

Campus des Arts

Discover the works of art on the Grenoble university campus
Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

► **Discovery trail**



Communauté
UNIVERSITÉ Grenoble Alpes

To contact the Culture et Initiatives étudiantes team
Communauté Université Grenoble Alpes
Bertrand Vignon, Julien Vaccari and Noëlle Dumolard
Free guided tours available on request

Service Culture et Initiatives Etudiantes

Espace Accueil Information
1025 Avenue Centrale
Domaine Universitaire
38400 Saint-Martin-d'Hères
Tel. 00 33 (0)4 76 82 81 80
culture@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr



This "Campus des Arts" brochure was produced by Claire Lardanchet and directed by the Communauté Université Grenoble Alpes association of universities and higher education institutions.

You can see all the works at
<http://campusdesarts.fr>

Production: Student Life department

Design and Production: Claire Lardanchet / Bertrand Vignon

Graphic Design: Elhem - www.elhem.fr

Photo credits: Pierre Borghi / Claire Lardanchet

Map: Mélanie Borgia-Jacquier

Acknowledgements: Sustainable Planning department,
Communication department – Communauté Université Grenoble Alpes

Translation: ITC Traductions

2000 copies of this brochure were printed
in February 2019 by Imprimerie du Pont de Claix.

Our thanks to Danielle Moger

Communauté
UNIVERSITÉ Grenoble Alpes



Editorial

*Open your eyes
and see!*

The university's works of art are very well presented across the site and its buildings, whether part of the architecture or rooted in the ground. Almost unheeded, the abstract shapes have become part of our daily lives. Visitors pass by them without noticing... Yet the campuses are bursting with fascinating items, from sculptures and mosaics to pictures and installations. Let's look at them from a different *Point of View*, sitting in a circle *Around a Tree* to admire *The Retort*...

Make your way along the paths
around the university grounds!

Take time to open your eyes and really see!

Enjoy your visit!

Isabelle Girerd-Potin
Vice-president of Campus Life
Communauté Université Grenoble Alpes



*A few words
about the 1%
for art law*

The idea of state funding for artistic creation was first mooted in France under the Popular Front, which came to power in 1936. It was not made into law, however, until 1951. The "1% for art" law, which was reviewed in 2002 and consolidated in 2012, translates the French state's determination to support artistic creation and raise public awareness on today's art. It makes it easier for the general public to encounter contemporary works but also promotes permeability between the arts by incorporating the visual arts into architecture and public space. The 1% for art is widely applied to the construction of school and university buildings throughout France and takes various forms (paintings, sculptures, mosaics, etc.)

The mechanism has resulted in the realisation of 12,300 projects involving over 4000 artists. Thus have Grenoble's university sites been embellished with some fifty works of art, turning them into a true open-air museum...

Find out more:

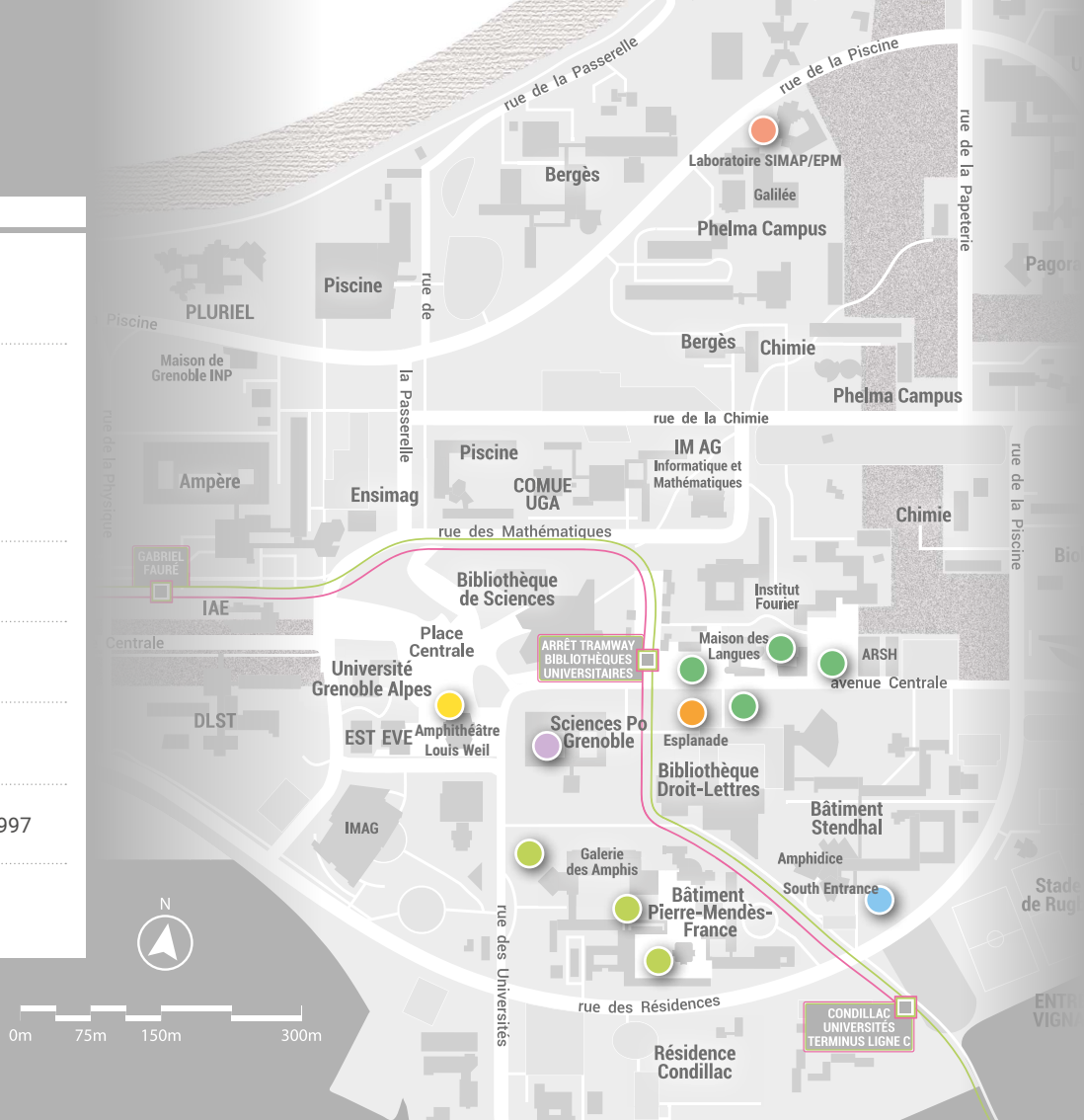
French Ministry of Culture and Communication

www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr/Politiques-ministerielles/Le-1-artistique

Discovery Trail

Trail duration: 1 hour

- 1 François Morellet
Sphère Enterrée | 1975
- 2 Pierre Székely
Point de Vue | 1971
Pierre Székely
Front | 1971
Pierre Székely
Parole | 1971
- 3 Morice Lipsi
L'Adret | 1967
- 4 Edgard Pillet
Sans titre | 1969
- 5 Olivier Descamps
Sans titre | 1990
- 6 Jean-Luc Vilmouth
Autour d'un Arbre | 1996-1997
- 7 Alexander Calder
La Cornue | 1974





François Morellet | *Sphère Enterrée* | 1975



François Morellet (1926–2016)

1

Sphère Enterrée (Buried Sphere)

1975, stainless steel tubes

Stendhal building, south entrance
1483 Rue des Résidences
Campus de Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

Son of an industrialist, François Morellet followed a traditional course of study in Paris before taking over the family business. Very soon, however, he began to combine his industrial activities with working as an artist. In the 1950s, following a meeting with the artist Max Bill, his work started to become increasingly abstract.

He went on to adopt an elementary, geometric language, based on a grid system. Having initially worked on canvas, François Morellet gradually began to create installations that were a combination of sculpture and architecture. This interest would later give rise to his grid-spheres.

Sphère Enterrée is thus the product of these sculptural researches. Stemming from the idea of symmetry and repetition, the work's design is based on a square serial grid. The artist has associated the upright nature of the square modules with the curves of the hemisphere. By positioning the grids in relation to each other, François Morellet has created an optical effect that impacts the retina's perception. The installation makes its large, yet light, presence felt, a perfect match for the architecture serving as its backdrop.



