



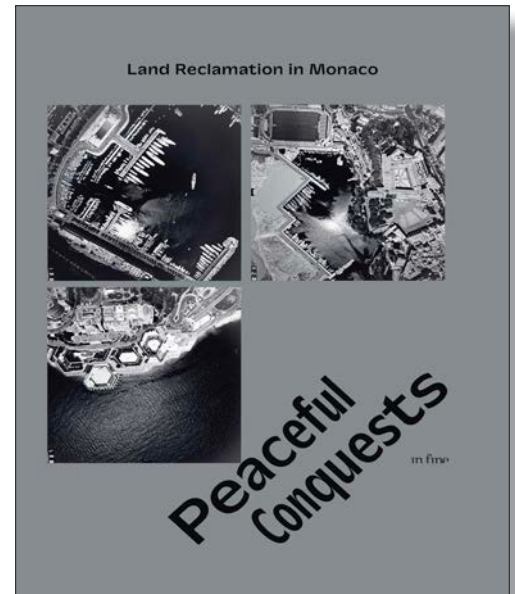
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PEACEFUL CONQUESTS

LAND RECLAMATION IN MONACO



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Peaceful Conquest, land reclamation in Monaco. The title of this book, in the form of a deliberately provocative oxymoron, goes directly to the heart of the contemporary political issues that the Principality has opted to promote, namely development and environmental science. The two interact in concert to guarantee the country a peaceful future.

Because of the loss of territory that saw Monaco's geography radically shrink after the Franco-Monegasque Treaty of 1861, space became an essential requirement. The limited access to land helped Sovereigns to imagine a host of initiatives, many of them technically pioneering and avant-garde.

The exhibition invites visitors to explore these geopolitical, social, urban, technical - in short, the human stories upon which Monegasque culture is built. To that end, it brings together a large collection of cartographical and photographic archives, along with various plans and models of past and present land reclamation projects and the new living spaces they created.



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Félix Marek, View of Monaco from La Turbie (ca. 1900)
 Archives du Palais princier de Monaco



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Providing new insights, offering new perspectives on our daily life, and promoting knowledge are all vital components of the cultural policy deployed by Monaco's Department of Cultural Affairs. The policy is reflected in this book, and the exhibition which preceded it, both inspired by the donation of a private collection of photographs depicting land reclamation projects.

On the basis of the wealth of sources and the substantial work carried out to inventory a large number of documents held in Monaco on this particular subject, the Department of Cultural Affairs awarded Björn Dahlström the task of developing and present these precious archives which deal at the same time with the past of a territory, its current configuration and its future prospects.

Visitors are invited for a very special look at an urban landscape that is familiar yet constantly changing, like the Mediterranean against which it nestles.

Françoise Gamberdinger
 Director of Cultural Affairs



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Alexissey, View of the town and fortress of Monaco, from a drawing made in the 17th century (undated)
 Heliogravure, 45,5 x 63,5 cm
 Collection Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, n° 1936.52

For contemporary observers, the relatively tiny scale of the Principality of Monaco is striking. The size of this sovereign State (2.02 square kilometres, or 202 hectares) is exceptional in Europe, for we have forgotten what our continent's geography once looked like. In the France of the *Ancien Régime* period, and in Renaissance Italy up until the 19th century, most of the feudal fiefs ruled by their own sovereigns were of a similar, modest size, and resisted the unifying movements of the great imperial and royal regimes with varying degrees of success.

If the country was miraculously able to retain its independence, it was thanks to the special talents of the Grimaldi dynasty, with all its tumultuous and colourful history. The Principality's unlikely survival can be attributed to its ability to withstand the succession of shocks brought by the modern age. Having been brutally erased from the map during the French Revolution and attached to the Alpes-Maritimes *département*, it nonetheless succeeded in reclaiming its sovereignty. Prince Honoré IV regained his throne at the Congress of Paris (1814) in the name of the principle of *legitimacy*, a shared political conviction of the Holy Alliance.

