

THE MUSÉES
D'ART ET
D'HISTOIRE
OF GENEVA



Un musée
Ville de Genève

www.mah-geneve.ch



VILLE DE
GENÈVE

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THE MUSÉES D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE

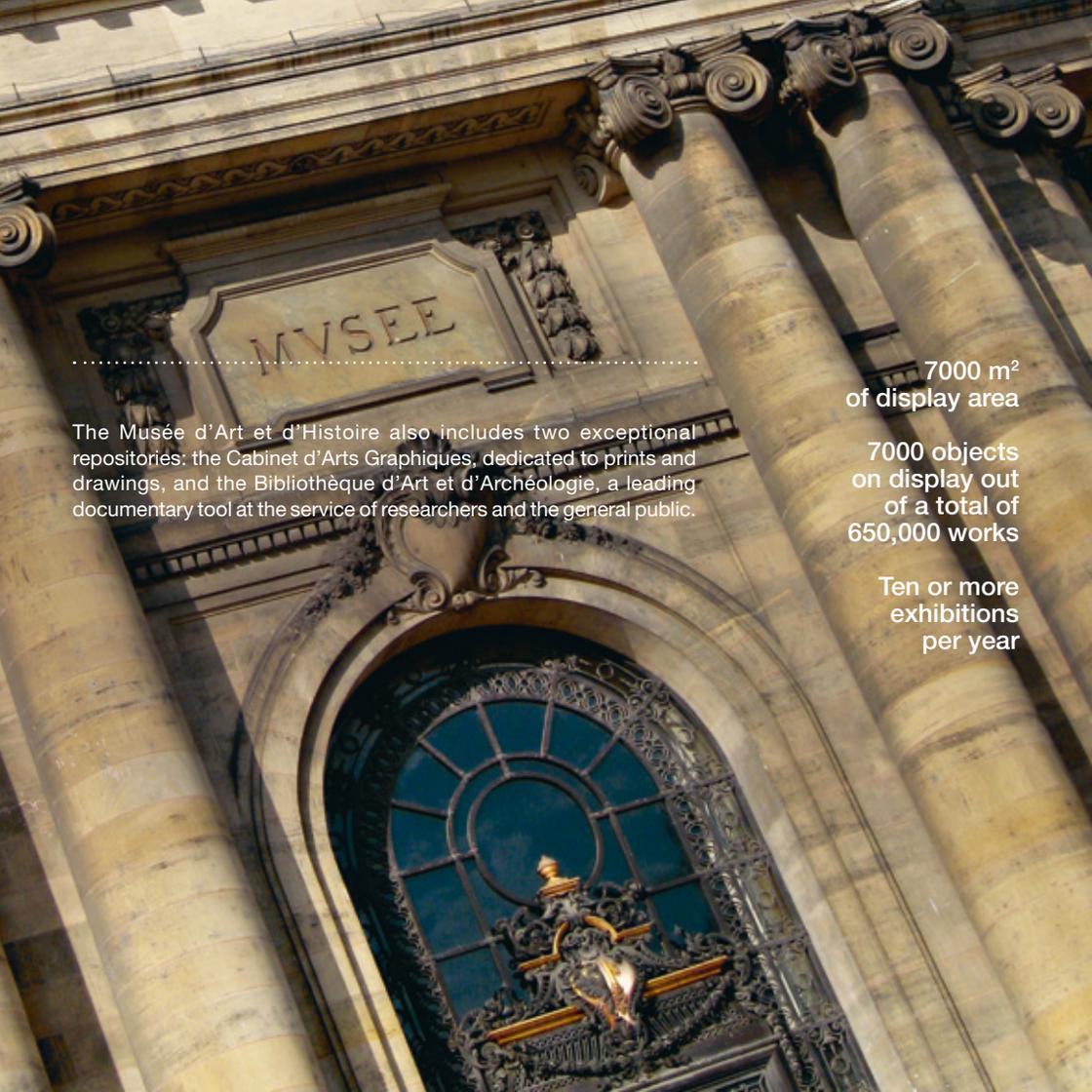
Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, façade
© Photo: Boris Baruchet

AN ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF CULTURES

Of a multidisciplinary nature, the institutions constituting the Geneva Musées d'Art et d'Histoire extend an invitation to take a voyage back through time, punctuated by the important stages in the history of Western civilization. At the heart of this network lies the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, which with its archaeological, applied arts and fine arts collections is present at two other venues as well: the Musée Rath and the Maison Tavel.

FROM THE PREHISTORIC TO THE CONTEMPORARY PERIODS

Inaugurated in 1910, the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire is one of the three largest museums in Switzerland and the only one with such a wide range of collections. The result of the union of several regional museums and donations from collectors, foundations and philanthropic citizens, the richness of its collections is further enhanced by the presence of some major works and a number of unique series, making it an institution of international standing. Paintings, sculptures, prints and historical objects bear witness to the multiple facets of the evolution of art and daily life over several millennia.



MUSEE

The Musée d'Art et d'Histoire also includes two exceptional repositories: the Cabinet d'Arts Graphiques, dedicated to prints and drawings, and the Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie, a leading documentary tool at the service of researchers and the general public.

