

RADICAL

An itinerant survey along the
45°N parallel by *forty five degrees*

Edited by
Berta Gutiérrez
Casaos and Alkistis
Thomidou and
Elise Misao
Hunchuck



PUNCH

RITUALS

45°N 1°W

More just spatial practices are to be found in the diversity and nuances of myriad space-making paradigms that tackle local challenges while providing credible responses to current global issues. In *Radical Rituals*, we collect spatial protocols following an imaginary line: the 45°N parallel. This line crosses Europe, from the Atlantic Coast to the Black Sea. The practices are named *rituals* because they strengthen the potential for collective action in order to reach systemic change. They are labeled *radical* because they are highly transformative and point toward possible futures. This publication features projects and initiatives in the context of France with articles and interviews by and with local experts.

PUNCH

ISBN: 978-606-95856-2-7



45°N 7°E

Protagonists in order of appearance:

Architecture School of Commons

Cantercel Site Expérimental d'Architecture

Viel Audon

Le Collectif La Maison

3PA Association

23 Anères

Joanne Pouzenc

Les Soulèvements de la Terre

Les Communes de Saint-Blaise

La Fabric Pola

Bruit Du Frigo

La Ferme des Volonteux

Association La Distillerie

ArtStock

Parc Naturel Marin du Bassin d'Arcachon

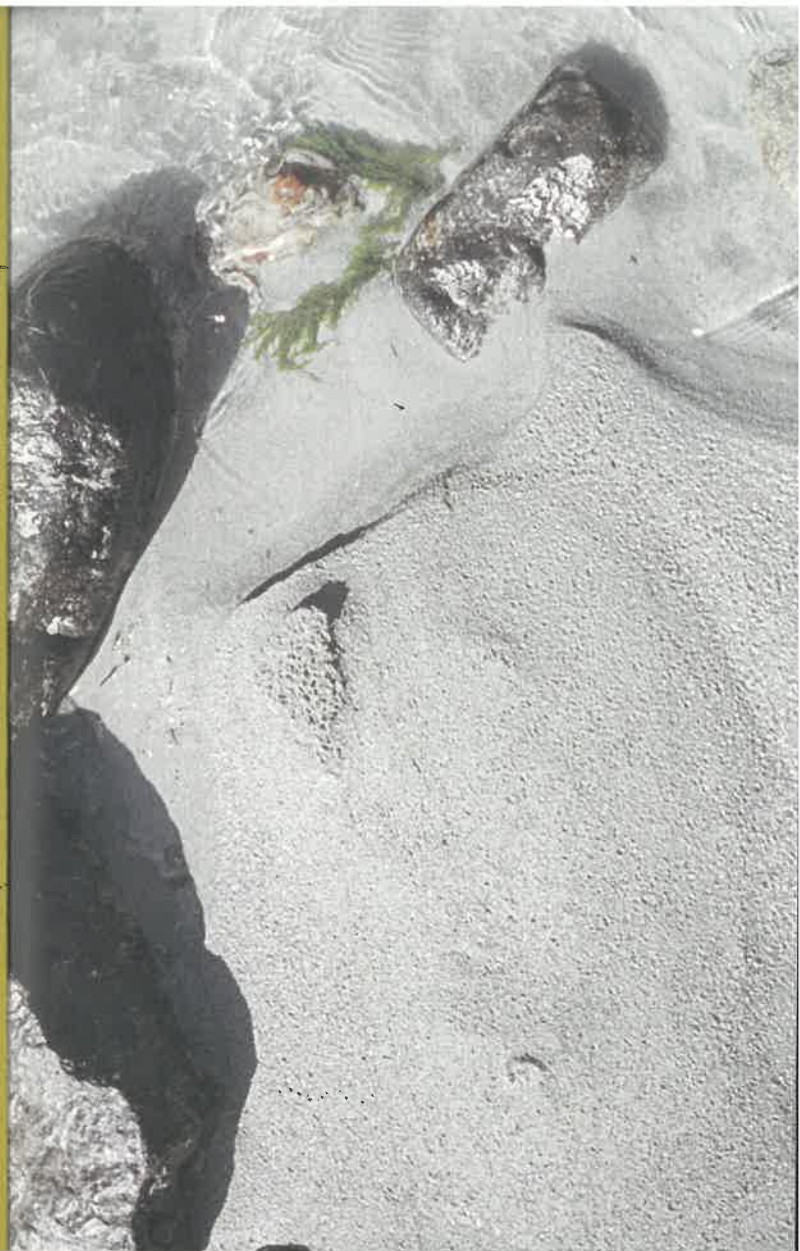
Lea Hobson

La Maraude

Les Terrasses Solidaires

Filature de Chantemerle Longo Mai

Léopold Lambert



LA FABRIC POLA AND BRUIT DU FRIGO

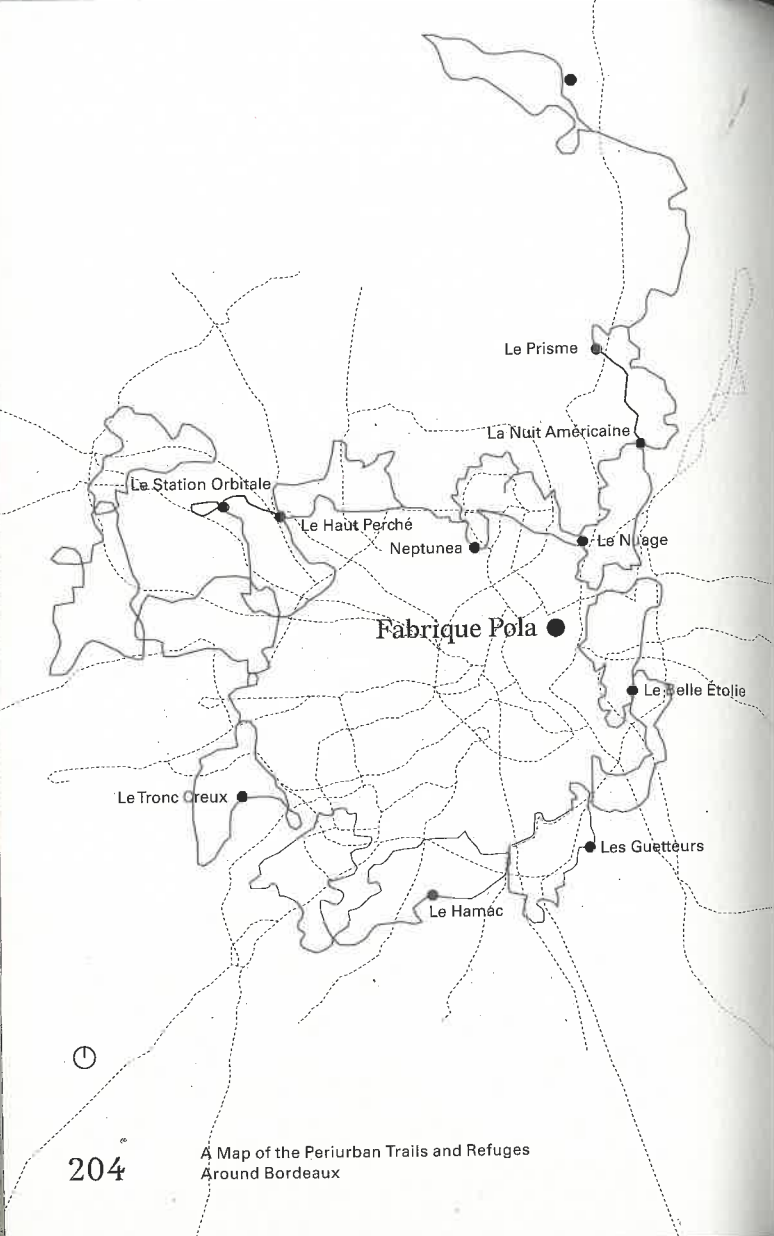


● 44°85'N 0°55'W



We arrived in Bordeaux, the city on the western boundary of the forty-fifth north parallel (45°N) within the European continent. By the shore of the Garonne River, we met with Blaise Mercier, the director of La Fabric Pola. Far more than just an art factory, Pola is a creative haven, a dynamic collective comprised of twenty-three associations and companies, the majority of which are nonprofit entities. The organization focuses on creative production in various fields and hosts several temporary artistic residencies. Situated in Quai de Brazza, a post-industrial landscape amid speedy urban transformation, La Fabric Pola represents a vision for the future that extends beyond traditional artistry's boundaries. What was once an industrial space has been transformed into a creative hub, an ecosystem revolving around a vast communal area that organizes various uses. Surrounding a central square are studios that