Pierre Székely | *Front* | 1971

The sculptor, architect and philosopher Pierre Székely turned to monumental art very early in his career. Works by this prolific artist can be seen in numerous countries and many of the world's capital cities. In 1983, he created *Le Monument à la paix (Monument to Peace)*, which he gave to the city of Budapest, and *L'Oiseau Impossible (The Impossible Bird)*, a gift to the State of Israel from the French president, François Mitterrand. Székely was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Royal Academy of Art in the Hague; in collaboration with a company called Air Liquide, he invented a process for sculpting granite with a blowtorch. This technique makes it look as though the stone has been naturally shaped by erosion.

Pierre Székely | *Point de Vue* | 1971



Pierre Székely (1923–2001)

2

Front, Point de Vue, Parole (*Front, Point of View, Speech*)

1971, flame-sculpted Sidobre granite

Pierre-Mendès-France building
151 Rue des Universités
Campus de Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

Front, Point de Vue and *Parole* together form a single piece on the campus. These pieces symbolise the University and its work. The flame-sculpted surfaces have a very special relationship with light.

Front, the work installed in front of the Pierre-Mendès-France building, consists of a number of blocks of granite. The understated, interlocking geometric shapes form a piece that is a perfect example of sculpture/architecture.

Point de Vue consists of a hollowed out square resting on a cube. Inside stands a sphere, set at an angle to the base. Székely says that this structure is like "a window, inviting the soul to contemplate distant perspectives". Thus the artist makes spectators think, as the stone's shape changes according to their point of view...

Located in the heart of the Pierre-Mendès-France building's agora, *Parole* refers back to that ancient square where the population would gather.

The artist has arranged a number of plinths and benches around a central point. The latter consists of a rectangular base on which rests a semi-circle. This installation, positioned as it is at the very heart of the university, may also make reference to the lecture theatres, places where thoughts, once formed, are soon expressed.



Morice Lipsi | *L'Adret* | 1967



Morice Lipsi (1898–1986)

3

L'Adret (South-facing Slope)

1967, granite from Haute-Savoie

Sciences Po Grenoble patio
1030 Avenue Centrale
Campus de Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

Morice Lipsi was born in 1898 in Lodz, Poland, and came to Paris in 1912. Having learnt to sculpt whilst still very young, he moved into La Ruche, a building inhabited by numerous artists, including the likes of Brancusi, Archipenko, Soutine, Chagall and many others. Here, in the midst of so many artist's studios, he was to become a master in the art of direct carving. Little by little, his sculptures tended towards the monumental, and became increasingly abstract. He created many works for public art commissions all over the world, including Grenoble, Tokyo, New York and Tel-Aviv. Part sculpture, part architecture, the dynamic, compact mass of his works seems to defy space.

The work here is fully integrated into its mountainous surroundings, in terms of both form, title and material used (a granite from Haute-Savoie). The sculpture comprises a series of different planes, possibly in reference to the sides of a mountain. This aspect of the piece should be set in the context of its title, "L'Adret", a word used in the Alps to refer to the sunniest slope of a valley. By abstracting forms, Morice Lipsi has produced a work that fits in perfectly with the university's mountainous surroundings.



Edgard Pillet | *Sans titre* | 1969



Edgard Pillet (1912–1996)

4

Sans titre (Untitled)

1969, moulded black cement

Amphithéâtre Louis Weil
701 Avenue Centrale
Campus de Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

Edgard Pillet studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux and Paris. In 1948 he was awarded the Young Painter's Prize and the Brussels Critics Prize in 1953. His growing fame resulted in invitations to exhibit all over the world (Paris, New York, Copenhagen, London, Chicago, etc.) He became a passionate advocate of modern art and the idea of artistic synthesis. The basis of this theory was that art should once more be a part of architecture and everyday life.

