisable structure in the city and thus the ideal site for the



4 Site plan highlighting the relationship between Musée Soulages, Cathédrale Notre-Dame and Rodez's squares and boulevards, 2016.

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5 The entrance to Musée Soulages seen from the park is a reference to the style of Mies van der Rohe's Neue Nationalgalerie, in relationship to Cathédrale Notre-Dame, 2015.

6 RCR study models showcases their rigorous analysis of the integration of the five blind boxes with the landscape, 2010.

7 The black model as a tribute to Pierre Soulages as the painter of black, 2010.

8 A sectional model showing volume and light exhibition spaces adapted to the type of work exposed: large rooms penetrated by overhead natural light for oil paintings, more intimate rooms with controlled artificial lighting for graphic works, 2010.

9 Looking at the south facade in relation to the park's thesis of a museum in a garden, 2015.



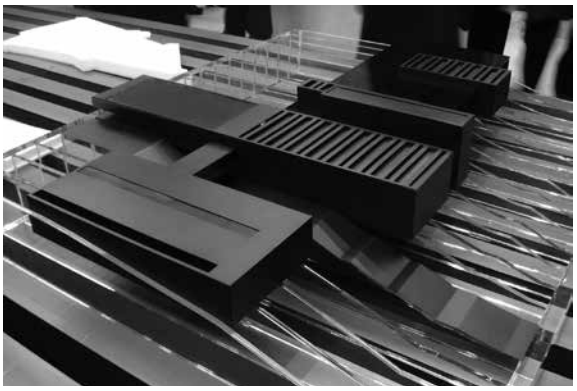
Soulages Museum. The privileged position of the park plays a leading role in the city, and their design makes the most out of the deep slope of one of its edges. It was also quite a challenge to design because of the different levels and junctions, both in descent and laterally. RCR decided to place the museum upon the flank of the slope incorporating both the upper and lower levels. At the first anniversary of the museum, architect Carme Pigem restated RCR's design intention at the celebration: 'This museum at first, was a true challenge. To create a museum in a garden! This image, for us, was very strong, and we never lost sight of it. We liked Soulages very much and wanted to take a journey with his work, characterizing it with spaces both dark and luminous, and also with volumes of different sizes both on the inside and the outside.'[10] In summary, RCR merged the museum with the landscape by dissolving the boundaries between interior and exterior to achieve a better unity with nature *[6]*.[11]

Fenestras aveyron

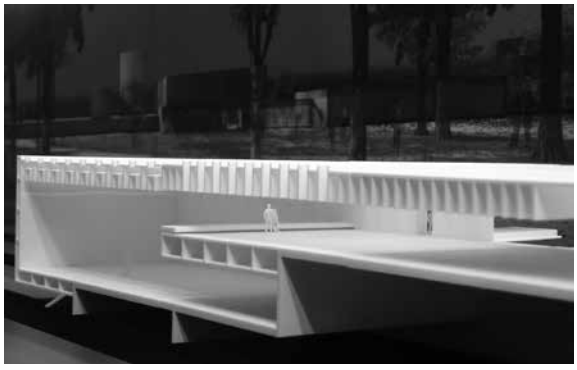
Long before entering the competition for the Museum Soulages, RCR established themselves rigorously through a series of artistic interventions of houses, civic centres, pavilions, and parks compactly woven into the land based on the application of forms that interpret the site: its light, atmosphere, materials, textures, and views.[12] This was a result of their training in the fusion of the Fine Arts studies in Olot and the melting pot of the Vallés School of Architecture, located near Barcelona, which offers a landscape-oriented curriculum.[13] At the same time, they began to show a keen interest in the mechanistic interpretation typical of minimalism seen in the works of Mies van der Rohe and Donald Judd. In addition, RCR's design thinking has been enhanced by the influence of Japanese Contemplative Asceticism, rooted in Zen Buddhism, brought about by a long journey undertaken to Japan a few years after graduation.[14] For instance,

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when they visited the Katsura Imperial Villa, they noticed that there is far more depth to this complex than the simply visual due to its highly intuitive connections to the landscape. This is exemplified in the proposal of parallel halls with slots towards the landscape in RCR's all steel Casa Horitzó en La Vall de Bianya (2003), a cousin of the Museum Soulages; the difference is that in the Casa Horitzó, the exterior wings are separated, but on the interior, in both cases, they are linked. Furthermore, RCR created the Universitat de Girona's Law School (2006) design with its monumental oblongs overhanging the slope; this can also be traced to the Museum Soulages.



