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MagalieRastello is a designer, she co-founded Magma studio in 2018. The Magma design studio creates projects that promote territories, their histories, and their resources. The objects, graphics, and spaces created question our relationship with the environment and are produced with ecological materials, sourced locally. Tailor-made projects are shaped collaboratively and produced using processes that combine traditional manufacturing techniques and digital design.

Magalie has been working as an associated design researcher for Cité du Design in Saint-Etienne for around ten years (2008-2018). She also works as a design professor at École Supérieure d'Art et de Design Toulon Provence Méditerranée (ESADTPM), where she teaches design with a territorial approach, in relation with local resources.

<https://www.magmastudio.co/>

Maillages/*Meshes* - A survey on emerging convivial design in a human scale city

Magalie Rastello

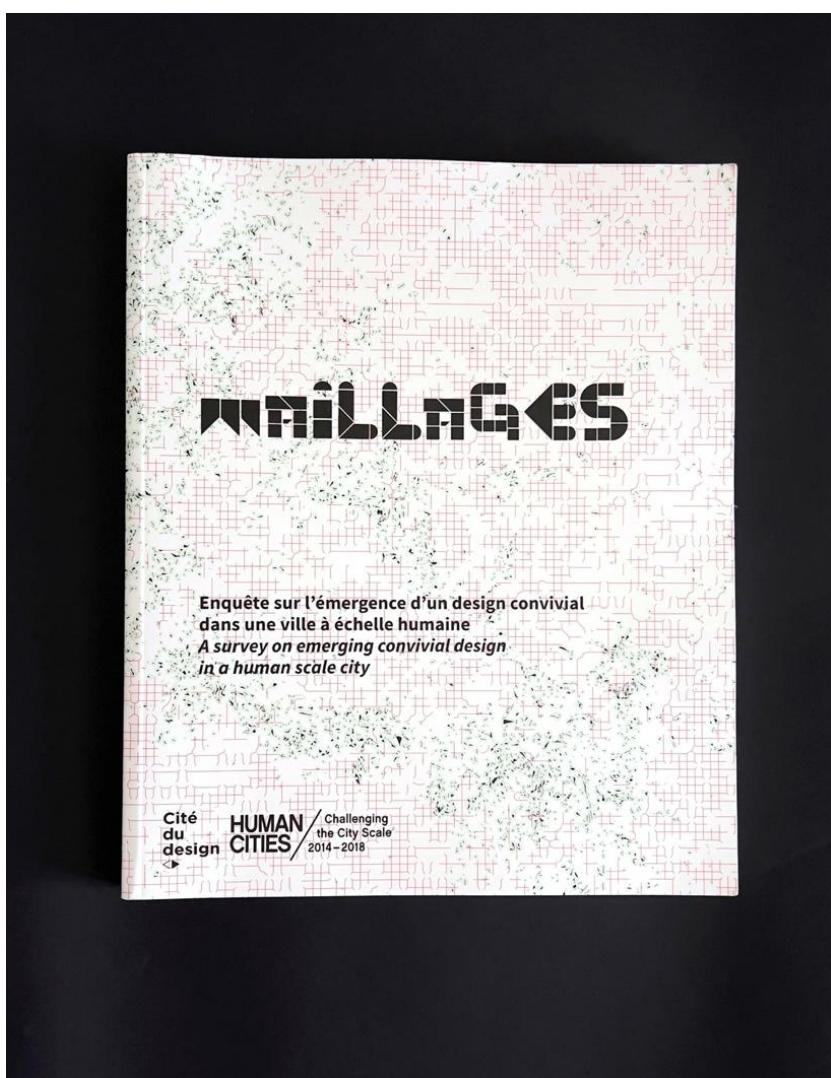
Abstract:

Maillages is an investigation into the emergence of convivial design in a human-scale city, conducted by Magalie Rastello. Through a study of local and collaborative initiatives in Saint-Étienne, this work explores how residents, collectives, and community actors transform their daily environment through innovative and participatory practices. The survey reveals how these often informal dynamics create connections among local stakeholders and redefine the city in an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient way. Design is envisioned here as a hybrid and collaborative process, capable of enhancing urban conviviality and empowering citizens.

Keywords:

