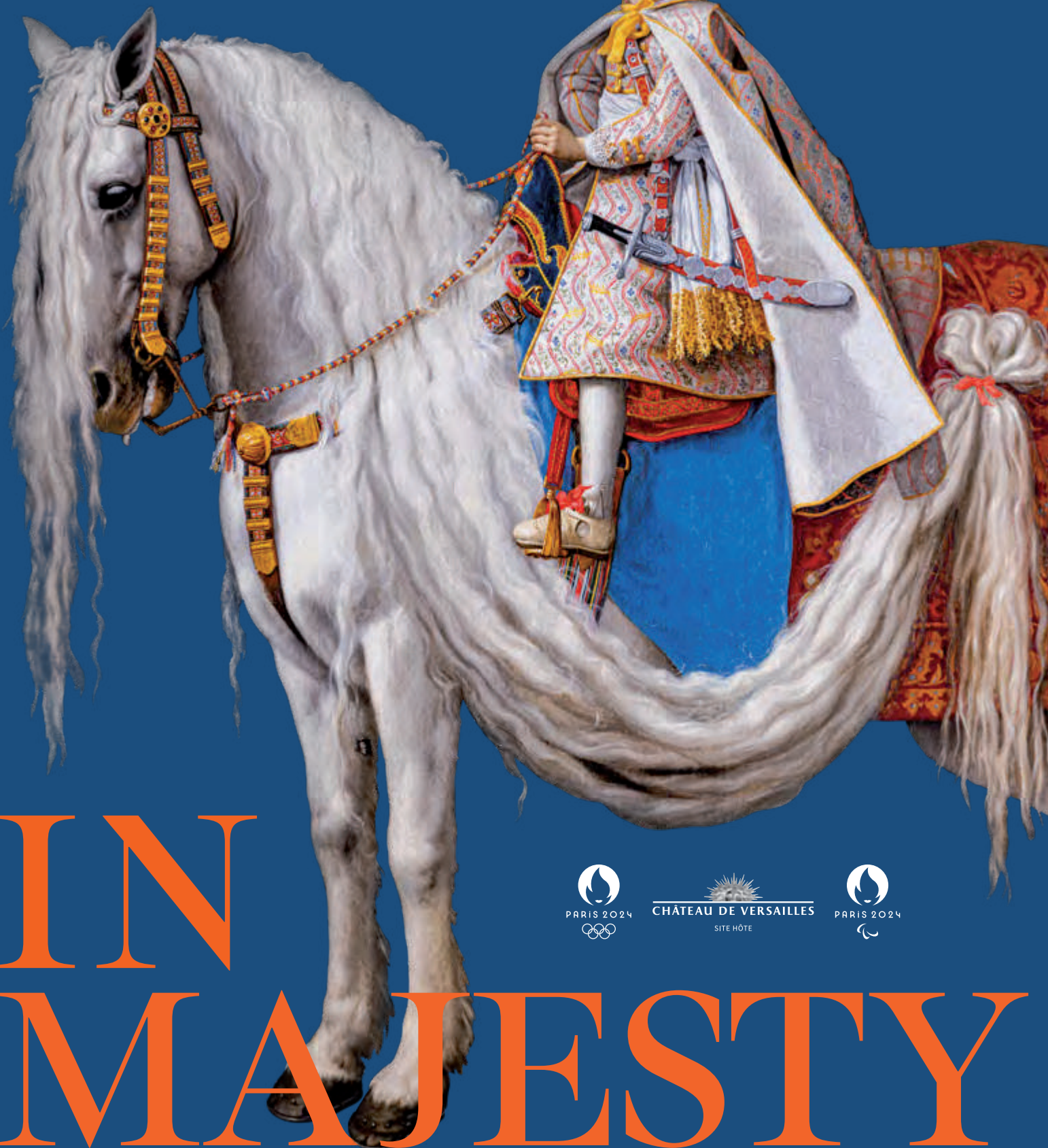


HORSE

EXHIBITION
Palace of Versailles

2 JULY - 3 NOVEMBER 2024



IN MAJESTY



PRESS CONTACTS PALACE OF VERSAILLES

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THE HORSE IN MAJESTY AT THE HEART OF A CIVILISATION

Exhibition from 2 July to 3 November 2024

To coincide with the equestrian events of the Paris Olympics 2024, the Palace of Versailles is staging a major exhibition on an unprecedented scale, from 2 July to 3 November 2024, devoted to horses and equestrian civilisation in Europe, thanks to the exclusive patronage of the CMA CGM Group.

HORSES AS A REFLECTION OF MAN AND A MIRROR OF THE TIMES

Horses can be found at every phase in the development of western civilisation and its imaginary, acting as a mirror of the times for each era. They are also the true reflection of the men they accompany in their conquest of the world. Horses have always occupied a special place, directly below humans in the animal hierarchy, due to their combination of strength and docility, of bravery and fear, of resistance and speed, associated with elegant proportions and gait, a unique soul, a peculiar ability to intuit human emotions, and exceptional usefulness.

Horses are also the animals of the nobility par excellence. From the *Ancien Régime*, by their presence alone in depictions, they could indicate rank, define social hierarchies, and consolidate power. As political animals, horses enhanced the majesty of sovereigns. They contributed to the process of glorifying the horseman-king as a hero of legend by conjuring up saints and knights.

Man's most noble conquest ever is this proud and spirited animal, which shares with him the fatigues of war and the glories of battle. It also shares his pleasures, excelling and shining in hunting, tournaments, and racing.

Buffon, *Histoire naturelle* (1749-1789)

This exhibition is made possible thanks to the exclusive patronage of the CMA CGM Group.

THE EXHIBITION

Horses are a vast subject, “a whole world to be studied”, according to the 19th century painter Eugène Fromentin. Informed by new research, this exhibition explores the many facets of the topic – political, artistic, diplomatic, scientific, spectacular, real, and imaginary.

The exhibition brings together some 300 works from public and private collections, in France, but predominantly internationally, to provide a new and comprehensive perspective on the theme of horses.

The aim is to reveal the extraordinary richness of equine civilisation in Europe from the 16th to the 20th century – from the dawn of the modern period, which witnessed a radical change in the position and use of horses in civil and military society, through to the eve of World War I, which marked the demise of horses as a means of locomotion in society, and their relegation to the sphere of leisure.

The exhibition is laid out across several iconic spaces in the Palace of Versailles: the Africa Rooms, the Hercules Room, the Hall of Mirrors, the War and Peace Rooms, and the apartments of Madame de Maintenon and of the Dauphine.

EXHIBITION CURATORS

Laurent Salomé, Director of the National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon

Hélène Delalex, Heritage Curator, National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon

SCENOGRAPHY

Loretta Gaëtis et Irène Charrat

“From humble and useful servant, the horse became a symbol and a spectacle”

History abounds with horses that became almost as famous as their riders, from Alexander the Great's steed Bucephalus and Napoleon's famous mount Marengo, immortalised by David, through to Emperor Caligula's beloved horse Incitatus, whom he allegedly contemplated making a consul. In Hinduism, each deity has its mount, and in our history, each king has his horse. Horses are, therefore, endowed with a dual majesty: by virtue of their imposing bearing, and as the special attribute of kings. “A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse”: Shakespeare's Richard III proclaimed this identification of the sovereign with his horse, and it has been substantiated time and again throughout history.

Court society pushed this symbiotic relationship to its highest level and can therefore truly be considered an “equine civilisation”. Horses were integral to the power and pomp of court as a basic source of traction, a means of locomotion, but also as faithful hunting companions, vital comrades in war who sometimes paid the ultimate price for their close bond with their masters, and the stars of court festivities. From useful and humble servants, they became a symbol and a spectacle: parading in carousels and tournaments, rearing up on pedestals, trotting at the forefront of paintings, and prancing in manuals of horsemanship for gentlemen.

This exhibition brings back to life these centuries of the horse in majesty. I would like to extend my thanks to the curators, the Exhibitions Department, all the teams at the Palace who have worked on the exhibition, institutions which have loaned works, and our patrons. The exhibition brings together some 300 works from public and private collections, not only in France, such as the *Musée du Louvre* and the Alfort French National Veterinary School, but also a significant number from abroad. We are fortunate to have secured exceptional loans from institutions such as the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, the Dresden Rüstkammer, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Royal Collection Trust, and the J. Paul Getty Museum.

I would also like to thank the CMA CGM Group, whose exclusive support made the extraordinarily ambitious scale of this project achievable.

Versailles is the beacon of this “equestrian civilisation”, which spans the centuries. This is demonstrated by the King's huge stables in a prime position opposite the palace, thus establishing a close parallel with royal power – open daily for visitors this summer specially for this event – and also by the equestrian statue of Louis XIV, which dominates the Place d'Armes and links these key buildings. One of the most famous fountains in the gardens, featuring the chariot of Apollo drawn by golden steeds, which have recently been restored to their full glory and fiery spirit, lends weight to this claim. The art of horsemanship is also well represented: the Bartabas equestrian academy, based in the Great Stables of the palace, keeps this French tradition of excellence alive with its training programmes and performances.