serve as headquarters for the organizations hosted here. The journey of La Fabric Pola spans two decades, marked by a nomadic existence in seven different temporary spaces before settling in its current space at the Garonne.

At the heart of the Pola project is a dedicated team coordinating the collaboration across various professionals, spanning architects, urban planners, comic publishers, lawyers, health and culture organizations, and curators. La Fabric Pola actively engages with the local community; its inclusive approach fosters connections across a broad spectrum of disciplines, enriching the fabric of the community and deepening a more layered understanding of the local landscape. This success was forged through a steadfast commitment to three core



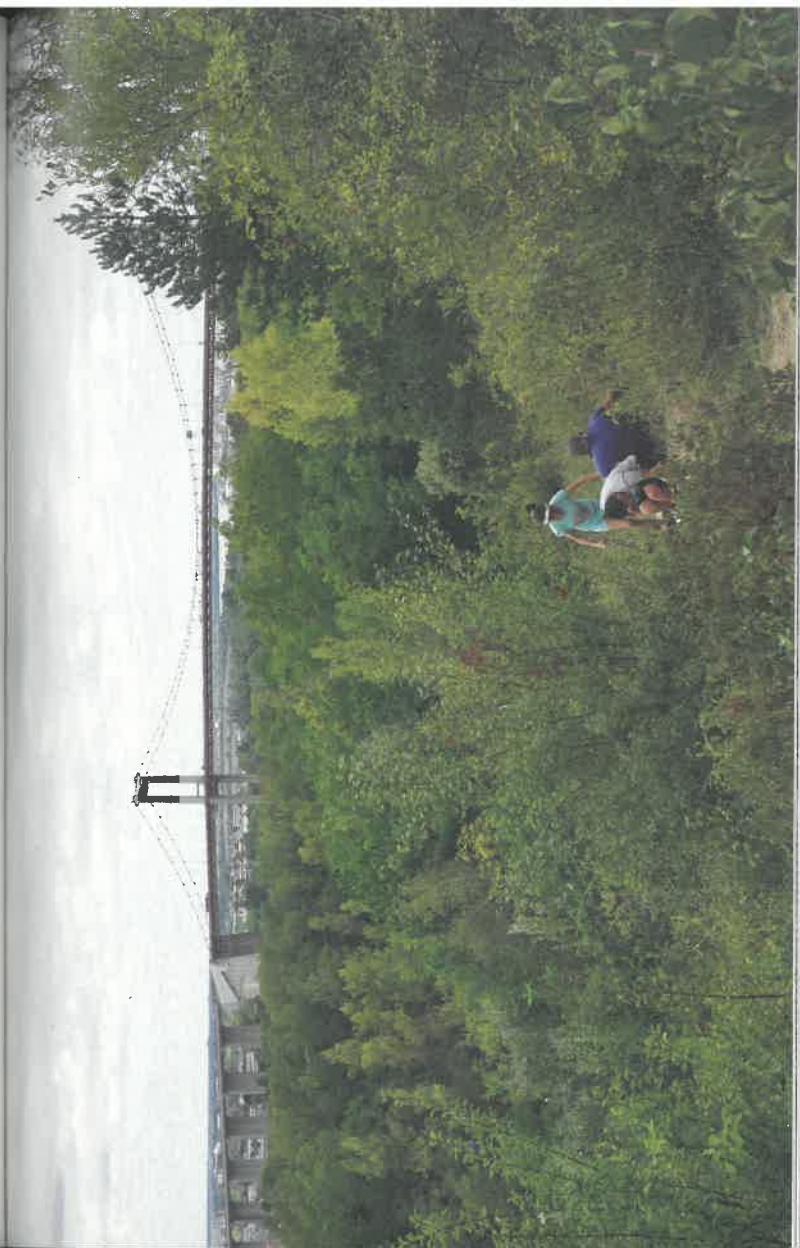
objectives. First, it serves as an axis for regional visual artists, restructuring the professional landscape. Second, it enables an exhibition space that welcomes emergent artistic visions from the local, national, and international scenes. Third, it is poised to actively collaborate with neighborhood associations, including schools and social workers, fostering mutually beneficial relationships that transcend traditional artistic spaces.

