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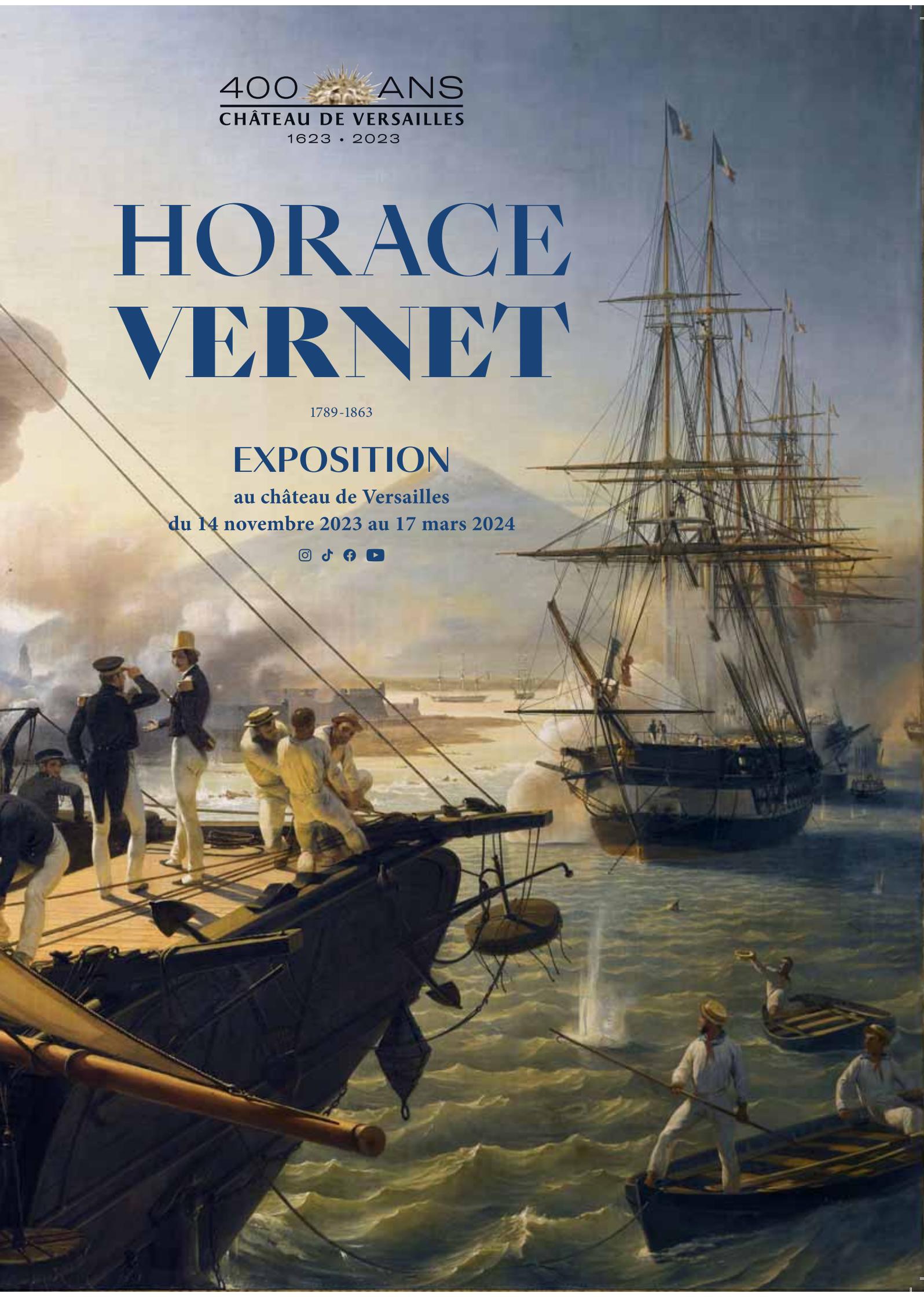
HORACE VERNET

1789-1863

EXPOSITION

au château de Versailles

du 14 novembre 2023 au 17 mars 2024





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HORACE VERNET

From November 14, 2023 to March 17, 2024 - The Africa and Crimea Rooms

Versailles, le 10 novembre 2023
Communiqué de presse

The Palace of Versailles is dedicating a major retrospective to the painter Horace Vernet (1789 - 1863). Closely linked to the Versailles of Louis-Philippe, for over thirteen years the artist produced some of the most beautiful paintings in the historic Galleries. Today, Versailles houses the largest collection of his works. More than forty years after the last exhibition dedicated to Vernet, this retrospective of some 200 works provides an opportunity to discover many heretofore unexhibited masterpieces, accompanied by sketches and drawings demonstrating the artist's methodology.

A SUCCESSFUL ARTIST

Born in 1789 in the Louvre, Horace Vernet is the grandson of Joseph Vernet, a seascape painter, and the son of Carle Vernet, an equestrian painter. A worthy heir to the family dynasty, not having obtained the Prix de Rome he won the favour of Napoleon I and his family very early on.

First evolving within the Romantic art circle of the 1820s alongside his friend Théodore Géricault, Vernet developed an easy and seductive style before discovering lithography. He became the favourite painter of the Duke of Orléans, the future Louis-Philippe.

Additionally, Vernet rapidly gained a degree of celebrity, which led him to pose for several colleagues. The exhibition will present some of these portraits by his contemporaries.

At the Salon of 1822, Horace Vernet saw his paintings refused. He then organised a personal exhibition in his studio, the immense success of which definitively established his reputation. It was the start of a long official career. This exhibition will endeavour to show the stylistic evolution of Horace Vernet's works, moving from the Romantic passion he shares with Géricault to more measured scenes of battles.

THE INFLUENCE OF HIS TRIPS

The exhibition will highlight the importance of Horace Vernet's travels, particularly in Italy and Algeria. Appointed director of the French Academy in Rome in 1829, Horace Vernet discovered the great classical Italian models and tried his hand at history painting.

In 1833, he discovered Algeria and concentrated on Orientalist painting, alternating civil, religious and military subjects. Two years later, he was commissioned to depict the military conquests of Louis-Philippe's heirs in the *Africa rooms* of the Palace of Versailles. This period of major orders was punctuated by numerous trips to the East and to Russia. Under the Second Empire, his career was hailed with a retrospective of his work at the Exhibition Universelle of 1855. He died in 1863 after having received the medal of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour.

A MULTIFACETED PAINTER

A prolific painter, both acclaimed and derided by critics, Horace Vernet did not leave his contemporaries indifferent. This retrospective will underscore the painter's ease of style and the richness of his preferred subjects. It will reveal his love for horses and hunting, his attachment to the Napoleonic epic and feats of arms, his taste for Romantic literature, Lord Byron or even the staging of his family origins.

A talented painter, Horace Vernet distinguished himself in all genres, especially portraiture. The exhibition will showcase many of his paintings kept in private collections.

Retracing the entire career of the painter, this retrospective dive into the 19th century of Horace Vernet.

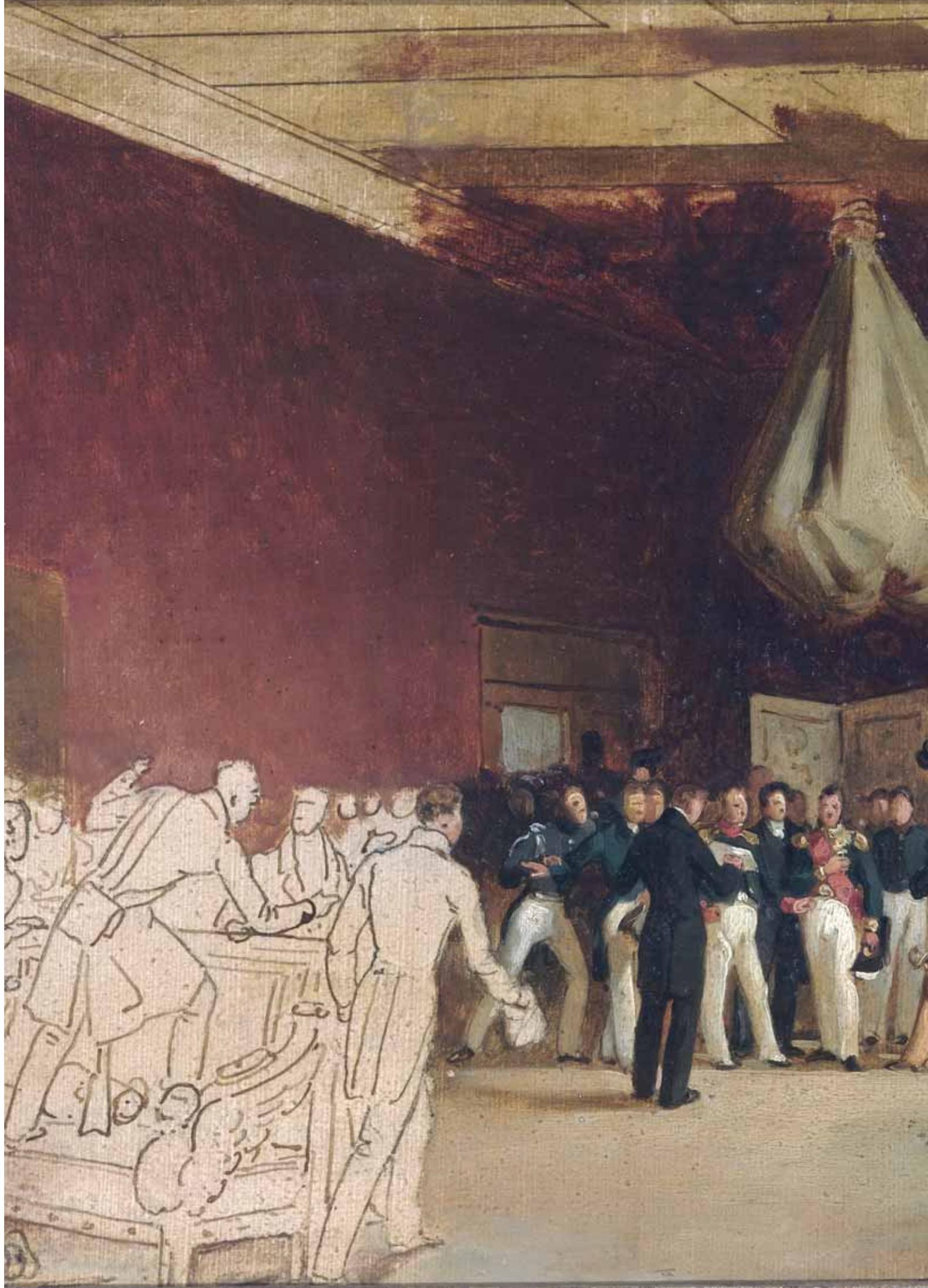
On this occasion, the canvases of the Africa Rooms are visible.

