



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

# VERSAILLES REVIVAL 1867-1937

Exhibition at the Palace of Versailles  
19 November 2019 – 15 March 2020







**VERSAILLES REVIVAL**  
**1867-1937**

19 November 2019 – 15 March 2020  
Palace of Versailles  
Africa and Crimea Rooms

Exhibition organised by  
**The Palace of Versailles**

Exhibition Curator  
**Laurent Salomé**  
Director of the Museum  
of the Palace of Versailles

Scenography  
**Hubert Le Gall**

## THE RE-BIRTH OF VERSAILLES 1867-1937

In autumn 2019, the Palace of Versailles will be presenting an exhibition dedicated to a crucial period in the Palace's history: from 1867 (the year of the first retrospective dedicated to Marie-Antoinette) to 1937 (when the number of visitors to the Palace hit a record number of over one million). 100 years after the French Revolution, at the dawn of the Belle Époque, a remarkable sense of fondness, nostalgia, curiosity and enthusiasm developed around Versailles. The earliest signs appeared under the French Second Empire with Empress Eugenie and her fascination with Marie-Antoinette. At the end of the century, this fascination spread to artistic and literary circles. Marcel Proust rediscovers this "*Versailles, a rusty yet soft and grand name, a royal graveyard of foliage, monumental fountains and marble (...)*". At the same time, historicist painting, which had already been in fashion since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, saw a spectacular rise in popularity and found some of its finest subjects at Versailles. Furniture and decorative arts reproduced important royal works. The palace also served as a model for King Ludwig II of Bavaria and, following his example, the residences of Boni de Castellane and Alva Vanderbilt as well as the SS France Ocean liner in 1912, dubbed "Versailles of the seas". Magnificent parties breathed new life into Trianon. In 1896, Sarah Bernhardt performed at the Palace during the visit by Tsar Nicolas II. A timeless society formed around the symbolic monument, with high-society figures such as Countess Greffulhe and Robert de Montesquiou, writers such as Marcel Proust and Henri de Regnier,

musicians like Reynaldo Hahn and Gabriel Fauré, and painters like Paul Helleu and Giovanni Boldini, as well as the Versailles landscape designer, Achille Duchêne. Simultaneously to this wave of enthusiasm the curators of the Palace were putting enormous efforts into restoring it to its former glory and returning it to something close to its condition under the Ancien Régime.

Pierre de Nolhac, Director of the museum from 1892 to 1920, was the key figure of this undertaking. This is the beginning of a long-term work that continues today, searching for lost objects and decorations one by one, to achieve the impression of a palace that had never been emptied. The exhibition displayed in the Africa and Crimea Rooms, puts in tension these two parallel stories.

On the one hand, a chronic of the "resurrection" of the Palace, to quote the title of Pierre de Nolhac's memoir, and on the other hand, a surprising period in the history of art when Versailles became a model for various painters, from the Russian Alexander Benois to Georges Rouault via Gaston La Touche, Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer and Henri Le Sidaner, as well as photographers like Atget, Steichen and Man Ray.

With the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Palace of Versailles found renewed royal and aristocratic splendour and a new level of popularity.

The cinema seizes it from its beginnings, tourism intensifies and fashion is inspired by it. The Fountains Show that never lost its appeal during the nineteenth century became a favourite destination for popular tourism.

## OVER FOUR HUNDRED WORKS ON DISPLAY

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, between the two Universal Exhibitions held in Paris in 1867 and 1937, was a crucial period in the history of Versailles.

Through nearly 400 works, this exhibition retraces the surprising moment in the history of art when Versailles was given a place among the great literary, pictorial and musical models, while at the same time a major restoration and refurnishing program was launched at the Palace. At a time when the figure of Marie-Antoinette became a nostalgic icon, the assemblies of the French Republic met at Versailles and foreign sovereigns were received at the Palace.

The gardens hosted aristocratic parties and popular tourism.

Artists of all origins including painters, photographers and illustrators, flooded to the site and Versailles replicas sprung up all over the world.

These sketches, paintings, decorative articles, furniture and photographs will be exhibited from the collections of Versailles, numerous French museums and major international museums (the Hermitage Museum in Saint-Petersburg, the Library of Congress in Washington, the Alte Nationalgalerie in Berlin, the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, Hillwood Museum in Washington, Chazen Museum of Art in Madison, the Giovanni Boldini Museum in Ferrare, the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, etc.).

**Eugène Lami, *The Neptune Fountain***

***Lit Up at Versailles, 1864*, Versailles,**

Musée National des Châteaux, MV 8015

© RMN-GP (Château de Versailles) / © Gérard Blot



# EXHIBITION VISIT

# NOSTALGIA AND RECONCILIATION

## Empress Eugenie and Marie-Antoinette

Empress Eugenie was quick to identify with Marie-Antoinette and was fascinated by the Queen. In 1867, the first exhibition dedicated to the sovereign, organised under her aegis, was held during the Universal Exhibition in Paris and brought together souvenirs of Marie-Antoinette. The restoration of her room in the Petit Trianon, recreated for the occasion, offered a perfect illustration through its artificial mix of styles and origins. Versailles was revived on the occasion of grand parties, such as during the visit by Queen Victoria in 1855.

