

# VISITOR GUIDE

Built between 1903 and 1910 by the Genevan architect Marc Camoletti, with the aim of uniting under one roof a number of dispersed public collections, the Museum of art and history (MAH) is one of Switzerland's most important encyclopædic museums.

Boasting over a half a million objects, including major works and unique series that have made it an institution of international influence, the museum displays selections from its collections, which are devoted to the applied arts, fine arts, works on paper and to archæology.

Regional archeological findings, Egyptian and Classic antiquities, objets d'art, furniture, arms, paintings and sculptures are the witnesses to fifteen thousand years of history.

For the first half-year of 2022, the MAH welcomes the art historian Jean-Hubert Martin who received an open invitation to revisit the collection. Entitled *Draw your own conclusion*, this exhibition fills the ground floor and the galleries on the museum's first floor.

*Draw your own conclusion* calls on the public's eye, imagination and ability to interpret so that it can discover a playful and sensitive presentation.

The trajectory of this exhibition is inspired by the visual thinking of artists, who draw their references from universal art. Liking surprise and often favouring atypical work, they make choices that follow neither logic nor the categories of art history.

The exhibition is ordered into chapters that are part of a continuous sequence in which each piece unfolds from the previous one and heralds the next. This innovative art walk is sure to be enjoyable while also engaging.

# TEN MASTERPIECES

This selection outlines a tour through the permanent collection, with its distinctive features and highlights. These ten masterpieces would indeed deserve a visit to the museum all to themselves.

A



**Savoyard helmet, ca. 1580.**

From the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, this type of helmet was used in several European armies. According to the tradition, this one, along with thirty similar specimens, comes from the Escalade spoils, that famous night in December 1602 when Duke Charles-Emmanuel the 1<sup>st</sup> of Savoy tried to seize the city of Geneva.

B



**Stained glass of St. Peter's Cathedral, *Saint James the Greater*, 1487.**

This stained-glass window representing Saint James the Greater comes from the abside of St Peter's Cathedral in Geneva. It is part of a remaining ensemble of six quasi complete windows, representing the Apostles as well as Maria Magdalena.

C



**Antonio Canova, *Venus and Adonis*, between 1789-1794 and 1820.**

This group representing Venus and Adonis was sculpted by Antonio Canova, whose work is the epitome of neoclassical sculpture. Often inspired by mythology, Canova shows the unfortunate lovers in a tender embrace.

D



**Konrad Witz, *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, 1444.**

This work by painter Konrad Witz is one of the MAH's highlights. It holds an overriding place in Western art history: by reproducing an existing topography, it has indeed become the first realistic "portrait" of a recognisable landscape.

E



Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Liotard Laughing*, 1770.

This self-portrait shows the painter as the actor of a farce in a theatrical setting. The artist with the toothless smile and the cheeky gaze holds his hand in a mysterious fashion. He seems to be showing the way to a place invisible to the viewer.

F



Ferdinand Hodler, *The Jungfrau in the Mist*, 1908.

In his last years, Ferdinand Hodler dedicates himself to Swiss landscape. He visits Grindelwald a few times, where he can admire the mythical Jungfrau. The mountain top arises from the fog, showing its blue and white peak, symbolising a spiritual world.

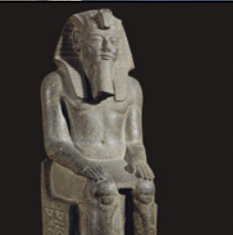
G



Félix Vallotton, *The Turkish Bath*, 1907.

This picture, a tribute to the eponymous painting by Ingres, holds a special place within the many works by Félix Vallotton kept at the MAH. Whereas Ingres' work is an ode to sensuality, this one shows the unforgiving way Vallotton treats the human body.

H



Colossal statue of Ramses II, 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, ca. 1290–1224 BC.

Carved in a unique block of granodiorite, this colossal statue was discovered in the Temple of Bubastis by Genevan Egyptologist Édouard Naville (1844-1926). In addition to its artistic qualities and historical significance, it has the advantage of being almost complete.

I



Large silver plate, known as The Charioteer and the Hunter's plate, end of 3<sup>rd</sup> –beginning of 4<sup>th</sup> century AD.

This large silver plate is a masterpiece of ancient goldsmithery. Its ornamentation reflects the imperial's court's *art de vivre*. Its central medallion, representing the victorious charioteer, recalls the importance chariot races.

J



Portrait of Pompeia Plotina, between 118 and 120 AD.

By comparing it to other sculpted portraits and numerous monetary representations, this statue undoubtedly is Pompeia Plotina. Originally from Nîmes, she married Trajan, who ruled the Empire from 98 to 117, and marked her time, using her influence to the people's advantage.

- 2 FINE ARTS & WORKS ON PAPER
- 1 DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSION
- 0 ADMISSIONS DESK  
DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSION
- 1 ARCHÆOLOGY
- 2 REGIONAL ARCHÆOLOGY

#### AUDIOGUIDES

1. Connect your phone to *mah expo* WiFi.
2. Go straight to [soundcloud.com/mahgeneve](https://soundcloud.com/mahgeneve) or download the Soundcloud app to your device, then select the *MAHgeneve* page.
3. Pick the audio guide or the playlist of your choice, like *Parcours Coups de cœur* or *Parcours Invitation au voyage* or *Parcours Les étoiles du MAH*

#### INCLUSIVE CULTURE

Since 2010, the MAH has worked to make the collection accessible to all. In addition to the descriptive and touch tours offered to the blind and visually impaired, tactile and audio Virtuoz® floor plans are available and sometimes complemented by 3D models of certain masterpieces.

Sign language video guides were created to allow deaf and hard of hearing visitors to discover the masterpieces of the collection on the website [izi.travel](http://izi.travel) (*mah geneve*). All year round, visitors living with intellectual disabilities can enjoy visits in French that match their learning style. Finally, sensory visits accompanied by art therapists are organised for people living with Alzheimer's and for their caregivers.



