

PRESS KIT

EGYPTIAN PHARAOKHS

FROM CHEOPS TO RAMSES II

9 FEBRUARY 2024 - 5 JANUARY 2025

ARTISTIC DIRECTION **VIRGINIE MARTIN** DESIGN AND PRODUCTION **CUTBACK** MUSIC SUPERVISION AND MIXING **START REC** A **CULTURESPACES DIGITAL®** PRODUCTION



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EGYPTIAN PHARAOHS FROM CHEOPS TO RAMSES II & THE ORIENTALISTS INGRES, DELACROIX, GÉRÔME...

FROM 9 FEBRUARY 2024 TO 5 JANUARY 2025

In 2024, Atelier des Lumières will present two new immersive exhibitions: a long program, 'Egyptian Pharaohs. From Cheops to Ramses II', and a short program, 'The Orientalists. Ingres, Delacroix, Gérôme...'

LONG PROGRAMME

Egyptian Pharaohs. From Cheops to Ramses II

Production: Culturespaces Studio ®

Artistic direction: Virginie Martin

Design and production: Cutback

Music supervision and mix: Start-Rec

The Atelier des Lumières' new digital exhibition invites visitors to step back in time and rediscover Egypt at the time of the Pharaohs, through masterpieces of Antiquity. This legendary civilisation, spanning three millennia, fascinates and captivates young and old alike.

As a prologue to the exhibition, grains of sand lifted by the wind reveal the remains of ancient Egypt as they appeared to French scientists during the Egyptian Campaign of 1798 to 1801, and drawn by the painter David Roberts, who wrote in his notebook "We are a people of dwarfs visiting a nation of giants". Originally, ancient Egypt had its own cosmogony, providing a rich account of the genesis of the world. The sacred forces of the gods clash and reveal themselves on the walls of Atelier des Lumières, taking us to the point when man first appeared on earth.

The journey then continues along the sacred river Nile, source of life. The rhythm of floods and seasons provides the fertile silt needed for a luxuriant flora and fauna to thrive. Daily life in ancient Egypt is brought to life through magnificent bas-reliefs, paintings and ancient papyri. Gigantic construction sites and feats of ancient architecture, the pyramids take shape before the eyes of visitors: one by one, the colossal blocks pile up to form the tombs of the eternal kings, guarded by the majestic Sphinx.

Ancient Egypt's impressive longevity is closely linked to the pharaohs, who ruled the unified kingdom of Upper and Lower Egypt. Monumental sculptures of sovereigns whose names resonate throughout history now tower over the space: Khéphren, Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Akhenaten and Nefertiti... Legendary battles punctuated the reigns of successive sovereigns, such as Ramses II at Qadesh. The arms of the Nile then irrigate the space with molten gold, the flesh of the gods, which flows along the walls, forging the incredible jewels of the Egyptian kings and queens.

Throughout Egypt, there are hundreds of temples dedicated to a multitude of divinities. From Luxor to Abu Simbel, these majestic, complex structures are cultural, spiritual, economical and political centres, where life and death are celebrated in great processions. Next comes the Valley of the Kings, home to the famous tomb of Tutankhamun. The Valley of the Queens also contains pure marvels, such as the tomb of Nefertari, all displayed in dazzling colour on the walls of Atelier des Lumières.

The cycle of life comes to an end, and the exhibition invites visitors to enter the afterlife by taking a closer look at the astronomical ceiling of Dendera, which normally rises 15 metres above the ground but is here displayed close enough to see clearly. The journey is over, having revealed only a tiny portion of this most fascinating ancient Egypt, where there are still so many mysteries to explore.

SHORT PROGRAMME

The Orientalists. Ingres, Delacroix, Gérôme...

Production: Culturespaces Studio ®

Artistic direction: Virginie Martin

Design and production: Cutback

Music supervision and mix: Start-Rec

In the 19th century, the doors of the Orient opened to Western painters attracted by the mysteries of far off lands. Dazzled by the light of the far south, which reveals the topography of these arid landscapes and highlights the colours of the buildings' spectacular motifs, Orientalists like Delacroix, Gérôme and Ingres, and other major names from European expressionism, now invite visitors to embark on a pictorial expedition to the new, exotic and bewitching world of the Orient of our dreams.

Delacroix's travel diaries begin the tale, immersing visitors in an itinerary steeped in the play of light and shade, the scent of spice, the rhythm of oriental instruments and quick sketches of hitherto unseen lives. Then come other great names, such as Constant, Frère, Vernet, Gérôme, Guillaumet, Belly, Richter and Dinet, amongst others, creating what they hope will be a marvellous, luxurious backdrop for an inspiring elsewhere. They meander through the narrow streets of Oriental cities and souks, to slip inside shady interiors, to join the dance of the Oriental soul, and to stroll through the patios of sumptuous palaces.

Visitors accompany the artists on their peregrinations and experience the gruelling journey across a merciless desert, relieved only by the occasional pause at an oasis. They also come across wild animals, the hunting of such creatures being a subject of choice for the Orientalists. And to finish, oriel windows, known as mashrabiya, offer a glimpse into the mysterious world of the harem. This sensual world, so often an object of fantasy, remained inaccessible to Orientalist painters, so their portrayals of it are drawn entirely from their imagination. The steam of the hammam reveals bathers with impossible curves, and finally the curtain rises on Ingres' *Grande Odalisque*, a dreamlike, idealised, Orientalist masterpiece. The dream comes to an end, and the visitor awakes from the fleeting mirage of an Orient as dreamt by the Orientalists, in the heart of the 19th-century Paris salon.

ARTISTIC PROJECT TEAM

Culturespaces Studio

Culturespaces Studio ® is Culturespaces' immersive exhibition production company, which covers 3 activities:

- **Designing large-format venues:** Designing, fitting out and organising large-format digital art centres in France and abroad, designed to receive between 500,000 and 1 million visitors a year
- **Audiovisual installations:** Coordination and implementation of specific technologies (video, sound, software) for the broadcasting of immersive exhibitions
- **Production studio:** Production of tailor-made digital exhibitions in collaboration with artistic directors or artists' collectives.