1 Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *Empress Eugenie*, 1857, Washington D.C., Hillwood Museum

2 Victor Joseph Chavet, *The Overture to the Ball in the Hall of Mirrors, Versailles, 1855*, 1855, Londres, Royal Collection Trust

## Historicism

On the rise since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, historicist painting found an endless source of inspiration in the newly-fashionable Versailles, with the likes of Eugène Lami during the French Second Empire. Scenes depicting the life of Marie-Antoinette gradually increased in number.

From meticulously portrayed events to the wildest fantasy, from the *Grand Siècle* to the *Fêtes Galantes*, the iconography and style of painting took a step back from modernity.

3 Georges Roux, *The Royal Family in a Gondola on the Grand Canal*, Versailles, musée Lambinet  
© Château de Versailles/© Christophe Fouin

## Alexandre Benois or the Russian fascination

Russian artists and craftsmen played an important role in the revival of Versailles, especially the painter and decorator Alexandre Benois who was fiercely passionate about the site and dedicated

many works to it: landscapes and historicist scenes inspired by the *Grand Siècle*, such as his series of *The Last Walks of the Sun King*.

4 Alexandre Benois, *The Water Parterre, Versailles, 1905-1907*, Stockholm, Nationalmuseum

5 Alexandre Benois, *The Bath of the Marquise*, 1906, Moscou, Tretyakov Gallery

## THE FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC IN THE KING'S PALACE

Between the proclamation of the German Empire in 1871 and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 in the Hall of Mirrors, the Third Republic established its seat in Versailles. The receptions of Heads of State are sometimes accompanied by spectacular celebrations. The former capital was once again placed on the map of international political gameplay.

6 Léopold Delbeke, *The Hall of Mirrors ready for the signature of the Peace Treaty of Versailles, 28 June 1919*, 1919, Versailles, musée national des châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon  
© Château de Versailles, Dist.RMN/  
© Jean-Marc Manai

7 Georges Barbier, *Le bonheur du jour, ou, Les grâces à la mode/text and drawings by Georges Barbier: The Allies at Versailles*, 1920/1925, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

## IN SEARCH OF THE REAL VERSAILLES

Pierre de Nolhac, Director of the museum from 1892 to 1920, established the foundations for a scientific restitution of the *Ancien Régime* apartments and a refurnishing of the Palace. His historical work suddenly advanced the knowledge of the domain, as did the work carried out in parallel by the architectural department. Paintings by his friend, Maurice Lobre, reflect the precise and analytical vision of a palace whose true nature they seek to discover. Founded in 1907, the *Société des Amis de Versailles* contributed to prestigious acquisitions. Important literary figures

such as dramatist Victorien Sardou acted as president of the society.

8 Maurice Lobre, *Salon of the Dauphin*, 1901, Saint-Pétersbourg, State Hermitage Museum, Chtchoukine Collection

## THE GARDEN OF POETS

### Literary, artistic and social effervescence

#### Writers and musicians

Marcel Proust, who stayed at Versailles on several occasions, is one of the great figures of the Revival and the author of some magnificent pages on the evocative poetic power of the Palace. Versailles inspired *Les Perles Rouges* by Robert de Montesquiou, *La Cité des Eaux* by Henri de Régnier, but also poems from Anna de Noailles and writings from Maurice Barrès. It became a musical subject for many composers, including Reynaldo Hahn. In June 1908, he played alongside Gabriel Fauré during a grand evening event organized on the Grand Canal.

9 Jean-Louis Forain, *Anna de Noailles*, 1905, Private Collection

10 *La nuit de Trianon, Sheet music*, lyrics by Paul Barret and music by Eugène-Jean-Baptiste Anthiome

#### Giovanni Boldini

Giovanni Boldini stands at the turning point between this narrative painting that brought the past to life and the modern representations of an elegant society that gathered around the Palace at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

11 Giovanni Boldini, *The Colonnades of Versailles*, Madison, Winconsin, Chazen museum of Art, Gift of Nathan Cummings

12 Giovanni Boldini, *Passeggiata a Versailles nel Settecento*, 1872-1875, Ferrare, museo Boldini  
Ferrara, © Gallerie d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

#### Festivities

Elegant parties on a countryside theme were organised in the park with a blend of music, declamations and disguises in an ambiance that was both simple and aristocratic, with the active encouragement of personalities such as the Countess Greffulhe. Leading names performed



there, including Julia Bartet and the Mante sisters. Women's magazines popularized astonishing visions of *fêtes galantes* on the steps and in the groves of the gardens of Versailles, admiring the sumptuous costumes of the most high-profile personalities, like Anna Gould or Cléo de Mérode.

