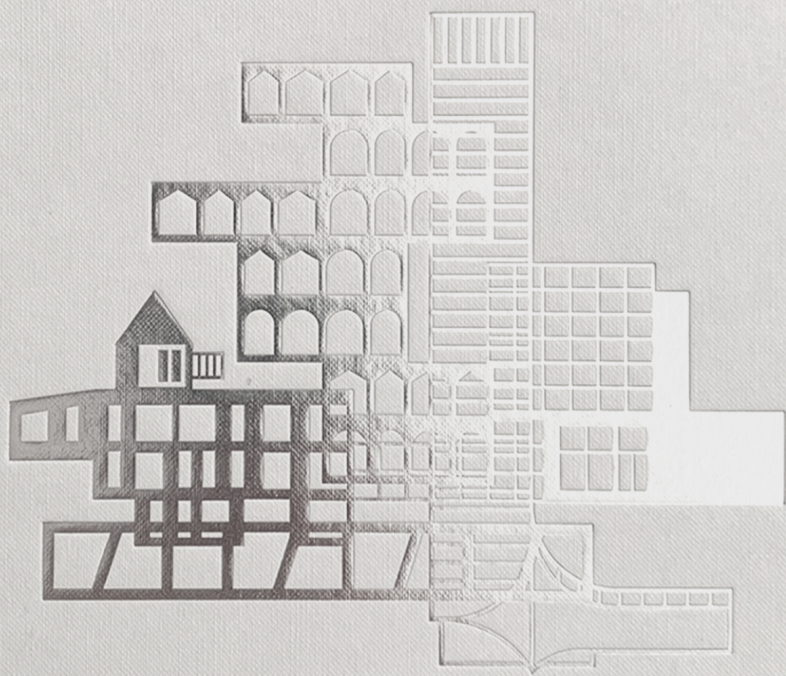


OPPOSITES ATTRACT:  
ACDF au fil des contrastes

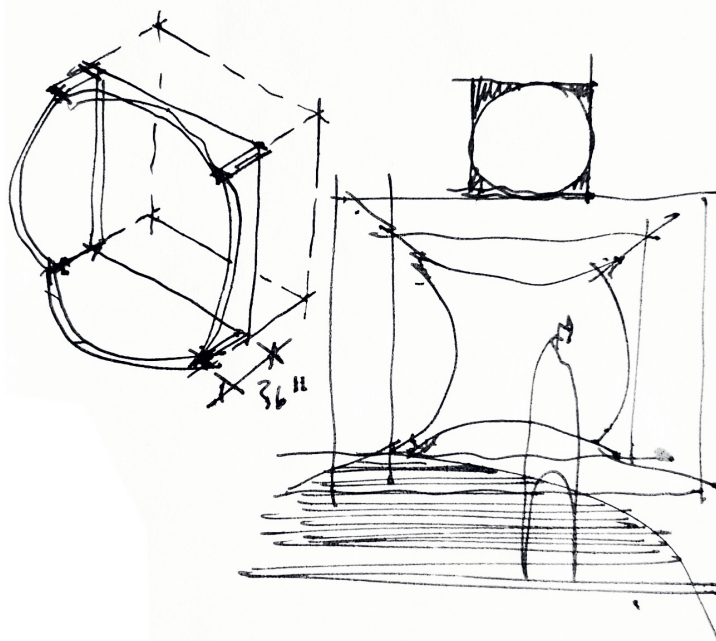


FRAME





41



OPPOSITES ATTRACT: ACDF au fil des contrastes

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# Unsung Heroes

Contrasts are the lifeblood of perception, creating a dynamic tension that fuels our imagination. It's the interplay of light and shadow, the extraordinary in the mundane. It's within these contrasts that we find intrigue and beauty.

Contrasts are pivotal in our sensory and cognitive experiences. They're the fundamental mechanism that enables differentiation. Their presence allows us to discern between objects and their surroundings, creating depth and perspective. They stimulate our brains, keeping us alert and engaged. They compel us to compare, evaluate differences, and make judgments. This stimulation is not just mentally galvanic; it's crucial for survival. It enables us to discern friends from foes, safety from danger, the edible from the poisonous.

However, the appeal of contrasts extends beyond the visual. They tug at our emotions. The sweet and the sour, the joy and the sorrow – these contrasts make our emotional experiences more nuanced. They allow us to appreciate the full spectrum of human emotions, from the depths of despair to the heights of ecstasy.





02

03



- 01 Photograph showcasing the volumetric simplicity, with an articulated upper volume responding to the city scale and a base integrating with its surroundings.
- 02 Hotel lobby with terrazzo-clad columns, balancing vertical grandeur with a human-scale experience.
- 03 Central terrazzo bar designed to enhance visual connections.
- 04 A wooden volume energises the hall, complemented by Valérie Jodoin Keaton's photographic collage of Montreal.





nostalgia to be celebrated somehow. I grew up on an orchard on the South Shore of Montreal, near the US border, and I wanted my kids to get a taste of that tradition because it's definitely something that has shaped my creativity.

The beauty of an orchard, much like a vineyard, lies in its nature, which is meticulously organised in an almost architectural manner. This presents a fascinating dichotomy; you're outdoors, in the middle of nature, but you're confronted with a rhythmic, colonnade-like structure that bears the unmistakable imprint of human design.

I greatly appreciate this aspect. It's both organic and composed. I like to incorporate the art of composition early in the design of a residential project.

That's why the home's focal point is a young apple tree. It became a central pillar, connecting the architecture, the house, and the family. Whether through its flowers in the spring, its foliage in the summer, its fruits in the fall, or the snow that accumulates on its branches in winter, this tree participates extraordinarily in creating a stimulating living environment. It stands as the barometer of the days' and seasons' moods.

Caring for the tree is a shared activity for my family, from pruning its branches to harvesting its fruit.

**FLG** In your portfolio, grand commissions coexist with smaller projects like your own residence and the Little Sister Cottage. How do you navigate resource management across these varying scales? Does your creative methodology adapt to the project size?

**MF** I often alluded to our pragmatic approach when you and I started these interviews. However, let me clarify: composition has always been a cornerstone of our work; it's never been a mere byproduct of our actions, a side effect of what we do. Instead, it's the main event, the overarching composition that carries the melody.

Our designs consistently present a visually robust yet highly functional aesthetic, maintaining fluidity in the simplest way possible.

To answer your question, we don't skimp on resources. We conduct extensive research to bring these smaller projects to life. Also, there's a personal, almost emotional, layer to these commissions.

Take the Little Sister Cottage, for instance. It was commissioned by a friend of a friend who had recently divorced but had also found a new flame. Between them, they have five children. They owned this charming old *piece-sur-piece* (squared-log home) with a beautiful rusted metallic roof that needed some TLC.

When they approached me, their request was simple: 'We need to change the roof. We're tired of maintaining the façade. Let's clad it out, extend it here...'

Still, I interjected, 'It's a splendid home! It would cost a small fortune to restore that rustic charm.' What they didn't realise was that I was thinking about the kids. Having experienced my parents' divorce, I didn't want these children to see their memories wiped clean.

So, we decided to create a volume that mirrored the size of the existing structure. That's why we christened it *La Petite Soeur*, or The Little Sister, as it takes cues from the pitched-roof home it adjoins.

**FLG** I'm intrigued by the interplay between your pragmatic approach and the emotional aspect of your work. It strikes me that these two elements are intrinsically linked; designing with emotions in mind is, in itself, a pragmatic strategy, wouldn't you agree? Can you elaborate on the residence's architectural design and how you



