

# 'Artworld'

*Les Ouches*

## Official Guide

2013



By Alain Fraval and Rosemary Border (translation)

Second edition

*[www.afraval.info/refere/](http://www.afraval.info/refere/)*



## Artworld Official Guide

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*Spring 2013 has come and gone. Around a very dense and convoluted rail network, amid non-stop comings and goings, even the most misshapen spaces have been – if not cleaned up, at least gentrified somewhat, with a view to creating an idyllic landscape for the edification, the culture and the nourishment of the downtrodden workforce of the ReFeRe – and the admiration of visitors.*

*The ReFeRe organisation, well known for its knowhow in the world of rail transport and toxic chemistry and already a leader in the world of pollution, exerts its authority with this achievement, rightly named Artworld, and its 'Art gets on track' project, as a rail network concerned not only with transport but also with social welfare. It shows the world a dazzling example of the success of evergetic transition.*

# The ReFeRe, a flight of fancy

An archipelago of islets rises out of a wide expanse of amorphous, indefinable gunge known as the stroma<sup>1</sup>.

Each islet has its own narrow-gauge railway network. The whole system combines to form the ReFeRe (Réseaux Ferrés Réunis), pronounced to rhyme with MayDayPay. Each islet is cluttered, nay congested, with civil and railway buildings, installations, factories, slag heaps and rubbish dumps.

There are no roads here (rail transport has the monopoly), no natural vegetation (pollution has seen it off, and such vegetation as exists is entirely artificial). All architecture is functional, painted in dreary colours.

Concrete, a sort of asbestos-cement amalgam, which has nothing to do with concrete as we know it, and which comes in slabs ready to be stuck together, is ubiquitous. Platforms, walls, bridges, tracks, buildings, the coachwork of trucks and motive power units, walkways, garbage bins and many other items are made of concrete, and painted in undistinguished shades of drab.

The many downtrodden employees come and go at the behest of the Director in Chief. On each islet goods trains and railcars

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<sup>1</sup> In animal tissue, stroma (from Greek στρώμα, meaning “layer, bed, bed covering”) refers to the connective, supportive framework of a biological cell. – Tr.

ply tirelessly to and fro – when they have not broken down.

Trains can be transported from one islet to another on hovercars which float above the stroma.

This imaginary world is precisely that – a figment of the imagination. The models are created without a detailed plan on the scale of 1 in 87 (HO). Cardboard and cartridge paper in all their various guises are widely used, from the framework of each island to the tiniest trolley trundling past the buildings and bridges. International commerce and the Internet supply the chassis of the trucks and rolling stock, the oddments of flexible track, the people (ready painted or paint-it-yourself) and the electrical supplies. The layout of the tracks is a simple matter of loops and back-and-forth.

Four islets are on display at the Museum of Imaginary Worlds/Alter Ego. These are: the Academy of Railway Arts and Sciences, the Oasis, the Nuclear Power Station and Artworld, in the order in which they were built, starting in 2000.



The Palm Grove

## Artworld – Les Ouches<sup>2</sup>

### *Art gets on track*<sup>3</sup>

The abandoned spaces between the railway lines are crammed with completed and ongoing works of art. In these places where weeds no longer sprout, in an environment which is chemically and aesthetically very inhospitable, trees, picture rails, workshops, statues and installations flourish. Floral displays give way to ornamental lakes, former platforms have become terraces or have given way to esplanades and gardens. The previous function of the place is evident from the lines of old sheds, from the skeleton of a storehouse or a sort of truncated factory. The railway buildings have been carefully treated: they have not been vandalised, covered with graffiti or otherwise massacred, but the result is the same. These telltale structures still show the influence of concrete, the dominant material here. In a setting dedicated - as the Director in Chief of the ReFeRe

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<sup>2</sup> *Les ouches* signify meadows, orchards, gardens, etc close to houses. I have called it *Artworld*, because that is what it is: a kind of theme park devoted to the arts. – Tr.

<sup>3</sup> The official slogan. It is, however, not to be taken literally: no work of art must interfere with the smooth running of the trains.

has announced - to the creative expression of the talents of the company's personnel, guided by the company's goodwill, the elements which they have chosen to preserve, and the artefacts which have been installed, glued, accumulated, inserted and planted, all combine to guarantee social harmony – 'Art compensates for life's shortcomings', as Pirandello might have said<sup>4</sup>.

Those who are familiar with the planted promenade created in Paris in place of the Bastille line (and its 141 TB class steam locomotives), or the Meat Line in New York – where the rails have been retained - have seen but a pale imitation of Artworld, which is unique in the creative thought, the skilful accomplishment and the sheer intensity of the artistic qualities that have gone into its creation. And whereas in Paris and New York visitors need to explore these installations on foot, here in Artworld the most interesting and spectacular sites (and the others too) are served by rail shuttles, whose brownian motion creates an atmosphere of sound and vibration that is 'all railway'. Here, more than elsewhere, as Léonor Fini has said, 'there are images to feed the imagination all along the line'

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<sup>4</sup> *You will find many learned references in this book. Some I was familiar with; others I had to look up on the Web. If you feel that the author seems to be displaying his erudition overmuch, you are not alone. Tr.*

The metasiderodromome<sup>5</sup> of a typical rail network is composed of immediately identifiable elements: crossing keeper's houses, engine sheds, goods depots, switching posts, water towers, houses, small apartment buildings and trees. The installations in Artworld show the same distribution but, as they fall outside everyday taxonomy<sup>6</sup>, they can puzzle those visitors who would like to go beyond mere blind admiration, and pride themselves on understanding the rationale behind these objects which make up the landscape.

Why are they there, why do they look the way they do, and how do they fit into the scheme of things? And so the texts that follow do not fit into any particular order. Every site or structure of interest gives rise to an adequate description supported by a commentary and completed by a substantial set of notes. In sticking to essentials we are emulating Boileau, who said 'Keep your art simple'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *Let's call it the trackside installations. One of the author's neologisms (which might even catch on)- Tr.*

Meta – beside, sidero –iron, drome – path and ome – fashionable suffix, as in genome, etc.

<sup>6</sup> Science of the description and classification of beings and, by extension, things.

<sup>7</sup> He said this in 1674.

*Ovid said something similar much earlier: 'Ars est celare artem': the idea that true art conceals the blood, sweat, toil and tears that went into its creation. – Tr.*





The Open Air Space

## The Arts – what Arts?

If you declare that something is art, then art it is, and as such deserving of publicity, encouragement and funding. 'Art gets on track' was carefully set up; but does it tell the whole story? Might someone, for example, have forgotten to involve the Muses? Has this very ancient cultural sisterhood, promulgated by Plato in 401 BC, made no contribution at all? If Urania, the Muse of astronomy, does not seem to have been involved despite being the Director in Chief's favourite, Calliope (eloquence) and Polymnia (music) are much in evidence, plugged into the computer of the author of this booklet.

Classified by the number which Hegel attributed to them in 1818, the first three Muses are definitely in evidence! Architecture, sculpture and painting – what Emmanuel Kant called the fine arts - the Bildenden Kunste - are all here.

As for the tenth art, railway modelling (Jacques Le Plat, 1998), even if Hegel does not give it prominence, the models of the ReFeRe prove its pre-eminence. Some people may point out some omissions: funerary art, martial arts and above all veterinary art. They may well be right.

## The Open Air Space

Here contemporary art is present in all its glory and in the open air<sup>8</sup>, and right in the middle of the Grande Poutre, the [Great Girder](#)<sup>9</sup>. Here works of art which are powerful, original, priceless and durable make their presence felt. Criticism would be futile, commentary superfluous, praise inadequate. The flat, rigorously rectangular pictures are displayed on very large panels in a space bounded by beautiful (manmade) deciduous trees in their winter starkness. The styles and treatments are varied, but all the pictures bear witness to the total commitment of their creators. A new small exhibition is in preparation on the black surfaces of the supports. In a nearby workspace, several 'plastic arts practitioners' are working busily together surrounded by pots of various materials and close to several [storage units](#) made from redundant and recycled wagons.

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<sup>8</sup> Exposed to the elements – so what? Almost all the buildings are protected by a terrace, a roof or a glass screen. What is more, it never rains here, just as it never rains in the 1/87 scale rail system. The roofs stimulate the imagination: what is under them, what is going on there?

<sup>9</sup> The words in blue correspond to places, things or concepts mentioned further on (or further up) in this book.