- 13 *Collection of old photographs of different parts of the domain, interiors and exteriors, of the Palace of Versailles and of the Trianon, country festivities 27 June 1901*, Versailles, musée national des Châteaux  
©RMN-GP (Château de Versailles)/  
© Gérard Blot

### The invention of the Versailles autumn

All the writers, artists and lovers of Versailles during this period agreed that autumn was the season when the beauty of the place could be admired best. With the canvases of Paul Helleu, Le Sidaner or Giovanni Boldini, a melancholic orchestral composition was played on the "royal cemetery of leaves" described by Marcel Proust.

- 14 **Henri Zuber**, *The Past*, Versailles, 1898, Amiens, Museum of Picardie  
© Collection des Musées d'Amiens M.P.474
- 15 **Paul Helleu**, *Three Women in the Park at Versailles*, On loan from the Musée d'Orsay to the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest

## THEMES AND VARIATIONS

### New Versailles and new Marie-Antoinette

Both in France and abroad, Versailles exerted a fascination that gave rise to evocations, replicas and more or less ambitious variations. King Ludwig II of Bavaria was the first to imitate Versailles with his Herrenchiemsee Palace. Boni de Castellane, and later Robert de Montesquiou, would each have a Rose Palace. In the America of the *Gilded Age*, apartments along Central Park were furnished to imitate the royal apartments and, on Rhode Island, the Marble House of Alva Vanderbilt was a combination of the Grand and Petit Trianon. In terms of garden design, landscape designer Achille Duchêne made

a speciality of designing versions of Versailles, working for Elsie de Wolfe (Villa Trianon on the edge of the park of Versailles), for the Vanderbilts and for the Nordkirchen Castle in Germany. The SS France, the new ocean liner, left the shipyards in 1912. It became known as the "Versailles of the Seas", offering a Louis XIV style décor to wealthy transatlantic cruise passengers. European princesses and American heiresses identified with Marie-Antoinette at fancy dress balls, but also more generally through fashion and finery.

- 16 Ocean liner SS France in 1912, Private Collection

## CITY OF WATER

Water was an inexhaustible source of inspiration at Versailles. In spite of the difficulties, the Palace retained the prestige of its hydraulic wizardry throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Painters from Lévy-Dhurmer to Le Sidaner used it as a mysterious and modern motif. Photographers also contributed to the celebrity of the Fountains Show, which became a favourite destination for popular tourism. In 1895, the first film was shot at Versailles on this subject. Complementing this show, fireworks displays, known as "Night Festivities", also contributed to the success of Versailles.

- 17 **Gaston La Touche**, *The Neptune Fountain at Versailles*, Londres, Private Collection
- 18 **Gustave Pamard**, *The Fountain Show: the Latona Fountain and the Tapis Vert Parterre*, analog photograph, Paris, Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon  
© Château de Versailles, Dist. RMN/  
© Christophe Fouin

### Gaston la Touche

La Touche is the painter who went the farthest with the fantasy of a "Belle Époque Versailles", accepting his subjugation to the place: "I have had only one master, the park of Versailles". In his paintings, the ponds are surrounded by a joyful crowd of visitors, when not peopled

with swans or Naiads frolicking in the fountains.