COMMISSION

Valérie Bajou, General Curator at the National Museum of the Palaces of Versailles and Trianon

SCENOGRAPHY

Antoine Fontaine, Roland Fontaine
et Perrine Villemur



THE TOP REPORTER OF THE TUMULTS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Five years ago, in 2018, Valérie Bajou, Chief Curator at the Palace of Versailles, gave Louis Philippe his first ever major exhibition within the museum he founded in 1837. By transforming the royal residence into a museum dedicated “to all the glories of France”, Louis Philippe, regardless of his ulterior political motives and the vicissitudes of his reign, ensured the survival of Versailles and that his era would go down in history forever.

This year, Valérie Bajou takes us into the bountiful, disturbing, and fiery tale that Louis Philippe commissioned from one of his favourite painters to depict the history of France in images. A committed spectator and a personality of contrasts, both loved and loathed, Horace Vernet was a technicolour embodiment of his era. "A soldier who paints," Baudelaire called him. "I detest how this art is improvised to the beat of the drum." Sainte-Beuve defended his "upright, honest, loyal, lively, sensitive nature". Horace Vernet was everywhere and nowhere at once. A loyal Bonapartist, an official painter under Louis Philippe, and still active under Napoleon III, he made a mark during the Restoration with paintings rejected by the Salon of 1822 for anti-royalism, but which earned him notoriety and began to win him honours from multiple academies. Gifted with every talent, he mastered all genres. He went from memory sketches – with a memory as prodigious as his curiosity – to 200 m² (2,150 ft²) panoramas, and also experimented with early daguerreotypes.

Elusive and unclassifiable, Horace Vernet was a free man. Thus, he became the top reporter of the tumults and unresolved questions of the 19th century. Valérie Bajou unveils all of this through a stunning retrospective, affirming our commitment to showcasing the Palace of Versailles across its varied historical periods.

The idea that this exhibition might be unexpected at Versailles is an out-of-date notion. On the contrary, it encapsulates how we have wished to celebrate four hundred years of the Palace of Versailles in 2023.

A long saga, from Louis XIII, who ordered the construction of a modest hunting lodge, to Louis Philippe, who established the Historic Galleries, to the present day, with the Palace of Versailles as a living witness.

Catherine Pégard
President of the Public Establishment of
the Palace, Museum and National Estate of Versailles

| THE 'ALEXANDRE DUMAS OF PAINTING'

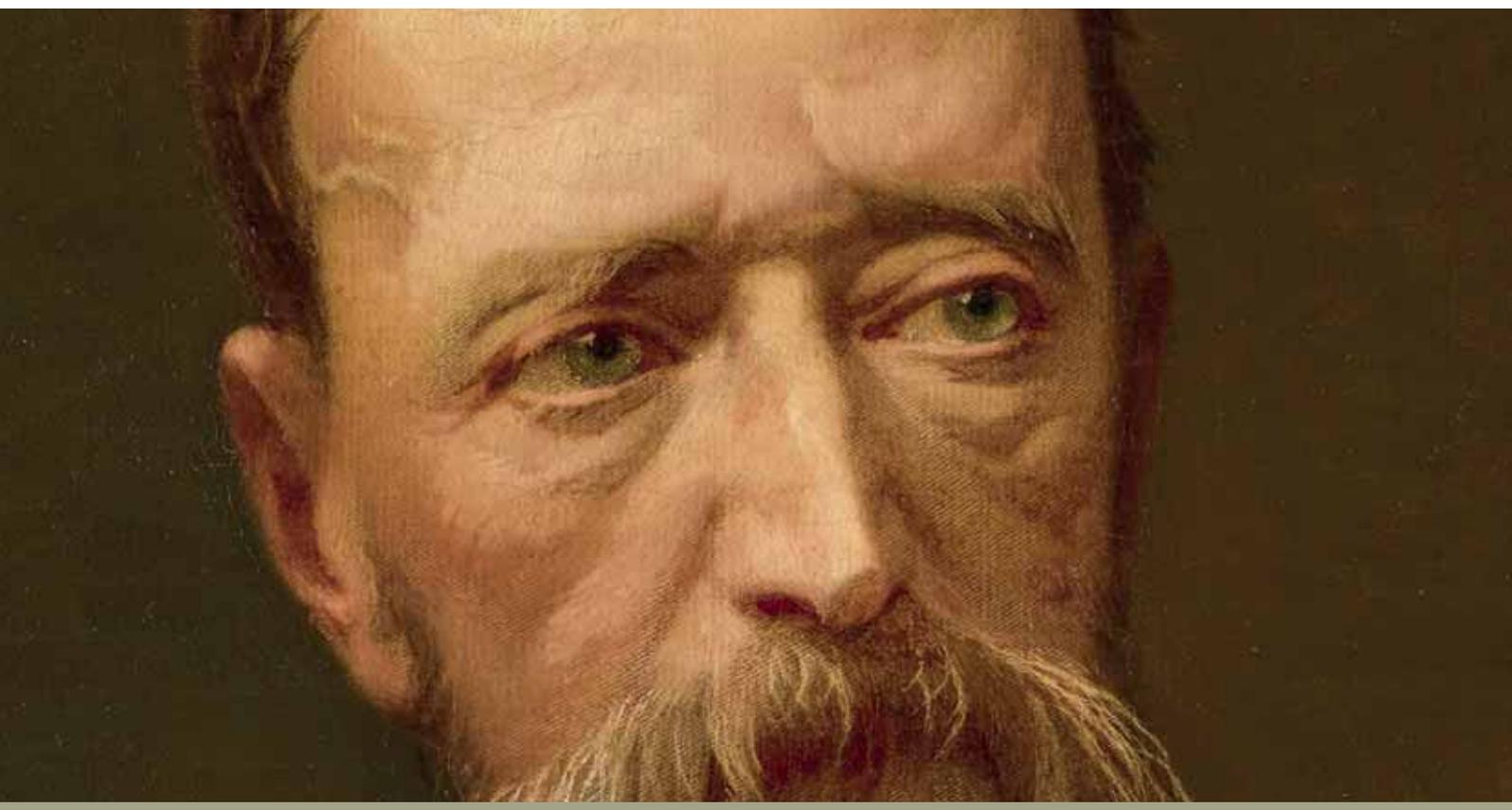
To be born in June 1789 into a lineage of celebrated artists is to be predestined for a very special relationship with history. Bring that person up in a chaotic world that is as dangerous as it is exhilarating and endow him with a virtuosity that gives him a magical power over images, as if by inheritance, and you have the recipe for an extraordinary and – for the 21st-century observer – quite exotic figure.

Horace Vernet also lived in a time when art criticism was abundant, sophisticated, violent, and often verging on the heights of literature – another reason we might feel distant from it. This era provides us with a wealth of comments and analyses, a welcome aid in understanding this tumultuous work as it crackles and bursts in all directions, seducing, irritating, and disorienting. Among all those eloquent phrases, the one that named Vernet the 'Alexandre Dumas of painting' is one of the most suggestive, highlighting the impossibility of confining certain minds to the neat boxes of romanticism, realism, historicism, etc. It is reductive and risky, of course, as all such comparisons are, but interesting in that, as with the prolific writer, one does not always know what to think, except that his genius is indisputable. In Vernet's case, this point is not quite accepted as self-evident. For us, let's admit, it is. The question would rather be why he is so unknown and little studied today. Certainly, he was not politically correct, and this has always been, not just in our time, a more serious handicap than one might like to acknowledge in art history. We are obviously more comfortable with Delacroix and Courbet. There is also the question of the austere status of history painting (even though Vernet was accused of bastardising it by confusing it with genre painting) that continues to deter many. But how sincere and jubilant his style is! It is as naive as it is brilliant, with its fundamentally ambiguous aesthetic.

Vernet was a committed artist, but also a strategist when managing his career. He did not hesitate to put himself in difficulty to defend his ideas of progress, as during his directorship at the Villa Medici. He lived his paintings, projecting his own adventure into them. Perhaps it was this total presence of the artist in his subject that allowed him to breathe so much life into it, with a truly cinematographic instinct for the décor and the dynamism of the figures predating cinematography. Take for instance the large canvases of the conquest of Algeria akin to giant screens made for dizzying tracking shots. Looking at it is like having sand (and blood and the smell of gunpowder) thrown in your face. Meanwhile, the armed monks of the Siege of Saragossa seem straight out of a Hollywood golden age studio. If we are to believe Le Duc's wonderful posthumous statue representing him on horseback taking sketches during the Battle of Isly, the painter himself was a reincarnation of Don Quixote. With Horace Vernet, you are sure to never be bored.

Laurent Salomé

Director of the National Museum of
the Palaces of Versailles Trianon



Portrait d'Horace Vernet en habit d'académicien, Alexis Witkofsky, Salon of 1864, oil on canvas, Palace of Versailles
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Poutin

PART I | **HORACE VERNET**
1789 - 1863

IA UNIQUE DESTINY

Portrait of Horace Vernet, Ary Scheffer, 1817, Palace of Versailles
© RMN-GP (Palace of Versailles) © F. Raux



1789

30 June: Horace Vernet is born at the Louvre to his parents painter Carle Vernet and Catherine Françoise Moreau.

3 December: Death of Joseph Vernet, Horace's grandfather, and father of Carle.

1807

12 May: Horace Vernet enters the Beaux-Arts in Paris, studying under François-André Vincent after learning from his father and his maternal grandfather, engraver Jean-Michel Moreau.