Virginie Martin

As a digital artist and architect, Virginie Martin explores the continual interaction between people and large scale images. For more than ten years, she has been creating video mappings, digital scenographies, and immersive exhibitions.

She has collaborated on various shows and installations in France (the Grand Palais in Paris, the Nîmes Amphitheatre, the Hôtel de Caumont in Aix-en-Provence, the Musée de la Renaissance in Ecouen, the Cathédrale d'Orléans, the Château de Maintenon, etc) and abroad (the Big-O Show in South Korea, the Fiesta de Luz in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, Bonjour India Bhargal in India, The Saga in the USA, San Antonio, Medellin Amor in Colombia).

Cutback

Founded in 2007 by Romain Perussel, Thomas Bellenger, and Grégory Lecourt, Cutback Live is a creative studio that is one of the foremost French video scenography companies. Cutback has been collaborating with Culturespaces for several years in order to produce spectacular images that completely immerse visitors in the world of the artists it highlights.

Start-Rec

Start-Rec is a music production agency, that creates for brands a unique and coherent musical universe bringing visual projects to life. Convinced that sound is an essential component of human emotion and that it governs the relationship between brands and individuals, Start-Rec has specialized in the design of premium, meaningful and emotional sonorous objects.

The soundtrack was entirely created by Start-Rec.

Ubisoft

The immersive exhibition, which features the Pyramids and Sphinx of Giza and the Temple of Karnak in Thebes, is based on detailed 3D reconstructions from the video game *Assassin's Creed Origins*, published by Ubisoft. These reconstructions are the result of demanding research carried out by teams of Ubisoft researchers and historians, in collaboration with external experts.

We warmly thank **Jean-Guillaume Olette-Pelletier**, Doctor of Egyptology at the University of Paris-Sorbonne and a specialist in Egyptian divinities from the 2nd and 3rd millennia BC and hieroglyphic cryptography, for his scientific advice. A field epigraphist at the temple of Karnak and then at the royal tombs of Tanis, he is currently co-director of the epigraphic mission at Ouadi Hammamat.



INTERVIEW WITH ARTISTIC DIRECTOR VIRGINIE MARTIN

After presenting retrospective exhibitions on great masters of art history, this year the Atelier des Lumières is exploring a great ancient civilisation. How did this exhibition project arise?

This new creation represents a continuation of the great masters of art history in that it focuses on Egyptian art in all its forms, a theme that offers us the opportunity to explore other artistic techniques than

painting. Visitors travel back in time and are immersed in a unique civilisation through a presentation of low reliefs, frescoes, monumental sculptures and architecture. Digital offers the opportunity to bring together works that are on display in the finest museum collections around the world: from the Louvre to the MET, from the British Museum to the Hermitage Museum, and of course the GEM in Cairo. The same applies to the tombs. We have reconstructed the most spectacular tombs, which are remarkably well preserved and to which access is regulated, by taking photos in situ, which have enabled us to 'restore' the marks of time on the image, and present these masterpieces to visitors as they existed more than 3,000 years ago.

How did you tackle this multifaceted subject? What have been your sources of inspiration?

Ancient Egypt offers spectacular subject matter that allows visitors to fully enter a variety of settings, in accordance with the themes of the presentation. For this creation, I wanted to move beyond the perception of archaeological remains as they are seen at the start of the tour; I chose instead to tell the story of what we have learned through hieroglyphs, burial treasures and recent discoveries still in a remarkable state of conservation, infusing history and context with movement, colour and music. I was fascinated to note how art, for artists and builders, was synonymous with lifelong religious devotion, in the ultimate hope of gaining access to the afterlife. As Egyptian mythology is fundamental, we made the cycle of life the main theme, which gave us greater freedom in the telling of the stories by allowing us to break away from chronology and thus enhance the immersion. The design of the exhibition presentation drew inspiration from Egyptian mythology, cinematic aesthetics and operatic dramaturgy. And also from music inspired by this unique civilisation. The many references to this subject, echo one another, stimulating new sensory dialogues.

How did you work with the different creation teams to create this exhibition?

The starting point for any creation is to take a close look at the material available to illustrate the subject. For this exhibition, the emphasis has been placed on masterpieces in the best state of preservation, allowing visitors to discover immersive settings based on what already exists. To complete the picture, the exhibition also features 3D reconstructions using the educational version of Ubisoft's *Assassin's Creed Origins* video game. Finally, archaeologist Franck Goddio's underwater photos of Thônis-Héracléion show the latest spectacular discoveries about this civilisation. Once the themes had been identified and the existing material selected, we designed the graphics and sounds that link the different media, and then completed the project by adding the more abstract sequences.

All the creative, technical and iconographic contributors worked in parallel, progressing together throughout the creative process to produce a unique experience, in which each visual detail and animated movement is accentuated by the soundtrack, and the entire project set in Atelier des Lumières's immersive projected space. The exhibition represents the synthesis of all the talents brought together to create a sensory environment in which visitors are plunged into the heart of the story.

Music is always an important element in Atelier des Lumières's immersive exhibitions: how did you approach the design of the soundtrack with Start-Rec?

The music describes the invisible dimension of the masterpieces and gives a real identity to the sequences in the presentation. Rhythm, intensity and silence all contribute to the narrative. The choice of music is therefore decisive in expressing an intention that will remain a medium of emotion throughout the visit. With Start-Rec, we began by exploring existing music that directly suggests the world of Ancient Egypt – whether from films or operas – and then created contemporary pieces, some of them daring, that allow us to vary the emotional response to the images. There are no guidelines, it's the emotion that is paramount and that can come from any source. For certain sequences, such as the construction of the Pyramids, the visual narrative is very precise, so we decided a piece should be specifically composed to convey the precise notion of the weight of the stone blocks and the awe-inspiring nature of the task of building the Pyramids.

Next came an important feature in the sound design, with the purpose of augmenting the immersive experience. In this, visitors are led to feel the forces of nature creating the world, such as sand-filled winds blowing through the space, or to feel themselves on the banks of the Nile during the age of the pharaohs.

