



Fondation
John Cockerill

PRESS KIT

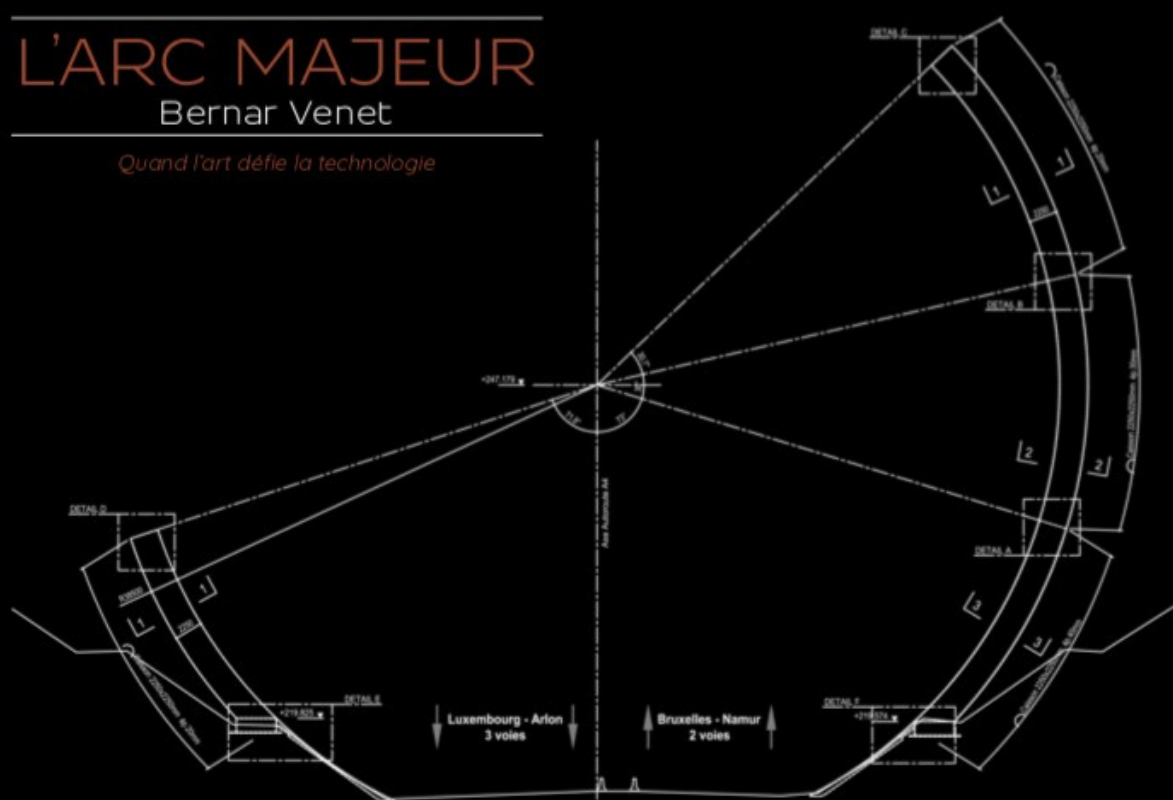
L'ARC MAJEUR: ART AS A CHALLENGE TO TECHNOLOGY

BERNAR VENET

Inauguration scheduled for the autumn of 2019

L'ARC MAJEUR Bernar Venet

Quand l'art défie la technologie



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1. Press release

L'Arc Majeur: art as a challenge to technology

The installation work begins!

After preliminary work (ground tests) carried out in November 2018, work on the installation of L'Arc Majeur at kilometre 99 of the E411 motorway on the border between the Belgian provinces of Namur and Luxembourg began in mid-March of this year. The inauguration is scheduled for the autumn of 2019.

Conceived in 1984 already by the internationally renowned artist Bernar Venet, the work was manufactured in the workshops of the CMI Group's Welding Expertise Centre (Seraing).

Spotlight on this outsize project!

