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Headlines



School box

PARIS (FR) - Just as a colourful wooden block exactly fits into one of the holes of a child's toy, this bright yellow building volume seems to have been snugly slotted into the openings of an existing building. The twelve-square-metre structure houses the new entrance lodge of a kindergarten in the Rue Ricaut, in the south-east of Paris not far from Place d'Italie. It was designed by **METEK**, an architectural bureau originally from New York that has been based in Paris since 2004. The name of the agency is derived from the ancient Greek word *mētoikos*, which means 'urban alien'. METEK's portfolio mainly consists of small-scale projects in the French capital, where limited space must often be handled in a smart way.



The new entrance lodge is prefabricated in its entirety with the aid of a light wooden frame construction. The facade is finished with Corian panels, a material consisting of a blend of two thirds natural minerals and one third resin. The corners of the design are consciously rounded (by means of a deep drawing technique) so that the edges can be properly stressed, and so the new volume is kept separate from the existing concrete structure. Drawn on the facade is a large, rounded number '8', the number of the school, which catches the attention of passers-by. Through a new horizontal window in the existing facade, direct contact with the street is now possible.

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The interior of the block is conceived as a large piece of furniture. As many functions as possible are integrated into the walls in order to keep the central space open: toilet, small dressing area, kitchenette, bulletin board, key hanger board and desktop have all become fixed parts of the walls. The high ceilings, large square window, white walls and the integrated, linear ceiling lights make the room seem bigger than it actually is. Following the new rippling white crèche in the 18th arrondissement, Paris now has an inventive and playfully redesigned school building as well.

Tuesday | 5 February | 2013 | France | Emiel Lamers

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