From a personal point of view, which sequence or work impacts you the most?

I've always been impressed by ancient Egyptian jewellery, which seems timeless. They lay at the heart of the trade to acquire extraordinary precious materials, and gold symbolised the flesh of the gods. They inspired a very organic sequence in which molten gold reveals the masterpieces. They have a special place in the exhibition, as it is from here that the presentation progresses to the representation of the sacred. The musical accompaniment to this sequence is Massive Attack's *Angel*, to underline the mystery surrounding the jewels and the spectacular brilliance of the chased gold.

What was your greatest discovery while working on this project?

It is fascinating to see how much the narrative and sacred dimensions of the remains, that has seemed unchanging for centuries, enabled great creative freedom, with the result that life was breathed into them through the moving images and music.



A WORD BY EGYPTOLOGIST JEAN-GUILLAUME OLETTE-PELLETIER

The exhibition “Egyptian Pharaohs. From Cheops to Ramses II” is like an immersive book about Pharaonic civilisation, and in particular about the importance of the gods to the ancient Egyptians.

The three-dimensional aspect of the exhibition means that the visitor gradually lose their original role as mere spectators of the work. He becomes as much an actor in this age-old vision as an experimenter in this archaic thought, through his feelings, his listening, his movements and his observation throughout the scenes. Presenting the various aspects that shaped Pharaonic civilisation, such as festivals, the construction of royal tombs and temples, fishing, hunting, court life and mummification, visitors will find themselves immersed in this fragment of history.

Alongside the time of man, the time of the gods is also presented. Inseparable from Pharaonic civilisation, the world of the divine is perfectly illustrated here. Whether we are talking about the origin of the world, with the emergence of the sun Ra from the primordial waters of the Noun, or the daily and eternal battle of the solar god against the immense serpent of Darkness Apophis, the presentation of these religious aspects offers a clearer and above all more active vision of the pharaonic pictures painted or engraved in the royal tombs and in two dimensions. The impressions that emerge echo those probably felt by the “Solar People”, as the Egyptians were known in ancient times.

One of the sequences that, in my opinion, remains as subjugating as it is scientifically important is that of gold. Gold was considered by the ancient Egyptians to be a sacred material, eternal and divine because it shone like the sun and was above all rustproof. Funerary texts such as the Pyramid Texts and the Book of the Dead even explain that gold is quite simply the flesh of the gods. Flowing in veins of light at the heart of the exhibition, this sequence is a clear reminder of the veins of gold that criss-cross the Egyptian mountains, but also and above all of the gold that forms the ‘limbs’, on two levels, of the Egyptian pantheon.

It’s a real journey into the treasures of ancient Egypt that this exhibition promises. It’s a chance for young and old alike to immerse themselves in a civilisation that continues to fascinate with its deities, legendary pharaohs and artistic masterpieces.

'EGYPTIAN PHARAOHS' ITINERARY

The exhibition route is an invitation to travel back in time and immerse oneself in the heart of the thousand-year-old civilisation that developed along the river Nile, itself a gift from the gods. From the civilisation's divine genesis, the exhibition invites visitors to discover the daily lives of these genius pyramid builders and craftsmen, who dedicated their art to the glory of the pharaohs, and their lives to the divinities, in the hope of gaining access to the after life. The paintings, reliefs, sculptures, jewellery and incredible architectures tell the story of life on earth at the time of the pharaohs, making visitors feel infinitely small compared with the opulence of ancient Egypt.

Prologue

The exhibition makes a brief stop in 1838, to follow in the footsteps of Scottish painter and watercolourist David Roberts. Encouraged to travel by Turner, he toured Egypt and discovered the remains of ancient Egypt, as found by Napoleon Bonaparte during his Egyptian Campaign in 1798. These architectural treasures of gigantic proportions, which provided a glimpse of the splendour of the Egyptians in ancient times, much impressed David Roberts, who wrote in his diary: "We are a people of dwarfs visiting a nation of giants". Visitors are invited to unravel the mystery buried by time and the winds of sand, and then, after this prologue, to go right back to the origins of the Egyptian world.

Divine Genesis

In ancient Egyptian mythology, the creation of the world is a fascinating founding myth that sets in motion the natural elements, embodied by the goddesses and gods. The exhibition begins by immersing visitors in Noun, a primitive subterranean ocean. From this sleeping chaos emerges Atum, the creator god, whose rays land on the first pointed stone, the 'benben', a symbol of which the pyramids are an illustration. Atum creates the first gods: Shu, Air, and Tefnut, Moisture. They give birth to Geb and Nut who, separated by their father, form the earth and the vault of heaven. Visitors then see the barque of Ra, god of the sun, who fights the evil serpent Apophis every day, to bring about the birth of a new day. Finally, Atum's tears flood the earth, giving birth to the first humans.



David Roberts, *The Sphinx of Giza*, 1842-1849, coloured lithograph, private collection © Bridgeman Images

Life on the banks of the Nile

Egypt is a gift from the Nile, a gift from the gods. This river is a vital artery uniting the different regions of Lower and Upper Egypt, a water source on which people depend. It is also Egypt's main traffic route, carrying both people and materials. Ancient Egypt's seasons and food are dictated by the rhythms of the Nile, which also gives birth to majestic art, as lush as the flora and fauna it represents. Reeds, lotuses and papyrus bloom, hunters put birds to flight, farmers plough, and the whole of Egyptian society comes to life before the visitor's eyes.

Building the pyramids

Clouds of dust rise. First one then another colossal block of limestone falls to the ground in front of the visitor, gradually coming together to form the pyramids of Giza. Built over 4,000 years ago by Cheops, Khafre and Menkaure, these legendary monuments are above all the tombs of kings, who were buried like gods. These gigantic necropolises – the Pyramid of Cheops is one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World – still puzzle Egyptologists because of the complexity of the construction sites. The enigmatic Sphinx completes the panorama of the Giza plateau, a fascinating representation of a pharaoh as a recumbent lion with the head of a man. The mysteries that surround it only add to its fascination.



