

# 2024: THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES PREPARES FOR THE OLYMPICS

Versailles, 26 October 2023  
Press Release

In 2024, the Palace of Versailles will offer an exceptional programme to accompany the equestrian events it will host during the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, featuring a special exhibition, guided tours, workshops, and artistic education projects designed around arts and sports. Early 2024 will also see the return of Apollo's Chariot and the restoration of its fountains after a spectacular renovation, followed by the completion of heritage projects throughout the Estate.

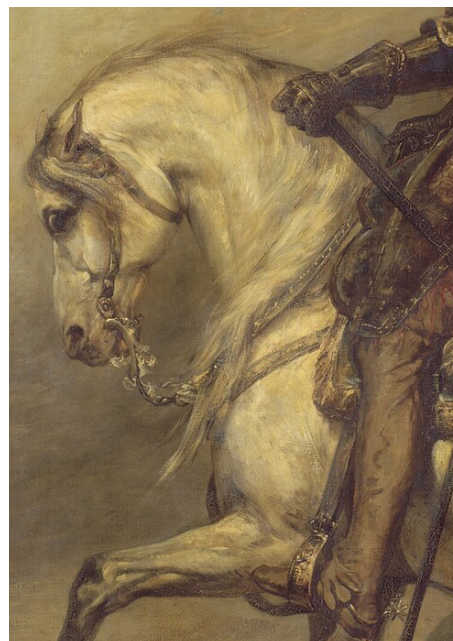
## THE HORSE IN MAJESTY

EXHIBITION FROM 2 JULY TO 3 NOVEMBER 2024

The Palace of Versailles will present a special exhibition dedicated to horses and equestrian civilisation in Western culture from the 16th century to the early 20th century. Over 400 works from collections around the world, many of which will be exhibited for the first time in France, will shed light on the long shared history between man and horse. The trilogy of *Service, Pleasure, and Power* govern the equestrian culture of modern times in Europe. Among the foremost means of expressing power and distinction, the horse will be considered in its multiple dimensions: political, military, academic, scientific, artistic, cultural, legendary, and imaginary. The exhibition will unfold through a journey across several of the Palace's most iconic spaces.

### CURATORS:

**Laurent Salomé**, Director of the National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon  
**Hélène Delalex**, Heritage Curator of the National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon



Equestrian Portrait of Henri IV, King of France, Ary Scheffer (1795-1858), 1828, Palace of Versailles © Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN © C. Fouin

## THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES, A HOST VENUE FOR PARIS 2024



PARIS 2024

SITE HÔTE



PARIS 2024

The Palace of Versailles will be the venue for the eventing competitions, i.e. the triathlon comprising cross-country, dressage, and show jumping, as well as the Olympic and Paralympic show jumping and dressage competitions, and all five components of the modern pentathlon.

Olympic Games: Equestrian sports from 27 July to 6 August 2024 / Modern Pentathlon from 8 to 11 August 2024  
Paralympic Games: Para-Equestrian from 3 to 7 September 2024

### PRESS CONTACTS

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## THE RETURN OF APOLLO'S CHARIOT AND ITS WATER FEATURES

APRIL 2024

Situated at the centre of the Grande Perspective between the Palace and the Etoile Royale, the Apollo's Chariot Basin is undoubtedly one of the most renowned basins in the gardens of Versailles.

In December 2022, with the patronage of the CMA CGM Group, the Palace of Versailles embarked upon the major restoration of this iconic fountain of Louis XIV's Versailles. The thirteen lead sculptures were removed for restoration and re-gilding. Meanwhile, the sculpted group's stone pedestal is being reinforced on-site, as are the hydraulic networks whose restoration is being carried out by the Palace's fountain artisans. This project will conclude with the creation of new nozzles to restore the original water effects, and the reinstallation of the sculpted group in January 2024. The illumination of the basin and the statuary will also be completely redesigned.

The Apollo's Chariot Basin will be fully reopened in April 2024 for the Grandes Eaux, following an exceptional restoration that has involved various skilled trades such as art foundry, metallurgy, gilding, fountain artisanship, and masonry.



The Basin of Apollo's Chariot before restoration  
© Palace of Versailles / T. Garnier



One of the lead horse sculptures of Apollo's Chariot undergoing restoration at the Coubertin Foundry  
© Palace of Versailles / T. Garnier



## A PROGRAMME FOCUSING ON THE ARTS AND SPORTS

PARIS 2024 "CULTURAL OLYMPIAD" LABEL

Throughout the year, the Palace of Versailles will offer a programme labelled *Cultural Olympiad*, weaving a connection between sports and the arts.

### FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

#### Unique guided tours

Specially created for the occasion, tours centred on arts and sports will be offered throughout the year: *Versailles, Games, and Sports*; *Dancing at Court*; *Gods and Heroes*; *Versailles, by Horse or by Carriage*; *Horses in Art*; and a tour of the Grand Parc, *Versailles by Bicycle*.

#### Activities for 18-25 year-olds

Activities specifically for 18-25 year-olds will also be offered, such as the *Heroic Nudities* and *Bath Time, My Queen!* guided tours and the *Drawing from a Model* and *Meditation at Trianon* workshops.

#### A Pentathlon of the Arts weekend

Over one weekend in June 2024, the Palace of Versailles will host a Pentathlon of the Arts. Inspired by Pierre de Coubertin's Pentathlon of the Muses for the 1912 Games, this original cultural event will invite the public to participate in workshops focusing on five cultural disciplines: visual arts; literature and writing; digital arts; architecture and design; and music and performing arts.