1809

1 April: Horace Vernet is eliminated in the second round of the Prix de Rome.

1811

9 April: Marriage to Louise Pujol, whom he met in the studio of painter Jean-Baptiste Isabey.

Receives his first official commission, the *Portrait équestre de Jérôme Bonaparte* for the King of Westphalia.

1812

First exhibition of Horace Vernet's work at the Salon.

1814

29-31 March: Horace Vernet participates in the defence of the Barrière de Clichy in the National Guard.

29 April: Birth of his daughter, Louise Vernet.

28 September: The Vernet family moves to Rue des Martyrs, becoming neighbours with Théodore Géricault.

7 December: Horace Vernet is made a Knight of the Legion of Honour for his participation at the Barrière de Clichy.

1816

First lithographs.

1817

Receives a commission from the King's Household for the *Combat de Don Sanchez de Navarre contre Mahomet or La Bataille de Las Navas de Tolosa*.

1818

Horace Vernet opens a workshop register for students.

1819

26-29 March: Trip to England with Théodore Géricault. .

1820

February - May: Trip to Italy with his father, Carle Vernet.

L'Atelier de M. Horace Vernet, La Barrière de Clichy, Le Soldat laboureur and La Course de chevaux libres.



L'Atelier de M. Horace Vernet, Horace Vernet, 1820, oil on canvas, France, private collection © C. Fouin

1821

4 June: Commissioned by the King's Household to create *Joseph Vernet attaché au mât d'un navire*.

1822

8 May - 11 June: Horace Vernet holds a solo exhibition in his studio on Rue de la Tour-des-Dames in reaction to the censorship at the Salon. Indeed, some of his paintings depicting tricolour cockades had been refused.

1823

23 April: Purchase of two houses on Rue de la Tour-des-Dames.

1824

26 January: Death of Théodore Géricault.

Exhibits at the Salon the *Portrait de Charles X*.

1825

11 January: Horace Vernet is made an Officer of the Legion of Honour.

1826

12 July: Horace Vernet is appointed to the Institut de France by Charles X.

10 October: Inauguration of the Galerie Joseph Vernet at the Musée Calvet in Avignon in the presence of the Vernet family.

1827

Exhibition at the Salon of *Edith retrouvant le corps d'Harold à la bataille d'Hastings*.

1828

10 August: Horace Vernet appointed director of the French Academy in Rome at the Villa Medici.

1829

Le Pape Pie VIII porté à la basilique Saint-Pierre.



Le Pape Pie VIII porté à la basilique Saint-Pierre, Horace Vernet, 1829, Salon of 1831, oil on canvas, Palace of Versailles © Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Fouin

1830

15 August: Following Louis Philippe's accession to the throne, the French ambassador to Rome resigns. Horace Vernet becomes the sole representative of France in Rome.

5 October: Horace Vernet clashes with the perpetual secretary of the Academy, Quatremère de Quincy, over the administration of the French Academy in Rome.

Portrait de Louise Vernet



Portrait de Louise Vernet, Horace Vernet, 1828-1833, oil on canvas, Louvre Museum © RMN-Grand Palais (Louvre Museum) / M. Urtado

1833

5 May - early June: First trip to Algeria to paint the *Prise de Bône* (now Annaba).

1835

5 January: Ingres, appointed director of the Villa Medici, arrives in Rome.

26 January: Marriage of Louise Vernet to Paul Delaroche.

1836

17 June - early September: First trip by Horace Vernet to Russia, welcomed by Tsar Nicholas I.

17 November: Death of Carle Vernet.

1 December: Birth of Horace Delaroche, first grandson of Horace Vernet.

La Chasse au lion



La Chasse au lion au Sahara, Horace Vernet, 1836, oil on canvas, London, The Wallace Collection © Wallace Collection, London, UK / Bridgeman Images

1837

31 October - 5 September: Second trip to Algeria, to Constantine (now Annaba).

1838

30 April: Commission of paintings for the Constantine Room at the Palace of Versailles.

23- 31 May: Horace Vernet's stay in Berlin where he presents *La Revue de la garde aux Tuileries* to Nicholas I.

30 August: Commission of the ceiling of the *concourse* of the Chamber of Deputies.

1839

21 October: Beginning of Horace Vernet's journey to the Levant (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey), lasting almost six months.

1841

Publication of Vernet's *on the Rights of Painters and Sculptors over their Works*.

21 February: Birth of Philippe Grégoire Delaroche, second grandson of Horace Vernet.

1842

8 March: Horace Vernet is made a commander of the Legion of Honour.

18 March: Presentation to Louis Philippe of the Constantine Room, featuring 14 canvases.

4 May: Purchase of a house on Impasse des Gendarmes in Versailles.

1 June: Second trip to Russia.

31 July - 20 August: Horace Vernet briefly returns to Paris to offer condolences to the king following the death of the Prince Royal Ferdinand-Philippe.

15 September - 19 October: Horace Vernet accompanies Nicholas I in various regions of Russia.

1843

3 August: Commission of the *Prise de la Smala*.

23 August - 21 November: Trip to Taguin to paint the *Prise de la Smala*.

1844

Late May - early June: Trip to London.

21 November: *La Prise de la Smala* is completed.

27 December: Commission of the decoration of the Morocco Room at the Palace of Versailles.

1845

Late January: Reception of a delegation of Arab chiefs in the Royal Tennis Court of Versailles, then Vernet's workshop.

18 March - 6 May: Trip to Algeria and Morocco to paint the paintings for the Morocco room.

18 December: Death of his daughter, Louise Delaroche.

1846

4 February: Horace Vernet receives condolences from Louis Philippe for the death of his daughter.

18 June: *La Bataille d'Isly* for the Morocco Room is completed.

Mid-July: Trip to Belgium and Holland with Soliman Pasha.



La Bataille d'Isly, le 14 août 1844, Horace Vernet, 1846, oil on canvas, Palace of Versailles © RMN-GP (Palace of Versailles) / F. Raux

1847

19 January: Completion of the ceiling of the Chamber of Deputies.

June - July: Moved to Impasse des Gendarmes in Versailles.

19- 25 October: Trip to Kabylia.

1848

7 February: Presentation at the Academy of Horace Vernet's theory, *On the Relationship Between the Costumes of the Ancient Hebrews and Modern Arabs*.

22- 24 February: Horace Vernet fights in the National Guard against the Guizot government.

12 April: Appointment of Horace Vernet as colonel of the National Guard of Versailles.

23- 26 June: Horace Vernet fights with the National Guard against the insurgents.

1849

21 July: Horace Vernet receives the Russian Order of Saint Vladimir, as thanks for *Prise de Wola* painted for Nicholas I.

20 December: Commission of *Le Siège de Rome*.

1850

Early January: Trip to Rome to paint *Le Siège de Rome*.

August: Trip to England to visit Louis Philippe in exile.

22 October: Resignation from the National Guard.

1851

Mid-June: Horace separates from his wife Louise.

1852

December: Trip to Algeria, while his assets and house are sold during the marital separation.

1853

March - September: Trip to Kabylia, at the Abbey of La Trappe in Staouéli with Abbot François Régis.

November: Horace Vernet receives several invitations to the imperial court, at Saint-Cloud and Fontainebleau.

1854

June - July: Trip to Crimea to paint *La Bataille de l'Alma*.

1855

January: Trip to Algeria.

15 May: Opening of the Exposition Universelle, with a room dedicated to Horace Vernet.

1856

8-11 April: Publication in the *La Presse* newspaper of *The Journey of Mr. Horace de Vernet from the Institut to Russia* by Théophile Silvestre.

15 April: Horace Vernet takes legal action against Théophile Silvestre, protesting the use of private documents entrusted to the author. Silvestre is found guilty and ordered to return all the letters to Vernet.

4 November: Death of his son-in-law, Paul Delaroche.

1857

21 April: Horace Vernet presides over an exhibition dedicated to Paul Delaroche at the Palais des Beaux-Arts.

1858

29 August: Death of the artist's former wife, Louise.

Commission of *Prise de la tour de Malakoff* by General Mac Mahon

1859

27 April: Second marriage of Horace Vernet to Marie Amélie Fuller.

1861

Late June - Early July: Horace Vernet falls off a donkey in his Hyères estate.

1862

October: Last trip to Algeria.