The Palace of Versailles is perpetuating this legacy by playing host to the equestrian events of the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2024. In the palace gardens, the carousels of the *Grand Siècle* will be replaced by a different type of equestrian symphony in the form of the showjumping and dressage events. From competition to exhibition, this summer, Versailles is turning the spotlight back on the other master of this establishment – the horse.

**Christophe Leribault,
President of the Palace, Museum
and National Estate of Versailles**





“A close encounter with this creature inextricably associated with the story of humanity”

Bringing a project for a major exhibition on horses to fruition was a huge challenge. This theme had been under consideration for some time by several institutions, giving rise to enthusiasm and perplexity in equal measure, and for similar reasons. The huge scale of the topic required a truly multidisciplinary approach. There was the tricky issue of setting chronological and geographical parameters, and above all the monumental nature of a project worthy of this sublime animal, and the prospect of negotiating the movement of unusually large artefacts.

The Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games provided us with the impetus to distil, in the chemical sense of the term, the extensive research carried out over time by H el ene Delalex, and to take up the challenge. We had to make strategic decisions, sacrifice some aspects, develop others, put together a coherent proposition, and reach out to colleagues in Europe and beyond and persuade them to get on board. Although preparatory trips form the backbone of any exhibition project, in the case of *The Horse in Majesty*, they proved to be unusually intense, rich and productive. Adopting a European approach to this major aspect of civilisation immediately pinpointed the main reference centres on the map, institutions which are custodians of swathes of history, with prestigious collections that have almost miraculously survived. Dresden, Stockholm, Vienna, and Turin were so much more than just museums to be approached; they were worlds to explore with knowledge to impart and visions to share. The equestrian tradition is also, first and foremost, a form of intangible heritage and this underpins this project, which has taken shape over the course of these discussions. We wish we could share them all with you, and mention all the places which we did not approach as part of this project that are already fuelling our desire for a sequel.

We made numerous discoveries. In many instances, the works and artefacts assembled have never been exhibited or are on display in France for the first time, such as the memorable equestrian portrait of the young Leopold de' Medici by Sustermans. We also believe that our proposition is new. It aims to situate itself in the tradition of major research into the equestrian world, paying particular tribute to the latest extensive synthetic study by Daniel Roche. While it is grounded in the museum exhibition tradition of an infinite variety of physical artefacts with a powerful emotional charge, it is also open, light, sensitive and celebratory. Visitors can experience in a personal way this creature which is inextricably associated with the story of humanity. Although we are no longer reliant on horses as we were in the period covered by the exhibition, when it was actually impossible to function without them, they remain at the core of our imaginary, and we shall never tire of contemplating their astonishing beauty. We adopted this noble companion as a means of locomotion. It is no coincidence therefore that in the 20th century, cars acquired a degree of prestige and seductive allure which is somewhat unusual for a machine. The silver screen often even endowed cars with souls, as if their illustrious predecessors still inhabited them. However, the exhibition also reveals the gulf between them. The extraordinary splendour of the ornaments created for horses; the majestic portraits rivalling those of high-ranking figures; the boundless curiosity of scientists and artists studying their anatomy, temperament and reactions; and the dazzling entertainments and parades to which the Olympic events in the grounds of Versailles are a nod, all belong to a bygone age swallowed up like the lost city of Ys from which King Gradlon escaped by cleaving the waves astride his wondrous horse, Morvac'h. The painting by Evariste Luminais sums up the exhibition: spectacular, crazy, and slightly overwhelming.

**Laurent Salom e,
Director of the National Museum
of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon**





PART I

THE EXHIBITION TOUR

1. OF HORSES AND KINGS

Upper Stone Gallery

Kortom, Sultan, Finske, Red Rose, Abraham, Merrygold, Mustafa, Imaum Adonis, Vizir, Phoebus, La Truffe...

The exhibition opens with a gallery featuring the favourite horses of European princes, sovereigns, and emperors with a passionate interest in all things equine. With their distinctive names, they are portrayed alone and resplendent in monumental paintings, and include horses belonging to Charles XI of Sweden immortalised by David Klöcker von Ehrenstrahl, one of the founding fathers of Swedish painting. They are also preserved as taxidermy specimens, as life-like casts, or depicted in more intimate portraits, such as the pictures of Queen Victoria's Arabian stallions. These portraits, with their compelling presence, reflect princes' emotional bond with their loyal companions, and the admiration the superb mounts in their stables inspired.

This pantheon of cherished horses brings together not only companions in everyday life, but also companions in arms of military leaders whose illustrious reputations they enhanced. One such example is Marengo, the new Bucephalus, the heroic *alter ego* of Napoleon, who was so famous in Britain that the distinction between reality and legend became blurred. Horses also shared the downfalls and military defeats of their masters, like Phoebus and Napoleon III after the surrender at Sedan. In this contrasting companion piece to the equestrian portrait of Napoleon I, the painter Wilhelm Camphausen offers the poignant and striking image of a sovereign with his horse, looking lost, absent, and totally overwhelmed.



Queen Victoria on Horseback, Edwin Landseer (1802-1873), 1865-1867, oil on canvas, London, The Royal Collection, lent by His Majesty King Charles III, Horn Room, Osborne House © His Majesty King Charles III 2024

MAJOR EXHIBITION LENDERS

THE NATIONALMUSEUM AND ROYAL ARMOURY, STOCKHOLM

Some thirty drawings, sculptures, paintings, works of art, and ceremonial horse trappings from Swedish national collections are displayed in the exhibition. These works, which are mainly kept in storage, or are on loan to France for the first time, will offer visitors a new experience. They include a horse with trappings, part of the "French gift" from Louis XIV to Charles XI of Sweden, which is one of the finest diplomatic gifts in history, and a series of six life-size portraits of the favourite horses of King Charles XI of Sweden by David Klöcker von Ehrenstrahl.



Kortom, Charles XI's Horse, David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl (1628-1698), 1684, oil on canvas, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum © Linn Ahlgren - Nationalmuseum



Sultan, Charles XI's Horse David Klöcker Ehrenstrahl (1628-1698), 1689, oil on canvas, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum © Linn Ahlgren - Nationalmuseum



Empress Elisabeth of Austria (1837-1898), known as Sissi, on Horseback, Wilhelm Richter (1824-1892), 1876, Budapest, Hungarian National Museum © Hungarian National Museum



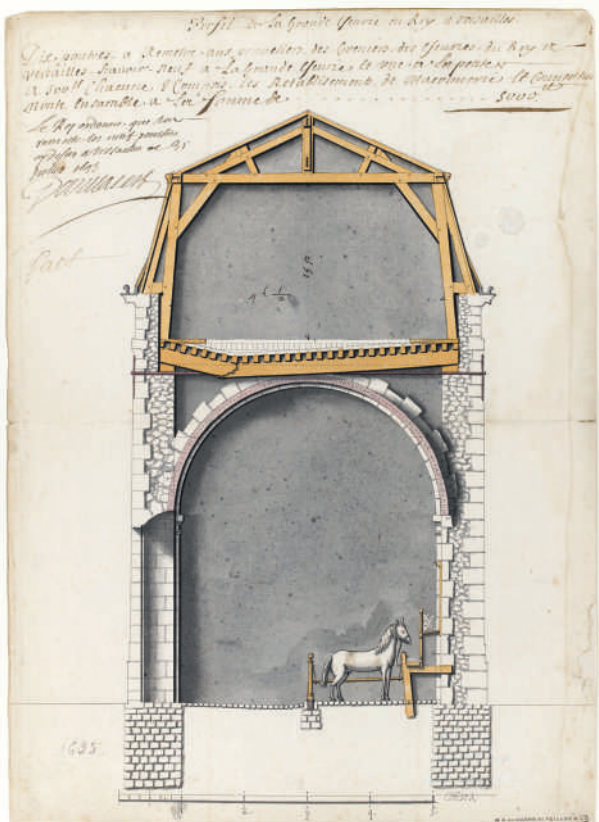
Bonaparte Crossing the Great St Bernard Pass, 20 May 1800, Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), 1802, Versailles, National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon © Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN © Christophe Fouin

2. ENLIGHTENMENT STABLES: PALACES FOR HORSES

Upper Stone Vestibule

The size of a prince's stables and the beauty and number of horses he owns have for centuries been one of the clearest indicators of *dignitas majestatis*. The major aristocratic and royal stables built in the 17th and 18th centuries provide clear evidence of the role of horses in the representation of power during the *Ancien Régime*: the king, as “supreme lawgiver”, was the most eminent knight in his kingdom.