We visited La Fabric Pola to understand their work and to meet Bruit du Frigo, a collective part of the organization. They are an architecture studio focused on urban creation, embodying the ethos of cross-disciplinary collaboration and a remarkable vision for urban interventions that bridge spaces and people through art and spatial practice. Rooted in a deep commitment to benefiting the local community, this dynamic group comprises six core members and collaborates with other actors and specialists, numbering between twenty and twenty-five individuals. Their members include architects, artists, builders, and even culinary experts, each contributing their unique skills and perspectives to the collective's multifaceted endeavors.

At its essence, Bruit du Frigo's vision is to reimagine the urban landscape as an opportunity for creative expression to unveil the latent potential of neglected spaces within the neighborhood and the city. Their initiatives spark a sense of wonder and engagement by bringing new life into these environments. Through inventive actions and design, they engage residents, fostering connections with their surroundings and empowering them to take stewardship of their environments, actively

participating in the creative process. *Bruit du Frigo* has been a beacon of spatial experimentation in Bordeaux over the last decade in a world where urban spaces often remain underutilized or forgotten. We met with Yvan Detraze to visit one of their main initiatives, *Les Refuges Périurbains* (Peri-Urban Shelters), a project that created eleven artistic shelters in the Bordeaux metropolitan area linked by a system of hiking paths and byways. Eleven architectural landmarks are embedded in dialogue with their environments, inviting hikers, residents, and visitors to experience the landscape and rediscover, step by step, the city's edges, a continuous itinerary that oscillates between wilderness and human-made landscapes—one thousand, two hundred kilometers of walking distance linking perceived wastelands and the bordering areas of Bordeaux.

The suburban shelters plunge us into a journey of discovery across the metropolitan area, its abandoned spots, new developments, and remote regions that are still very close to the urban fabric. This experience invites people to temporarily inhabit the breaks of the city, shifting the approaches to understand better our metropolises, interstices, and edges. Stop off, spend the night, and rediscover nature within reach of the city. "The suburbs are the contemporary developments of our cities; they consolidate actualized notions of our urbanity. Through this project, we wanted to imagine what 'public space' means for the people in the suburbs. It is quite impressive to realize how current developments mostly focus on private investors, leaving the creation of public spaces and the questions of accessibility adrift," Yvan shared.





In France, much like in other countries, contemporary urban development features vast private areas juxtaposed against the existing city fabric, resulting in numerous gaps and discontinuities. Many spaces are left abandoned or neglected, enclosed within this urban patchwork. The project's core objective establishes a continuous, accessible thread amidst this urban complexity. The concept of periurban walks was conceived to develop a network of what Yvan calls *common lands*. This initiative reinvents public spaces tailored to the periphery and encourages alternative, non-commercialized city uses, such as hiking or overnight shelter stays. This practice has gained immense popularity, requiring advanced bookings for shelter accommodations due to the high influx of visitors.

