

Antoine Le Menestrel

TOP LEVEL CLIMBER / VERTICAL DANCER / CHOREOGRAPHER



CLIMBING...

Top level climber all through the eighties, he is part of the birth and development of sport climbing and vertical dance.

He solo climbs the route "Revelation", the hardest route in Britain at the time. He sets the course of "La rose et le vampire" in Buoux, with an original, world famous move. He initiates the job of international course setter for climbing competitions and reveals his creative talent. He works with the architect Jean-Marc Blanche to create walls and climbing holds. He has a state degree in climbing and has trained the national teams of France and New Zealand.

Antoine Le Menestrel climber, it's <https://youtu.be/3Qln7Ui7Gvo> and a full documentary called "L'escalade Libérée"



Free Climb, Fall 2022, 22 minutes, available in VOD here <https://vimeo.com/ondemand/lescaladeliberée>

It is in Buoux, France, temple of sport climbing, that Benoît Regord (Air Libre Prod), filmmaker of the documentary "Freed Climbing", went to meet one of its main figures, Antoine Le Menestrel. From the cliff's discovery to the bolting of recent routes, Antoine talks with passion about the different ages of the crag. First, the discovery of the cliff in 1980, then the first bolting sessions from the top with the tamponnoir, in the company of his brother Marc and Laurent Jacob, a time when it took 3/4 of an hour to drill a hole! But what drives Antoine is more the quest for a choreography that links the routesetter to his work, where the movement takes on an emotional charge and takes on an artistic side, as in "Rêve de papillon", one of the first 8a of France. The aesthetic aspects of the climbing movements that he has largely developed through dance-climbing are the driving forces of his practice. At the time, the race for success in order to name the route and leave a signature at the bottom was very important. Although this obsession with success vampirized him in "The Rose and the Vampire", the artist also opened his face to the world and greeted his belayer with the famous cross, a wink to the rope spirit. Thus, Antoine Le Menestrel preaches for a liberated climbing, free of pressure of success, of the summit quests, of the social pressure. For him, the most important is to live a relationship with the route, to touch the holds and retrieve their fragrance with his own ethic and own vision... But also to take care of his body for durable climbing. Thank you Antoine for your sincere testimony, sublimated by the gorgeous images of climbs and cliffs! A quarter century after the Manifesto of the 19, "Freed Climbing" sounds like a reminder of the values which build the foundations of our activity.

DANCE AND ARTIST COURSE...

Antoine Le Menestrel discovered Vertical Dance with the Compagnie **Roc in lichen**, Laura de Nercy and Bruno Dizien, in several creations including *Rosanine*. With François Joxe, he choreographed twenty dancers and actors for *La Création* in the grandiose setting of the Gavarnie circus. With Jean-Marie Maddeddu of the Compagnie **Les Piétons**, he was introduced to street theater. He is a dancer-actor on several creations: *Corps de Balai International*, *Opéra Bobo*. Then he co-wrote with Dudu the surreal and ultra-light facade theater show *Les Urbanologues Associés*. With the **Ilotopie** Company, he participates in the show *Les Habitants du lundi* for L'année des 13 Lunes. From dawn to dusk, it cracks on the walls, waiting for the full moon. With Pierre Sauvageot and **Lieux Publics**, he is a dancer-choreographer on several creations: Final of the year of the thirteen moons, *Babel Platz Symphony* and *L'Odyssée [DXC]*, urban and Mediterranean opera.

It was with **Roméo Castellucci**, associated artist of the 2008 Avignon Festival, that he made the unforgettable ascent of the facade of the Cour d'Honneur of the Palais des Papes for the creation *Inferno*. In 2013, he repeated this ascent with the choreographer **Jérôme Bel** for the show *Cour d'Honneur*. Also, within the framework of the Printemps des poètes 2021, **Priscilla Telmon and Mathieu Moon Saura** directed Stéphanie Bodet and Antoine le Menestrel in a short film in the Palais des Papes again (based on an idea by Sophie Nauleau) <https://www.printempsdespoetes.com/Ligne-de-Vie>

In 2021, he collaborated with **La Horde** for the choreography in height of the show **"Room with a view"**, on the roof of the Ballet national de Marseilles.

Antoine Le Menestrel worked with many artists: Cie Les Piétons, Allegro Barbaro (Lieux Publics), Artonik, Décor Sonor, Olivier Farge, Générk Vapeur, Ilotopie, Kumulus, Le Phun, Tout Samba'l, Théâtre en vol, la Cie Oposito or Roméo Castellucci in la Cour d'honneur du Palais des Papes d'Avignon. Michel Risse, Décors Sonores. He also worked with visual artists such as: Olivier Grossetête, Karine Debouzie and George Cuvillier or authors like Marie-Do Fréval.