*And, on the subject of the Great Girder, let us remember the ancient joke about the Irish brickie. 'Sure I know the difference between a joist and a girder. Joist wrote Finnegan's Wake and Girder wrote Faust'. (This replaces one of the author's untranslatable quips – Tr.)*

## Vasco da Gama

All eyes are riveted to a big brick red statue<sup>10</sup> set on a high pedestal, which is best admired from as far away as possible. Vasco da Gama succeeded in passing himself off as the first European to reach India by sea. As such he is commemorated by a great many statues<sup>11</sup>. This statue, in plastic painted to look like bronze, was found a long time ago as a tiny freebie in a consignment of coffee.

What use is this statue, fairly banal, not very 'with it', not very expressive and not in solid gold? For every seeker for immortality, any statue paid for by someone else is a blessing. Once unveiled, it intrudes upon everyone's field of vision for the next century or so.

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<sup>10</sup> A three-dimensional work of art, created by sculpting, moulding or soldering. Statuary, whether monumental or movable, figurative or abstract, historic or contemporary, is particularly well represented in Artworld.

In addition to Vasco da Gama, visitors can admire in particular [The Ploughman](#) (plastic) and [The Camel](#) (ditto). They can marvel at the [Glyptopole](#), a studio-exhibition in the round of the work of [patafixistes](#) (*exponents of glue pads, manufactured by Uhu – for what purports to be an explanation, see page 51 if you can be bothered – Tr.*). They can gaze at [Porcus Caeruleus](#), the Cerulean Pig, another plastic creation, The Puzzle in the [Park](#) (concrete), Untitled on the [Terrace](#) (chrome tubing, acrylic, glue pads) and the bold works of the [empilistes](#) (*the Stackers: cf infra for an explanation - Tr.*) – while meeting and greeting the movie [extras](#) (plastic).

<sup>11</sup> A second Vasco da Gama statue (same price, same provenance) lords it over the entrance to the [Insect Cellar](#).



The Camel

## The Great Girder

An immense parallelepipedic caisson<sup>12</sup> resting on two earthworks makes up the highest point (and the pinnacle of achievement) of Artworld. It is crossed by three (more or less) parallel tracks on the surface, tracks which form two lines, [Tapeworm](#) and [Spaghetti](#)<sup>13</sup>. At one extremity are three terminus stations and the [Cerulean Pig](#). At the other, beyond the [Troquai](#), the Station Bistro<sup>14</sup>, the tracks curve round to enclose the [Circus](#)<sup>15</sup>.

The Great Girder shelters an entire world, notably the [Creation Pit](#), [Alter Ego](#) and a disused line which was formerly an extension of the Tapeworm and is now full of wheelless wagons.

Why is this great girder there at all? It is said to be the legacy of the ferro-industrial complex which held sway until the site was claimed by art and arboriculture. Its function in those days has never been made clear.

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<sup>12</sup> *In geometry, a parallelepiped is a three-dimensional figure formed by six parallelograms. The term rhomboid is also sometimes used with this meaning. – Tr.*

<sup>13</sup> Everyone calls them that; their official names were forgotten long ago. They are in fact quite well provided with tight curves, although well calculated (clothoides and ellipsoids). 'Tapeworm' is short and elegant. 'Spaghetti' is more problematic. Perhaps the term 'Spaghetti Junction' springs to mind..More about this at the end of this book.

*The Cornu Spiral or Clothoide is a mathematical curve commonly used in road engineering to define progressive transitions between lines... – Tr.*

<sup>14</sup> *A play on words: think of a bistro on a railway platform – Tr.*

<sup>15</sup> *This is a corrie rather than an entertainment – Tr.*

## Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres

The landscape of Artworld is scattered with billboards, each bearing a number, a syllable, sometimes a word or even a sentence, sometimes an abstruse symbol.

These 'sham writings' are produced and put in place by the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles-Lettres, part of the ARAS<sup>16</sup>, according to a rigorous selection process.

The billboards are salvaged from various sources and placed according to perfectly defined and hierarchical criteria: dimensions, colours and ultimate meaning.

If some state clearly, at least at first reading, what they have to say, most of them lead the reader to speculate and to question.

Mathematicians are still unable to determine whether the numbers displayed are real or imaginary<sup>17</sup>.

Their locations (so well described in this *Guide*) are never identified 'in clear', but by QR codes, very modern, very straightforward, very expressive.

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<sup>16</sup> The Academy of Railway Arts and Sciences on the islet of the same name.

<sup>17</sup> One of these mathematicians, after years of perseverance, and just before he went mad, came to the conclusion that these billboards were purely decorative.

## The Trail

A hedge, black and aggressive-looking, remarkably well clipped and perhaps too regular, runs across the landscape in the centre of the [Great Girder](#). It is vigorous, perfectly aligned and free from insect pests. No botanist could possibly identify its species: the hedge is man-made from artificial foliage, in common with all the bushes, flower beds and trees on the islet. The pure lines of the beds and borders are uncluttered by leaves or flowers<sup>18</sup>.

The smallest specimens are planted immovably. The large trees are mobile and interchangeable<sup>19</sup>. Every individual plant is unique; nature has no place in this magic garden, where industry meets craftsmanship.

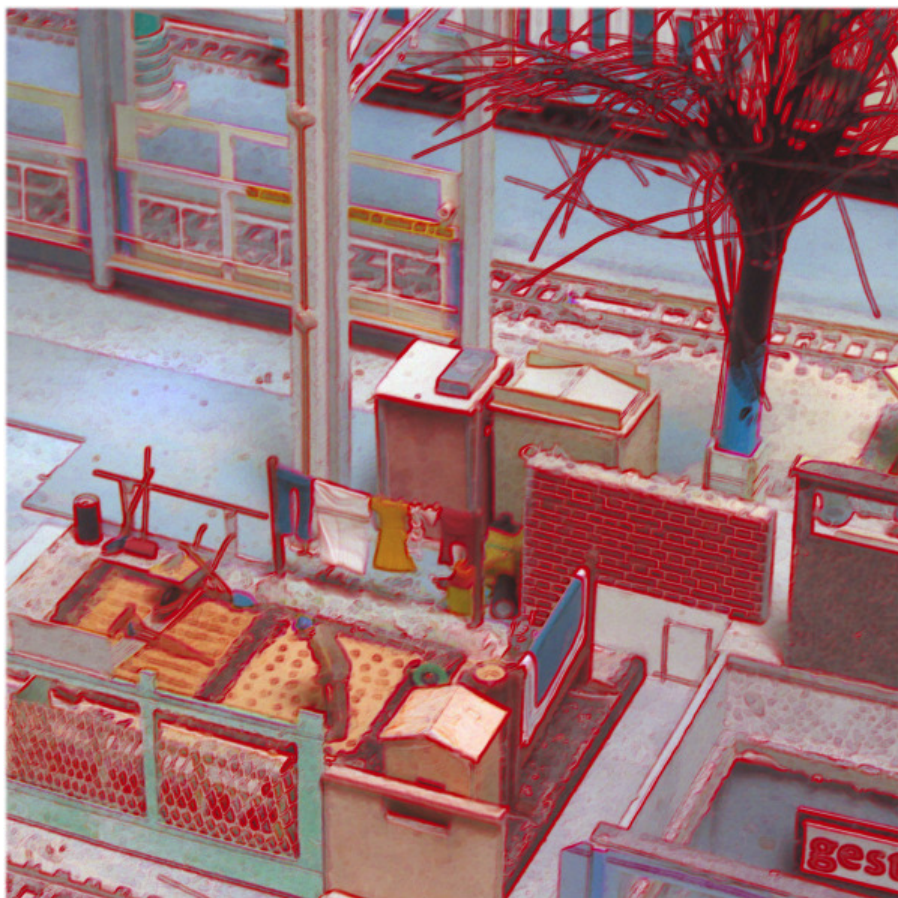
And, as Seneca said, 'this imitation of nature is art'.

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<sup>18</sup> With the notable exception of certain specimens planted under cover.

<sup>19</sup> Imagine the astonishment of people revisiting Artworld who find themselves in the shade of an orange neo-apple tree, where previously they stood under a black neo-palm.





The Allotment

## The Movie Extra Factory

The Extras are life-size anthropomorphic statues with bright red skin, dressed uniformly in dark grey. It is this, apart from their bland, faceless look that distinguishes the Extras from the real people (mostly members of staff) who frequent Artworld.

They do not move; as decorative as they are passive, their function is simply to be there, to look nice, to make up the numbers, even to occupy certain strategic spots<sup>20</sup>.