7 December: A dying Horace Vernet is awarded the title of Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour.

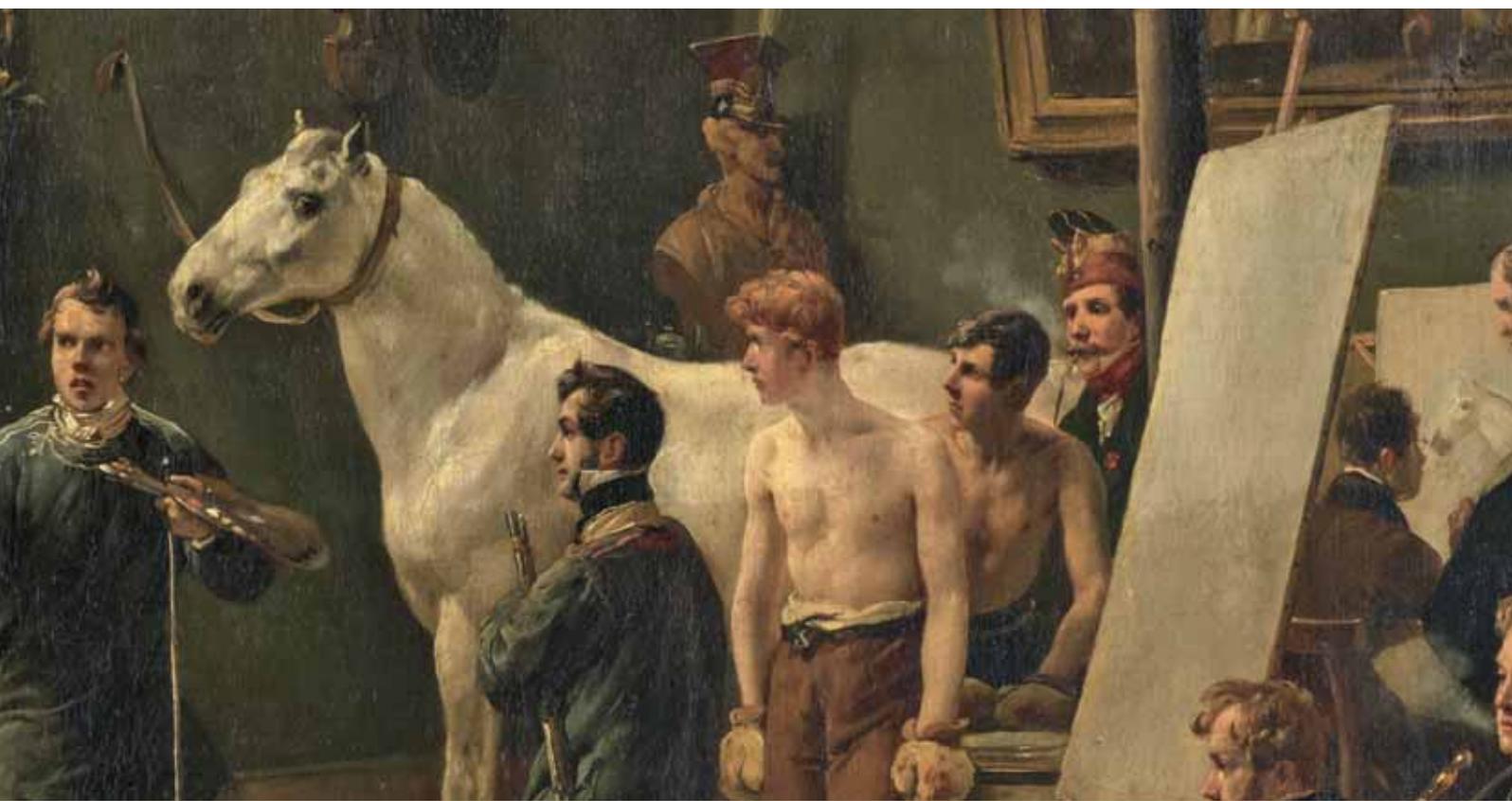
1863

17 January: Death of Vernet in Paris, in his apartment at the Institut.





L'Atelier de M. Horace Vernet, Horace Vernet, 1820, oil on canvas, France, private collection © C. Fouin



PART II | **GUIDE TO THE
EXHIBITION**

| A FAMILY CULTURE

Horace Vernet was the grandson of Joseph Vernet, a marine painter under Louis XV, and the son of Carle Vernet, a military painter during the Empire. Some of their works are now preserved at the Palace of Versailles.

Belonging to a dynasty of artists marked Horace Vernet's entire career, beginning with his apprenticeship under his father. The artist painted the stories of his family members: his grandfather tied to the mast of a ship in a storm, or his father climbing the slopes of the erupting Vesuvius alongside him. Horace Vernet also captured the delicate features of his daughter, Louise.

As his father Carle did before him, Horace Vernet provided designs for women's costumes for the *Journal des modes* from 1811 to 1817. Like him, he also worked with lithography, along with Théodore Géricault and Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet, thereby ensuring the popularity of his work.



Joseph Vernet attaché au mât d'un navire

Horace Vernet,
Salon of 1822,
Oil on canvas
Avignon, Calvet Museum
© F. Lepeltier

Commissioned in 1821 by the Royal Household, this painting depicts the marine painter Joseph Vernet, Horace's grandfather, observing a storm while tied to the mast of a ship. The episode recalls that of Ulysses tied to the mast to hear the sirens' song. By portraying his ancestor as a modern Ulysses, Horace Vernet helped build the family legend. The painting was exhibited at the Salon of 1822.



L'Éruption du Vésuve

Horace Vernet
1822, Salon of 1824
Oil on canvas
Paris, Jacques Grange Collection
© C.Fouin

Following his first trip to Italy in February-March 1820, Horace Vernet added an episode to the family saga by depicting himself and his father ascending Vesuvius in eruption. While this episode was fictional, the artist may have witnessed the volcano's eruption on 23 February 1820, during his trip to Italy.

Today, a sketch and a painting of this scene remain. In the completed version, the figures are small and inconsequential, allowing the natural phenomenon to take centre stage amidst a romantic vision.

VERNET, THE ROMANTIC

During his apprenticeship within his family, the artist forged a close bond with Théodore Géricault, whose portrait he painted. Two years his junior, Géricault became his mentor in painting. Both shared an interest in current affairs, and a predilection for horses, taking interest in the rider-less horse races of Rome. They both depicted the end of the Empire and the military's disarray during Napoleon's final campaign. They discovered England together in 1819, and Vernet brought back highly sensitive landscape paintings from this trip.

In the 1820s, Horace Vernet emerged as a major Romantic artist, a status cemented in 1822 when the Salon rejected his works featuring tricolour cockades. Provocative, and under police surveillance, he subsequently opened his studio for a private exhibition to great success. In his *Intérieur d'atelier*, Vernet crafted a persona of a swashbuckling political dissident, surrounded by the Duke of Orleans' liberal aides-de-camp, as skilled with a paintbrush as a fencing sword.



Portrait de Théodore Géricault

Horace Vernet
1820-1822
Oil on canvas
New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
© CC0 New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Horace Vernet was Théodore Géricault's closest friend. They met each other in Carle Vernet's workshop when they were the only students. Later, they were neighbours on Rue des Martyrs.

In this portrayal, Vernet presents Géricault as the quintessential Romantic artist, shown in his studio attire, deep in thought, with a grave expression and brows furrowed in pain – Géricault was already suffering from illness – gazing directly at the viewer.



L'Atelier de M. Horace Vernet

Horace Vernet
1820
Oil on canvas
France, private collection
© C. Fouin

Painted in 1822 and featured in his personal exhibition on Rue de La Tour-des-Dames as a reaction to the Salon's censorship, *L'Atelier* is both a political and artistic statement. In this work, Vernet brings his students together with his liberal patrons. Far from the typical composed atmosphere of painting studios, Vernet's workshop was a real pigsty. He is depicted holding a foil in one hand and a palette in the other, confronting his student Ledieu.

HORACE VERNET AND LITERARY ROMANTICISM

Around 1820, Horace Vernet found inspiration in literature. The paintings resulting from this inspiration are among those where he felt most liberated; they exhibit a concentration of energy not found elsewhere in his work. Vernet did not turn to Shakespeare, despite the translations available at the time. Instead, he was inspired by classical works, such as the abduction of Angelica as depicted by Ariosto in *Orlando Furioso* (*The Frenzy of Orlando*), a 16th-century Italian poem. He also chose several subjects involving maritime themes, such as *Camoëns sauvant le manuscrit des Lusies*.



Mazeppa aux loups

Horace Vernet

1826, Salon of 1827

oil on canvas

Avignon, Calvet Museum

© City of Avignon, Calvet Museum

Like Théodore Géricault and Eugène Delacroix, Vernet was inspired by English Romantic literature, particularly the poetry of Lord Byron, who was well-regarded in France for his admiration of Napoleon and, more importantly, his support of the Greek cause. Byron's *Mazeppa*, written in Venice in 1819, was immediately translated into French. It recounts the story of a Ukrainian hero condemned to be tied to the back of a horse galloping wildly across the steppe. This narrative particularly appealed to Vernet, who depicted two episodes from it.



Épisode de la bataille d'Hastings ou Édith retrouvant le corps d'Harold à la bataille d'Hastings

Horace Vernet

1828

Oil on canvas

Cherbourg-en-Cotentin, Thomas-Henry Museum

© Musée Thomas Henry - La Fabrique de Patrimoines en

Normandie - A. Cazin & G. Debout

This subject is drawn from English history. In 1066, Harold Godwinson perished in battle against William the Conqueror. As the king's head was disfigured, monks were unable to find his body and summoned Edith, his lover, who managed to find his remains.

NAPOLEON'S SHADOW ON THE ART OF HORACE VERNET

On Friday 6 July 1821, at nine in the evening, Horace Vernet and his friends learned that Napoleon had died on the previous 5 May. Immediately, the artist lit candles and draped a black crepe over a bust of the emperor. His circle, which included many close to the Duke of Orleans, subjected his studio to close police surveillance.



Le Tombeau de Napoléon, or Apothéose de Napoléon, Horace Vernet, 1821, oil on canvas, Paris, Pierre-Jean Chalençon collection © C. Fouin

Undoubtedly, Vernet deeply venerated Napoleon and capitalised on this by producing numerous bivouac scenes that sold easily. Amidst the climate of funereal mysticism that prevailed in Bonapartist circles upon the announcement of Napoleon's death, Vernet created *Tombeau de Napoléon*, depicting the emperor prostrate on a rock on Saint Helena, battered by waves. A true political riddle, the painting, with its strength and intensity, helped to elevate the emperor as the god of the Romantics.



La Barrière de Clichy

Horace Vernet
1820
Oil on canvas
Paris, Louvre Museum
© RMN-Grand Palais (Louvre Museum) / M. Urtado

This painting depicts the National Guard, under Marshal Moncey's command, defending Paris at the Clichy barrier against the Russians at the end of the Empire in 1815. Horace Vernet, himself a member of the National Guard, had participated in the defence of Paris. He is portrayed standing to the right. The goldsmith and national guard, Claude Odier, who commissioned the painting, is at the centre, receiving orders from Moncey.



