



Since August 2008, the Gennevilliers waste sorting and transfer center has shared space with Extramuros® l'atelier, a company that hires the long-term unemployed and designs and makes everyday items using recycled materials. Feature article.

The Art of Materials

L'objet infini®, or Infinite Object, is being created in Gennevilliers. Exactly where you would least expect it, at Veolia Environmental Services' sorting and transfer center at Chemin des Petits-Marais, which treats 150,000 metric tons of non-hazardous waste each year. At the entrance to the facility is a building housing Extramuros® l'atelier. This company to help the long-term unemployed rejoin the workforce makes items from recycled materials, giving them a second life. Bed-base slats become lamps, post office sorting racks are reborn as writing desks and advertising banners are





The same material can be used to make several different products. Opposite, bed base slats are reborn as a basket. On the left, a designer table lamp.

Commitments



A coat rack made out of bed-base slats.



Carrying case for art works.



●●● reshaped into shopping caddies. The two partners complement one other so obviously that they were bound to meet some day. Their collaboration began with a phone call between Pascal Peslerbe, Treatment and Recycling Director for Veolia Propreté Île-de-France and Jean-François Connan, Chairman of Extramuros, the association behind the project, and Sustainable Development and Job Market Insertion Director at Adecco.

The original plan was simply to create a materials recovery loop to supply Extramuros. But the obvious value of a closer partnership quickly became apparent.

“The idea of combining the recycling of materials into new objects with an initiative to find permanent employment for people is what interested me right away,” says Pascal

Peslerbe. René Chainay, Director of Veolia Propreté Île-de-France’s landfill and materials regional branch, offered to lease the association space at the Gennevilliers facility that is unusable for sorting activities.

Waste Plus Job Market Integration

With funding from Veolia Foundation, 350 square meters of space were remodeled on two floors; rough production was set up on the ground floor. “Everything involving metal and wood,” explains Nicolas Mangione, Director of Extramuros® l’atelier.

Sewing and manual finishing is located on the second floor.

In the same building, on the other side of the sliding door, one can see the facility’s original function: a pile of glass bottles and, farther on,



Coffee table on wheels made out of a Paris plane tree, 130 years old.



A stockpile of doors, from the construction sites of private residences.

Extramuros® l'atelier has set up shop in Veolia Environmental Services' sorting and transfer center in Gennevilliers, enabling it to take advantage of the raw materials on site.



Plan for a low piece of furniture.

paper, metals, vegetable matter, etc. "This is where the shop's raw materials are," comments René Chainay. "At the association's request, my employees set aside the materials that are needed." That is no small challenge when you see how powerfully the machinery's grapples transfer waste from one container to another.

Two workers were hired under six-month integration contracts, renewable for two years, including a 48-year-old man unemployed since 1995. "It's a stepping stone," stresses Jean-François Connan, "a transition period during which the employment contract becomes a reintegration tool." The company hopes to hire six people eventually. Spurred by the implicit belief that people as well as objects can have a second life. ■



Oak coffee table.

Objects and People

"Fighting waste: of people and of materials" was what drove three friends, Rosanna Del Prete, visual artist, Isabelle Pujade, painter, and Jean-François Connan, Sustainable Development Director at Adecco, to found the Extramuros association in late 2005.

At the time, their idea was to create prototypes for objects made out of recycled materials. "It didn't take long for us to start thinking about recovery systems," recalls Jean-François Connan. Initially, Extramuros

contacted companies such as La Poste, Vinci and L'Oréal, which were quite interested in the project. The three founders did not lose sight of their original goal of creating a waste recovery company to help bring people back into the world of work. A meeting with Veolia Environmental Services and a decisive feasibility study made it possible to get the project off the ground. Extramuros® l'atelier was created in 2007. Its management and development were entrusted to Nicolas Mangione.



Rosanna Del Prete, visual and graphic artist; Nicolas Mangione, director of Extramuros® l'atelier; Isabelle Pujade, painter, modeler, theater and film set designer.

Going Farther by Working Together

The budding partnership between Veolia Environmental Services and Extramuros® l'atelier has opened up a number of new horizons for both. Extramuros® l'atelier has already created eco-designs for some of Veolia Propreté Île-de-France's trade show stands, making them reusable. "In the future we'll probably need reception areas at the Claye-Souilly facility, which receives 3,000 visitors a year," says Pascal Peslerbe, Director of Veolia Propreté Île-de-France's treatment and recovery activities. "We may have Extramuros® l'atelier lay

them out and decorate them." The company could also design and make premium promotional goods or corporate gifts. "Lastly, we're studying the possibility of coming up with joint products/services, combining recycling and Extramuros® l'atelier's reuse of the recovered material. "That, for example, is what we may offer makers of advertising banners, which could enjoy a second life as shopping caddies or secondary raw materials for industry."