The Movie Extra Factory, where the Extras are manufactured, occupies a sort of large rectangular basement on the [Great Girder](#), where the end of a recycled wagon can be seen on a redundant track. In the courtyard, the workers bustle about around a scouring bath<sup>21</sup>.

The Factory is served by the overhanging track. The platform is not very wide, and it is cluttered with Extras packed like sardines, lifted up from below by the small green crane. The finished Extras are waiting to be sent to wherever they are to be deployed.

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<sup>20</sup> The Extras were not created to perform tedious tasks tirelessly, nor to amuse the onlookers with their antics. They are statues, not robots.

<sup>21</sup> On a stretcher can be seen the remains of an Extra who has been too vigorously scoured.

## The Square

Square by name, square by nature. Its handsome layout is somewhat cluttered by a series of [storage units](#). Nevertheless, there are plenty of interesting nooks and crannies. In one of these the 'landscape gardeners' are seen working on a bush, armed with a wide ladder.

Presiding over the Square is a façade (or maybe a gable) which is strongly reminiscent of the rugged pediments of the ARAS building. This very typical structure has been left standing either out of respect or to make its mark on its surroundings<sup>22</sup>. At its foot are workspaces for DIY of an artistic persuasion and, on the other side, an enclosed area where some activity or other was planned but has not yet taken place.

Near the terminus, at the far end of the [Great Girder](#), a space is provided for 'peripatetic reflection' - wandering about deep in thought while pondering, like Jean Tardieu<sup>23</sup> which train to take.

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<sup>22</sup> The reader should listen again to the historic interview granted by the Director in Chief in 2011, in which he set out his clear vision of the landscape and his promise of a better place – a promise honoured, the 'springtime of the ReFeRe' – see [www.afraval.info/refere/Sauvigny11 audio.html](http://www.afraval.info/refere/Sauvigny11_audio.html)

<sup>23</sup> *A writer of the existentialist persuasion – Tr.*

## The Storage Units

Storage units there are aplenty, from the size of a garage to the size of a wardrobe, in every imaginable colour. They rub shoulders with the wheelless wagons<sup>24</sup>. Some may say they breed too prolifically<sup>25</sup>, but the storage units are essential, because each association or interest group, whether artistic or cultural, is allocated its own place to keep things in.

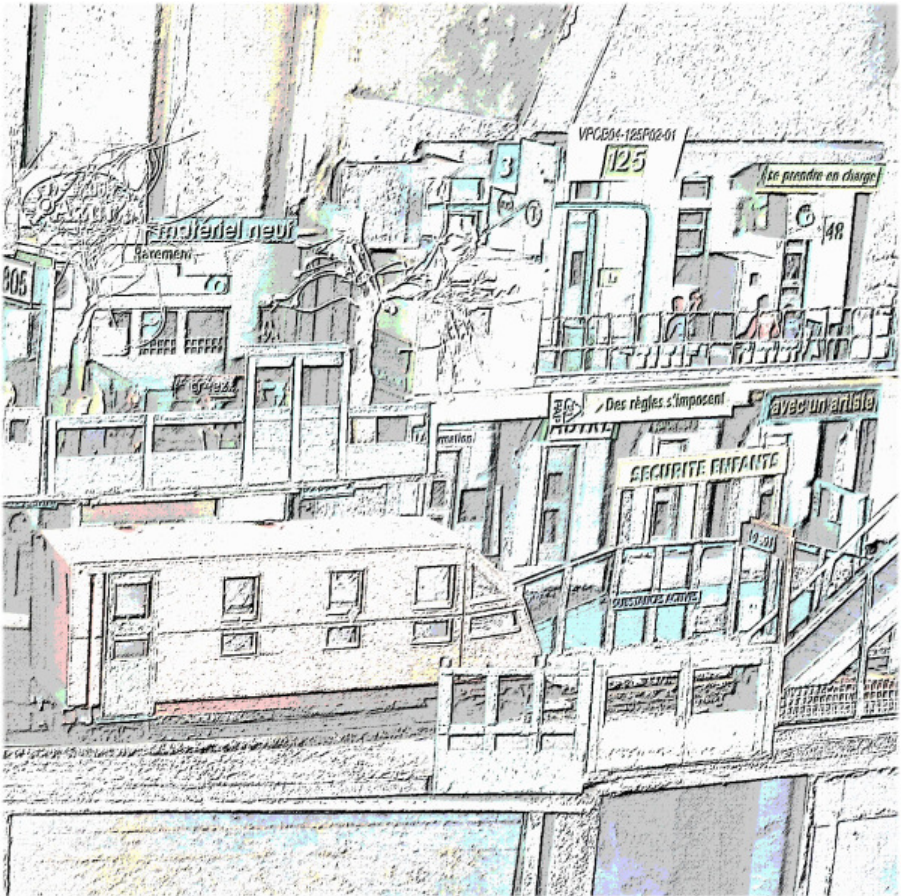
In general, a large ex-wagon (or even better a pair of ex-wagons) indicates a powerful organisation with plenty of members; a mere cupboard indicates a small-scale unsubsidised group.

These units give shape and permanence to the group structure of the railway landscape. The forming of clubs and interest groups is warmly encouraged by the Director in Chief, at least in the subsections of which he approves.

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<sup>24</sup> In theory, a wagon whose bodywork has been removed from its chassis and wheels (usually mounted on bogies). Wagon-building is a very important creative activity on the ReFeRe: it is quite possible to imagine that several different home-produced bodies can be mounted on the same chassis, which is costly and scarce because it has to be imported. Or indeed wheelless wagons are constructed in the same way as whole wagons.

<sup>25</sup> In certain places large numbers of wagon-bodies are grouped together and become wagonvilles, shantytowns of wagons (*from bidonville – Tr.*). Typically they are perched above the tracks or placed on the terrace of a normal building.



The Residences

## The Amphitheatre

A positive plethora of red-faced [Extras](#) is installed on the terraces of the amphitheatre. These are the Admirers: there are about 30 of them, their awestruck gaze directed towards the artworks on display. All they lack is speech to express their delight, movement to get closer to the exhibits, and pockets from which to take a banknote to slip into the collecting-box thoughtfully placed there by the organisers of the exhibition<sup>26</sup>. The tiers of Admirers in themselves constitute an ironic, post-historic installation as well as a tribute to classical sculpture, but without any obvious association with the Greek masters. Marcel Duchamp, one of the daddies of Dadaism, said: 'It is the beholder who creates the picture.'<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> We owe it to ourselves to support exhibitions, even in the case of this one, which displays shamelessly the artworks of all its paid-up members.

<sup>27</sup> *I am reminded of Gray's 'flower destined of 'blush unseen And waste its sweetness on the desert air' – what is the point of something beautiful if there is nobody to admire it? – Tr.*

## The Terrace

The Terrace is L-shaped, shaded by two fine trees, sheltered by a palisade and situated in a rectangular area where sculpture takes pride of place. On the edge sit [Extras](#) with their legs hanging into space. Their function is to provide a guardrail to satisfy the demands of the Health and Safety Brigade<sup>28</sup>.

Behind these red-skinned figures are four abstract sculptures. Above the shoulders of the Extras are revealed two examples of conceptual sculpture. On two mighty pedestals, truncated, streaked and the colour of fresh butter, are a mythical couple: Mr and Mrs Eternally Absent. They do not represent Hell, any allusion to which would be rather tactless, given the working conditions prevailing on the ReFeRe, despite what Victor Hugo could have said about them.

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<sup>28</sup> Although he greatly appreciates the 'graphically interesting' guardrails, the Director in Chief has made a decision which applies to all overhanging and vertiginous situations (particularly along the tracks), under the heading *Ubi periculum* – where there is danger. He has decreed an imaginary line from the edge of the platform to a point situated at a distance equal to the height of the person standing there (*In other words, if you are 6 feet tall the statutory distance from the edge is 6 feet –Tr.*). Anyone who crosses this line and tumbles off the platform will be summarily fired in a letter of dismissal dated the previous day.



## The Allotment

An allotment is every worker's dream, or at least the dream of his benevolent boss: the honest son of toil spends his leisure hours growing vegetables instead of squandering his wages in the pub. In his immense generosity, the Director in Chief's department wished to present 'workers' gardens'<sup>29</sup> to all his labourers and railwaymen<sup>30</sup>. As nothing can grow here, however, it is not worth allocating land for cultivation, and the workforce is too busy working anyway.

