

# PRESS KIT | 2023

**CHÂTEAU  
DES DUCS DE  
BRETAGNE**  
**MUSÉE  
D'HISTOIRE  
DE NANTES**

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## COME BACK AND VISIT YOUR MUSEUM

For several years now, the **Musée d'histoire de Nantes**, which is also in charge of the **Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery**, has been carefully defining its singular and exemplary position regarding the social and political role it plays.

With its share of historical precedents, like the signing of the Edict of Nantes and past exhibitions – *Les anneaux de la mémoire* that, for the first time, looked unflinchingly at the city's oft glossed over involvement in the Atlantic slave trade, but also *Nantais venus d'ailleurs*, *En guerres or Amazonie*, and its refusal in the fall of 2020 to succumb to pressures to censor its *Genghis Khan* exhibition – the museum has consistently shown it is a **responsible actor when dealing with contemporary issues**, and never backing down from taking a firm stance. **It willingly breaks free from the strict, institutional framework of a history museum** to become an active participant in environmental, societal, and human struggles.

The exhibition, *L'abîme. Nantes dans la traite atlantique et l'esclavage colonial, 1707-1830* [i.e., "The Abyss. Nantes in the Atlantic Slave Trade and Colonial Slavery, 1707-1830" – October 2021 - June 2022] was part of this process, as has been the strong stance taken by *Expression(s) décoloniale(s)*, where the idea is to change people's perspectives by questioning their preconceived certainties on colonial history.

In 2023, **Barthélémy Toguo** will add his touch to the museum with the third edition of *Expression(s) décoloniale(s)*.

While continuing to add to its permanent display on the city's history, the Musée d'histoire de Nantes offers visitors an opportunity to discover other cultures, other histories, and other civilizations. In fall 2023, it will present an international exhibition **in collaboration with the Republic of Mongolia** devoted to the Mongolian conqueror **Genghis Khan** and the history of his immense empire, which stretched from the Pacific coast to the shores of the Mediterranean.

Following the exhibition's cancellation in 2020, it has been entirely redesigned and recomposed thanks to the support of many national museums, thus making the Musée d'histoire de Nantes the sole producer.

**Bertrand Guillet**

*director of the Château des ducs de Bretagne – musée d'histoire de Nantes*

## BERTRAND GUILLET

Director of the Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes

Bertrand Guillet, directeur, Château des ducs de Bretagne. © David Gallard / LVAN



Bertrand Guillet has been the Chief Curator and Director of the Château des ducs de Bretagne – Musée d'histoire de Nantes since 2011. He is also a member of the Scientific Committee for the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery and the *Global Curatorial Project* (GCP), spearheaded by the *Center for the Study of Global Slavery* at the *Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture* (NMAAHC) and the *Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice* (CSSJ) at Brown University, USA.

Bertrand Guillet has curated several exhibitions, including the highly acclaimed civilization *Samurai, 1000 ans d'histoire du Japon* ("Samurai, 1000 years of Japanese History") in partnership with Osaka Castle, made possible thanks to his in-depth knowledge of the subject and an extraordinary network with other museums. This same network has allowed for other exhibitions to tour abroad, for instance, *À bord de la Marie-Séraphique, navire négrier de Nantes* ("Aboard the Marie-Séraphique, a slave ship from Nantes") – designed to tour North and South America, which began at the Museo del Oro in Bogota – or creating exhibitions on local themes, thanks to donations of items from unexpected collections.

Among the members of this network are the *STARACO project* (STATuts, Races and Colors) in the Atlantic from antiquity to the present day, the AGCCPF (Association of France's Public Collections Curators), which held its national round table discussion on "Museums and History. How to put history on display?" hosted in part by the Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes in 2018.

The museum has also opened up through conferences featuring enlightened and enlightening historians who are pioneers in their field, and who help create new ways of thinking in our society. This museum's commitment can be seen in its future exhibition *Genghis Khan*, to be opened in October 2023, it had been put on hold in 2020 to meet an ethical imperative.

### **Exhibition curators**

- *Gengis Khan. Comment les Mongols ont changé le monde*, [Originally scheduled for 2020, postponed to October 2023]
- *Inde. Reflets de mondes sacrés*, in collaboration with the Museo Delle Civiltà of Roma from 15 October 2022 to 23 April 2023
- *LU, un siècle d'innovation (1846-1957)*, from 27 June 2020 to 16 May 2021
- *Nous les appelons Vikings*, in collaboration with history's museum of Stockholm (Suède), from 16 June to 18 November 2018
- *Les 47 Rônin : histoire d'un mythe japonais en estampes*, from 21 October 2017 to 07 January 2018
- *Les esprits, l'or et le chaman*, in collaboration with the Gold Museum in Bogota, Colombie, from 01 July to 12 November 2017
- *Samouraï : 1 000 ans d'histoire du Japon*, from 28 June to 11 November 2014

### **Publications on the theme of the Atlantic slave trade and colonial commerce:**

- *La Marie-Séraphique, navire négrier*, Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes. Ed. MéMo, 2010, 187 p. (*Monograph*)
- *A bordo de un navío esclavista La Marie-Séraphique* : colecciones del museo de historia de Nantes castillo de los duques de Bretaña / Exposition, Bogota, 27 October 2018 - 07 April 2019, Banco de la Republica, 2018, 68 p. (*Exhibition catalogue*)
- *Le musée d'histoire de Nantes – Mémorial de l'esclavage*, In : Musées et collections publiques de France. *Journées d'études nationales de l'AGCCPF* in Pays de la Loire n°277 – Volume 2, 2018, pp. 20-25 (*Communication*)
- *Enchaînés, dans l'entrepont de La Marie-Séraphique*. Éditions Petit à Petit, octobre 2021 (*Cartoon*)

### **And on the castle's history:**

- *Le château des ducs de Bretagne : huit siècles d'histoire*, Nantes, Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes, Collection : Les indispensables, 2017 (Available in english) (*Monograph*)
- *Le château des ducs de Bretagne. Entre grandeur et renouveau*, Nantes, Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes (PUR), 2016 (*Monograph*)

## KRYSTEL GUALDÉ

Scientific Director of the Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes

Krystel Gualdé, directrice scientifique, Château des ducs de Bretagne. © Manuel Cohen



Krystel Gualdé is the Scientific Director of the Musée d'histoire de Nantes and the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery. As a specialist in the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery, she has enlisted the museum in numerous partnerships and scientific networks at both the national and international levels, offering council and orientation to the *Foundation for the Memory of Slavery*, as well as the *SLAFNET Project* – *Slavery in Africa: a dialogue between Europe and Africa* – to only name a few.

She is also a member of the *Global Curatorial Project* (GCP) spearheaded by the *Center for the Study of Global Slavery* at the *Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture* (NMAAHC) and the *Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice* (CSSJ) at Brown University, USA.

Her knowledge of these themes has allowed her to contribute to numerous conferences, seminars and symposiums, as well as to provide her expertise for national institutions during fact-finding missions, for books, film scripts and scientific projects for new museums...

Even before the *Black Lives Matter* movement, her knowledge and insight allowed for the Musée d'histoire de Nantes to decolonize its perspective and doctrine by, among other things, inviting contemporary artists to participate in *Expression(s) décoloniale(s) #1* in 2018.

### Recent exhibition curators

- *Expression(s) décoloniale(s) #3* with the artist Barthélémy Toguo and the historian François Wassouni, from 13 May to 12 November 2023
- AAM AASTHA, *photographic exhibition by Charles Fréger*, from 2 July to 27 November 2022
- *Labîme. Nantes dans la traite atlantique et l'esclavage colonial, 1707-1830* from 16 October 2021 to 15 June 2022
- *Expression(s) décoloniale(s) #2* with the artist Romuald Hazoumè and the historian Gildas Bi Kakou, from 19 May to 14 November 2021
- *Amazonie, le chamane et la pensée de la forêt* from 15 June 2019 to 19 January 2020
- *Cimarron* by the photograph Charles Fréger from 02 to 14 April 2019
- *Expression(s) décoloniale(s) #1* with Moidja Kitenge Banza and Nicolas Delprat from 28 April to 04 November 2018

### Recent endeavours

- As part of the APM 2023 convention, a workshop entitled "Mémoires du futur" with Nelly Labère, March 15, 2023
- International symposium organized by Les Anneaux de la Mémoire (7 - 17 May, 2022) in Nantes called "Des traites aux émancipations" ("From Slave Trading to Emancipation"). This is part of "les enjeux mémoriels" and of the history in images event: "en beauté(s)".
- Conference "Esclaves sur le sol de France, une histoire oubliée" ("Slaves on French soil, a forgotten history"), Université Permanente, Nantes, December 20, 2021
- Fact-finding mission on the emergence and evolution of different forms of racism, and how one should respond to them – 23 July 2020 session at the Assemblée Nationale. Minutes n° 10. [https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/racisme/l15racisme1920010\\_compte-rendu#](https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/racisme/l15racisme1920010_compte-rendu#)
- "Patrimoines déchaînés" conference at Musée d'Orsay in Paris on May 6 and 7, 2019
- 7<sup>th</sup> Rencontres Atlantiques at the Musée d'Aquitaine in Bordeaux on May 9 and 10, 2019

