

An Image that Can Be Inhabited

— Lotte Arndt

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Alejandra Riera, *Enquête sur le/notre dehors (Valence-le-Haut) < 2007 - ... >*, still, view from the prison

“Culture, word and concept, derives from the Latin word *colere*—and means to inhabit. Therefore, to cultivate, includes to dwell, to stay, to take care, to tend and finally, to preserve.”^[1]

“A border implies a relation. It says that people have met each other there, sometimes with violence, hate and contempt. And in spite of all that, they have brought about meaning. My multi-belonging carries meaning—it is a reminder to those who believe in the fixity of things, especially identities, that not only is the plant irreducible to its roots, but that these roots can be replanted and take hold in a new soil.”^[2]

Enquête sur le/notre dehors—that could roughly translate as *Inquiry on the/our outside*—was initiated in response to an open call made by residents of Fontbarlettes, a neighborhood situated on the periphery of the southern French city of Valence, to overcome the area’s stigmatization. Deepening this initiative, across changing dialogical constellations, the *enquête*^[3] continued for five years. Established alongside inhabitants of Valence-le-Haut in the Rhône-Alpes region, with many others in solidarity, the research aimed to produce “a collective image of the place that we live in.”

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