Sans titre, made in 1969, is a good illustration of this desire to see art and architecture combine. Thus, working in close collaboration with the architect Olivier-Clément Cacoub, Edgard Pillet has created a work that is in perfect harmony with the Louis Weil lecture theatre. The through-coloured, moulded cement pillars are members of his 'creusets' family. These relief pieces were the result of the artist's research into issues of balance and the relationships between shapes, colours and materials. This field of artistic production was peculiar to Pillet. Lastly, the wall of the building is given rhythm by the use of geometric shapes and the contrast between filled and empty spaces.



Olivier Descamps | **Sans titre** | 1990



Olivier Descamps (1920-2003)

5

Sans titre (Untitled)

1990, heat-formed stainless steel

Laboratoire SIMAP/EPM (Grenoble INP)
1270 Rue de la Piscine
Campus de Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

Olivier Descamps was born in 1920 and in 1939 began studying for a degree in the History of Art at Sorbonne University in Paris. At the same time, he attended drawing and modelling classes. After the war, Descamps went to live in the countryside, where he continued his research into shapes and materials. An interest in heat forming led him to see how he might apply the technique to his art. Focusing first of all on plastics, he went on to look at other media such as concrete, aluminium and metal.

The material used to make *Sans titre* is an original artistic and scientific design produced by the SIMAP/EPM research laboratory at Grenoble polytechnic institute. A shape-memory alloy enables the three metal hands to move. No mechanical movements are involved! Variations in temperature are what makes the magic happen.

At a certain temperature, heat made the hands move with the help of a titanium sphere which has since disappeared. The material, having "learnt" this performance, can return to the exact same shape it had had at a given temperature. This amazing piece is the perfect illustration of the relationship between art and science.



Jean-Luc Vilmouth | *Autour d'un Arbre* | 1996–1997



Jean-Luc Vilmouth (1952–2015)

6

Autour d'un Arbre (Around a Tree)

1996–1997, trees, glass slabs

Avenue Centrale
Campus de Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

The sculptor Jean-Luc Vilmouth was born in 1952 in Lorraine and taught at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Following a visit to England in the 1970s, where he was much inspired by English New Sculpture, Vilmouth began to focus his research on everyday objects. He stated: "What I find interesting about the objects that surround us is their origin, the idea behind them...I think objects can help us to understand a whole process of social evolution." Thus his approach looks at our relationship with objects and their place in our environment. Vilmouth transforms and alters the way objects are used, inviting spectators to be actors in this transformation.

Autour d'un Arbre, a work which was made between 1996 and 1997, is divided between the Maison des Langues et des Cultures, the MSH-Alpes and the ARSH. Each of the installations comprises four curved benches made of slabs of glass, arranged in a circle around a tree. The benches form a 4-metre-wide circle and are lit up from inside by spotlights the same colour as the tree's fruit. The trees represent the four seasons, with a cherry tree for spring, a plum tree for summer, an apple tree for autumn and a persimmon tree for winter. This work by Jean-Luc Vilmouth is perfectly integrated into the environment. When people on the campus sit in the shade of the trees, they themselves participate in the work.

Alexander Calder (1898-1976)

7

La Cornue (The Retort)

1974, black lacquered steel sheets

Esplanade Bibliothèque Universitaire Droit - Lettres
1130 Avenue Centrale
Campus de Saint-Martin-d'Hères/Gières

Although he was born into a family of artists, Alexander Calder first studied technology, qualifying as an engineer in 1919. In 1923, he enrolled at the *Art Students League of New York*, where he studied drawing and painting. His career as an artist really began in 1928, when he held his first individual exhibition. Calder won many prizes and was awarded prestigious honours.

La Cornue has been positioned in front of the Bibliothèque Universitaire Droit - Lettres library. As the cost of the work exceeded the 1% initiative that was available, the artist donated the remainder, to the great delight of Maurice Besset, a close friend of Calder who was the curator of Grenoble museum at the time. *La Cornue*, a stabile (as opposed to mobile) work, consists of sheets of steel that have been assembled to form numerous planes, ridges and curves. Despite its monumental size, the installation's relatively minimal attachment to the ground makes it seem quite light. "The cat", as the work has come to be known by users of the campus, is a very powerful presence on the whole esplanade.



Alexander Calder | *La Cornue* | 1974