ELEVATOR



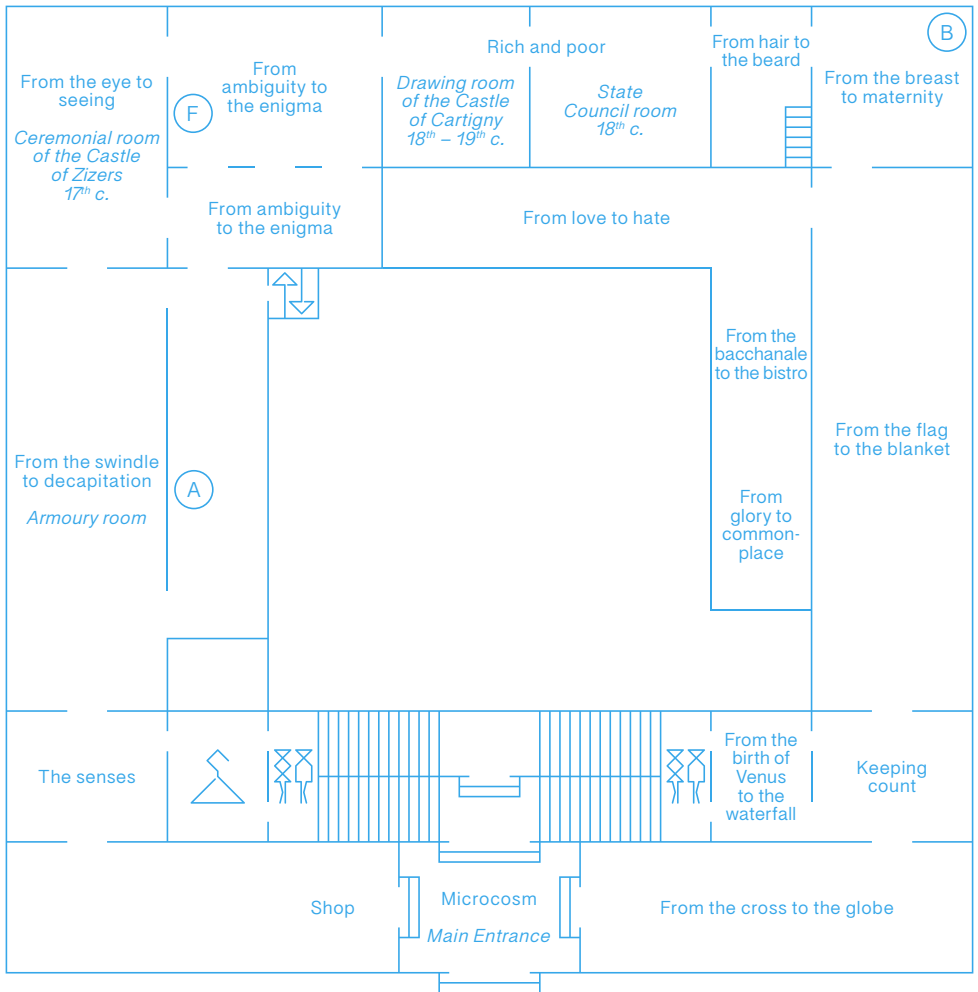
RESTROOM



CLOAKROOM

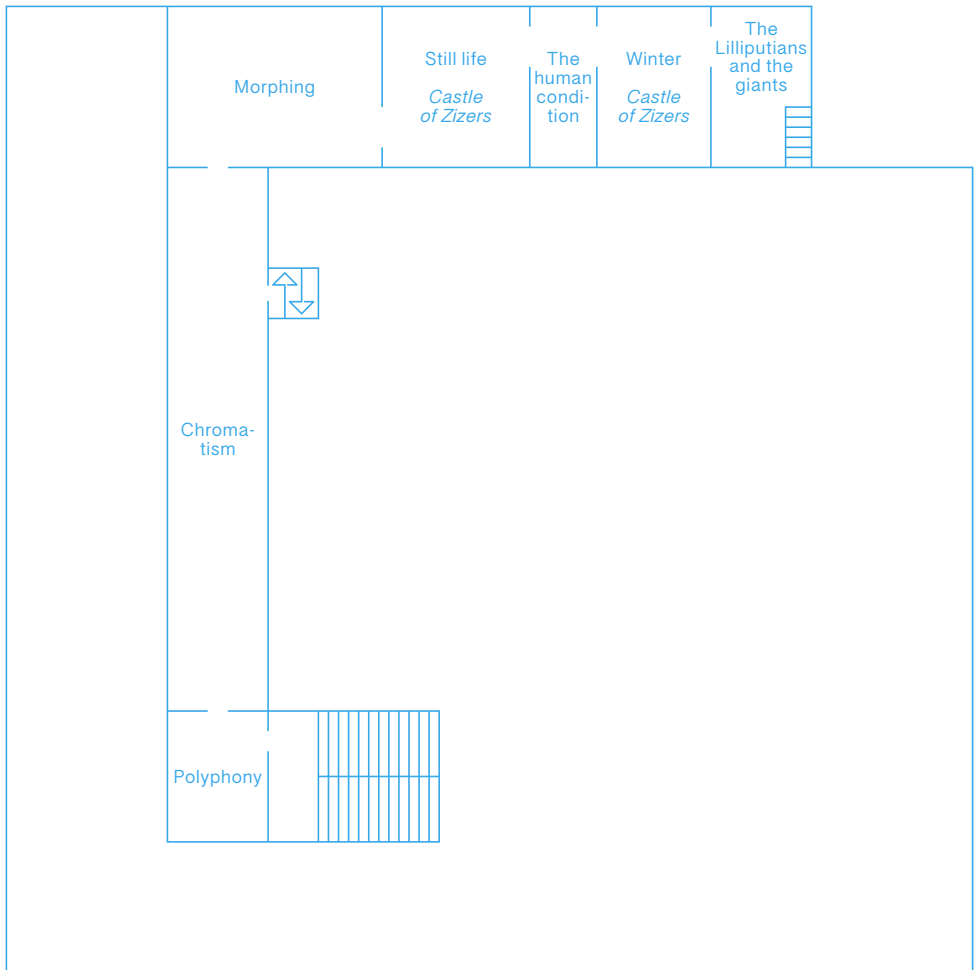


RESTAURANT



## 0 DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSION


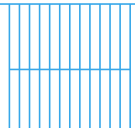
As is indicated by its title, the exhibition asks for the public's involvement so that it can build its own interpretation. Visitors are invited to trust in their capacity to observe, find their own references and listen to what they feel. In following the exhibition's flow (which is not imposed), they can best understand the passage from one piece to another and what motivated the curator's choice: play, humour, similarity or its opposite, contrast, for example. This active participation makes it possible for each visitor to ultimately draw his or her own sensations and feelings. The museum is seen in new light and becomes the theatre of their interpretations and desires.



# 1 DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSION

*Draw your own conclusion* continues in the museum's first floor galleries, inside the intimate rooms of the Castle of Zizers. The trajectory ends with *Morphing*, which brings together some fifty vessels of all kinds, revealing the universality and evolution of their forms; and also with *Chromatism*, a bursting finale where more than 150 objects from all horizons are organised according to their colour, thereby creating a thirty meter long chromatic palette.

