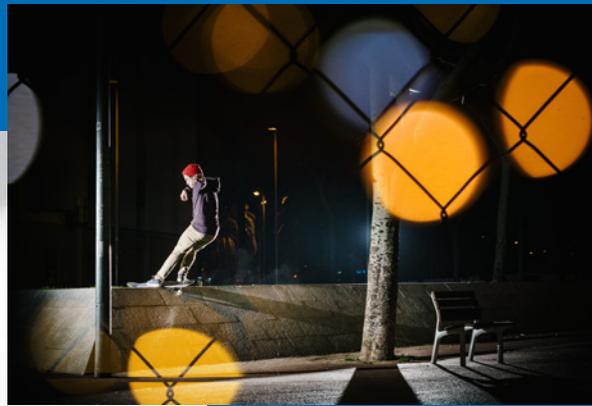


Carhartt WIP's  
2015 projects

# A SKATE ANNUAL<sup>2</sup> B

Below, Maxime Verret shows us how modernity was bound to oppress the individual, through an architecturally rigorous photograph. Right, Gabriel Engelke shines at night with elegance on Spain's favorite piece of urban design, the bank. Photograph by Sam Ashley.



# O T D R D H J N G

## Not Exactly DIY Anymore

Photos by Gabriel Engelke,  
La Guineueta, before and after 2015

Up until recently, Barcelona had no decent skatepark. The only OK infrastructure was the semi-DIY bowl of the Parc de la Guineueta and it was maintained by locals. You might say the city itself was the actual skatepark, sure, but still. And then, suddenly, things changed: La Guineueta saw a complete redevelopment; the crumbly Marbella bowl/mini-ramp was replaced with a huge bowl, and a wonderful street course was built in Les Corts. We asked a few questions to SCOB, the architects who designed these three new landmarks.

**OLIVIER** You are landscape architects, as opposed to skatepark builders. What difference does this make in your approach to designing a skatepark?

**SCOB** If you ask skateboarders, they'll explain that skateboarding is more than just sport, that there's a lifestyle aspect to it. As architects and landscape architects, we felt this. It was clear from the start that our projects were not only places to practice a sport but rather "Landskate Parks", actual public spaces for the whole city. Therefore, we wanted those places to integrate well within their environment, to be flexible in their approach—welcoming for all ages, disciplines, and levels of ability, vital for the city, beautiful and well-built like good design should be.

We worked very closely and continuously with skatepark designer Sergi Arenas, who is a skateboarder, and with the associations' representatives and local skateboarders. By doing so, we managed to produce technical solutions program without giving up its quality as a public space.

The results are places that have become meeting and reference points for all generations and disciplines—all this during their first year of use. The Landskate Parks both respect the urban environments they were built in and have re-injected life into them, generating a multitude of social and urban dynamics.

**OL** After being on the map for almost 20 years as a street skateboarding mecca, the city of Barcelona has only managed to build decent skateparks in the past couple of years. Why is that?

**SCOB** Barcelona is a large city with a complex administration. It takes time to steer it in one direction or another. Often, too, there's no consensus or simply no political will to confront or accelerate certain projects. But despite this context, these skateparks are a perfect example of a project making it through: they were initiated under a left-wing government, built under a conservative one, and now they'll probably become part of *Barcelona en Comú's* new participatory policies. This shows

how these projects are the fruit of a strong and ongoing community determination. The city council chose our projects because our approach was to integrate these places in the cityscape, in line with the democratization of public space Barcelona started in the 1980s.

**OL** What do you think of skateboarding as an activity taking place on the city's urban design?

**SCOB** For us, cities are for the people first—we believe any kind of sport, social or urban activity that fosters life in the streets and social cohesion among inhabitants is something positive. For this slightly utopian approach to influence reality, it is necessary that we all consider public space like a common good, one we need to respect and help maintain. Skateparks are places where people cohabit in very interesting ways. We should learn from them—as spaces without explicit rules or limits (there are no fences, painted lines, lanes, priorities or laws), they function much better than most public spaces with these restrictions. This is because conflicts that arise within them are approached with a need to understand and agree, rather than to own and complain.

