



## Presse release



Modern department, from Louis XIV to Napoleon III  
Permanent collections  
Reopens to the public on 20 March 2010

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# MARCH 2010, THE ARMY MUSEUM COMPLETES ITS RENOVATION

## OPENING OF NEW AREAS

On 20 March 2010, the Army Museum will reopen to the public all presentation areas of its permanent collections located in the Orient wing, after four years of renovation.

After the period *From Louis XIV to Napoleon 1<sup>st</sup> (1643-1814)*, presented in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor rooms inaugurated on the occasion of the Night of the museums on 16 May 2009, visitors will discover the rest of the rooms and the **collections relative to the 1815 to 1870 period** – from the Hundred Days to the Commune, including **major museum pieces** such as Charles X's robe of state, carabineer Fauveau breastplate, who died in Waterloo, pierced by a cannonball, Napoleon III's saddle used in the battle of Magenta or Coignet's portrait of Field Marshal Maison.

**2010 therefore marks a significant stage in the museum's history: the completed renovation** of museum areas dedicated to permanent collections, which will all be accessible to the general public after being closed, rehabilitated and reopened in successive stages since 2003.

On the ground floor of the Orient wing, the **two former refectories of the residents of the *Hôtel des Invalides*** will once again be accessible, both decorated with mural paintings by Jacques Antoine Friquet de Vauroze (1648-1716). Completed in 1677-78, these decors portray the main episodes of the War of Devolution (1667-1668) in Flanders – battles of Charleroi, Tournai etc. – and the Franche Comté region – battles of Besançon, Dole etc. They were the object of a **large-scale restoration**, supervised by Madeleine Hanaire and completed in December 2009.

These two former refectories constitute thematic areas of the new visit itinerary. One of them, known as the "Turenne room", will evoke the original purpose of the space – which was to provide meals to the residents of the *Hôtel des Invalides* – via an alignment of tables, displaying written and picture documents for the visitors while giving them elements to comprehend the *Hôtel des Invalides*. The other one, known as the "Vauban room", will display an **impressive procession of thirteen horsemen** from the *Consulat* era to the Second Empire, some of them from the studios of painters Ernest Meissonnier and Edouard Detaille, as a tribute to the history of the Army museum and its forerunner the Army history museum with which these artists were connected.

In these new rooms combining chronological reading and thematic approaches, the public will benefit from **numerous tools to support the visit** giving a better understanding of the objects, weapons, uniforms and works of art exhibited by replacing them in their context. Multimedia terminals, animated scale models of major battles, audio stations and guides and interactive additions to traditional signage will make the **collections attractive, accessible and comprehensible by the largest possible**

**number of visitors**, enthusiasts or novices, who will therefore become more involved in their own visit.



Living in the eras, immersing oneself in History, this is the new evolution of the Army museum, **which resolutely becomes a history museum.**

# RENOVATION OF THE MODERN DEPARTMENT

## CONTEXT, COLLECTIONS, STAKEHOLDERS

### The ATHENA programme

2010 marks the completion of the plan designed to reshape the Army museum, ATHENA (2003-2010). The full reopening of the Orient wing after four years of major renovation works (it was closed in 2006) finally means that the museum can offer a comprehensive visit discovering French history from the Middle Ages until now. This fourth and final stage finalises the modernisation of the museum's permanent exhibition rooms: the Ancient, arms and armours department (which reopened in December 2005), the World War One and Two department (which reopened in July 2006) and the opening of the Charles de Gaulle Memorial (inaugurated in February 2008).

### Rich, varied and unique collections

The collections of the modern department include **thousands of items from the world's top collections in terms of diversity and sheer volume**. They have regained pride of place within the new museography to retrace **France's military, political and social history** over more than two and a half centuries, from 1643 to 1870: uniforms of private or elite soldiers, pieces of equipment from numerous regiments, weapons, emblems, decorations, iconography, personal effects of major historical figures (Napoleon Bonaparte, Marshals of the Empire – Lannes, Bessières etc., Charles X, Louis-Philippe, Napoleon III etc.).

On the ground floor, the Vauban room presents a "procession" of 13 horsemen. Added to the traditional collections of uniforms and pieces of equipment are equally exceptional horses, created in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Project stakeholders

This achievement is the result of a close collaboration between the management of the museum, the curator of the modern department and his team, supported by the museum's scientific and technical staff, under the aegis of historians and specialists, members of a scientific council.

The museum, following a call for tender, selected the *Repérages Architecture* agency to be the project manager (this agency having already demonstrated its ability in projects for the Louvre – Venus and Parthenon Gallery, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London – Islamic Gallery, the Péronne World War One Memorial etc.).

### A new setting for the collections

A surface area of 3,700 m<sup>2</sup> over two floors underwent a thorough **renovation**, in keeping with the spirit of ATHENA the objective of which is to turn the Army museum into a genuinely **modern, didactic, coherent and pleasant history museum accessible to all** French and foreign visitors, individuals and groups, novices and enthusiasts.