The Principality and its Princes thus succeeded in the impressive feat of navigating every stage of the modernising process which, everywhere else, swept away the old map of traditional Europe with all its complex contours. Monaco was then able to overcome the succession

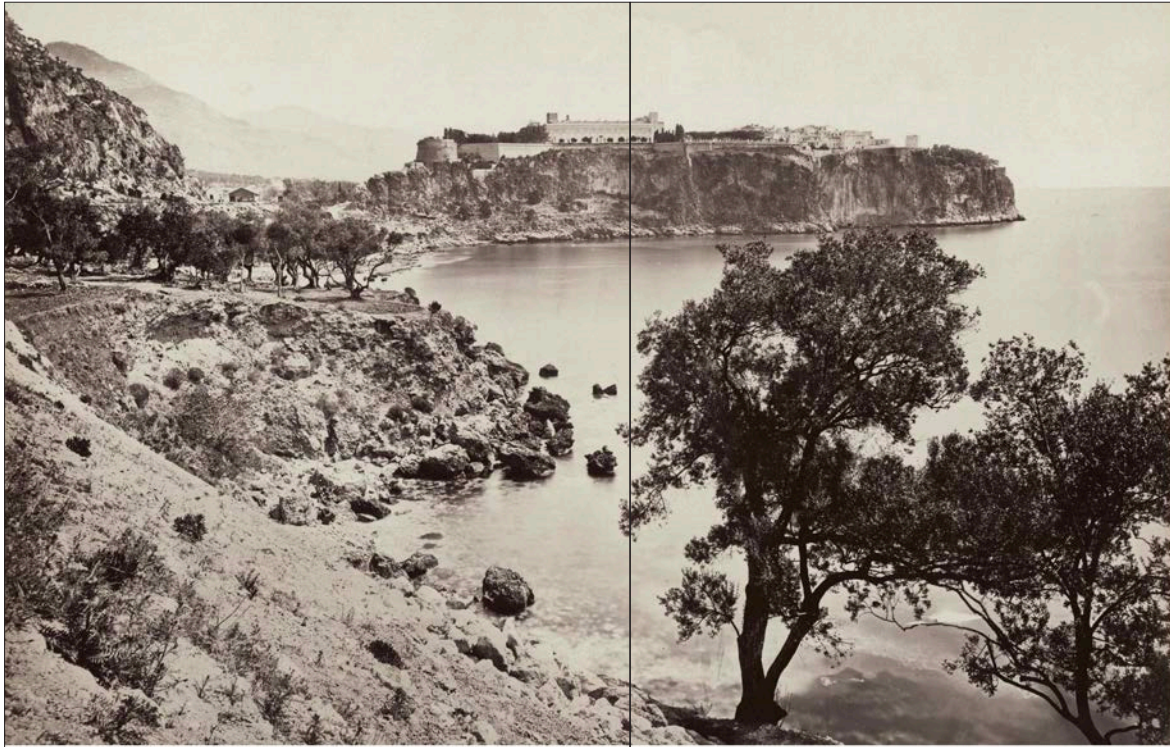
of sudden political and industrial upheavals that marked the age, from the rise of nationalism to the irreducible Italian unification movement. The Principality, politically resuscitated but still a subsistence economy, was deprived of its agricultural income from Roquebrune and Menton during the crisis of 1847 and 1848. The agreement between the French Empire and the Kingdom of Italy awarded the County of Nice to France, at the expense of Monaco, which saw its land area drastically reduced. Yet this was not the end of the story. Conveniently, the loss of territory just happened to coincide with a revolution in transportation, and the invention of tourism. Prince Charles III, with great foresight, seized upon the first signs of this new modernity, ordering the construction of roads, railways, hotels, and a casino (overseen by François Blanc). It was an ingenious approach that saw Monaco roll out the proverbial red carpet for the first ever tourists from Europe's aristocracy. In the space of a few years, this spectacular development would bring far-reaching change and determine the path of Monegasque prosperity for the long-term. This fundamental change ushered in the growth of the city and the Spélugues district, now renamed *Monte-Carlo*.

The development of the coastline was of course affected.

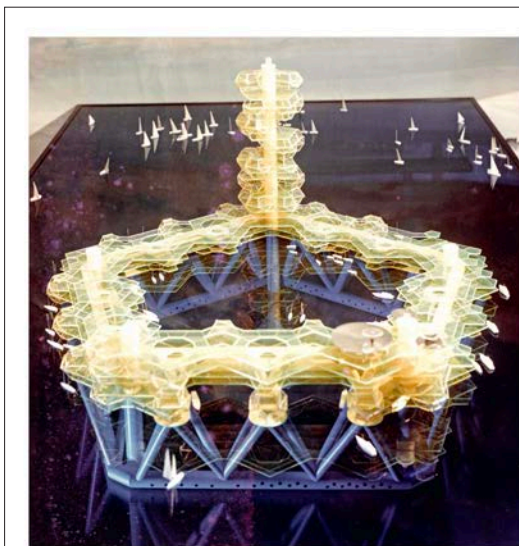
The development of the coastline was of course affected.

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Mūnegu e scūū de scheyu
 "Monaco is on a rock"
 (traditional saying)



Attributed to Miguel Alós, Monaco, view of the Rock from the Anse de Fontvieille (ca. 1927)
Archives du Palais princier de Monaco



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Édouard Albert, Model of the artificial floating island, Monaco (unrealized project) (1963-1967)
Chromogenic print
The Kandinsky Library, a documentation and research centre in the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, gift of the Albert family, 1985

To build on water. This is the crazy ambition of those who, lacking available land, have developed unprecedented architectural and urban designs. Houses that either float or stand on stilts were the earliest versions of this aspiration. Dykes and embankments, in contrast, are much more technical forms. Why should we be cowed by this difficulty? Although the issue may appear symbolic, it is also strategic. In Monaco, the lack of space justifies the peaceful conquest by "the land over the sea".

Boosted by industrial success, the 19th century was able to develop the machinery required to create new infrastructure projects. The large ports prided themselves on quays and wharves of great size. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Principality reorganised its seafloor in order to build beautiful promenades but also to ensure its port functioned perfectly. Shallow water in certain places made this possible.

Half a century later, with the benefit of new technologies, architects and urban planners around the world dreamed of developments that bordered on utopia. Statistical projections indicated an unprecedented demographic boom, and Japanese cities announced their rapid overpopulation. At the dawn of the economic miracle, the Japanese archipelago summoned its specialists to curb this phenomenon. In 1958, the city of Tokyo even called for a new urban plan, but the resistance put up by landowners in combination with the lack of available space led to what had hitherto

been considered impossible: building on water.

Kenzo Tange, an architect, called for the development of Tokyo Bay in accordance with a master plan based on the construction of buildings that reinterpreted traditional and archetypal forms on a large scale. His colleague, Kiyonori Kikutake, proposed "floating cities". A young Frenchman, Paul Maymont, arrived in Tokyo during this burst of enthusiasm with the commission to produce a pilot study for an extension to the Franco-Japanese Institute. He quickly became the French-speaking spokesman for a generation of Japanese architects and brought back fascinating images to Europe to advance this bold research.

While Paul Maymont authored patent applications for earthquake-resistant constructions that floated on air mattresses, he also enthusiastically created visuals of the future of cities in French architectural magazines.¹ Édouard Albert, the architect of the Paris's first skyscraper and a champion of modular construction, also became fascinated with the difficulties faced by Japanese architects. However, no logical opportunity existed in France to develop proposals that were as advanced as those in Japan. Europe had very few places facing similar challenges - except in Monaco.

**Extensions, Intentions,
Architects on Land
and at Sea**

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coastline in the open air, vast real-estate operations were undertaken, and tower buildings sprang up along the seafloor.

At that time, these developments were unheard of on the Riviera: at the end of the 1960s, vertical architecture was rare in Europe. Paris, London, Milan, and Berlin readily embraced this innovation, and Monaco quickly followed in their footsteps. After all, the world's major coastal cities, popular with the jet set, such as Honolulu, Acapulco, Rio and Miami, had daring skylines. Tower buildings exemplified modernity and luxury, and were an expression of power and confidence.

As the idea emerged of continuing the creation of land from the sea near Fontvieille, the Principality began work of a different kind. The extension of the Spélugues

plateau, the vast rocky promontory dominated by the iconic Casino, was a technical and technological challenge. At this location, the cliff plunges steeply into the sea, leaving architects and engineers with very few possibilities. Therefore, strictly speaking, the extension became not in the sea but "over" the sea.