Le Trompette blessé

Horace Vernet
1819
Oil on canvas
London, The Wallace Collection
© Wallace Collection, London, UK / Bridgeman Images

The painting depicts a horse leaning over the body of a young trumpeter mortally wounded in battle, with a dog licking his face. Representing a poignant subject from the Napoleonic campaigns, the work made a significant impact on contemporaries. Due to its subject matter, it was not presented at the Salon but was acquired by the Duke of Berry, along with its counterpart, *Le Chien du régiment*.

VERNET DURING THE BOURBON RESTORATION AND THE JULY MONARCHY

The politics of Horace Vernet fascinate researchers for the outright opportunism they display. His family, Freemasons for several generations, embraced the French Revolution with no qualms, later rallying behind the First Empire. The artist himself, after accepting commissions under the Bourbon Restoration, particularly the *Portrait de Charles X*, took up his brush on behalf of Louis Philippe, Duke of Orléans, as of 1817, developing a reputation as the artistic face of the liberal opposition movement.

Vernet was in Rome when the Second French Revolution broke out in 1830; he painted several works referencing the July Uprising, starting with *Louis-Philippe quitte le Palais-Royal*. Even more significantly, he accepted commissions from the newly enthroned Louis Philippe for the Historic Galleries of the Palace of Versailles.

Although he was loyal to the July Monarchy, Horace Vernet initially sided with the people during the February Revolution of 1848. He was serving as a captain in the National Guard in Versailles at that time. During the June Days uprising in 1848, he fought with the regular army, quelling the protesters as depicted in *Barricade dans la rue Soufflot*. Vernet's worldview having veered to extreme reactionism, in 1850 he produced a political allegory entitled *Socialisme et Choléra*.



Casimir Périer offrant la lieutenance générale du royaume à Louis-Philippe à l'Hôtel de Ville

Horace Vernet

Circa 1830

Oil on canvas

Palace of Versailles

© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Fouin

This unfinished painting portrays Louis Philippe at the Hôtel de Ville. The work provides insight into the artist's way of working: on a white surface, Vernet sketched the outlines of the various figures, after which he began painting the main characters.



Louis-Philippe quitte le Palais-Royal pour se rendre à l'Hôtel de Ville, le 31 juillet 1830

Horace Vernet

1832

Oil on canvas

Palace of Versailles

© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Fouin

In 1830, Horace Vernet championed the new July Monarchy and the king - his patron - Louis Philippe. Horace Vernet painted this scene on his own initiative, choosing the subject himself. It depicts Louis Philippe leaving his residence at the Palais-Royal for the Hôtel de Ville, supported by the people, partisans of revolution.



Barricade dans la rue Soufflot

Horace Vernet

1848

Oil on canvas

Berlin, Deutsches Historisches Museum

© BPK, Berlin, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / I. Desnica

This small painting illustrates the artist's involvement in the June Days Uprising in 1848. A few months earlier (February 1848), Vernet had fought with the National Guard alongside the rioters. In June, however, following the closure of the National Workshops, he distanced himself from the working-class revolt. Horace Vernet, Colonel in the National Guard, fought with the regular army against the insurgents.



Socialisme et Choléra

Horace Vernet

1850

Oil on canvas

Palace of Versailles

© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Fouin

This work is a satirical allegory of the Republic and the plagues of 1848: Socialism and Cholera. The guillotine stands in the background, but the blade has stopped working. The executioner, having no one left to behead, has guillotined himself, and his body lies covered in a red cloth. On the left, two priests are portrayed in fiery colours hanged from a lurching cross.

Amid this vision of chaos, Cholera plays a flute carved from a shinbone. Socialism takes the appearance of Death reading the latest issue of *Le Peuple*, while the shaft of his scythe serves as a flagpole for a scarlet standard bearing the words: Social Republic. Three symbolic colours dominate the composition: the vermilion hue so typical of Vernet's palette, yellow and charcoal grey, i.e. blood, gold and darkness.

The composition is a rare example of the fear, common among French conservatives, that the revolution of 1848 would lead to the collapse of European civilisation, and their consequent desire to eradicate the "masses". This painting is among the artist's most political works, and was followed shortly afterwards by his decision to back the Prince-President and future Emperor Napoleon III.

THE TURKISH ROOM

In May 1833, Horace Vernet, then Director of the French Academy in Rome, undertook his first journey to North Africa, travelling with the French army to the newly conquered territories in Algeria. Upon his return, the artist expressed his fascination with an exotic world he had until then only imagined by designing a small room with a Middle-Eastern decor at the top of a tower at the Villa Medici, known since as the “Turkish Room”.

This early example of Islamic-inspired interior design in Italy brings together several Arabo-Andalusian features. Vernet embellished the room with a verse from the Koran reputed to ward off evil: “Allah! There is no god except He, The Living, The Self-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtake Him”.

The work was carried out by Roman craftsmen using local materials. The walls were covered with colourful earthenware tiles from the Giustiniani factory in Naples, represented with consummate accuracy by Alfred de Curzon in 1850.

The door of the Turkish Room, reproduced as part of the decor for the exhibition, serves as the entrance to a room featuring sketches and drawings where visitors can admire works by Horace Vernet.



La Chambre turque

Alfred de Curzon

1850

Oil on canvas

Rome, French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici

© French Academy in Rome – Villa Medici



Marin scrutant l'horizon

Horace Vernet

1825

Black pencil sketch coloured with brown ink and brown wash tint on white paper

Londres, private collection

© Todd White Art Photography

Vernet first discovered the sea thanks to Théodore Géricault, with whom he travelled to Le Havre in 1818. The experience provided inspiration for a number of seascapes and other maritime paintings. The decor in this work provides little insight into the setting. The brown wash tint sensually illustrates the sailor's garb; the brush and pencil strokes explore both the model's facial features and hands in intimate detail. This portrait was presumably intended for a private collector.



| IMPRESSIONS OF THE ORIENT

Horace Vernet's view of the Orient, initially fashioned by paintings portraying the French military expedition in Egypt, later reflected exotic and fanciful images associated with the poetry of Lord Byron.

As of 1833, Vernet's journeys to North Africa provided inspiration for the monumental canvases adorning the Africa Rooms in the Palace of Versailles. These travels also influenced more imaginative personal works such as *Jeune Algérienne au faucon* and *La Chasse au lion*. The decoration of the three Africa Rooms – the Constantine, Smalah and Morocco Rooms – was Vernet's last major project at the Palace of Versailles. It includes the unfinished work *La prise de Tanger*, on public display for the first time at this exhibition.

Finally, Vernet's many trips to Africa were the basis for an innovative theory relating to religious painting, particularly the depiction of human figures. The artist applied this approach in several of his works, most notably *Agar chassée par Abraham*. Presented at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1848, this theory sparked acute controversy.



Homme en costume oriental

Horace Vernet
1818
Oil on canvas
New York, Dahesh Museum of Art
© Dahesh Museum of Art, New York / Bridgeman Images

The Orient held enduring fascination for Horace Vernet, as can be seen in this portrait. Initially

painting Mamelukes, Vernet also focussed on portraying Middle-Eastern dress. With Spartan reserve, the artist depicts a man standing before a very simple black background. The model's face is not identifiable.



La Chasse au lion au Sahara

Horace Vernet, 1836
Oil on canvas
London, The Wallace Collection
© Wallace Collection, London, UK / Bridgeman Images

Horace Vernet discovered Algeria in 1833. He was entranced by the beauty of the landscape and the victories of the French army. An avid hunter, he soon began accompanying hunting expeditions. This painting demonstrates the artist's consummate mastery of the genre. The kaleidoscopic composition, radiating from the centre of the canvas, creates an impression of movement and a dramatic intensity. Horace Vernet underscores the violence of the fight and the cruelty of the sight, with men killing the lioness and capturing her cubs.



Agar chassée par Abraham

Horace Vernet
1837
Oil on canvas
Nantes, Musée d'Arts
© RMN-Grand Palais / G. Blot

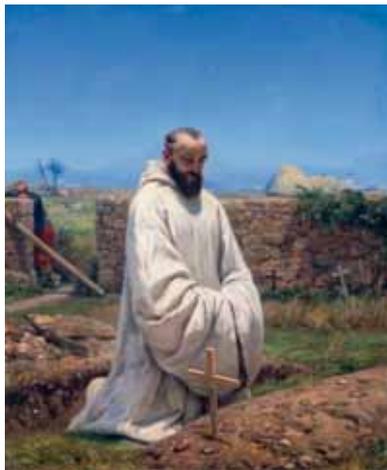
In this painting, Vernet applies his theory regarding religious painting. He maintained that

modern Arab dress was directly derived from ancient Hebrew garments. As such, Old Testament figures should be portrayed wearing contemporary Algerian clothing. The artist executed several works of this type.



La Prise de Tanger, Horace Vernet, 1847, oil on canvas, Palace of Versailles © Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Fouin

This massive canvas was commissioned by King Louis Philippe for the Morocco Room. The project having been abandoned at the outbreak of the 1848 Revolution, the painting remained unfinished. Rolled up in storage since the 19th century, it is now on display for the first time. It demonstrates Horace Vernet's technique of painting large surfaces by starting on one side or a corner of the canvas. Sketched figures are discernible in the foreground.



Le Zouave trappiste
Horace Vernet
1856
Oil on canvas
Saint-Cloud, Musée
des Avelines
Don Jacques
Foucart and
Elisabeth Foucart-
Walter in memory
of Bruno Foucart
© City of Saint-
Cloud – Musée
des Avelines / G.
Plagnol

This scene was inspired by a true story: the account of a soldier who swore, should he return alive from the front, to devote his life to God. The painting was exhibited at the Salon of 1857 and later purchased by the Empress Eugénie to adorn her apartments at the Palais de Saint-Cloud.