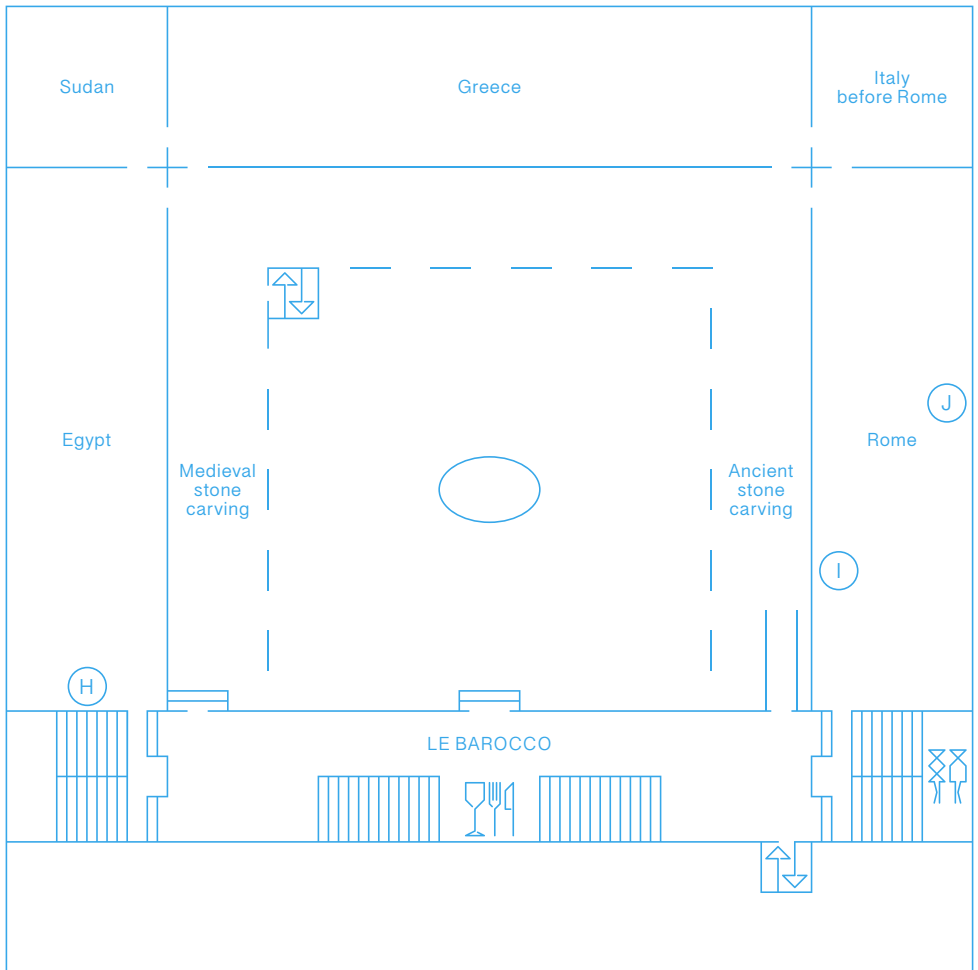


Genevan landscape De La Rive, Töpffer 18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> c.	Geneva The English taste 18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> c.	Neo-classicism Saint-Ours 18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> c.	Genevan landscape Calame & Diday 19 <sup>th</sup> c.	Modern landscape Monet, Van Gogh 19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> c.
European portrait Liotard, Hogarth 18 <sup>th</sup> c.  (E)	Works on paper  		Works on paper	Ferdinand Hodler 19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> c.
Baroque in Italy 17 <sup>th</sup> c.	Works on paper  Pastels		Works on paper  Bonnard, Vallotton, Amiet	Félix Vallotton 19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> c.  (G)
Flemish & Dutch art 17 <sup>th</sup> c.	Portrait 16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> c.  Genre scenes 16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> c.  Landscape 16 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> c.		Modern art 19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> c.  École de Paris 20 <sup>th</sup> c.  Modern art 19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> c.	Swiss Symbolism 19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> c.
International Mannerism 16 <sup>th</sup> c.	Sculpture		Sculpture	Genevan modernities 20 <sup>th</sup> c.
Konrad Witz Religious and secular art 14 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup> c.  (D)		(C)		A look at the collection

## 2 FINE ARTS & WORKS ON PAPER

Initiated in 2018, the refurbishment of the entire Fine Arts floor ended in Spring 2020. The permanent exhibition offers a journey through time, from the Middle Ages to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, from Konrad Witz to Alberto Giacometti, and offers an overview of European art focused on Swiss art. Both chronological and thematic, this presentation not only offers a narrative of art history through its masterpieces, it also shows the evolution of taste and ideas.

Within the galleries, five rooms are dedicated to evolving presentations of works from the collection. Four of them offer a renewed selection of works on paper directly related to the permanent presentation. On a regular basis, *A look at the collection* hosts thematic exhibitions, focusing on specific aspects of the collection.