Jean Ginsberg, a French architect known for having broken the Principality's restraint in his quest for verticality by constructing the first high-rise building facing Port Hercule, proposed a "megastructure". In many respects, the word may seem graceless. It has been widely used since an English historian of architecture, Reyner Banham, published a book that has since become a reference: *Megastructure*.² The book's cover shows an imposing and even gigantic building that

imposing and even gigantic building that announces the author's intention to define the "urban futures of the recent past". These vast constructions are the results of dream projects and artificial topographies, like the *Woburnberg*, the "inhabited mountain" envisioned by Walter Gropius in 1928. These monumental complexes have become a reality and do not belong to the dreams associating "fun & flexibility" – to quote Archigram's cheerful proposals – but embody a future concerned with stability.

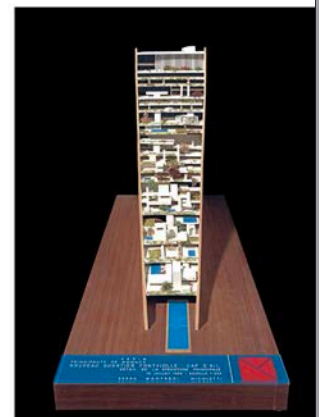
Jean Ginsberg probably did not concern himself with such considerations: his aim was to develop thoughts on housing, but also on geometric variations, the integration of art and architecture, and, in general, on three-dimensional urbanism. The programme commissioned from him by the Neue Heimat – the German trade union construction cooperative that instigated the project in the early 1970s – entailed the construction of a "complex" comprising an international conference centre (with a 1300-seat auditorium), a casino, a luxury hotel with 650 rooms and suites, and a complex of 150 apartments. It was to be created on a narrow strip of land 500 metres long. To overcome the constraints created by this difficult situation, a large concrete platform measuring 25,000 m² was designed: its pillars plunged directly into the Mediterranean. Stab urbanism? Almost. The Spélugues complex hides behind its 35-metre high road tunnel, made famous by the Monaco Grand Prix. Pedestrians walk through the

complex's vast terraces that host gardens and public spaces, and the strict separation of traffic from the development completes the modern ideal represented by the project. Delivered in 1978, the complex was officially opened in a context that was increasingly unfavourable to gigantic and optimistic forms. It marked the end of a particularly swaggering "futurology".⁴

Towards a new urbanism?

In this context, Fontvieille represented a milestone in Monaco's urban and architectural history. The possibility of extending the Principality to the west of the Rock, however, had left other ambitious architects the

Guy Venteville. Photographic montage showing the Spélugues complex (1971) Médiathèque de Monaco



Manfred Nicoletti. Megastructure of an artificial hill (1966) Model made from cardboard and wood, 46.5 x 21.5 x 81 cm Collection du Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, n°2004.73

them was Manfred Nicoletti, a member, like Paul Maymont, of the GIAP, the Groupe International d'Architecture Prospective. In 1966, he designed not a floating city but a "Satellite City". His proposal attempted to reproduce the image of hills and natural amphitheatres: a few kilometres away, in Villeneuve-Loubet, the huge Marina Baie des Anges construction site, which bore similarities with Manfred Nicoletti's design, encouraged hopes that such plans would be carried out on a large scale in the Principality. At the same time, work began on the largest extension that has ever been built in Monaco a 220,000 m² area of land that represented a 16% expansion of the territory.

A Franco-Italian group operating under Monegasque law – the SADIM – was created to carry out the work on the periphery of the old Fontvieille district, which, at the foot of the Rock, had historically been dedicated to

industry (flour mills, breweries and chocolate factories). The press quickly described the project as "gigantic", if not "utopian". To enable the project, an embankment one kilometre long was built. It rests on a truncated pyramid whose base is 90 metres wide and lies 47 metres beneath the water surface, a record at that time. Forty concrete caissons filled with sand were stacked on top of this embankment: those most critical of the project even spread the rumour that they contained all the region's rubbish. On top of the caissons, which stand "as high as a six-storey building", lies a reinforced concrete slab. Lastly, a breakwater was built along this shoreline. The project was completed in 1971. However, it was not until two years later that the Monegasque state acquired the entire Fontvieille terreplein and its port.

