



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

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## PRESS RELEASE

### LOUIS XIV: THE MAN AND THE KING

From 20 October 2009 to 7 February 2010 at the Château de Versailles

#### PRESS CONTACTS

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#### EXHIBITION

##### CURATORSHIP

Nicolas Milovanovic and Alexandre  
Maral, curators of the Château de  
Versailles

#### EXHIBITION DESIGN

Giada Ricci

**FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES DEVOTES A LARGE-SCALE EXHIBITION TO LOUIS XIV.** It brings together more than 300 exceptional works coming from collections all over the world and never shown together before. Paintings, sculptures, objets d'art and furniture will be exhibited. These masterpieces, some of which have never been presented in France since the days of the Ancien Régime, will enable visitors to get to know the famous monarch better in both his personal tastes and through his public image.

**THE RICHNESS OF THE IMAGE OF LOUIS XIV HAS NO PRECEDENT IN HISTORY: LOUIS XIV IS THE SUN KING, I.E. APOLLO AS THE SUN GOD.** But his image is also associated with other historical or mythological figures at different times during his reign: Alexander or Hercules, Augustus or Saint-Louis, etc. Fashioned by the king himself and his counsellors, this image constantly evolved to convey emblematic figures of the royal power: the king of war leading his troops, the patron king and protector of the arts, the very Christian king and Defender of the Church, the king of glory, an image constructed for posterity. This visible glory, given mythical proportions, which was constructed during his lifetime, took shape thanks to the excellence of the artists chosen, such as Bernini, Girardon, Rigaud, Cucci, Gole, Van der Meulen and Coysevox who set out to sublimate the royal portrait, which the exhibition allows the visitors to rediscover.

**APART FROM HIS PUBLIC IMAGE, IF WE WISH TO SEE THE MAN BEHIND THE SOVEREIGN, WE NEED TO STUDY HIS PERSONAL.** He saw himself as a king who was the protector of the arts and a collector, competing with other sovereigns of Europe who were also genuine connoisseurs. Benefiting from the example of Mazarin, Louis XIV formed his taste in direct contact with artists, and through the personal relations that he established with them: Le Brun and Mignard in painting, Le Vau and Hardouin-Mansart in architecture, Le Nôtre in the art of gardens, Lully in music, and Molière in theatre. By assembling the works appreciated by the King, a genuine portrait emerges of a passionate lover of the arts and a man of good taste through the jewels, cameos, medals, miniatures and objets d'art, as well as the paintings and sculptures that he loved to surround himself with in the Petit Appartement in Versailles. He showed a keen personal interest in artistic creation by coming every day to follow up the progress being made in the works of Le Brun, by participating in the design and setting out of the gardens with Le Nôtre, by taking part in the ballets given in the Court, as well as by orchestrating the construction work of the Château de Versailles with Hardouin-Mansart and Le Vau.

The visit to the Château and gardens of Versailles will prolong the exhibition tour and enable the visitor to appreciate the great work of Louis XIV.

This exhibition is produced thanks to the sponsorship of **Moët Hennessy** and **SAINT-GOBAIN**

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### In addition to the exhibition

**Specific programme at the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles** as part of the Fêtes

Baroques from 25 September 2009.

[www.cmbv.fr](http://www.cmbv.fr)

**Symposium** organised by the Research Centre of the Château de Versailles on image, taste and myth in January 2010.

[www.chateauversaillesrecherche.fr](http://www.chateauversaillesrecherche.fr)

**Royal Pomp Exhibition.** The collection of tapestries of Louis XIV in the Galerie des Gobelins from 20 September to 15 November 2009.

### Exhibition Catalogue

**Collective work** edited by Nicolas Milovanovic and Alexandre Maral.

496 pages, 450 colour illustrations, €49: paperback edition with flaps

€65: hardback edition in stiff sleeve

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### Information

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[www.chateauversailles.fr](http://www.chateauversailles.fr)