Zouaves à Malakoff
Horace Vernet
1856
Oil on canvas
London, The
Royal Collection
Royal Collection
Trust / © His
Majesty King
Charles III, 2023
/ Bridgeman
Images

In the 1850s, Horace Vernet endeavoured to represent war in all its brutality. He painted soldiers fighting, wounded, lying dead. With vivid intensity, the Zouaves at Malakoff are violently hurled from their station by the force of an exploding cannonball. The soldier in the foreground seems about to burst forth from the painting with an almost cinematographic impression of movement.

| THE AFRICA ROOMS

Work on the Africa Rooms, overseen by architect Frédéric Nepveu, began in 1837.

Louis Philippe intended the chambers to commemorate the conquest of Algeria, where his sons had served with distinction. Horace Vernet was tasked with decorating the three rooms – Constantine, Smalah and Morocco – for which he produced several large paintings with the help of Éloi-Firmin Féron, who created the decor for the arched ceiling.

No comprehensive plan ever existed: following the siege of Antwerp, Belgium in 1832, Africa-themed subjects were selected gradually as French troops advanced.

All painting activities were completed in six years. In preparation for each painting, Vernet travelled to the site in question to ensure an authentic portrayal. The artist executed several landscape sketches that he later fleshed out in his workshop. Although he journeyed to Constantine and Taguine following the respective battles to create preparatory sketches, he also based his work on plans drawn by army engineers and draughtsmen.

Once the borders were complete, Vernet enlivened the foreground with picturesque accessories brought back from his travels: bundles of goods, a teapot, a sugar loaf. These objects can be seen in a variety of his compositions. The sketches were gridded to facilitate replication of the composition on the canvas.

The works were painted in Versailles, in the Royal Tennis Court, which the artist used as his workshop, and then displayed at the Salon before being permanently placed in the Africa Rooms.

For these oversized paintings, Vernet focussed more on military life and encampments than actual battles. The characters, represented in large expanses of solid colours, offer a compelling contrast with the surrounding landscape. The artist eschewed motifs of drama and grandeur in favour of light, picturesque and trivial themes that lay bare both his romantic fervour and his racism.

Vernet also received orders for easel paintings and depictions of the Crimean War. Under the Second Empire, his style grew more dramatic.



View of the Constantine Room, Palace of Versailles © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier



Prise de la Smala d'Abd-el-Kader par le duc d'Aumale à Taguin, le 16 mai 1843, Horace Vernet, 1843-1845, oil on canvas
 Palace of Versailles © RMN-GP (Palace of Versailles) / F. Raux

For this painting, Horace Vernet relegated the battle to the far horizon, drawing the eye rather to a multitude of picturesque scenes. Overtones of colonial exoticism pervade the imagery of war, accentuating the crudity and violence of combat through a fanciful form of ethnographic curiosity: an oblique allusion to France's civilising mission comes out in characters that command attention through dazzling colours – a marabout reading the Koran, women falling from palanquins, a slave skewering a watermelon, etc. The multitude of animals, depicted with obsessive attention to detail, mirror the gazelles and dromedaries populating the Jardin des Plantes menagerie.



Horace Vernet prenant des croquis sur le champ de bataille d'Isly

Arthur Le Duc and Eugène Rudier (founder)
 1913 - 1920
 Bronze
 Palace of Versailles
 © Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Fouin

For the 50th anniversary of Horace Vernet's death in 1913, the French government commissioned Arthur Le Duc to create a statue of the artist. The sculptor chose to portray Vernet in the saddle "sketching on the battlefield at Isly". With this composition, Le Duc invoked his model's love of horseback riding and in situ drawings. A specialist in equestrian statuary, the sculptor reconciled anatomical precision with a pointed sense of storytelling. Disregarding contemporary accounts underscoring his remarkable memory and his studio work, a long-bearded Vernet is depicted in action on the field.

The statue, cast by Eugène Rudier in 1920, was installed in the Smalah Courtyard at the Palace of Versailles in 1929. Soon placed in storage and long forgotten, this work was specially restored for the exhibition.

| PORTRAITS

Horace Vernet's portraiture style from around 1815 onwards initially exhibited meticulous and picturesque detail before evolving into a more romantic and sensitive style. His models, initially depicted in small, delicately executed formats, later took on more varied poses, subtly hinting at their temperament. The artist also enjoyed portraying those close to him in busts, created in a single sitting with a swift, singular stroke of the brush, as seen in the *Portrait de Mademoiselle Mars*.

However, Vernet also fulfilled commissions from patrons and friends, such as the *Portrait de Jean-Georges Schickler*, shown at the Salon of 1827, and the *Portrait du baron Desgenettes* dated 1828. During the 1830s-1840s in Paris, alongside portraits of artists and musicians, he completed significant commissions like the *Portrait de frère Philippe* completed in 1844.



Portrait de la comtesse Greffulhe
Horace Vernet
1825
Oil on canvas
Switzerland, private collection
© Christie's New York

In this portrait of Countess Greffulhe, Horace Vernet revisits the formula of full-length

female portraits in landscapes that he adopted around 1815. Yet, he adds a romantic twist with a seaside landscape, twisted trees, and a stormy sky.



Portrait de mademoiselle Mars
Horace Vernet
Circa 1825
Oil on canvas
Palace of Versailles
© Palace of Versailles, Dist. RMN / C. Fouin

The famous actress, a member of the Comédie Française since 1799 and neighbour of

Horace Vernet in the New Athens neighbourhood, is depicted with her natural brown hair in the crimped curls fashionable in the 1820s. The portrait's painting style is flexible, sometimes scraped with the brush handle or dry-brushed. Only the head and hair are finished, standing out against a broadly applied brown background. Striking contrasts between shadow and light add volume to the face. The lower part of the canvas, with its white primer, served as a palette. Vernet specialized in this close-up framing.



***Portrait
d'Alexandre
Ivanovich
Bariatinsky***
Horace Vernet
1837
Oil on canvas
Rome, Gallerie
Nazionale d'Arte
Moderna e
Contemporanea
© Heritage Image
Partnership Ltd /
Alamy Stock Photo

After his first trip to Russia, Horace Vernet attracted a new clientele: the Russian aristocracy. In 1837, Prince Alexander Bariatinsky, attached to the cavalry of Tsarevich Alexander, commissioned his portrait. A masterpiece of composition and balance, the painting captivates with its meticulous yet lively brushwork.



Portrait de frère Philippe
Horace Vernet
1844
Oil on canvas
Rome, Generalate of the
Institute of the Brothers of
the Christian Schools
© Dr. Antonio Farese,
photography technician

This grand portrait of Brother Philippe, Superior General of the Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools, was exhibited at the Salon of 1845. It was hailed by critics as Horace Vernet's greatest work of portraiture. Brother Philippe is portrayed engrossed in reading religious texts, set against a harmonious palette of yellows, greens, and browns. Vernet was assisted by his student Louis Léon Desjardins in painting this tableau.

| LOUISE VERNET

Born on 23 April 1814, Louise Vernet was frequently depicted by her father. At fifteen, when he was named director of the Academy of France in Rome, Louise caught the attention of all the artists frequenting the Villa Medici.

As early as 1831, Antoine-Laurent Dantan sculpted her bust, and Horace Vernet painted her portrait before the towers of Villa Medici. Louise married Paul Delaroche on 28 January 1835, with whom she had two sons named for members of the two families: Horace, born the 1 December 1836, and Philippe Grégoire, born 21 February 1841. Suffering from frail health, Louise passed away on 18 December 1845, at the age of 31.



Portrait de Louise Vernet

Horace Vernet

1830-1831, Salon of 1831

Oil on canvas

Paris, Louvre Museum

© RMN-Grand Palais (Louvre Museum) / M. Urtado

Exhibited at the Salon of 1831, this portrait is among Horace Vernet's most celebrated works. It features Louise Vernet at sixteen or seventeen years old, set against the Villa Medici. More than ever, Horace Vernet's technical virtuosity is evident in his depiction of the moiré fabric of the dress and the jewelled buttons, while Louise's youthful visage is rendered with precision and gentleness. Horace Vernet cherished this portrait throughout his life, keeping it in his successive residences.

| ITALY!

In the 19th century, Rome was in many ways a city of foreigners. As a destination on the Grand Tour, it remained the ideal journey's end for wealthy Europeans while retaining its picturesque charm. This combination must have appealed to Horace Vernet, who was both drawn to the ordinary people and flattered by personalities who commissioned their portraits.

While he was a tourist during his first visit in 1820, Vernet became an official member of the French community in Rome as the director of the Academy of France from 1829 to 1834, one of the most coveted positions an artist could dream of. He enthusiastically defended scholarship holders against the perpetual secretary of the Académie des Beaux Arts, Quatremère de Quincy, and the Parisian administration. Vernet, a socialite, organised soirées at the Villa on Thursday evenings, attended by Mendelssohn, Cornelius, Overbeck, Léopold Robert, Victor Schnetz, Orsel, Adolphe Roger, Malibran, and Stendhal, the French consul at Civitavecchia from 1831 to 1842.

Villa Medici was a frequently visited place, and its director was much in demand; nevertheless, he worked extensively. His role enabled him to produce numerous portraits of European artists and art lovers in their interiors or against iconic landscapes. Following the influence of English art, particularly that of Lawrence, in the 1820s, the influence of Ingres, and especially of Raphael, became apparent, as seen in the ambitious *Portrait de la marquise Cunegonda Misciatelli avec son enfant et une nourrice*.



Esquisse pour Raphaël au Vatican

Horace Vernet
1832
Oil on canvas
London, Stair Sainty Gallery
© Image courtesy of Stair Sainty Gallery

This sketch was executed as preparation for the grand canvas of *Raphaël au Vatican* (1832, Paris, Louvre Museum).

Horace Vernet sketched Raphael drawing a model for a Madonna and child surrounded by a crowd of admirers. In the foreground, Michelangelo is seen leaving carrying the modello of one of his sculptures.