### Publications on the Atlantic slave trade and colonial trade. (In French)

- *Labîme, Nantes dans la traite atlantique et l'esclavage colonial, 1707-1830*, Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes, 2021, 256 p. (*Monograph*)
- *Nantes dans la traite atlantique*, Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes – Collection: Les indispensables, 2021, 84 p. (Revised and expanded edition. (Available in english) (*Monograph*))
- *A bordo de un navío esclavista La Marie-Séraphique : colecciones del museo de historia de Nantes castillo de los duques de Bretaña* / Exposition, Bogota, 27 October 2018 - 07 April 2019, Banco de la Republica, 2018, 68 p. (*Exhibition Catalogue*)
- Musée versus mémorial ? In: Revue du Philanthrope n°7, 2018, pp. 99-111 (*Article*)
- *Musée d'histoire de Nantes château des ducs de Bretagne : six nouvelles salles* In: Bulletin de la Société Archéologique et Historique de Nantes et de Loire Atlantique – Tome 152, 2017, pp. 35-41 (*Article*)
- *Marguerite Urbane Deurbroucq, née Sengstack, et son esclave* In: Femmes et négoce dans les ports européens : fin du Moyen-Age-XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, Peter Lang, 2018, pp.139-153 (*Book chapter*)
- In chains: *Nantes and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* In: Exhibition catalogue « Europe and the sea » – Berlin Deutsches historisches museum – 13 June 2018 - 6 January 2019 pp. 80-88, 2018 (*Book chapter*)
- *Neuchâtel, Nantes et l'Afrique : une production textile pour la traite atlantique* In: Exhibition catalogue « Made in Neuchâtel : deux siècles d'Indiennes », Neuchâtel, musée d'art et d'histoire, 07 October 2018 - 19 May 2019, 2018, pp.52-63 (*Book Chapter*)
- Le musée d'histoire de Nantes – Mémorial de l'esclavage In: Musées et collections publiques de France. Journées d'études nationales de l'AGCCPF en Pays de la Loire n°277 – Volume 2, pp. 20-25 (*Communication*)
- *Enchaînés, dans l'entrepont de La Marie-Séraphique*. Éditions Petit à Petit, octobre 2021 (*Cartoon*)

# THE MUSEUM'S KEY TOPICS

## RENEWING HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

A good city history museum is one that also opens out on to the world. This is why the Musée d'histoire de Nantes regularly organizes temporary exhibitions about other continents and civilizations, from ancient eras to the present: **its goal is to encourage the discovery of otherness.**

This attention to a broader perspective can be seen in its permanent exhibition. The museum's research team bases its choices on the proven and undeniable fact that, long before our own period of globalization, contact had already been established between different populations. By applying the notions of a "connected" approach to history, it places Nantes' past within a network of national or international relationships. Each event is also observed in the long term in order to link it to less immediate causes or consequences. This *modus operandi* is also called "Global History", popularized in France by historian Patrick Boucheron. Through comparative chronologies, maps, or quotations that offer new perspectives, this dual mode of research allows us to lay out the general context of a local event, while also pointing out its consequences, or how it is echoed in other territories and time periods.

Questioning traditional historical narratives often surprises visitors. Without calling everything they know into question, **the museum shows visitors how historical research is advancing**, introducing them to themes and, through them, finding new ways to speak and think.

**History thus becomes a living thing that everyone is invited to grasp.** This itinerary encourages visitors to take a step back, even when looking at archival texts, and develop their own tools for reflection.

## A CIVIC MUSEUM

Reconsidering historical narratives also means redefining the very notion of a museum. What is its role in current-day society? For the Musée d'histoire de Nantes, it is no longer only to preserve objects and relay their history, but also to **take a stance regarding contemporary issues, be they political, societal or environmental.**

In doing so, the past becomes a tool for understanding the present.

Nantes played an important role in colonial commerce and the Atlantic slave trade. Far from repressing this past, the museum has chosen to explore it, since it existed on a global scale and still resonates with us today. Placing it within a civic perspective reflects the racism and various forms of discrimination that currently exist. Through values like tolerance and peace, this approach – which is also the approach to the rooms devoted to WWI and WWII – **aims to defend human dignity and social justice.**

Western thought must be freed from pre-existing notions and imaginary ideas born in the colonial era. By observing how relationships of domination have been established on a global level with lasting consequences, visitors are better able to detect the discriminations and other inequalities of today's world. The museum thus becomes a democratic space at the heart of the city, where a critical dialogue can exist between the past and the present.

Turning citizens into active participants can be done in different ways. First, in order to communicate emotionally with visitors and leave a more durable imprint on their memory, we embody history in concrete elements as often as possible. The use of the present tense in printed descriptions enhances this desire to make the past come alive in the present. Second, the museum not only showcases its great historical figures, but also society in general.

The collection drive among the local population in 2008 for objects related to the two World Wars was a milestone in this respect. Since then, items reflecting personal stories have been displayed that illustrate a broader view of history through individual experiences.

Both at the castle and the Musée d'histoire de Nantes, **accessibility for all remains a central priority**, as can be seen by the "Tourisme & Handicap" label they were awarded for their attention to the four categories of disability: visual, hearing, physical, and mental. The texts accompanying exhibits are part of this approach. The most relevant information is selected, and every event or name is paired with precisions to help visitors understand, regardless of their level of knowledge.

## A DYNAMIC MUSEUM

This process of updating the facts and values expressed by the museum requires several actions. First, temporary exhibitions may lead to **changes in the permanent itinerary**. Indeed, the research carried out when setting up these shows sometimes brings to light unknown aspects of the featured theme. If they prove to be convincing enough, new modules or texts will then be integrated into the museum. New themes are also needed to understand current social issues, like the role of women in economic and social life. More broadly speaking, the way in which objects are displayed is sometimes modified, and the words used in the descriptions may be adjusted when new historical research or major contemporary events change the way we understand past ones.

Another action concerns the diversity of viewpoints. The "Expression(s) décoloniale(s)" biennial is emblematic of this approach: for each edition, an African historian and artist are invited to look at the museum's collection and, through it, present their own vision of the world

to the public. And via the museum's cultural agenda, guest experts from other disciplines, like anthropology or sociology, as well as artists, contribute to our understanding of other perspectives.

Outside of exhibitions and happenings, the museum also dialogues with current affairs, where events are programmed bridging the collection and national or international incidents. On a more frequent basis, the castle also communicates its ongoing engagements and approach via social media platforms. Through all of these actions, the museum takes on a social function – not a place separate from life, but one where people can come to visit, reflect, and discuss the evolution of the world.

**Text by Pascaline Vallée,  
Independent journalist**

# A CIVIC CASTLE

## OPENING UP ONTO THE WORLD

Located in Nantes' historic quarter, in the Château des ducs de Bretagne, the Musée d'histoire de Nantes paints a picture of the town, from its beginnings to the city that it is today. The 32 rooms of the permanent visit offer an understanding of the city and its development, through key identity-forming events.

### THE FIRST OBJECT OF THE COLLECTION IS THE CASTLE.

Telling both the stories of Nantes and Brittany, the castle is a marker of the region's identity. Its successive transformations over the centuries can be seen during the visit by visitors, who discover the monument's interior architecture at the same time as the 1,150 objects.

'Nantes and its history' was chosen as the concept to facilitate the dialogue between the monument and the museum collections. The themes addressed are: the history of ducal Brittany, the slave trade and colonial history, the Loire estuary, the urban development, the shipping and shipbuilding, the industrial history, the two World Wars, the social movements. They all resonate in the present day.

The museum maintains privileged relationships with a large number of other museums, historians and philosophers throughout the world. It offers a new way of approaching history: "global" history. An historical process of integration that is global, economic and/or cultural, or as a contextual approach that is extended to embrace the planet. Here, globalization offers a means of studying objects.

The idea of the museum is to analyse, show and help people understand the city's past, including its darkest sides.

Nantes was significantly marked by colonial trade and the slave trade. The museum opted to make these topics the focus of a major section which has achieved international renown. The objects presented in it, some of which are exceptional for their rarity, are set out very differently from the rest of the visit.

### IN 2016, THE MUSEUM OPENED WITH NEW ROOMS EXPLORING THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY HISTORY,

with over 300 new objects in total. The museum became a key reference on the context of the French world wars.

The museum began conducting collection drives for objects relating to the city's recent history, back in 2008. This process became the museum's main way of expanding its collections, in addition to its acquisitions. A major collection drive on the two world wars led to the production of an exhibition, which took place from February 2013 to February 2014. It brought 1,500 new objects and documents to the collection.

### THE MUSEUM IS A MODEL FOR HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT.

In addition to enriching the collections, this experience has shown how significant involving local people in building its collections can be for strengthening the museum's local presence. The participatory collection process has allowed the people of Nantes to take ownership of their museum.

**AWARDED THE MUSÉE DE FRANCE LABEL | 1 150 OBJECTS | 32 ROOMS | 333 079 VISITORS IN 2022**

Anne of Brittany's castle, Château des ducs de Bretagne, Nantes © David Gallard / LVAN



## TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND THE CASTLE'S DIFFERENT USES

# ANNE OF BRITANNY'S CASTLE :

## A HISTORY OF THE CASTLE FROM ANNE OF BRITTANY TO THE CURRENT DAY



Itinerary *Le château d'Anne de Bretagne*  
© David Gallard / LVAN

### ITINERARY

#### LE CHÂTEAU D'ANNE DE BRETAGNE

It isn't always easy to find your way in the museum – or to see what the castle might've looked like in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century! So, to help visitors get to know one of Nantes' most important monuments, a **new itinerary through its different rooms has been created**.

Roughly twenty stops will help you get a sense of life in the castle during Anne of Brittany's reign and the way in which the different spaces were occupied on a daily basis.

The itinerary has been illustrated and translated into English and Spanish.



The castle in 3D, room 7, musée d'histoire de Nantes © David Gallard / LVAN

### THE CASTLE IN 3D : HISTORY OF ITS ARCHITECTURE

Since the summer of 2020, thanks to the important work of archaeologists and historians, visitors to the Château des ducs de Bretagne can now use a new media system to learn even more about this **monument's history and the evolution of its architecture**.

On a touch screen, visitors can scroll through all the historical eras on display, or just choose to look at one. They can compare different 3D images: Did this tower exist? Was it always this high? When was this building built? Why were the ramparts altered several times? Visitors have immediate access to countless facts without losing their way. Everything is within reach – and just a few taps away on a touchscreen tablet. The reconstitutions of the monument have been carried out with the greatest possible precision. A scientific committee composed of historians, art historians and archaeologists have all contributed to translating new research into 3D images. For instance, the final result makes it possible to show the first, 14<sup>th</sup> century-era castle as it has never been seen before.



*Magic wall* about the edict of Nantes, room 3, musée d'histoire de Nantes  
© David Gallard / LVAN

### THE EDICT OF NANTES SIGNED AT THE CASTLE

A “magic wall” entirely devoted to the Edict of Nantes is on display in the museum's room 3. This interactive and educational digital set-up aims to challenge visitors and turn them into empowered actors. The museum's research team has taken on the goal of making France's complex history with religion as accessible as possible through a navigation system with several levels of interpretation, depending on key dates. The second intention is to bring questions of religious tolerance and secularism to the fore, making the public aware of contemporary issues in the fight against all forms of discrimination, in French, English and Spanish.