### FOR SCHOOL PUPILS AND PEOPLE WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO CULTURE

#### The Pentathlon of the Arts

In 2023-2024, the Palace of Versailles will offer Pentathlon of the Arts workshops for school pupils and people with limited access to culture. Conducted in partnership with the Academy of Versailles, the "À l'école du patrimoine et de la création : des corps et des muses" programme involving nearly 2,000 pupils will also draw from this programme.



A Pentathlon of the Arts workshop at the Grand Trianon  
© Palace of Versailles / D. Saulnier



400 young people celebrate the Olympic rings at the Palace of Versailles © Palace of Versailles / T. Garnier

#### Flourishing Versailles: Skills to hand down

In 2024, the Palace of Versailles is continuing the *Flourishing Versailles* project, allowing young individuals in professional integration from the cities of Les Mureaux and Plaisir to discover the trades of Versailles. To put what they learn into practice, 200 young people will be invited to create a floral artwork on the theme of horses.

#### Stop off at Versailles: Dreams in Motion

Led by the Palace of Versailles in collaboration with the new *Vivre ensemble* association, this project offers people with disabilities an introduction to dance through workshops with choreographers. A photographer will then immortalise their bodies in motions during the presentation of the choreographies. The photographs will be exhibited at the Palace of Versailles starting from 14 June 2024.

### JUST DANCE 2024 EDITION A NIGHT AT THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

The Palace of Versailles, Ubisoft, and the French National Centre for Cinema and the Moving Image (CNC) have collaborated to create a new "A Night at the Palace of Versailles" map to mark the release of the musical video game *Just Dance 2024*. Immersed in the heart of the 18th century at Versailles, players will be able to admire iconic parts of the Palace and its gardens while dancing to two pieces of baroque music that have been modernised with a pop arrangement: *March for the Turkish Ceremony* by Jean-Baptiste Lully and *Savages* by Jean-Philippe Rameau.

THE PENTATHLON OF THE ARTS IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE PATRONAGE OF:



STOP OFF AT VERSAILLES IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH THE SUPPORT OF:



Yvelines  
Le Département

## COMPLETION OF PROJECTS ACROSS THE ENTIRE VERSAILLES ESTATE

AHEAD OF THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPICS GAMES

The Palace of Versailles is overseeing several significant projects set to be completed by spring 2024, ensuring visitors from around the world can experience the Palace and its gardens under the best conditions.

### Restoration of the Honour Gate

The Palace of Versailles is currently restoring the Honour Gate, the main entrance to the Estate, along with the two sculpted groups by Girardon and Massy that frame it. Thanks to funding from the Département des Yvelines, this operation will restore the original layout of the gate and its ornamental details existing since the 19th century. The scaffolding, installed in September 2023, will remain in place until spring 2024, when the restored Honour Gate will be unveiled to the public.



Removal of the Honour Gate © Palace of Versailles / D. Saulnier

### Restoration of the Œil-de-Bœuf Antechamber

Emblematic of life at the court during the reign of Louis XIV, the Œil-de-Bœuf Antechamber is undergoing extensive restoration. This operation will breathe new life into the woodwork, gilding, and painted decor of this masterpiece of decorative arts. The Palace is also bringing the King's Apartment, where the famous King's Chamber is located, into compliance. Both will reopen to the public in June 2024.



Removal of the Œil-de-Bœuf © Palace of Versailles / D. Saulnier

### Restoration of the Roofs of the North Wing

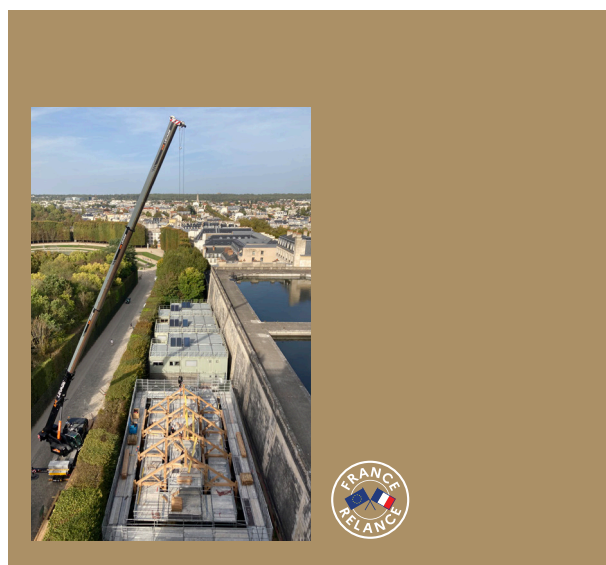
Following the restoration of the roofs of the Gabriel Wing, those of the Palace's North Wing are now undergoing restoration. Various skilled trades are currently involved - roofers, sculptors, carpenters, as well as stonecutters - to enhance the lead covering's waterproofing, ensure better thermal insulation, and restore all of its stone sculptures. The scaffolding will be entirely dismantled once the restoration is complete in spring 2024.

### Restoration of the Banks of the Grand Canal

In 2023, the Palace of Versailles initiated, thanks to the patronage of Jacquemus, the restoration of the banks of the Grand Canal, a major architectural element of the park designed under Louis XIV by André Le Nôtre. By spring 2024, 420 concrete copings will be replaced by copings made of Saint-Leu stone, a historic and resilient material, ensuring a sustainable restoration all while improving the watertightness of the basin.

### Restoration of the Roofs of the Grand Trianon

In 2023, the Palace of Versailles began the restoration of the roofs of the Grand Trianon. Starting in 2024, the south wing will be completely restored, thus beginning the transformation of one of the most intimate and refined spaces in the Versailles estate, built in 1687 for Louis XIV and Madame de Montespan.



THE RESTORATION OF THE HONOUR GATE IS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF:



**Yvelines**  
Le Département

THE RESTORATION OF THE BANKS OF THE GRAND CANAL IS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE PATRONAGE OF:

**JACQUEMUS**