

## CTBUH France Chapter Secretary: Ariane Dienstag



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Ariane Dienstag SAS

Ariane Dienstag, founder, Ariane Dienstag SAS, is the CTBUH France Chapter Secretary, based in Paris, where she has played a strong role in increasing

participation of French firms in CTBUH activities. A former business development director at Ateliers Jean Nouvel, she began her own firm in 2018 as a marketing consultant. She was recently on the winning team, led by Gustafson Porter + Bowman, for a major renovation of the grounds of the Eiffel Tower.

### What drew you to CTBUH?

People are exceptional teachers. Observing them is like reading an encyclopedia. I fundamentally like people and naturally came to architecture and urban design. Just as the naturalist observes flora and fauna, the richness of life on this planet mutually reinforces human knowledge and can contribute, if used in an ethical way, to improving the quality of our lives. It is banal to write, but it is important. Communicating and exchanging local *savoir-faire* of various disciplines, uses and practices, enriching a common heritage, is one of the targets of the CTBUH, and for me, a deep personal conviction. The urban habitat is a focus point for me especially. And the rural should be one.

### What interests you about tall buildings?

The question of “what is a tall building?” interests me the most. It has such different answers from place to place. Due to fire regulations, in France, a building is considered an *Immeuble de Grande Hauteur* (IGH) when it exceeds 28 meters for offices and 50 meters for residential. The 314-meter Eiffel Tower, from 1889, remains our summit, and only three buildings today exceed 200 meters. Meanwhile, in Asia, one meets architects of 600-meter buildings, dines with friends who live on

the 54th floor in social housing and visit a doctor on the 34th floor of a hospital.

This is a very interesting situation. Is the sky lower in France? Are design teams less talented in that typology, or fires worse, or the population more scared of elevators? Do we simply have an unadventurous business culture, or do we just not need to go high in France? Regulations and uses have origins that are interesting to decrypt.

### What is your vision for CTBUH in France?

First, the CTBUH was introduced to me as a “big family” of sharing, at a very professional level. Second, I think of the chapter-to-be as a “*cocorico*” (emblem or rallying cry) for France, which is no doubt an extraordinary country with an *art de vivre* that is not likely to go away. Then, engaging such entities as CTBUH brings to our table top experts from around the world. It is an opportunity we need to take; it might help us reconsider some of our practices and improve them (such as those around mixed-use towers or height limits, for instance). On the other side, France has some high-performance building knowledge to share: technical expertise in wood construction, the smart grid, eco-neighborhoods, strong heritage regulations, and public engagement in the design process. This can’t be “duplicated” elsewhere, exactly, but it can inspire, and that’s what I’d like to make happen.

### What about the tall building industry would you like to see change?

First, reducing delivery time while also increasing the flexibility of the of the tall building typology is important. Second, the typology needs to be demystified. The public should be informed and involved in consulting plans for tall buildings, to a reasonable extent. The reasons for building high have to be clear. Third, all buildings must contribute to, rather than destabilize the ecosystem, and generate resources such as electricity, not just short-term financial gain. ■

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