

The Fontaine des Innocents ***Stories of a Parisian*** ***Masterpiece***

From 24 April to 25 August 2024

Press preview April 23



Charles Marville, *East façade of the Fontaine des Innocents, detail of a nymph, between 1855 and 1865*
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For the first time, the Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris dedicates a temporary exhibition to a Parisian monument, inviting its visitors to discover or rediscover it in all its many facets. A masterpiece of the French Renaissance adorned with reliefs by the sculptor Jean Goujon, the Fontaine des Innocents shaped the centre of Paris in the heart of Les Halles district. The restoration of the fountain, which began in July 2023 and will be completed in June 2024, is an exceptional opportunity to discover in the best possible conditions the five reliefs of the nymphs sculpted by Jean Goujon, which were removed from the monument.

Through a selection of around 150 works of varied types and digital devices, the exhibition presents the successive transformations that have affected the edifice, in the heart of the constantly changing neighbourhood of Les Halles. The fountain, deeply rooted in the Parisian imagination, then became a popular icon. The exhibition also explores the figure of Jean Goujon, a major artist of the French Renaissance, yet today little known to the public.

**PRESS
RELEASE**

HEAD CURATOR

Valérie Guillaume, director of the Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris

Véronique Milande, head curator, responsible at COARC (Conservation des Œuvres d'Art Religieuses et Civiles)

COMMISSARIAT SCIENTIFIQUE

Emmanuelle Philippe, head curator, in charge of civil heritage at COARC

Sophie Picot-Bocquillon, documentary researcher, in charge of COARC's documentary department

Juliette Tanré-Szewczyk, head curator in charge of the Department of Sculptures and Urban heritage at the Musée Carnavalet - Histoire de Paris

The aim is to evoke the artistic career of the sculptor, its historical reality and its mythical aspect, by highlighting his Parisian creations, more particularly those of the Louvre and Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois. His influence in art history is presented through examples found in various artistic trends. If several generations of sculptors would be nourished by the art of Jean Goujon, such as David d'Angers, Maillol, and Carpeaux, a filiation also becomes apparent with the painter Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, who borrowed the composition of one of the nymphs from the fountain in *La Source*, one of his masterpieces completed in 1856. A both scholarly and popular icon, this work became in its turn a source of inspiration for many artists. The model imagined by Goujon for the Fontaine des Innocents thus continues along its path, borrowed and reinvented, like an eternal fountain of youth.

The high point of the exhibition is the discovery, in a novel way, of the reliefs created by Jean Goujon for the fountain. The nymphs removed during their restoration interact once again with the reliefs with marine decorations taken from the building in the 19th century and kept at the Louvre Museum. Alongside the last stage of the tour, a workshop allows visitors to witness the *in situ* restoration of old plaster proofs of Jean Goujon's nymphs in a dedicated space. Digital devices complement this sensory discovery at the heart of the material. It makes it possible to present the restoration issues faced by professionals responsible for heritage preservation: how do we restore sculptures? Why and how are reliefs adorning a monument removed?

The exhibition invites the visitors to explore a restoration behind the scenes through that of the Fontaine des Innocents and its successive metamorphoses, and highlights the posterity of this iconic Parisian monument in popular culture and in art.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION
MUSÉE CARNAVALET - HISTOIRE DE PARIS

23 rue de Sévigné - 75003 Paris
www.carnavalet.paris.fr/en

Open Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm
Ticket desks close at 5.30pm
Closed Mondays and certain holidays

TICKETS

Full: € 13
Reduced: € 11

PRESS CONTACTS

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John James Chalon, *The Market and the Fontaine des Innocents*, 1822
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