From dream to reality

In 1984, French Minister of Culture Jack Lang invited the artist Bernar Venet to create a monumental sculpture, L'Arc Majeur. Originally intended for the A6 motorway (France), the work would ultimately be installed 35 years later in Belgium. At the time, art was beginning to emancipate itself from the museum space and to assert its presence in the public space, where it could be enjoyed by one and all. The internationally renowned French artist Bernar Venet had been working since 1976 on the Line in all its mathematical variants and physical manifestations. That is how the Venet's Arcs came into existence! Made of Corten steel, they develop a materiality and alter the environment. As early as 1984, the artist imagined a very large sculpture, a monumental arc through which travellers could pass in one direction or the other, the work ringing the road. On many occasions, the project was studied and then abandoned, until one day Bernard Serin, President of the CMI Group, asked the artist how the project was progressing. It is at the inauguration of two works by the artist in 2014 in Seraing that Bernard Serin and Bernar Venet decided to create L'Arc Majeur together. The artist chose the location while the CMI Group manufactured the work in its workshops at the Welding Expertise Centre and entrusted it to the Walloon Region so as to integrate the regional heritage and thus promote Belgian know-how on the international stage. Indeed, besides being a work of art, it is a unique technical achievement.

L'Arc Majeur from all angles

L'Arc Majeur is a 205.5° arc (the initial project was 185.4°) spread over two 'arcs' of different dimensions. The large arc (60 m) consists of three cases measuring 20 m long and with a side section of 2.25 m. The small arc consists of a single case measuring 20 m long and with a side section of 2.25 m.

Material: Corten steel, self-patinated steel with forced surface corrosion

Maximum height: 60 m | Maximum diameter: 75 m | Total weight: 200 tons

A technical achievement

L'Arc Majeur is a genuine technical achievement in terms of both its development, driven by Bureau Greisch, and its manufacture. Indeed, considering the size of the cases and their particular geometry, the Welding Expertise Centre (CMI Group) used welding trolleys in a semi-automatic process. An experienced team of four welders and three fitters took turns over several months – for a total of more than 6500 hours – to create the monumental work. The

advanced and innovative non-destructive testing technique, Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing, made it possible to check welds more quickly and above all to detect more completely the indications that ensure weld quality.

L'Arc Majeur is a collective project led by the John Cockerill Foundation, which has gathered around the project a number of experienced technical service providers as well as corporate sponsors (Agoria Wallonie, BEG, CFE, Eloy, Bureau Garcia, Gerb, CMI Group, Groupe Joris Ide, Monnaie, L Decoration, Vinçotte) and institutional partners (Walloon Region, SPW, Sofico, etc.).

2. Presentation of L'Arc Majeur

Bernar Venet is a French visual artist who was born in Château-Arnoux-Saint-Auban in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. He lives in the United States, where he is known for his steel sculptures and his drawings.

'In 1984, French Minister of Culture Jack Lang invited me to create a sculpture for the motorway.

Art was beginning to emancipate itself from the museum space and to assert its presence in the public space, where it could be enjoyed by one and all. I had just designed my Arc sculptures and imagined a very large one through which travellers could pass in either direction, the sculpture ringing the road.

This beautiful idea stayed in my drawer and on my mind until that day in 2014 when Bernard Serin asked me how the project was progressing. Thirty years after it was designed, we were able to pick it up again thanks to his enthusiasm and energy and to present it to the Walloon authorities. Things got moving again!

I spotted an ideal location on the motorway to Luxembourg: it is important to have a lot of distance so as to see the sculpture from far away and to get closer to it – unless it is the sculpture that comes nearer to us. I reworked the dimensions and the work's integration into the landscape. I particularly like the fact that the road's verges embrace the arc's curve. I am happy to donate it to all motorists, workers or tourists, who travel this road.'

A monumental work that promotes Walloon know-how on the international stage

L'Arc Majeur is composed of two monumental arches, the highest of which culminates at 60 metres. Manufactured in the workshops of the CMI Group's Welding Expertise Centre in Seraing, the 200-tonne Corten-steel work will be offered to the Walloon Region and installed at kilometre 99 (Rochefort) of the E411 motorway.

It will thus become part of the Region's heritage and artistic collection, and will promote Walloon know-how far beyond its borders.