Built between 1679 and 1683 from plans by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, the Great and Small stables at Versailles form an exceptional equestrian complex reflecting the new ambitions of Louis XIV. Their names refer not to their size, but to their purpose. The Great Stables to the north were overseen by the Grand Equerry of France, known as *Monsieur le Grand*, who was responsible for horses impeccably trained for hunting and war. The Small Stables to the south, managed by the First Equerry, known as *Monsieur le Premier*, housed horses for everyday riding, carriage horses, and carriages.



Profile of the Great Stables of the King at Versailles in 1695, Jules Hardouin-Mansart agency (1646-1708), annotated and signed by Nicolas Desmaretz (1648-1721), Controller General of Finances, 1695, Versailles, National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon © RMN-GP (Château de Versailles) © Gérard Blot

État des Chevaux de la grande écurie
du Roy sous M. Duplessis, 1693.

Noms.	Poils.	âge.	Pais.
Le palfre	Arabe à crin noir	26 ans	du haras
Le Rocard	Arabe à crin noir	12	D'Espagne
Le herin	Arabe bay castagne	12	D'Espagne
Le Dupon	bay	14	D'Espagne
Le Blavanc	bay castagne	14	D'Espagne
L'homme	bay brun	15	D'Espagne
Le Ballon	bay	14	D'Espagne
Le Biquet	noir	10	D'Espagne
Le Negre	noir	12	D'Espagne
Le Coffre	alezan brulé	10	du haras
Le Diamant	blanc	14	Barbe
Le Rubican	noir	15	D'Espagne
L'aimable	alezan clair	16	Barbe
La Scote	bay brun	14	D'Espagne
Le Doyal	noir	15	D'Espagne
La Truite	gris truite	10	Barbe
Le crin coupe	bay	16	D'Espagne
Le belle fave	alezan rubican	8	Barbe
Le sans égal	bay brun	20	D'Espagne
Le fûtel	bay	24	Barbe
Le Douffon	bay	12	D'Espagne
Le Bay gentil	bay	8	Barbe
Le fantasque	bay brun	7	D'Espagne
Le barbe noir	noir	18	Barbe

Inventory of the Horses in the Great Stables of the King under Monsieur Duplessis, 1693: list of 73 horses (name, coat colour, age, country) and 19 Grooms, King's Household. Departments of the Senior Officers of the Royal Household. Grand Equerry, King's Stables. General matters; inventories of horses. 1693-1792. 1693, Paris, Archives nationales, O/1/895, pièce 12 © Archives nationales de France, O/1/895

Their very obvious beauty made a deep impact. They represented a complete change of scale, and became a model or, at the very least, a remarkable benchmark. At a time when nations were emulating each other, these new buildings throughout Europe developed an architecture fit for horses. They were grounded in theoretical thinking about the architecture of actual and ideal stables, reflecting not only a functional approach, but also a concept: the majesty of horses.

In Sweden, Charles XII's plans for new royal stables on an unprecedented scale of quasi-utopian lavishness, aspired to outstrip the stables of the King of France, in splendour and size. Although they never came to fruition, the numerous designs, plans and elevations presented here reveal the detailed thought given to the rational organisation of these huge complexes: the adoption of a horseshoe-shaped design with a functional visual identity, like Versailles; the layout of buildings to accommodate horses, staff, carriages, fodder and manure; ceremonial courtyards; indoor maneges; outdoor arenas, etc.



Louise Julie Constance de Rohan-Rochefort-Montauban, Countess of Brienne, Princess of Lorraine, Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (1704-1778), 1769? Stockholm, Nationalmuseum
© Hans Thorwid, Nationalmuseum



Plan for the Helgeandsholmen royal stables in Stockholm: section, Nicodemus Tessin the Younger (1654-1728), Stockholm, Nationalmuseum
© Cecilia Heisser, Nationalmuseum

3. THE ART OF RIDING

Upper Stone Vestibule

The royal stables were also a centre for innovation, teaching, and the transmission of equestrian knowledge and practices. At Versailles, riding was practised as an art. Between 1680 and 1830 new ways of thinking and equestrian techniques were developed there. Taking their cue from pioneering studies by the Neapolitan riding master Gianbatista Pignatelli on the art of freeing horses' movements from the constraints of aids, French riding masters such as Salomon de La Broue, Antoine de Pluvinel, François Robichon de la Guérinière and Gaspard de Saunier set out their theoretical knowledge and practices in groundbreaking educational treatises.

They advocated perfect harmony between man and horse. Notions of tact, gentleness and cooperation were introduced. Training was tailored to the character and psychology of the horse, and riders guided their mounts with an invisible touch, thus respecting their natural grace and bearing. The animal's freely-given consent to domination conveyed the image of flexible, fair government accepted by all, and the understanding that existed between the sovereign and his horse symbolised the monarch's relationship with his subjects. The art of horsemanship was the fullest expression of the art of governing.



Monsieur de Nestier (1686-1754), Ordinary Equerry of the Great Stables, riding Le Florido, a horse belonging to Louis XIV (1638-1715), Jean Daullé (1703-1763) after Philibert-Benoit de la Rue l'Ainé (1718-1780), Versailles, National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon © RMN-GP (château de Versailles) ©DroitsRéservés

At the Versailles School, elite horsemanship reached the peak of perfection and spread throughout Europe as courts interacted with each other. With their potent blend of chivalric ideals and humanism in horsemanship techniques, the king's equerries, who were perfect gentlemen endowed with mental and physical skills, pursued this ideal of flexibility, ease, balance, perfect lightness, and grace. *Piaffe, passade, demivolt, pirouette, levade, ballotade, courbette, croupade, capriole...* They performed extraordinary feats and their fine bearing, as exemplified by *Monsieur de Nestier*, the most famous of the king's equerries, enhanced the prestige of the kingdom.

These feats were reflected a century later in skilful horse acts in circus rings performed by the new women sidesaddle riders. Mademoiselle Thérèse Renz and Blanche Allarty were true stars of their times, immortalised in photographs by the Delton studio. The discovery of the phases of motion of horses through the medium of chronophotography, and advances in snapshot photography, made it possible to capture leaps and stunning haute école figures.



Mademoiselle Thérèse Renz (1859-1938), sidesaddle rider at the Molier Circus: skipping, 1904, J. Delton, modern print from a glass plate, Paris, Émile Hermès Collection © Archives Hermès (Paris)



Mademoiselle Blanche Allarty, pupil and wife of Monsieur Molier. A gliding jump or capriole, on the horse d'Artagnan, 1911, J. Delton, modern print from a glass plate, Paris, Émile Hermès Collection © Archives Hermès (Paris)



Mademoiselle Thérèse Renz, sidesaddle rider, performing her "Loie Fuller on horseback" act at the Nouveau Cirque, 1904, J. Delton, modern print from a glass plate, Paris, Émile Hermès Collection © Archives Hermès (Paris)

Cerbero, a Kladrubský stallion performing a capriole, Johann Georg de Hamilton (circa 1672 - 1737), 1721, oil on copper, Vienna, Imperial Carriage Museum © KHM - Museumsverband





4. HORSES: KINGS OF WAR

Crimea Room

One of the most moving aspects of the bond of companionship between man and horse spanning two millennia is their shared participation in war, an adventure which often cost them their lives. Whether on the front line of the battlefield, escorting infantry convoys, or transporting artillery, horses were absolutely integral to war.

Mounted clashes synonymous with nobility and bravery epitomised heroism in warfare. The exhibition explores the theme of the cavalry clash, based on the archetype invented by Leonardo da Vinci in *The Battle of Anghiari*, a scene of hand-to-hand combat in which horses and riders form a spectacular seething mass from which the assailant's sabre emerges. This was virtually the only portrayal of a battle of this kind prior to the 19th century. This frenzied melee, be it depicted on armour such as the helmet on loan from the Armeria Reale in Turin, or painted by Jacques Courtois, François Casanova and Eugène Delacroix, represented the ultimate horror of their shared fate.



Ceremonial helm, on the crest, top: cavalry charge; side: cavalry clash, France, 1575-1585, chased, engraved and damascened steel, Turin, Musei Reali – Armeria Reale © Su concessione del MiC - Musei Reali, Armeria Reale



Combat of the Giaour and the Pasha, Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), 1835, Petit Palais, musée des Beaux-arts de la Ville de Paris © CC0, Paris Musées Petit Palais, musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris

In counterpoint to this compact formation, energy in major cavalry charges was spread horizontally in an extended line of riders with lances, known in French as the hedge. This was one of the most iconic battle formations in history. Horses were transformed into powerhouses of energy, as lances were only fully effective at high speed. From the epic portrayal of Joan of Arc in Frank Craig's enormous painting *La Pucelle*, punctuated by red lances, right through to episodes from the Franco-Prussian War with the charge of the cuirassiers at Rezonville, the last major cavalry battle in Europe, painters reinterpreted the motif in monumental formats which were already choreographed in a quasi-cinematographic style.



