



Eric Tabuchi

Born of a Japanese father and a Danish mother, he studied sociology, where he discovered the work of August Sanders, and then began his photographic work. In 1999, together with other artists, he founded the Glassbox collective in Paris, with whom he has participated in numerous exhibitions. From 2007 onwards, he published several books - *Hyper Trophy*, *Twenty-six abandoned gasoline stations*, *Alphabet truck* - with Florence Loewy. He has exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo, the Confort Moderne and the Abattoirs. Since 2012, he has been working on *Atlas of Forms*. In 2017, he began work on the *Atlas des Régions Naturelles*, a project he intends to pursue over the next few years. His work revolves around notions of territory, memory and identity. Architectural typologies are the main focus of his work. In addition to his photography, Eric Tabuchi also produces objects and installations. He lives and works in Paris.

Nelly Monnier

After a rural childhood and cinema studies in Bourg-en-Bresse, she obtained a DNSEP from Ensba Lyon in 2012. She then presented her work, in which painting, drawing and narrative explore the relationship between architecture, decoration and landscape, in several institutions in Thiers, Montpellier, Lyon, Singapore, Paris, Toulon and Belfort. Her practice is informed by numerous 'local' trips, notably for the *Atlas of Natural Regions* project she is carrying out with Eric Tabuchi. At different scales, most often on canvas but also directly on the wall, she creates a dialogue between extracts from the landscape and the cultural forms found there. For a number of years now, she has also been developing a photographic collection of roadside objects. Nelly Monnier lives and works between the Ain and Essonne regions of France.

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In Brian Eno's song "I'll Come Running (To Tie Your Shoe)", the title of which can be translated into French as "*Je cours vers toi (lacer tes chaussures)*", a carefree voice settles over a canvas of synthesizers, snare drum and the blended strings of guitar and bass. It talks about spending its days looking out of the window. It also talks about wandering and the changing seasons. What part of all this is audible, what other part mingles with the sound of the engine as Nelly Monnier and Eric Tabuchi drive along the country roads on a grey day? I don't know. But at least we know where the title of their exhibition comes from.

It's true that, at first glance, this narrative doesn't sound very "architectural". The album *Another Green World*, which contains the track, presents itself as a landscape album, moving between the renunciation of pop accents and the ambience of Eno's work. In this infra-architecture of sound textures, we navigate between turbulent assurance and quiet fragility. And there's no guarantee that any of it can be reproduced, even with a musical score in hand.

But if Nelly Monnier and Eric Tabuchi are to be believed, the buildings that shape the landscape of our "natural regions" are no strangers to this dynamic. How many cottages and sheds also feature this juxtaposition of materials? How many of them bear witness to this curious impetus that superimposes rubble and brick, braids metal and wood, relying on empirical knowledge handed down by word of mouth, from generation to generation?

The *Atlas des Régions Naturelles* (ARN) is the fruit of a particular attention to this form of modesty. It is also the result of a pronounced taste for adventure, exploration and even exoticism. What we are being offered is a guide to the vernacular, a step aside so that we can move fearlessly off the beaten track of mainline France, even if it means upsetting the knowledge we thought we had of our environment.

On the other side of the garden gate described by Brian Eno in his song, what will we discover? Self-builds, rushed commercial initiatives, bricklayers' houses... Here's an enterprising family who've blocked up a window, there a friend who's helped on a whim to build an extension that we haven't yet found the time to plaster. From these edges, you can see *art brut*. We can also observe a whole territory that is less rooted than one might think in calibrated aesthetics or folklore. France in the ARN is unified by a network of practices, the most important of which has long been "do-it-yourself". But even this activity is now threatened by standardization, photography collects traces of it, the need for it, and calling by doing so into question learned architecture.

The exhibition *Je cours vers toi pour lacer tes chaussures* stands as an absolute eulogy to tinkering, patching and repairing, against all post-modern reconstructions. It conveys the ultimate ecological message for architecture, now that we know that most of the greenhouse gases emitted by a building during its lifetime are emitted at the time of construction. So there is virtue in accepting imperfection. And as Nelly Monnier and Eric Tabuchi sometimes say, "abundance of means is detrimental".

If money were abundant, none of what they show would be visible. Everyone would no doubt have bought their own little place on the well-trodden paths of contemporary aesthetics. For this reason, their exhibitions do not feature scenography, but rather functional, modular installations. In their thematic pavilions, the image market takes on a new twist. It's a four-season market, where you have to pass through the curtains and drapes and explore the stalls. And don't touch the stickers, which hold up part of the structure. And don't wait too long to soon it will all be moved again, packed away in a van to be reassembled elsewhere—differently, no doubt, but hopefully without

too much breakage. In the meantime, the artist-craftsmen will have continued their harvesting.

As for Brian Eno, paradoxically he has produced music that is surprisingly free of dissonance. His bricolages, adventurous as they are, rarely deviate from the chromatic norm: a balance has been struck between the perils of plastic exploration and dialogue with the most diverse of audiences. And perhaps that's the message encrypted in the atlas: however convoluted it may be, the world presented is habitable, shareable, and in fact already ours. So it's up to us to go deeper into it—once we've laced up our shoes.

Clément Paradis,
art and photography historian

**Je cours vers toi
pour lacer tes chaussures**
Eric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier
artists, photographers

exhibition curatorship:
Eric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier.

exhibition
26 10 2023 → 24 03 2024

inaugural lecture
26 10 2023 – 6.30 pm
Eric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier
with Bruce Bégout philosopher

guided tours
visite@arcenreve.eu

arc en rêve
centre d'architecture
Entrepôt, 7 rue Ferrère
F-33000 Bordeaux
+33 5 56 52 78 36
info@arcenreve.eu
arcenreve.eu
f @ t v



Since 1981 arc en rêve centre d'architecture has elaborated a cultural awareness-building strategy focusing on contemporary architecture and extending into city planning, landscape design, aimed at broadening perceptions of a changing world. Its internationally recognised programme features exhibitions, lectures, public discussions, publications, workshops for children, seminars for adults, visits to buildings, city tours, and planning experiments.

The exhibition is produced in collaboration with **Les rencontres d'Arles** and in partnership with the **Frac Nouvelle-Aquitaine MÉCA**

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For the last five years, Eric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier have been travelling the length and breadth of France, documenting the 450 natural regions or "pays" that make up the country. Taking as their starting point the ancient historical and geographical entities such as Artois, Morvan and Béarn, they have patiently and meticulously set about describing the ways in which we take over the landscape, live in it and shape it.

The exhibition *Je cours vers toi pour lacer tes chaussures* (*I'll Come Running To Tie Your Shoe*), presented at arc en rêve, is devoted to this ambitious photographic adventure. Focusing in particular on the question of construction, the artists, with their characteristic curiosity, question the limits of the architectural discipline through marginal practices: self-construction, personal initiatives, bricklayers' houses and *art brut* are just some of the strategies that are shaping, without us even realising it, many of the built objects in our territories.

Although closely linked to architecture, their research goes against the grain of its academic meaning, and draws up an unreasoned repertoire of the often modest forms that arise in rural and peri-urban environments.

Exhibiting their *Atlas des Régions Naturelles* at arc en rêve, Eric Tabuchi and Nelly Monnier question the boundaries between the architectural and the vernacular. As the title suggests—borrowed from a Brian Eno song—they praise a free and diversified practice of construction in which the bricolé, the improvised replaces the normative temptation of 'learned' architecture.

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