

ADOPT A BUST OF THE MARBLE COURTYARD



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

VERSAILLES

A VISION OF ANTIQUITY

When Louis XIV brought his court and government to Versailles in 1682, he ordered the most prestigious antique pieces, displaying a vision of a new Rome recreated for his own glory. The Palace's Marble Courtyard, its facades decorated with almost a hundred busts resting on pedestals, is the first vision of antiquity that the visitor sees. This sculpted decor has been undergoing restoration for the past ten years, thanks to a number of generous patrons.

2024 marks the final phase of this project. After restoration, the busts will be returned to the position they had in 1722, date of the only inventory describing each bust, drawn up by the sculptor Benoît Massou. Don't miss the last opportunity to become a patron of a bust of Versailles, by adopting a bust of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius or the bust of Lucrece!





BECOME A PATRON OF THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

The adoption cost of a bust is €5,000, and covers the cost of its restoration.

YOU ARE AN INDIVIDUAL DONOR

Benefit from tax advantages amounting to 66% of the donation within the limit of 20% of your taxable income. Should you exceed this limit, you have the option to carry forward the tax reduction benefit over the next five years. You will also enjoy benefits up to €73 (subscription card and an adoption certificate featuring your name).

YOU ARE A COMPANY OR A FOUNDATION

Benefit from tax advantages up to 60% of the donation within the limit of 0.5% of your pre-tax turnover, with the option to carry forward any excess over the next five fiscal years. You will also enjoy benefits at the Palace of Versailles up to 25% of the amount of your donation.



DISCOVER THE BUSTS OF THE MARBLE COURTYARD



Lucrèce
Also said *Cleopatra*

MR 2355

This portrait of a suffering woman could represent Lucretia, a Roman woman renowned for her beauty. Her rape by King Tarquin's son and subsequent suicide are said to have precipitated the transition from monarchy to republic. Lucretia's story inspired artists to see her as an example of virtue. This bust could also represent Cleopatra.

Since the First Empire, this bust has adorned one of the niches in the Marronniers amphitheater, and is the equivalent of the one described in 1722 as a Cleopatra.

This bust replica will be set up on the south side of the Royal Courtyard on the ground floor (2nd bust from the right side).



Young Roman

MR 2618

Taken from Paris to Versailles during the First Empire, this bust of a Roman Youth has since been displayed in one of the green niches of the Amphitheatre of the Chestnut Tree Garden, in the gardens of the Grand Trianon. In terms of both size and iconography, it bears many similarities to the « small bust of a child's head inclined on the right shoulder »

described by Massou in his 1722 inventory. Dressed in Roman style, this short-haired boy stands out for his straight gaze and youthful appearance.

This bust replica will be installed on the north side of the Marble Courtyard upper level (3rd bust from the left side).

SUPPORT THE MEMORY OF AN EXCEPTIONAL HERITAGE



ADOPTED
Venus of Arles
restored on the Venus
of Arles offered to
King Louis XIV

In 1722, Massou mentioned « a bust of Venus wearing her hair with two bands, her head turned to the left ».

None of the busts preserved at Versailles can be compared to this description. Thanks to its iconography, and in particular its hairstyle, this missing bust must have been derived from a famous model.

This statue, dating from the end of the 1st century BC, was

a gift to Louis XIV given by the aldermen of Arles. After its restoration, the sovereign had it placed in the Hall of Mirrors, among the most beautiful antiques in the royal collections.

This bust will be set up on the south side of the Royal Courtyard on the ground floor (6th bust from the right side).



Roman Woman

MV 7488

Kept in storage, this bust bears some similarities to the one described by Massou in 1722.

We can see the « ribbon edging the shirt with which the body is covered ». A Languedoc marble pedestal evokes the lost one described as « of mixed marble ». Despite its poor state of preservation, this bust is a sculptural masterpiece, particularly in the treatment of

drapery. Although it is probably a portrait, the many impacts make it impossible to identify a precise figure.

After restoration, this bust will be cast and its replica set up on the south side of the Marble Courtyard upper level (7th bust from the right side). The original bust will be kept in storage.



Antinoüs
Formerly know as
Bacchus

MV 7960

Coming from the royal collections, this bust was once known as Bacchus. Today, it can be recognized as one of the replicas of the famous portrait of Antinous wearing a vine crown. Native of Bithynia in Asia Minor, Antinous becomes the favorite of the Emperor Hadrian. At the age of twenty, in 130 CE, he voluntarily drowned in the Nile in mysterious circumstances

Inconsolable, the emperor encouraged the creation of countless portraits of the man he deified. This restoration campaign is an opportunity to study this beautiful bust and restore it to its former glory.

After restoration, it will be displayed in storage before returning to the Palace of Versailles (museographic project underway).