And so, in the place of real-life allotments, a life-size model allotment has been created in a central space. It is all there: double-dug beds, nonchalantly stowed garden tools, a brick wall topped with broken glass, clotheslines, garden shed and a big pile of pesticide drums<sup>31</sup>. And if you look closely you can see bottles of red wine heeled in and waiting to be planted out. There is everything you need here to dream about personal horticulture in a temperate environment.

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<sup>29</sup> *As described by the good Abbé Lemire, who set up the first allotment scheme in France. (See //jardins-familiaux.pagesperso-orange.fr/histoire.htm for a spot of history and some endearing sepia photographs – Tr.)*

<sup>30</sup> With a view perhaps to calling them 'The Director in Chief's Gardens', but that might be seen as coming it a bit.

<sup>31</sup> Problem: One interpretation is that the drums were emptied (where??) in the move towards organic gardening. Otherwise it's just a normal garden.





The Park

## The Mall

Here stood a mighty building proudly displaying its concrete half-timbering and its casement windows. One bay has been left standing, which encloses a light and airy passageway. The Mall is also a gallery where figurative sculptures are on show. The theme is total kitsch – let's all give a cheer for the eclectic selection of works of art here in Artworld!

On the adjoining low structure which houses the specialised studios, a little wagonville served by an awkward staircase is a home for 'major associative activities'<sup>32</sup>. Sadly, none of them qualified for grant aid this year<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> *Clubs and interest groups in plain English - Tr.*

<sup>33</sup> All the rejected clubs and interest groups will fold for lack of support, which will free up valuable space. Then it will be time to set out a dossier in support of applications for grant aid (name, address, bank details, tax record, the blessing of the Director in Chief, full details of the project, resources, medico-political support, assurances, rules and regulations...) These must be addressed to the management, local government, the diocese, the European Parliament and UNESCO. It is envisaged that groups of experts will be entertained with coffee and cake... (*Think of applying for a National Lottery grant and you'll get the idea. Tr.*)

## The Great Emulation Gallery

'A site of exceptional artistic interest' according to the promotional material, which does not tell lies. It is an authentic loft conversion, the entire first floor of a truncated building. It is reached by a footbridge from the [Mall](#). The natural lighting is perfect: there is no roof. The walls are romantically lop-sided. This area, as its name suggests, is devoted to competitions. A theme is set, a closing date is fixed and the entries are judged by strictly defined criteria. The entries are assembled on the 'green monochrome'<sup>34</sup>.

The prizewinning works, both paintings and sculptures, are immaculately displayed thanks to skilful design and enhanced by the pure light of day. The catalogue is on sale at the reception desk under the window next to the entrance.

But what is the reason for that pile of pictures flung into a corner, behind what was formerly a functioning lift? They are the rejects, the daubs or the pathetic imitations, like this exact copy of Yves Klein's Green Monochrome painted in 1957.

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<sup>34</sup> A reference to Yves Klein's paintings in the 1950s: see below – Tr.

## The Tro-quai<sup>35</sup>: the Station Bistro

This trackside snack bar is perched on green supports, a narrow platform clings to the gable of the building which houses the [Great Emulation Gallery](#), protecting the platform. It is reached by a covered staircase.

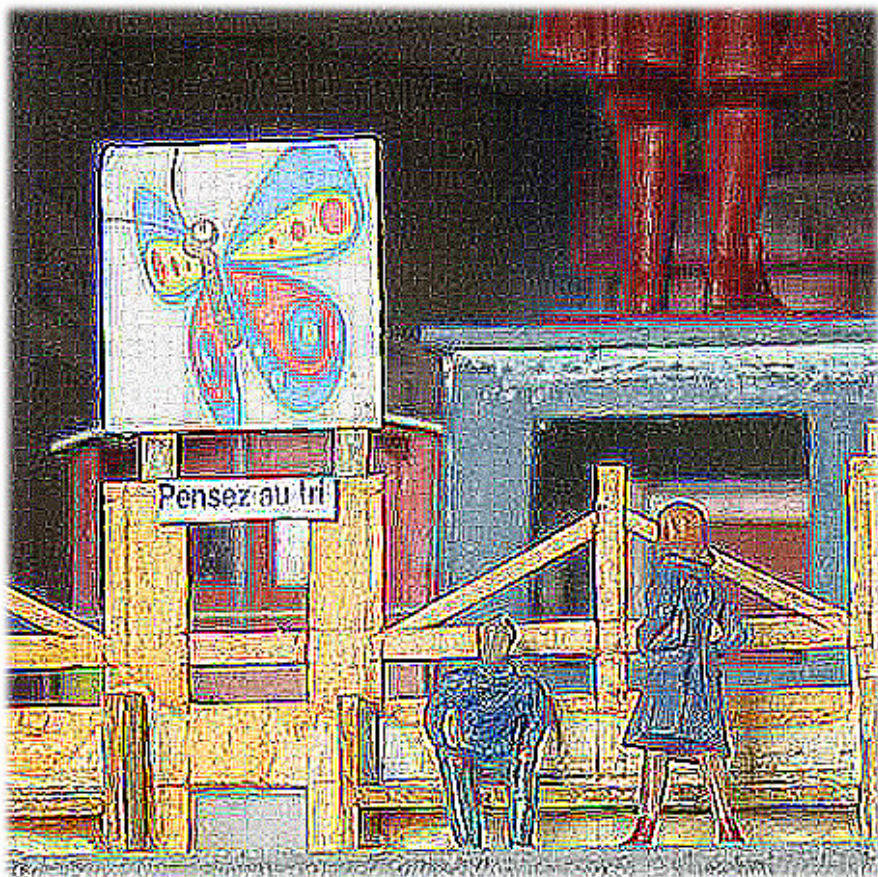
The wheelless wagon is next to a terrace with tables and benches and stools where refreshments<sup>36</sup> are served. A kind of square balcony overhangs the track; it is highly prized by certain trainspotters<sup>37</sup>. The other trainspotters congregate on the other side, on the terrace opposite the [Circus](#).

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<sup>35</sup> *A play on words in several levels: un troquet is a little bistro, troquer is to swap or barter, un quai is a station platform. Best not to speculate too much – Tr.*

<sup>36</sup> *All manner of good things are served there, including the hearty Railwayman's Soup (prepared, as we know, down the Mine). Here the punters knock back (long list of drinks, including plonk, maté and tea made from caterpillar dung, doled out in precise amounts...Don't let it worry you – Tr.)*

<sup>37</sup> *A trainspotter is someone who stands by a railway line to note down the numbers of the trains which pass, the make-up of their carriages, trucks and wagons...He may well end up by being run over by a train. Here is trainspotter's heaven. The same railcar passes to and fro along the same track – it's a bit of a bummer, like life.*



The Insect Cellar



## The Circus

At its northern extremity, the [Great Girder](#) rests on a complex concrete structure. Think of a millefeuille, a flaky pastry confection: layers of worthless and non-biodegradable rubbish, more or less crushed. The surface has been modelled in the form of a pleasant hill with a pointed peak (hollow) and a circus<sup>38</sup> at its foot, occupied by the [Park](#). The whole seems suspended, levitating even, wider than its pedestal.

Vegetation has been specially designed and tastefully planted so as not to interfere with rail traffic. Anyone familiar with the grassed-over slag heaps next to coal mines can compare Mother Nature's slow and haphazard work, even with the help of a landscape gardener, with the vigour, rigour and splendour of the landscaping performed by the specialist services of the ReFeRe. No fewer than four tracks in tight curves, crisscrossed constantly by shuttle trains, encircle the Circus, embellishing the [Park](#) like a glorious crown.

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<sup>38</sup> *No clowns or acrobats here: a circus in this context is a bowl-shaped, steep-walled mountain basin carved by glaciation, often containing a small, round lake – Tr.*

## The Park

Planted with white or black trees singly or in rows, and clumps of reeds, this gently undulating space is ideal for contemplative walks. It is dominated by an immense wall of paving stones, the Puzzle in the Park, a powerful and original creation in concrete. Here one can see clearly a detail – pixellated – of the bas-relief on the column of Marcus Aurelius<sup>39</sup>, which itself was inspired by Trajan's Column.

A belvedere towers above it, a focal point for art-lovers. The gaps in the vegetation provide advantageous views of the surrounding railway lines and the trains that run along them. In the centre is a small pavilion with seats. All-round sound effects<sup>40</sup> are guaranteed.

