



MUSÉE DE CLUNY
le monde médiéval

PRESS RELEASE
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THE ROCK CRYSTAL EXHIBITION AT THE CLUNY MUSEUM: EXPLORE THIS FASCINATING MATERIAL THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

Rock crystal has fascinated every civilisation since time immemorial for its mysterious translucence. From 26 September 2023 to 14 January 2024, the Musée de Cluny – Musée National du Moyen Âge will be taking visitors on a journey through the history of crystal from the present day to the Middle Ages and beyond.

During medieval times in particular, this colourless quartz was a much coveted material for making tableware and other precious items such as decorative objects and jewellery. Due to the rock's purity, crystal has also been endowed with powerful symbolic meaning expressed through the production of liturgical pieces and reliquaries.

Curated in six acts, the exhibition "Voyage dans le cristal" explores every facet of this enigmatic material whose mystery is slowly revealed through the sequence of displays. To start proceedings, visitors are introduced to quartz and its geological properties, notably through models produced by one of the modern creators of crystallography, Jean-Baptiste Louis Romé de l'Isle. Next, with exhibits that are chronological and arranged by theme, visitors get to discover the many and varied ways humankind has made use of rock crystal through the ages. The exhibition presents over 200 pieces, almost half of which date from the Middle Ages, including objects with spiritual or magical powers, such as reliquaries in which the crystal serves as a magnifying lens; objects for kings, like a sceptre on loan from the British Museum; luxury and ornamental pieces, for example a ewer from the Louvre; and scientific instruments such as the mystifying Visby lenses. It guides visitors through to the modern day and concludes on the museum's first floor with an installation by artist Patrick Neu, specially commissioned for the event, which will interact with loaned ancient and contemporary objects made of rock crystal.

Organised by the Musée de Cluny – Musée National du Moyen Âge and the Réunion des Musées Nationaux – Grand Palais, with the special participation of the Musée du Louvre, the exhibition features works from Musée de Cluny and objects on loan from national and international institutions including the Schnütgen Museum (a member of the European Network of Museums of Medieval Art established by the Cluny Museum) and other institutions in Cologne; the Musée national d'art moderne, the Muséum d'Histoire naturelle (Paris); the Kunsthistorisches Museum (Vienna); the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and Tate Britain (London); the National Museum of Denmark (Copenhagen); and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York). The exhibition was curated by Isabelle Bardiès-Fronty, head curator of heritage at the Musée de Cluny, and Stéphane Pennec, archaeologist. The exhibition is supported by L'ÉCOLE, School of Jewelry Arts.

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Musée de Cluny - musée
national du Moyen Âge
#VoyageDansLeCristal

About the Musée de Cluny - Musée National du Moyen Âge

Reopened on 12 May 2022, the Musée de Cluny is the only national museum in France dedicated to the Middle Ages. The public can now discover the Middle Ages for a new generation, thanks to improved accessibility, renewal of the visit itinerary and museum design, and redesign of the information tools targeted at a diverse public.

At 28 rue Du Sommerard, in the heart of the Latin Quarter, the museum takes you on a journey back in time, from the 1st to the 21st century, in a unique setting. The 15th century private townhouse of the Abbots of Cluny, attached to the Gallo-Roman thermal baths, has now been joined by a contemporary extension, inaugurated in 2018 and designed by the architect Bernard Desmoulin.

This heritage site houses prestigious collections illustrating the extraordinary diversity of medieval artistic production. The new museum itinerary follows a chronological thread, designed to make the development of forms, groundbreaking moments, innovations and aesthetic differences between Northern and Southern Europe easy to understand. Through a multitude of approaches and media, the cultural programme provides information to a wide-ranging public.

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Practical information

Museum entrance :

28 rue Du Sommerard
75005 Paris

Opening times :

Open every every day, except Monday,
from 9.30 am to 6.15 pm
Open 1st and 3rd Thursday evening of the
month from 7 to 9 pm
Closed on 25 December, 1 January
and 1 May

Book/gift shop :

9.30 am – 6.15 pm, free entry
Tél. +33 (0) 1 53 73 78 22

Directions :

Métro Cluny-La-Sorbonne/Saint-
Michel/Odéon
Bus n° 21 – 27 – 38 – 63 – 85 – 86 – 87
RER lines B and C Saint-Michel – Notre-
Dame

Prices :

€12, concessions €10
Free for those aged under 26 (EU citizens
or on long stays in the EU) and for all
visitors on the first Sunday of the
month

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