

Charleston Mercury

October 2023

The newspaper with a cosmopolitan attitude

Le Carnet de France: Autumn in Paris

By Martine Dulles

Autumn in Paris means new art exhibits and this year — yet again — the program is extremely interesting, and a short smattering of highlights is below:

The first “must” is in the Louvre’s Naples in Paris. The world-famous museum of Naples in Italy, the Museo di Capodimonte, has lent the Louvre some 60 major masterpieces from its own collections, including oil paintings, drawings and porcelain pieces from different areas of Italy dating from the Renaissance to the 18th century.

The Louvre also had the exceptional idea to hang the pieces in separate rooms alongside similar Italian paintings owned by the Louvre instead of simply showing the borrowed paintings next to one another in a single room. This means that in the very long Grande Galerie, for example, one may admire masterpieces by Bellini, Caravaggio, Raphaël and Titian in the same room as one can also admire other masterpieces by Italian artists which the Louvre does not own, such as Masaccio and Parmigianino — the chains holding the pieces from the Capodimonte are covered with a red velvet fabric to differentiate them from the paintings owned by the Louvre.

In the Salle de la Chapelle decorative items made in Naples during the 18th century are displayed with an emphasis on porcelain sets. The history of the collections from the Capodimonte, started by the Farnese family from Parma and continued by different popes is also presented in this Salle. And finally, in the Salle de L’Horloge, some magnificent drawings by Michelangelo and Raphaël are shown for a short time.

The second exhibit

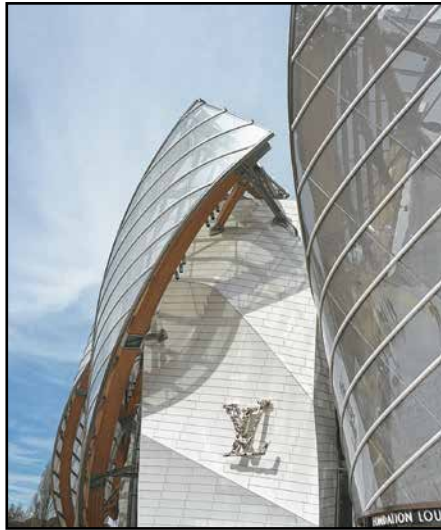


IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

The Fondation LVMH.

not to be missed is the Musée d’Art moderne de Paris’ (MAM) exhibit *Nicolas de Staël, le funambule* [the tight-rope walker]. Born in 1914 in St. Petersburg, Russia, Nicolas de Staël and his family were forced to flee to Poland after the revolution. His parents died shortly thereafter, and he was taken in by a family in Brussels who adopted orphan children. He decided he wanted to be a famous painter at a very young age and traveled extensively around the Mediterranean, which influenced his use of color and contrast — if at the beginning his palette was dark, the influence of the sun and the sea led to his use of brighter colors in his paintings as he matured. As a prolific painter and an excellent sketch artist, de Staël was interested in both figurative and abstract forms, which he blended effortlessly. Observers may recognize the shape of a boat, a nude or even a salad bowl set against the background of an abstract sky or landscape.

As was the case with many painters, de Staël endured harsh times, eventually reaching the point that he could no longer afford food and paints. Fortunately, in

the early 1950s, galleries in New York began to promote his works and finally money started to come in. However, with four children from three marriages, his personal life was tumultuous to say the least and on March 16, 1955, he hurled himself into the sea while alone at his home and studio in Antibes.

Last year, the French award for the best art book was attributed to the publisher Citadelles & Mazenod for their book on Nicolas de Staël. It is a magnificent book.

The exhibit lasts until January 21, 2024. The MAM is located at 11 avenue du Président-Wilson in the 16th arrondissement, between Alma-Marceau and the Place du Trocadéro.

After the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London, the delightful exhibit of Berthe Morisot and the art of the 18th Century: Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard and Perronneau will be shown at the Musée Marmottan Monet from October 18, 2023, to March 3, 2024. Berthe Morisot (1841-1895) was born in Bourges in France. She married Eugène Manet, Edouard Manet’s brother, so it is easy to imagine



IMAGE BY THE AUTHOR

The Louvre at the golden hour.

she circulated around the world of “impressionist” painters of her time. Her subjects — friends, children and animals — were painted in beautiful outdoor landscapes. In London, the displayed paintings were not big, and they were hung next to paintings done by her friends or others who influenced her in her art.

The Musée Marmottan Monet at 2 Rue Louis Boilly in the 16th arrondissement houses the largest collection of Monet’s paintings as well as furniture and decorative items from the early 19th century.

Not far from the Musée Marmottan Monet is the Fondation LVMH — the exact address is 8 av. du Mahatma Gandhi. Find it next to the Jardin d’acclimatation in the Bois de Boulogne. Designed by legendary architect Frank Gehry, the Fondation opened in October of 2014 and has since organized many blockbuster exhibits from Claude Monet to Joan Mitchell (see “Le Carnet de France” in the *Mercury* in February of this year). This time the main attraction is a major retrospective of the works of Mark Rothko (1903-1970), featuring 115 paintings gathered

from museums and private collections all over the world. The exhibition is open from October 18, 2023, to April 2, 2024.

Back in the center of Paris on Place de la Concorde, the Musée de l’Orangerie is presenting *Amadeo Modigliani. Un peintre et son marchand* (“A. M. and his art dealer”) until January 15, 2024. Although a native Italian, Modigliani (1884-1920) lived most of his life in France. He started his career as a sculptor, but soon switched to painting, where he became personally acquainted with masters such as Picasso, Juan Gris, Diego Rivera and many others, although it was Paul Guillaume who truly encouraged him as an artist: Modigliani produced more than 100 oil paintings, at least 50 drawings and a dozen sculptures for Paul Guillaume. This exhibit emphasizes the rising cultural and artistic climate of France and the United States during the 1910s and 20s.

The Salon du Patrimoine (the international Heritage Fair) in the Carrousel du Louvre is scheduled to run from November 2 – 5 of this year. According to the museum’s website, “The theme of

this 28th edition will highlight the challenge of transmission, one of the essential issues of heritage.” As mentioned in previous years, it is a small venue where one can meet the best French artisans and restorers of ironwork, woodwork, tapestry, trompe l’oeil and many more. Owners of châteaux, manoirs, gardens and parks, museums and antique sites display items from their domains in the enchanting space in addition to the many books and magazines devoted to the celebrating the heritage, restoration and beauty of works of art.

It should go without saying that it is best to purchase tickets online ahead of time for these exhibits. Remember that the Olympic games take place in Paris and in major French cities from Friday, July 26 to August 11, 2024.

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