

# *The Building Site of the National Archives*

Commissioned by the OPPIC - 2005-2012

In the winter of 2005, the Émoc (Établissement public de maîtrise d'ouvrage des travaux culturels) commissioned Gilles Raynaldy to photograph the «Tartres site» and its surroundings in the northern suburbs of Paris, on the edge of the communes of Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, Saint-Denis and Stains, where the new National Archives building was to be constructed. The images were intended to provide the architectural jury with a visual record of the surrounding urban landscape. Agricultural activity and traces of rural life - fields, disused water towers, derelict land - were juxtaposed with large housing estates. In 2008, the photographer was approached again by the client to photograph the archaeological excavations, and then in 2010 to follow the construction site through to completion. The result is a collection of around 500 images.

The photographer has taken this traditional monitoring of a construction site, which is usually limited to documentation and communication by the companies, and used it to create a memory of the different layers that naturally overlap, hide each other and fade over time on a construction site. His photography becomes an archaeology of the present. With the photographs of the mutations of 19th-century Paris in mind, he has also photographed the surroundings of this building site, which is destined to undergo radical changes in the times to come. Other photographs show the workers at work, reminding us that every architectural work is also the work of its builders.

The first part of this series was exhibited in 2005 at the National Archives in Paris in 2005. A second exhibition took place in the new building in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine from September 2012 to October 2013.

(extracts from the series)

## **Related link:**

Interview on France Culture on the occasion of the exhibition at the National Archives in 2012

<https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/ballade-des-archives-nationales/l-expo-photos-de-gilles-raynaldy-pierrefitte-sur-seine>





The site,  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
February 2005



The site,  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
February 2005



Water tower, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, February 2005

The site, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
February 2005



Avenue de Stalingrad,  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
February 2005



The future site bordered by allotments, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, February 2005

Allotments on the site, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, February 2005



Avenue Emile Zola, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, February 2005



Avenue Emile Zola, Villa du Nord, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, February 2005



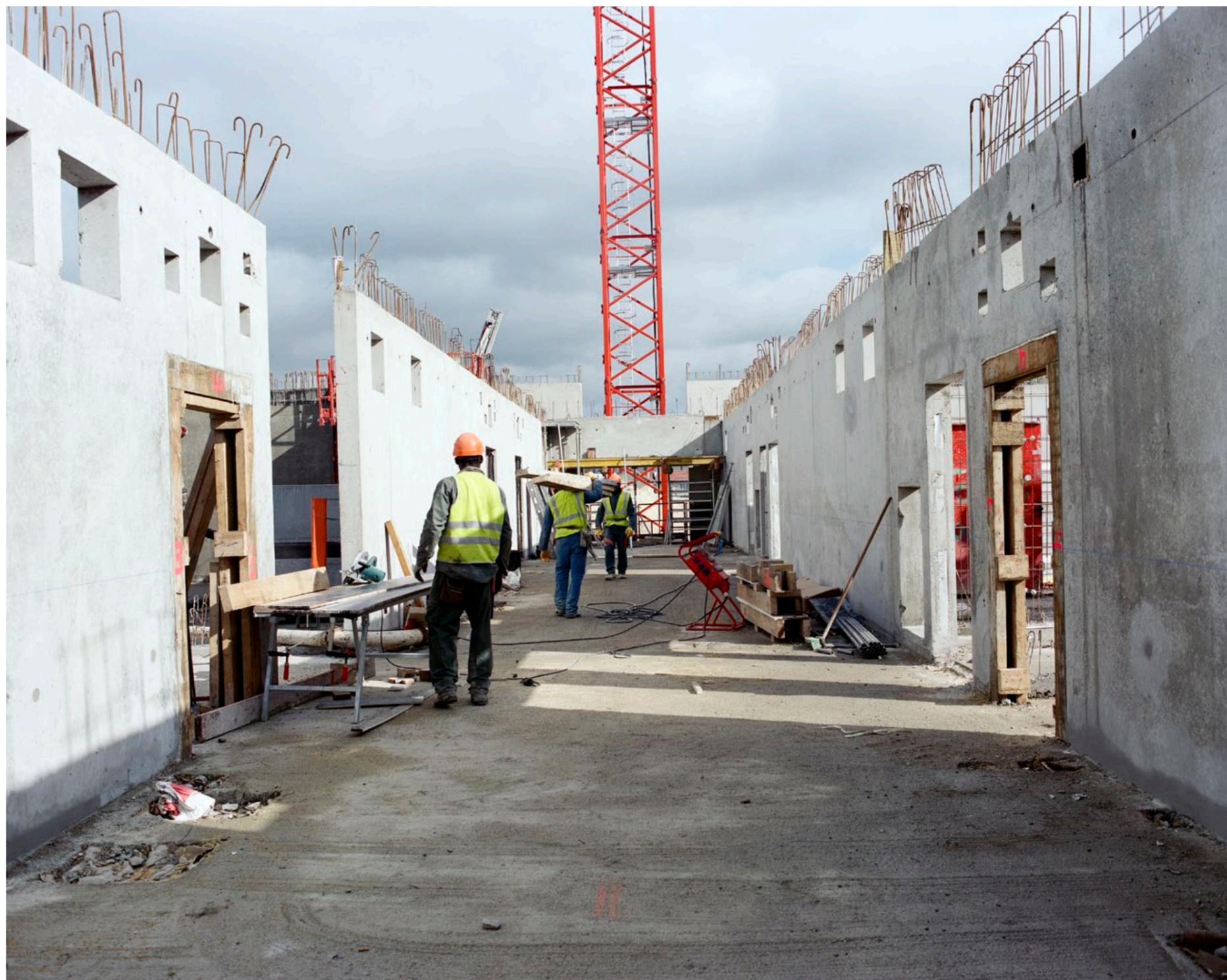
Avenue de Stalingrad,  
Saint-Denis, February 2005