Pyramids of Cheops, Khafre and Menkaure, between 2600 and 2500 BC, Giza
© Copyright 2009sculpies/Shutterstock

Pharaohs

The pharaohs, veritable muses of Ancient Egypt, form a fabulous frieze that tells the story of over 3,000 years of history. The palette of Narmer, the founding pharaoh of the very first dynasty, illustrates the story of the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Pharaohs played a key role in Egyptian society, acting as a link between the earthly and divine worlds. These functions were distinguished by much pomp and circumstance. Monumental statues of pharaohs and queens clearly convey the pharaohs' divine nature to visitors.

Under the reign of Akhenaten, Egypt underwent a religious revolution, moving from polytheism to monotheism. The disruption in the aesthetic can be seen in the representations of the pharaoh and his wife Nefertiti depicted in their family life.

The pharaoh was also a warrior king, and his power therefore lay also in maintaining Egypt's borders. Victories over the enemy were the occasion for official narratives glorifying the sovereign, such as that of Ramses II and his legendary battle against the Hittite people at Qadesh.

Divine Gold

Now the Nile is transformed into a river of molten gold, flowing along the walls from the deposits in Nubia (modern-day Sudan). The ancient Egyptians considered gold to be a divine metal, the flesh of the gods. Visitors can see it in the bracelets, pectorals, amulets and daggers that sparkle and shine with a thousand lights. Carnelian, turquoise, amazonite, lapis lazuli... the shimmering, semi-precious stones bear witness to rich exchanges with Iran, Afghanistan and the cities of Mesopotamia.

The small, gilded wood naos found in Tutankhamun's treasure is the perfect end to this chapter: finely carved, it depicts the royal couple formed by Tutankhamun and Ankhesenamun.



Funerary mask of Tutankhamun (1345-1327 BC), 54 cm x 39.3 cm x 49 cm, gold, glass, lapis lazuli, semi-precious stones, 10.32 kg, Great Egyptian Museum, Cairo © akg-images / picture-alliance/ dpa

Temples

Egypt is brimming with hundreds of temples – sacred places and homes to the gods. Everything here is a symbol of the world created in the divine genesis: from the imposing surrounding walls and gates representing the Noun, to the naos, a secret sanctuary housing the divine statue.

Thanks to the striking images recreated by Ubisoft, visitors are greeted by avenues of sphinxes, before strolling through the courtyards and colonnades of a majestic temple. The bright colours used to decorate the temples reflected Egyptian chromatic thinking. Musicians and dancers bring the processions to life.

Masterpieces of the Ramesside dynasty and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temples of Abu Simbel in all their grandeur are displayed before visitors. They discover the colossal statues of Ramses II and the elaborate façade of the small temple dedicated to his wife Nefertari.

Next visitors admire the extraordinary phenomenon of the holy of holies, lit up as on every 22 February and 22 October, when the sun's rays cross the temple and illuminate three of the naos's four gods.



Colossal statues of Ramses II, entrance to the temple of Abu Simbel, circa 1260 BC, Abu Simbel
© akg-images / arcaid / Marcel Malherbe

Valley of kings and queens

The Valley of the Kings and Queens is the main necropolis of the New Kingdom, housing the tombs of the famous pharaohs. These tombs contain sublimely polychrome murals depicting the deceased's nocturnal journey to the after life. This iconography can be found in texts such as the Ani papyrus, whose pages unfold across the Atelier des Lumières like funeral bandages.

The valley, guarded by the Colossi of Memnon, is home to Hatshepsut's temple and a wealth of treasures, the most famous of which is, of course, that of Tutankhamun, whose discovery in 1922 was a major event. The door opens to reveal a jumble of precious objects, furniture and jewellery, and a sarcophagus. The gold glints softly in the torchlight, to be followed by the king's funerary mask, scrutinising visitors as they pass. To complete the funerary rites, a gallery of sarcophagi with painted decoration rises to the top of the walls.

The exhibition then turns to the tombs of Horemheb and Ramses I, whose very similar frescoes feature magnificent representations of Anubis and Osiris. Then rays of light reveal the paintings on the tomb of Queen Nefertari, the first royal wife of Ramses II, whom he called "she for whom the sun shines".



Antechamber of the tomb of Nefertari, first Great Royal Wife of Ramses II, circa 1290-1255 BC, Valley of the Queens, Luxor © akq / Science Photo Library

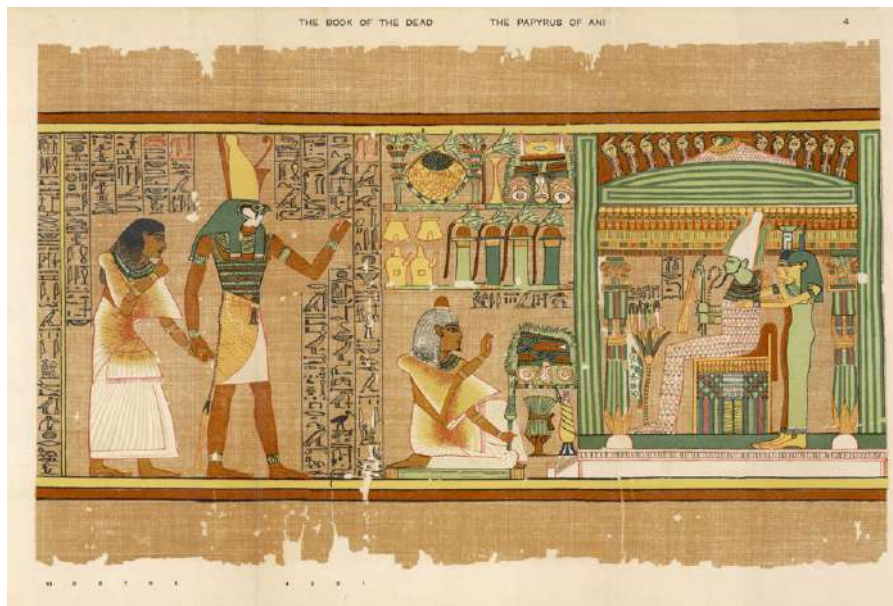
The Beyond

The golden stars on Nefertari's ceiling resemble a celestial vault. The queen appears alongside the various gods who are accompanying her to the afterlife, as the Dendera zodiac, now removed from the temple and preserved in the Louvre, swirls around the floor and walls. It illustrates the Egyptians' perception of the sky and goes with the astronomical ceiling in the Temple of Hathor, renowned for its dazzling colours.

