

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170103180951/http://archipel.cc/alexandre-navarro-interview/>

ARCHIPEL

Alexandre Navarro Interview

August 31, 2015 by Pierre-Henry Paradis In Interviews

Back in June Alexandre Navarro crafted a special podcast for us, a lot of sonic acoustics and instrumental ambient. Alexandre Navarro, a Frenchman from Bordeaux, is not your average producer out there. With a 15 year background in electro-acoustics, he is a producer, collaborator, label owner and manager, as well as a father and husband. Have a read at this exceptional insight into his knowledge about French experimental pioneers, past and future projects amongst other stories.

Archipel: Hi! How are you? Could you please tell me who you are, where you are from, what you have been doing?

Alexandre Navarro: Hello Archipel, I'm fine thank you.

My name is Alexandre Navarro. I am a self-taught guitarist and sound artist. Born in 1974, I grew up in Bordeaux and came to Paris 15 years ago. In the early 2000s, along my studies in anthropology, specialising in history of ideas and religions, I studied electroacoustics and concrete music at CNR of Bordeaux, France (Conservatoire National de Région). I began an underground career in 2004 with the release of my first official EP on the Swiss netlabel Realaudio.ch. Followed quickly by meetings and new productions on various labels as Archipel, Mandorla, Laverna, Dronarivm, Constellation Tatsu, and of course my labels.

A: How do you like to spend your spare time? Passions and Hobbies?

AN: Spending time with my family, playing with my girls, going to the ocean and mountains (I love Bretagne and Pays Basque) . Eating good food, watching a good movie, reading philosophy and anticipation novels (I'm a fan of Philip K. Dick) and of course making music (a bit useless to notify!).

A: What are your current and future projects?

AN: After the closing of Sem label in June 2014, I was a bit confused because after 7 years my associate Letna quit without any explanations. In the emergency I decided to quickly launched a new minimalist label DISQ AN still working with Markus Schäfer (Büro Ink) for artwork and design. Markus became a real friend over the years! By the way, today I am managing everything alone by myself, I feel so overwhelmed and I'm not sure, for now, that I'll keep running labels. So there's a chance I will concentrate only on my music and collaborations with other artists in the future.

A:What do you think about your country/area and experimental music?

AN: I think there's a real root of experimental music in France coming from the concrete music of the 50' that began with Pierre Schaeffer and GRM (Groupe de recherches musicales) I'm a big fan of Michel Chion and Bernard Parmegiani, I learned a lot about sound in their compositions. Today I can't say, maybe because I don't have enough visibility but for sure Quartz events (Alexandre Grauer) made a lot to spread experimental music. About production, even if it's very difficult to run a small label today, internet had also help a lot of micro structures to develop micro experimental projects like mine and reach an audience. I really like what the new french/fresh label Tripalium does and especially the Paulie Jan EP (Tesla). I also have some friends from Paris « Witnesses Without Hands » with whom I started collaborating. Also, Playing at "Les Digitales" in Switzerland allowed me to encounter Witxes who plays a super nice and deep "emo noisy" music: a great moment. I recently discovered the music of Charles Eric Charrier that I really like too.

A: So it seems like your roots lie in your country as well. The way you approach your music inspired from previous electronic pioneers. However on the other hand, many French nowadays tend to look for artistic references and inspirations outside of France, because they feel there has not been anything ground breaking currently - or - in the past. Could you comment on this phenomenon?

AN: Well, maybe it's just a matter of time. It's sure that the marriage of Germany and US Black Culture, this amazing melt of the 80' (like Kraftwerk and Afrika Bambaataa) was the beginning of something huge that made a lot of babies in Europe and North America. In the mid 90' some things happened in Europe with Trip Hop/Jungle in UK and the French Touch in France. In USA, I also remember the emergence of post-rock that was amazing to me! Of course, I think there's also a wealth in traditional music in any places of this planet. I'm not a specialist, but today I think that everything has to be done, like circles, music does not stop. With the Internet, we are living in a Village. Sources come from everywhere no?

A: Your sound is very distinctive, what is your secret to sculpting sound?

AN: Thank you Pierre-Henry, I used to record a lot of sessions by playing guitars with pedal effects or hacking synths. Live sessions are my best way to create sound material and then I sample or not. Anyway the main thing for me is to record live to get inspiration. Sometimes it is really frustrating, sometimes things happen! With my last EP "La Danse Des Substances" I used granular samples on Ipad but I still love ambient guitars with delay, reverse things etc. Quite simple in fact.

A: How do you get that spirit that, cinematic emotion?

AN: I try to reach a goal: melting together sound and melody / sound in melody / melody in sound / something organic and alive, sensitive and deep. A kind of poetry, if it doesn't sound pretentious. I love cinema and especially anticipation movies but not only - Andrei Tarkowski is one of my favourite movie maker because of his own metaphysic spirit.

A: Your influences are obviously abstract and classical, why? Who are your biggest influences?

AN: Well, I love so much things... Recently my main music influences came from different styles like instrumental abstract hip hop production such as J Dilla or Dirty Tapes prod or Leaving records, deep techno like Basic Channel or the beautiful abstract guitars of Loren Connors ... These days I re-listened to Fennesz, some tracks are so great... All the artists I met through my labels also had a true influence on my music. Classical, yes for Debussy and Chopin (Nocturnes) or Marin Marais - but really I listen to tons of music - each year there's a time for Joy Division, The Cure or even Jimi Hendrix: inescapable ! Anyway, influences obviously come from everywhere in life experience, books, movies, people...

A: Do you have any upcoming release we might be interested in?

AN: I started reworking on some guitars. After a little quiet break to take a bit of a breath on everything that happened, I now have an EP "DAIMON" digital release due out in September. I also recently just recorded a noise / ambient / post-rock session " Vents et vagues" with my guitar for "Fête de la musique" (available for free from my site).

A: Anything you would like to mention, add or comment?

AN: I would like to thank the artists, people I worked with and to anyone out there who likes my music over the years, it means a lot to me. Xo my wife my daughters Kim

and Lou and my family. And Hey, Thanks for this interview Pierre-Henry! Cheers to Archipel team and Pheek!

Interview by PH Paradis.

Text Image: Sam Graf.

Cover image: Yoann Pochet.