In the 1980s, the first phase of the housing developments was built. As Manfred Nicoletti's plans were considered too daring,

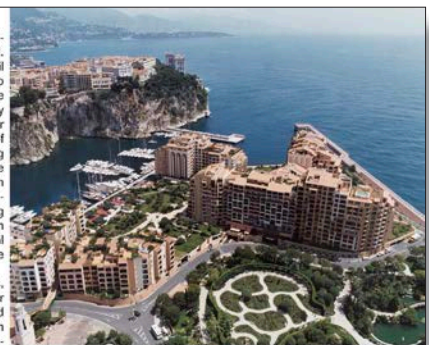
they were set aside in favour of a more moderate, "neo-Provençal" vision. For the critic and historian Charles Jencks, "modern architecture died in St. Louis (Missouri) on July 15, 1972 at 3:32 p.m." when a group of housing blocks delivered in 1954 was dynamited.

of housing blocks delivered in 1954 was dynamited. Unrelated to theory, the oil crises of 1973 and 1979 also jeopardised all large-scale projects, and post-modernity became a significant factor in the debate, with its goal of abandoning urban-planning theories – including the one detailed by Le Corbusier in the Athens Charter, the product of large-scale housing estates and slab urbanism – as well as architectural forms, including high-rise buildings.

In these circumstances, architects, notably Léon Krier and Maurice Culot, appealed for a "new urbanism" from Brussels, a metropolis considered a victim of the excesses of modernism. In Italy, the *Tendenza* and, in France, the *Typomorphologie* movements upheld a return to a traditional vision of the city, composed of streets, squares and avenues, but also of buildings on a "human scale". Those constructed in Fontvieille offered an idealised interpretation of the characteristic Italian town. Bay windows were flattened, shutters became blinds, and balconies were turned into loggias. The roofs were no longer flat but sloping and decorated with Roman tiles. Within this new impetus, François Spoerry, a key figure in

this "new urbanism", drew up an "offshore" proposal for Monaco. Having made a name for himself in the late 1960s with the lagoon city of Port Grimaud in the Var, whose traditional architecture and canal-based layout makes it a "Venice of Provence", he developed plans for Monaco in the same spirit, but the recession of the 1990s put an end to his project.

"Starchitecture" and eco-district
Whatever the crisis, the imagination of architects is never curbed. A good example

