

GARDEN
CITY
SUPERGREEN
BUILDINGS,
URBAN SKYSCAPES
AND THE NEW
PLANTED SPACE

ANNA
YUDINA

Thames & Hudson

Réalimenter Masséna

Lina Ghotmeh - Architecture / Paris, France

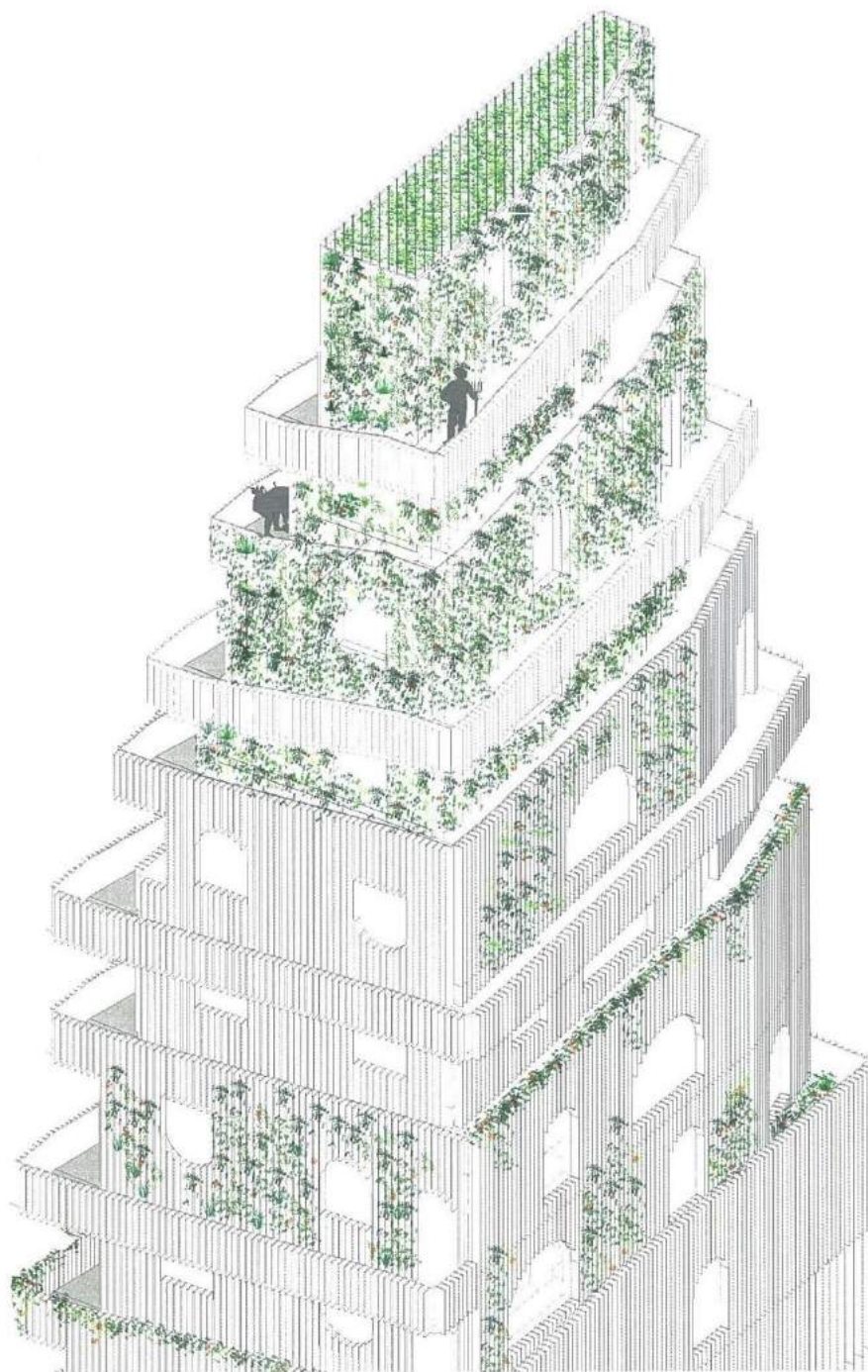


Countless research laboratories around the world are working hard to address the challenge of feeding the earth's population, which is expected to number 9 billion by 2050. Yet many people are unaware of these efforts and the solutions proposed by experts. Which is why, in her winning proposal for the Reinventing Paris competition, architect Lina Ghotmeh suggested converting Paris's disused Masséna railway station into a showcase for 'the food of tomorrow'.

A gathering place for local residents and a destination for foodies, Réalimenter Masséna will bring together urban farmers, researchers, chefs, artists and the media to help foster a food culture and raise awareness of the ways in which our food is grown and produced. The former railway station will be complemented by a tower, the first in Paris to be built from wood - and, no doubt, to host such a wide range of food-related activities.

The two interconnected buildings will house 750 square metres (8,073 square feet) of urban farms, as well as educational workshops, an interactive canteen, a food market, a concert venue, a street-art gallery and a few residential units. Having every step of the food-production process - 'from plough to fork' - represented in one place will help to promote a zero-waste policy. A spiral ramp will connect the tower's thirteen floors, reinforcing the project's collaborative spirit.





Dedicated to urban farming, the top three floors of the wooden tower will be entrusted to AgroParisTech (a Paris-based university specializing in life sciences and agronomy) and Sous les Fraises (urban farmers of organic vegetables). Half of the project's total area will be occupied by research, entertainment and retail spaces, while 25 per cent will be given over to housing, including flats for the resident chef, artist and researcher. The spiral ramp will incorporate planters, so that the residents, too, can grow food.





Stone Gardens

Lina Ghotmeh – Architecture / Beirut, Lebanon

Designed by Lina Ghotmeh (formerly of DGT Architects), this tall, monolithic volume with textured façades and variously sized apertures brimming with greenery is an architectural comment on the scarred history of her hometown, Beirut. 'Violence has left traces on the skin of [the city's] buildings', says Ghotmeh. 'It has reshaped and hollowed them. Overgrown concrete skeletons change our concept of an "opening" on the facade.' Together with the concrete masses of new-build apartments and the few remaining traditional, tile-roofed houses, these ruins – which, ironically, are just about the only green spots in the city – form the urban fabric of the Lebanese capital.

It is to this mix that Lebanese photographer Fouad Elkoury decided to add a new building with a sense of

timelessness. The family-owned site was once home to the Middle East's first concrete company, founded by Fouad's great-grandfather, and, later, to the office of his father, the renowned Lebanese architect Pierre el-Khoury. The surroundings, too, are remarkable, with the port district rapidly being transformed into a vibrant creative hub while still maintaining the rough charm of a former industrial area. Ghotmeh's thirteen-storey tower comprises a series of apartments aimed at young professionals and design aficionados, as well as the Arab Center for Architecture, a foundation established to raise public awareness of architecture and urban design. As if carved out of a chunk of earth, it resonates with the raw open-endedness of the city and makes greenery an important part of its identity.

With marine views on every floor, the project's uniquely laid-out apartments are provided with their own 'urban gardens'. These gardens come in a variety of shapes and sizes, from the double-height 'Jungle' to an individual, shade-giving 'Tree' and the 'Plant', a glimpse of green that inhabits the smaller openings.