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Both projects started out with a domestic scale model that explored the idea of a perfect form carefully inserted into a place. It is also reminiscent of older examples: Mies's first American project, the Resor House (1938), which displays integration of its surroundings as well as a sequence of spaces that create the poetics of minimalism; in addition, there is also the Serra-like notion of cutting into the landscape in order to reveal a certain energy as executed in the Parc de Pedra Tosca on Dams (2003–5). The engagement with steel and with voids takes RCR back to Soulages's paintings, which capture light that is both immobile and alive.[15] Unlike Soulages's black period and the initial models, however, the architects opted for an ochre-rust colour Corten steel to highlight the volumes of the structure *[7]*.

The orientation of the museum takes full advantage of its location because it is an elongated piece parallel to the main boulevard that delineates the park. The longitudinal circulation part acts as the backbone of the museum inside; the series of windowless volumes of different heights create an interesting rhythm on the facades *[8]*. The intervals of these boxes are reminiscent of the traditional fenestras Aveyron, which provide modest openings as a visual gateway similar to the small scenic and nested openings in the walls that mark the city of Rodez. They offer a view of the horizon and are conducive to contemplation. The unevenness of the terrain on which the museum sits, on the one hand, minimises its visual impact in the park (by partially burying part of the volume) and on the other hand, maximises the monumental silhouette of the city's downtown. Within the museum, there are blocks of vertical openings where the eye can pass through to the distant landscape, the plateau Aubrac. The south facade is open to the garden and does not exceed three metres, while to the north, the boxes are cantilevered above a pathway *[9]*.



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The tradition of the Aveyron fenestras also made its way into the cladding of rectangular volumes with Corten steel panels of 6mm (0.24 inches) thickness with a special size of 1.8 metres (6 feet) wide and reaching up to 14 metres (46 feet) tall (1.8 metres is the basic module of the whole building's construction).[16] The ventilated facade is made up of individual unique panels that consist of a single sheet glued into a perpendicular socket, giving the impression that they stick straight out of the ground, using the slope of the land *[10]*. Soulages appreciated the austerity that a material has, which is oxidised to create a protective patina. For that reason, the material will not destroy the relationship with its surroundings. Interestingly, the material is similar to Soulages's painting period of 'brou de noix' (walnut stain), however, its chromaticism is in contrast to the pink sandstone of Rodez. This is best described in Soulages's own philosophy to never restrict the desires of the material, instead to respect the material's properties as it changes through exposure to the weather and climate. The north facade consists of a high performance insulating glass over 4 metres (13 feet) high and a Brise-soleil, also made of Corten steel, while the interior side is covered by crude steel panels of 6mm with a varnished layer, which will accentuate the continual aging that occurs from the natural flow of human traffic.

Outrenoir

Another creative intersection between the RCR and Soulages, respectively, are the architects' watercolour painting of intentions and the French painter's outrenoir paintings. Both echo styles that can be traced to cave paintings, like Lascaux, where charcoal animal paintings were made 30,000 years ago. In RCR's case, they express the underlying idea of their projects with both intuition and intention by painting quickly, gesturally, and with thick brush strokes. Their Zen-quality watercolours demonstrate simplicity, the unconscious, and the breath that cannot be expressed solely in words, but are also not intended to determine the final form.[17] During a recent interview, they commented why they were based more in painting than architecture: 'The painting, which extends to art in general, is closer to the world of ideas and can be very emotional. That's why we like to draw inspiration from works of art.'[18] There are similarities to the spirit of calligraphy both in RCR and Soulages's approaches. However, for the creation of the outrenoirs, Soulages freed himself from pre-packaged principles by making his own tools.

Soulages coined the term outrenoir to describe his work when he started using only ultra-black or beyond black in his paintings.[19] This became Soulages's distinguishing painting style by 1979.[20] His techniques also changed at that time when Soulages began literally sculpting the application of