When they touch the wall, visitors access essential information about the signing of the Edict of Nantes by Henry IV in 1598 at the castle. Texts, archival images and illustrations can also be viewed, placing events into their context, and explaining the major events leading up to the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man, which established religious freedom.



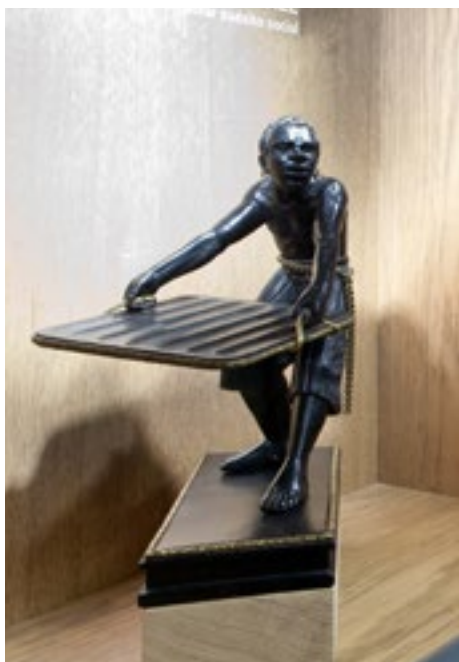
Room 4 © David Gallard



Château des ducs de Bretagne. Nantes © Michael MENIANE – Lensman Studio / LVAN

## THE MAJOR THEMES

# THE SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY



Room 13. Musée d'histoire de Nantes.  
© Patricia Bassen / LVAN



Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery  
© Karine Garcia-Lebailly



Musée d'histoire de Nantes, room 13  
© David Gallard / LVAN

The slave trade and slavery form part of the city's history and identity. From the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the slave trade played a prominent role in Nantes' trading activity and helped the city to prosper.

## LE MUSÉE D'HISTOIRE DE NANTES

The Musée d'histoire de Nantes covers these topics in the permanent itinerary. In exploring 12 of the museum's rooms, visitors will discover Nantes' role in the European slave trade and how trafficking campaigns were organised, as well as the ship owners and the merchants at the origin of this trade, how slaves were sold and their life in the plantations. To help identify the exhibits in the themed itinerary on the slave trade and slavery, a special logo can be found beside objects, display units and multimedia materials connected with the topic.

## MEMORIAL TO THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

In addition to remembering the victims of the Atlantic slave trade, it pays tribute to the struggles to abolish the trade of slaves and slavery throughout the world. Located on and beneath the quayside (Quai de la Fosse), the Memorial does not seek to explain or explore history, but rather to aid remembrance, raise awareness and convey a universal message.

## NANTES AT THE HEART OF THE SLAVE TRADE

In 2017, the Château hosted the exhibition *Les Esprits, l'Or et le Chaman* ("Spirits, Gold and Shamans") created by the Gold Museum in Colombia. Until April 7, 2019, Nantes was making headlines in Bogotá with an exhibition produced by our Musée d'histoire called "Aboard the Marie- Séraphique, Nantes' Slave Ship".

Through the example of this emblematic ship, visitors had an updated glimpse of the reality of the slave trade, from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The origin, heritage and presence of Colombians with African descendants have long remained invisible. This exhibition offered an opportunity to further our knowledge of slavery in this country's history and preserve the memory of Afro-Colombian populations.

To do this, the Gold Museum in Bogotá decided to turn to Nantes' expertise. 97 objects from the Musée d'histoire were presented there, and visitors could read quotes from our Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery. Many museums and institutions regularly look to Nantes for inspiration regarding issues related to the slave trade, slavery, and the scars these abominations have left on contemporary society. Offered for the first time in Columbia, this exhibition is intended to tour throughout North America.



Tiznao, Saint-Domingue, République dominicaine. Exposition *Cimarron*, 2019.  
© Charles Fréger



Château des ducs de Bretagne, Nantes.  
Romuald Hazoumè, *Petrol Cargo*  
© David Gallard / LVAN



Exhibition *L'abîme. Nantes dans la traite atlantique et l'esclavage colonial, 1707-1830*.  
© David Gallard / LVAN

Beyond a vision of a global and connected history – which was already present in the museum's itinerary – the 2018 exhibition *Expression(s) décoloniale(s)* allowed this institution to explore the question: can we decolonize our thinking, gaze, and imagination ?

For this event, the museum undertook a reassessment of its own itinerary by distancing it with the help of the artists Moridja Kitenge and Nicolas Delprat.

For 2019, the photograph Charles Fréger has been invited to present his series *Cimarron* in both the castle and the museum's permanent collections. This invitation therefore resonated particularly strongly with Nantes' commitment to confronting its own history.

As for the exhibition *Tromelin, l'île des esclaves oubliés* ("Tromelin, the Island of Forgotten Slaves") that took place at the Musée d'histoire de Nantes in 2016, it ended its long journey at the Musée de l'Homme in Paris in February 2019 after having travelled to Lorient, Bordeaux, Bayonne and Tatihou.

The second edition of *Expression(s) décoloniale(s)* took place from May to November 2021, featuring contemporary Beninese artist Romuald Hazoumè and Ivorian historian Gildas Bi Kakou.

The exhibition offered visitors an opportunity to question their views by discovering other historical perspectives on the Atlantic slave trade and slavery, introducing them to new ideas through Romuald Hazoumè's works and the uninterrupted dialogue they create between the past and present.

From October 2021 to June 2022, the major exhibition *L'abîme, Nantes dans la traite atlantique et l'esclavage colonial, 1707-1830* ("The Abyss, Nantes in the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery, 1707-1830") questioned the Musée d'histoire de Nantes' collections in order to reveal the lives of those who were victims of the colonial system. Immersive, evocative, and delicate, this exhibition offered an account of the complex reality behind the periods concerned, and particularly within the national territory.

Starting in May 2023, for the third edition of *Expression(s) décoloniale(s)*, some twenty powerful works will be featured at the museum by world-renowned Cameroonian artist Barthélemy Toguo, along with texts written by Cameroonian historian François Wassouni.

All of these exhibitions continue to participate in Nantes' reputation as an expert on the subject of the slave trade, and of slavery.

MÉMORIAL  
DE L'ABOLITION DE  
L'ESCLAVAGE  
MUSÉE  
D'HISTOIRE  
DE NANTES

# MEMORIAL TO THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The **Musée d'histoire de Nantes** is also in charge of the **Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery**.

More than ten years after the inauguration of the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, the link between the Musée d'histoire de Nantes and this monument – one of the most important in the world dedicated to the Atlantic slave trade, slavery and its abolition – continues.

Since 2007, the Musée d'histoire de Nantes has dedicated a large share of its space to a permanent section on the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery. Internationally recognized as a reference in the field, the museum has continued the scientific work it began then. Through events, exhibitions and conferences, it has never stopped questioning history or re-examining the way we look at the past – and the present.

Inaugurated in 2012 and designed by artist **Krzysztof Wodiczko** and architect **Julian Bonder**, the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery also contributes to questioning Nantes' relationship to its colonial past. This monument carries a three-fold message: it is a tribute to all those who rose up and fought against slavery, an invitation to reflect upon these crimes, and a call to continue struggling against all forms of human exploitation throughout the world.

Today, more than 10 years after the inauguration of the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, the Musée d'histoire de Nantes, which also manages the site, hopes to continue the process it began, as an active member at the heart of today's societal and human struggles.

A city itinerary comprised of 14 information panels symbolically links the Memorial and the Musée d'histoire de Nantes. Situated in close vicinity to sites and monuments connected with Nantes' slave trading past, these panels help to identify the traces of what was once a major activity for Nantes.

## TO LEARN MORE...

A press kit devoted to the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery is available.

*Liberté ! Le Mémorial de l'abolition de l'esclavage* is a French-language book telling readers everything they need to know about this contemplative space.

## THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE ON GOOGLE ARTS & CULTURE

The Château des ducs de Bretagne has partnered up with Google Arts & Culture to create virtual exhibitions offering exclusive content to visitors on a variety of themes, including Nantes and the Atlantic slave trade.

Google Arts & Culture: [g.co/artsandculture](https://g.co/artsandculture)

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION - MEMORIAL TO THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The Memorial is a freely accessible public space which is open all year round.

It is closed only at night and when flooding occurs on the Loire.

Unaccompanied visit: no booking required, open every day:

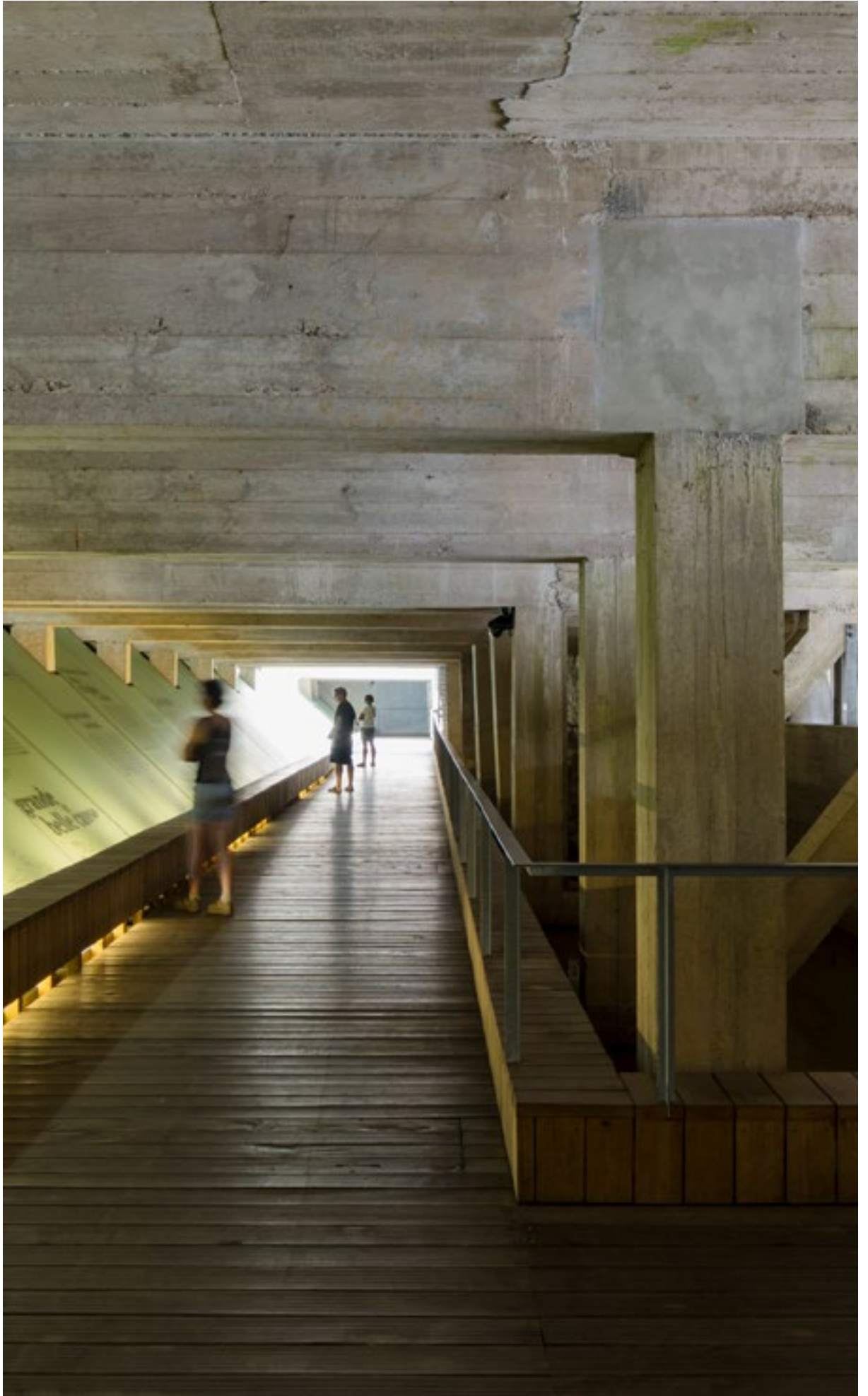
9 AM to 6 PM from 16 September to 14 May, 9 AM to 8 PM from 15 May to 15 September.

Last access to the meditative passage 30 minutes before closing.

Practical information: Individual visitors - Tel.: +33 (0) 811 46 46 44

[memorial.nantes.fr](https://memorial.nantes.fr)

Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, Nantes (Loire-Atlantique) © PHILIPPE PIRON / LVAN



# INDUSTRIALIZATION



© Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes

Both bourgeois and working-class, Nantes became an important industrial city in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The banks of the Loire were lined with avenues of factories stretching all the way out to Saint-Nazaire. Amieux, LU, BN, Saupiquet, Cassegrain, Biette, Sarradin... these companies were at the forefront of ingenious advertisements.

Through its collections and six of its rooms, the Musée d'histoire de Nantes explores the newly discovered trade routes used by Nantes' ship-owners in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, slave trafficking (illegal until 1848), the port's prosperity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (despite how difficult it was to navigate in the estuary), and the creation of the port of Saint-Nazaire.

At the time, ship-building and the development of canneries, biscuit-makers, and soap factories made Nantes a "great industrial and colonial port".

This "Venice of the West" gradually disappeared as port activities slid downstream to Saint-Nazaire. As for the Erdre River, it was diverted from its natural course and partly buried, while the two arms of the Loire were filled...

Bridges, docks, and ships eventually disappeared from Nantes' landscape.



Room 21 © Vincent Jacques / Le Voyage à Nantes - SAMOA



Room 21 © Vincent Jacques - SAMOA



Room 5 © Bernard Renoux



Room 15 © Bernard Renoux



Room 25 © Patricia Bassen

# THE TWO WORLD WARS



Room 26. Musée d'histoire de Nantes.  
© David Gallard / LVAN

From the opening of the Musée d'histoire de Nantes in 2007, it became clear that the rooms relating to modern history and particularly the periods concerning the world wars lacked content. The museum very quickly wanted to supplement these collections and the itineraries covering these rooms.

A major collection drive targeting local people was started in 2008, on the theme of the two world wars. As a result, 1,500 objects and archives were added to the collection. Every one of this wide variety of objects is fully documented. They each, in their own way, provide a glimpse of an era and the emotions associated with it, allowing the stories of many men and women to be told.

In June 2016, over 300 new objects were incorporated into the museum itinerary.

Four rooms entirely devoted to the two world wars were opened. The exhibition design, by Jean-François Bodin, is very different from the rest of the museum's rooms. Rough wooden boards and sand bags evoke the hoardings and barricades of occupied wartime cities.

This sequence recounts the experience of the generation that lived through two successive wars of extraordinary violence on an unprecedented scale. Although these two wars posed different challenges, they were both equally traumatising for those who lived through them. The fear, the sorrow of grief and the horror of combat can be seen in the documents and objects presented in these rooms.



Room 28. Musée d'histoire de Nantes. © David Gallard / LVAN



Room 28. Musée d'histoire de Nantes. © David Gallard / LVAN



© Château des ducs de Bretagne - musée d'histoire de Nantes



Room 26. Musée d'histoire de Nantes. © David Gallard / LVAN

# A LIVELY CASTLE

## EXHIBITIONS WITH AN INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

The Château des ducs de Bretagne can be visited any number of ways.

The castle is a place of life and conviviality and its location in the heart of the city allows people to pass through it or to go there for a stroll; the moat offers a place to relax. Let's not forget the gift shop-bookstore where you can bring home souvenirs, or one of the books from the *Éditions du château* collection! And why not swing by *La Fraiserie* and enjoy an ice cream in the courtyard?

**LIKE THE CHATEAU'S PROGRAMME, TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS ARE AN OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION** history and the contemporary world in order to constantly improve our understanding of them.

Exhibitions come in two forms: those that are mostly in relation with the city, whether historical or societal in focus, and those that examine Nantes' relationship with other places. These exhibitions, often in association with major institutions or national or international museums, are the opportunity to present objects that are rarely exhibited in public.

Since 2007, 30 exhibitions have been brought to the public, six of which were awarded the 'exhibition of national interest' label.

**Throughout April**, the sensorial exhibition *Inde. Reflets de mondes sacrés* ("India. Reflections of Sacred Worlds") explores the country's three native religions – Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism – through over 200 original objects.

**In May**, the third edition of *Expression(s) décoloniale(s)* will be held at the museum, featuring some 20 works by world-renowned Cameroonian artist **Barthélemy Toguo**, alongside texts by Cameroonian historian **François Wassouni**.

**In October**, the exhibition *Genghis Khan* will open its doors. This the first show in France ever to be entirely dedicated to one of history's greatest conquerors. Organized in partnership with Mongolia and with the support of many national museums, the exhibition will present certain pieces that have never been displayed in the West.

### EVENTS FOR ALL AGES AND GROUPS ARE HELD THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

Fans of Breton music or those curious to discover it can enjoy a taste of this culture in an intimate evening of music (*Les Voix bretonnes*).

*L'humain d'abord* ("Humans First") is an event organized with Nantes-based anti-discrimination associations, which allows the museum to reaffirm its civic stances, and its desire to have history dialogue with contemporary issues.

*Le Mois Kréyol* ("Creole Month") is a multidisciplinary festival of languages and customs, where visitors can discover Creole culture through dance, theatre, concerts, round table discussions, documentary films, and workshops.

Through a serie of events, the castle reveals itself through a new approach that is off-kilter, playful and surprising : *Les nocturnes*!

As a key player in Nantes' cultural scene, the castle is involved in major city-wide events (Le Voyage à Nantes, Aux heures d'été, Scopitone, Nantes Digital Week, Atlantide, etc.) as well as national ones (Nuit des Musées, Journées du Patrimoine).

Every event has its own specific press kit.

For more information, contact us!

Follow us also on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube.

## TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS | A CULTURAL PROGRAMME

INCORPORATING ALL THE ARTS | PUBLICATIONS | A BOOKSHOP | ICE CREAM PARLOR CREPERIE

*L'humain d'abord*, citizen highlight at the Château des ducs de Bretagne (from the 22 to the 27 march 2022) © Michael MENIANE – Lensman Studio / LVAN



# EXHIBITION

## **INDE. REFLETS DE MONDES SACRÉS**

("INDIA. REFLECTIONS OF SACRED WORLDS")

**15 OCTOBER 2022 > 23 APRIL 2023**

**Created in collaboration with the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome, this exhibition features nearly 200 original objects from the renowned Italian museum spanning over 1,300 years of Indian art.**

From the traditional art one might find in temples to the folk and tribal traditions of villages, the different threads of India's religious fabric are interwoven here into a rich, visual tapestry illustrating an essential element in the evolution of the country's civilization and culture.

This exhibition explores the giant subcontinent's three native religions, featuring the gracious and powerful dance of stone sculptures representing Indian gods and goddesses, the serene artistic expressions of the Buddha and Jaina Tirthankaras, delicately rendered miniatures and colourful paintings, along with jewelry and folk art depicting the myths and legends of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism appeared consecutively in India between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC.

These three religions share common features, the main one being the spiritual quest that allows humans to escape the cycle of reincarnations – known as samsara – to reach a state of deliverance and liberation from the sufferings of existence.

### **A FEAST FOR THE SENSES**

Visitors were invited to take a journey to distant climes, thanks to this immersive exhibition. The ground floor acts as a parenthesis allowing the public to familiarize itself with India in all its diversity. Large-format images of contemporary India are projected, plunging visitors into the heart of Indian temples, cities and landscapes. The shimmering fabrics on display also condition spectators for this. Music is, of course, largely present, where unfamiliar sounds instantly lure us into this very rich world. Not to mention the unmistakable scent of incense, which will have marked any traveller to this part of the globe.

And for the first (and maybe only!) time, this exhibition allowed visitors to try a few yoga positions! Guided by a virtual yoga teacher, individuals could try their hand at a few exercises, from the simplest to the most technical. The system (which recognizes images in real time) will signal if the movements are correct or not. An original, interactive, and fun moment for all!

### **PUBLICATION**

A richly illustrated reference book has been published, edited by Laura Giuliano. Seven authors specialising in Indian art, spirituality and religions – Hindu, Buddhism, and Jainism – collaborated on this work.

*In partnership with the Museo delle Civiltà in Rome*

*288 pages - 23 x 30 cm*

*Price: €36,50*



# UPCOMING 2023

## **EXPRESSION(S) DÉCOLONIALE(S) #3**

*Decolonize your thought, gaze and imagination*

**13 MAY > 12 NOVEMBER 2023**

**Every historical narrative is a construction and an expression of a viewpoint on oneself and on others. History museums are no exception to this rule. Exhibiting a collection's objects is akin to presenting the perception that the collectors had of themselves and of others over time.**

*In a moment when we are rethinking the history of Humanity as an interconnected one on a global scale, it is essential to point out that many of the objects and documents on display in museums today are intrinsically imbued with a colonial perspective.*

In an attempt to understand exactly how these pieces were seen when they were acquired, to distance ourselves from them, to question them and measure their impact on us – both in what we know and how we imagine things – **the Musée d'histoire de Nantes, as part of the third edition of *Expression(s) décoloniale(s)*, has once again invited an historian and an artist from the African continent to dialogue with the museum's collections.**

**Internationally renowned Cameroonian artist Barthélémy Toguo** will invest the museum's rooms with his work, which shows an unfailing commitment to questioning the major issues of our time, while also establishing a dazzling relationship between past and present. **Themes exploring the fundamental imbalances of the world we live in, the structural imbalances of exchange that characterize it, and the unequal opportunities and multiple discriminations** resulting from them, make his work eminently contemporary and political.

In the spirit of hospitality, Barthélémy Toguo wanted to associate five artists with this year's edition at the Musée d'Histoire de Nantes.

**Jean-François Boclé** (Martinique), **Moreira Chonguica** (Mozambique), **Rosana Paulino** (Brazil), **Monica Toiliye** (Democratic Republic of Congo), **Kara Walker** (USA) have come to join him. Painters, video artists, sculptors or performers, each of them has found their place in the museum's spaces, and their resonance with history.

Historian **François Wassouni** – a **specialist in the history of violence and a lecturer in contemporary history** at the University of Maroua in Cameroon – will present roughly ten new captions for objects that are emblematic of Nantes' and France's colonial history, which resonate with his research topics and his approach to questions of national memory.

### **REFERENCE WORK**

The biennial is accompanied by a book on Barthélémy Toguo, titled ***Barthélémy Toguo. Nos mémoires*** ["Barthélémy Toguo. Our Memories" – Éditions du Château des ducs de Bretagne], written by Andrôla Michael: contemporary art historian and director of the Centre de recherches en art et esthétiques (CRAE UR 4291) at Université de Picardie Jules-Verne.

**96 pages; 17 x 25 cm; price: €15**

**Available at the bookshop and on the Chateau's online boutique**



*Natural Flow of Energy* Barthélémy Toguo © David Gallard / LVAN



*Sans titre, Vase Clermont* Barthélémy Toguo © David Gallard / LVAN



*The Smell of Life VII, The Smell of Life VI, Vaincre le virus ! II, Vaincre le virus ! III, Vaincre le virus ! XI, Vaincre le virus VI, Vaincre le virus ! XIII, Vaincre le virus ! XVII*, Barthélémy Toguo © David Gallard / LVAN

# EXHIBITION - SPECIAL EVENT

## **GENGHIS KHAN**

*Comment les Mongols ont changé le monde*

*("HOW MONGOLS CHANGED THE WORLD")*

**14 OCTOBER 2023 > 5 MAY 2024**

**This exhibition is the first in France to be dedicated to one of history's greatest conquerors: Genghis Khan.**

From the Mongolian plains to the southernmost tip of China, from the Pacific Ocean to the outer reaches of the Middle East, Genghis Khan and his Mongolian army would eventually build an immense empire during the 13<sup>th</sup> century AD.

At their peak, Mongolians controlled more than 22% of the Earth's surface, and Genghis Khan's grandson, Kublai Khan, Great Khan of the Mongolians, became Emperor of China by founding the Yuan Dynasty, establishing the capital in Dadu (current-day Beijing). After years of violent conquest, the "Pax Mongolica" allowed for commercial, scientific, and artistic relations to flourish between the East and West, allowing for an unparalleled period of exchange.

With the rare exhibition of objects dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and **from Mongolia's national collections – including a large number of national treasures**, complemented by objects from major French and European museums – this exhibition offers an insight into the history of this great empire.

The exhibition will also be accompanied by a **diversified cultural program** for a discovery of contemporary Mongolia. Events around cinema, contemporary and traditional music, storytelling, contemporary dance, popular culture, traditional Mongolian games, culinary traditions, calligraphy, history, literature and photography will constitute a real **cultural season**.

### **REFERENCE WORK**

A richly illustrated catalogue will be published for the exhibition, edited by **Marie Favereau**, lecturer at Université Paris-Nanterre in the Medieval History of Mongolian and Muslim worlds, with contributions by international experts.



Portrait of Genghis Khan © Taipei, National museum of the palais

# AN ACCESSIBLE CASTLE

## LE CHATEAU DES DUCS DE BRETAGNE IS OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK, 361 DAYS A YEAR.

Three different entrances, connecting with some of the city's major cultural sites, allow visitors to penetrate inside the fortifications and discover the ducal palace. The different view points from the courtyard, the ramparts and the moat can be visited free of charge. At the Château des ducs de Bretagne, accessibility for every member of the public is at the heart of our project. Here we have a universal policy adapted to the castle's scientific and cultural content, the exhibition spaces and all the services proposed on site.

## THE CASTLE IS A RARE EXAMPLE IN FRANCE OF MAXIMUM ACCESSIBILITY IN A 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BUILDING.

People with all types of handicaps can enjoy the museum thanks to special tools or visits offering various ways to discover the content.

Here, **accessibility is a priority.**

## VISITOR FACILITIES: THE HEART OF THE PROJECT.

The castle is committed to quality assurance and has been awarded the **Tourisme & Handicap** label for all four disabilities (motor, sight, hearing, mental). It also has the **Qualité Tourisme** label and is mentioned in its guide for its excellent practices in terms of accessibility.

In addition, it received special recognition under the Prix du patrimoine pour tous (Heritage for All Prize) for all of its actions, as well as the Trophée de l'accessibilité des Régions (Regional Accessibility Trophy) for north-western France. These awards are the result of efforts begun in 2007.

## THE MUSEUM REACHES OUT

The team behind the museum is also involved in the greater metropolitan region through temporary or long-term cultural activities **with members of the public that cannot always spontaneously come to the castle.**

In order to maintain a certain level of quality in welcoming visitors – and to continually improve this level – especially for senior citizens, the physically disabled, or those affected by Alzheimer's disease, the service des publics ("visitors' service") has developed activities adapted to nursing homes, both in the castle itself, but also in partnering establishments throughout the region via thematic workshops (the industrial age, leisure activities in Nantes in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries...). They are offered by cultural mediators who directly visit residents at regular intervals.

Other initiatives have also taken off since then – notably, projects with prisons, as well as the twinning of low-income Nantes neighbourhood Dervallières and the castle, thus creating long-term partnerships among the city's associations. Workshops to raise awareness for those working in education and social work were launched in 2020. Their aim was to give these privileged mediators the keys to plan their next visits to the castle, to become familiar with its content, and to use their visit as part of future projects.

**361** DAYS A YEAR | **7** DAYS A WEEK | LABEL **TOURISME & HANDICAP & QUALITÉ TOURISME**  
**32 222** SCHOOL STUDENTS IN 2022 | GUIDED TOURS VISUAL GUIDES |  
 OUTREACH PROJECTS



Adapted tours are carried out by cultural officers.



The courtyard, most of the ramparts, the gardens in the moat, and 28 out of 32 of the museum rooms are accessible, along with the building which hosts temporary exhibitions and the events space on the first floor of the 'Horseshoe Tower' (Tour du Fer-à-Cheval).



A tactile itinerary is available at the museum reception desk.  
Guide dogs and assistance dogs are allowed.  
A tactile drawing can be found in rooms 4, 10, 19 and 25.  
New : rooms 7, 11 and 13.



The reception desk/ticket booth as well as the audioguides and audiophones are fitted with magnetic loops.  
In the museum, the multimedia terminals have subtitling and are interactive.



Visual guides in French sign language are available at reception.



A help booklet and educational pack are available at reception.  
Various devices help those on solo visits in their exploration.  
Certain cards describing art works have been adapted to Easy-to-Read format.

# ONE CASTLE FOR ALL

At le Château des ducs de Bretagne, we see visitors as active agents who organize their visit to suit their own tastes.

## FOR FAMILIES

Seasonally-themed tours and workshops are offered all year long. Every exhibition also has a specific program of activities and workshops, and – if the subject lends itself – family tours or presentations from our staff.

A fun kit called *Le musée en famille* ("The museum as a family"), in French, is available at the museum reception desk and can be downloaded from our website. With the help of an adult, it can be enjoyed by children who cannot yet read (age 4 and up), where they will have fun learning about ten of the museum's objects in one hour.

For grandparents, workshops, in French, like *Venir au musée avec de jeunes enfants* ("Coming to the museum with young children") allow them to (re)discover the history of Nantes and the castle with a member of our staff who will give them the keys to create their very own tour, which they can confidently use when they return with their own grandchildren.

## LA CHAMBRE DES DRAGONS ("THE DRAGONS' LAIR")

"The Dragons' Lair" is aimed at families and children aged 4 and up. It's a space in the heart of the museum itinerary where you can stop, breathe... and learn while having fun! Visitors explore the world of these imaginary animals through an abecedarium filled with countless illustrations, touch and sound devices, and its own reading area. Kids and adults can share a moment this playful, colourful and warm universe.

