

THE FARANDOLE OF ONE THOUSANDS SAPLINGS



Carouge
(Place du Rondou – Arve Watershed)
The Carouge figure wears a carab helmet made of carab pods with simple geometric shapes.



La Paille
(Place du Rondou – Arve Watershed)
The figure of La Paille is a haystack with leafless cypress branches.

Our project combines the pragmatic principles of placemaking with a poetic narrative. It is grounded in an urban acupuncture strategy that operates at two spatial levels – nodes and networks – and addresses both short-term, transitory actions and the prefiguration of a long-term, sustainable future. Drawing on local resources, we seek to create spaces and moments that foster urban vitality and well-being, with particular attention to climate resilience. Beyond physical transformation, we engage with environmental challenges by facilitating commoning and collective action. Accordingly, each intervention is supported by activation strategies designed to mobilize and sensitize local communities – quite literally – towards sustainable ways of moving through and inhabiting the city. The idea of a moving forest inspired a folkloric and fantastical iconography, bringing to life a farandole of allegorical figures drawn from the cultural and landscape mosaic that shapes the consolidated city.

The neighborhoods of Geneva largely correspond to cultural and landscape formations with deep historical roots. In this sense, they can be seen as bioneighborhoods. We've grouped them into four biosectors, following the boundaries of the watersheds: the Rhône, the Arve, the Left Bank of Lake Geneva, and the Right Bank of Lake Geneva. Our project connects one emerging urban centrality from each watershed to the Plaine de Plainpalais. This selection – made with an eye toward morphological and geographical diversity – serves as a demonstrator of our approach. In order to celebrate the diversity of the center's tangible and intangible heritage, each bioneighborhood is associated with distinctive elements such as a guardian tree or a woodland figure featuring vernacular attributes.

We envisioned the movement of the urban forest – i.e. the thousands of saplings – as a festival bringing together all the bioneighborhoods. Within each of the four watersheds, one public square is selected to host an urban forest, activating the space for eight days before flowing toward the Plaine de Plainpalais – the recurring central gathering point. The squares are activated in succession, while the Plaine de Plainpalais gradually fills with life. Most of the trees make their transience during the farandole, but some remain in the initial square to extend the activation and allow both spaces to remain alive simultaneously. This successive pairing of each square with the Plaine de Plainpalais helps highlight peripheral areas and their local specificities, for both Genevans and visitors alike. Throughout the festival, streets become pedestrianized, and forested layers are transformed into welcoming, enchanted gathering places. Beyond celebration, the festival also functions as a platform for active consultation – strengthening dialogue and amplifying existing community initiatives.



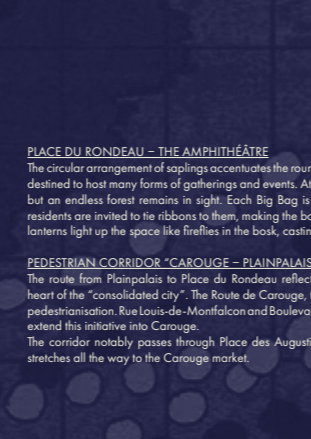
Aire
(Secteur de la piscine du Lignon – Rhône Watershed)
The Aire figure has a spherical head topped with an oak crown and drooping reed in a long cape patterned with weather motifs.

SECTEUR DE LA PISCINE DU LIGNON – THE BELVEDÈRE
The Secteur de la Piscine du Lignon is overshadowed by a 1,000-metre-long housing complex that snakes through the landscape. The space, once dominated by cars and road infrastructure, has been returned to pedestrians. Nets are stretched from rooftop to rooftop, forming a continuous canopy beneath which one can stroll or unwind in the shade. A belvedere made of scaffolding poles is erected, offering a fresh vantage point over Georges Ador's building as it emerges from a sea of foliage.

PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR "LIGNON – PLAINPALAIS" (2.5 KM)
Avenue des Tilleuls – already pedestrianized – serves as the backbone of the pathway towards Le Lignon. To improve pedestrian continuity across the covered CFF railway tracks, new service lanes should be created, particularly along Rue Saint-Jean and Rue de l'Encyclopédie. The final stretch of the route, between Route du Bois-des-Frères and Avenue d'Aires, has a low urban density and lacks pedestrian amenities. Temporary pedestrianization provides an opportunity to test various configurations for its future transformation. The pathway crosses Place Neuve and Parc Saint-Jean, and also runs near the Châtelaine cemetery.



VIEW - SECTEUR DE LA PISCINE DU LIGNON – THE BELVEDÈRE



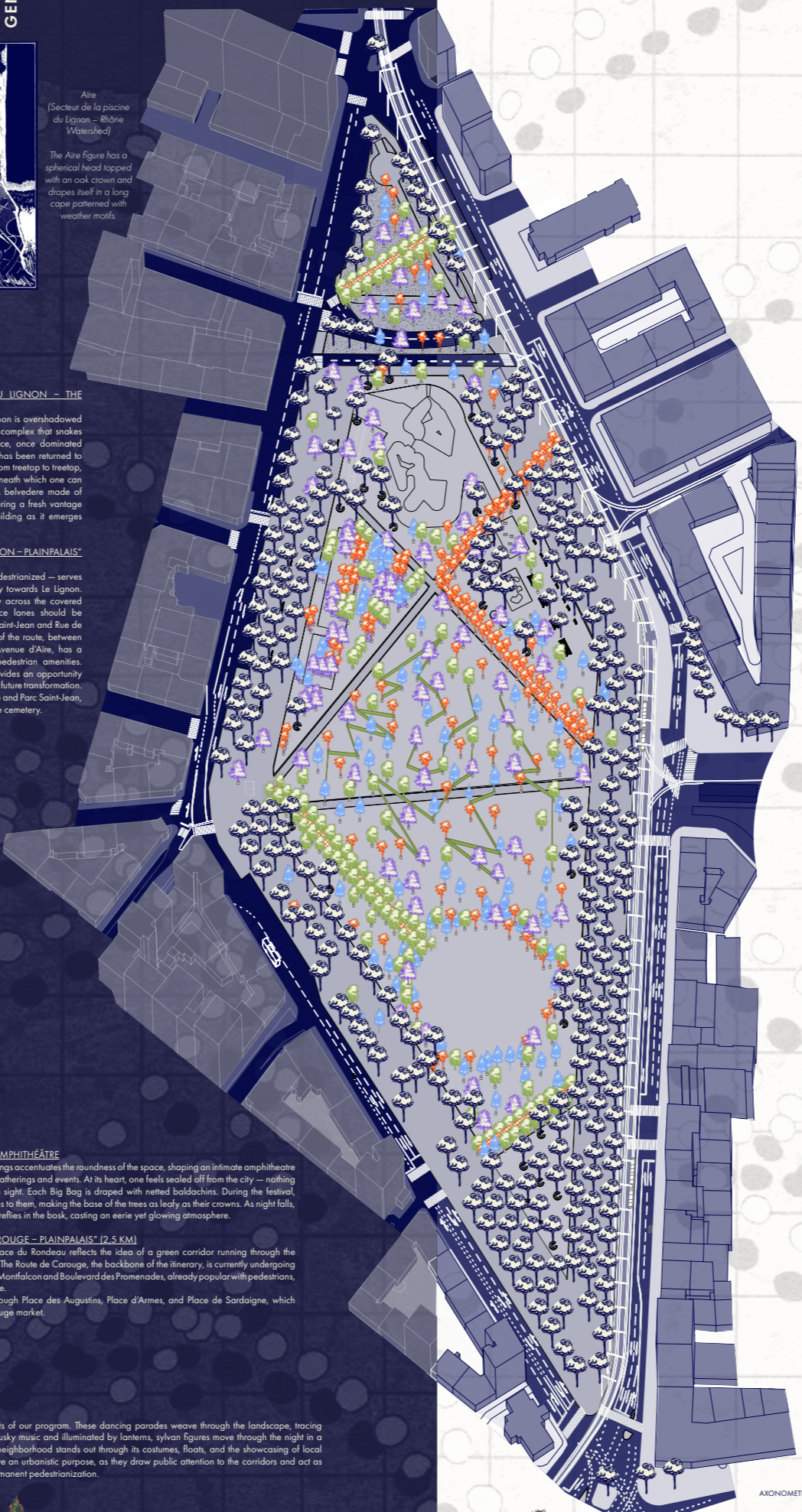
VIEW - SECTEUR DE LA PISCINE DU LIGNON – THE BELVEDÈRE

PLACE DU RONDEAU – THE AMPHITHÉÂTRE
The circular arrangement of saplings accentuates the roundness of the space, shaping an intimate amphitheatre destined to host many forms of gatherings and events. At its heart, one feels rooted all from the city – nothing but an endless forest remains in sight. Each Big Bag is draped with netted balloons. During the festival, residents are invited to tie ribbons to them, making the base of the trees as leafy as their crowns. As night falls, lanterns light up the space like fireflies in the dark, casting an eerie yet glowing atmosphere.

PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR "CAROUGE – PLAINPALAIS" (2.5 KM)
The route from Plainpalais to Place du Rondou reflects the idea of a green corridor running through the heart of the "consolidated city." The Route de Carouge, the backbone of the itinerary, is currently undergoing pedestrianization. Rue Louis-de-Monfalcon and Boulevard des Promesses, already popular with pedestrians, extend this initiative into Carouge. The corridor notably passes through Place des Augustins, Place d'Armes, and Place de Sardaigne, which stretches all the way to the Carouge market.