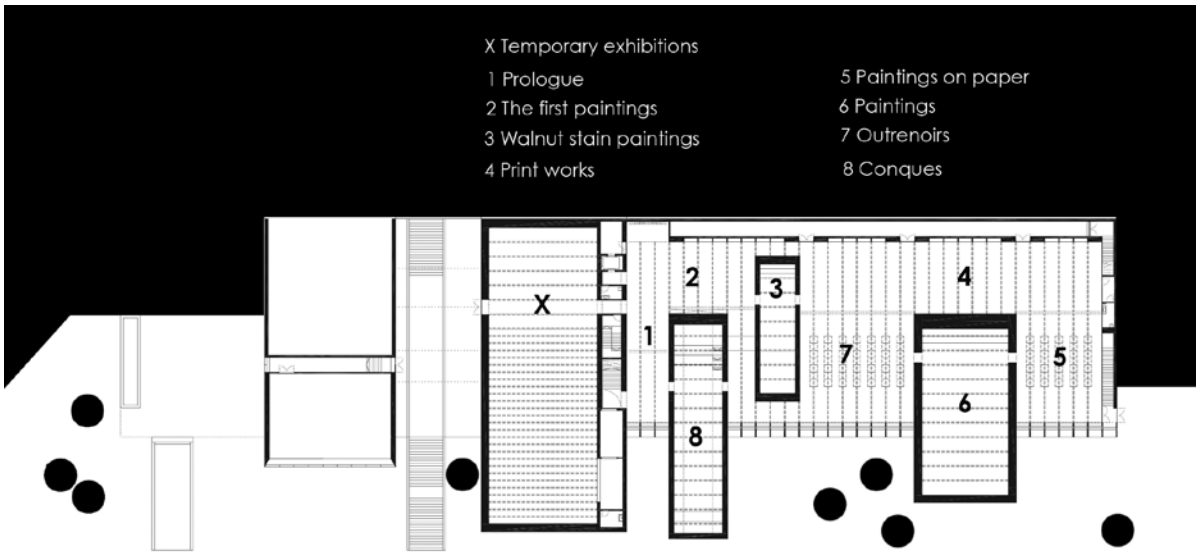


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10 Corner detail showing Corten steel panels connected through a socket between the wall and overhanging base, 2015.

11 Interior relationship emphasising a white wall, with Soulages's painting '202x327 cm, 17 January 1970' and a black wall with two paintings on paper, 2015.

12 Exhibition layout and organisation of the Musée Soulages, 2016.

paint using knives, scrapers, trowels, large brushes, andΩ other tools that he often borrowed from house painters. From that point on, none of his works have titles, because Soulages believes the technique, the completion date, and the format are all that is necessary to identify the paintings. The title of each work is always the same minimalist formula: the painting's size followed by its date of production. Soulages's painting, '202x327 cm, 17 January 1970' exemplifies this style through the density and thickness of the black lines that are repeated seven times across the canvas; these lines also vary in shape from left to right as they approach the right edge of the canvas *[11]*. The frequent repetition of paint strokes in the painting can be read as a reference to RCR's architectural reality of the museum. This style is not so much to generate a rhythm, but more about boundaries being overstepped, experiments performed with depths, contexts related to one another, and experiences shared. Both the artist and the architects have created a visual meaning that relies on the uniqueness of each element in succession, thus they are very similar. This results in a constructed philosophy of life as the basis for innovation in RCR's architecture as well as for Soulages.[21]

The layout of the museum consists of three main elements: an entrance hall marked by a cantilevered canopy; a transparent corridor that crosses the building and leads to a small auditorium and the restaurant; and a series of galleries below the entrance level accessed by a steep terrace-like stairway. The entrance hall for the public lies at mid-slope from Foirail Park and is where the ticket office and bookshop are located; it can also function as a reception hall. This entry emphasises the horizontal level of the museum acting as the first stage. What becomes important is the process of entering, of moving from the outside to the inside, and then moving down to the lower part where the precious 21 paintings on canvas, 100 paintings on paper, 49 etchings with brass plates, 26 serigraphs, three bronzes, documentaries consisting of books, films, photographs, correspondence, articles, documents, and all work related to the creation of the stained-glass 'Conque Abbey' (stained-glass, glass samples, cardboards in size, archive and other documents) are kept. There is nothing on display in the stairwell, where the wide concrete steps are reminiscent of Soulages's wide brush strokes, surprisingly not in black, and are framed by smooth concrete walls. It feels as if one is walking down into the middle of an amphitheater.

At the lowest level, RCR's design transports the visitor through several compartmentalised rooms where the observer wanders from one space to the next guided by views through tall, narrow openings; this almost feels like following Soulages's paintbrush, which is similar to a calligraphy application *[12]*. His full, thin strokes carry with them a function that determines the visitors' use and guides their path through the museum, reducing the freedom of their movements. This is also exemplified by the location of the museum itself, since it is almost completely separate from the life of the town. This sense of remoteness suits Soulages's temperament perfectly, as was illustrated when he left Rodez and moved to Paris in 1947. Only his work returned as an enormous donation to his birthplace.

