

An architectural perspective drawing of a modern house. The drawing features a grid of thin lines in the background. The house's structure is highlighted with thick red lines, showing a multi-level design with a prominent cantilevered upper floor. The drawing is a technical sketch, likely a pen-and-ink or digital line drawing, with some areas filled with red color.

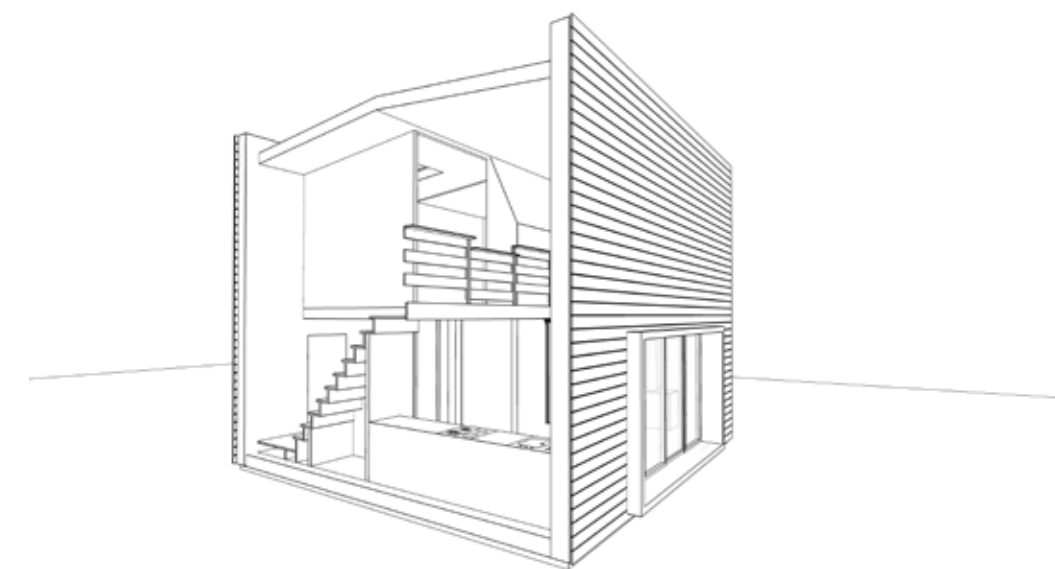
# THE NEW MODERN HOUSE

REDEFINING  
FUNCTIONALISM

*Jonathan Bell & Ellie Stathaki*

*Rural*

MAISON À 100,000 EURO  
Beckmann-N'Thépé  
France



LEFT  
PRESENTATION RENDER  
OF THE MAISON À 100,000  
EURO – A STARK AND  
AGRICULTURAL VISION

ABOVE  
PERSPECTIVE SECTION,  
ILLUSTRATING THE  
COMPACT PLAN AND  
SLEEPING MEZZANINE

*This proposal for* an ultra-modest house, put forward in 2009, comes from a firm of architects better known for larger-scale projects. Aldric Beckmann and Françoise N'Thépé have collaborated since 2001, working on commercial and residential projects, as well as representing France in the International Biennale of Architecture in Venice. Their work is characterized by a focus on surface and texture, with rich materials being combined with adventurous physical form.

The Maison à 100,000 Euro is a marked departure. Located in Bellaviers, Normandy, the cube-shaped house is an experiment in low-cost construction. The site is bounded by woodland on two sides, with a main aspect towards the west. To the east, a shallow slope overlooks the forest of Bellême. The basic form of the new house derives elements of its proportions from the nearby vernacular, beginning with a solid cube that contains simple subdivisions of internal space to make a double-height living area and two mezzanine-level sleeping platforms, with a shallow pitched roof concealed behind the raised façade.

The façades are clad in a coated and varnished fabric, creating a dark brown patina that is strongly reminiscent of the region's traditional tiled façades. The compact floor plan has resulted in very tight planning, with the wooden construction allowing for a great deal of flexibility and, naturally, keeping costs down to allow this two-to-three-bed structure to come in at an extremely economical price. Another example of an architecture that draws on the pragmatic and direct aesthetic of industrialized agriculture, the house in Bellaviers offers a way forward for low-cost dwellings as a counter to the economic challenges that face rural regions.

*Rural*

THE BLACK HOUSE  
Tank Architectes  
France



LEFT  
LOCATED ON THE VERY EDGE  
OF THE VILLAGE, THE BLACK  
HOUSE DRAWS INSPIRATION  
FROM INDUSTRIALIZED  
AGRICULTURE

RIGHT  
THE OPEN-PLAN GROUND-  
FLOOR SPACE IS BISECTED  
BY A TOP-HUNG STAIRCASE



*This angular single-family* house, shaped like an irregularly sided octagon, squats on a large backland plot in the small French village of Radinghem-en-Weppes, west of Lille. Overlooking ploughed fields to the east, with the rear façades of the village's main street to the west, the Black House is a stealthy, subtle addition to the rural landscape. Rather than imitate the pitched terracotta roofs of the surrounding villas, Tank Architectes have adapted the aesthetic of the local barns and agricultural buildings – mundane, stock structures for storing machinery and sheltering animals and feed.

Radinghem-en-Weppes is laid out in a linear fashion along the D62 road that runs north–south through the village. Behind the houses fronting the main street are the functional structures that serve local farmers, hidden from view just like this contemporary house. The house, completed in 2006, epitomizes the transfer of technology and aesthetics from modern agriculture to domestic design, and the abandonment of formalism, structured façade, and symmetry and pattern.

The Black House also moves on from the imagery and form of the traditional 'great barn', a vernacular form gradually usurped by modern farming methods and either demolished or converted in their thousands to houses during the 1970s and '80s, creating a sub-genre of contemporary residential design in the process. Taking its name from the black corrugated metal

cladding that makes the structure a discreet, indistinct presence in its long, narrow plot, tucked out of general sight, the Black House sidesteps the romantic notion of the 'barn conversion'.

The plan places the main living space in a long room at the heart of the house, with a staircase to the north and a kitchen and utility areas arranged in two 'wings' to the east and west. Three bedrooms are placed upstairs, all of which have access to a large west-facing terrace – giving views across the fields – on the roof of the kitchen below. Inside, the finishes are minimal, with floor-to-ceiling partitions used in the main living area to maximize the perception of space. An entrance ramp leads up to the front door in the west façade, while a larger terrace opens off the living area and kitchen to the east.

The Black House is not the first time that Tank Architectes have experimented with traditional and industrial forms. The practice was founded in 2005 by Lydéric Veauvy and Olivier Camus and the small office is based in Roubaix, north-west of Lille. Their other projects have included large-scale housing, urban infrastructure, retail stores and private houses, including the Peniche House, the conversion of an industrial barge to a home, reflecting the architects' interest in domesticating technology.