The farandoles are the highlights of our program. These dancing parades weave through the landscape, tracing ecological corridors. Set to daily music and illuminated by lanterns, sylvan figures move through the night in a chiaroscuro atmosphere. Each neighborhood stands out through its costumes, songs, and the showcasing of local talents. The farandoles also serve an urbanistic purpose, as they draw public attention to the corridors and act as living tests for their potential permanent pedestrianization.

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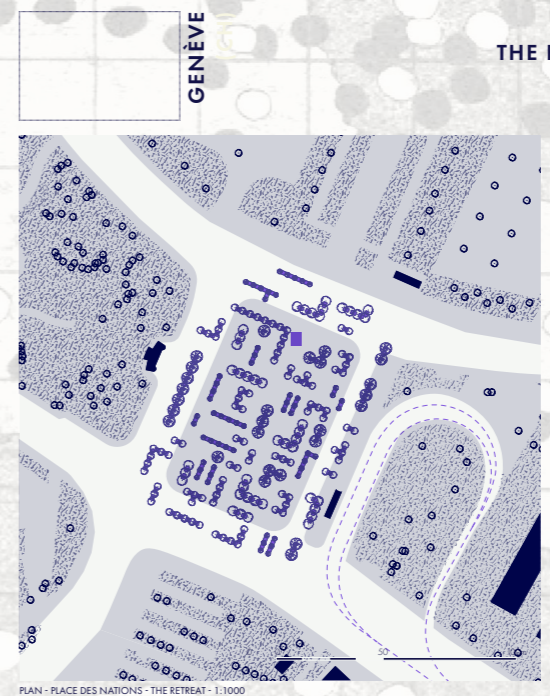
PLAINE DE PLAINPALAIS – THE CONFLUENCE
Plaine de Plainpalais lies at the very heart of the city. Seen from above, it is easily recognizable by its diamond shape and imposing scale. Throughout the year, it hosts a wide range of events – from demonstrations and concerts to fairs and circuses. It also sits at the confluence of the city's identified catchment areas. As a nod to these features, the site becomes the convergence point for the parades and identities of each neighborhood. "Weak other week", trees gradually flow in from the various squares, coming together into a patchwork that intertwines the installations designed for each area. This steady accumulation gives rise to an urban forest at the center of Geneva – a striking contrast to the built-up nature of other temporary structures.

PLACE DES NATIONS – THE RETREAT
Place des Nations is envisioned as a place of serenity, celebrating the longest of summer. The saplings follow an orthogonal layout that echoes the neoclassical structure of the landscape and extends it across the traffic lanes, pedestrianized for the occasion. Their arrangement creates a variety of spaces – small squares, alleys, and pathways – while their low density encourages a gentle, flowing stroll. The trees are arranged in pairs, allowing nets stretched between the Big Bags to become seats or hammocks where residents can relax in the shade. During the festival, the nets are customized through arts and crafts workshops and, at its conclusion, may be hung throughout the city as leisurely ornaments and lasting reminders.