Paradise is also depicted in the frescoes on the tomb of the artisan Sennedjem: a luxuriant, real Eden awaits any of the dead who have successfully passed the test of weighing their souls. To the sounds of *Stairway to Heaven*, the nine divinities that bring together the forces of the universe welcome visitors into eternity.

Sunken treasures

Visitors now leave antiquity behind and return to the present, immersed in the Bay of Aboukir where, in 2001, archaeologist Franck Goddio discovered the mysterious remains of the sunken city of Thônis-Héracléion, 35 km east of Alexandria. Goddio was a pioneer of underwater archaeology, and his unique images of his explorations have prompted continued research into ancient Egypt, where there are still so many treasures to discover.



Vignette showing the dead Ani introduced to Osiris, reproduction of the Papyrus of Ani, circa 1250 BC, acquired in 1913 by E.A Wallis Budge, British Museum, London © Mary Evans / Bridgeman Images

SOUNDRACK OF 'EGYPTIAN PHARAOHS FROM CHEOPS TO RAMSES II'

Song of the Pharaohs – Brian Keane, Omar Faruk, Tekbilek

Pruitt Igoe – Philip Glass

Loom (Sunrise session II) – Ólafur Arnalds, Reykjavik Orkestra

Lawrence of Arabia: Theme – London Philharmonic Orchestra

Imhotep – Jerry Goldsmith

Aida, Acte 4: "O terra addio" (Aida, Radames, Coro, Amneris) – Giuseppe Verdi, Montserrat Caballe, New Philharmonia Orchestra, Placido Domingo, Riccardo Muti

The Feeling Begins – Peter Gabriel

Angel – Massive Attack

The Shortening of the Way – Hans Zimmer

The Tomb of Kings – Trevor Jones

The Blue Planet – Jacob Shea

Inspirit – Julianna Barwick

Herald of the Change – Hans Zimmer

The Scorpion King – John Debney

Orion – GENER8ION

Stairway To Heaven – Led Zeppelin

Northern Lights – Jacob Shea

'THE ORIENTALISTS' ITINERARY

The Orient first appeared on the cultural landscape in the 17th century, but it was primarily the first French translation of the *Tales of a Thousand and One Nights*, in 1704, that really started the fashion for Orientalism. Part of a multi-artistic movement that allowed 19th-century industrial society to escape into a romantic, exotic world, the Orientalist painters have returned to Paris and have now turned up at Atelier des Lumières. A true invitation to travel, the exhibition is structured around six major movements.

Prologue

Accompanying Charles de Mornay on a diplomatic mission on behalf of Louis-Philippe I, in his travel diaries, Eugène Delacroix quickly jotted down sketches of the sensations and impressions he experienced during his stay in Morocco. Notes, watercolours, architectural details, attitudes and postures of the inhabitants, new colours and shapes – all are set down on paper, bearing witness to the artist's remarkable creative process.

The oriental city

From the rooftops, we can see panoramic views of distant horizons: terraces, lightly caressed by the wind, invite visitors to enjoy a moment of reverie. The shady rooftops give way to bustling streets and markets. In this maze of alleyways, brightly coloured carpets gradually cover the walls and visitors are invited in to meet the locals. Stunning portraits appear, such as Jean-Léon Gérôme's *Bachi-Bouzouk*, magnificently dressed in silks, but whose weapons are a reminder of his brutal profession. The walk through the city ends with scenes of interiors, filled with rich fabrics and delicate zellige tiles, depicted in Eugène Delacroix's *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*.



Gustave Boulanger, *The Courtyard of the Palace of Dar Khdaouedj El Amia, Algiers, 1877*, oil on canvas, 83,8 x 114,3 cm, private collection, Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images

The dance of the oriental soul

Now it's time for a show. The patterns start to dance. Sword dancers and belly dancers, musicians, snake charmers and actors attract the attention of a group of spectators. There is a festive atmosphere, with lively music to accompany the concentric patterns and turquoise Iznik pottery that so bewitch the spectators as they spin like tops. Here, in typical Impressionist style, Renoir has depicted a joyful crowd surrounding five musicians. We also get a brief glimpse of the ramparts of Algiers, a city whose white domes stand out against the blue waters of the Mediterranean.

Architectural wonders

Things quieten down and all is calm again, as the light reveals palaces of majestic proportions, thirst-quenching fountains in the patios, and the mesmerising geometric patterns of the zellige tiles. The materials take on a thousand different hues and the dazzling gilding sparkles. Guards watch over the splendid residences of sultans, pashas and other eminences, while women lounge on flower strewn carpets. Now it is the visitors' turn to move through the succession of luxuriously sculpted Moorish and broken arches.

The merciless crossing of the desert

The plants growing in the patios gradually fill the space and take visitors outside the city. Arid landscapes were a key theme for Orientalists on expeditions, and the desert motif fascinated with its light, textures and colours. The visitor continues the pitiless journey on a camel, in a landscape where you can almost feel the thirst and the sandstorms. Atelier des Lumières becomes a Saharan tent where you can rest a little, sheltered from the scorching sun. At last, the oasis finally appears, and with it, the vegetation.



Jean Léon Gérôme, *The Pyrrhic Dance*, 1885, oil on canvas, 65 x 81,3 cm, private collection, Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images

A world of wild animals

Huge claws scratch the walls, the big cats come out of hiding and reveal themselves in the shadows. Delacroix was fascinated by big cats, painting them in their natural environment and reproducing their captivating gaze. The pace quickens and through the vegetation appear the climax of the sequence: a hunt for these majestic felines. Captured or killed for prestige, these tests of strength between man and beast fascinated painters such as Horace Vernet, for example, with his *Lion Hunt*.