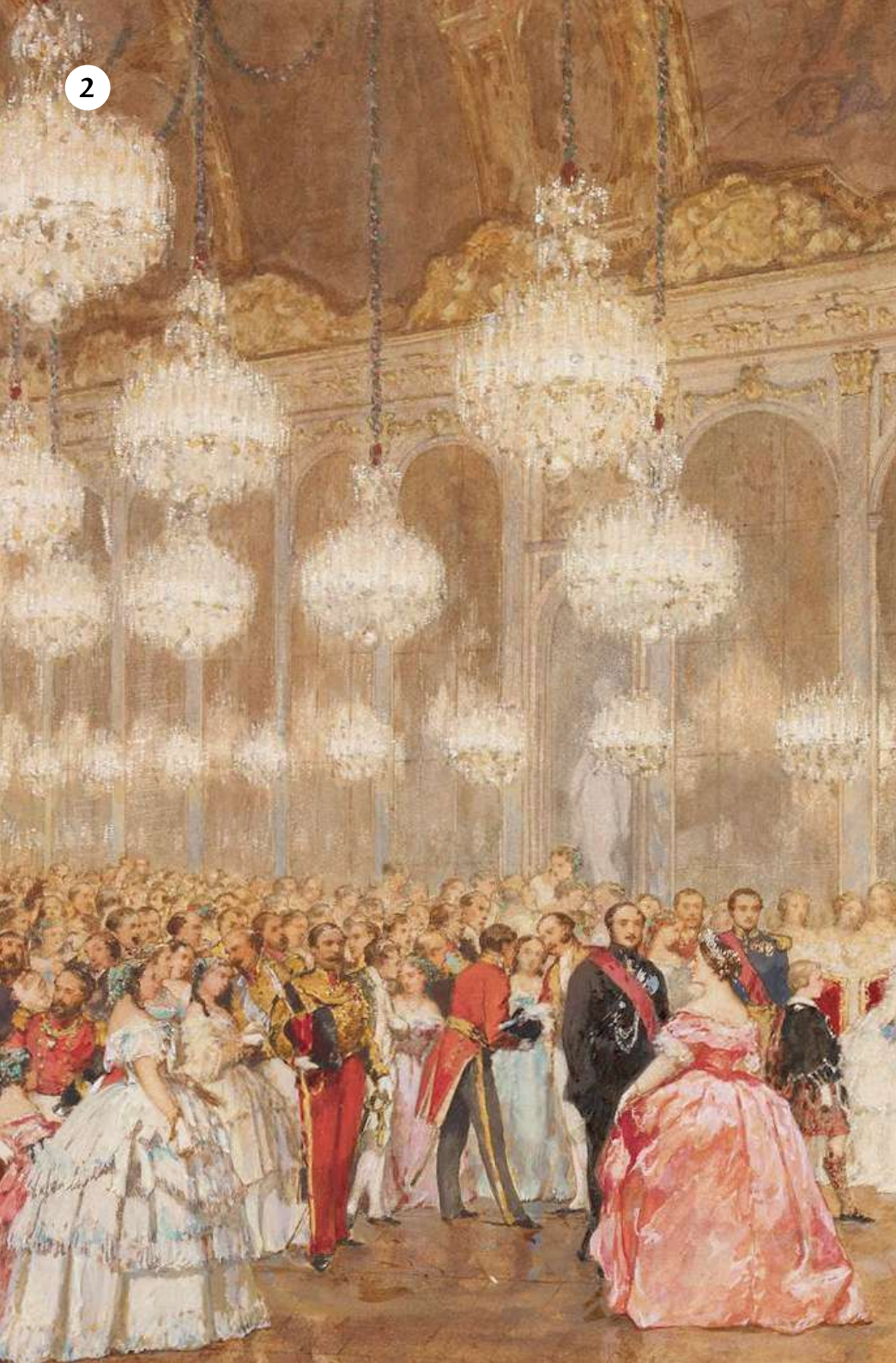
- 19 **Gaston La Touche**, *Dawn*, Strasbourg, musée d'Art moderne et contemporain

## POPULAR VERSAILLES

Postcards, advertising and photography (Man Ray, Kertesz) reflected the appropriation of the Estate by the general public. In this first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the boring image of Versailles was no more than a fading memory and artists converged from all countries, essentially to paint the gardens. The famous Danish couple formed by Gerda Wegener and her husband Einar, who would become a woman under the name Lily Elbe, came to give their interpretation of André Le Nôtre's great poem. During the Russian ballet performance in 1923, a certain Rockefeller fell in love with Versailles. Thus began the history of American patronage, which has played a deciding role in the revival of the Estate. Depicted by the painters Jean-Louis Forain and Georges Rouault, the park and its visitors moved away from the realism of Paul Helleu or Maurice Lobre, as lines came to be favoured over motif.

- 20 **André Steiner**, *Feet of a Passing Lady in Versailles*, circa 1935, Paris, Centre Pompidou
- 21 *Railways of western France. Versailles. Electric trams serving the stations Rive Gauche, Rive Droite and Les Chantiers*, 1899, Lithograph, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France