The inauguration of the work is scheduled for the autumn of 2019.

A collective undertaking for the benefit of art and technology

L'Arc Majeur will be the subject of a significant communication and media campaign. A prestigious publication is in preparation and so are digital tools in the fields of mediation and tourism.

Wishing to unite partners around the project, the John Cockerill Foundation intends to create one of the largest partnership operations.

3. Technical details

A 205.5° arc spread over two 'arcs' of different dimensions.

- The large arc (60 m) consists of three cases measuring 20 m long and with a side section of 2.25 m.
- The small arc consists of a single case measuring 20 m long and with a side section of 2.25 m.

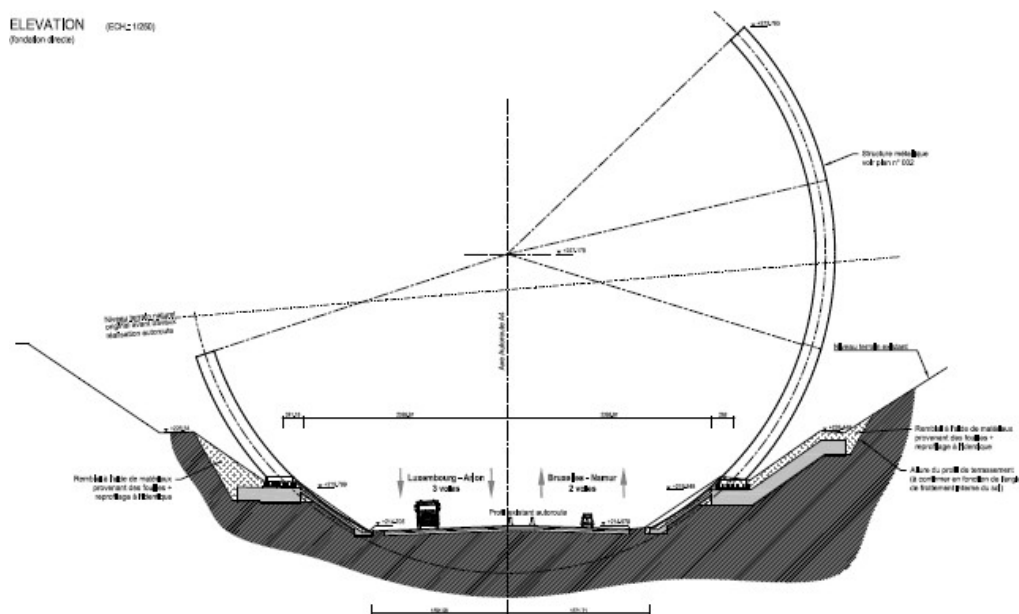
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Total weight: 200 tonnes

In view of the size of the cases and of their particular geometry, the Welding Expertise Centre used welding trolleys in a semi-automatic process. An experienced team of four welders and three fitters took turns over several months – for a total of 6500 hours – to produce the monumental work. The advanced non-destructive testing technique, Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing, made it possible to check welds more quickly and above all to detect more completely the indications that ensure weld quality.



L'Arc Majeur, Bernar Venet © 2018 Bureau Greisch for the John Cockerill Foundation

4. Bernar Venet biography

An artist renowned for his Corten steel sculptures – Straight Lines, Arcs, Angles and Indeterminate Lines – and his representations of mathematical equations and scientific texts, Bernar Venet began his career as an assistant decorator at the *Opéra de Nice*.

From 1961 to 1963 he exhibited tar-covered canvases and a pile of coal poured onto the ground, presenting the material in its raw state, seeking sobriety as a 'rejection of facile communication'. In 1966 he moved to New York, where he came in touch with minimalist and conceptual artists with whom he participated in several founding exhibitions. He put an end to his practice in 1970 for theoretical reasons. This was followed by a period of reflection during which he theorized his work, gave talks, taught courses at the Sorbonne, exhibited his work from the previous years ...

In 1976 the artist returned to his studio, and the line, in all its mathematical variants and physical manifestations, would now occupy a prominent place in his work. From canvases to wooden reliefs, he quickly turned to sculpture.