Le départ de la chasse dans les marais Pontins

Horace Vernet
1831, Salon of 1833
Oil on canvas
Washington, National Gallery of Art, Chester Dale Fund
© Washington, The National Gallery of Art

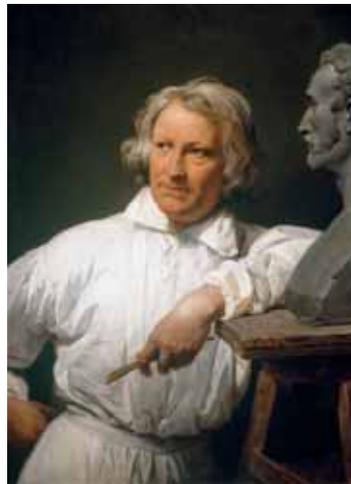
This Roman landscape and its counterpart, *La chasse dans les marais Pontins*, are exceptions in Horace Vernet's oeuvre. While their titles suggest hunting scenes, these paintings depict landscapes along the Taverone. In a still-romantic vision, Horace Vernet paints an almost idyllic landscape filled with uprooted trees, twisted and broken trunks, illuminated by warm light, which also lights up small figures.



Portrait de la marquise Cunegonda Misciatelli

Horace Vernet
 1830, Salon of 1833
 Oil on canvas
 The University of Arizona Museum of Art
 © Collection of The University of Arizona Museum of Art,
 Tucson; Gift of Samuel H. Kress Foundation

In Italy, Horace Vernet developed a new painting style, closely akin to Raphael and the Italian Renaissance, which is particularly evident in the *Portrait de la marquise Misciatelli*. The young woman playing piano turns her head to see her child in a nurse's arms. The female ideal is epitomised here, with a long neck, pale skin, and large eyes. Vernet depicts an opulent Italian interior, adorned with arabesque decorations.



Portrait de Bertel Thorvaldsen modelant le buste d'Horace Vernet

Horace Vernet
 1833
 Oil on canvas
 Copenhagen,
 Thorvaldsens Museum
 © Thorvaldsens
 Museum / Ole Woldbye

Horace Vernet executed this portrait of the Danish sculptor Bertel

Thorvaldsen, who is seen working on the painter's bust. The two men became friends in Rome and exchanged correspondence until the sculptor's death in 1844. Vernet gifted his bust to the Musée Calvet in Avignon, while Thorvaldsen kept the portrait for life. Vernet depicts him in a workshop blouse, sculpting his bust, casually leant against a pedestal.



Buste d'Horace Vernet

Bertel Thorvaldsen
 1835
 Marble
 Avignon, Calvet Museum
 © City of Avignon, Calvet
 Museum

This bust of Horace Vernet, sculpted by Bertel Thorvaldsen, is the marble version made from the terracotta model in Horace

Vernet's painting. They are displayed side by side in the exhibition.



| THE EVER-PRESENT VERNET!

Horace Vernet's own portrait was very well-known. Throughout his life, his portrait was made, "painted on canvas, carved in marble, cast in bronze, modelled in plaster; lithographed, photographed, engraved; embossed in copper, in cardboard, baked in porcelain; turned into snuff boxes, walking stick knobs, whistles, and pipe heads," joked the critic Théophile Silvestre.

This rich iconography bears witness to Horace Vernet's long and prolific career. The artist enjoyed enduring success from the start and accumulated honours. He carefully cultivated his own image, both through a few paintings and in his correspondence, where he would put on a show. Prints, lithographs, and photographs widely disseminated the painter's features, sometimes mangled by caricatures.



**Horace Vernet,
23 février 1856**
Adrien Alban
Tournachon
Albumen print
Paris, National Library
of France,
Department of Prints
and Photography
© Paris, National
Library of France, 2023

Horace Vernet
attached great
importance to

photography, a new medium which he promoted almost immediately after its invention in 1839. However, he seems to have consented to stand before the lens only after 1854. Taken by Adrien Alban Tournachon, the younger brother of the famous Nadar, the photograph shows the artist sitting in an armchair, in profile, with his head turned towards the viewer, wearing a black suit covered in decorations, sporting a fairly long beard and an impressive moustache waxed to a point. This photograph was taken on the occasion of the publication of Théophile Silvestre's *History of Living Artists* (*Histoire des artistes vivants*). According to Théophile Silvestre, Horace Vernet, concerned about his image, supposedly retouched his photograph with black ink.

This particularly striking image of the painter, with his penetrating gaze capturing the viewer, essentially became his official portrait in his later years. Published by the Nadar studio until the early 20th century, this photograph was used for countless lithographs and prints that illustrated the biographies and other galleries of famous men published during the Second Empire.



**Portrait de l'artiste
par lui-même**

Horace Vernet
Circa 1850
Pen, brown ink
Paris, National Library
of France, Department of
Prints and Photography
© Paris, National Library
of France, 2023

Horace Vernet utilised
sessions at the Institut,
which he attended
diligently in the
1840s, to humorously
depict several of

his colleagues. Consequently, several of his drawings still exist, including depictions of the painter François Marius Granet, curator of paintings at the Palace of Versailles, as well as Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and the architect Pierre-François-Léonard Fontaine. In the 1850s, Horace Vernet created his own caricature, with his head shaped like a violin.



Portrait charge d'Horace Vernet

Jean-Pierre Dantan (1800-1869), known as Dantan the Young
 Circa 1829
 Terracotta
 Paris, Carnavalet – Paris History Museum
 © C. Fouin

Dantan Jeune was known for caricaturing Parisian celebrities. His figurines, displayed in his shop in the Passage des Panoramas, were highly popular. He created two caricature

portraits of Horace Vernet and one preparatory sketch. In the sketch and the full-length statuette, Dantan aimed to capture the painter's posture, exaggerating his swaying stance and cinched waist. In the bust, Dantan took the elongation of the head to the extreme, giving it a cranium that extends backward and a chin that juts forward.



Portrait d'Horace Vernet en habit d'académicien

Alexis Witkofsky
 Salon of 1864
 Oil on canvas
 Palace of Versailles
 © Palace of Versailles, Dist.
 RMN / C. Fouin

With the numerous homages published

in honour of Vernet upon his death came a rich posthumous iconography. At the Salon of 1864, Alexis Witkofsky honoured the accomplished academician. His ceremonial attire was adorned with decorations, among which stood out the Grand Officer's Cross of the Legion of Honour, which Napoleon III had bestowed upon him shortly before his death.



Épée d'académicien d'Horace Vernet

19th century
 Gilded bronze, damascened and gilded steel, and leather
 Paris, Musée Marmottan-Monet (deposit of the library of the Institut de France)
 © Library of the Institut de France

Horace Vernet's ceremonial sword of the Institut de France, depicted in Alexis Witkofsky's painting, is exhibited alongside the painting.

Vernet was the first to personalise his ceremonial sword, adorning its guard with "evocative" emblems: a painter's palette, a hunting horn, and a lance on one side, symbolising his favourite activities. It also depicts Socrates with a pipe in his mouth, in profile on one side, alluding to his own use of tobacco.





PART III

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF LOUIS-PHILIPPE AND HORACE VERNET

LOUIS-PHILIPPE'S VERSAILLES

As the heir of the Orléans branch, Louis-Philippe had little shared history with the Versailles of the Ancien Régime. However, from his ascension to the throne in 1830, he showed a keen interest in the palace and endeavoured to transform it into a national museum, dedicated to “all the glories of France”. His goal was certainly to reconcile the French people, but more importantly, to enshrine his reign in national history. From 1834 to 1847, Louis-Philippe made nearly 400 visits to Versailles, following the project with keen interest, giving out his instructions, and attending to even the smallest detail.

WHEN VERSAILLES BECAME A MUSEUM

Henceforth, two Versailles lived side by side. The royal residence within the central body, with the State Apartments restored and refurnished, retaining their original name. The former monarchy was especially evoked in the King’s Apartment, whose bedroom marked the climax of the visit. Elsewhere, in the North and South Wings, significant construction projects were undertaken. Louis Philippe spread the Historic Galleries out from one end of the palace to another, thus punctuating the tour with significant iconographic ensembles: the Gallery of Battles, from Tolbiac to Wagram, the Estates General Room and the 1792 Room, Napoleon’s Coronation Room and its counterpart, the 1830 Room, both dedicated to the glory of the new monarchy, and finally the Crusades Rooms and the Africa Rooms, which were left unfinished in 1848 following the fall of the July Monarchy.

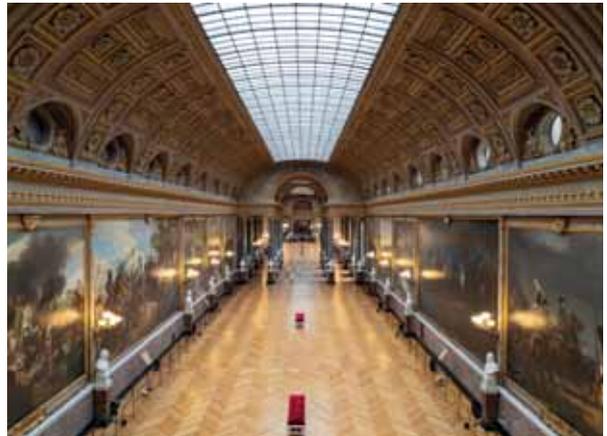
For the implementation of this project, the palace architect, Frédéric Nepveu, drew inspiration from the decorative vocabulary of the State Apartments but used new techniques, particularly with the metal structure that allows natural overhead lighting of the monumental Gallery of Battles.

The iconographic programme supported Louis-Philippe’s political discourse, who had gained an acute awareness of history from his education, kindled by the French Revolution and the romantic sensitivities of the time. The many commissioned works (over 3,000 of the nearly 6,000 gathered at Versailles) thus illustrate an eventful history, punctuated by glorious names. The King brought to life the heroes of France

from Pharamond up to the most recent events of his assumption of power and his reign.

By transforming the former Bourbon residence into a museum open to all, Louis-Philippe confirmed his didactic vision of a palace where paintings are read like a picture book, accompanying a political discourse.

The Historic Galleries were inaugurated by Louis-Philippe on 10 June 1837. Five thousand guests crowded into a magnificent celebration, featuring a tour of the galleries, a banquet in the Hall of Mirrors, and a performance at the Opera.