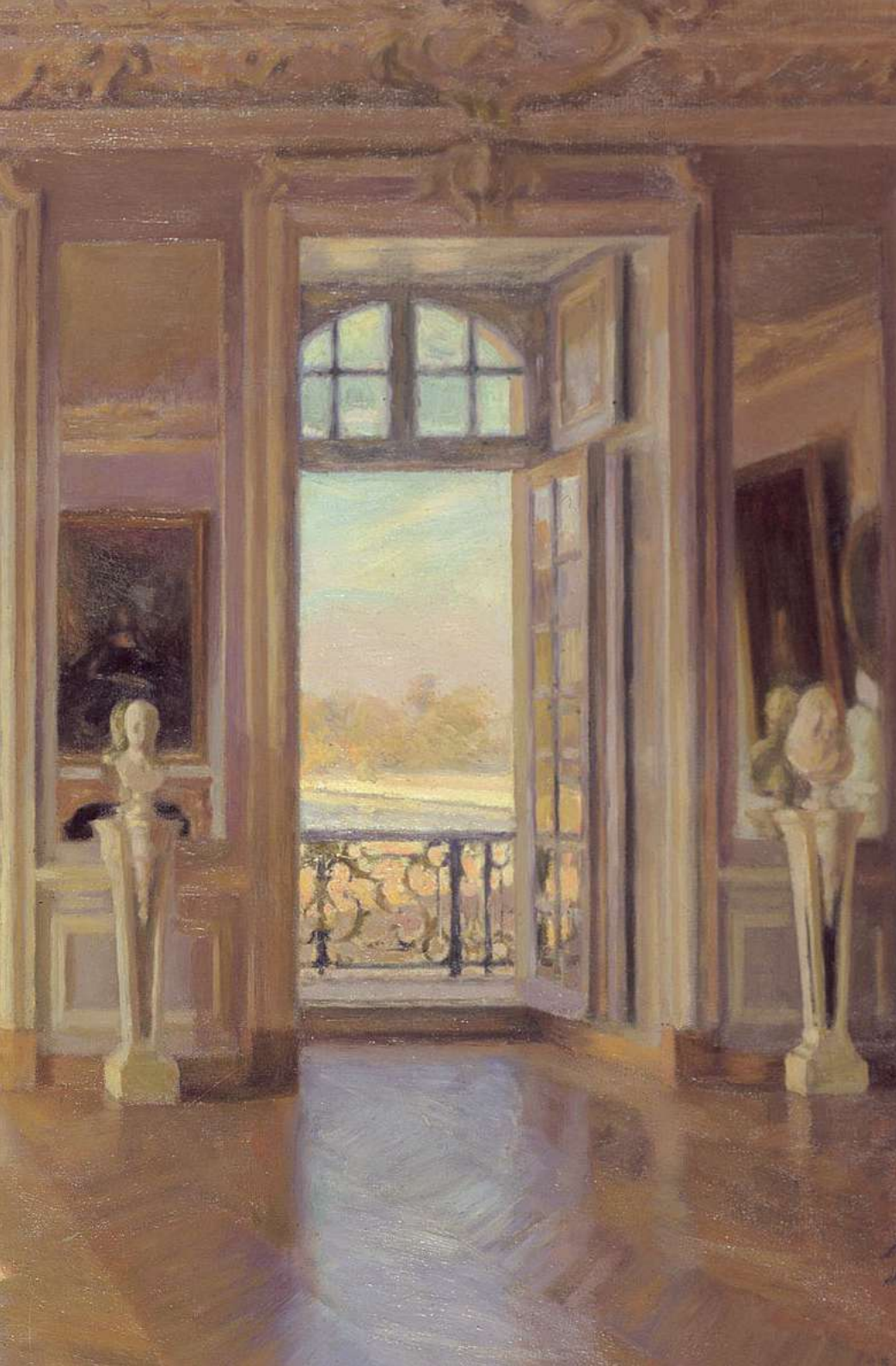














# NUIT DE TRIANON

Paroles de  
**PAUL BARRET.**

Musique de  
**EUG. ANTHIOME**

*Mouvt de Mouvet. dolce. piaz.*

**PIANO**

*piaz. très léger*

*una corda,*

*rall.*

*misterioso.*

Les grands ar - bres dans le silen - ce, Com - me pour u - ne con - fi - den - ce, Se

*mf*

- pen - chent vers le sen - tier noir, — Et, parmi les feuil - les de chè - ne Cou

- leur des che - veux de la Rei - ne, Sur Tri - a - non des - cend le soir, — A -

