

CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE ROUTE

FROM THE ARVE TO THE PEAKS, A VAST OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

In 1973, the high plains of Passy were the backdrop for an international artistic event:

“MOUNTAIN SCULPTURES, A POEM IN SPACE”

It was a question of supporting the conversion of the Plateau d’Assy, a cultural hotspot¹, so that the site could strengthen its threefold calling in the areas of **wellbeing**, **art** and **tourism**. It was also a question of taking art out of the museums to place it in the public arena, and speak a universal language to a wide audience. Twenty-five of the best contemporary sculptors, led by the poet J.-P. LEMESLE and J.-P. BOUVIER, therefore built a route dotted with some forty monumental sculptures in and around the site.

1. Architectural centre, revolution in religious art, literary journals.

Five great signals from some of the most inspired sculptors of the 20th century have remained in our area: CALDER’s stabile, CARDENAS’s totems, FÉRAUD’s brazier, GARDY ARTIGAS’s golden shell, and SEMSER’s ladder.

They talk to us about the sun and space, about the sources of life, about people and their conquests, about celebration.



Sun and mountains. Alexander CALDER, 1973

CALDER and FÉRAUD’s works were moved in 1989. As the years went by, other sculptures were added to populate the route that runs over 15 km along the mountainside linking the plain to the Plaine-Joux area: those of BRUNELLI, CYGANEK & POULAIN, COSSIN, DUPUY, FILIPPI, GAGÉ, GOSSELIN, LACOSTE, ROBINSON, ROMY, ROUSSI and SANDEL.

These sculptors evoke the passing of time, the chaos of history, war, peace and human rights, not to mention matter, technology, the industrial age and manual work.

These sculptures as a whole form “**THE CONTEMPORARY SCULPTURE ROUTE**”



1. ROULEMENT (ROLLING), JÉRÔME BASSERODE (2015)

A rock carved with multiple facets made of COR-TEN steel, a material that was intentionally rusted to withstand the effects of the weather. We aren't told whether the fossil came from glacial landslides or was rolled along by the river's roaring waters. If you listen carefully, the work will tell you the story of a secular nature. BASSERODE (1958) thus evokes the relationships, the agreement or opposition between science and the power of nature.



2. FLAQUES (PUDDLES), FABIEN LERAT (2015)

By the riverside, LERAT (1960) has placed two cast iron puddle-shaped basins on the bank. Soon, all around, the landscape will caress them and moss will grow. Slow-flowing, calm and stagnant waters are an oasis of reverie that represent the mountain space and talk to us about mankind's place in the world. The puddles eat away at the soil, allowing the water to seep in or to evaporate. The puddles die and are then reborn.

3. LES GARDIENS (THE GUARDIANS), GLORIA FRIEDMANN (2015)

An ibex and a bearded vulture, mountain animals, atop an earthenware globe to look far into the Arve and the future. FRIEDMANN (1950), a Franco-German artist wanted this work and its circular pedestal to be a meeting point and a place of contemplation along the hikers' way. Matter takes the form of earth, as if it had germinated on the spot, granular, dirty, subject to climate change, sometimes dry and light, sometimes damp and dark.



4. DANS UN ESPACE DE PAIX (IN A SPACE OF PEACE), COLETTE COSSIN (2006)

The title of this work made of wood and stainless steel substantiates the approach adopted by the artist who is involved with children and people in difficulty. This notion of sharing is conveyed well by the work's clean lines. Savoyard, a cabinetmaker by trade, approved by the Ancient Monuments and National Education Departments, COSSIN (1950) masters a great variety of materials, in particular natural materials, snow and ice.

5. 3000° CELSIUS, RAYMOND GOSSELIN (1989)

The title is the melting point of the magnesia that used to be produced by the plant in Chedde. This was GOSSELIN's way of dedicating this work (1924) to the company's personnel. It is a big baking furnace with, in its centre, a mobile crown of nine graphite electrodes placed above a steel basin filled with magnesia crystals. All around it there's a network of steel wires and Duralinox pillars lacquered blue, white and red, alluding to the bicentenary of the French Revolution. Animated by a breath of air or handled by man, the artist's sculptures are always a quest between reverie and technology.

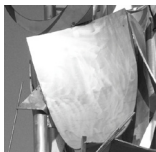
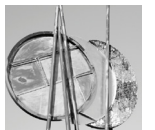


6. AUX TRAVAILLEURS DE CHEDDE (TO THE WORKERS OF CHEDDE), JEAN-PIERRE FILIPPI (1996)

This rough standing stone was commissioned by the town to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Chedde plant. FILIPPI (1947-2007), poet and sculptor, had worked in Uriage (Isère), then in Carrara (Italy) for its marble. A former professor at the Beaux-Arts school in Grenoble, he is known for his Ours du Vercors (Vercors Bear) and his fountain in Villard-de-Lans.

