



## **THE “BETONS: ETONNEZ-VOUS!” EXHIBITION CELEBRATING CONCRETE AT THE MUSEUM OF ARTS ET MÉTIERS IN PARIS**

**Although concrete is the most commonly used building material in the world, it remains a mystery to most people. Time to give it the credit it deserves! The “Bétons: Etonnez-vous!” exhibition, held in 2006 and 2007 at the Museum of Arts et Métiers in Paris in partnership with Lafarge, did just that.**

**The exhibition revealed a multi-faceted material that is the very essence of modernity: born of extraordinary technological progress and offering unlimited creative potential.**

### **A substantial contribution from Lafarge**

The Museum of Arts et Métiers wanted to highlight concrete’s potential for creation and innovation. Naturally, Lafarge was the ideal industrial partner for the exhibition, which was also an excellent opportunity for the Group to demonstrate its determination to get the best out of building materials. Beyond its financial contribution, Lafarge provided scientific and historical input to the design of the exhibition. The Group also loaned objects, models and demonstration materials for the educational workshops.

### **Exploring concrete’s secrets**

The exhibition addressed the general public, artists, architects, building professionals and schools. Visitors discovered concrete’s secrets in a concrete environment: the floors and walls were made of Ductal®, an ultra-high performance concrete developed by Lafarge!

### **A four-stage exhibition**

The suggested tour invited visitors to explore concrete’s secrets in 4 stages.

#### **1) An ancient material**

The exhibition went back 2,000 years to trace concrete’s major milestones and revealed the inventions, notably the development of reinforced concrete, that allowed concrete to take center stage as a modern material.

#### **2) Research and innovation**

Since its earliest days, the ingredients, handling, appearance and treatment of concrete have aroused the curiosity of scientists. Sustained research efforts have led to improved concrete constructions.

As the new generation of concrete proves, this material still has the power to astonish! With its incredible strength, lightness, finesse and fluidity, this revolutionary material is transforming the construction industry and will continue to shape the architecture and design of tomorrow.

#### **3) Building with concrete**

The exhibition presented traditional masonry tools (trowel, trough and rammer) and scale-model cement mixers. It also showcased a number of elegant civil engineering works made of concrete, including the models of the piers that hold up the Millau viaduct. The most dazzling concept, however, was the Hypergreen tower! This futuristic 246-meter tower, designed by the architect Jacques Ferrier in collaboration with Lafarge, respects sustainable development criteria. Amongst other things, it produces most of its own energy.

#### **4) A material to encourage creativity**

Concrete offers unlimited possibilities to architects, designers and interior decorators. Little by little, it is invading every part of the house, covering floors, walls and counter tops and being transformed into fireplaces, desks, couches and bathtubs.

Even artists have been won over! The proof? The 4 benches Francesco Passaniti created from Ductal®, the Ductal® tables of Marie-Christine and Mario Silva and the Ductal® vases crafted by the Compagnie du Béton, all of which lent the exhibition an artistic touch.

#### **Exhibition extras**

##### **Guided Tours**

Every day, public guided tours of the exhibition included demonstrations of concrete's properties.

##### **The concrete of Paris by bike**

Why not continue the visit by bike and discover remarkable concrete monuments in the City of Light on a tour led by architect Michel Canta-Dupart?

##### **Educational workshops for kids**

You can become a concrete fan at any age, as the educational workshops for 7 to 12 year olds proved. After visiting the exhibition, kids carried out fun experiments on different types of concrete and created their own keepsake.

##### **Conferences on concrete**

Several conferences took place alongside the exhibition:

- a debate, "Between high style and ready-to-mix: concrete, the material without boundaries",
- a presentation of the Hypergreen Tower project,
- a report on "Tomorrow's Concretes, or the Remarkable Rise of the Infinitely Small".