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<sup>39</sup> A pupil of Epictetus, who himself was a pupil of Musonius Rufus. (*The author is showing off his classical knowledge again. – Tr.*)

<sup>40</sup> On the 1/87 scale network, as must also be the case on other scales, noise is a serious issue. (*long dissertation on railway modelling techniques intended to reduce noise. Read the original if you are really interested. –Tr.*)

## The Museum of Pure Imagination

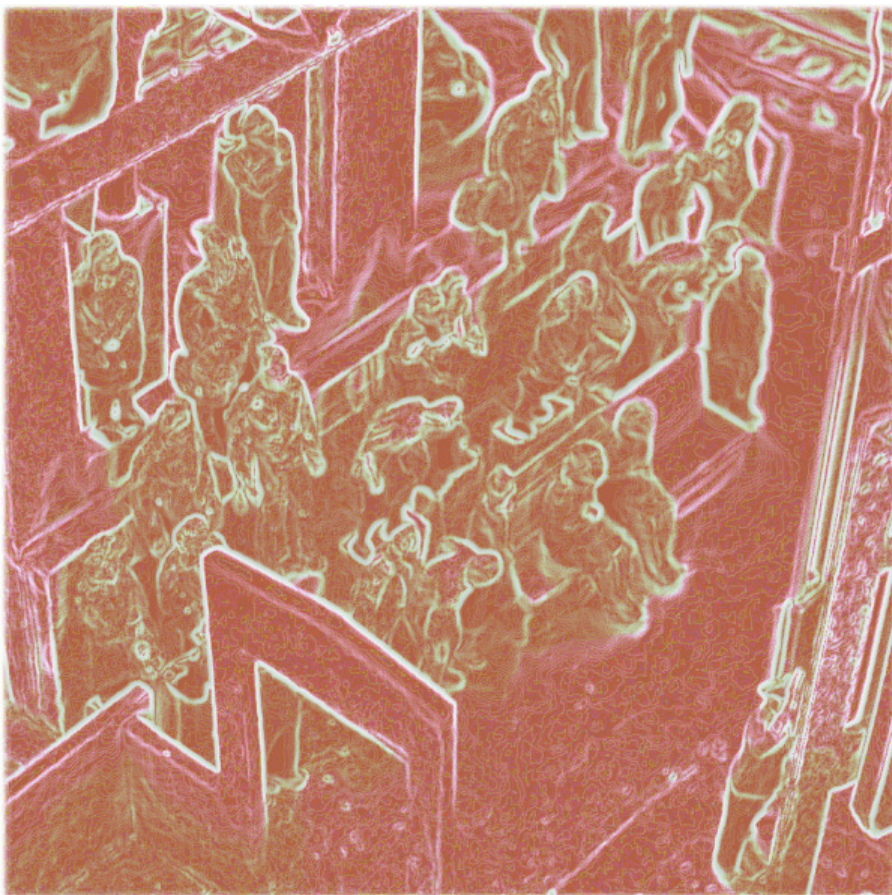
Its architecture would not be inappropriate for a small electric power station. Its surroundings are of the 'green space' persuasion, but blackish-grey in actual colour, with metalled roads which cling closely to this cubical building which is a masterpiece of 'orthogonalism'. The glass in the windows of the façade is frosted<sup>41</sup>.

Inside as well as outside the Museum is featureless, for it leaves everything to the imagination. It is better to make the effort to visit it (via the [Tapeworm](#) line) than to make war, for as General De Lattre de Tassigny said, 'It is good to strike the enemy, but it is even better to strike the imagination.'

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<sup>41</sup> Nothing is visible from the outside. The same goes for the inside, as visitors to the museum have confirmed. Clearly they are totally lacking in imagination, for all they had to do was close their eyes, as instructed in the free information provided (a blank screen with no sound) and let their imagination do the rest.





The Extras

## The Bridge

More technically complex than a canal bridge, more accurate than a weighbridge, noisier than the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, longer than the bridge of a tanker, bigger than all the other bridges<sup>42</sup>... this is The Bridge.

Between the [Circus](#) and the [Desert](#) – exactly on a level with the little workshops of the [Glyptopole](#), a mighty concrete caisson supports three parallel equidistant railway lines and an enormous amount of traffic in six directions. At each extremity, the piers are sunk deeply directly into the stroma, or rest on a small platform: it's neat and clean, very Bauhaus<sup>43</sup>.

On an islet given over to the Arts, it is the Work of Art.

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<sup>42</sup> The trains spend a great deal of their time crossing bridges. There are several different designs of bridge. Many are amazingly bold and innovative thanks to the properties of concrete.

<sup>43</sup> The Great Architect – in this context the Director in Chief rather than the Almighty – sometimes paints with a broad brush, sometimes fine-tunes every fiddly detail. Has this all-powerful, all-knowing personage actually checked whether there is enough space under each bridge to allow a standard hovercar to pass underneath? But then what would a hovercar do under the Great Girder, apart from cower in terror?

## The Palm Grove

Palm trees with crops growing in their shade, an irrigation channel, some sand<sup>44</sup>, an ornamental pool... and the [Camel](#): this is indeed a palm grove, even if the site does not bear much resemblance to an oasis. Here visitors like to stroll, pester the artists in their studios, feel the vibrations of the trains passing to and fro, and take their ease on the benches and chairs provided. The dried-up ornamental pool is on the level below; it has probably seen use as a cooling pond<sup>45</sup>. Have no fear: the palm trees here do not produce any oil. Their trunk is a smooth, translucent plastic tube, their foliage is high up – it is pointless to try to pick a palm frond.

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<sup>44</sup> There is no need to worry about any damage the sand might do to the fragile machinery of the railcars which pass to and fro constantly: the sand is securely glued onto the concrete slabs on which the Palm Grove stands.

<sup>45</sup> The history of this site has been suppressed, but not certain untouchable installations. At one time the ReFeRe developed, under the noses of the International Atomic Energy Authority, an enrichment facility and a nuclear power station. Might there have been an element of blackmail to extort substantial funds in exchange for abandoning a worrying nuclear programme which had never in fact been started? Well, who knows? There remains an islet named The Nuclear Power Station, and possibly this pool is a cooling pond for the fuel rods.

## The Camel

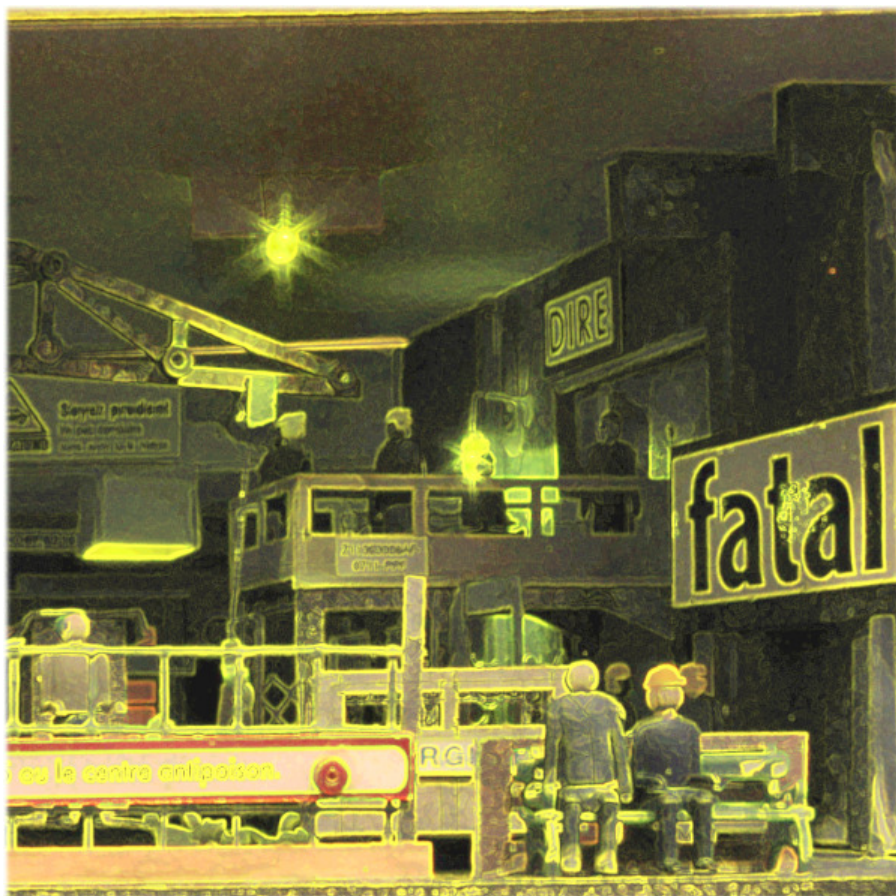
Although it is constructed on a less than monumental scale, the Camel is one of the major monuments of Artworld statuary. It depicts an adult specimen of a *Camelus bactrianus*, life size, with a plaque (very small, written in Arabic) engraved with this proverb (also Arabic in origin): 'Life is a desert in which Woman is the camel.'

