

THE COLOURS OF THE SKY

Paintings from 17th-century Paris churches

Exhibition 4 October 2012 - 24 February 2013

In the autumn of 2012 the Musée Carnavalet, a hub for the history and patrimony of Paris, is presenting a brand new retrospective devoted to 17th-century painting in the city's churches: some 120 paintings, drawings and engravings from collections in France and abroad are being brought together here for the first time.

Partially dispersed since the French Revolution, this remarkably spectacular heritage is little known to today's general public. Home to ornamentation by such 17th-century masters as Nicolas Poussin, Simon Vouet and Philippe de Champaigne, the churches of Paris are the French capital's oldest museums. The Musée Carnavalet and COARC (Conservation of Civil and Religious Artworks for the City of Paris) are thus offering visitors the chance to rediscover a period of enormous creative energy and an art context in which religious painting played a key role.

The exhibition's line of approach combines chronology, style and some of the major features of the religious art scene of the time: the importance and diversity of those who commissioned works (the royal family, the guilds), the stages in the creative process (preliminary drawings, reductions), incorporation of ornamentation into architecture, etc. Also on display will be a unique ensemble of preparatory works for the "Mays" of Notre Dame, the large-scale pictures given to the Cathedral every year by the guild of goldsmiths.

The Musée Carnavalet exhibition can be complemented by a tour of the churches of Saint Eustache, Saint Nicolas des Champs and Saint Joseph des Carmes: visitors will be able to see the works in the architectural setting they were created for, together with the recent restorations that have given some of the private chapels all the *éclat* of the *Grand Siècle*.

The exhibition is produced in association with COARC (Conservation of Civil and Religious Artworks for the City of Paris).

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Curators

Chief curators : Jean-Marc Léry, director of the Musée Carnavalet , and Daniel Imbert, director of COARC (Conservation of Civil and Religious Artworks for the City of Paris)

Consultant curator : Guillaume Kazerouni, professor of art history at the Manufacture des Gobelins

Exhibition curators : Thierry Sarmant, chief curator of the Musée Carnavalet, and Lionel Britten, COARC documentation coordinator

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Philippe de Champaigne, *The Sleep of Elias*, Musée de Tessé, Le Mans
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Open daily 10 am - 6pm

except Mondays and public holidays