*rall.*

leur des che - veux de la Rei - ne, Sur Tri - a - non des - cend le soir, — A -

*rall.*











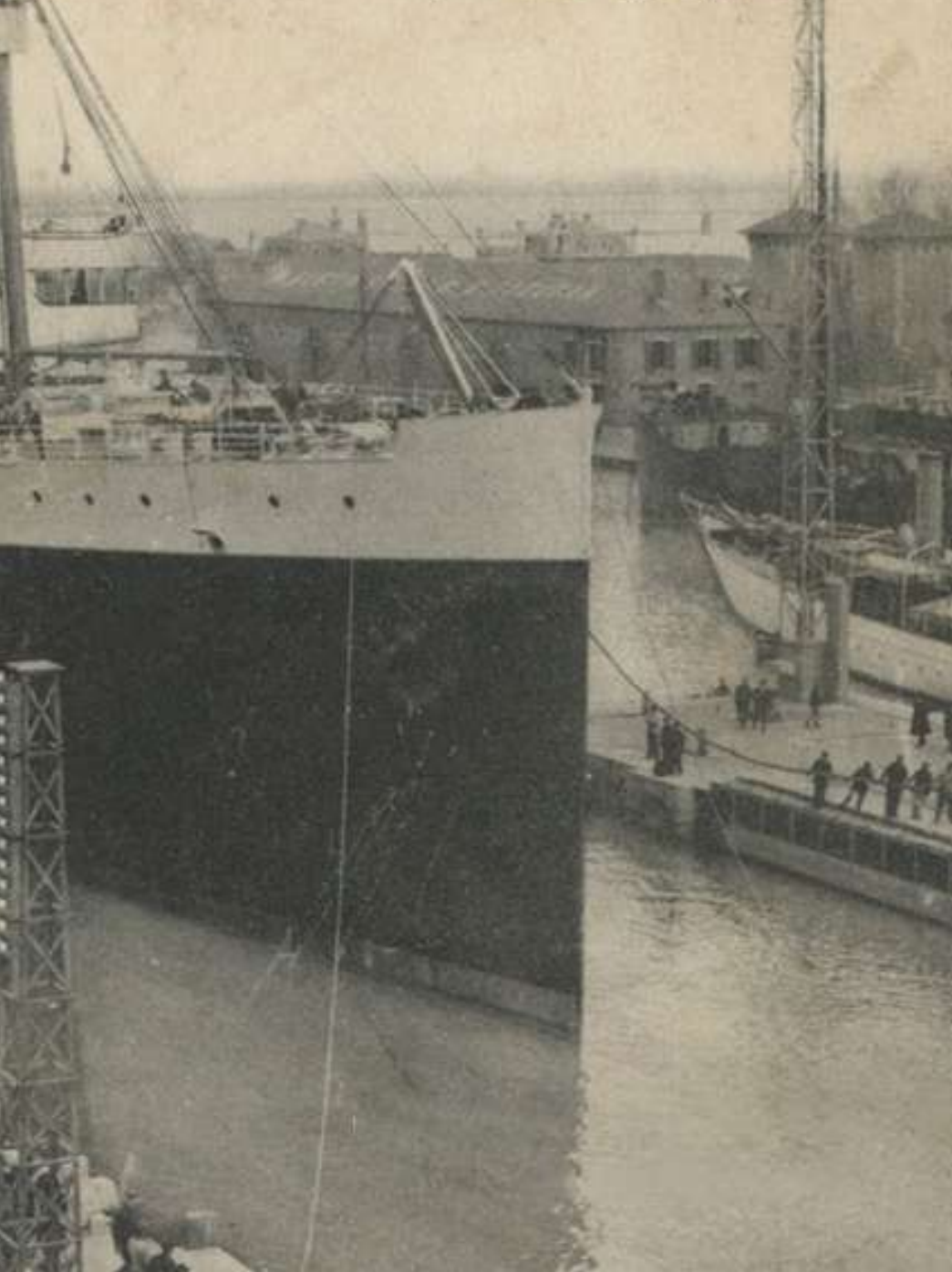








*Départ du Paquebot "FRANCE"  
(3 Avril 1912)*

















*Chate*  
CHEMINS DE FER DE L'OUEST

# Versailles



BASSIN D'APOLLON

## TRAMWAYS ÉLECTRIQUES

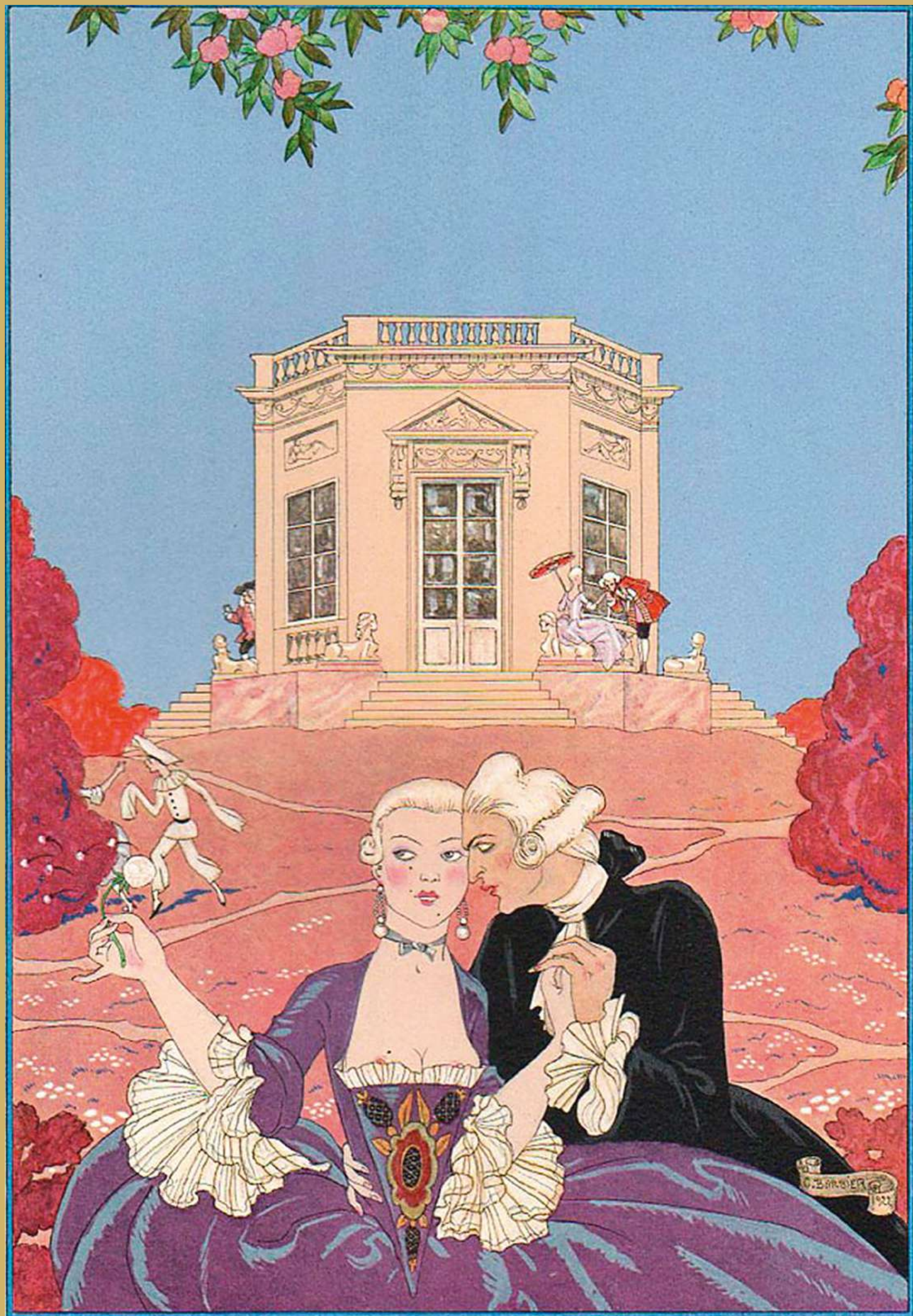
DESSERVANT LES GARES Rive droite, Rive gauche et les Chantiers