**FOR KIDS AND TEENS**, activities organized by mediators allow them (depending on their age) to learn while having fun (4-6 years old, 7-11, and 12-15).

Guided tours with a cultural officer also allow **ADULT VISITORS** to learn more about the Château des ducs de Bretagne and the history of Nantes, as well as the museum's main themes: the slave trade and the two World Wars.

**BEING OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC** also means having a generous pricing policy. The choice of free admission to the outdoor areas stemmed from a real desire to give the castle back to visitors and locals. Admission to the history museum and exhibitions is free for those under 18 years of age, as is the case for physically disabled visitors and those accompanying them.

A **"PASS MUSÉES" FOR €15**, allows you to visit the Musée d'histoire de Nantes (in the Château des ducs de Bretagne), the Muséum d'histoire naturelle, the Musée d'arts de Nantes, the Musée Jules Verne, and Le Chronographe (in Rezé), with no time limit for an entire year. It also offers holders a discount on guided tours, as well as at the castle's gift shop/bookstore, and the online shop (5% off books and 10% off objects).

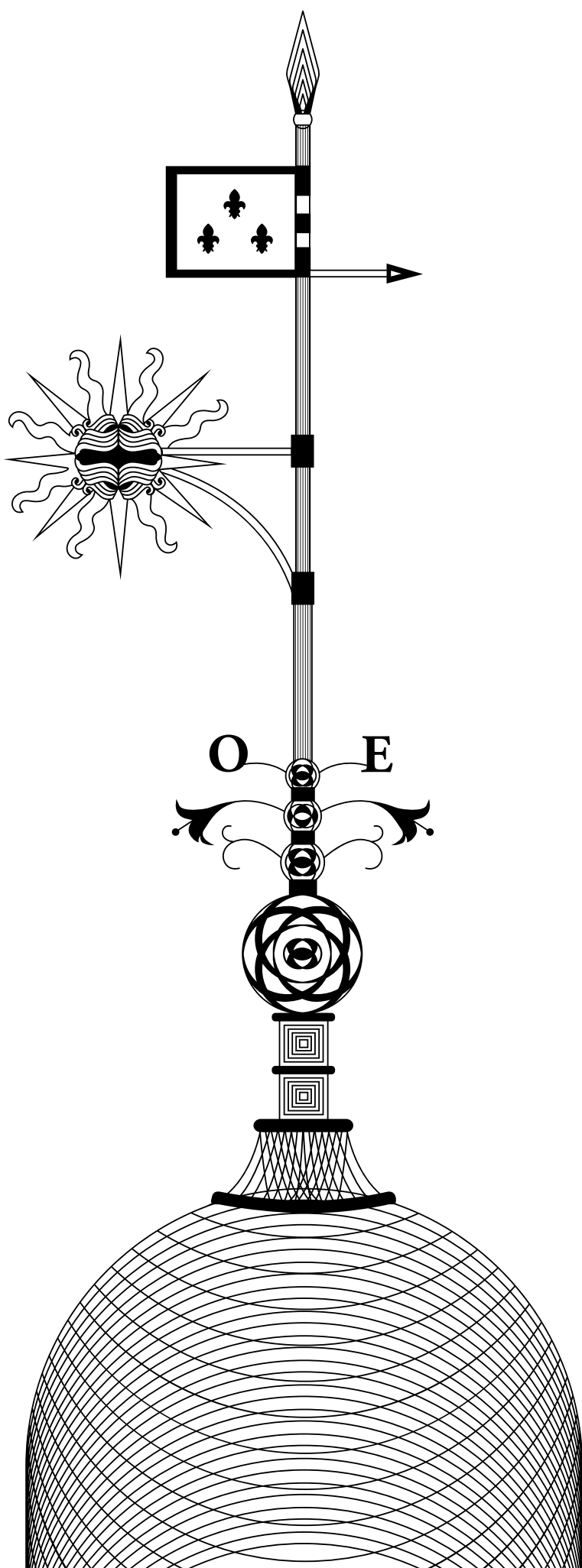
**FREE** FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18 | **PASS MUSÉES €15** | **YOUTH ACTIVITIES**  
**FAMILY VISITS AND WORKSHOPS** | **GUIDED TOURS FOR ADULTS** | **COME BY BIKE**  
**LOIRE BY BIKE** | **ONE IN FOUR VISITORS UNDER 18**



*The Dragons' Lair* © David Gallard / LVAN



© David Gallard / LVAN.



# ANNEXES

# HISTORY OF THE MONUMENT



Château des ducs de Bretagne. Nantes  
© Philippe Piron / LVAN



Château des ducs de Bretagne. Nantes  
© Rom1 Péneau / LVAN



Anne of Bitanny's castle © David Gallard / LVAN

Set in the historic heart of Nantes, the Château des ducs de Bretagne is the city's most important historic building. When looking at it from the city, it is a fortress with 500 metres of curtain walls punctuated by seven towers, all linked by a sentry walkway. The inner courtyard reveals an elegant 15<sup>th</sup>-century ducal residence built in tufa stone, in flamboyant Gothic style and bearing the first traces of Renaissance inspiration, as well as other buildings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. With their elegant white stone walls and sophisticated sculpted façades, they contrast strikingly with the rough textures of the exterior fortifications, made of granite blocks and separated by layers of schist.

The first ducal castle was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century on top of the (still visible) Gallo-Roman wall of the town, where the Namnetes people settled. It was demolished in the 15<sup>th</sup> century to make way for the present building.

The current castle was the work of Francis II, the last Duke of an independent Brittany, who wanted to make the Château des ducs de Bretagne both a military fortress, which could act as a defence against the King, and the principal residence of the ducal court. Enhancement work was continued by Duchess Anne of Brittany, twice Queen of France through her marriages to Charles VIII and Louis XII. Her influence can be seen in the sculptural décor (dormer windows overlooking the main residence, as well as the coat of arms and loggias on the 'Golden Crown' tower), marked by the first signs of the Italian Renaissance.

Following the integration of Brittany into France in 1532, during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Château des ducs de Bretagne became the residence of the kings of France when they visited Brittany, and later a military barracks, an arsenal, and a prison. For three centuries, it endured countless transformations and considerable damage: fortifications, a fire in 1670, construction of the Military Saddlery (Bâtiment du Harnachement) for storing artillery equipment, an explosion in 1800, and so on.

Listed as a historical monument in 1862, it was sold by the government to the City of Nantes in 1915 before becoming a municipal museum in 1924. During World War II, the occupying German forces built a bunker in the courtyard.

The 1990s focused on restoring the Jacobins' Tower (Tour des Jacobins), the façades of the Principal Governor's Palace (Grand Gouvernement – 15c/17c) and the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Golden Crown Tower (Tour de la Couronne d'Or). The Military Saddlery (Harnachement – 18c) refurbished in 1997, is used for temporary exhibitions.

In 2000, work began on restoring the white tufa façades of the main ducal residence (Grand Logis – 15c) to their full glory. These are the oldest and most impressive sections of the building, providing a visual link between the Château des ducs de Bretagne and the Loire Châteaux. The bell tower was rebuilt and the spires replaced on the Golden Crown Tower (Tour de la Couronne d'Or). The interior of the ducal residence was also completely restored and redeveloped to house the museum.

Following 15 years of works, during nearly three of which the Château was fully closed to the public, the site reopened in 2007 and has since housed the Musée d'histoire de Nantes. This was the first time a full restoration had been completed.

Since the summer of 2020, many plants that were already known and appreciated in the Middle Ages and Anne of Brittany's court have been set up in the castle courtyard, to the great delight of visitors who can rest on the nearby benches and contemplate the monument.

# COLLECTIONS

The Musée d'histoire de Nantes regroups the collections of six former museums: the Musée d'Art décoratif, the Musée d'Art populaire régional, the Musée des Salorges, the Musée de Nantes par l'image, the Musée colonial du castle du Grand Blottereau and the Musée d'art religieux.

This permanent collection comprises over 32,000 objects. Over 1,150 of them are on display.

When developing the Musée d'histoire with a view to its reopening in 2007, the Château des ducs de Bretagne undertook a very significant acquisition campaign. Its sought to fill the gaps in a museum itinerary designed on the basis of a historical discourse and not on the basis of the collections that existed. Many acquisitions were made and when the museum opened in 2007, a quarter of the objects on display had been acquired since 1993.

With the permanent itinerary created, the acquisition policy since 2007 has focused on enriching collections in two ways:

- Opportunistic acquisitions aimed at enhancing the collection in relation to two main themes: the history of Nantes and the region from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to today, and the history of the castle.
- A major collection drive targeting local people (started in 2008) on the theme of the two world wars. This aimed to supplement the last section of the museum itinerary that explores modern history. As a result of the drive, 1,500 objects and archives documenting the two wars were added to the collection and allowed the revision of rooms in June 2016.

This acquisition policy corresponds to this museum's singular spirit – a museum that has been constantly evolving and questioning itself since its creation. A museum that offers a global vision of history, exploring topics of major importance, like the slave trade and both World Wars. In order to truly exist in the present and examine the historical process of urbanization of our beloved Nantes, the future wealth of our collections also needs the help of individuals like you.

## **The Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery collections available on the Internet**

The exhibition *L'abîme* ("The Abyss") allowed visitors to (re)discover the museum's collections devoted to the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery. After the exhibition closed, many objects were placed throughout the permanent itinerary, while others were returned to the museum's reserves.

The Musée d'histoire de Nantes took this opportunity to **digitize the entirety of this exceptional collection and upload it online**. A new site now offers users a chance to consult texts written about objects related to the Atlantic slave trade and colonial slavery, both on display throughout the museum and those featured in *L'abîme*.

Contexts, dates, explanations, and photos: all this information is easily accessible, thanks to a simple user-friendly search tool. For instance, you can find watercolours of the slave ship *La Marie-Séraphique*, portraits of local shipowners, and objects related to political struggles and the resulting abolitions. Explore the site by entering a prompt, or let yourself be guided by the ready-made thematic itinerary!