The oriental woman

The so-called 'Oriental' woman was a subject that inspired the greatest masterpieces of this pictorial movement. The closed world of the harem, shrouded in mystery, was a pretext for studying the nude: behind the mashrabiya, or oriel windows, painters like Delacroix, Richter, Gérôme and Ingres give a glimpse of voluptuous, diaphanous, evanescent bodies. Ingres's *Grande Odalisque* leaves her fantasised background to end our journey with majesty, before evaporating into the air and awaking us from our dream.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
© Bridgeman Images

SOUNDTRACK 'THE ORIENTALISTS. INGRES, DELACROIX, GÉRÔME...'

Stained Glass - Hooshyar Khayam (feat. Aram Talalyan, Julietta Vardanyan, Lusine Aghababyan & Naregatsi Ensemble)

Arabesque – Dom La Nena

Cruising – Bendik Giske

Orientale – David Carroll and his orchestra

Starry sky – Brandon Fiechter, Derek Fiechter

The Way We Win Matters - Steve Jablonsky, Gavin Greenaway et Metro Voices

Rumba - Issam Houshan

Violin Concerto "1001 Nights in the Harem": IV. – Fazil Say, John Axelrod, Luzerner Sinfonieorchester, Patricia Kopatchinskaja.

It's A Man's Man's Man's World - James Brown, New-York Studio Orchestra, Sammy Lowe

Antar (After N. Rimsky-Korsakov): No. 7. Ravel Allegretto - Maurice Ravel, André Dussolier, Leonard Slatkin, Orchestre National de Lyon

CONTEMPORARY CREATION 'FOREIGN NATURE'

Production: Culturespaces Studio ®

Direction & Design: Julius Horsthuis

Music: Ben Lukas Boysen

In 'Foreign Nature', Julius Horsthuis employs computer generated fractals to create a universe where mathematics and art coalesce seamlessly, where the secular and the spiritual harmonize, where the differences between the organic and the artificial, the macro and the micro all blend into a strange and unseen universe.

Organized in two parts, visitors travel first through mysterious industrial and mechanical landscapes - made of endless spaceships moving into space or multilayered church-looking structures - and then into enigmatic organic alien-like landscapes and forms. From a mutating vegetal cathedral to a breathing hybrid organic-machine heart, it is easy to see in these worlds familiar forms that are part of our existence or have shaped our fantasies and dreams. The music of Ben Lukas Boysen made specifically for the show accompanies visitors in this journey, meshing these extraordinary views with a thrilling and spiritual touch.

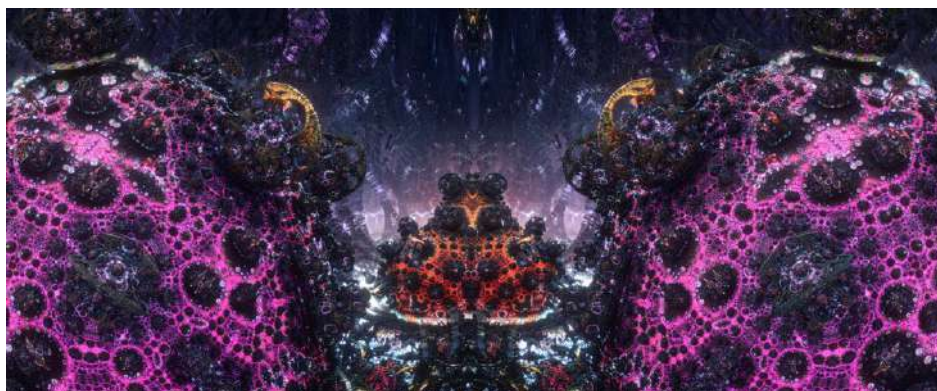
"My kind of art can be compared with the art of the photographer or the cinematographer or the documentary maker, it is showing something that exists, like the fractal exists. I didn't create it, I didn't come up with it, I found it. And I'm trying to show that journey of discovery and that is where the creative part comes in." – Julius Horsthuis

Julius Horstuis

Born in 1980 in The Netherlands, Julius Horsthuis is a digital artist known for his extensive use of fractals. His creations have been showcased in notable films and series like the Academy Award-winning *Manchester by the Sea* (2016), *Koning van Katoren* (2012) and *Guillermo del Toro's Cabinet of Curiosities* (2022), as well as at various music and art festivals such as Coachella Music and Arts Festival, IDFA, Art Futura, and the SAT Symposium in Montreal.

Ben Lukas Boysen

Composer, producer and sound designer. With several albums to his credit, often using the alias HECQ, Ben Lukas Boysen specializes in crafting custom sound designs for films, commercials, video games, and installations. In 2011, he made his debut in film scoring with *Restive*, followed by the release of his first solo album in 2013. He received acclaim for his award-winning score in 2016 for the Sony Playstation game, *Everything*.



© Julius Horsthuis

ATELIER DES LUMIÈRES, A DIGITAL ART CENTRE MANAGED BY CULTURESPACES

Since it opened in 2018, Atelier des Lumières has been making the most of the digital revolution to promote artistic creation. Within its immersive exhibitions, Atelier des Lumières pays tribute to the greatest artists in the history of art and questions contemporary issues such as space conquest and sustainability. The venue is internationally recognised and hosts exhibitions of the work of artists who specialise in digital and immersive art.

Culturespaces, founded in 1990 by Bruno Monnier, is the leading private operator in the management and promotion of historical monuments, museums, and art centres. Since 2012, Culturespaces has also become a pioneer in the creation of digital art centres and immersive digital exhibitions.

With CULTURESPACES STUDIO ®, Culturespaces works with teams and has expertise, in France and worldwide, that encompasses the design and creation of digital art centres, technological expertise for holding exhibitions, the production and cataloguing of immersive digital exhibitions, and the presentation of the works of classical, modern, and contemporary artists.