Cité Jardin, place M. Pointet,  
Stains, February 2005



Beginning of the structural work  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
26 February 2010



Beginning of the structural work  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
2 April 2010



View from the roof  
of the building,  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
7 April 2010





View of the building,  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
16 July 2010







Villa du Sud, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
19 October 2010



View of the building, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, 3 June 2010



View of the building, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, 14 October 2010





View from a field,  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, 17 May 2011





Corridor under construction, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, 20 July 2011

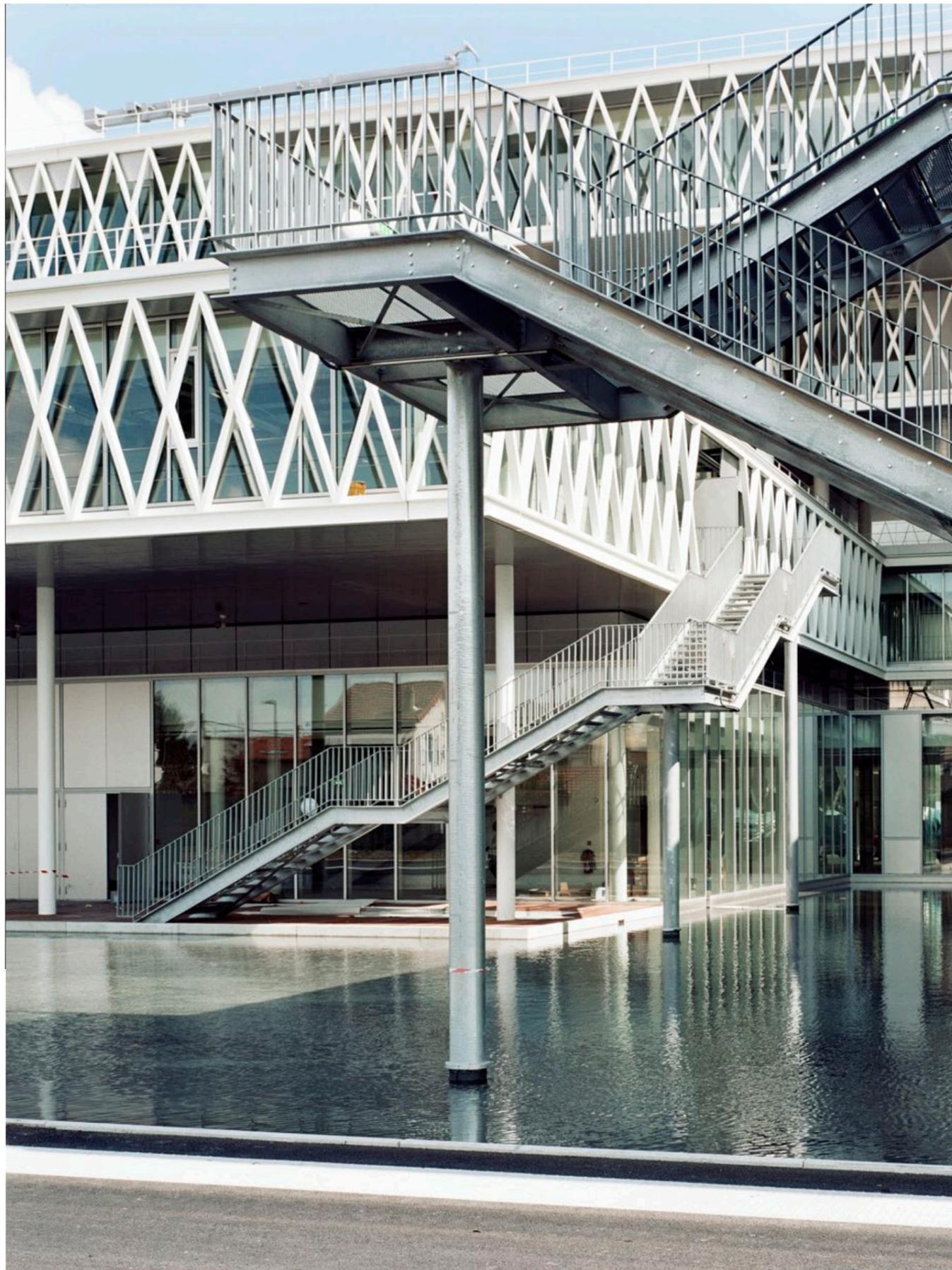


View of the building from Avenue de Stalingrad, Pierrefitte-sur-Seine, 16 July 2011