This statue in plastic was kept for the Zoo project<sup>46</sup>; it is currently displayed in the centre of the [Palm Grove](#) – but ownership is claimed by the planning committee of the Transport Museum<sup>47</sup>. The plaque will be revised accordingly.

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<sup>46</sup> There were moves afoot, in a moment of great intellectual creativity in respect of the unoccupied spaces, to gather together important animal species in a zoo: animals whose existence is not under the control of the ReFeRe but which the public ought to be familiar with, by means of models, including statues, easier to feed and care for than real life creatures. Insects are presented from an educational point of view in the Insect Cellar. A proud horse forms part of the statuary composition entitled The Ploughman. The project is still at the feasibility study stage. Meanwhile you can find nematodes, mussels, warthogs and sponges on the internet.

<sup>47</sup> There were moves afoot, in yet another moment of great intellectual creativity in respect of the unoccupied spaces, to gather together important types of vehicle in a museum of transport. Camels count as vehicles...This project too is still at the feasibility study stage. In the meantime you can study triremes, rickshaws and engineers' velocipedes on the internet.



The Motor

## The Desert

Apart from the three lines which cross it, the Desert does not enclose, display or conceal anything. Between the [Lift](#) and the [Glyptopole](#): zilch.

Absolute desert: you can still cry out there and Alphonse Allais can still sift the sand, although he won't find any lions<sup>48</sup>.

What is the Desert for? To run tracks across, the engineer says. To meditate on, for that is the beginning of wisdom – thanks for the advice, Mr Buddha, but not easy with the racket all the trains kick up!

To stockpile toxic waste, that is an obvious answer, but there is already plenty under these bizarre undulations. 'Land art' is trendy here – conceptual art!

The Desert should be shown off to its best advantage. It is already ripe for development, suggests a property developer. Squatters will be encouraged and a camp set up so that no developer will set foot there. All it needs is to be rendered radioactive: there will never be anyone there, sustainability guaranteed...

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<sup>48</sup> French writer 1854 – 1905 who quipped, 'To find a lion in the desert, all you need to do is sift the sand' - Tr.

## The Lift

In its fine green cage the Lift conveys people up from level 0 (a halt on the [Loop](#)) to level 1 (a halt on [Spaghetti Junction](#)) or down in the opposite direction. A project to provide a rail connection between these two lines never saw the light of day, hence this vertical transport facility, included in the ReFeRe's monopoly<sup>49</sup>, which links the two lines.

Travellers are advised not to attempt the connection when the Lift is out of order, for there is no staircase<sup>50</sup>. They could always meditate on Serge Gainsbourg's confession: 'I do not have the esprit de l'escalier, I have the wit of the ascenseur en panne, the broken-down lift'<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Since its inception the ReFeRe has had the monopoly on all transport infrastructures on the Archipelago. Forbidden (and disappeared without trace) are canals, roads, mule tracks, cable cars and ski-lifts. Permitted (and they occupy a large proportion of the space available) are railways, from high speed trains to trams, not forgetting beetroot shuttles and underground rail systems, as well as hiking trails, footbridges and lifts.

<sup>50</sup> The Rambler's Guide states that the answer is to take the lift from the Insect Cellar, each of whose two levels is served by one of these two lines. Passengers must, however, make sure their subscription to OPIE (Office for the Preservation of Insects and their Environment) is up to date: see [www.7.inra.fr/opie-insectes](http://www.7.inra.fr/opie-insectes). (This link actually leads you to a wealth of insect-related websites run by the author, a polymath who is an entomologist as well as the 'onlie begetter' of the ReFeRe – Tr.)

<sup>51</sup> *Esprit de l'escalier* (staircase wit) is a French term, attributed to Diderot, that describes the predicament of thinking up the perfect retort too late. – Tr.



## The Insect Cellar

These premises, installed in the base of the [Great Girder](#) on the same side as the [Circus](#), are not a true cellar, given that they are lit from the front by the sun's rays, or at least by their reflection on the dust floating in suspension.

The upper part is entirely glassed in and is like a mezzanine. A door opens on this level. It leads to a platform for the passengers on the [Spaghetti Junction](#) line.

Underneath there is no glass, air comes in along with the floating dust; part of this space is taken up by [storage units](#). A gently sloping ramp leads to the platform where the travellers on the [Big Loop](#) congregate. Whether you approach from above or from below, you cannot miss a reddish statue, very grandiose, very 'Renaissance', very like the statue<sup>52</sup> of Vasco da Gama.

The insects are artificial (displayed most educationally by the OPIE), because real insects sting<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> It is not in fact Vasco da Gama: this statue depicts J.H. Fabre, famous for his study of insects, but disguised as Vasco da Gama for the amusement and instruction of visiting children.

<sup>53</sup> Above all, live insects need to be looked after. They eat, they crap, they breed, they die...





The Glyptopôle<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Look up Glyptopôle on the web, and the only entry leads to [www.afraval.info/refere/Sauvigny11.html](http://www.afraval.info/refere/Sauvigny11.html) which tells you far more than you wish to know – Tr.

## The Art of Stacking

This artistic movement could be described as the products of working with hard and more or less flat materials in the 21st century.

Since time immemorial<sup>55</sup> man has stacked stones into cairns, markers and mounds to commemorate the dead, point travellers in the right direction, and indeed show off his skill in constructing piles of stones without doing himself an injury<sup>56</sup>.

Today it is enough for the Stackers to construct tall, slender mounds by piling up slabs and platelets of concrete in an artistic manner<sup>57</sup>.

The Stackers produce their works of art in the pit next to the [Movie Extra Factory](#). They protect their creations fiercely against ramblers who would like to add a layer...The most successful stacks are already displayed on pedestals or plinths for visitors to admire.

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<sup>55</sup> Since Neolithic times, to be precise. 'Neolithic' means adding a new (neo) stone (lith) to the stack.

<sup>56</sup> *Dry-stone walls – so called because no mortar is used - are perhaps the most useful expression of this skill – Tr.*

<sup>57</sup> There is no message involved. There are no miracles either: these structures stay up thanks to a touch of concrete adhesive, discreetly applied and provided equally discreetly by the Sticky Squad on the Oasis islet. It's all unofficial, but as it's all in a good cause nobody spills the beans.

## The Hypogeum<sup>58</sup>

Behind the [Residences](#) and the [Motor](#), and more or less directly underneath the [Circus](#), is a cultural complex which is very deep in every sense and offers tremendous possibilities.

Reception room, small and large multi-purpose halls, gallery, service area; nothing is left out here and everything conforms to international standards<sup>59</sup>.

In particular, the large hall contains a great many seats; it can host video shows, theatrical performances, lectures on vernacular art, club AGMs (booked in advance), exhibitions both temporary and permanent.

This hall is equipped for puppet shows – which, as George Sand said, amuse no one except little children and great thinkers.

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<sup>58</sup> *Hypogeum or hypogaeum literally means "underground", from Greek hypo (under) and gaia (earth). It usually refers to an underground temple. The author is showing off again. – Tr.*

<sup>59</sup> Needless to say the Hypogeum is served by WiFi, which pervades every inch of ReFeRe's premises, even the profoundest depths, and unfailingly carries messages downwards (the orders of the Director in Chief), upwards (messages of allegiance from his workforce) and horizontally (within authorised limits). This system does away with telegraph poles, which give endless trouble on other rail networks.

## The Residences

Under the [Circus](#), sheltered by a sort of geomorphic cap, is a very long row of troglodyte buildings on two levels. This is a place of workshops, halls, offices and study cubicles made available to writers and artists in residence.

It is reached by a passageway from the platform (the [Big Loop line](#)), via a staircase and along a footbridge. The occupants' period in residence is sometimes cut short because the track was built too close to the walls of the buildings<sup>60</sup>; and some artists, wandering about in search of inspiration, are mown down by the railcar and squashed flat. These poor souls would have done better to confine their wanderings to the tree-lined walkway.