Digital art centres:

- Carrières des Lumières, Les Baux-de-Provence (since 2012)
- Atelier des Lumières, Paris (since 2018)
- Bunker des Lumières, Jeju (since 2018)
- Bassins des Lumières, Bordeaux (since 2020)
- Hall des Lumières, New York (since 2022)
- Fabrique des Lumières, Amsterdam (since 2022)
- Théâtre des Lumières, Seoul (since 2022)
- Phoenix des Lumières, Dortmund (since 2023)
- Port des Lumières, Hambourg (opening in 2024)

CULTURE FOR CHILDREN

The 'Immersion in art' programme is a national scheme developed by Culture for Children that aims to facilitate access to an Artistic and Cultural Education, by exploring the potential of immersive digital art as a medium for art. Every year in France, 7,000 children between the ages of five and twelve take part in the programme.

The project's educational and creative content is developed in connection with the immersive digital exhibitions held in three digital art centres: Atelier des Lumières in Paris, Carrières des Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence, and Bassins des Lumières in Bordeaux.

Composed of several parts, 'Immersion in Art' enables children to discover an artist and his world in an original way. Hence, the educational and creative workshops created by Culture for Children and the discovery of an immersive digital art centre provide children with an opportunity to apprehend new artistic media through a unique cultural itinerary.

To tackle the inequalities seen in access to art and heritage, in 2009, **Culture for Children** (ex-Culturespaces Foundation) began creating and launching educational programmes for children affected by illness, disability or social deprivation. These programmes enable them to enjoy unique artistic and cultural experiences to pique their interest and help them grow and thrive.

Every year in France, almost 13,000 children aged 5-12 participate in our fun, educational programmes, organised in collaboration with around ten exceptional cultural sites and local social and educational stakeholders. Our programmes form a truly creative journey, organised in several stages by our external mediators who intervene during class time or outside school hours. By boosting awareness of culture, art and heritage in an inclusive and engaging manner, Culture for Children combines solidarity with creativity. Created more than ten years ago with the primary goal of encouraging the social integration of young people through culture, today Culture for Children is one of the leading French players in the area of artistic and cultural education for vulnerable children.

Culture for Children includes each year:

- 4 regions in which educational programmes are run
- 5 educational and cultural programmes
- 800 teaching workshops run by our mediators
- More than 500 partner institutions (schools, hospitals, social facilities etc)
- 13 000 children given access to culture



© Culture for children (2022) - C. de la Motte Rouge



Contact

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BRUNO MONNIER, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF CULTURESPACES



30 years dedicated to historic monuments, museums, traditional and digital exhibitions. Creator of digital art centres.

With degrees from Sciences Po Paris, Université Paris II Assas and an MBA from HEC, art-loving Bruno Monnier joined the French Ministry of Culture in 1986 as project leader on the Patrimoine 2000 commission and to help reorganise Château de Versailles. He left the ministry in 1988 to create Culturespaces, a company inspired by the British model, under which most monuments and museums are managed by private organisations. Culturespaces started out by advising regional authorities, private owners and public establishments on how to promote and manage their monuments and museums.

In 1992, Académie des Beaux-Arts asked him to manage the Ephrussi de Rothschild Villa in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, whose gardens he had renovated. In 1996, Institut de France entrusted him with the management of the Jacquemart-André museum in Paris and its exhibitions. Other authorities signed public service delegation contracts for the management of monuments, museums and exhibitions. He was ultimately managing 15 establishments with 450 employees, directing major temporary exhibitions and organising live shows and concerts.

Bruno Monnier created the Culturespaces Foundation in 2009 whose mission is to encourage access to art and heritage and to fight the cultural exclusion of certain children suffering from illness, disabilities or made vulnerable by poverty or social exclusion. The Culturespaces Foundation has become the independant fund of endowment Culture for Children. It currently welcomes over 13,000 children each year to the establishments managed by Culturespaces.

In 2012, Bruno Monnier opened Carrières des Lumières in Les Baux-de-Provence for Culturespaces; it is now the region's most visited cultural site. He created a new cultural venue in Aix-en-Provence in 2013: Hôtel de Caumont. After an exemplary restoration project and the creation of new gardens, he turned the site into an art centre to host famous temporary exhibitions.

In 2015, he came up with the 21st century museum for Culturespaces using works of art and music supported by digital technology. He decided to create Atelier des Lumières, his first digital art centre, in a former foundry in the 11th arrondissement. Atelier des Lumières was inaugurated in 2018 and welcomed more 5 million visitors since. Then, in 2020, he created Bassins des Lumières in the submarine base in Bordeaux, which is the world's largest immersive digital art centre. International development continued with the 2018 opening of Bunker des Lumières in Jeju (South Korea), and Infinity des Lumières in Dubai in 2021. Three new digital art centres opened in 2022 in Amsterdam, New York and Seoul. Two digital art centres open in Germany, in 2023 in Dortmund and in Hambourg in 2024.

VISUALS AVAILABLE FOR THE PRESS



Hypostyle hall with osirian colossi representing Ramses II, circa 1260 BC, Abu Simbel
© akg-images / Bildarchiv Steffens



Antechamber of the tomb of Nefertari, first Great Royal Wife of Ramses II, circa 1290-1255 BC, Valley of the Queens, Luxor
© akg / Science Photo Library



David Roberts, The Sphinx of Giza, 1842-1849, coloured lithograph, private collection
© Bridgeman Images



Hunting scene, fragment of a fresco from the tomb of Nebamun, circa 1350 BC, British Museum, London
© akg-images / WHA / World History Archive



Colossal statues of Ramses II, entrance to the temple of Abu Simbel, circa 1260 BC, Abu Simbel
© akg-images / arcaid / Marcel Malherbe



