

## *Est-ce ainsi*

Xavier Wrona (born in 1976) graduated from the *École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Paris-La Villette* and the *Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta (United States)*. He created the *Est-ce Ainsi* architectural firm in 2006.

It would be easy to think of Xavier Wrona as a gentle, utopian dreamer rifling through Louis Aragon's poetry books to find a name for his architectural firm, but this would be an over simplification. This is a man who chose architecture "after accepting the fact that he was a bit too fragile to be an artist". For whom, there is an alternative way of doing things, without making a big statement and that everyone can appreciate. Designing a luxury boutique with other architects - lots of money and very little space - was all it took to convince him that he was not suited for this line of work. "My dream, which is nearly a reality, is to design architecture for everybody; including people who know nothing about architecture and can't afford an architect." Small projects with small budgets mean living frugally and working long hours, but that's how he thinks it should be: "Is it possible that architecture is a luxury? It seems to me that we should be able to design buildings with next to nothing." The very sensitive architect pursues his work solo, in a manner resembling a kind of asceticism: "I've always felt that I was involved in a very personal dialogue with architecture. Today, I think it would be impossible for me to work with another person. This isn't something I'm proud of, I would like to be able to share things more in the future." Made-to-measure and super minimalist housing are the architect's favourite domains at present. He defines his firm's approach as "a small attempt at doing things differently and finding solutions for a number of questions that have been neglected by contemporary architecture". The architectural firm's purpose and working style are paramount in a conceptual process enriched by writing and literature: "For each project I try to find a book that I can refer to." He is also interested in art history, which Alain and Josette Silly introduced him to. The two lecturers have had a great influence on him and their house in Coupigny has become an important reference tool for his students at the *Georgia Institute of Technology*. For eight years, teaching has played an important role in his architectural work, "it's impossible to separate the two, there is no distinction between my professional and my private life". For him, being an architect requires great dedication: "to be able to devote your life to understanding the world we live in. "What a magnificent job! "

*Maryse Quinton*

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