La Pucelle (the Maid of Orleans), Frank Craig (1874-1918), 1907, Paris, Musée d'Orsay © Musée d'Orsay, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn, Patrice Schmidt



Rezonville, 16 August 1870, Charge of the Cuirassiers, Aimé Morot (1850-1913), 1886, Paris, Musée d'Orsay © GrandPalaisRmn (musée d'Orsay) Adrien Didierjean

5. HORSES IN DEATH

Crimea Room

The exhibition sheds light on another facet of the carnage of modern warfare – the slaughter of horses. In his iconic tribute, Buffon describes how a horse: “*gives himself up without reserve, and declines no service; he exerts all his strength, and, that his obedience may be complete, will strain every nerve till he even expires*”. Losses were staggering in the pitched battles of wars under the *Ancien Régime*, during the French invasion of Russia in 1812 (135,000 of the 150,000 horses involved perished), and in the horrific charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava in 1854 during the Crimean War (500 horses in Lord Cardigan’s brigade died within the space of 20 minutes).



Episode of the Retreat from Russia, Joseph Ferdinand Boissard de Boisdenier (1813-1856), 1835, Rouen, Musée des Beaux-Arts
© GrandPalaisRmn / Gérard Blot

Some artists were eager to depict these colossal recumbent figures. Horse corpses litter the foreground of battle paintings, their crumpled brown, grey and blue bulk highlighting the violence of the clash and its cost. In paintings by Pisanello and Vernet, horses are upturned puppets, already forgotten, their stiff legs no longer in contact with the ground; for Boissard and Detaille, they are heavy masses collapsing under the onslaught of enemy fire, gradually becoming distorted, but still sharing the last of their body heat with dying combatants. They are killed at full gallop in *The Battle of Reichshoffen* by John Lewis Brown, a painting which seems to prefigure Robert Capa’s photography; and horses with bulging eyes hurl themselves fearlessly into battle in the scene *The Precipice of Waterloo* by Ulpiano Checa.

MAJOR EXHIBITION LENDERS MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

The *Musée du Louvre* has loaned some twenty works from its Graphic Arts Department and Paintings Department, including an exceptional series of drawings by Louis XIV’s chief court painter Charles Le Brun. These studies (from a series of 14), which are being exhibited for the first time, were preparatory drawings for two major cycles: *The History of the King* and *The Battles of Alexander*. Here, this master, renowned for his ability to capture expressions, observes horses from every angle: on their backs with bloated bellies, lying facing forward in foreshortened perspective, or on their sides with their necks stretched out on the ground and their mouths open, raising their heads one last time to observe the battle at its height. In this fascinating series of drawings, which is being exhibited for the first time, Le Brun depicts them as true equine counterparts of the suffering hero.



Recumbent Horse, Charles Le Brun (1619-1690), circa 1660-1670, Paris, Musée du Louvre, Graphic Arts Department
© GrandPalaisRmn (musée du Louvre) / Michel Urtado



6. HORSES IN REVELRY

Crimea Room

Equestrian festivals were an integral part of the life of European courts. Festivities involving horses very quickly became a feature of urban entertainment provided for the people by town authorities and local elites. This blend of civil and military, of entertainment and the art of war, offered an image of war in peacetime, where violence was re-directed and controlled.

Tournaments, jousting, carousels, tilting at heads and rings, sled rides, grand ceremonial parades, and dazzling horse processions recreated the magic of a heroic ideal. They provided the nobility with an opportunity to demonstrate their attachment to the chivalric virtues which underpinned their social supremacy to a large extent.



Album of Tournaments and Parades in Nuremberg, Germany, Nuremberg, late 16th-early 17th centuries, pen and ink on paper, watercolour, gold and silver highlights, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1922 © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / image of the MMA



The Four Elements: Fire, Claude Deruet (1588-1660), circa 1641-1642, Orléans, Musée des Beaux-Arts
 © 2024 Musée des Beaux-Arts, Orléans / François Lauginie

This is superbly illustrated at the end of the reign of Louis XIII by the monumental *Four Elements* cycle, commissioned by Cardinal Richelieu from the painter Claude Deruet. Here, the artist gives free rein to his bold vision. In the foreground of *Water*, which conjurs up winter equestrian festivities, is the Flying Dragon sled, a rare novelty conveyance dating from the end of the reign of Louis XIV (and the only surviving example in France from this period). There is also a rare horse caparison decorated with gold bells whose jingling would cut through the silence of rides in the snow.

The exhibition also provides an opportunity to see some scarce surviving artefacts used in 18th century equestrian festivals: lances for jousting and tilting at heads and rings, shields and fantastical quivers for quadrilles (jousting teams).

Lastly, there are two ceremonial saddles on display from the collections of the Dresden Rüstkammer, which are among the finest produced in the 16th and 17th centuries. The first saddle, made of velvet with silver embroidery, was a diplomatic gift from Louis XIV to the King of Poland, August II, the Strong; the second, with a pommel decorated with a lion's head automaton, was adorned with lavish chased and gilded relief decoration.



Mechanical armoured saddle, saddle plates: Augsburg, embroidery: Saxony (?), 1589, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Rüstkammer
 © Rüstkammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden / Photo: Jürgen Karpinski





Horse Trappings for Le Gaillard, horse No. 9 gifted by Louis XIV (1638-1715) to Charles XI of Sweden (1655-1697) in 1673. Saddle, saddlecloth, blinkers, pair of stirrups, stirrup strap, circa 1670, silk velvet, silver gaufered embroidery background, embroidery in coloured silks and gold thread, lace, taffeta, wool, leather, Stockholm, National Historical Museums, Royal Armoury © CCBY Livrustkammaren / The Royal Armoury



Saddlecloth for Le Gaillard, horse No. 9 gifted by Louis XIV (1638-1715) to Charles XI of Sweden (1655-1697) in 1673, 1814-1853, crimson silk velvet embroidered with silk thread, gold thread, silver thread and gold sequins, parchment leather core, hemp straps; decorated with flowers, stars, tracery, foliage scrolls, Stockholm, Royal Armoury © CCBY Livrustkammaren / The Royal Armoury

7. STABLE TREASURES

Crimea Room

As an extension of the art of festivities, the exhibition features a group of exceptionally luxurious ornaments for horses, mostly from the collections of the Livrustkammaren in Stockholm, the Dresden Rüstkammer, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York. These include a lavish saddle pommel design for equestrian armour for Alessandro Farnese, which is a masterpiece of exuberant Renaissance Mannerist decoration, tail ornaments, exquisitely crafted bits and stirrups, harness trimmings embroidered with gold thread, and even a set of horse jewellery.



Design for the pommel plate of a saddle from a garniture belonging to Alessandro Farnese (1545-1592), Andrea Casalini († 1597), circa 1575-1580, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dist.GrandPalaisRmn / image of the MMA

During the Dutch War, Louis XIV presented Charles XI with twelve Spanish horses decked out with saddles and coloured velvet caparisons embroidered with gold and silver. The exhibition presents ornaments for *Le Gaillard*, one of these twelve horses, which are the last surviving trace of one of the most fabulous diplomatic gifts in history.

The exhibition also presents a few rare artefacts relating to the ephemeral art of equestrian festivals: jousting lances, shields and quivers decorated with the devices and emblems of quadrilles (carousel teams), drawings and illuminated manuscripts of French and Swedish costumes and carousels. These works revive the memory of these entertainments whose lavish nature still has the power to astonish us today. The rich liveries, splendid silver brocade caparisons embroidered with gold and set with a multitude of precious stones, and their fresh bright colours, the spellbindingly exotic carriages, and the expressive fiery horses all appear to be frozen in time in an endless festivity.



Tail piece of horse armour with a dragon's head, Kunz Lochner (1510-1567), London, Tower of London © Royal Armouries



Stirrups belonging to Francis I, France, first third of the 16th century, Écouen, Musée de la Renaissance – Château d'Écouen © Grand Palais RMN (Musée de la Renaissance, Château d'Écouen) / S. Maréchalle



Pair of stirrups, Daniel Kellerthaler; Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen Dresden - Rüstammer - Dresden © Rüstammer, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

MAJOR EXHIBITION LENDERS DRESDEN RÜSTKAMMER

A number of masterpieces on display at the exhibition come from the very extensive collections of this leading institution in the field of the decorative arts. These include a full suit of ceremonial equestrian armour which is on loan for the first time, two of the most lavishly decorated saddles ever made, one with a pommel featuring a lion's head automaton, and many treasures such as horse collars and ornaments, and a set of incredibly ornate bits and stirrups. Visitors can feast their eyes on these breathtakingly skilfully crafted objets d'art, which are a true reflection of the equestrian splendour of European courts.