In 1983 he established the basic structure of his Indeterminate Lines. He made them in Corten steel and installed them in many urban spaces and public collections: Nice, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Strasbourg, Beijing, Austin, San Francisco, Seoul, New York, Bordeaux, etc.

In 1999 he installed a 235.5° Arcs sculpture in Cologne for the G8 Summit. Bernar Venet's new Indeterminate Lines sculptures heralded a new direction that underlined his penchant for disorder, complexity and entropy.

Bernar Venet's Corten steel Arcs develop a materiality that changes the way people look at their environment. The lines, through their variations (Arcs, Leaning Arcs, Vertical Arcs, Angles, Indeterminate Lines, Collapses, etc.), make up the vocabulary of Venet, who through them addresses the different issues of sculpture (relation to the body, to balance, to the Kantian sublime).

In 2011 the sculptor installed two 22-metre-high arcs (the work known as 85.8° Arc x 16) on the *Place d'Armes* of the *Château de Versailles*. The arcs encircle the equestrian statue of Louis XIV, like the laurel wreath of the Roman emperors.

Bernar Venet currently works and lives between New York (US) and Le Muy (France), where the Venet Foundation he created organizes summer exhibitions.

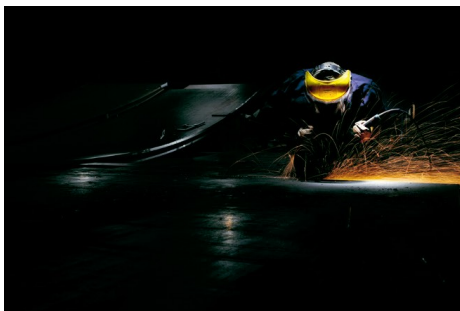
His works are held in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, the National Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., among others.