One exception to Soulages's distant relationship with his upbringing is his work nearby in Conques, a tiny medieval village located 32 kilometres (20 miles) northwest of Rodez, for the Abbey Church of Sainte-Foy. In 1994, Pierre Soulages was commissioned to craft 104 stained-glass windows for the Abbey Church.[22] His choice of materials was a translucent, unstained glass, which respects the variation of natural light and modulates it, bringing continuity between the walls' surface and the windows, seen either from the inside or the outside. His artistic composition is based on lines of horizontal bars and

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13 Detail channelling the natural light through skylights into the Conques exhibition room, 2015.

14 Installation view between two different periods, Outrenoirs and Estampes, at the Musée Soulages, 2015.



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lead fittings, making this masterpiece a unique creation of contemporary art.[23] In the museum, there is a triple-height, narrow and vertical niche that corresponds to the mock-up drawings at 1:1 scale, which were used to study the windows of the Abbey. There is also a subliminal reference to the proportions of the Romanesque nave. Within the exposition space, there are three steps between the main entrance and a sunken level where one can sit to watch a documentary about Soulages's research and design for the Abbey. However, in the museum, unlike the church, the light is filtered in from the top via slender steel skylight beams that appear to float *[13]*.[24]

Soulages's articulated technique of thick black lines seems to dive through the paper, trapped only by its edges, expressing a secretive restlessness in works such as Untitled.[25] His work has four particular features: the calligraphic quality of the work, textural dimensions to achieve play of light, references to Romanesque architecture, and the desire to create a pictorial space. These leitmotifs are noticeable in the museum and echo a previous retrospective of 2009–10 at the Centre Pompidou where many of his paintings were suspended on wires from the ceiling, sometimes back-to-back.[26] In the museum, some gallery spaces are pure white, while one rectangular room is black with steel

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flooring. One of the main concepts behind the exhibition layout can best be described by quoting Pierre Soulages himself:

> *A window looks outside, but a painting should do the opposite – it should look inside of us. When I put them in the middle of the room, I attach the paintings at the top to the ceiling and on the bottom to the floor. I prefer this to just hanging them from the ceiling because it creates a place in a space, like a wall.*[27]

Hanging the paintings supports Soulages's desire to create a pictorial space that impresses upon the viewer an emotive state through the juxtaposition of light and dark *[14]*. The creation of such a mental structure is reinforced by contrasts from black to white on the canvas in which the viewer can visually penetrate the darkness.[28] Such thinking is also evident in RCR's architecture for the museum, where the galleries feel disengaged from the gravity of the earth because they are supported by cantilevers. The penetration of light is further projected through the fenestration, which brings in natural light, making the lines more distinct and less blurred, and in which the high rooms rise in clean contrast from the background of the land and make the artist's works even more vibrant.

Conclusion

RCR's most effective creative concept is a potent fusion of rigorous and poetic work representing Soulages's performance with black, based on architectural ideas of space, light and landscape in a singular guiding image; this image creates an atmosphere of mystery and prehistoric caves. The architects created this atmosphere through the design of large vertical windows and frames that emphasise the horizontal landscape; the exterior of the volumetric complex seems hidden, but also emerges as a form of a sublime fenestration with abstract qualities. However, the interior is more open and is influenced by the transformation in Soulages's work that reflects, to a greater degree, his own philosophy of Outrenoir or beyond black; more than the exterior may indicate.

A visitor to the museum becomes part of a theatrical event in which two actors – three Catalan architects, one French abstract painter – communicate in physical terms about the metaphysical environment, the relationship between the scenographic and the tectonic, and the architecture of the interior. This results not in a negative sense of congestion, density, and excessive detail, but in an exhibition design that calls for an understanding of RCR's architectural intentions based on the characteristics and qualities of spaces and their natural illumination. Finally, the architectural narrative of the chain of parallelepipeds of Corten steel, whose colour reflects the artist's paintings from the 1940s, depicts a harmonious relationship with the reddish-brown sandstone cathedral of Soulages's childhood home.