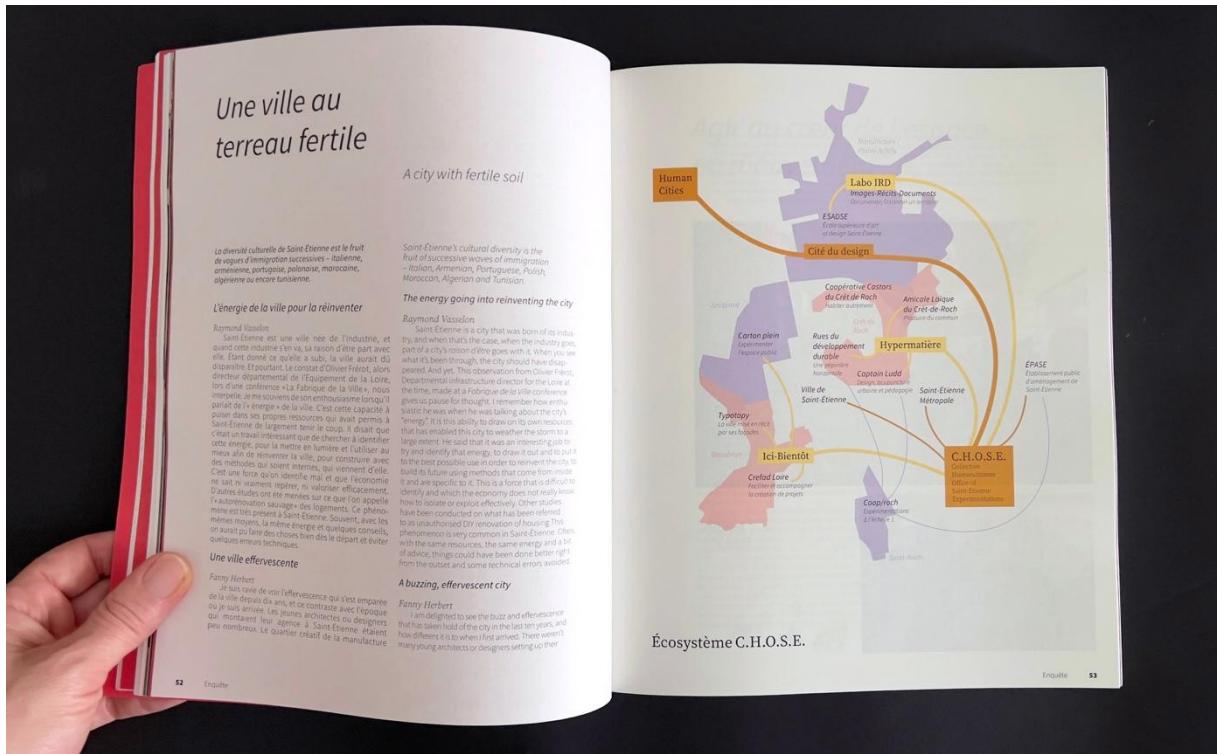
Participatory design, convivial design, social design , social innovation, urban survey, co-design, collaborative processes, territorial ecosystem, human-scale city, resilience, sustainability, ecology , local ressources , empowerment, inclusion

Maillages / Meshes consists of a review of experiences and experiments. It is a survey made by the designer Magalie Rastello who interviewed the collectives that were active in Saint-Étienne during the Human Cities_Challenging the city scale project. Her work is completed by structuring commentaries by the heads of the programme at the Cité du Design (Josyane Franc, Camille Vilain, Olivier Peyricot and Nathalie Arnould), all of which has been editorialized by Victoria Calligaro, with the unwavering support of the associations and collectives and, finally, some reflective contributions from Raymond Vasselon.



A city is an entity in perpetual movement that is permanently evolving. Whether these transformations are minute, gigantic, discrete, ostentatious, brutal or progressive, their implementation involves several scales of organization and different processes. Big events can sometimes radically change the face of a city for a few days, but the deeper changes are often those that set in over the time it takes to carry out urban development and major renovation projects. Cities are also subject to other types of changes, whose timescales vary, and which are initiatives of inhabitants and voluntary sector actors who wish to act on their everyday environment.

Often on the very edge of the established frameworks and rules that govern them, the actors in these adventures are breaking new ground. They are exploring new fields, reinventing “modes of doing”, reconsidering the practices of their ecosystem and their own practices, even in their professions. As they do this, innovative schemes arise out of civil society in a diffuse, nebulous and organic way, on the fine mesh of the local territory. New forms of organization are created, new frameworks of action produced. Starting from an impetus given by a group of inhabitants or a structure in the voluntary sector, the projects involve two types of participants: volunteers and professionals. They each contribute in their own way: the association seeks public or private funding; the inhabitants give their time or their specific skills.



During the European program Human Cities_Challenging the City Scale, the Cité du design, lead partner, has chosen to put the spotlight on different projects undertaken by the inhabitants of its own city. As the Human Cities_ Challenging the City Scale program has sought to show throughout its course, the stakeholders grappling with the challenge of the urban transformations give their projects a strong political and experimental dimension. Human Cities program, at its final phase, was no longer questioning the effects of scale leading to interactions between the actors, but a form that was gradually revealed as the survey progressed: the mesh.

This perspective opens up a space for possibilities that gives structure to the actors' feelings of connections between them, linking to their multiple realities. The effective life of a city is made up of meshes and binders, tenuously linking the entire

territory in one and the same net, which encompasses everything in a single living environment, including the institutions, the official producers of the urban, but also residents, their imaginations, their actions, human and non-human.

As the Human Cities European program came to its end, we can say that the focus on one city – Saint-Etienne – and the local actions that we know so well has enabled us to get our feet back on the ground. *Maillages (Meshes)* proposes to draw out of the Saint-Étienne situation an exemplary structuring of citizens' initiatives, which, over the last decade, have given the city a remarkable identity: the medium- sized city claimed as a space on the right scale, ideal to produce resilience, a city on a human scale.



Beyond the visible forms, the artefacts and the development of spaces, the urban initiatives and changes we refer to in this book

are thus completely integrated into a dynamic of social innovation through design in a territory. The approach to design is essentially a hybrid one and design itself seeps into urban practices often without being identified. It is the observation of the rich variety of actions and the diversity of the areas addressed that enables us to assert the existence of a form of convivial design in the territory.

<https://humancities.eu/story/publication-maillages/>

Conclusion

Design as a Lever for Conviviality and Territorial Empowerment for over a decade, I explored the intersections between design, citizen participation, and social innovation. My approach—both investigative and creative—reveals how local initiatives, often marginalized or informal, can become driving forces in rethinking the city on a humanscale. Through projects like *Maillages*, and my role in **Hypermatieres** during **Human Cities_Challenging the city scale but in many other projects**, I try to demonstrate that design is not merely an aesthetic or functional discipline but a collaborative process capable of weaving connections between diverse actors—residents, associations, institutions—and transforming urban dynamics from within.

My work embodies a vision of design as a catalyst for conviviality: it is not just about creating objects or spaces but fostering conditions for communities to reclaim their environments, develop shared knowledge, and build collective narratives. In this way, my practice of design is committed, experimental, and deeply rooted in territorial realities.