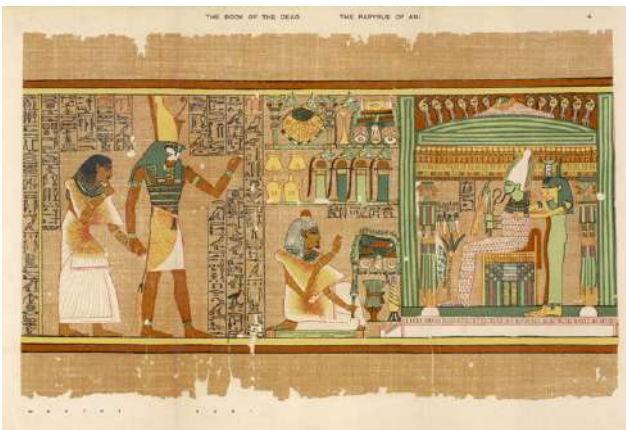
Funerary mask of Tutankhamun (1345-1327 BC), 54 cm x 39.3 cm x 49 cm, gold, glass, lapis lazuli, semi-precious stones, 10.32 kg, Great Egyptian Museum, Cairo
© akg-images / picture-alliance/ dpa



Pyramids of Cheops, Khafre and Menkaure, between 2600 and 2500 BC, Giza © Copyright 2009sculplies/Shutterstock



Solar barque, detail from the Book of the Dead, mural, Tomb of Inherkhau, circa 1186-1146 BC, Luxor
© Hervé Champollion / akg-images



Vignette showing the dead Ani introduced to Osiris, reproduction of the Papyrus of Ani, circa 1250 BC, acquired in 1913 by E.A Wallis Budge, British Museum, London © Mary Evans / Bridgeman Images



Funerary temple of Hatshepsut, circa 1472-1457 BC, Deir el-Bahari
© akg-images/Rainer Hackenberg



Cover of the mummy of Soutymes, high priest of Karnak, circa 1069-943 BC, painted wood and stucco, 175 x 44 x 15.3 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris © 2000 Musée du Louvre / Georges Poncet



Falcon-shaped pectoral jewel, circa 1357-1336 BC, gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise, carnelian and glass, 12.6 x 11.7 cm, Tutankhamun treasure, Great Egyptian Museum, Cairo
© akg-images/Album/Pepe Lucas



The Eye of Horus, detail of the astronomical ceiling, hypostyle hall of the temple of Hathor, 50-48 BC, Dendera © Heritage Images/Fine Art Images/akg-images



Relief of Akhenaten, Nefertiti and two princesses worshipping the Aten, limestone, from Tell el-Amarna, The Egyptian Museum, Cairo
© akg-images/Andrea Jemolo



The Nefertiti bust, circa 1351-1334 BC, limestone, painted stucco, Neues Museum, Berlin
© akg-images/Album/M. Flynn/Prisma



Queen Nefertari and Horus, detail, mural from the tomb of Nefertari, circa 1290-1255 BC, Valley of the Queens, Luxor
© akg/Science Photo Library



Statue of Thutmose III, basalt, circa 1479-1425 BC, Luxor Museum of Ancient Egyptian Art, Luxor
© akg-images/De Agostini Picture Lib./G. Sioen



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Grande Odalisque*, 1814, oil on canvas, 91 x 162 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
© Bridgeman Images



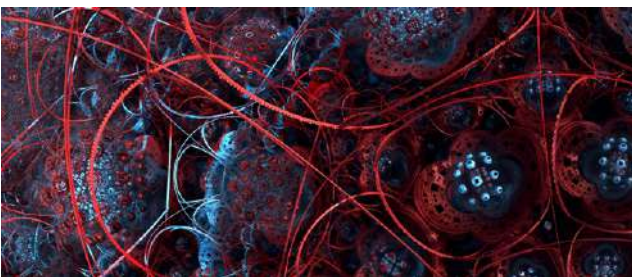
Gustave Boulanger, *The Courtyard of the Palace of Dar Khdaouedj El Amia, Algiers*, 1877, oil on canvas, 83.8 x 114.3 cm, private collection
Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



Eugène Delacroix, *Young tiger playing with his mother*, 1830, oil on canvas, 130.5 x 195 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris
© Bridgeman Images



Jean Léon Gérôme, *The Pyrrhic Dance*, 1885, oil on canvas, 65 x 81.3 cm, private collection
Photo © Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images



© Julius Horsthuis



© Julius Horsthuis



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'Egyptian Pharaohs. From Cheops to Ramses II' © Cutback / Culturespaces



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'Egyptian Pharaohs. From Cheops to Ramses II' © Cutback / Culturespaces



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'Egyptian Pharaohs. From Cheops to Ramses II' © Cutback / Culturespaces



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'The Orientalists. Ingres, Delacroix, Gérôme' © Cutback / Culturespaces



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'The Orientalists. Ingres, Delacroix, Gérôme' © Cutback / Culturespaces



Simulation of the immersive exhibition 'The Orientalists. Ingres, Delacroix, Gérôme' © Cutback / Culturespaces

Credits for all the visuals below: Photograph of the exhibition 'Egyptian Pharaohs. From Cheops to Ramses II'
© Culturespaces / C. de la Motte Rouge





Credits for all the visuals below: Photograph of the exhibition 'The Orientalists. Ingres, Delacroix, Gérôme'
© Culturespaces / C. de la Motte Rouge



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Access

38, rue Saint-Maur 75011 Paris

Metro: lines 9 (Voltaire, Saint-Ambroise), 3 (Saint-Maur) and 2 (Père Lachaise)

Bus: 46, 56, 61 et 69

Openings

Open every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and in the evening on Fridays and Saturdays until 10 p.m. and on Sundays until 7 p.m.

The exhibitions will be projected continuously: there are no fixed viewing times.

The cultural gift shop is open during the venue's opening times.

Online booking

Rates (preferential rates when booking online, - €2 compared to the rates on site)

Full rate: €17

Senior rate: €16 (over 65)

Reduced rate: €15 (aged 12-25, students, job-seekers, invalid people - upon presentation of a valid proof of entitlement)

Child rate: €10 (aged 3-11)

Family rate: €49 (2 adults + 2 young person)

Free for children under 3 (upon presentation of a valid proof of entitlement)

Press Contact

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