In the 1980s, Lucius Burckhardt coined the term *Spaziergangswissenschaft* (strollology) to describe strolling as a method of discovery. He employed this approach with his students to explore the experiential dimension of spatial understanding. This unconventional perspective on the built environment is both transformational and highly accessible. Yvan currently organizes recurring guided hiking trails, attracting between fifty and two hundred participants who come together to rediscover the landscapes on the periphery. Over time, a community has coalesced around this ritual, fostering a novel connection with these neglected peripheral spaces. "At first, friends or groups of students would attend the walks," Yvan confided. "Then, more and more people started to join, some linked to hiking clubs that wanted to rediscover Bordeaux. We also have attendance from architecture or

urban planning fields, but the community is diverse. When we reach two hundred people, it becomes a transcendental experience, like human transhumance.”

As we traverse the thirteenth trail, we eventually reach Le Nuage (The Cloud), the inaugural shelter established by Yvan. By the shores of the lake within the Parc naturel de l’Ermitage (Natural Park of the Hermitage), this shelter has a picturesque design that harmonizes with the surrounding landscape, evoking a sense of playfulness and discovery. As per Bruit du Frigo’s thoughtfully crafted proposal, participants engaging on these trails are invited to uncover these shelters, connecting one trail to the next.

Thirteen years ago, Yvan initiated this exploratory journey with Le Nuage thanks to the Panorama Art Biennial. This biennial sought to unveil natural spaces through artistic interventions, and Yvan’s project proved successful. Subsequently, the Bordeaux municipality extended an offer to Yvan, proposing to develop and nurture this experimental initiative further. This resulted in a long-term agreement to see the project fully realized. Today, the Bordeaux Council is responsible for maintaining these spaces, safeguarding the installations, and actively engaging citizens through public events. They also oversee the booking website and facilitate group school visits, fostering a strong connection between the community and the city’s periphery.

The refuge—*rifugio*, *refugium*, καταφύγιο—is an ancient tradition and building typology. Usually located in the remoteness of high mountains, generally accessible only by foot, these picturesque huts are intended to provide food and shelter to mountaineers, climbers,

and hikers, allowing them to access their facilities freely, although some require reservations. The construction of refuges and shelters in the Alps dates back to ancient times when Roman roads led across the mountain passes and are found worldwide in different forms and operational organizations. Bringing this feature to the city’s edge and reinventing a peri-urban use towards wilderness helps breed a closer narrative of outdated concepts of urban and natural landscapes today.

Throughout the project’s evolution, the pursuit of bridging the discontinuity at the city’s edge encountered numerous challenges. The collective’s determination led to opening access points along the trail, each area requiring its own specific approach and consideration. In some regions, the untamed wilderness made access difficult, while in others, negotiations with landowners were intricate to establish the connections between trails. Although the majority of the trails were public, there were private paths that had to be unlocked for the benefit of the community. This meticulous and site-specific approach created an extensive trail free from boundaries or barriers to cross. Yvan initiated this endeavor before the advent of Google Maps, relying on the craftsmanship of exploration and a careful hands-on approach: one step at a time, armed with topographic maps revealing unknown territories. This urban project reshaped the perception of the environment, highlighting the stark contrast between natural and urban spaces.

Yvan’s efforts are put into preserving this juxtaposition as a tribute to the boundaries of human-made environments while keeping the exuberant wilderness

on the city's edges. It's a powerful reminder of the importance of experiencing these natural corridors and pathways, enabling us to cherish and safeguard them. This freedom to encircle the city of Bordeaux on foot, spending days in the shelters and embracing periurban nature, is a testament to the transformation of what was once abandoned into a wild and thriving realm. It embodies a living Third Space in action, an inspiring account of an enduring natural world and the innate connection to our surrounding environment.