Gallery of Battles © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

THE GRAND TRIANON, THE FAMILY’S PRIVATE RESIDENCE

In 1835, Louis-Philippe decided to set up an apartment at the Grand Trianon to oversee the transformation of the Palace into a museum. Since the refurnishing carried out by Napoleon in 1810, the premises had not changed. The King ordered numerous works and rearrangements to accommodate himself in the small chateau along with other family members and their entourages.

Previously a simple summer residence, the Grand Trianon was transformed into a functional chateau, in keeping with the taste of the era. As in all his residences, Louis-Philippe wished to bring in the most modern of comforts. He had the building’s foundations dug and created basements where the services necessary for the functioning of a royal residence were set up. Notably, these subterranean areas housed furnaces heating all the salons through grilled outlets placed in front of the windows. The kitchens of the chateau were also moved there.



State apartments were set up for Louis-Philippe and Marie-Amélie, with a part of the palace transformed to accommodate their large

family. For instance, in the bedroom and salon of Louis XIV's first apartment, a spacious family salon was created, allowing for evening gatherings. Large family tables were placed there, equipped with numbered drawers, enabling the princesses, who held the keys, to store their needlework or books. In the adjacent salon, a large mahogany billiard table was installed for the sovereign's sons and the men of the entourage. The gallery, in turn, became a vast dining room. While the furniture installed during the Empire was retained, the apartments were rearranged and supplemented with more comfortable elements, like padded seats or light chairs, encouraging family gatherings.

Behind the suite of state salons were the apartments of Louis-Philippe's daughters. The decor was largely rethought, with silks in bright shades, mostly blue with golden rosettes, adorning the walls.

A WORKING APARTMENT FOR LOUIS PHILIPPE

Louis-Philippe also needed an apartment in which to work. So he had several rooms arranged around a large bedroom-office, with walls covered with a very elegant floral cotton fabric. This room served both as a resting and working space, with a library and the apartment of the sovereign's secretary nearby. The bedroom-office's furnishings were restored in 2021 (based on an inventory from 1839), and since then, the walls have been covered with a white background Persian canvas with large bouquets, reprinted according to preserved elements.



Louis Philippe's bedroom-office © Palace of Versailles, T. Garnier

This choice of a textile featuring woodblock print in ten different colours is probably an echo of Louis-Philippe's anglophilia, having seen such fabrics during his exile in England, which were then very popular.

Quite simple and featuring mahogany prominently, the furniture is drawn from the reserves of the Garde-Meuble located at the Tuileries before the Revolution, an example being the long low bookcase. It is complemented by elements from Louis-Philippe's time, like the comfortable padded chairs or the trunk daybed placed on the left wall, which has a trundle system allowing it to unfold.



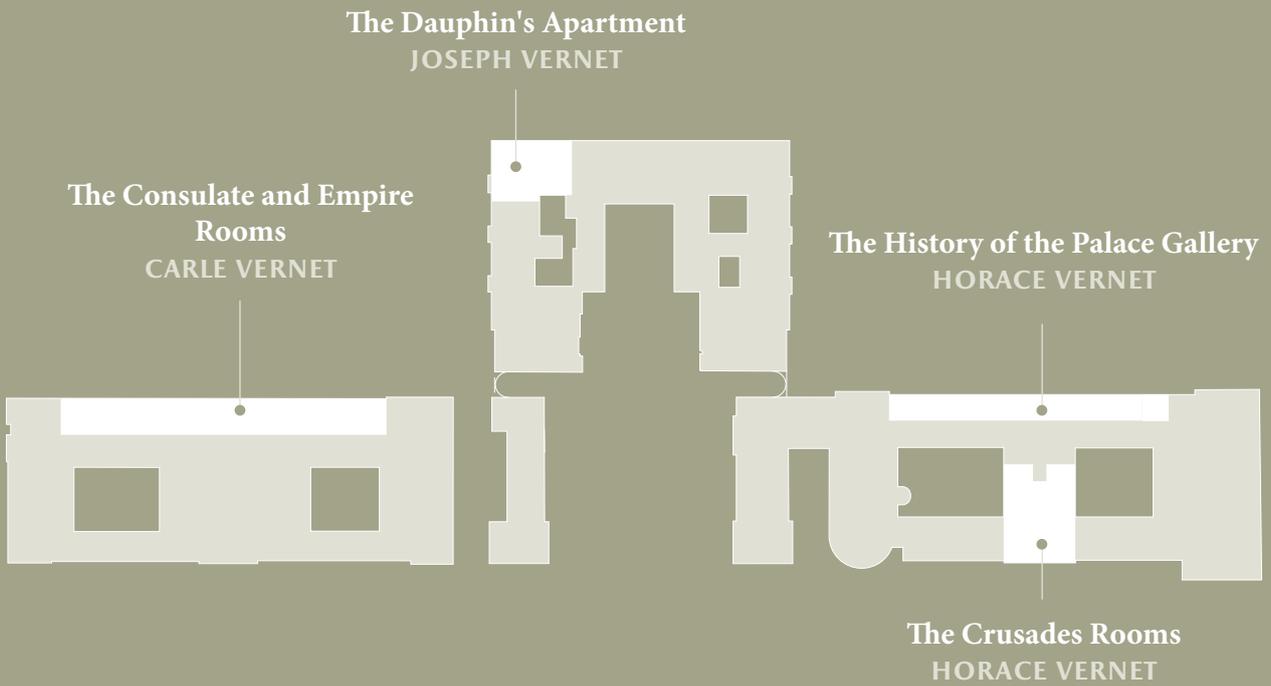
Today, numerous paintings depicting Louis-Philippe's life, his entourage, or his cherished residences are displayed on the walls. A bathroom adjoins this bedroom.

In the former apartment of the king's secretary, located in immediate proximity to Louis-Philippe's private apartment, a room's furnishings recalls that of the apartments of the sovereign's sons, who then resided in the Trianon-sous-Bois Wing (largely transformed in the 1960s by General de Gaulle).

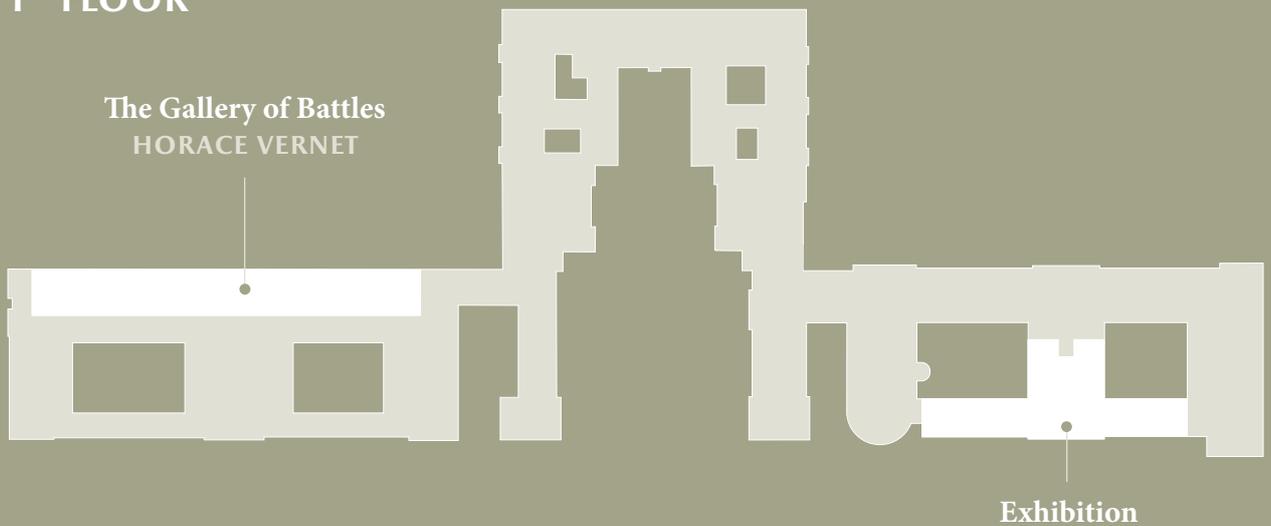
The Grand Trianon was used by Louis-Philippe and his family until the end of his reign for brief visits or short stays. The king's last visit was in February 1848, during his journey to exile.

THE WORKS OF THE VERNETS AT VERSAILLES

GROUND FLOOR



1ST FLOOR



THE WORKS OF JOSEPH VERNET (1714-1789)

The Dauphin's Apartment, Library



*Le matin or
la pêche*
1762
Oil on canvas



*Le midi or
la tempête*
1762
Oil on canvas



*Le soir or
le coucher du soleil*
1762
Oil on canvas



*La nuit or
le clair de lune*
1762
Oil on canvas

THE WORKS OF CARLE VERNET (1758-1836)

The Consulate and Empire Rooms



*L'Empereur donnant
ses ordres aux
maréchaux de
l'empire, le matin de
la bataille d'Austerlitz*
1808
Oil on canvas



*Bombardement de
Madrid, 3 décembre*
1808
1810
Oil on canvas

THE WORKS OF HORACE VERNET

The History of the Palace Gallery



*Le roi Louis-Philippe entouré
de ses cinq fils sortant par la
grille d'honneur du château
de Versailles après avoir
passé une revue militaire
dans les cours, 10 juin 1837*
1846
Oil on canvas

The Crusades Rooms



*Bataille de Las Navas de
Tolosa, 1212*
1817
Oil on canvas

The Gallery of Battles



*Philippe-Auguste à la
bataille de Bouvines, 27
juillet 1214*
1827
Oil on canvas



*Bataille de Fontenoy, 11
mai 1745*
1828
Oil on canvas



Bataille d'Iéna, 14 octobre
1806
1836
Oil on canvas



Bataille de Friedland, 14 juin
1807
1836
Oil on canvas



Bataille de Wagram, 6 juillet
1809
1836
Oil on canvas



Howard Christy
1874





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