The museography of the former rooms, designed in the 1960s and 1970s, was dated and no longer corresponded with the expectations of the public, visit procedures, scientific, cultural and educational ambitions of the museum. At the same time, the establishment needed to comply with current safety and accessibility standards.

One of the major concerns of the project team was to highlight the collections, which required the creation of a **new historical approach, a new scenography** (choice of presentation, showcases, colours, lighting) and the implementation of **cultural mediation supports** to enlighten the visitor. Today's objective is no longer to display as many items as possible in the rooms but to improve their presentation by making them comprehensible by all. The new museography provides the opportunity of an actual rediscovery.

The rotation principle of part of the collections should also enable the regular discovery of new pieces.

Structured in accordance with didactic and scientific principles, **the visit is organised chronologically and thematically**. Visual and audio mediation supports make the presentation more dynamic and explain the collections, their history and context (animated scale models, audio guides, multimedia and audio terminals, maps).



# ARCHITECTURE AND MUSEOGRAPHY

*Repérages Architecture Agency – Adeline Rispal*

## Repérages Architecture

The **Repérages agency** was founded in 1990. It is managed by **Adeline Rispal**, a certified architect and museum designer, and is made up of architects, interior designers, designers and museum designers. Its activity mostly covers cultural projects as well as all domains of urban, territorial, commercial and museum scenography.

Its approach is designed to extend the traditional fields of investigation of architectural projects to other scientific, literary, artistic projects in order to look at the issues raised by each situation via a multiple perspective. This shift in perspective combined with a global approach of the project parameters results in interactions which generate original solutions, in keeping with the genius of the museum as well as the client's objectives. Its specific characteristic is that it acts on all levels of expression (urban, architectural and scenographic scales) to achieve coherence and enhance the multiple aspects of the same project. The agency treats all projects as a conductor would, in close collaboration with teams of consultants and partners: curators, historians, philosophers, museologists, scientists, lighting and multimedia specialists, graphic designers, engineers, economists, musicians, artists etc. on a European and international scale (Russia, USA, Arab World).

## The ATHENA IV programme

In 2003, the Repérages agency won the architectural competition launched by the public corporation of the Army museum for the restructuring – renovation and museography of the Orient wing of the Army museum in the *Hôtel national des Invalides* in Paris. This restructuring is part of the vast ATHENA renovation programme. ATHENA IV, the purpose of which is to treat the Orient wing of the museum, intends to complete the thematic developments dedicated to the history of the *Hôtel des Invalides* and Army museum and renovate the buildings and museography of the modern department – from *Louis XIV to the fall of Napoleon III*.

## The Heritage project

In agreement with Benjamin Mouton, the head architect of historical monuments in charge of the building, Repérages proposes the recreation of the spatial divisions as they existed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when a wide central alley led to the rooms of the resident soldiers – sometimes invalids – occupying the three wings around the *Cour de la Valeur*. *Localised spatial divisions enable the highlighting of exceptional programme elements such as battles for example.*

## Spatial specialisation

To respond to the museum's ambition to switch from an object museum to a history museum, Repérages proposes spatial "specialisation" and the highlighting of the interactions between the different components of the French armed forces: from national history to military policy, from strategy to weapons technique, from soldiers to army corps.

To create an overall unity of architecture and museography, the programme alternates between themes relative to the links between armed forces and nation, national military apparatus, armed forces and powers that be... The systemic nature of the museographic approach enables visitors to choose their type of visit:

- \* thematic and linear: the history of the collections;

- \* multi-disciplinary, cross-sectional and chronological all at once: the history of armed forces as part of wider history and as part of social and cultural history.

## Army in motion

The design of museum furniture aims at rigour and efficiency. The pedestal and hanging process is fundamental, as collections are the focal point of the scenography. Deep showcases, arranged on a 90 cm anthropomorphic frame, display prestigious collections as part of a general layout which evokes the movement of troops in the field. Mirrors positioned at the back of showcases increase the number of uniforms to provide a mass effect and reveal all aspects of these uniforms.

Expanding showcases, reflections, separations, fragmentation, shifts, animated images, visual openings, the scenography tries to push spatial limits into an imaginary area, that of the movement and history of the army corps.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

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### Opening hours

Open every day from 10am to 6pm (from April 1st to September 30th) : from 10am to 5pm (from October 1st to March 30th)  
Nocturne on Tuesdays to 9 pm  
Closed the 1st Monday of every month (from October to June included), and January 1st , May 1st, November 1st and December 25th

### Access

Métro : Invalides, Varenne, La Tour Maubourg  
RER C Invalides  
Bus 28/49/63/69/82/83/87/92  
Nearby parking

### Fees

8.50 € / 6.50 €  
9 € / 7 € from April 1st

Free for under 26s (European Union)  
A single ticket gives access to the musée de l'Armée's permanent exhibitions, the Eglise du Dôme (the Tomb of Napoleon I, to the Musée des plans-reliefs and the Musée de l'Ordre de la Libération.

### Services

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