**[www.collections.chateaunantes.fr](http://www.collections.chateaunantes.fr)**



1-2: Room 18 - Nantes and the revolution  
 3-6: Room 14 - The "men" of gold  
 4-8: Room 8 - A mermaid city  
 5: Room 27 - The internationalization of the estuary  
 7: Room 11- A port of the high seas



Room 21 : The multimedia display *Nantes 1900* won the 2016 "Territoires innovants" © Patricia Bassen

Themed itineraries are proposed to allow visitors to discover the museum and the monument according to the time they have available to them or the themes that most interest them (the slave trade, the two world wars in Nantes, the castle, etc.)

Tools are available for solo visits (leaflet, audioguide).

Guided visits also take place at weekends and during school holidays.

There are offerings to suit every profile of audience (disabled visitors, families, young persons from 4 to 15 years old).

Guided visits are not the only form of mediation used here.

A number of tools are available to assist visitors during their itinerary:

- Texts and leaflets are available in different languages to help foreign visitors appreciate the museum's collection and temporary exhibitions.
- Multimedia allows visitors to explore topics in greater detail, or to provide a translation in French sign language...
- Explanatory sheets for each room zoom in on important objects
- Tactile and audio itineraries are available for visually impaired visitors, as well as documentation that is 'easy to read and understand'.
- The itinerary *Discover the château d'Anne de Bretagne* allow the visitors to discover this early 16<sup>th</sup> century edifice where every step of the itinerary will allow you to understand everyday life at the castle and how its different spaces were used.
- Visitors having opted for a solo visit will also come across several mediators to whom they can talk during their visit.

Visitors have a choice of itineraries which are accompanied by a leaflet and a tactile device. They can organise their visit as they choose, according to the time they have available and the topics that interest them.

#### **THE CHATEAU OF ANNE OF BRITTANY** (length of visit: from 30 min. to 1h30)

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Discover the secrets of the château built in Medieval times by the Duke François II and completed by his daughter Anne of Brittany, the only woman to have been twice Queen of France. Recent scientific studies have enabled us to learn more about the various modifications to this major monument of Nantes, and about its different uses, from the palace-fortress to the museum of today.

#### **THE MUSEE D'HISTOIRE DE NANTES IN 20 OBJECTS** (length of visit: 1h30)

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This visit gives a general overview of Nantes' history, from its origins to the present day. Visitors discover objects with strong connections to the past of the city and the local region.

#### **AT WAR, NANTES 1914-1918 / 1939-1945** (length of visit: 45 to 90 min.)

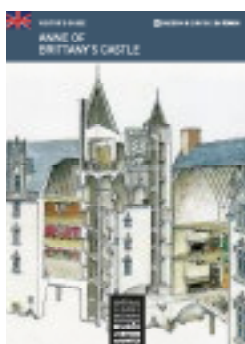
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Thanks to a brand new lay out, this tour allows visitors to discover the history of the two world wars through the prism of events that most impacted Nantes and its inhabitants. Thanks to a major collection drive and donations made by the local population, the objects and documents presented in these rooms shows how war affects civilians. Through their great diversity, and in their own way, they all reflect an era and its zeitgeist. They are so many stories of men and women afflicted by two successive conflicts.

#### **THE SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY** (length of visit : 45 to 90 min)

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In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Nantes prospered on the back of its trade with the French colonies in the West Indies and, to use the words of abolitionists, the 'vile trafficking' of the slave trade. This itinerary offers an understanding of the role played by Nantes in the European slave trade.



# MULTIMEDIA

The desire was to write the history of the city using works from the collections, but also using modern day materials.

The museum itinerary features 38 audio and video exhibits, including 22 interactive stations. Discover archives and audio sequences, as well as two videos on Anne of Brittany and the history of the castle, a virtual visit of the different districts of Nantes in 1757 (Nantes in 3D, the development of the city), and an immersive 180-degree film on the city by the videographer Pierrick Sorin.

## **'Anne of Brittany', the film** - Room 2

This animated film combines contemporary graphics with documents from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The use of calligraphic writing and hand-drawn pictures, which appear on the stone before fading away, help recount an intense and complex historical destiny with dramatic pace, facilitating our understanding of key details.

*The film is translated in French sign language.*

## **The "Magic Wall" on the Edict of Nantes** - Room 3

The aim of this multimedia display is to challenge visitors, while empowering them to be actors. It can be found in room 3, which is now entirely devoted to the Edict of Nantes.

## **Nantes en 1645 ("Nantes in 1645"), by Cornelis Danckerts** - Room 4

The painting animates this engraving representing Nantes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The view from the south of the Loire offers a panoramic view stretching from west to east, and from the Quai de la Fosse to Château des ducs de Bretagne. The urbanization of the city and its various activities are presented.

## **Film on the history of the castle** - Room 6

This film about the castle presents the main stages in the construction of the castle and the various manners in which it has been used over the centuries, as well as the figures that have marked its history.

*The film is translated in French sign language.*

## **The Castle in 3D** - Room 7

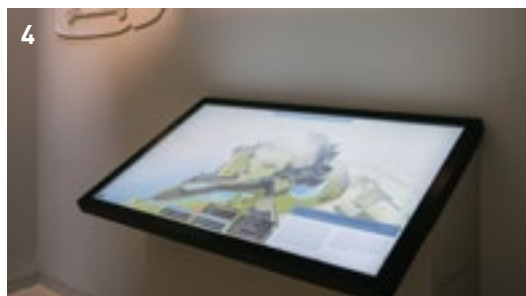
Historical and archaeological research have made it possible to create a digital scale model of the castle, presenting it from the Gallo-Roman era to the present day. The 3D modelling of all the buildings allows us to see and understand the construction, destruction, and changes the castle has gone through.

For every period, certain particularly important elements are explained and documented.

## **Navires à l'entrée de Saint-Nazaire, Charles Leduc** ("Ships entering Saint-Nazaire by Charles Leduc") - Room 10

In 2018, this painting was selected to be animated and tell the story of the city's great industrial port.

Charles Leduc, a painter specialising in marine depictions, painted the port of Saint-Nazaire in 1831. The different boats here seem to represent different functions: the three-master evokes whale-hunting – most likely heading out towards Newfoundland – the brig represents trade and shipping out to faraway destinations, and the sail and steam boat were possibly carrying the first transatlantic passengers.



1/ The movie « Anne de Bretagne » - Room 2 2/ Magic wall about the edict of Nantes - Salle 3 3/ Nantes in 1645, Cornelis Danckerts - Room 4 4/ The Castle in 3D - Room 7 5/ Ships entering Saint-Nazaire - Room 10 © David Gallard / LVAN

### Sound installation on the Deurbroucq paintings – Room 11

This sound installation allows visitors to enter the paintings' visual space, understand their compositions, and analyze the details informing us both about the desire of the couple who commissioned them, and the reality of the times.

### Modelling of *La Marie-Séraphique* – Room 13

The Nantes slave trade ship, *La Marie-Séraphique*, has been modelled and its journey from Nantes to the West African coast and West Indies animated in order to understand what happened during the months-long voyage, and at the marketplace, when slaves were finally sold.

### Virtual Reconstruction of Nantes 1757 – Room 17

Visitors can wander through 11 districts of the city in 1757, taking the time they desire to absorb all the transformations in the urban landscape. As a means of comparison, a video shows the urban landscape and buildings as they are today.

### *La cale de la machine au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle* ("The machine hold in the 19<sup>th</sup> century")- Room 20

This painting by François Sablet offers a snapshot of early 19<sup>th</sup> century daily life in the port, by Quai de la Fosse: people working at their trade, floating boats, and the exchange of goods.

This painting captures the port – a place of work, trade and socializing – and offers a wealth of information about Nantes society at the time. Lasting roughly 4 minutes, an animated film ends on trade with China. The video highlights details from the painting that are invisible to the naked eye!

### *Nantes en 1900* ("Nantes in 1900") – Room 21

In 1900, for the Universal Exhibition in Paris, the Chamber of Commerce commissioned a model of Nantes' port exhibited in Room 21 to show the qualities and dynamism of the city's maritime sector. The museum decided to make better scientific and museographical use of the model by creating a multi-touch, multiuser device which allows people to explore and understand the relief map.

*Won the 2016 "Territoires innovants" prize awarded by the group Interconnectés!*

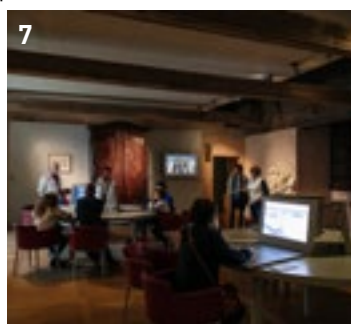
### *Nantes, de 1945 à nos jours* ("Nantes, from 1945 to today") - Room 30

This film covers the history of the major upheavals and developments that have characterised the city of Nantes, from the post-war period to today.

Produced using extracts of film archives from French news broadcasts this film was produced in collaboration with AURAN (urban development agency for the region of Nantes).

### *Le portrait de Nantes par Pierrick Sorin* ("Portrait of Nantes, by Pierrick Sorin") - Room 32

Nantes-based artist and videographer Pierrick Sorin used the museum collections to produce a highly personal 'city portrait' in the form of a film shown on an ultra-panoramic screen (180-degree video projection). The work presents a series of humoristic skits relating to Nantes' history or specific characteristics. In this 'river parade', Pierrick Sorin interprets the 84 characters that appear in the film.



6/ Sound installation on the Deurbroucq paintings © David Gallard / LVAN 7/ Virtual Reconstruction of Nantes 1757 - Room 17 © David Gallard / LVAN 8/ The machine hold in the 19<sup>th</sup> century - Room 20 © David Gallard / LVAN 9/ Nantes en 1900 – Room 21 © Bernard Renoux / LVAN 10/ Portrait of Nantes by Pierrick Sorin - Room 32 © David Gallard / LVAN

# UPCOMING EXHIBITION

## **CHEVALIERS**

(*"KHNIGHTS"*)

**OCTOBER 2024 - MAY 2025**

*In collaboration with the Stibbert Museum – Florence*

**Chevaliers** ("Knights") is an exhibition featuring a collection of European weapons and armour from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, most of which are true masterpieces. The exhibition reveals the incredible beauty of these warlike objects, as well as the artistic skills of the craftsmen.