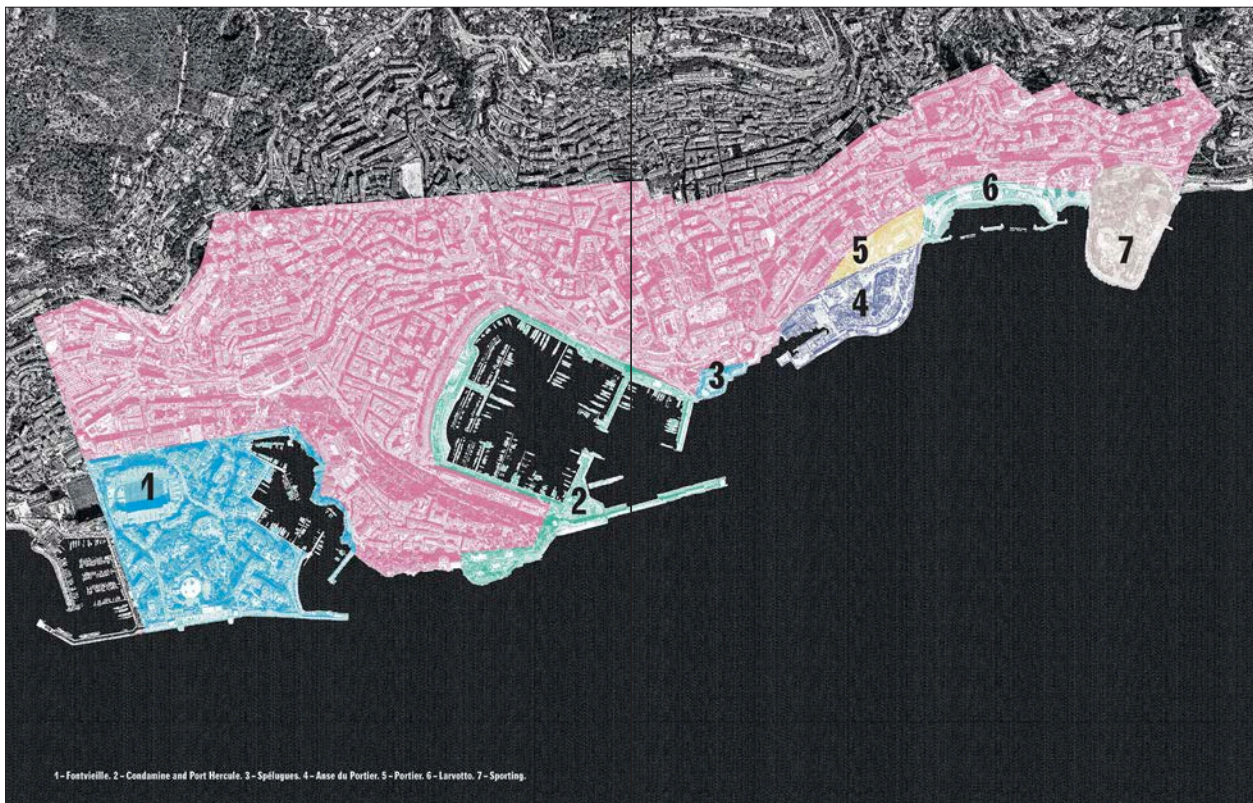
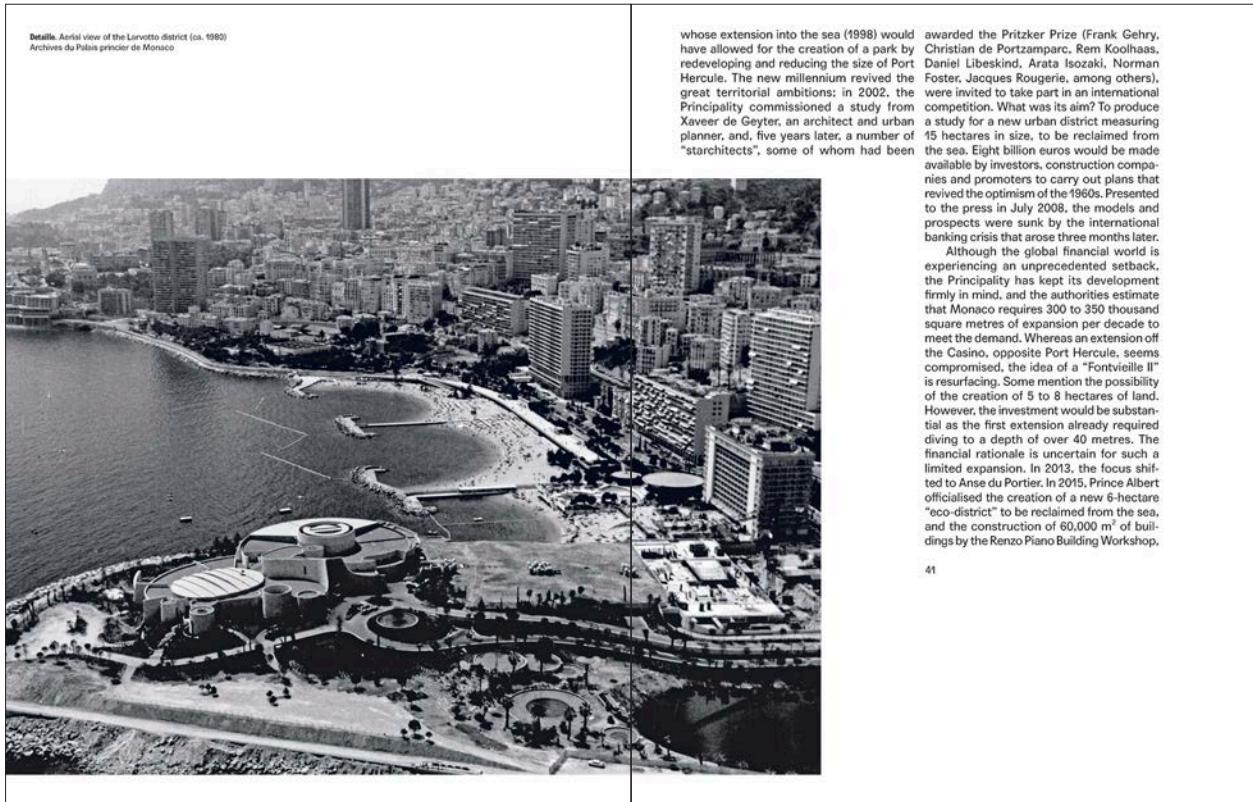