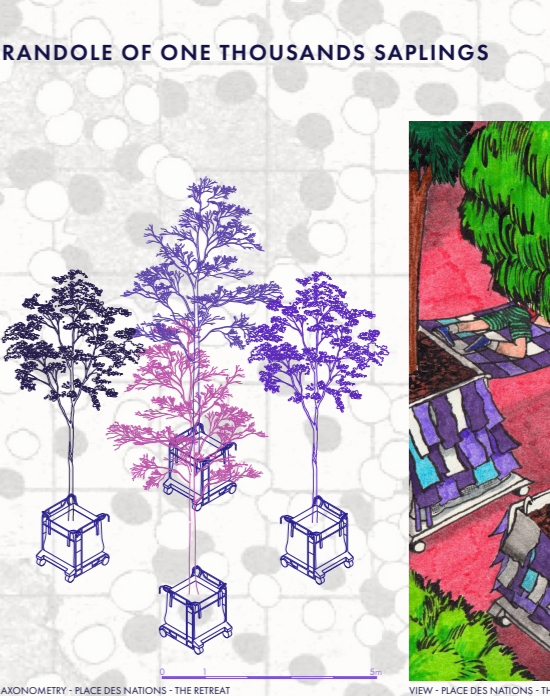
PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR "NATIONS – PLAINPALAIS" (2.5 KM)
The path linking Plainpalais to Place des Nations crosses several parks and existing pedestrian areas. Our interventions aim to mend current disconnections, allowing the parks to percolate into the roadway. The corridor passes through Parc de Vermont, Parc Baoullieu, Parc des Crochettes, as well as Place des Grattes, the forecourt of Cornavin train station, and Place Neuve. Each corridor is closed to motor traffic for two weeks, nightly from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. During this time, they come alive with poetic and artistic interventions. Afterwards, most of the saplings are permanently planted along the route.

AVENUE DE LA GARE DES EAUX-VIVES – THE MAZE
Our intervention accompanies the transformation of the station surroundings into welcoming, refreshed spaces by blending organic and structured patterns. The saplings stand scattered across the forecourt, while nets stretched between them form a shifting maze that redirects the flow of travelers. As the activation progresses, the nets become adorned with ribbons that gradually obscure the paths. By concealing the faces of passersby, the installation heightens the sensation of wandering in a crowd of strangers while fostering playful encounters.

PEDESTRIAN CORRIDOR "EAUX-VIVES – PLAINPALAIS" (2.5 KM)
In continuity with the pedestrian streets and alleys of the city center, Rue de la Terrasse strengthens the link to the Eau-Vives train station. The corridor leads through Bastions Park, Place du Bourg-de-Four, and the Rive roundabout.



PLAN - PLACE DES NATIONS - THE RETREAT - 1/1000



AXONOMETRY - PLACE DES NATIONS - THE RETREAT



VIEW - PLACE DES NATIONS - THE RETREAT

ACTIVATION
The activation of public squares by forestation aims to kindle various hearts of biodiversity and social interaction poised to ignite a broader urban transformation. Our interventions are frugal and reversible, yet their effects ripple through the urban system. Activation begins by halting motor vehicle traffic, reclaiming the space for pedestrians and sparking spontaneous social phenomena. The subsequent interventions do not alter infrastructure or the ground's materiality, but they reshape urban forms, soften existing divides, highlight living elements, and open the space to new uses. Though temporary, this new configuration provokes

a fresh perspective on the space and its potential. The activation toolkit always includes the same core elements: saplings; Big Bags; carts; nets; ribbons. Additional placemaking elements may be added, such as: chalk & paint; seating made from cut or laid tree trunks; planters of various shapes and sizes; lightweight structures for shade and comfort; lanterns and string lights; mobile kiosks; drinking water tanks; and signage. The selection of these depends on available resources and the preferences voiced by residents during co-programming. Using Big Bags – industrial containers made of flexible fabric – and related handling equipment reflects a commitment to resource-conscious logistics and the reuse of materials already present onsite. Tree species