ARTIST'S WORD...

I travel on the walls to meet my dreams. I make them alive in order to make them become your own dreams in your minds, as well as a physical reality in your bodies. I ring the bells of the poetical gathering.

I create my poetical body movements in relation to the façades, the architecture, the stories which the walls tell us, the interaction with the neighbours and the users of the cities, towns or villages in which I perform. Every time, my vertical poetry is at the junction of these mineral, human and cultural influences. My language is above all choreographic, between dance and acrobatics, climbing and mime; the architecture is my choreographic score, and my dance is ceaselessly recreated. My choreography brings emotions.

My solitary presence is full of humanity and brings back the human scale in the architecture. Always in height, I peacefully and safely gamble with my life in order to reveal its fragility. My set is made of your monuments of which I reveal the mysteries through a playful, poetic and spectacular journey. I tame the material of the building: I feel it, I touch it, I embrace it in order to espouse its hidden recesses and edges. In a hand to hand peaceful fight with the walls, I dance my life in the void.

My body is a brush on the picture, and the paint is the poetical track which I leave in the spectator's mind. After the performance, the walls will always be there, but they will be different as your vision will have changed. My performances help to change the way people look at urban and natural spaces. The interaction with the inhabitants and the new urban disciplines such as Parkour or vertical choreography, converge towards the artistic proposal. I build a relationship with the inhabitants in their living area before, during and after the show.



Photo Philippe Ribière

ARTISTIC CREATIONS AND COMPANIONS...

In 1989, he founded with Fabrice Guillot the dance company Retouramont in which he worked as a choreographer and a dancer. He created a vertical ballet show intitled "Les balcons du vide" ("The balconies of void") with which he won the prize of the International trials organized by the Dance in Lille Festival.

In 1992, he founded the Compagnie Lézards Bleus. He created a vertical ballet show intitled "Le manège envolé" ("the flying merry-go-round"). In 1996, he creates "Issue de secours" ("Emergency exit") on the walls of an industrial wasteland in the North of France, which makes him part of the installation of the new theater in this area.

In 2000, invited by the director of the Hivernales dance Festival of Avignon, he creates the show "Service à tous les étages" ("Service at all levels") on the Opera. This show is a real success and tours the world, confirming the discipline of Vertical Dance. Since this period, this performance has been performed 158 times.

Since 2000, Antoine Le Menestrel has been invited in a lot of national and international performances venues, theaters, and festivals to create other performances. For example The International Dance Festival of Aix-en-Provence : "L'Aimant" ("The lover", but also "the magnet" in French): a quest for love which implicates the inhabitants at their windows. Scènes & Cinés - Istres : "Lignes de vie" in 2016, a vertical dance and free running show with 5 free runners. Since then he supports the professionalization and artistic orientation of young people who practice this discipline in public space. <https://youtu.be/V4loIQGmtAk>. 3 performances were backed by CDC Les Hivernales – Avignon : "La bourse ou la vie ?" in 2009 and "Les grimpeurs éperdus" in 2014 and "Debout" a tribute to Trisha Brown" in 2018 <https://youtu.be/VEmljk82ZQ>

In 2008 he was implicated in the Romeo Castellucci's performance Inferno in the cour d'honneur of the Palais des Papes in Avignon.

In 2019, he created a 3 day performance called "La dictature du Haut": 3 days and 2 nights along the facades and above the roofs. Vertical dance and theater, with a special TV on YouTube for this performance : <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHWuNnh953jstZ7CluleqMQ/videos>

In 2020, "Paisible" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S487I5DDHRQ&t=3s>. A solitary creation for the lock down period due to Covid

In 2021 "DESCENSIONS" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mp7QXi6YMuQ&t=21s> A vertical dance, free running, text, lyrical and musical composition, this indoor show uses all visible and hidden sides of the theater. Inspired by his rereading of Thus Spoke Zarathustra by Friedrich Nietzsche, Antoine Le Menestrel wished to continue his artistic idea of inventing a new imaginary around the concept of descent.

TRANSMITING AND TRAINING

Invited by Michel Crespin, one of the founders of the National Federation of Street Arts, Antoine Le Menestrel is regularly invited as an educator within the framework of the FAI AR (Advanced and Itinerant Training of Street Arts), as well as with the CDCN les Hivernales offering facade dance workshops during the festival in February. It's an adventure that has lasted for 30 years.

This artistic discipline develops movement by locating its value, not in its difficulty of realization, but in its quality of execution, interpretation and commitment. During the workshops, the trainees experiment with choreography at height, a way of overcome fear through relaxation and breathing.

For several years, Antoine Le Menestrel has been involved in the Parkour movement (Free running) by supporting the professionalization and artistic orientation of young people who practice this discipline in public space. He is part of Artistic and Cultural Education projects and works with young people in their living area. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIZTOX4nHhQ>





AND ALSO...

Since 2015, Antoine Le Menestrel has performed on the monumental cardboard sculptures of **Olivier Grossetête**. In 2017, along with the free runners of the Company Lézards Bleus, he joined forces with the OFF Company for the creation *Wild Side Story* given at the Aurillac festival. In 2018, he created for 6 free runners : *Bamboo Flow* with George Cuvellier (bamboo artist) <https://youtu.be/g5ElbwxPpAM>

In 2017, he produced the world premiere of the ascent of a wind turbine with magnets.

SOME SUPPORTS AND PLACES...

- Le MASA, Abidjan -Ivory Coast
- Festival Cervino Mountain, Italy
- Festa di Roma, Italy
- Sarrono, Italy
- Festival Mut ! Castellon, Spain
- Matera, European Capitale of Culture 2019, Italy
- Eclat(s) de rue, city of Caen (France)
- La Faïencerie, Theater of Creil, France
- Générrik Vapeur, Marseilles, France
- Citée des Arts de la Rue, Marseilles, France
- The Sundays of the Canebière, Marseilles, France
- Orly Temps Danse, City of Orly, France
- County Council of Isère – « Paysages, paysages » (38)
- City of Albi, France
- Festival Cergy Soit ! , France
- Festival of Camargue, Port-St-Louis, France
- City of council of the Chamonix valley, France
- Les Rencontres d'Ici et d'Ailleurs, Garges-Les-Gonesse, France
- Festival Danse sur les rails, Paris 18, France
- BnF, Paris, France
- Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Grenoble, France
- City of Aix-en-Provence
- Théâtre de l'Esplanade, Draguignan, France
- Annecy Paysages – Bonlieu, national theater of Annecy, France
- FAIAR, formation : « verticalité et poétique de la hauteur », France
- National ballet of Marseilles, France
- Les jeudis du Port, Brest, France
- Inauguration des fresques du viaduc de l'Agau (34)
- Théâtre du Merlan, (ZEF), national theater of Marseilles
- Les tombés de la nuit, Rennes, France
- FARS(e), Strasbourg, France
- Sur le pont, Centre national des Arts de la Rue, La Rochelle, France
- Paris, Ville éphémère, France
- CDCN Les Hivernales d'Avignon, France
- Le Citron Jaune, Centre National des Arts de la Rue, France
- Le Moulin Fondu, CNAREP d'Ile de France à Garges-lès-Gonesse, France
- Ville de Marseilles, France
- Scènes & Cinés / Théâtre de l'Olivier, Istres, France
- Le Cratère, Scène nationale d'Alès, France





Service à tous les étages - ©Chris Boyer



Paisible - ©Anne Barthélémy



La Dictature du Haut - ©Olivier Meissel



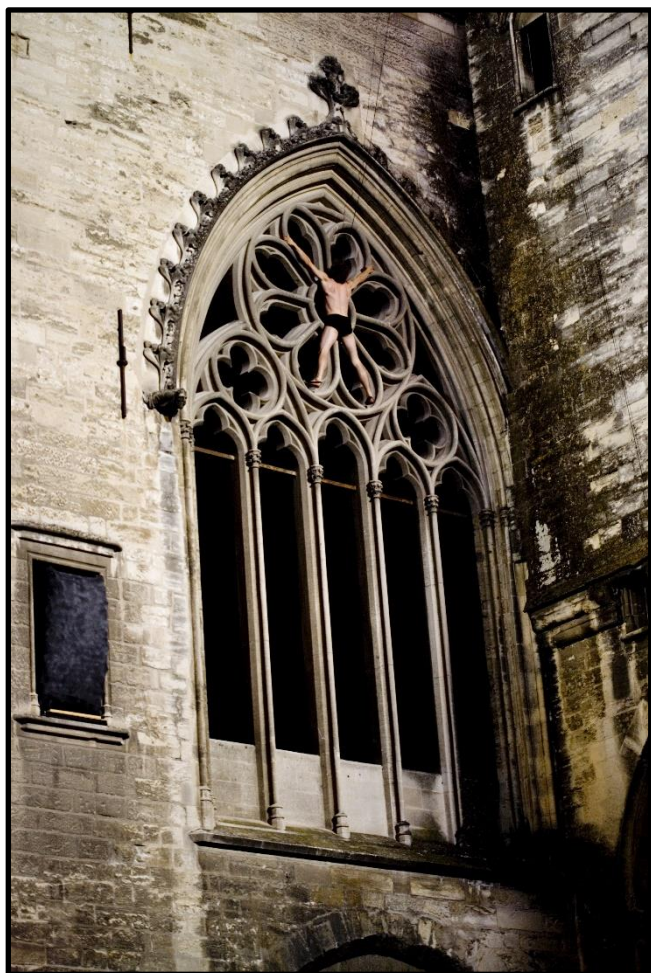
La bourse ou la vie - ©Daniel Raoulas



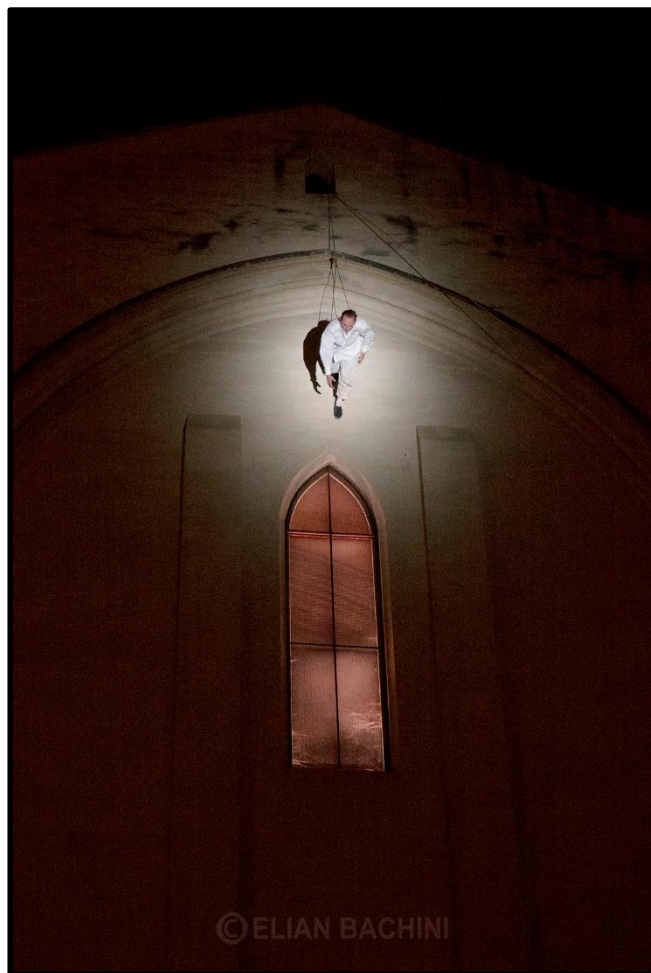
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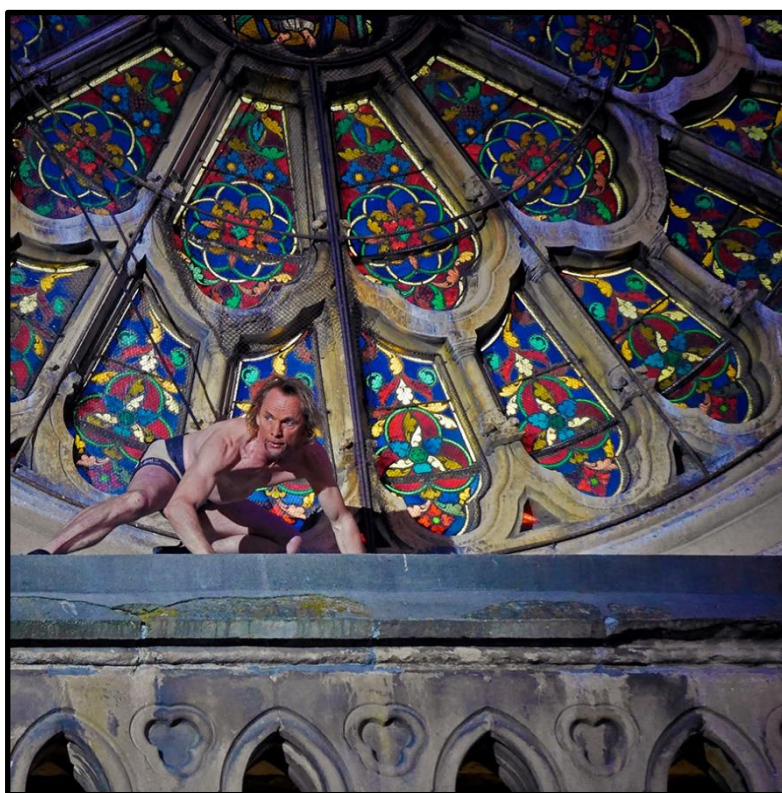
Service à tous les étages - ©Katia Pakhomoff



Inferno - © Luca Del Pia



Debout - ©Elian Bachini



Entre Chien et loup- © Pascal Kober

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