View of the construction site,  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
24 November 2011





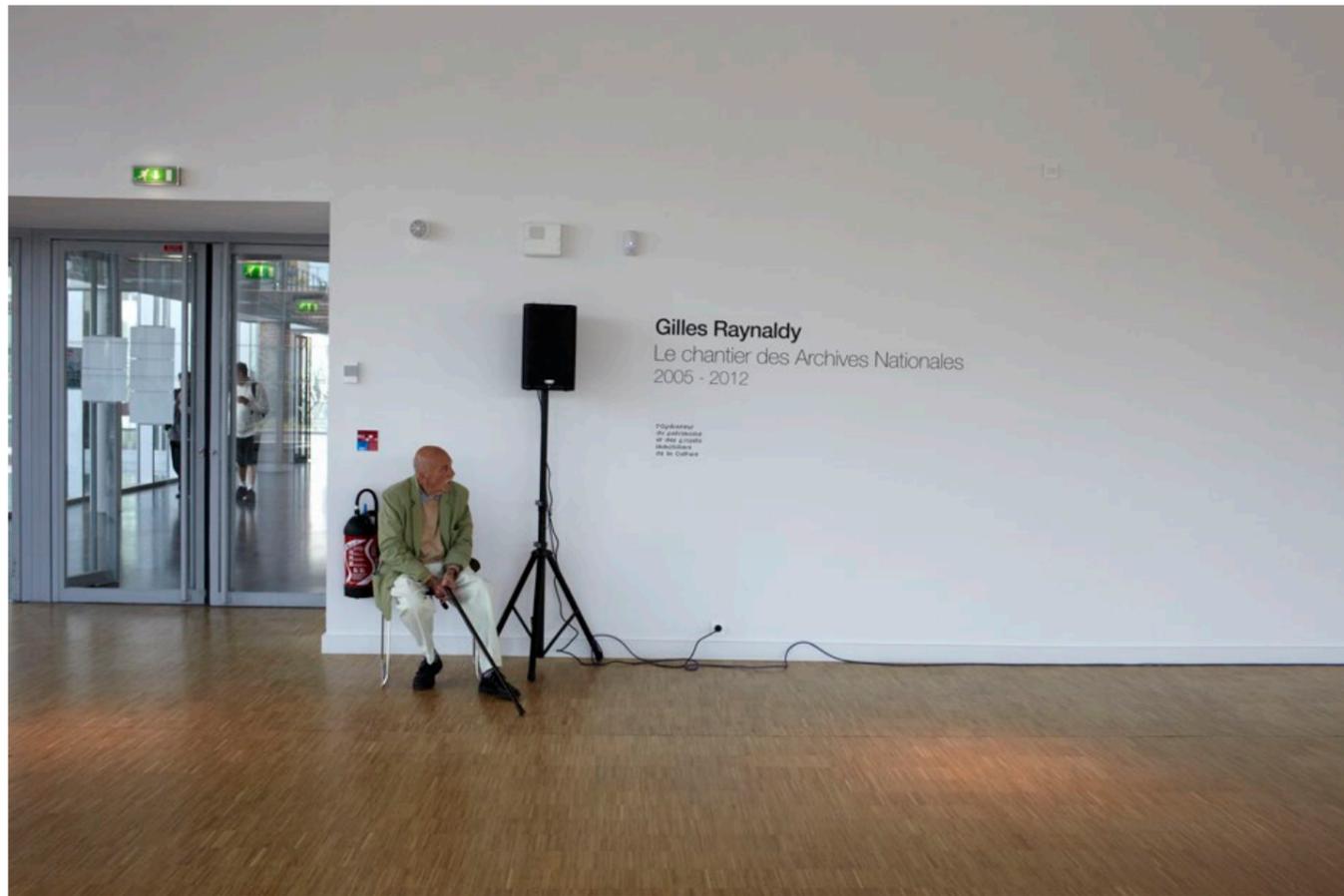
View of the building in operation  
Pierrefitte-sur-Seine,  
27 June 2013

# ***Exhibition at the National Archives***

September 2012 to October 2013

An album of xx photographs unfolded on a long 17-metre table designed in collaboration with architect Nathalie Surzur Heim shows the progress of the building site, the changes in the landscape, and the actions of the workers.





***L'Expérience Photographique,***  
**Histo.Art #6**  
**publications de la Sorbonne.**  
**Portfolio : *les archives nationales***