Duon, trimming maker, 1818-1819; Ensemble supplemented in 1825 and 1853 by François-Joseph Gobert, Duchesne et Mairet associés, Feuchère et Fossey associés, and Roduwart, 1814 (supplemented in 1825 and 1853), Versailles, National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon © château de Versailles, Thomas Garnier

8. GOLD AND IRON BARDING: CEREMONIAL EQUESTRIAN ARMOUR

Hercules Room

The Hercules Room plays host to a spectacular group of full sets of ceremonial equestrian armour from major European collections: the Dresden Rüstkammer, the Armeria Reale in Turin, and the *Musée de l'Armée* in Paris.

In the 16th century, the development of portable firearms and the rise of heavy cavalry meant that equestrian armour for military purposes became less common and was replaced by luxurious ceremonial armour for use in tournaments and ceremonies. Off the battlefield, it made a statement about wealth and power. The examples presented here reveal the magnificence of the courts of France, Saxony and Savoy in the 17th and 18th centuries.

These sets of armour, which were a wearable form of equestrian sculpture, clothed horses with a heroic second skin of leather adorned with gold and painted in bright colours, featuring precious textiles, heraldic ornaments, and metal with repoussé, engraved, chased, damascened and gilded motifs. Some incredibly lavish examples inspired wonder in their day, such as armour belonging to Emperor Maximilian I, and to Alessandro Farnese, for which the design is displayed.



Set of armour for horse and rider, Anton Peffenhauser (1520? – 1603), Augsburg, 1586-159, Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Rüstkammer
© BPK, Berlin, Dist.GrandPalaisRmn, Jürgen Karpinski



Double armour for horse and jousting, belonging to Wilhem von Boxberg of Nuremberg, Kolman Helmschmid (Augsburg 1471–1532), Turin, Musei Reali
© Su concessione del MiC - Musei Reali, Armeria Reale

A fourth horse, without armour, stands next to these colossal metal monsters. This masterpiece of realistic sculpture, exuding nervous energy and elegance, serves as a reminder of the sensitive being hidden beneath these terrifying cuirasses. This jewel from the collections of the Royal Armouries in London, was created in the 17th century by Grinling Gibbons, one of the most illustrious woodcarvers at the English court, to display King Charles I's armour. Royal and princely armories, which were predecessors of our museums, flourished in the 17th century as a visual reminder of the golden age of chivalry and as an extension of the real presence of the the prince on horseback in time and space.



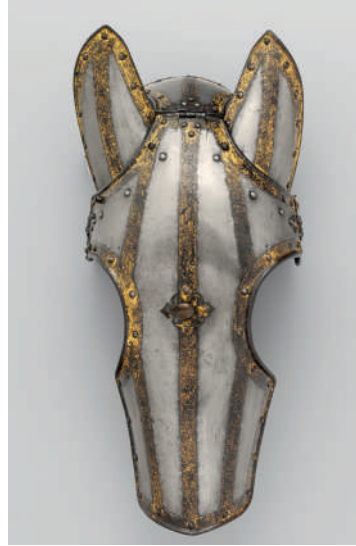


9. ROYAL CHAMFRONS

War Room

War horses' heads were very exposed and the primary element of rigid protection created for them was the chamfron. It was made from several plates of metal riveted together to cover the fragile parts of the head, from the ears to the muzzle, and notably the chamfron, as is indicated by the name. These elements were pierced to allow the horse to see and hear. In the late 14th century, a criniere was added to the chamfron around the animal's neck, which was very vulnerable to sword blows from adversaries on horseback. This example of technical prowess remained the only fully hinged component of equestrian armour until its demise in the 17th century.

The lavishness and variety of the techniques, materials and shapes of the chamfrons displayed here reveal the virtuosity of master armourers from the 15th to the 17th centuries. Among the extraordinary designs, the exhibition features the four finest chamfron masks in the shape of dragons. Equestrian armour was actually a form of costume for horses, transforming them into strange and fantastical creatures on occasion, notably for ceremonies and festivities. Inspired by the imaginary of chivalric romances and the legend of St George, with which knights identified, these designs embody the taste for all things strange and marvellous characteristic of the early Renaissance aesthetic.



Chamfron, circa 1620, United States, New York (NY), The Metropolitan Museum of Art © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dist.GrandPalaisRmn / image of the MMA

MAJOR EXHIBITION LENDERS

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

The MET is generously loaning several masterpieces from its collections, including an extraordinary manuscript of 112 gouache paintings depicting horse parades, precious spurs, a drawing of a saddle belonging to Alessandro Farnese, and several lavish chamfrons.



Chamfron and criniere, attributed to Romain des Ursins (active circa 1493-1495), circa 1480-1495 New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / image of the MMA

AN INCOMPARABLE MASTERPIECE

Hall of Mirrors

The Hall of Mirrors is playing host to one of the key works in the exhibition, which is both spectacular and fascinating. Justus Sustermans' portrait of the young Prince Leopold de' Medici on his white horse with its cascading long mane was rediscovered a few years ago after languishing in obscurity for almost two centuries. It has never been exhibited in France before and is on special loan from Konopiště Castle in the Czech Republic. The young rider and his mount are united in a truly mystical solemnity reminiscent of an icon. The rider astride this imposing mount is, rather oddly, a child, barely seven years old – Prince Leopold de' Medici (1617-1675), the youngest child of Grand Duke Cosimo II and Archduchess Marie Magdalena of Austria. However, the main character in the painting is in fact the majestic white horse (an Andalusian mare) whose whiteness is accentuated by the beam of light highlighting its extraordinarily long soft, groomed mane. Sources reveal that the horse was gifted to the child by a Frenchman, Charles de Lorraine, fourth Duke of Guise (1571-1640), who was exiled to Tuscany on the orders of Cardinal Richelieu. The animal met with a sad fate: when it grew old, it was shot in the head with an arquebus. Its pure white coat was mounted on a wooden horse and its long mane was stored in a large chest.



Equestrian Portrait of Leopold de' Medici (1617-1675), future Roman cardinal, circa 1624-1625, oil on canvas, Benešov (Central Bohemian Region), Konopiště Castle, National Heritage Institute, Czech Republic © National Heritage Institute, Czech Republic





10. MASTERPIECES OF PRECIOUS METALWORK

Peace Room

The Peace Room houses a group of precious and evocative metalwork items, including equestrian statuettes representing *King Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden* by Daniel Lang, and *Lady Godiva* created by the French silversmith Pierre-Emile Jeannest as a birthday gift from Queen Victoria to Prince Albert.



Lady Godiva, Jeannest Emile, London, Royal Collection Trust
© His Majesty King Charles III 2024

In 1851, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert also commissioned the lavish *Alhambra* part-gilded silver table fountain from Edmund Cotterill, one of the finest equestrian modellers of the day. In an imaginary desert backdrop, three magnificent horses, partly modelled on the Queen's favourite Arab stallions, caper around a dome inspired by the Alhambra Palace in Granada. The dome acts as a reservoir for the fountain located in the base. The fountain was filled with eau de cologne when it was used on the royal table for special occasions.



Equestrian statuette of Gustavus II Adolphus of Sweden, Daniel Lang, London, Royal Collection Trust © His Majesty King Charles III 2024

MAJOR EXHIBITION LENDERS BRITISH ROYAL COLLECTIONS

Several masterpieces from the Royal Collection Trust and the Royal Armoury are displayed in the exhibition, including the three objects of precious metalwork grouped in the Peace Room, an impressive portrait of Queen Victoria on her horse Flora, a horse mannequin full of nervous energy created to hold the ceremonial armour of Charles I of England, and a study of the correct proportions of a horse by Leonardo da Vinci, presented for the first time alongside the version by his master Verrocchio.

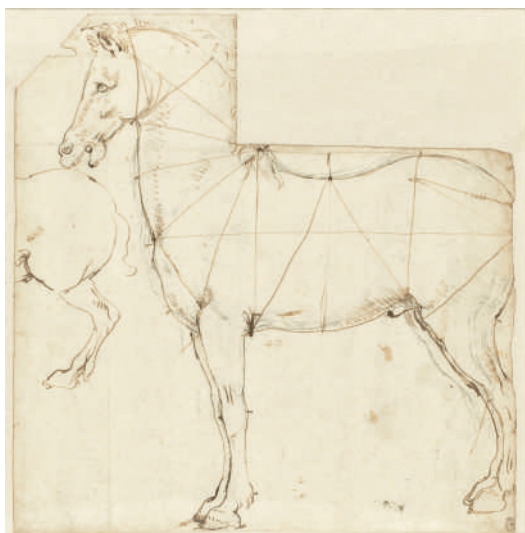
11. HORSES AND SCIENCE

Madame de Maintenon's apartment

Getting the measure of equine beauty

In the traditional relationship between art and anatomy, painters and sculptors would commonly gather useful information from scientific knowledge to inform their art. By contrast, in the study of equine anatomy, artists were a step ahead of the scientists.

Thus, more than a century before the publication of the earliest treatises, Andrea del Verrocchio and his student Leonardo da Vinci were exploring the exact proportions of horses, which were critical for making monumental equestrian statues such as the statue of Duke Ludovico Sforza in Milan. These iconic equestrian studies are being presented together for the first time: Verrocchio's study is from the Metropolitan Museum of Art collections, and Leonardo da Vinci's version is one of the jewels of the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.



A Horse with Lines of Proportion, Leonardo da Vinci, circa 1480, London, Royal Collection Trust © His Majesty King Charles III 2024



Measured Drawing of a Horse Facing Left, Andrea del Verrocchio (1435-1488), circa 1480-1488, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art © MET, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn, DR

MAJOR EXHIBITION LENDERS THE GETTY MUSEUM

The Getty Museum has agreed the special loan of several key works for the exhibition including a fascinating *Piebald Horse* by Paulus Potter and two small virtuoso bronzes: *Rearing Horse* by Adriaen de Vries and *Kicking Horse* by Caspar Cras. These sculptures were sought out and collected by the most illustrious princes (the Adriaen de Vries bronze was in the collections of Rudolf II in Prague). What makes them so distinctive is the “pictorial” naturalism of the modelling, the accuracy of the poses, and the fine quality of the execution.



Rearing Horse, Adriaen de Vries, 1605-1610, Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum © J. Paul Getty Museum

The quest for the anatomy of the horse

In 1598, Carlo Ruini, a senator from Bologna, published his detailed and groundbreaking *Anatomia del cavallo* in Venice. This lavishly illustrated work remained the seminal text on the the subject until the 19th century.

A year later, Jean Héroard, a “doctor of the veterinary arts”, who would also become physician to the Dauphin, the future Louis XIII, published a very detailed *Hippostologie* (study of horse bones). This was the first text on the subject in the French language. These works marked the beginning of an era when comparisons were drawn between man and this animal, and his divine nature was sought in the supposed perfection of human anatomy. These plates had a major impact on the art world as artists could use them to perfect the proportions ad contours of their portrayals.

From hippiatrics to veterinary medicine

Hippiatrics was an early form of equine veterinary medicine. Major reform in hippiatrics occurred during the Enlightenment with the establishment of the world’s first veterinary school by Claude Bourgelat in Lyon, in 1762. Teaching based on rational principles gradually superseded traditional know-how informed by practical experience. Veterinarians replaced hippiatricians, the

pioneers of animal medicine, but not without conflicts and rivalry. Philippe-Étienne Lafosse, the descendant of a dynasty that had worked in the stables at Versailles for over a century, attempted to challenge the domination of Bourgelat by publishing several lavish treatises adorned with hand-painted plates reconnecting art with science. In 1772, he produced his *Textbook of Hippiatrics*, a sumptuous folio volume with 15 hand-painted plates, devoted to highlighting the errors and omissions of his rival.

MAJOR EXHIBITION LENDERS

ALFORT FRENCH NATIONAL VETERINARY SCHOOL

A special collaboration with the Alfort French National Veterinary School has enriched the exhibition with a display of some twenty works, including seminal illustrated texts on anatomy and hippiatrics and also rare anatomical models of horses made of plaster or papier mâché. One of these models, dating from 1789, which is on loan for the first time, is among the oldest and best preserved known models.



The Myology of the Horse in Life Size, Antoine-François Vincent (1743-1789), cast, Eugène Petitcolin (1855-1928), colouring, 1789, colour added circa 1904, plaster, Maisons-Alfort, Alfort French National Veterinary School © château de Versailles / T. Garnier

12. HORSES AS MODELS

Dauphine's apartment

Throughout the ages, horses have been popular subjects for artists on an equal footing with man, and art history abounds with horses depicted in many different and original ways. Their nobility, size, musculature, spirit, and power have inspired sculptors, and their graceful gait, speed, agility and enigmatic allure have fascinated the finest painters and draughtsmen.

Although the most impressive horses in this room are being ridden by *Cardinal-infante Ferdinand of Austria* in the masterpiece by Rubens from the Prado Museum, and by *King Henry IV* in the painting by Ary Scheffer from the collections at Versailles, which has been restored for the exhibition, the other examples do not feature any humans.



Ferdinand of Austria at the Battle of Nördlingen 1634-1635, Peter-Paul Rubens (1577-1640) Museo Nacional del Prado © Museo Nacional del Prado, DR

Paulus Potter's *Piebald Horse*, depicted in three-quarter view from behind, appears to be meditating on the landscape while posing for the artist, but painter Alfred de Dreux endows his horses with an almost arrogant aristocratic haughtiness, and Géricault's animals radiate a heroic *terribilità*. The famous *Head of a White Horse* by Géricault confers a quasi-hypnotic presence and psychological dimension on this animal, which was unprecedented in the portrayal of horses at that time.



Théodore Géricault (1791-1824), *Head of a White Horse*, circa 1800-1825, oil on canvas © GrandPalaisRmn (musée du Louvre) Thierry Le Mage



13. THE SOUL OF HORSES

Dauphine's apartment

Certain artists aspired to plumb the soul of horses by exploring their closeness to humans or, by contrast, their own specific traits and virtues. The fascination exerted by these animals is largely based on two related but contradictory characteristics: their strength and their nervous energy. This is therefore perfectly consistent with epic visions, and with the frenzy beloved of artists during the Romantic era.

Horses kicking out and fighting with each other or with other animals inspired Delacroix and Géricault, while in Britain a heroic trend developed, with a hint of the supernatural, illustrated by James Ward for whom it became a favourite subject in the 1810s.



Marengo, Napoleon's Barb Charger, James Ward (1769-1859), Alnwick Castle - Alnwick
© Collection of the Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle

The British influence can be discerned in paintings by Alfred de Dreux, another great horse specialist. *Black Knight* is no longer man's faithful servant, but a superior creature which appraises and possibly frightens us, and *Black Horse with a Palm Tree* seems to be contemplating the end of the world.

The theme of horses spooked by thunderstorms was also particularly prevalent in the 19th century, and allowed artists to explore what appeared to be a special connection with the elements. It inspired sumptuous Romantic landscapes and striking studies of expressions, such as the fine sketch of a terrified horse by Alfred Roll.



Horse Frightened by a Thunderstorm, Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863), 1825-1829, Budapest, Szépművészeti Múzeum / Museum of Fine Arts © Szépművészeti Múzeum, DR



Horses Frightened by the Thunderstorm, Carle Vernet, 19th century, Musée Calvet - Avignon © Musée Calvet - Avignon / DR



14. HORSES AND LEGENDS

Dauphine's apartment

The mysterious aura emanating from horses' bodies fuelled a wild imaginary in the late 19th century. Horses became hybrid creatures with wings or webbed feet, such as Pegasus carrying Perseus, or Morvac'h saving King Gradlon from drowning when the City of Ys was swallowed by the waves. Horses bore the Horsemen of the Apocalypse, drew the chariots of the gods, and royal ships, and were inextricably associated with gods and heroes.

When the Industrial Revolution signalled the triumph of mechanisation, a deep nostalgia emerged for a lost world. People took refuge in the fables of Antiquity, or a picturesque Middle Ages in which Lady Godiva, the young wife of the Count of Chester in the 11th century, was one of the most moving heroines. The presence and mystery of horses appears to be woven into the fabric of myths and legends.

The cavalcades of Norse mythology set the tone for the last section of the exhibition, echoed in the large, outlandish and fantastical paintings of Ulpiano Checa, a Spanish painter who settled in Paris in 1887. He is somewhat neglected today, but the exhibition restores him to prominence.



Horse-Drawn Delivery of the First Cars at the Grand Palais, for the Motor Show, Léon Fauret, Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris - Paris © Paris Musées, musée Carnavalet, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / image ville de Paris / DR

From one civilisation to the next

The exhibition draws to a close with the demise of the equestrian civilisation. Within the space of a few decades, a centuries-old way of life, in which man and horse shared every aspect of their existence, changed radically. The invention of machines capable of breathtaking speeds redefined the future, former staging posts disappeared,

and the birth of the rail and automobile industries reshaped conceptions of time, which was previously measured by the rhythm of the hooves of a walking horse. Horses were no longer the masters of time.

The year 1913 was symbolic – the Paris Omnibus Company ceased buying horses permanently on economic grounds. The tragic fate of these creatures that had outlived their usefulness and were sent to the abattoir, is followed by a painting by Léon Fauret, with an ironic last twist. It depicts the arrival of dashing new cars at the Grand Palais for the first ever Motor Show, which are being pulled... by horses!



Hippocampus, figurehead for King Louis-Philippe's boat, Ateliers des sculptures des Arsenaux, Musée National de la Marine - Paris © Musée national de la MarineP. Dantec





V. Checa



Twilight, Ulpiano Checa (1860-1916), Salón de París, 1912, Colmenar de Oreja (Madrid), Museo Municipal Ulpiano Checa © Museo Municipal Ulpiano Checa



PART II | **DISCOVERING
HORSES AT
VERSAILLES**

A TOUR SPANNING THE WHOLE ESTATE

At Versailles under the *Ancien Régime*, daily life at the court was inconceivable without horses in their many different guises: for entertainment, war, transport, and for use by the royal family and courtiers. Horses in all their incarnations played a role in manifesting the power of the monarchy. These animals occur very frequently in the decor of the Palace. In painting and sculpture, depicted alone or with a rider, on the battlefield, in the manège, or hunting, in both real and mythological forms. The beauty and elegant lines of these creatures, their powerful musculature and noble appearance inspired the very finest artists. The Palace of Versailles collections feature several great masterpieces depicting horses as a symbol of glory and majesty.

Beyond the exhibition *Horse in Majesty At the Heart of a Civilisation*, visitors can continue their horse-themed tour and discover iconic places and works in the wider estate.



THE ROYAL STABLES

The Great and Small Stables were built between 1679 and 1683, when Louis XIV was at the height of his glory. These new monumental stables opposite the palace were designed to house several hundred of the king's horses, from France, Europe, and the rest of the world, organised by breed and coat colour. The Great and Small Stables, whose name refers to their purpose rather than their size, are a dazzling assertion of the power of the kingdom which had become the leading court in Europe under Louis XIV.

The royal stables were among the largest departments in the Royal Household. The Great Stable (to the north) was overseen by the Grand Equerry of France – known as Monsieur le Grand – and the Small Stables (to the south) were under the control of the First Equerry – Monsieur le Premier. The Grand Equerry was responsible for horses trained for hunting and war. The First Equerry was responsible for horses for everyday use, and for carriage horses.

The art of French horsemanship, which came to the fore under Louis XIII, continued to develop under Louis XIV and reached its peak at Versailles. French riding advocated perfect harmony between horse and rider, respecting the grace and natural bearing of the horse being ridden. The mastery and flair of the king's equerries enhanced the reputation of the kingdom.



Today, the King's Great Stables still retain a very strong connection to their past. Since 2003, they have been home to the French National

Equestrian Academy of the National Estate of Versailles. This institution, created by Bartabas, forms part of the legacy of the king's equerries, who established the credentials of French horsemanship in the 17th century. The Academy plays a key role in live entertainment by transmitting know-how associated with the art of riding.



The building is also home to the Coach Gallery, where an outstanding collection of ceremonial vehicles from the 18th and

19th centuries is displayed: sedan chairs, small children's carriages, and novelty sleds. These artefacts provide an extraordinary insight into the life of the court and the pomp of the Ancien Régime, Empire, Restoration, and Third Republic.

One of the most iconic objects in this collection is Charles X's coronation coach.

This comprehensive masterpiece of mechanical engineering, sculpture, gilding and decorative trimming exudes extreme luxury and refinement.



Coronation coach of Charles X

Charles Percier, Étienne-Frédéric Daldringen, 1814-1856
Carved and gilded wood, gilt metal and bronze, leather, velvet, glass.

This coach, which is among the finest in the world, was commissioned for the coronation of Louis XVIII and was finally completed for the coronation of Charles X. Designed by the architect Charles Percier and completed in less than six months in 1825 by the coachbuilder Daldringen, it was only used three times: twice for the coronation of Charles X, for his entry to Reims and his entry to Paris, and lastly under Napoleon III for the christening of his son, the Prince Imperial. For this occasion, the coach was modified to install the imperial insignia. Its proportions are monumental: 4.5m high by 6.7m long. It weighs almost 5 tonnes, which is unusually heavy, due to the extraordinary quantity of chased and gilded bronzes. The exterior is fully carved and gilded, and the interior is decorated with crimson silk velvet, very richly embroidered with gold. It was coupled in the French style to eight horses.

The Small Stables are now home to the Centre for Research and Restoration of the Museums of France, the Versailles National School of Architecture, and the Sculptures and Casts Gallery. This gallery has the distinction of housing extraordinary collections of casts dating from the 17th and 18th centuries, a collection of Greek and Roman architectural elements, and over 5,500 historic casts inventoried by the Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities at the Louvre Museum.

This magnificent group of works is supplemented by original statues from masterpieces in the gardens of Louis XIV at Versailles, which have been restored, protected from the elements, and replaced in the gardens by replicas as part of a huge preservation campaign.



STABLE OPENING TIMES

To coincide with the Olympic season and the exhibition, **the Coach Gallery and Sculpture and Casts Gallery** will be open to visitors from 1 July to 29 September, daily except Monday, from 9am to 6.30pm.

From 1 to 31 October, they will be open on Saturday, Sunday and public holidays from 12.30pm to 6.30pm.

The Equestrian Academy is open to the public.
Information and bookings: <https://www.bartabas.fr/academie-equestre-de-versailles/>

THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF LOUIS XIV

Pierre Cartellier, Louis-Messidor-Lebon Petitot

1825-1836

Bronze

Place d'Armes



Louis XVIII was keen to reinstate the equestrian statue of Louis XV on the Place de la Concorde, which had been melted down during the French Revolution. He therefore commissioned a new work, and the horse was completed in 1829. The July Revolution in 1830 halted the project. Work resumed in 1834, and Louis-Philippe commissioned the rider, favouring a figure of Louis XIV. His intention was to place the statue in the Royal Courtyard at the Palace of Versailles. It was installed there in 1837 and remained in situ until 2009, when it was transferred to the end of the Place d'Armes during the restoration of the Honour Gate.

The depiction of a calm horse, based on the universal model of Marcus Aurelius from Antiquity, is the ultimate symbol of a political animal: it is dominated by its rider, just as a king dominates his subjects.

The equestrian statue underwent restoration in 2024.

PAINTINGS IN THE GALLERY OF BATTLES



The Gallery of Battles is the monumental emblem of the museum dedicated to “all the glories of France” created by Louis-Philippe and inaugurated at Versailles in 1837. Over 100 metres long by 12 metres wide, it is much larger than the Hall of Mirrors. It boasts thirty-three paintings which the sovereign described as “a grandiose summary of our military history”, thus fulfilling his desire for national reconciliation after forty years of regime changes.

These large paintings by some of the finest artists of the era – Horace Vernet, Eugène Delacroix, Gérard, Ary Scheffer – document France’s epic military history from Tolbiac, in 496, to Wagram, in 1809.

These major battles allowed the country to establish its borders and repel its fiercest enemies. Every regime is represented: Merovingians, Carolingians, Capetians, the Valois and Bourbon dynasties, and also the French Revolution and Napoleon. In addition to sovereigns, several great military leaders are represented by busts positioned between the paintings: Du Guesclin, Condé, Turenne, Villars, Maurice de Saxe, etc.

Horses are the dominant feature of most of these large-scale works, often in the centre of the canvas, being ridden by sovereigns or their officers on the battlefield. They can also be seen in the thick of battle with the advancing troops, or injured and paying the same heavy toll as soldiers in warfare.

SCULPTURES FROM THE BATHS OF APOLLO

François Girardon, Gilles Guérin, Sébastien Regnaudin, Balthasar and Gaspard Marsy

1666-1674

Marble

Original: lower vestibule of the Royal Chapel

Replica: Grove of the Baths of Apollo



The Grotto of Tethys, named after the sister of Oceanus, one of the Titans in Greek mythology, is a masterpiece dating from the first Versailles of Louis XIV.

This artificial grotto, built in 1666, boasted a major collection of sculpted marble works set against a refined backdrop of shells and fountains: the group depicting *Apollo Attended by Nymphs* by François Girardon and Thomas Regnaudin, and two horse groups, *Tritons Grooming the Horses of the Sun* by Balthasar and Gaspard Marsy, and *Horses of the Sun Drinking* by Gilles Guérin. The three sculptures depict a twilight scene as Apollo and his horses are enjoying a well-earned rest after pulling the sun across the sky. Apollo is being attended and washed by nymphs, and tritons are grooming the horses and giving them water to drink. The fact that Apollo has the features of Louis XIV establishes a connection between the daily activities of the deity and those of the monarch: tireless work in the service of the kingdom.

The Grotto of Tethys, which was intended to be a source of wonder, was destroyed in 1684, and the sculpture groups were transferred to the earliest version of the Grove of the Baths of Apollo in 1704. In 1781, the painter and landscaper Hubert Robert altered the grove and created the layout we see today.