LA FERME

CHAPELLE DU CASTEL

CORRESPONDANCE A TOUS LES TRAINS  
pour le PALAIS, (Musée, le Parc, Grandes-Eaux)  
le Grand et le Petit Trianon



## PATRONAGE BENEFITS

### TAX BENEFIT

In accordance with the provisions of the French Law of 1 August 2003 on patronage, companies paying, in full or in part, their taxes in France are eligible for a corporate tax relief equal to 60% of the amount of their donation, not exceeding 0.5% of their pre-tax turnover. If this limit is exceeded, the surplus may be carried over to the following five fiscal years.

For American taxpayers, donations entitle you to a tax deduction according to Article 501(c) of the US Internal Revenue Code.

### EXTRAORDINARY VISIBILITY AND MEDIA RESONANCE

Key figures:

- ▶ 8.1 million visitors per year;
- ▶ More than 20,000 references to the Palace of Versailles per year, across all press media;
- ▶ A total of 15.7 million visits to our websites per year;
- ▶ Almost 10 million views on our YouTube channel;
- ▶ 2 million followers on our social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Youtube and WeChat).



George Barbier, Illustration from *Fêtes Galantes* by Paul Verlaine, 1928, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France

### OFFICIAL OPENING

The patron company will be associated with the official opening, including reserved invitations for the patron's most valued guests.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PATRON ON ALL COMMUNICATION MEDIA RELATED TO THE EXHIBITION

- ▶ Advertising posters;
- ▶ Banners set up at the entrance to the Palace and Estate;
- ▶ Invitation cards to the official opening;
- ▶ The catalogue cover page;
- ▶ Press advertisements;
- ▶ The Palace website [chateauversailles.fr](http://chateauversailles.fr).



## LASTING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE PATRON ON THE DONORS' PLAQUE

For patronage donations of €500,000 and over, the patron's name will be engraved on the donors' plaque located in the North Wing gallery leading to the Royal Opera House.

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- ▶ A press opening is organised by the Palace of Versailles;
- ▶ The name of the corporate patron features in press kits sent to 2,500 French and foreign journalists;
- ▶ A dedicated presentation page is reserved for the patron inside the press kit.



## CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

- ▶ A presentation of the exhibition by the curator may be organised at the company's headquarters;
- ▶ The new Palace Auditorium can be made available to host seminars, corporate meetings, assemblies, etc.

## PHOTO RIGHTS

The patron will be licensed to use photos belonging to the Palace of Versailles of the works exhibited, for the company's corporate communication (annual reports, greetings cards...).





## PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE PRESTIGIOUS SETTING OF THE VERSAILLES ESTATE

(from under 10 to more than 1000 people)

Spaces can be made available for free within the Palace and Estate of Versailles (Gallery of Great Battles, Hercules Room, Grand Trianon Gallery, Orangery, Royal Opera House, etc.) to host prestigious public relations events, with private tours of the exhibition or of the Palace and Estate of Versailles, outside public opening times.