Aérogames. Aerial view of the Princess Grace Rose Garden and Fontvieille harbour (ca. 2000) Collection Institut audiovisuel de Monaco

Georges Detalle. Aerial view of the construction of the terreplein in Fontvieille (September 1971) Archives du Palais princier de Monaco

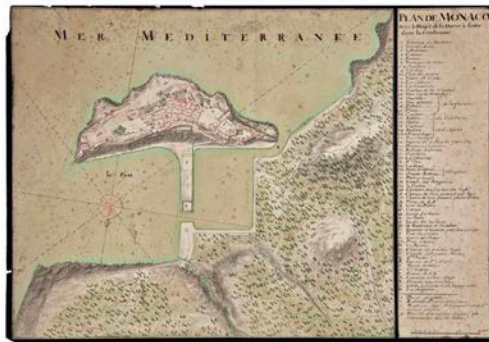
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Anonymous. 18th century maps showing development of the port (ca. 1710-1720)
Watercolour, 41.5 x 58.5 cm each
Archives du Palais princier de Monaco



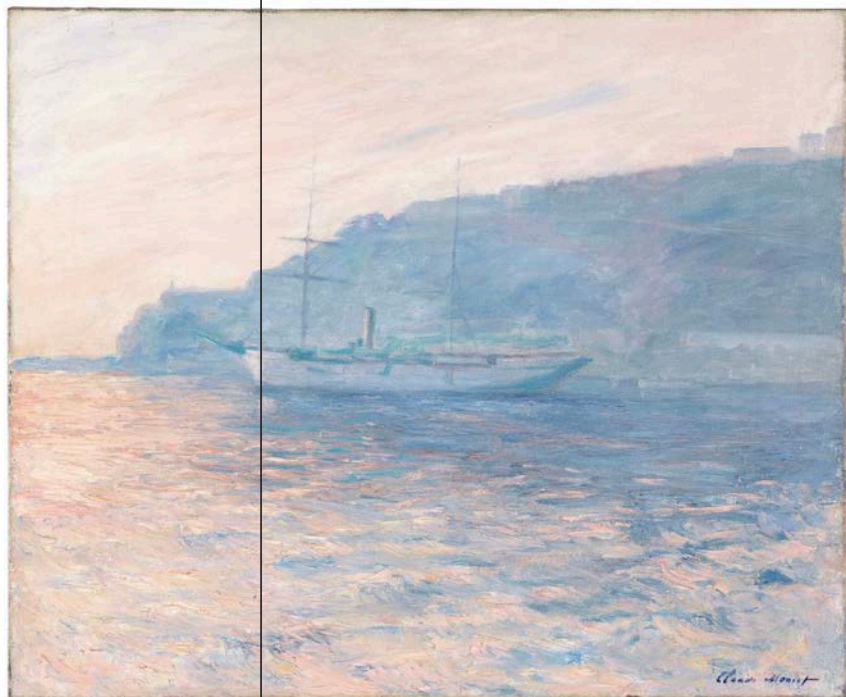
Condamine and Port Hercule
For a long time, Port Hercule was the main gateway to the Principality of Monaco. In the early 20th century, Prince Albert I was keen to usher his state into the modern age, and the port development project was declared to be of public utility in 1901.

Responsibility for the works was handed to the engineer A. Batard-Razellière, who began by overseeing the construction of the southern pier, a real feat of technical mastery, given the depth of the bay. The Quai de Commerce or commercial quay to the south was created in 1908, and the Quai de Plaisance or marina dock followed in 1914. The port entrance, some 30 metres deep and marked by two iconic lighthouses, is capable of accommodating the world's very largest yachts. Two tunnels link the southern quay to the goods terminal at La Condamine and to the Fontvieille district, reflecting the port's commercial role. The new Quai Albert I^{er}, which was extended in 1923, consists of a jetty built on the beach, equipped with

a central platform, a landing stage, and a saltwater swimming pool.

