



Louise Michel (1830 – 1905), the renowned French revolutionary advocate of human and animal life without oppression and suffering, was born in the small village of Vroncourt-la-Côte (Haute-Marne), where she spent the first twenty years of her life.

Le nid de mon enfance avait quatre tours carrées, de la même hauteur que le corps de bâtiment, avec des toits en forme de clochers.

Louise Michel, *Mémoires*, 1886, p. 21.

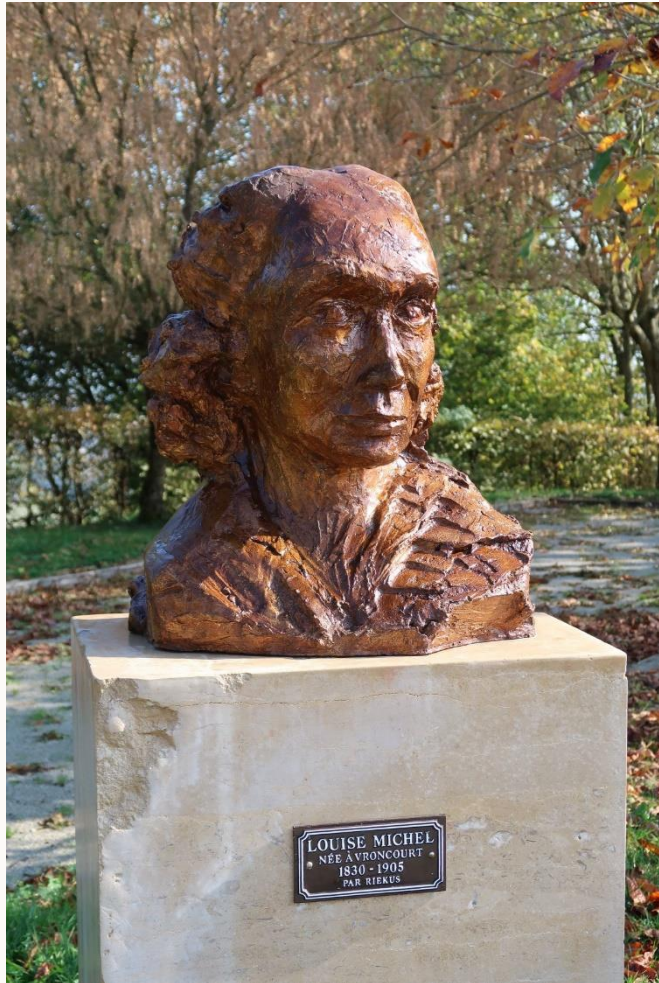
< 2017 Louise Michel

Collection Commune Vroncourt-la-Côte



Cette vaste ruine, où le vent soufflait comme dans un navire, avait, au levant, la côte des vignes et le village, dont il était séparé par une route de gazon large comme un pré.

Louise Michel, *Mémoires*, 1886, p. 21.



...il est bon, par le temps où nous vivons, de ne passer que pour soi-même.

Louise Michel, *Mémoires*, 1886, p. 321.

Riekus:

“The concept of the portrait revolves around the endeavour. I wanted to render her force of life. The politically engaged elementary teacher of early years became politically active when she was forty.

It’s exceptional to be able to find photographs (not many) of her from the age of nine up until her seventies. However, it wasn’t easy to capture her ‘alive’ since I had to deal with this typically nineteenth century posed photography. Also, she had a very singular face that only revealed its unique outlines *en profile*. Fortunately, there was a mugshot.”



Louise Michel:

Ma mère était alors une blonde, aux yeux blues souriants et doux, aux longs cheveux bouclés, si fraîche et si jolie que les amis lui disaient en riant: Il n'est pas possible que ce vilain enfant soit à vous! Pour moi, grande, maigre, hérissée, sauvage et hardie à la fois, brûlée du soleil et souvent décorée de déchirures rattachées avec des épingles, je me rendais justice et cela m'amusait qu'on me trouvât laide. Ma pauvre mère s'en froissait quelquefois.

Mémoires, 1886, pp. 28 – 29.



Riekus: “On the occasion of the 100-year remembrance of Louise Michel’s death I was commissioned by the Association Louise Michel Haute Marne to paint her portrait.

Louise Michel is an icon. She has become a *grande dame* whose ideas about justice and freedom still fuel our thoughts.

In the painting I wanted to capture her beyond flesh and blood, using three colours next to white: prussian blue, alizarin red, and burnt umber (to create the warm greys).”

In 2017 Art Unlimited Amsterdam added the portrait of Louise Michel to its vast arrange of art postcards. See:

<https://www.artunlimited.com/a12008-louise-michel-2005.html>

< 2006 *Portrait of Louise Michel*

Collection Association Louise Michel Haute-Marne

RIEKUS



Le dernière fois que j'ai vu Vroncourt, c'était aux vacances de 1865...

Un soir que nous suivions la forêt de Thol à Clefmont, allant chez l'oncle Marchal, le vieux forestier qui marait sa fille, le trot régulier et les yeux lumineux d'un loup nous suivirent pendant toute la route.

Louise Michel, *Mémoires*, 1886, pp. 62 – 63.

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Louise Michel dedicated her life to the fundamental rights of underprivileged children, women, men, and animals. As a teacher she wanted to reform education, in an attempt to make it accessible for all.

Parts of her correspondence can be found in Amsterdam, preserved by the International Institute of Social History on behalf of The Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

<http://www.iisg.nl/collections/louisemichel/biography.php>

RIEKUS

Riekus's work as a painter and sculptor grows out of a fascination for craftsmanship, and an innate knowledge of the singular properties of materials and their transformations. His practice addresses past and current interactions between humanity, nature and culture. He mostly works on ongoing projects, such as Resin Paintings, Ship of Fools, Powerfigures, Captain of Freedom, Intrusive Relationships, Hundred Souls (Zielen), Shamepoles, Metal Paintings, Machines of Subjectivication.

Riekus was born in 1973, and now lives and works in the Netherlands and France. He received his M.F.A. (2000) and Meisterschüler (2001) from Kunsthochschule Kassel, in Germany. His works are featured in several private and public collections.

For more information or purchase inquiries please contact us at: info@riekus.com