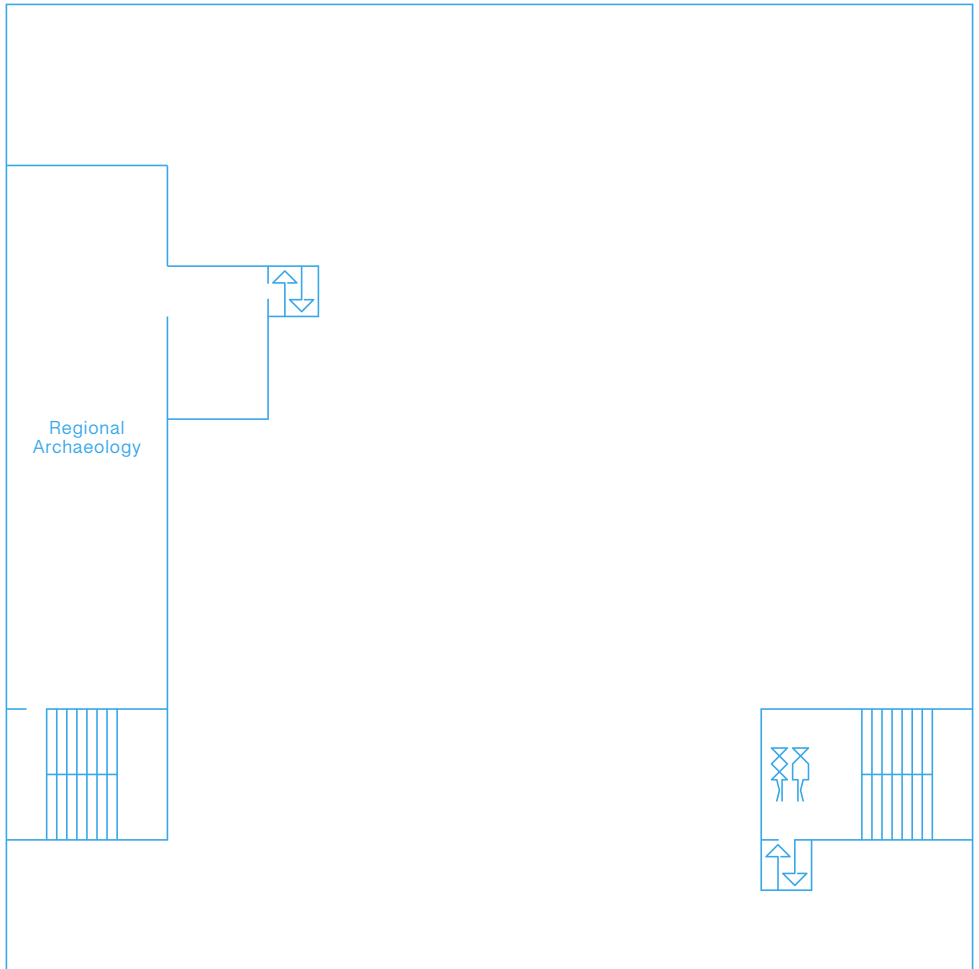


## -1 ARCHÆOLOGY

The antiquities collection includes more than 70,000 objects. Assembled for the most part in the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the instigation of collectors, it testifies to the Genevan taste for ancient civilisations.

The pieces are displayed in chronological order, leading the visitor from Pharaonic Egypt to the Roman Empire via Ancient Greece and the peoples of the Italian peninsula before the Roman expansion.

The MAH can lay claim to having the largest Egyptian antiquities collection in Switzerland. The flagship of the Greek collection is unquestionably the Italiote funerary vases collection from the Greek colonies of Southern Italy, but in the Roman antiquities room the superb group of Roman sculpted portraits is not to be missed either.



## -2 REGIONAL ARCHÆOLOGY

The Regional Archæology room presents the discoveries made in the Geneva region over more than a century. The display guides the viewer from the first signs of human occupation, around 13,000 B.C., towards the year 1000 of the modern era. This room contains one of the museum's treasures, the oak statue of an Allobrogian (Genevan Gaul) chieftain, standing nearly three metres high.

## POINT OF SALE

The MAH's exhibition catalogues, as well as various objects, are on sale at the museum entrance. The area is open during the MAH's visiting hours. An online store is also available at [shop.mahmah.ch](http://shop.mahmah.ch)

## RESTAURANT LE BAROCCO

Le MAH includes a restaurant, Le Barocco, which recipes are inspired by local Genevan traditions and which specialises in homemade pastries. During the summer months, an outdoor terrace welcomes customers in the museum's inner courtyard. The restaurant is only accessible during the MAH's opening hours. Information and bookings: T +41 (0)22 418 26 82

## TICKETING & BOOKINGS

[billetterie.mahmah.ch](http://billetterie.mahmah.ch)

## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION


Buses 3 & 5 (Athénée stop), bus 7 (Musée d'art et d'histoire stop), bus 36 (Saint-Antoine), buses 1 & 8 (Florissant stop), trams 12 & 17 (Rive stop), regional train Léman Express (Genève-Champel stop)

Parking: Saint-Antoine

Disabled access: entrance on boulevard Jaques-Dalcroze 9

## GENERAL INFORMATION

MAH - Musée d'art et d'histoire  
Rue Charles-Galland 2, 1206 Genève  
T +41 (0)22 418 26 00 (Monday to Friday)  
[mah@ville-ge.ch](mailto:mah@ville-ge.ch)

[mahmah.ch](http://mahmah.ch)  
[mahmah.ch/collection](http://mahmah.ch/collection)  
[mahmah.ch/blog](http://mahmah.ch/blog)  
 [mahgeneve](https://www.instagram.com/mahgeneve)

Open from Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 6pm  
Thursdays, from 12pm to 9pm. Le Barocco is available from 11:45am

Pay what you wish! - Free  
Suggested admission between 5 CHF and 20 CHF.