A figurative statue merits closer inspection: this is the [Ploughman](#). The colour green predominates. Although it is in general rather a poisonous green, it is nevertheless peaceful and refreshing. Further on, after a pleasant walk along the platform, the visitor comes across [Stacker art](#) and other sculptures.

The success of the Residences in this green space, in terms of masterpieces started or at least conceived, expresses the saying 'put out to grass'.

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<sup>60</sup> *Or vice versa – Tr.*



The Blue Pig

## The Ploughman

The statues of Saint Gens are well known<sup>61</sup>, likewise the monument at Rosalbe in France in homage to Pascal Hamant, inventor of the reversible plough, which features a bare-headed man and a pair of horses in bas-relief on a vertical slab of pink sandstone.

The Ploughman monument installed on the inner platform of the [Residences](#) is vastly superior. First of all, it is striking in the impression it gives of vast volume squashed up small. The three-dimensional work tends strongly towards 2D – is this a regression or an indication of plastic-rationing?

Moreover, the ploughman wears a hat, the horse does not need an assistant and the tree in the background, which represents the world of agriculture and the countryside, animal life and the potassium cycle, enriches the message.

The man holding the handles of the plough and the horse harnessed to the shafts are looking towards the future – not too distant – and their message, mute but eloquent, is unanswerable: 'We plough the field and scatter...'

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<sup>61</sup> *Not to me: I had to look him up. He was a 12th century hermit. – Tr.*

## Alter Ego

This distinguished association, based in the Nièvre, has one branch there, with another is at the planning stage (Alter Ego at Dubai). It is the most interesting station on the [Spaghetti Junction](#) line.

No flashing neon sign, which is in itself a distinguishing feature - but have no fear, all GPS flash when they get near it. The people wait outside. There are a lot of them, and they are impatient – another sign that something interesting is going on. The current exhibition is called Entomokolla on the theme of insects stuck together en masse – shades of Damien Hirst and Jan Fabre<sup>62 63</sup>.

Also on display is the Petite Boutique, Broc & Brolles<sup>64</sup>, MMI with exact copies to 1/87 scale of all the islets of the ReFeRe<sup>65</sup> and a reconstruction of Art in Progress (Monceaux-le-Comte, summer 2006) and the famous Labyrinth of Art in the Rough.

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<sup>62</sup> *Not to be confused with Fabre the entomologist; Jan Fabre is a Belgian multidisciplinary artist, playwright, stage director, choreographer and designer. – Tr.*

<sup>63</sup> The exhibition is sponsored by the Adhesion Centre, thanks in all probability to a deduction from the wages of the workers, the notorious Sticky Squad. The Adhesion Centre, situated on the Oasis islet, manufactures the concrete adhesive required for all the ReFeRe constructions, as well as for the Stackers.

<sup>64</sup> *A pun on Rock an Roll; broc is short for brocante – bric a brac. – Tr.*

<sup>65</sup> You can visit – and revisit – the Alter Ego Museum of Imaginary Worlds at Sauvigny in the commune of Marigny-sur-Yonne, Burgundy, France, Tel +33 683 719910. Email: [alterego@assoalterego.info](mailto:alterego@assoalterego.info). Website: [www.assoalterego.info](http://www.assoalterego.info).



## The Motor

In a former factory, served by the [Big Loop](#), is a permanent installation which is innovative, astonishing and delightful. In this type of artistic endeavour the medium – a green crane<sup>66</sup> – merges with the message, as Jean Baudrillard<sup>67</sup> says The arrow pivots, a letter is plucked out at random and dropped onto the bench. After a certain time, the Motor will have written a complete word. How long does that take?<sup>68</sup> and what will the message be? Come and see for yourself.

The queue of patient punters re-forms. While waiting they are treated to the company of grey and blue robots<sup>69</sup>.

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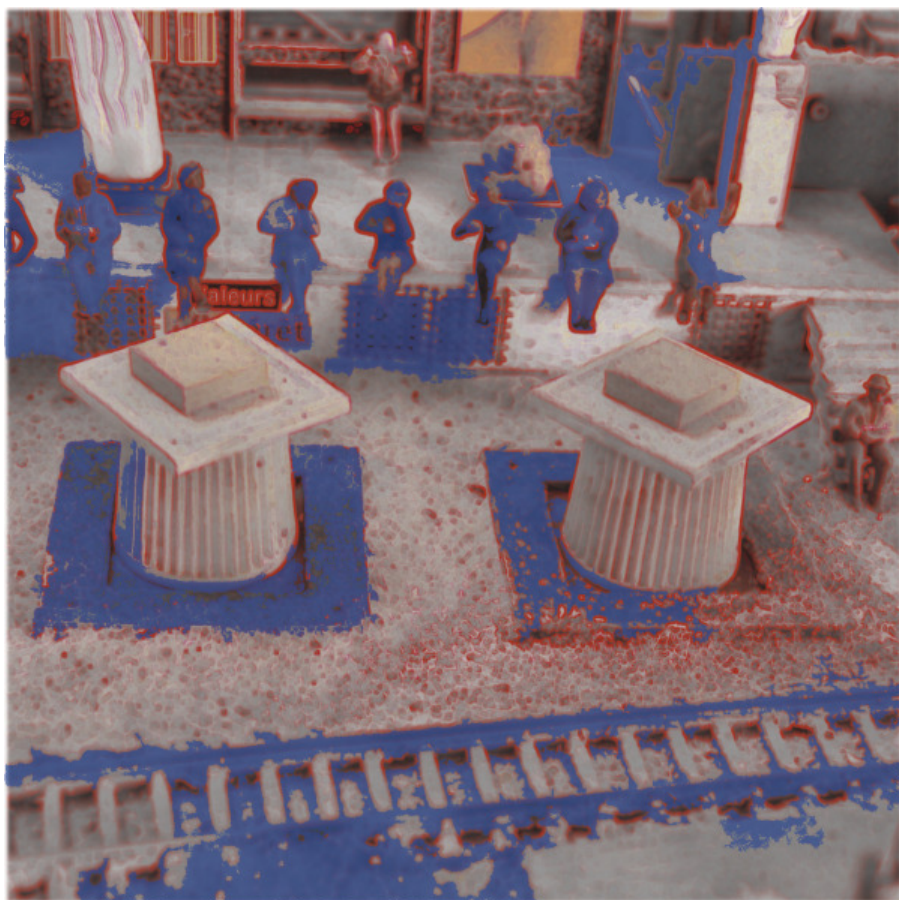
<sup>66</sup> ReFeRe territory is littered with green cranes, usually so called after the colour of their bodywork but sometimes associated with the colour of their booms. These very powerful devices lift their load by a system of induction. The present installation was able to benefit from a 'loan' to which the Director in Chief's department turned a blind eye, given the artistic use to which the installation was put, and the worldwide fame and glory they hoped it would bring.

<sup>67</sup> 1929 – 2007: *sociologist, philosopher, photographer, frequently associated with postmodernism and post-structuralism: Marshall McLuhan said it first.* – Tr.

<sup>68</sup> It is a truth universally acknowledged that after a sufficiently long period of time, an army of monkeys will type out the Aeneid. We may extrapolate from this a possible date when the Motor will have achieved its goal.

<sup>69</sup> While the subject of animal and robot rights is hotly debated, the ReFeRe states clearly that neither has the slightest right which would exceed that granted to the ReFeRe workforce (to obey, to keep quiet, to be photographed...) It is moreover forbidden for a humanoid robot to pass itself off as a member of staff and thus enjoy free rail travel.





The Terrace

## ***Porcus Caeruleus* – the Blue Pig**

This is no ordinary representation, in resin, of a royal blue pig on a greyish-white pedestal. Along with The **Ploughman**, this monument comes into the category of figurative sculpture with a message, that is to say, politically committed art<sup>70</sup>.

In fact one can interpret it<sup>71</sup> only as a manifesto in favour of 'methanisation' on the farm: the animal proudly displays its translucence, lit up with the electric current which the methane gas from its slurry has produced<sup>72</sup>.

It is not easy to escape from this paradox: this work of art is simultaneously one of the most accessible – situated at the triple terminus, at the end of the Great Girder – and the most difficult to get to because of its height: in order to admire it fully, the visitor must climb the staircase to the observation-bridge.

