

Romantic Paris, 1815-1848

PRESS RELEASE
April 2019

Exhibition at the Petit Palais and the Musée de la Vie Romantique

22 May – 15 September 2019



Petit Palais
Musée des Beaux-Arts
de la Ville de Paris

Tuesday - Sunday, 10 am - 6 pm
Open late: Friday until 9 pm

INFORMATION

www.petitpalais.paris.fr

After *Paris 1900: La Ville Spectacle*, the Petit Palais is presenting *Romantic Paris*, a further episode in its overview of the great periods that have shaped the city's identity. **This is both an exhibition and a cultural event : a sweeping panorama of the French capital during the Romantic years** from the fall of Napoleon in 1815 to the revolution of 1848. **Over 600 works** – paintings, sculptures, costumes, objets d'art, furniture – plunge the visitor into the artistic, cultural and political ferment of the time. The exhibition's **immersive design** takes the form of a tour of the period's emblematic Paris sites : the Tuileries, the Palais-Royal, the Nouvelle Athènes quarter, Victor Hugo's Notre-Dame, and the Grand Boulevards and their theatres. At the same time an additional segment at the Musée de la Vie Romantique rounds off the exhibition with a look at the city's literary and high-society salons.



Eugène Lami, *Carnival Scene, Place de la Concorde*, 1834.
Oil on canvas. Musée Carnavalet
Crédit : © Musée Carnavalet / Roger-Viollet

Portraying a day in the life of the city, the tour begins in the early hours at the **Palais des Tuileries**, the royal residence and the nation's political hub. Exceptional loans, notably from the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, have enabled evocations both of the interiors and of figures who left their mark on fashion, like the Duchesse de Berry, or on the arts, like Marie d'Orléans, a remarkable sculptor in her own right.

The day continues with **a stroll through the Palais Royal**. A spectacular model from the Musée Carnavalet combined with historical recreation conveys all the liveliness of this temple to business and pleasure, while **luxury items, small bronzes and fashion accessories** testify to the sophisticated craftsmanship of the time. **A selection of costumes** lent by the Palais Galliera museum likewise illustrates the «chic» of the Parisiennes and dandies who had already made Paris the world's fashion capital.

Next comes a strangely cramped display of artworks – this is what **the annual Salon des Beaux-Arts at the Louvre** looked like, with paintings and sculptures brought together in a hodgepodge of the different trends of the time: **Chassériau, Delacroix, Girodet and Ingres** cheek by jowl with **Vernet and Delaroche**, while **Bosio, David d'Angers, Pradier and Préault** provide the sculpture.

The following room is dedicated to the taste for things medieval that blossomed after the French Revolution. Initially a source of inspiration for the «Troubadour» painters, the Middle Ages went on to influence the Romantics: the success of Victor Hugo's famous novel *Notre Dame de Paris* (1831) rekindled popular passion for the «Dark Ages» and the picturesque heritage of Old Paris.

Time now for a reminder that the backdrop to this cultural vibrancy was one of marked political instability. Deposed in July 1830, King Charles X was replaced by Louis-Philippe, who quickly became just as unpopular. Rioting was frequent and gave rise to Honoré Daumier's famous lithograph *The Massacre in Rue Transnonain* (1834). Here political caricatures by **Daumier, Granville, Traviès** and **Roubaud** illustrate the political issues and struggles of the time, while a selection of paintings and sculptures recalls the street battles in Paris in July 1830.

The theme of revolution is also addressed via two emblematic works of the same year: Victor Hugo's play *Hernani* and Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*.

This period also saw the birth of the myth of the bohemian artist, seeking inspiration and recognition but doomed to a wretched existence in an uncomprehending bourgeois society. Paintings and engravings conjure up the lives of these artists, as well as the working-class entertainments – dances and costume celebrations – that were then becoming popular.

La Nouvelle Athènes, a neighbourhood near Gare Saint-Lazare, was home to the studios of many artists, including those of Ary Scheffer (now the Musée de la Vie romantique), Géricault and even Delacroix for a time, as well as the residences of Georges Sand, Chopin and other famous figures.

The day comes to an end on the Grand Boulevards, where Parisians loved to stroll and enjoy themselves. There was the Théâtre Italien for opera, as well as more working-class entertainment venues. The stars of the time included the actress **Marie Dorval**, the actor **Mélingue** and the dancers **Fanny Essler** and **Marie Taglioni**, remembered here in portraits, souvenirs and designs for sets and costumes. The exhibition closes with the **Revolution of 1848** and the disillusionment of the Romantic generation, as expressed in the original handwritten version of Gustave Flaubert's *Sentimental Education*.

Interactive terminals to enhance your exhibition experience

The first terminal covers the political context of the period via four historical episodes: the Restoration, the revolution of 1830, the July Monarchy and the revolution of 1848.

The second terminal offers an interactive map of Paris : all the main monuments and political sites, plus the emblematic literary, artistic and entertainment places of interest mentioned in the exhibition.

And an app for your mobile : Track down the traces of the period still to be found in Paris, a kind of playful treasure hunt taking you to the parts of the city covered by the exhibition. Devised in conjunction with the Ma Langue Au Chat communication agency, the app is available free for iOS and Android, in English and French. Two excursions: one for adults, one for all the family.



Charles-Édouard Leprince, *Julie and Saint-Preux on Lake Geneva*, 1824, oil on canvas, Montmorency, Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Photo Didier Fontan

And there's more : at the Musée de la Vie romantique you can immerse yourself in the literary salons of the period. A hundred exhibits – paintings, sculptures, drawings, manuscripts and clothes – offer the ambience and the legacy of the salons, those Romantic literary hotbeds frequented by such greats of the early 19th century as **Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac** and **Théophile Gautier**. The salons were the expression of the sense of artistic solidarity so dear to the Romantics, and the exhibition highlights the interplay between literature, the fine arts and music. The visit is filled out by interactive terminals, a listening room and a cultural programme.



Louis-Léopold Boilly, *The Effect of Melodrama*, c. 1830, oil on canvas,
Versailles, Musée Lambinet
Photo RMN-Grand Palais/Philipp Bernard

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