

# *Tombé des nues*

Exhibition at the Palais Épiscopal,  
Belley, May 5th–20th, 2007.



## **A great success**

An almost capacity audience for the opening lecture, and over six hundred visits to the exhibition.

The external sculptures in the garden of the *Palais Épiscopal* were seen, and appreciated, by an even wider public.

## **... thanks to our sponsors and partners**

That success was assured by the generous sponsorship of the municipality of Belley and of the local business *MBR*.

André Liatard's lecture aroused great interest and was undoubtedly responsible for a large part of the success of the first evening.

## Conference

André Liatard, conservateur of the Musée Faure, Aix-les-Bains spoke on “Nues et nus”.

He examined the role of the nude in art from 30,000BC until the end of the last Century. Over the course of a forty minute presentation he traced the (prehistory and) history of the nude, starting with the *Venus of Willendorf* and ending with a variety of contemporary and some quite abstract representations of the end of the Twentieth Century. His very well appreciated lecture was accompanied by over thirty slides.



FIG. 1 – The vernissage on Saturday evening, immediately after the conference. (Photograph courtesy of Frédéric Clerc-Renaud.)

## Exhibition

Our *invité d'honneur*, **Nicolas Lavarenne** though well known in the region had never been asked to exhibit in Belley previously and his existing admirers were joined by a new and appreciative public.



Nicolas exhibited two monumental works in the garden of the *Palais Épiscopal*, works that incorporated four life-size figures in total. He exhibited another monumental piece in the *Salle Olive* and a variety of large and medium sized works.

**Annie Berthet** showed a series of nudes (acrylic on canvas) in the *Salle Bleu*.

**Lisa Micah** exhibited her *Inner Workings* Series in the *Salle Carrelé* as well as a number of sketches and pastels. One of the *Inner Workings* Series was selected for the municipal collection.

KITZLEN presented a series of moulages from life and a collection of graphic material (*infographie*) exploring curves and body form.

### video presentations

Besides the exhibition proper facilities were arranged for visitors to watch a selection of videos. Two instructional videos covered lifecasting and foundry work (bronze casting). Three documentaries covered the work of Lavarenne, Micah

and Kitzlen. A series of seven television ‘clips’ reported on previous exhibitions, etc. of Nicolas Lavarenne in various countries.

## Group visits

Invitations were sent to all colleges and lycées in the sector and to other institutions, inviting group visits and offering to open the exhibition outside normal hours. In the end, though, the exhibition clashed with the looming end of the academic year and the need to complete syllabus work.

A group from ORSAC (Prémeyzel) visited during the second week, by arrangement, as did a group of partners of competitors from an archery competition (the latter group spontaneously).



## Visitors

The total attendance exceeded 600 visits : With over 200 at the lecture and/or vernissage and a further 442 in the following two weeks.

The number of visitors per day varied widely, from seven to over 70, with no obvious pattern

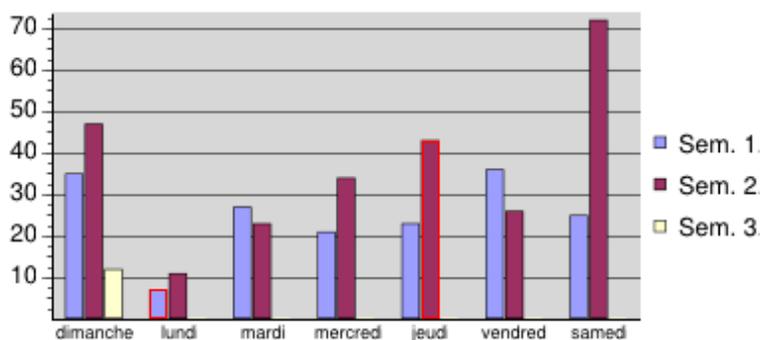


FIG. 2 – Visitors per day for weeks 1 (May 6th to 12th), 2 (13th to 19th) and 3 (May 20th, the final Sunday). Bars enclosed in red were national holidays.

No attempt was made to find the origin of visitors, but these certainly came from Ain, Isère, Rhône and the two Savoies. It seems likely that there were also visitors from Switzerland.

The Réunionnais photographer, Joël Pellerin, made a detour on his way to the Cannes Festival to visit the exhibition.

## Press

An article from the local *Le Progrès* is attached.

**Website** <http://kitzlen.com/nues/>

The exhibition’s website also received many visitors, over 170 in the month of May alone.

## Afterword : the theme of the exhibition

The exhibition was announced with a theme centred on : “la représentation ces sexes dans l’art”, admittedly the French is somewhat ambiguous.

Whilst we received many plaudits during the exhibition there was little or no commentary on the ‘theme’. (Some comments in the *Livre d’Or* did prosyletise for a greater acceptance of the human body ‘nature’ in society.)

After the exhibition though we did find one comment hidden (*caché*) in the comments on the previous exhibition at the *Palais*, as it seems inappropriate for that exhibition, it was presumably a tilt at our own exhibition :

*Le sexe des femmes doit rester caché.*

The author in only seven words does seem to have got to the heart of the matter.

- Firstly, there is a statement about *remaining* hidden. A discussion about when and why ‘hiding’ became *de rigueur* would have been interesting. Certainly the human sexual organs have been exposed for more millennia since man evolved, than they have been hidden.
- Secondly, there is the word hidden (*caché*), not ‘covered’ but ‘hidden’. Interesting.
- Finally, and most apposite to the exhibition the comment only refers to the *female* external genitalia. Is there a difference between the sexes here?

The author is entitled to their point of view. Indeed it may be the prevalent one in our society, and the intention is not to mock it. Rather to reflect that in so few words the writer managed to highlight the fundamental points.

Perhaps they are not amenable to any easy analysis . . .

## Partners and sponsors

- **La Ville de Belley**
- **MBR mobilier agencement, Belley**
- **Musée Faure, Aix-les-Bains**
- Galabia, Culoz
- Caveau Monin, Vongnes
- L’an vert du decor, Serrières
- L’atelier des fleurs, Belley

