

# VERSAILLES AND CHINA IN 120 MASTERPIECES

Exhibition: *The Forbidden City and the Palace of Versailles*

Hong Kong Palace Museum (December 18, 2024 - May 4, 2025)

Versailles, 19th November 2024  
Press Release

From December 18, 2024, to May 4, 2025, the Hong Kong Palace Museum presents the exhibition *The Forbidden City and the Palace of Versailles: Exchanges between China and France in the 17th and 18th Centuries*. This exhibition, which follows the one held in 2024 at the Forbidden City in Beijing, will highlight the privileged relations between China and France during the Ancien Régime, characterized by artistic and cultural exchanges and the sharing of scientific knowledge. A significant selection of masterpieces, primarily from the collections of the Chateau de Versailles and the Palace Museum in Beijing, will illustrate the mutual fascination that developed between China and France in the 17th and 18th centuries.

## LOUIS XIV: INITIATOR OF RELATIONS WITH CHINA

The exhibition spotlights the diplomatic policy initiated by Louis XIV toward Emperor Kangxi. In 1685, French Jesuit fathers were sent to China, joining the Beijing court as mathematicians of the King. This initiative established a foundation of trust and mutual respect between the two nations that endured until the late 18th century. This unique diplomatic context and reciprocal interest played a key role in the emergence of modern sinology in France.

## A CHINESE AESTHETIC THAT SWEEPED THROUGH FRANCE

At the French court, enthusiasm for China and its art manifested through the importation of Chinese art objects, the transformation of certain imported works—such as adding gilt-bronze mounts to porcelains or using lacquer panels for French furniture—the imitation of Chinese products, highlighted by the frenzied quest to uncover the secret of kaolin porcelain, and the significant influence of Chinese art on French art, particularly in the decorative arts.

The exhibition will underscore the endless inspiration that Chinese art represented for French artists and intellectuals, impacting fields such as objets d'art, interior decor, architecture, garden design, painting, music, and science. The works displayed in Hong Kong will illustrate the genuine fascination of the Versailles court and major French collectors for Chinese creations. Moreover, the exhibition reveals the real interest Chinese emperors of the 17th and 18th centuries had in French scientific knowledge and expertise.




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香港故宮文化博物館特別展覽 Hong Kong Palace Museum Special Exhibition

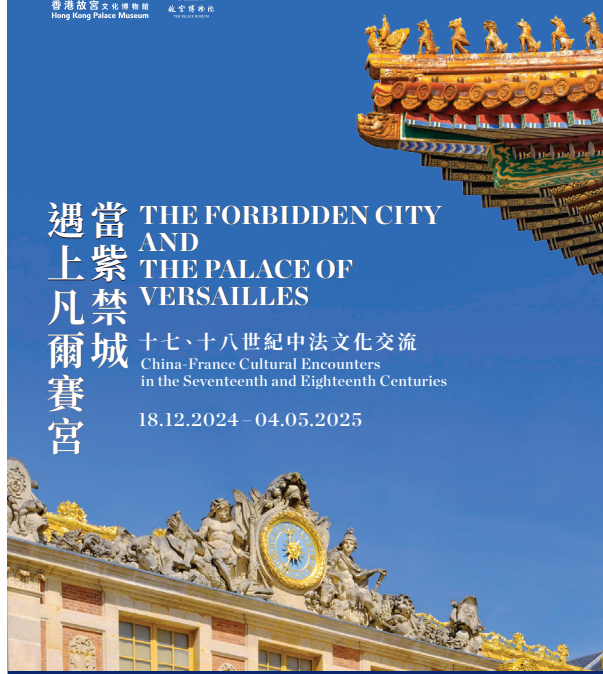


**遇上紫禁城  
凡爾賽宮**


**THE FORBIDDEN CITY  
AND  
THE PALACE OF  
VERSAILLES**

十七、十八世紀中法文化交流  
China-France Cultural Encounters  
in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

18.12.2024 - 04.05.2025



訂座查詢: Local Operators 訂座查詢: Major Operators



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## A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON SINO-FRENCH RELATIONS THROUGH THE REDISCOVERY OF OBJETS D'ART

In April 2024, an exhibition at the Forbidden City inaugurated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and France for both the Palace Museum and the Palace of Versailles. This exhibition, which drew over 175,000 visitors, will find its new reiteration at the Hong Kong Palace Museum starting from December 18 2024 to May 4 2025, as a culmination of this celebratory year, featuring some of Versailles' prestigious acquisitions from the past decade. A unique aspect of this exhibition will be the pairing of works from Chinese and French collections, creating a dialogue that highlights the mutual interest of both cultures. Furthermore, scientific collaboration between the teams at the Palace of Versailles and the Palace Museum has led to the rediscovery of previously unknown objects, deepening our understanding of this longstanding history.

### THE FORBIDDEN CITY AND THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES: EXCHANGES BETWEEN CHINA AND FRANCE IN THE 17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES

Exhibition from December 18, 2024, to May 4, 2025

Hong Kong Palace Museum, Hong Kong

Curators: Marie-Laure de Rochebrune, General Heritage Curator, Palace of Versailles; Guo Fuxiang, Research Fellow, the Palace Museum; and Wenxin Wang, Associate Curator, with contributions of Assistant Curators Phoebe Yin and Mia Ma, Hong Kong Palace Museum

### VERSAILLES AND ITS CHINESE VISITORS

Chinese visitors represent the second-largest foreign nationality among visitors at the Palace of Versailles, accounting for 13% of international visitors in 2019. To enhance the experience for Chinese visitors—whose numbers were steadily increasing before the pandemic—Versailles has implemented dedicated initiatives. All visitor information and mediation tools are translated into Chinese, including the audio guide, which covers the full tour. To establish a presence in China's digital ecosystem, Versailles has been active on Chinese social media platforms since 2015, with over 326,000 followers on WeChat, Weibo, Douyin, and Bilibili. Since 2019, Versailles has also been among the first museums to offer online and contactless payment options via WeChat Pay and Alipay.

In China, the traveling exhibition *Virtually Versailles* has already attracted 260,000 visitors across Singapore, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Macau, and Hangzhou. Furthermore, the Palace of Versailles fosters privileged relationships with Chinese cultural institutions such as the Forbidden City and the Hong Kong Palace Museum, organizing exhibitions in close collaboration.



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#### Captions

1. *Louis XIV, King of France (1638-1715)*, Hyacinthe Rigaud, 1701-1712, oil on canvas
2. *Ewer*, Anonymous, China, circa 1680, repoussé, chased, and engraved silver, partially gilded (LVMH Donation)
3. *Perfume fountain*, Anonymous China (Qianlong period) and Slodtz Brothers (sculptors), 1736-1743, hard porcelain with cracked celadon glaze, brown porcelain, chased and gilded bronze
4. *Round plate from the Louis XV service with the Arms of France*, Jingdezhen Manufacture, circa 1738-1740, Chinese porcelain
5. *Watch*, Julien Le Roy, 1750-1755, gold, gilded brass, translucent basse-taille enamel
6. *Louis XV, King of France (1710-1774)*, François-Hubert Drouais, oil on canvas
7. *The Emperor of China Qianlong*, Sèvres Manufacture, 1776, painting on hard-paste porcelain

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