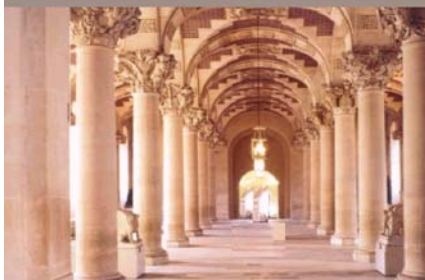


The new Salle du Manège

Open to the public on Friday, 25 June 2004

Press release



Mazarin Hermaphroditus, called "The Spirit of Eternal Rest", early 3rd century A.D., Musée du Louvre and Salle du Manège, Musée du Louvre, Denon Wing, Ground floor © Musée du Louvre/ E. Revault.

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Built during the reign of Napoleon III to receive equestrian events organized by the imperial riding stables, the Salle du Manège reopens to the public on 25 June 2004, with a new museological design. A total of seventy-five works are now exhibited in this magnificent room, some of which are antiquities while others are modern works inspired by antiquity, from the Louvre's fabulous collection of classical sculpture, one of the most important collections in the world in terms of size (more than five thousand pieces) and quality.

Completed between May 2003 and June 2004, the redesign and refurbishment of the Salle du Manège was made possible thanks to the generous support of Fimalac. The room's new lighting system is the work of Michel Gou, chief architect for historical monuments, assigned to the Louvre, while the museum's Department of Architecture and Museography was responsible for the remainder of the installation.

Although the Salle du Manège was dedicated in 1989 to antiquities and to modern works inspired by antiquity, it had not benefited from any specific installations honouring this mission until recently. The exhibition *Porphyry, The Purple Stone, from Ptolemy to Bonaparte*, in November 2003, was the first step in this ambitious redesign, whose aim is to offer a renewed perspective on the great French and Italian collections of antiquities of the 17th and 18th centuries.

This new presentation highlights the appeal of classical antiquity over the centuries, by exhibiting pieces assembled by the great French and Italian collectors. The room's central bay presents the Albani and Borghese collections while the side bays exhibit the Richelieu and Mazarin collections as well as antiquities from the French royal collections.

The museological design of the room is enhanced by the new lighting system. It extends the coverage of antiquity (the works displayed illustrate the deep connections between classical sculpture and modern sculpture), while at the same time offering a denser and more thematic treatment. Prestigious large-scale pieces are included, some of which have never before been seen by the public.

Fimalac, proud sponsor of the Salle du Manège

Fimalac's sponsorship is in keeping with a longstanding commitment to the Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities. As of 1995, Marc Ladreit de Lacharrière's patronage has made possible the restoration of major works, such as the *Borghese Gladiator* (1995–1997) and *Venus Genitrix* (1999). This sponsorship was extended with the funding of the exhibitions *2000 Years of Creation... after Antiquity* (2000–2001) and *Porphyry, The Purple Stone, from Ptolemy to Bonaparte* (2003–2004). Thus contributing to the prominence of the Louvre's collections of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman antiquities, Fimalac honours its ambition to promote the deeper appreciation and preservation of France's national heritage.

Denon Wing, Ground floor.
800 m², 10 m high, three bays.

Open daily except Tuesdays, from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Evening hours: The exhibition is open on Mondays and Wednesdays until 9.30 p.m.

A brochure entitled "Les chevaux du Louvre" is provided free of charge at the information desk. Intended for younger visitors, it traces a path through the Louvre's departments, thereby enhancing their exploration of the many and varied representations of horses exhibited.

The salle du Manège

The imperial riding stables of Napoleon III (800 m², 10 m high, with three bays) were located on the ground floor of the wing built by Hector Lefuel from 1855 to 1857 to house the Salle des Etats. In 1879, with its space no longer enlivened by the splendours of Second Empire equestrian events, the stables were granted to the museum and took the name Salle du Manège. A portion of its original 1861 decoration is preserved, evoking the original incarnation of these premises (the visitor's attention is drawn in particular to the stone capitals decorated with the heads of animals and hunting paraphernalia). The Museum of Casting, a project of Félix Ravaissou, took up residence in this space in 1898. The ambition of this museum was to introduce visitors to genuine Greek art, as distinguished from Roman art. Vacated in 1927, it became the entrance lobby for the Louvre in 1928. In 1989, it was selected as the home of restored antiquities and copies of antiquities, revealing the deep connection between classical sculpture and modern sculpture. The Salle du Manège thereby became the intersection of the Department of Greek, Etruscan, and Roman Antiquities and the Department of Sculptures.

Related events and publications

Publication

LES ANTIQUES DU LOUVRE :

Une histoire du goût de Henri IV à Napoléon Ier

"Trésors du Louvre" Collection

Edited by Jean-Luc Martinez.

This work deals with the development of the museum's collection of antiquities (royal collections, Borghese and Albani collections, among others), recounting the many trials and tribulations experienced by those involved, and attempts to bring into focus the complex history of the appeal of classical antiquity among collectors, a thread running through European art since the 16th century. The aim of this considerable undertaking is to present the collections of classical antiquities constituted by French rulers from Henri IV through to Napoleon I in a manner befitting their splendour.

A Fayard / Musée du Louvre co-edition. 250 p., €49.

The publication of this work is sponsored by Fimalac.

Documentary

LES CHEVAUX DU LOUVRE

An Equidia / Musée du Louvre / Compagnie Lyonnaise de Cinéma co-production. Directed by Jean-Luc Gunst, 52 min.

This film retraces the history of representations of horses in different civilizations, through an exploration of several equestrian works from the collections of the Louvre. With the exceptional participation of circus director Alexis Grüss highlighting the imaginative aspects, the film also includes a presentation of the realistic approaches of different artists. The perspectives of art historians and scientists provide a historical counterpoint.

Broadcast on Equidia beginning on 19 June 2004.