are chosen in harmony with the surrounding vegetation and the unique qualities of each site. Ribbons and nets evoke the gentle undulation of forests and the rustling of leaves. Beyond material elements, activation also includes a cultural and festive program – outdoor dinners, dances, flea markets, performances, and games – organized in collaboration with local artists and street performers as an homage to Geneva's counterculture and free festival spirit. Designed as celebrations of togetherness and creativity, these activations also foster environmental awareness and strengthen social cohesion within neighborhoods.



Molagnoz
(Avenue de la Gare des Eau-Vives – Lake Geneva Left Bank Watershed)
The Molagnoz figure wears a mouse mask and a shawl woven from ladder leaves.



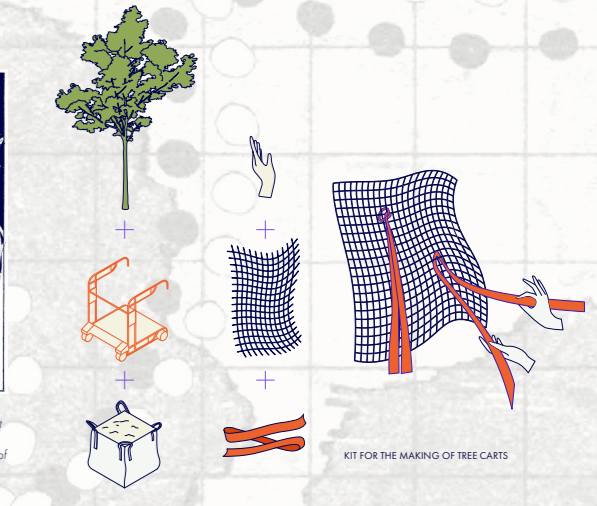
Eaux-Vives
(Avenue de la Gare des Eau-Vives – Lake Geneva Left Bank Watershed)
The Eaux-Vives figure is recognizable by its central adornment and the stem poles of nams rising from it.



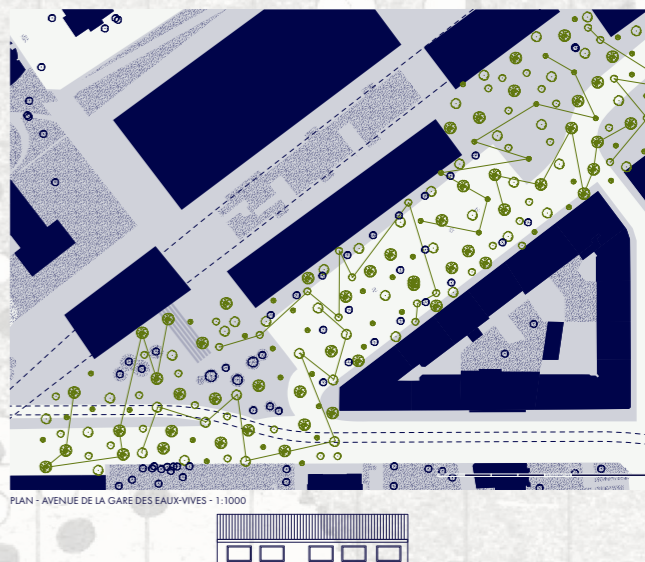
Sécherin
(Place des Nations – Lake Geneva Right Bank Watershed)
The Sécherin figure wears a bundle marked decorated with a white caponion with flourishes.



La Paille-Sacemine
(Place des Nations – Lake Geneva Right Bank Watershed)
The Paille-Sacemine figure sports a mane of maple branches and a three-barreled percut blouse.



VIEW - AVENUE DE LA GARE DES EAUX-VIVES



PLAN - AVENUE DE LA GARE DES EAUX-VIVES - 1/1000



AXONOMETRY - AVENUE DE LA GARE DES EAUX-VIVES



FARANDOLE - PLAINE DE PLAINPALAIS SECTION - 1/2000