precedent in the Pompidou Centre’s famous external escalators, which used to be the greatest free ride in Paris. Here, the experience is like walking through a big, fractured greenhouse with views of the Seine filtered through the delicate veil of moiré patterning. Strips of French oak are soft underfoot, so it also feels like the promenade deck of a great ship.

And there’s that green. Jakob + MacFarlane’s lurid colour scheme clearly owes a debt to high-tech colour coding and leaves no doubt as to the distinction between old and new. Why green? Because the Seine is a green river,” says MacFarlane, but don’t be fooled by such gnostic pronouncements. The plug-in is piece of highly invasive engineering and construction, its form arrived at by the systematic deformation of the concrete grid. The original structure was based on a rhythm of four 7.5m-wide bays followed by a larger 10m-wide fifth bay, and the new implant riffs on this regular beat, simultaneously subverting and enriching the original geometry through the process of digital distortion. The complex tubular steel was fabricated by descendants of Gustave Eiffel, who are still in the business of making challenging structural concepts a built reality, and each of the 644 double-glazed panels is unique.

Trudging across the deserted, snow-covered roof in a winter dusk makes it slightly hard to imagine the building as the vibrant experience its backers and designers envisaged. But Paris has a vigorous on-plan air culture, and no doubt such a creative architectural conversation will draw the crowds. Fast forward to the summer and things should be very different.

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