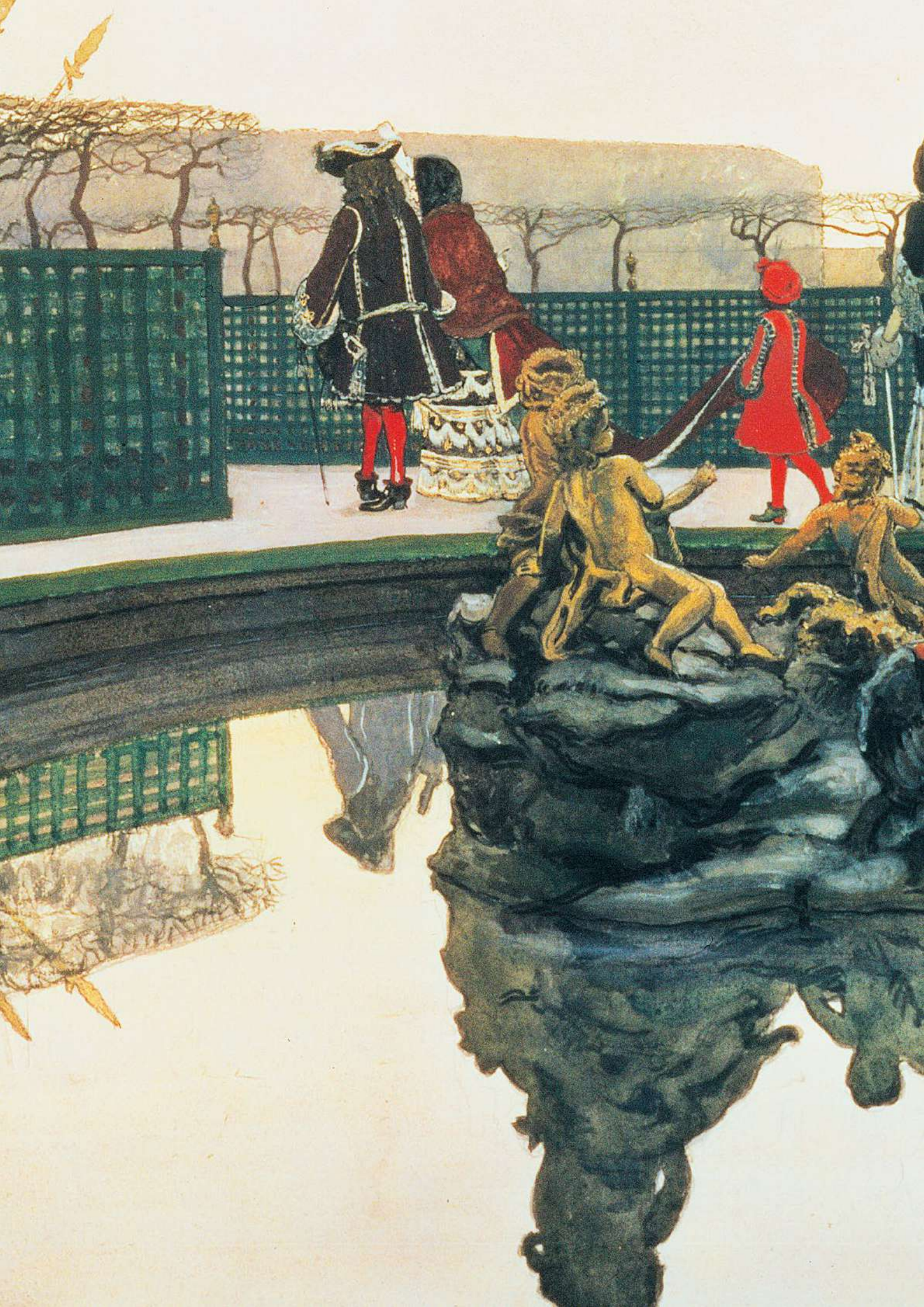
## ADMISSION TICKETS AND "A YEAR IN VERSAILLES" CARDS

The patron can benefit from free admission tickets to the exhibition and the Palace during public opening times and/or "1 year in Versailles" membership cards granting unlimited access to the Palace and Estate of Versailles at public opening times and for a period of one year, or more.

## AND WHAT ABOUT USING YOUR PATRONAGE BENEFITS TO SERVE A GREATER CAUSE?

As part of these benefits, the corporate patron may organise one or more events devoted specifically to members of the public said to be alienated from museums. The special opening of the Palace on a Monday (weekly closing day) can offer the freedom of unique discoveries and original activities aimed at bringing culture and heritage to a wider audience.





**Alexandre Benois, *The King's Walk*,**  
1906, Moscou, Tretyakov Gallery



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## **SUPPORT VERSAILLES:**

[en.chateauversailles.fr/support-versailles](http://en.chateauversailles.fr/support-versailles)