The main purpose of the exhibition is to **illustrate and revive the emblematic figure of the knight, the code of chivalry he lived by, his relationship to war, his place in that era's society, and the demonstration of his status** through events like tournaments and jousts.

The interest in objects related to knights and knighthood was revived during the romantic Gothic revival that characterized 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Frederick Stibbert (1838-1906), a wealthy financier and avid collector, devoted his life to collecting artworks, particularly European and non-European armour and weapons. Today, his armoury is considered to be one of the most beautiful in Europe and is permanently on display in the Florence museum that bears his name.

Thanks to **more than 150 original objects from the Stibbert collection**, this exhibition in Nantes will develop new themes, like French and Breton knighthood, the role women played in this masculine world, the Château des ducs de Bretagne, and the imaginary and mythical figure of the knight in the arts, literature, and cinema throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Curated by the Stibbert Museum, **this exhibition** has recently been featured three times in the USA, and **will be shown here in Nantes for the first time in Europe.**

# PAST EXHIBITIONS

*Temporary exhibitions of the Musée d'histoire de Nantes since the reopening of the Château des ducs de Bretagne following its restoration:*

- France Nouvelle-France, naissance d'un peuple français en Amérique (9 March > 10 June 2007)
- Anne de Bretagne, une histoire, un mythe\* (30 June > 30 September 2007)
- Peut-on liquider Mai 68 ? (30 April > 1 June 2008)
- Nantais ?! Qui sommes-nous ? (23 February > 29 June 2008)
- Miroir, mon beau miroir... Le pouvoir politique en images hier et aujourd'hui (4 October 2008 > 4 January 2009)
- La Mer pour Mémoire, archéologie sous-marine des épaves atlantiques\* (4 April > 28 September 2009)
- Jorj Morin, Nantes et la pub (6 February > 2 May 2010)
- La Soie & le Canon FRANCE-CHINE (1700/1860)\* (26 June > 7 November 2010)
- Nantais venus d'ailleurs (2 April > 6 November 2011)
- Nantaises au travail (11 February > 20 May 2012)
- L'Austria, une tragédie dans l'Atlantique (15 June > 11 November 2012)
- En guerres, 1914-1918 / 1939-1945, Nantes / Saint-Nazaire (23 February 2013 > 23 February 2014)
- À l'école de la guerre, 1914-1918 (25 January > 20 April 2014)
- Présentation du reliquaire d'Anne de Bretagne (8 April > 18 May 2014)
- Samouraï, 1 000 ans d'histoire du Japon\* (28 June > 9 November 2014)
- Jean-Émile Laboureur. Images de la Grande Guerre (17 January > 17 May 2015)
- Flamands et Hollandais. La collection du musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes (30 May > 30 August 2015)
- Tromelin, l'île des esclaves oubliés\* (17 October 2015 > 30 April 2016)
- Icônes, trésors de réfugiés (2 July > 13 November 2016)
- Aux origines du surréalisme - Cendres de nos rêves (11 February > 28 May 2017)
- Les Esprits, l'Or et le Chamane (1 July > 12 November 2017)
- Les 47 Rōnin (21 October 2017 > 7 January 2018)
- Rock ! Une histoire nantaise\* (24 February 2018 > 10 November 2019)
- Nous les appelons Vikings (16 June > 18 November 2018)
- Cimarron (2 February > 14 April 2019)
- Amazonie, le chamane et la pensée de la forêt (15 June > 19 January 2019)
- LU, un siècle d'innovation (1846-1957) (27 June 2020 > 16 May 2021)
- Exhibition by Romuald Hazoumè as part of *Expression(s) décoloniale(s) #2* (19 May > 14 November 2021)
- Toshihiro Hamano. Esprit et forme du Japon (3 July > 12 September 2021)
- L'abîme. Nantes dans la traite atlantique et l'esclavage colonial, 1707-1830 (16 October 2021 > 19 June 2022)
- AAM AASTHA, exhibition by Charles Fréger ( 2 July > 27 November 2022)
- Inde. Reflets de mondes sacrés (15 October 2022 > 24 April 2023)

\* Awarded the label 'Exhibition of national interest'

# PARTNERS



## OFFICIAL PARTNER

***The cultural programme is supported by Crédit Agricole, an official partner of the Château des ducs de Bretagne. Driven by values of responsibility and solidarity, Crédit Agricole Atlantique Vendée is proud to be the official partner of the Château des ducs de Bretagne. This partnership is the continuation of Crédit Agricole Atlantique Vendée's patronage policy in support of heritage.***

Crédit Agricole has for many years invested, through the 'Pays de France' Foundation, in conserving and promoting historical monuments, buildings and natural sites throughout the regions of France. Firmly integrated in the Pays de la Loire region, Crédit Agricole Atlantique Vendée also plays a key role in local life. In addition to its commitment to culture, Crédit Agricole is involved in environmental and solidarity work, with the support of its 2,000 employees, 1,000 directors and 69 local branches.

Crédit Agricole participates in local economic development by supporting and assisting the initiatives of local stakeholders. With its 215 outlets, it is one of the leading banking networks in Loire-Atlantique and the Vendée.

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### **CREDIT AGRICOLE**

Route de Paris - 44 949 Nantes cedex 9

**[www.ca-atlantique-vendee.fr](http://www.ca-atlantique-vendee.fr)**

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## MEDIA PARTNER

France Bleu Loire Océan strives day in day out to promote the region and the riches that make it stand apart.

Focusing on a combination of tradition, development and innovation, France Bleu Loire Océan is involved in promoting heritage on a daily basis, by providing its 115,000 daily listeners with programmes on history and places of exception and by bringing them closer to the artists and key figures of the region. The radio station also helps to create geographical and affective ties among listeners by raising their curiosity to the challenges of tomorrow and to developments in their living environment.

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**Throughout the year, find all the news, insider information and the brief and full history of the Château des ducs de Bretagne, on France Bleu Loire Océan.**

**101.8** General frequency and Nantes

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*FRANCE BLEU LOIRE OCÉAN*

*2 bis quai François Mitterrand 44200 Nantes*

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*bleuloireocean@radiofrance.com*





## **SPL (LOCALLY-OWNED PUBLIC CORPORATION) LE VOYAGE A NANTES**

***Château des ducs de Bretagne is a listed historical monument owned by Nantes Métropole. As part of a public service delegation, SPL Le Voyage à Nantes manages all aspects of the site, including all scientific, cultural, technical, and tourist-related matters.***

Every year, a green line is drawn on the ground, moving to the rhythm of Nantes' constant transformation, leading visitors to its permanent or temporary art works, and celebrating a brand-new way to travel. It has become an iconic yet playful bookmark in motion that lays out the city in a way we'd like you to discover it. And this discovery does not follow some static, unchanging itinerary! It leads you to outdoor art works, lively social spots, museums, historical or natural heritage and art galleries... so many facets of the "City of Dukes".

Le Voyage à Nantes is a local public corporation in charge of promoting the cultural policy established by Nantes Métropole and, more generally, the destination Nantes Métropole. Management of cultural sites is carried out by a public service delegation: Château des ducs de Bretagne, artistic itineraries (Le Voyage à Nantes permanent collection, Estuaire Nantes < > Saint-Nazaire, Voyage dans le Vignoble), Machines de l'île, the Memorial to the Abolition of Slavery, HAB Galerie, and Parc des Chantiers. This tourism policy is implemented across the region through the development of the following projects: Le Voyage à Nantes summer festival, the Winter's journey, the Tables de Nantes, and A Modern Journey through an Old Land.

The choice to merge the tourism sector and flagship cultural sites within a single structure was implemented on 1 January 2011.

Many local and large businesses present throughout the region are involved in our project and actively take part in the dynamic launched by Le Voyage à Nantes.

Roughly 70 employees work for Le Château des ducs de Bretagne, welcoming visitors, continuing the site's scientific and cultural work, and maintaining the overall operation of the site.

## OPENING TIMES

**Courtyard and ramparts - freely accessible** Open 7 days a week: 8.30 am to 7 pm  
1 July > 31 August: 8.30 am to 8 pm

### Château interiors, museum and exhibition

10 am to 6 pm, closed Mondays  
1 July > 31 August: 10 am to 7 pm, 7 days a week  
(Ticket booth closes 30 minutes before closing)

**Site annual closing dates:** 1 January, 1 May, 1 November, 25 December

## ADMISSION

**Admission to the museum is free on the first Sunday of every month from September to June and everyday for under 18s.**



### Pass musées: €15

Visit the Musée d'histoire de Nantes (in the Château des ducs de Bretagne), the Muséum d'histoire naturelle, the Musée d'arts de Nantes, the Musée Jules Verne, and Le Chronographe (in Rezé), with no time limit for an entire year.

### Museum + exhibition

Full fare: €9

Reduced fare: €5

Ticket valid for one day

### Free\*:

Under 18s – job seekers – RSA recipients – Carte Blanche holders – disabled persons and their companion.

**Reduced fare\*:** young persons aged 18 to 25 – holders of certain workers' committee cards (see reception for details) – holders of the 'Familles nombreuses' card.

*\*please provide proof of less than 6 months / Bookings can be made at [www.chateaunantes.fr](http://www.chateaunantes.fr)*

## ACCESS

The Château des ducs de Bretagne is situated in Nantes' Medieval quarter, Bouffay, a few minutes' walk from the Cathedral, the Musée des beaux-arts de Nantes, Nantes' Events Centre 'La Cité', the National Theatre venue, the Lieu unique, and the SNCF train station.

- **High-speed train (TGV):** from Paris: 2 hours (20 trains per day)
- **By car:** A11 from Paris – A83 from Bordeaux – RN 137 from Rennes
- **Tram: line 1** – Duchesse Anne stop
- **Busway: line 4** – Duchesse Anne stop

## CHÂTEAU DES DUCS DE BRETAGNE MUSÉE D'HISTOIRE DE NANTES

4, place Marc Elder - 44000 Nantes

Tel. **0811 464 644** Service 0,05 € / min  
hors appel

Tel. From outside France + 33 (0)2 51 17 49 48

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