DISCOVER THE BUSTS OF THE MARBLE COURTYARD



Diane
Goddess of hunting

MV 9098

In 1722, Massou described a bust of « Diana wearing a diadem », situated on the south side of the Royal Courtyard. Despite some differences, this bust is an equivalent. Executed in the 17th century, it depicts Diana, the goddess of hunting whom we can recognize by the quiver slung across her back. The proud goddess is wearing a gold-plated diadem. Her tunic, with its folds marked by the cord of the quiver uncovers

breast. Inventoried at Versailles at the end of the July monarchy, this bust adorned the façade of the Queen's cleaning dairy at the Queen's Hamlet in 1861.

Once the mould has been taken at the restoration workshop, it will stay in storage, while its replica will be placed on the Royal Courtyard.



Marc-Aurèle
Portrait of youth

Vdse 98

This bust is probably a portrait of Emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180). It can be compared to a bust in the Toulouse Museum of Archaeology or to one in the the Capitoline Museum in Rome. The melancholy, interiorized expression of this bust contrasts with the portraits of the emperor's youth, and is inspired by the meditative

postures of Greek philosophers from the 5th and 4th centuries BC.

Not mentioned in the inventory drawn up by Massou in 1722, this bust will be stored away whilst still available for visits.

FINALIZE THE ADOPTION OF THE MARBLE COURTYARD BUSTS

Busts from the last adoption campaigns



Bust of Roman

Vdse 143

Particularly realistic, this bust is the portrait of an elderly man whose identity is unknown. The wrinkled face and impressive toga bring this bust closer to the statues of ancient senators known as « togati » (such as those displayed at Versailles under the Princes passage overlooking the gardens). Indeed, it can be linked to one

of Massou's descriptions: « an antique bust of a senator, with short hair and a little beard, the pedestal is also antique ».

After restoration, the bust will be integrated into the north side of the Royal Courtyard on the ground floor: 2nd bust from the left side.



Bust of Roman

Vdse 118

According to the inventory drawn up in 1772 by the sculptor Benoît Massou, the site occupied by this Roman bust was home to « a bust of a young man, looking straight ahead, dressed in Roman style, a piece of scarf tied over his right shoulder and covering his left, revealing a mascaron on his stomach ».

This bust does not correspond to any of those described by Massou in 1722.

For this reason, it will remain stored away after its very much needed restoration, whilst still available for visits.



Bust of Rome

Vdse 166

This bust of Rome, or Roma, is a copy of a 2nd century original from the collection of Cardinal Richelieu (Paris, Louvre Museum). This allegory of the city of Rome is shown here helmeted, bare-chested, with a piece of light drapery flowing from her left shoulder. Her gaze is determined, with a slight twist of the neck to the left.

The most characteristic element is the capitoline she-wolf, depicted on both sides of her helmet, in reference to the founding myth of the city of Rome.

Not listed in the 1722 inventory, this work will be kept in storage after restoration.

FINALIZE THE ADOPTION OF THE MARBLE COURTYARD BUSTS

Busts from the last adoption campaigns



Bust of
Roman Woman

Vdse 130

In 1722, Massou described this work as « a bust of a woman wearing her hair up, her head in front, her body all draped in colored marble ». The wavy hair, gathered in a bun at the nape of the neck, adorns the face of the woman whose identity has yet to be determined.

She is wearing a tunic adorned with a jewel at the neckline, with the folds of the drapery emphasizing her chest.

After restoration, this bust will be installed on the north side of the Marble Courtyard upstairs: 1st bust from left.



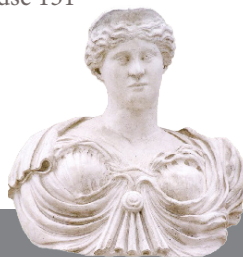
Bust of
Roman Woman

Vdse 131

Covered in a headdress with wavy combed hair, this Roman matron has not been identified. The woman's round face is marked by a small, reduced chin, and her gaze is peaceful. The virtuosity of the drapery, superimposed on a dress adorned with two round

clasps at the neck, giving it a patrician look.

Not mentioned in the inventory drawn up by Massou in 1722, this bust will stored away after restoration, available to visits.



Bust of
Roman Woman

Vdse 156

This unidentified patrician is wearing a tiara that enhances her deeply sculpted, wavy hair. Slightly tilted to the right, the face is imbued with an almost melancholy softness. The body is clothed in a tunic whose astonishing draperies emphasize the bust and lend it

a baroque expressiveness. This diademed portrait is in the spirit of known effigies of Empress Sabina of the Aelian dynasty.

After restoration, this bust will be kept in storage.

BRING BACK TO LIFE

THE BUSTS OF VERSAILLES

ADOPT A BUST

ONCE YOU HAVE CHOSEN YOUR BUST,
CONTACT THE PATRONAGE DEPARTMENT

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CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES