Is it a park or a sculpture?
Folds, wrinkles and undulations give form to the landscape-sculpture designed by Gilles Brusset in Meyrin, Switzerland. Hollows, ridges and gullies inspire inventive games.

La Porta: 11 rue Larrey (1926-64) by Marcel Duchamp may provide a conceptual explanation of the park created by Gilles Brusset in 2017 in Meyrin, Switzerland. The work by the Dadaist master incarnates the idea of interstitiality because it achieves the paradox of being simultaneously a door and not a door: it is a door because it closes a passage; it is not a door because it always opens another. It is the condition of “in-between-ness”, as Peter Eisenman calls it. During the years of the digital revolution, the American architect explored the theme of the interstice in essays and projects involving folds, which is the formal motif of this park and the origin of its name, L’enfance du pli [literally: the fold’s childhood].
Landscape design and sculpture, the park is a response to the modernist development principle whereby the ground is a neutral platform upon which primary volumes are placed. And it is no coincidence that this area in Meyrin has taken the place of a previously flattened hill. Brusset envisioned undulating terrain for the park, with a vertically varied topography, both as an homage to the original contours and as an evocation of the generative forces behind the nearby Jura Mountains.

↑ Sketch of the project. (Courtesy Paysarchitectures – Gilles Brusset)

The project falls into the category of the “operational topographies” defined by Manuel Gausa (in The Metropolis Dictionary of Advanced Architecture) as “those devices conceived of as and through strategic movements of folding in the territory. Such movements define platforms and (or) enclaves of a quasi geographical nature”. The hybrid nature of the park, lacking any of the
traditional playground equipment, becomes an incentive for children to
discover, through physical exploration, all the possibilities for play offered by
the wrinkled terrain.

↑ "L'enfance du pli" is not outfitted with traditional playground equipment. Here the children have to
exercise their imaginations to discover how to play amidst the folds. (Photo Pierre-Yves Brunaud /
Picturetank)
Founded in 1961 by Piera Peroni, Abitare magazine has crossed the history of costume, architecture, and design, international, following in its pages the evolution of our ways of life and how we inhabit places.