Incomparable masterpieces of 17th century French art, **the horses of Apollo are now on display in the lower vestibule of the Royal Chapel, in the approximate former location of the Grotto of Tethys. In 2000, copies were placed in the Grove of the Baths of Apollo.**

LOUIS XIV WITH THE FEATURES OF MARCUS CURTIUS

Bernini

1671-1688

Marble

Palace Orangery



In 1665, the idea of a grand monument dedicated to the glory of the king was suggested by Bernini himself, during a visit to Paris. It was officially commissioned in 1667, and the work was created in Rome with the assistance of artists in residence at the Académie de France, under the close supervision of the master. Bernini's intention was to illustrate the taming of brute strength, with the king scaling the mountain of virtue on a rearing horse, whose marble bulk appears to defy the laws of gravity.

The statue only left Rome in 1684, twenty years after its completion. A year later, it was transferred from Paris to Versailles and Louis XIV discovered it for the first time in the Orangery. However, he was extremely disappointed. He felt that the horse was too contorted, the theme of the base was too difficult to discern, and the drapery was too deeply chiselled. Nevertheless, the work was installed in the parterre of the Orangery. It was eventually modified by Girardon in 1688 and placed behind the Neptune Fountain.

It was moved again in 1702 to the far side of the Pièce d'eau des Suisses pond, at the end of the southern vista of the gardens, which is the main reason why it was forgotten.

It has been displayed in the Orangery for many years. A lead replica was installed on 21 December 1988 in the Napoleon courtyard at the Louvre, and a copy was placed at the far end of the Pièce d'eau des Suisses.

From 18 June to 29 September 2024, the Palace of Versailles Orangery will be open to the public for the exhibition *Eva Jospin - Versailles*. Visitors will be able to admire Bernini's statue.

APOLLO'S FOUNTAIN

Jean-Baptiste Tuby

1668-1670

Gilded lead

Versailles gardens



Apollo's Fountain, which is located in the centre of the Grande Perspective, at the end of the Allée royale connecting the palace to the Grand Canal, is undoubtedly one of the most famous fountains in the gardens at Versailles. In the centre is a sculpture group depicting Apollo's chariot rising out of the water to bring light to the world. This masterpiece, executed by Jean-Baptiste Tuby between 1668 and 1670 at the height of the reign of Louis XIV, was created at the Gobelins factory.

The lead sculpture weighs almost 30 tonnes and comprises thirteen statues. In the centre, Apollo is accompanied by a cherub on his chariot hitched to four horses. There are tritons at the four points of the compass, and dolphins on the short spurs.

The sculpture group underwent a full restoration between December 2022 and March 2024.





PART III | **2024, THE YEAR
OF THE HORSE**

THE OLYMPIC GAMES AT THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

FROM 27 JULY TO 11 AUGUST,
AND FROM 3 TO 7 SEPTEMBER 2024

This summer, the grounds of the Palace of Versailles will host equestrian events (showjumping, dressage, and three-day eventing: showjumping, dressage, and cross-country), the five modern pentathlon events, and the paralympic equestrian events.

Temporary structures have been erected for the events on the Étoile royale site at the western edge of the grounds and around the Grand Canal: an arena with stands for 16,000 spectators, jumps, and a 5.3 km course for the cross-country event.

These temporary structures have been installed by the Paris 2024 teams, working with the Public Establishment to ensure that the integrity of the site is protected both architecturally and in terms of planting and the environment.

After the Games, all the infrastructure for hosting the events will be dismantled and the site will be restored to its historic state. As a legacy of the Games, the Étoile royale gate will undergo a full restoration carried out by the Public Establishment.

Furthermore, the Palace of Versailles will be open for the duration of the Olympic Games. A programme of events relating to the arts and sport designed to appeal to all visitors has been specially developed to mark the occasion. It includes tours, workshops, family events, and shows.



THE RESTORATION OF APOLLO'S FOUNTAIN



After a comprehensive 18 month restoration, carried out with the patronage of the CMA CGM Group, the harmony and visual integrity of the Chariot of Apollo Fountain have been restored. The Grande Perspective now looks as Louis XIII and Louis XIV intended, and offers a fine setting for the equestrian events of the Paris Olympic Games 2024.

Apollo's Fountain, which is located at the centre of the Grande Perspective, at the end of the Allée royale connecting the Palace to the Grand Canal, is probably one of the most famous fountains in the grounds of Versailles. Executed by Jean-Baptiste Tuby between 1668 and 1671 in the early years of the reign of Louis XIV, and created at the Gobelins factory, the fountain features a sculpture group of the chariot of Apollo. This monumental lead sculpture weighs approximately thirty tonnes and comprises thirteen statues. In the centre, Apollo is accompanied by a cherub in his chariot, which is hitched to four horses. Tritons are arranged at the four points of the compass of the group and the short spurs are adorned with dolphins. Each sculpted subject has a different pose as it emerges from the water, thus contributing to the overall dynamism of the group.

The last major fountain restoration campaign took place from 1929 to 1933, almost one hundred years ago. Despite regular maintenance, Apollo's chariot, which is an integral part of the water feature, was in a state of serious disrepair due to corrosion of the armature, deep deterioration of the lead, severe erosion of the coatings, and faulty waterworks.

The project focused on restoring the lead statues by reinforcing, gilding and patinating them to reinstate their original anatomical volumes and bronze appearance. Conducted under the supervision of Jacques Moulin, Chief Architect of Historic Monuments, this heritage project drew on the exceptional skills of a number of restorers: founders, gilders, and fountain experts.



Visitors from all over the world can now admire the dazzling Chariot of Apollo Fountain and marvel at the water feature which contributes to the renown of the gardens of Versailles, just as it did in the time of Louis XIV.



Duon, trimmings maker, 1818-1819; Ensemble supplemented in 1825 and 1853 by François-Joseph Gobert, Duchesne and Maitret associés, Fauchère and Foscy associés and Roduwart, 1814 (supplemented in 1825 in 1853), Versailles, National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon © château de Versailles, Thomas Garnier



PART IV

THE EXHIBITION PATRON



For several years, the CMA CGM Group has been forging prestigious partnerships with major institutions and stakeholders in the culture space. CMA CGM, which has deep roots in the Mediterranean, is involved in disseminating regional, national and international culture and heritage.

The Group's various cultural patronages reflect its commitment to promoting and preserving heritage and cultural diversity on a global scale. The CMA CGM Group is therefore lending its support to long-term initiatives with the aim of ensuring that French culture and heritage are preserved and handed down to future generations.

Through its cultural partnerships, the CMA CGM Group raises the profile of art and creativity by acknowledging and showcasing the work of artists and designers. Lastly, the CMA CGM Group's involvement in these groundbreaking projects fosters innovation in the culture and heritage field.

The CMA CGM Group has also leveraged its transport and logistics expertise on several occasions to move exceptionally heavy loads, such as major artworks requiring transportation.

In December 2022, the Palace of Versailles began the restoration of Apollo's Fountain, a masterpiece in the gardens of Versailles. On 29 March 2024, the water was turned back on in Apollo's Fountain after a comprehensive 18-month restoration carried out with exclusive patronage from the CMA CGM Group. This restoration has brought one of the most famous fountains in the gardens of Versailles back to life. The CMA CGM Group was keen to use this project to showcase a major feature of this iconic French heritage site. This large-scale heritage operation reinstated the Grande Perspective as designed by Louis XIV, just a few months before the Paris Olympics 2024 equestrian events are due to be hosted in the grounds of Versailles.

As part of its ongoing commitment, the CMA CGM Group also has the distinction of being the exclusive patron of the major exhibition *The Horse in Majesty at the Heart of a Civilisation*, devoted to horses and the equestrian civilisation in Europe. This initiative coincides with the Paris Olympic Games 2024 equestrian events hosted by the Palace of Versailles from 2 July to 3 November 2024.

About CMA CGM

The CMA CGM Group, headed by Rodolphe Saadé, is a global player in sea, land, air and logistics, serving over 420 ports worldwide across 5 continents with its fleet of approximately 620 vessels. In 2023, the Group transported 21.8 million TEU (twenty-foot equivalent unit) containers. With its subsidiary CEVA Logistics, a world leader in logistics, which transported 522,000 tonnes of air freight and over 22 million overland freight cargos, and its air freight division CMA CGM AIR CARGO, the CMA CGM Group is continuously innovating to provide customers with a comprehensive service and ever greater efficiency through the use of new land, sea, air, and logistics solutions.

The CMA CGM Group, which is committed to achieving energy transition in maritime shipping and has pioneered the use of alternative fuels, has set itself the objective of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The Group's CMA CGM Foundation helps thousands of children every year through its projects to support education for all and equal opportunities. The CMA CGM Foundation also offers assistance in humanitarian crises requiring a rapid response by leveraging its maritime and logistics expertise to deliver humanitarian supplies worldwide.

The Group operates in 160 countries via its network of over 400 offices and 750 depots, employing 160,000 people worldwide, some 6,000 of whom are based at the company headquarters in Marseilles.

Website: [cmacgm-group.com](https://www.cmacgm-group.com)

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