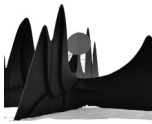
7. LA PORTE DU TEMPS (THE DOOR OF TIME), LINO BRUNELLI (2007)

From sunrise to sunset, from sunset to sunrise time passes, imperturbably. Sunrise is represented by a gold and copper-plated disc, sunset by a crescent cage filled with coloured pieces of Murano glass. In the centre, the white steel crescent represents the moon. The work is supported by five rods inserted into a concrete pedestal covered with pebbles from the Arve.



8. LA PORTE DU SOLEIL (DOORWAY TO THE SUN), ALBERT FÉRAUD (1973)

In 1973, the work opened the Cheminement des Conquérants (grimpeurs et leurs bêtes) (Path of the Conquerors - climbers and their animals). Structured around two tubular masts, this tall brazier with its cosmic shapes cut out from sheets of stainless steel bound by fire, sparkles in the sunlight from sunrise to sunset. Grand Prix de Rome in 1951 and member of the Institute, FÉRAUD (1921-2008) is a master in the art of breathing life and poetry into materials from the industrial era.



9. SUN AND MOUNTAINS, ALEXANDER CALDER (1973)

In 1973, the work opened the Cheminement des Manèges (la ville et ses fêtes) (Path of the Roundabouts - the town and its festivals). This stabile made of riveted and painted steel sheets consists of two planes of arabesques that depict the surrounding peaks, crossing at a point of equilibrium, the sun. Fascinated by the balance of tensions and industrial materials, inventor of sculpture in movement (mobiles), the American CALDER (1898-1976) draws his inspiration here from the shapes of nature.

10. MATÉRIALITÉ DU VIDE (MATERIALITY OF EMPTINESS), ROMY (1999)

Fascinated by the symbol of emptiness, the artist erects his granite monoliths in memory of the earth. The verticality of the work is underscored by the finely grooved strips, cut by voids. The artist thus mixes materiality with emptiness, the finite with the infinite. Citizen of the world thanks to his origins and travels, the Genevan ROMY (1951), trained as a gem cutter, he was also interested in the culture of the Far East.



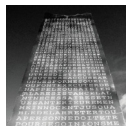
11. LUMINESCENCE 2001, JEAN-FRANÇOIS DUPUY (1993)

A pyramid of light mounted on four triangular legs that support iridescent needles, the work consists of plates made of an acrylic matter translucent like glass and solid like steel: Lexan or Makrolon (Polycarbonate). A Norman, and trained as a goldsmith, DUPUY (1950) assembles here a material that is well known in the worlds of industry, architecture and transport for its properties of resistance, lightness and transparency.



12. LA GRANDE ÉCHELLE (THE GREAT LADDER), CHARLES SEMSER (1973, FNAC state deposit 9865)

In 1973, the work belonged to the Cheminement des Manèges (Path of the Roundabouts). This sculpture made of reinforced cement dyed in the mass is a satire of the so-called advanced societies' desire for power over the so-called primitive societies. The upstretched couple forming the A of Africa, are assailed by a multitude of characters whose function and disequilibrium symbolise our social failings. Organiser of "Sculptures in the mountains", Parisian of American origin, SEMSER (1922-2011) is one of the 20th century's greatest sculptors. His work - free from fashions and trends - has the incisive derision of a Daumier.



13. PLAIDOYER POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME (PLEA FOR HUMAN RIGHTS), GILLES ROUSSI (2000)

This tall tower with a square base made of stainless steel sheets, proposes the text of the Declaration of Human Rights in its entirety. The summit depicts a chaos which materialises the upsets in the history of France. Its base, set in a shaped concrete pedestal, depicts the tragic events of our world since the French Revolution. Hailing from Ardèche, ROUSSI (1947) marries human values, modern materials, mathematics and cutting edge technology.

14. LA PORTE D'EAU (THE WATER DOOR), AGOSTIN CARDENAS (1973)

In 1973, the Porte d'Eau opened the Cheminement des Formes en Femmes (Path of Shapes as Women). This great anthropomorphic totemic pair made of Iroko wood opens up a space on to our forest that celebrates the main sources of life: water and womankind. The Cuban CARDENAS (1927-2001) elaborates a personal formal language where the simplification of the volumes, the influence of surrealism and of African art can clearly be seen.



