



THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Körnerkiez, Charonne, Seochon, Greenwich Village, Hampstead, Venice

B

CHARONNE,

PARIS





STUDIO

NeM Architectes

A leisurely workspace with a witty charm

LOCATION 29, rue Vitruve, Paris

TYPE office

SIZE 400 m² (including shared space)

FLOOR PLAN kitchen, office for the two architects, open space, atelier for modeling, meeting room

Led by Lucie Niney and Thibault Marca, Niney et Marca Architectes (NeM) is an architectural firm located on Vitruve street that crosses Réunion square and the Saint-Blaise neighborhood. The firm moved to its current location in 2019, where only a few small shops are scattered between modern apartment buildings. “Our old office was in Ménilmontant. There were a lot of nice restaurants and coffee shops around, and the office space was not expensive for its size, but we had to work our way through congested streets, and there was no place to chill out. And we discovered this building, which used to be a private family home. We liked the neighborhood’s calm atmosphere and many open spaces. On top of that, we were drawn to the street named after Vitruvius, a Roman architect who established architectural theory for the first time in history.” NeM’s projects for cultural spaces, residential complexes, artist workspaces, and scenography focus on simplicity and flexibility. These features are also apparent in the firm’s office, which dumped all freestanding walls and only left the basic framework. “The four-hundred-square-meter office space is shared by 15 employees, interior architects, furniture designers, architectural studios, artists, and architecture photographers. We all work on different projects, but we give advice to each other and sometimes collaborate.” Pink terraces, furniture in soft colors and materials, and artwork add warmth to the office and blur the boundary between residential and office space. “We want to imbue humanity and wit into architecture, which is often too serious and strict. Charonne’s unique simplicity and relaxed mood make us think about the attitude we want to put forth as architects.”

"It's harder than you'd expect to find an open space in Paris that's not noisy, not too crowded, and open to everyone. Charonne is small and isn't particularly beautiful, but there's a hidden charm that only those who have spent a long time in this calm neighborhood can recognize. After we relocated, we realized once again how luxurious it was just to enjoy the happiness that comes from tranquility."



"A good neighborhood to work in has all different kinds of food. (*laughs*) We often go to La Vierge and Des Terres, which look like run-of-the-mill diners but actually serve excellent cuisine. We can visit these places every day and never tire of them because they both update their menus weekly with new dishes made with seasonal ingredients. Also among our favorites are Iranian restaurant A Table and patisserie Ô Gâteau, which has the best pavlovas in the city."



"Saint-Blaise, on the east side of Charonne, is one of Europe's most densely populated and impoverished neighborhoods. While low-income households are concentrated here, this area keeps a homey atmosphere thanks to steady urban development. Roads have been well maintained, too, to facilitate traveling between neighboring towns. As architects, we think it's anachronistic to demolish all buildings and build new ones. In Saint-Blaise, improvements started with small things, encouraging interaction among residents and harmony in the community. We think that's an example of successful urban development."

"Charonne is a mosaic of cultures, as symbolized by Saint-Germain de Charonne, the only medieval church in Paris with a cemetery, as well as the church of Saint Jean Bosco, which was built in the art deco style in the 1930s. The neighborhood's identity is embodied in Réunion square, which shows many aspects deviating from the rest of Paris, such as a Western-style fountain in vivid primary colors, pine trees that give off an Asian mood, and modern buildings."



"A neighborhood is an area where you experience communal living with your neighbors. It's hard to expect to interact with neighbors in a residential complex densely packed with apartment buildings, a business district filled only with companies, or a downtown lined with shops. In this sense, Charonne strikes a balance between residential, office, and commercial spaces. The symbiotic relationship among residents, office workers, and shop owners creates an integrated, culturally flourishing foundation for life."