Work on the port took place at the same time as some of the major speed boat and seaplane meetings (1904-1923). As the venue for international regattas and air shows, Port Hercule would soon become a veritable mecca for sporting events and technological innovations. Quai Oriental, which was officially opened in 1926 under its original name of Boulevard Louis II, formed part of the Monaco Grand Prix circuit from 1929 onwards. Meanwhile, the Monte-Carlo Rally and motor boat competitions ensured that sports remained at the very heart of the Principality. In 1961, Quai Albert I^{er} was redeveloped with the construction of Stade Nautique Rainier III, with a central wharf added later. Following the demolition of the gas plant in 1957, Quai Antoine I^{er} was given

Anonymous. Monaco bay (ca. 1900)
Collection Société des Bains de Mer

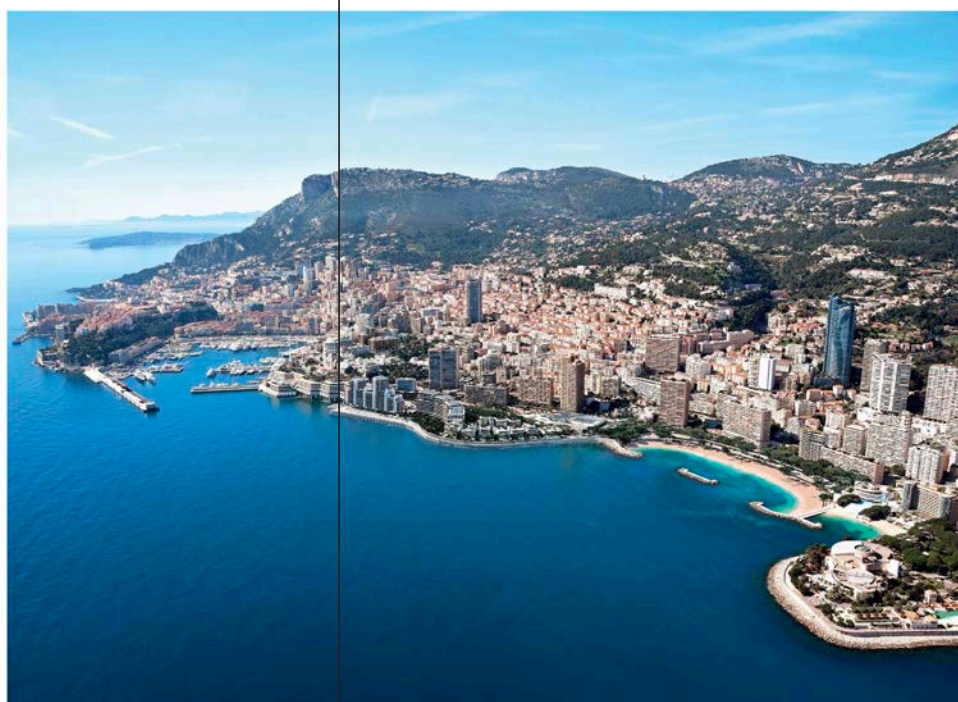


Clara Maier. Port of Monaco (Dawn) (undated)
Oil on canvas, 60 x 79 cm
Collection Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, n°1993.11

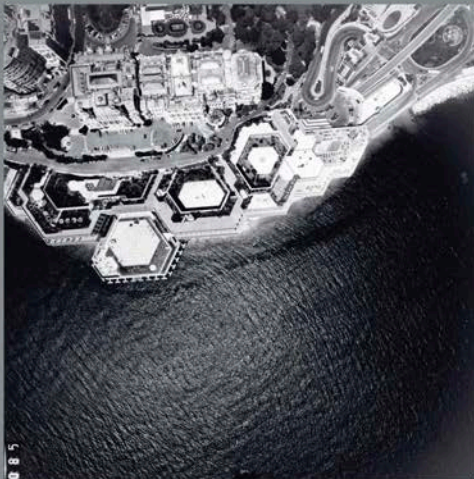


Georges-Louis Rogalle, *La Jetée du port* (The port jetty) (1891)
Oil on canvas, 90 x 70 cm
Gift from M. Jacques Parsi - Collection Nouveau Musée National de Monaco, n° 2005.13.11

Nicolas & Pierre - EPF&P - *Michal Design Paysage*, Aerial perspective view and model of the Anse du Portier project (2022)
S.A.M. Anse du Portier



Land Reclamation in Monaco



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