

FINAL STAGES OF THE RESTORATION OF APOLLO'S FOUNTAIN

Versailles, 12 December 2023
Press Release

The famous Apollo's fountain has seen a thorough restoration over the past year thanks to the patronage of the CMA CGM Group. Artisans have restored twelve of the thirteen lead sculptures and have just begun work on the final and most iconic one, *Apollo*. The sculpted group will return in February 2024 so that the fountain craftsmen can restore its historic water fountain display, which will function from 29 March 2024 during the Musical fountains show.

A FUNDAMENTAL RESTORATION

PREVIOUS STAGES



December 2022

The restoration was launched with the removal of the thirteen lead sculptures which were transported to the Coubertin Foundry.



Since January 2023

Each sculpture was worked upon, their frames consolidated, their lead outer shells cleaned, any deformed parts were corrected, and cracks filled.



Since April 2023

Then, each restored sculpture was re-gilded using the traditional gold leaf gilding technique.

CURRENTLY

December 2023 – January 2024

The Apollo sculpture entered the lead workshop at the beginning of December after restorers consolidated its frames. It is the final element of the group to be restored and the most monumental at **2.7 metres (8 ft 10 in) in height and 6.5 long tonnes in weight**. Once the casing is restored, Apollo will continue its metamorphosis, from mid-January, as it is regilded. As with the entire group, restorers will apply the various layers of primer and gilding paste before applying gold leaf to the sculpture, as decided by the Ministry of Culture. A warm-toned patina will then be applied to the sculpture to restore the effect of the original bronzing.



Apollo before arriving at the Coubertin Foundry restoration workshop, specially equipped for the safe handling of lead
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STATE PRE-RESTORATION

Despite constant maintenance, Apollo's fountain, strained by its water features, exhibited significant issues. Its last major restoration was performed 100 years ago between 1923 and 1927. With structural deformations due to the corrosion of the frames, deep alterations of the lead, and severe erosion to the coatings, the sculpted group's restoration had become urgent. Moreover, the water fountain display was altered and far removed from its original historical design.

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NEXT STEPS

In February 2024, the sculpted group will return to the heart of the Versailles Garden after an exceptional restoration.

The palace's fountain craftsmen will then continue this project by creating new nozzles to restore the original water effects.

The fountain will be re-launched from 29 March 2024 for the Musical fountains show. This spectacular restoration will bring back this iconic fountain's harmony and visual clarity and reinstate the splendour of the Grande Perspective designed by Louis XIII and Louis XIV.

AN ICONIC FOUNTAIN

Located at the centre of the "Grande Perspective" between the palace and the "Étoile Royale", Apollo's fountain represents the rising sun. Completed by Jean-Baptiste Tuby between 1668 and 1670 under the reign of Louis XIV, the lead sculpture weighs nearly thirty tonnes and includes thirteen statues. In the centre, Apollo is accompanied by Cupid on his chariot, which is drawn by four horses. At each cardinal point of the sculpture is a triton, while the corners feature dolphins.



Apollo's fountain before restoration
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