La Grande Cascade
(Grand’s falls)
Name: Grande Cascade (Grand’s falls)
Town: Le Mont Dore
Owner: council and private

References:
Longitude: 2°49’12.4”E
Latitude: 45°33’57.6”N

Access: by car and on foot
2 accesses:
1) From Le Mont Dore pump rooms (Les Thermes), take the steps leading up to the signposted short distance hiking path (PR). This path on the right comes out onto the road to Besse, cross over and on the other side a path leads to the waterfall.
2) Take the D36 towards Chambon sur Lac and at Col de la Croix St Robert on the right follow a path for 1.1 km to get to the waterfall via the top.

Length of itinerary: on foot from Le Mont Dore: 1 ½ hr / from the D36: 1h30 A/R.

Parking: from Col de la Croix St Robert there are 2 car parks 300 m from each other, restaurant at La ferme de l’Angle 3 km away.

Location of work: option of exhibiting an installation at the foot of the waterfall or on the rock walls and the drop.

Description of place: type of soil / surface area / vegetation / exposure

Two paths leave from La Croix de St Robert, one goes towards Puy de l’Angle and the other towards Grande Cascade waterfall.

The landscape is open and formed of fields under cultivation and pastures for grazing sheep. The footpaths are flanked by fences. This is the vast and lovely plateau de la Durbise. A private tarmacked road, similar to a cart track, starts from this plateau. The vegetation is similar to that of high plateaux and made up of large treeless meadows.

To get to the waterfall, the footpath goes down into a “lieu-dit” or place named Les Creux des Bœufs and runs alongside a stream called “Couze Surains”. The vegetation near the stream is different and comprises bushes and lots of rowan trees whose red berries add colour to the scenery.

The field at the top of the waterfall is used for grazing flocks of sheep. The grass is short and studded with tall tufts of grasses and lavastones. A forest of conifers lines one side of the field and a row of heather and blueberry bushes form its edge. The other side is home to the rowan trees. Its easterly aspect means the sun is present for most of the day in summer. The field covers an area of about 900 m².

The Grande Cascade site is very popular with visitors. The focus of the visit is a waterfall nearly 100 feet in height dropping over the cliff. Visitors make their way to the viewing point overlooking the valley.

These grand falls are a site which is symbolic of the Sancy Massif and more specifically of Mont-Dore.

They originate from a spring out on the plateau swept by the Durbise winds at a height of 1450 metres which runs over a series of ancient lava flows.

This hundred-foot-high waterfall is one of the highest in the Auvergne. If you look up from the bottom of the falls to the top, you are overwhelmed by a sensation of vertigo.

The height and power of the waterfall can also be appreciated from the stairs which lead to the foot of the falls. The viewpoint is very different, but always interesting.

Other points of interest: half of the water runs down the rock face, while the other half hurtles out into space, which means that it is possible to get behind the waterfall.

At the base of the falls you find yourself surrounded by meadows, surrounded by rock walls with the appearance of cliffs. The lush vegetation (lims, tall conifers, etc.) contrasts with the blackness of the basalt organ pipes.

On hot summer days this location is very busy, and plenty of people take advantage of the falls to cool down. It is a lovely spot for young and not-so-young.

Additional information: from the walking track, the view over the town of Mont-Dore is breathtaking. A work located at the top of the falls would be visible from a great distance: from Le Capucin (1468 m), a very popular spot, being the place to aim for from Mt-Dore village and also from the centre of Mt-Dore.

Note:
In July and August, sheep kept by a shepherd occupy part of the plateau.
Car park at Col de la Croix St Robert before going down to Grande Cascade waterfall

Footpath going down to Grande Cascade waterfall

Footpath going down to Grande Cascade waterfall
View from field of Upper Dordogne valley with Le Mont Dore in the background and the surrounding mountains (Le Capucin, Puy Gros).

View of field, possible location of work.

View from location of work, with Le Mont Dore in the background and the road top right beneath the mountain.

From the field, Le Capucin (right) and its field

View from location of work, with Le Mont Dore in the background and the road top right beneath the mountain.