Notes

1. *Outrenoir* does not exist in English; the closest translation is 'beyond black'. In French, one would say *outre-Manche*, beyond the Channel, referring to England, or *outre-Rhin*, beyond the Rhine, referring to Germany. Zoe Stillpass, 'Pierre Soulages', in *Interview Magazine* (2014), available online: <http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/pierre-soulages/> [accessed 9 July 2016].
2. Approximately 30 minutes away from Montpellier is the sea town of Sète where Pierre Soulages has a second studio next to his atelier in Paris.
3. 275,000 visitors have made the Soulages museum one of the most visited places in the Midi-Pyrénées region. Available online: <http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2015/06/01/2115561-le-musee-soulages-a-change-la-ville.html> [accessed 12 July 2016].
4. The initial list of architects included mostly winners of the prestigious National Grand Prize of Architecture. For example: Dominique Perrault for his National Library of France (1989); Jean Nouvel for his Arab World Institute in Paris (1987); Christian de Portzamparc for his Hergé museum in Louvain-la-Neuve (1989); Rudy Riccioti for his black pavilion in Aix in Provence (2006); among others.
5. Paul Chemetov is best known for his collaborations with Borja Huidobro and such projects as the sports arena in Metz, France (2001).
6. William J. R. Curtis, 'Dark Matter', in *Architectural* Review, 1411 (2014), 38–53.
7. Ibid.
8. Bernhard Schulz, 'Museum Pierre Soulages in Rodez', in *Bauwelt*, 28 (2014), 14–21.
9. Project statement posted at the SpainLab, an Open Innovation Platform on Architecture by the architects Rafael Aranda, Carme Pigem, and Ramón Vilalta who started their own studio, RCR Arquitectes, in 1987 in Olot: available online: <http://cementerio.montera34.com/spain-lab.net//wp-content/uploads/2012/08/rcr.pdf> [accessed 10 July 2016].
10. Author's translation from the French newspaper article 'Le museé Soulages a changé la ville' (1 June 2016) available online: <http://www.ladepeche.fr/article/2015/06/01/2115561-le-musee-soulages-a-change-la-ville.html> [accessed 12 July 2016].
11. Between 2009 and 2010 the Parisian City Museum of Architecture and Heritage organised an exhibition entitled 'Pierre Soulages en son musée', available online: <http://www.citechaillot.fr/fr/expositions/expositions_temporaires/24091-pierre_soulages_en_son_musee.html> [accessed 12 July 2016].
12. Juan Cortés, Fernando Cecilia, Richard Levene, and RCR Arquitectes, *RCR Arquitectes, 2003–2007: Los Atributos de la Naturaleza* (The Attributes of Nature) (Madrid, Spain: El Croquis Editorial, 2007).
13. 'In the School of Architecture of Vallés we conveyed the importance of emotion in architecture, you have to feel emotions in the spaces that are created. This has deeply marked us and guides us in our project methodology. If the answer is not beautiful, it has followed looking for a better response.' Available online: <http://veredes.es/blog/entrevista-a-rcrarquitectes/> [accessed 15 July 2016].

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14. Juan Cortés, Fernando Cecilia, Richard Levene, and RCR Arquitectes, *RCR Arquitectes, 2007–2012: Abstraccion Poetica* (Poetic Abstraction) (Madrid, Spain: El Croquis Editorial, 2012).
15. Robert Morgan, 'Pierre Soulages: Painter of Black and Light', in *Hyperallergic* (2014), available online: <http://hyperallergic.com/126322/pierre-soulages-painter-of-black-and-light/> [accessed 9 July 2016].
16. Bellapart, a local company from the same town as RCR, was commissioned to fabricate and install these Corten steel panels. Available online: <http://www.bellapart.com/en/projects/facades-and-building-envelopes/soulages-museum.html> [accessed 13 July 2016].
17. Soulages found himself in Tokyo in 1957 for an exhibition of his works, where he became aware of the various traditional Japanese paintbrushes. RCR is also familiar with these techniques.
18. Interview with RCR Arquitectes (3 March 2016), available online: <http://veredes.es/blog/entrevista-a-rcr-arquitectes/> [accessed 15 July 2016].
19. The Centre Pompidou invited Soulages to exhibit over 100 works from 1946 to 2009. The visitors started to refer to his work as *noir lumière,* or black light. In French, noir can be used to mean both dark and black. Soulages did not like that name because it suggests an optical, as opposed to an emotional, effect. For him these painting are not monochromes. The fact that light can come from the colour black, which is supposedly the absence of light, is already quite moving. Soulages realised he needed to find a word that could convey the mental field opened up by these paintings, which is when he invented the word *outrenoir*. Stillpass, 'Pierre Soulages'.
20. Ibid.
21. David Cohn, 'Soulages Museum', in *Architectural Record*, 8 (2014), pp. 86–91, available online: <http://archrecord.construction.com/projects/building_types_study/museums/2014/1408-soulages-museum-rcr-arquitectes.asp> [accessed 9 July 2016].
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