15. LES REGARDEURS (THE WATCHERS), OPJ CYGANEK & JULIE POULAIN (2020)

Les Regardeurs are two ensembles situated at the ends of the footbridge over the Nant Bordon. "These funny orange posts watch us as we cross. An immersive installation consisting of convex mirrors. A multiple view of the scenery and of our reflection..." Cyganek (1987) & Poulain (1986).

16. LA PORTE BLEUE (THE BLUE DOOR), JOAN GARDY ARTIGAS (1973)

In 1973, the work opened the Cheminement des Signaux (Path of Signals). A gilded bronze shell mounted on two blackened concrete pebbles, it shouts out into space. Son of the ceramist who worked closely with Miro and Picasso, the Spaniard GARDY ARTIGAS (1938) worked with Braque, Chagall and Giacometti. Organiser of "Sculptures in the mountains", he was the creator of La Porte de France (The Gateway to France) at the entrance to the Mont-Blanc tunnel.



17. NÉE DE LA MONTAGNE (BORN OF THE MOUNTAIN), ANDRE SANDEL (2007)

A Varois who loved the world of women, SANDEL (1950) caricatures our expressions with ease. Taut as a bow, the work rises up above the mountains with its mass softened by the curves of the base. Its red colouring characterises the sequoia. The king of trees, venerated by the Native Americans, introduced into Europe in the 19th century, the sequoia is a precious ally for carpenters.



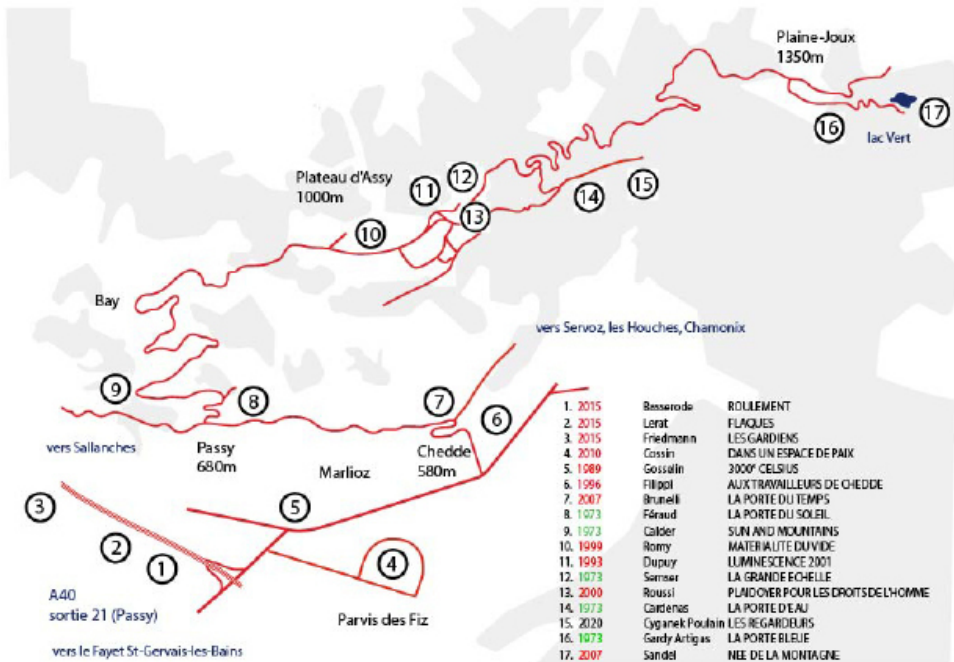
IN THE "JARDIN DES CIMES" (in season)

Works by Loïc TELLIER (2008), Nicolas BEAUCHATON, Ivan FRÉMONT (2009), Claude CULTOT, Vincent BECHAUT and Marie-Laure BOURGEOIS (2010), Emmanuel LACOSTE...

IN THE MUNICIPAL ARTS CENTRE

• MARÉE HAUTE (HIGH TIDE), by NIGEL ROBINSON, JEAN-PIERRE LEMESLE, & THE CHILDREN FROM THE SCHOOLS IN THE MONT-BLANC COUNTRY (2013)
The Ammonite from the Désert de Platé, in its wave painted by the schoolchildren, reminds us that Passy is a major geological site. With sounds of the sea in the background, you must imagine the long-lost Jurassic world in the times of the dinosaurs (65 million years ago), when the mountains were still under the hot seas...

• EUREKA by M. GAGÉ (1997)



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