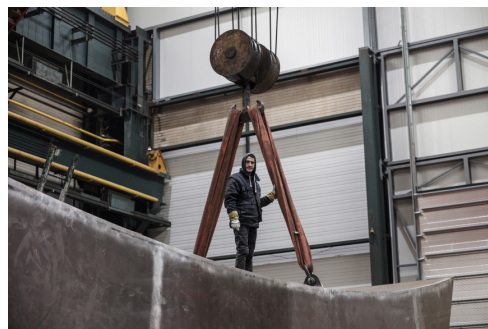
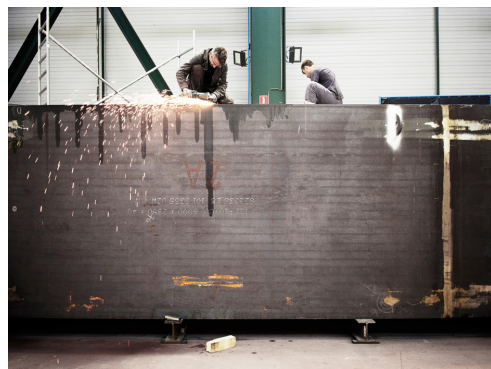
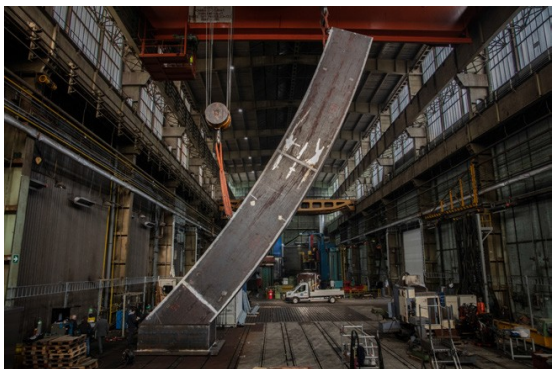
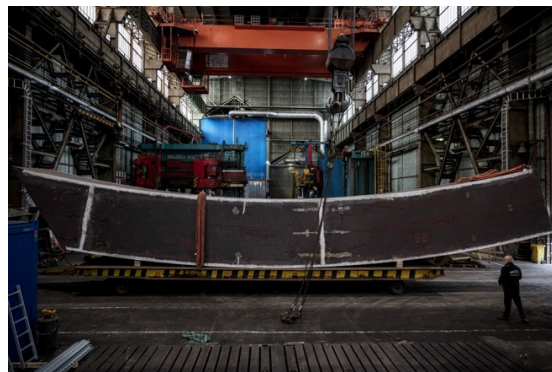
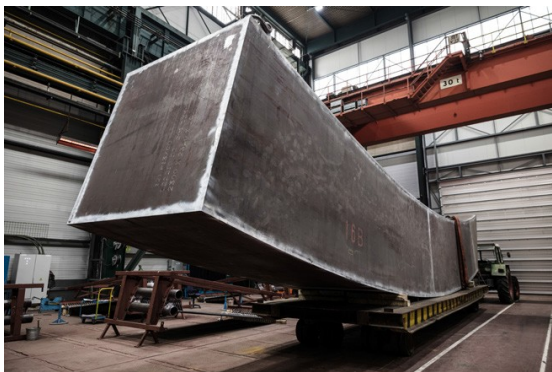
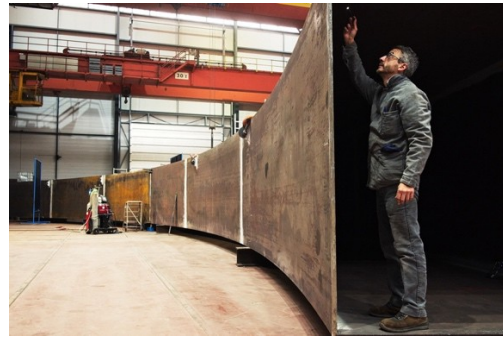
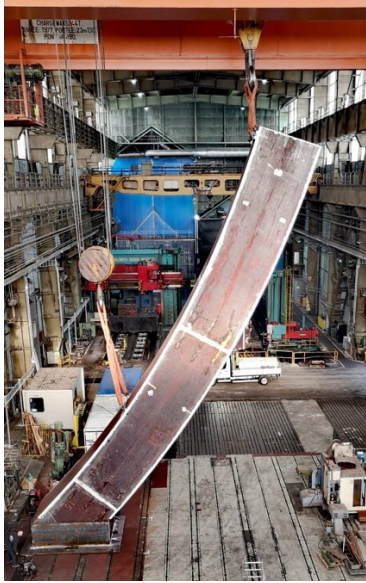
www.bernarvenet.com

5. Visuals



Drawing on paper by Bernar Venet





L'Arc Majeur, Bernar Venet – photos and design © 2018 Meta-morphosis: Axel Ruhomally / Charles Paulicevich / Franck Depaifve for the John Cockerill Foundation

6. The John Cockerill Foundation



Created in 2017 by the CMI Group, the John Cockerill Foundation seeks to maintain, develop and transmit the legacy of John Cockerill. The Foundation coordinates and supports any disinterested initiative that enables the community to remember the past in order to understand the present and imagine the future. The aim is in a sense to identify and share the keys to understanding the human, technical and industrial adventure of Cockerill and his heirs.

In 2017 the John Cockerill Foundation was involved – along with the CMI Group and partners such as the City of Liège, the Royal Academy of Belgium, the University of Liège, MMIL, RTBF, etc. – in the organization of events for the general public intended to mark the bicentenary of John Cockerill's arrival.

The Foundation's activity takes the form of financial partnerships but also of partnerships in kind or involving competences or services, and this, with three main purposes:

- Preservation of memory and history
 - Opening of *Château Cockerill* to the community
 - Management of the donations and archives related to John Cockerill
 - Support for specific educational projects around the history of the industrial group
- Engagement in cultural life
 - Support for cultural institutions (Co-legia, La Boverie, Théâtre de Liège, etc.)
 - Special support for the *Maison de la Métallurgie et de l'Industrie de Liège*
 - Driving the project to produce Bernar Venet's *L'Arc Majeur*
- Commitment to social and humanitarian aid
 - Supporting associations in Belgium and abroad (*Éclat de Rire*, *The Nest Home*, etc.)