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<sup>70</sup> In principle, and as the result of a decision from On High, only politically uncommitted art is authorised in ReFeRe territory. A very few, very rare exceptions prove this rule, which we make known to enable the visitor to gauge the limits of the approach and the mediocre aesthetic merits of this trash: clumsy, childish drawing, poor composition, crappy proportions, mass-produced coloured plastic with all the appeal of a toy out of a detergent packet (*cadeau de Bonux - a French detergent – see /www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABt-L3rNs4s for an idea of the sort of thing on offer. – Tr.*).

<sup>71</sup> It's cool – and who can deny it?

<sup>72</sup> But the blueness of this creature – what is its significance, what statement does it make, what universal truth does it proclaim? Transgenesis (*in my book this means introducing an extraneous gene into a living organism in a manner that can be transmitted to its offspring. – Tr.*)? The freedom to faire le cochon – to behave badly – whenever and however you want? The pseudo-Linnaean (*Swedish botanist Linnaeus, the father of classification of speccies. – Tr.*) Latin name implies experimentation and painstaking zoological study.

## The Glyptopole

An entire station with both its platforms is devoted to sculpture. It is one of the finest projects ever conceived and executed along a railway line: a centre of creation and exhibition of works of art on the theme of the transfiguration of raw materials through its translation or distortion in 3D.

On the spot, the sculptors beaver away in several smallish, rather squalid studios, with chisels, powerful computers and drawing pencils. The current exhibition has been organised by the patafixistes<sup>73</sup>.

The premises are magnificent. Under the kindly shade of the trees, stands and impromptu pedestals display the sculptures upright; big bas-reliefs hang on a great white display board, the bulky pieces rest on the ground.

A smartphone application guides the visitor, patiently explaining the artist's train of thought to show how the piece was conceived, and places it in the context of contemporary art. In the area further back you can see the smaller pieces - smaller but no less demanding – and a sculptor acting as custodian.

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<sup>73</sup> *Exponents of glue pads, manufactured by Uhu – Tr.*

## Patafixisme

This is an artistic movement which may be defined as the outcome of working with malleable and adhesive materials in the 21st century. Diverging from mainstream figurative art, patafixisme sets out to interpret subpotatoid masses – much worked, almost tortured, but limited in shape to a big ball<sup>74</sup> – which is produced from a malleable, elastic substance, in terms of metaphors of Global Cooling<sup>75</sup> while at the same time postulating a response to the fundamental question: 'How long does it take?'<sup>76</sup>

Several works of art of this persuasion are scattered around Artworld, but it is not until you see them on display in the Glyptopole that you appreciate the truth of the adage: 'Where the patafixistes display their work, there is nothing else to see'.

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<sup>74</sup> *Think of a lump of Blu-Tak and marvel at the author's fertile imagination – Tr.*

<sup>75</sup> It is easy to understand the relationship between patafixiste art and the massive volcanic eruptions which shook the Earth and covered it with lava which later cooled down and assumed the shapes of these works of art – always bearing in mind a reference to the cannonballs which Victor Leclerc de Buffon (*Naturalist and scientist – Tr.*) cooled down to calculate the age of the Earth at Montbard in 1779.

<sup>76</sup> What artist has not been confronted with these questions? Even if he considers that they have nothing to do with the interest, the power, the worth of his masterpiece, he would still wish to vouchsafe a reply. The creation of each patafixiste 'ball' is precisely timed. The time measured is subsequently scaled by multiplying by a safety factor of 144.



The Tro-quai

## The Landing Stage<sup>77</sup>

This structure welcomes the hovercars which link Artworld with the outside world, the scattered islets of the ReFeRe. How do you get there?

This begins logically enough with a double disembarcation. The train drives off the hovercar onto the jetty. The passenger alights from the train onto a flat and rather narrow platform<sup>78</sup> (this is typical of ReFeRe platforms). Subsequently – the time lapse is not rigidly defined – the pedestrian climbs the staircase which gives onto the upper platform, which is served by the Big Loop, and finally boards the train (assuming one has stopped there).

This then is disembarcation. Embarcation proceeds as follows: The passenger alights from the railcar, hangs about a bit, visits the boutique (a little blue kiosk selling snacks of various kinds)<sup>79</sup>, hangs about a bit longer if he has missed his departure, and then boards the train which drives onto the hovercar which, in turn, is launched out onto the stroma.

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<sup>77</sup> Embarcation or disembarcation, depending whether you are departing or arriving.

<sup>78</sup> The classic message: 'Stand clear of the edge of the platform, keep your children under control' is posted – airport style – on everyone's smartphone simultaneously, at the precise moment when the nose of the train comes into view.

<sup>79</sup> For, as they say in Quebec, 'Never board a train without a cookie to nibble'.

## The Three Railway Lines

The **Big Loop** sets off from nowhere and arrives at the same place by way of the Residences, the Hypogeum, the Motor, the Glyptopole, the Lift, the Landing Stage, the Insect Cellar, the Residences...and so on, ad infinitum and occasionally vice versa. The train which plies the **Spaghetti** Junction line leaves the terminus on time, passes by the Station Bistro, describes a big loop around the Circus, negotiates the Bridge, crosses the Desert, is relieved to reach the Palm Grove, crosses the Bridge again, runs along above the Park, brushes past the Allotment, leaves the Extras behind, runs along past the Square and stops at the terminus. Then it departs again in the opposite direction, always scrupulously on time.

The **Tapeworm** channels the delighted and dumbfounded visitors from Alter Ego, crosses the Park, then goes through a short tunnel. It passes the Insect Cellar, runs along above the Oasis, passes by the Lift, triumphs over the monotony of the Desert and the boredom of the Bridge, accumulates centrifugal force around the Circus, sneaks under the Station Bistro, greets the Mall, the Terrace and the feet of Vasco da Gama, avoids tumbling into the Creation Pit, runs along one side of the Square and arrives at a set of buffers at the feet of the mighty Blue Pig.



## To Find out More

**On the Internet:** [www.afraval.info/refere](http://www.afraval.info/refere) – the official website. See also [//fr. Wikipedia.org/wiki/La\\_ReFeRe](http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_ReFeRe)

**Published works, available from [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com)**

### ***ReFeRe: rudiment illustré***

by Alain Fraval – 2011. 19 x 19 cm, 40 pages, 32 photos.

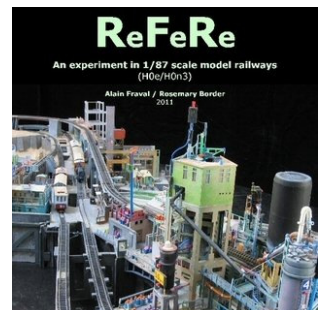
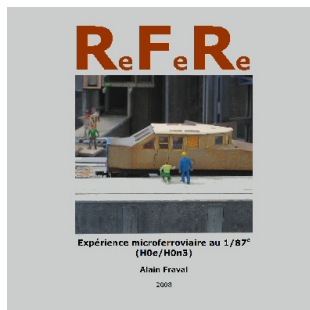
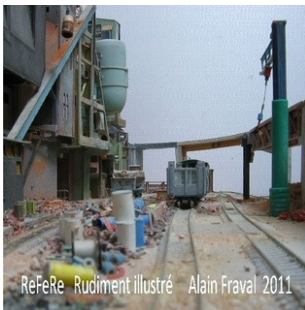
### ***ReFeRe***

#### ***Expérience microferroviaire au 1/87e (H0e/H0n3)***

by Alain Fraval – 2008. 21.5 x 21.5 cm, 82 pages, glossary in 35 articles, 170 photos.

#### ***ReFeRe – An experiment in 1/87 scale model railways***

by Alain Fraval and Rosemary Border – 2011. An English translation of the above work.





Picture visitors' surprise and delight when they find, prominently displayed more or less everywhere, large, restrained graphic works, pictures in two dimensions (precisely calculated) composed of tiny squares in two colours, arranged in different patterns. Picture now the surprise – and the satisfaction<sup>80</sup> - of the said visitors when they read messages there: messages which state clearly in plain words along the lines of 'Here you will see'. Here is an example<sup>81</sup>.



Anyone unable to read this message – called code QR – will be able to flash their smartphone on the symbols and read the text. Let us decrypt the QR code printed large and bold on the title page of this book:

**Astonishing revelations from this stopover in  
paradise in the midst of the world's most  
amazing offshore rail network!**

**ReFeRe and Alter Ego thank you for your visit.**

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<sup>80</sup> And the huge relief of those who are lost.

<sup>81</sup> Such as: 'The Insect Cellar – temporary exhibition: the flying zombies: Subscribe to Insect magazine! Take out membership of OPIE!