7000 m²
of display area

7000 objects
on display out
of a total of
650,000 works

Ten or more
exhibitions
per year



Maison Tavel, façade
© Photo: Gérard Pétremand

Musée Rath, façade
© Photo: Gérard Pétremand

MAISON TAVEL

Listed as a historic building, located in the heart of the Old City, the Maison Tavel is Geneva's oldest private residence still standing and represents a unique testimonial to mediaeval civil architecture. Converted to a museum in 1986, its six levels illustrate the urban development of the city and various aspects of the daily life of Geneva's former inhabitants. It also holds the Relief Magnin, a spectacular, large-scale model of how Geneva appeared before its fortifications were demolished in 1850.

MUSÉE RATH

A symbol of Geneva's interest in the arts, the Musée Rath hosts the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire's temporary exhibitions some two to three times per year. Opened to the public in 1826, the building was one of the first in Europe to have been conceived from the beginning to host and exhibit works of art.



MISSIONS

Torso of Achilles, Group of Achilles and Penthesilea
Roman replica, 2nd century AD
Model: statue from Pergamon, around 150 BC
Marble, 143 x 80 cm, detail
© MAH, photo: Bettina Jacot-Descombes
Inv. 8937

ACQUIRING, STUDYING, CONSERVING AND TRANSMITTING

Among the various missions to be undertaken by a museum, the acquisition of works and their study, conservation and exhibition to the general public must be ranked at the top of the priority list. To accomplish these imperatives, the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire counts on the daily commitment of some two hundred employees whose activities help preserve and make the works known by creating a connection between the collections and the public. In this context, the study of the acquired objects constitutes an essential scientific support to the pedagogical effort. As to the acquisition policy, it has always held the objective of consolidating existing collections. Today's exemplary groups, illustrating significant trends or periods, are the most visible result of this course of action.

In parallel to their conservation centres and restoration workshops, for over twenty years the Musées d'Art et d'Histoire have had at their disposal a cultural outreach service whose purpose is to make this temple of knowledge a place of sharing and exchange. Through the intermediary of guides and cultural mediators, the possibilities are multiplied for appreciating both the famous pieces and the lesser-known works in the collections.

200
employees

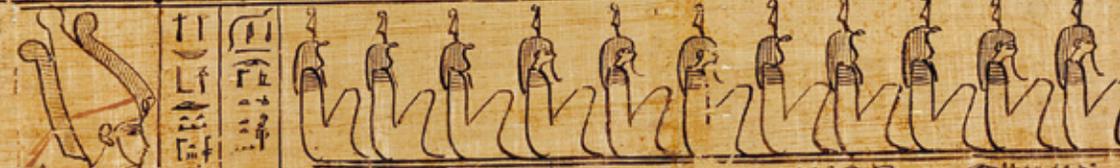
Some 15
cultural
mediators
and guides

300,000
visitors
per year

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a marble bust of a man's head, shown in profile facing right. The marble is light-colored with some yellowish-brown staining and wear, particularly on the forehead and the top of the head. The background is solid black. A horizontal dotted line is positioned above the text.

FOR ALL TASTES AND AGES

Motivated by the desire to be accessible to all and in parallel to the traditional guided visits and pedagogical support on offer, the museums also present conferences, workshops, concerts, and meetings with artists, craftsmen and specialists. All available resources including the latest technologies are put to use in order to give the public, whether young or old, a chance to explore the historical epochs from Antiquity to the modern world, while closely examining objects, exhibitions and collections.



Book of the Dead in the name of Taouat, the singer of Amun
End of Late Period, 4th–3rd century BC
Papyrus, 32.2 x 288 cm, detail
© MAH, photo: Jean-Marc Yersin
Inv. 23 464

AT THE HEART OF GENEVA, GENEVA AT THE HEART OF THE WORLD

The Musées d'Art et d'Histoire maintain a constant dialogue with the history of their city, Switzerland and the world, demonstrated by the strong links upheld with researchers, museums and national and international cultural institutions. The intense scientific exchanges, large number of loans and new networks being implemented perfectly illustrate this situation.

A cosmopolitan centre and a place of international cooperation and humanitarianism, the city of Geneva shares a common identity with the Musées d'Art et d'Histoire. The institution has moreover distinguished itself more than once in preserving artworks in peril, notably with the collections of the Prado museum during the Spanish Civil War and more recently by protecting Gazan archaeological treasures under threat of destruction.

180 museums
per year
receiving loans
from the
Musées d'Art
et d'Histoire

530 pieces
from Gaza's
archaeological
heritage held
in deposit

400,000
visitors for the
"Masterpieces
from the Prado
Museum"
in 1939

ARCHAEO- LOGY

Fragment of a statue of an idealised young man
First half of the 1st century AD
Discovered near Geneva around 1715
Bronze, hollow cast iron, 20 x 16 cm
© MAH, photo: Pierre-Alain Ferrazzini
Inv. C 2104

A MULTIMILLENNIAL HISTORY

Providing an overview of the great civilizations of the past is the goal of the archaeological department, whose collection of Classical Antiquity pieces is among the finest to be found in Switzerland.

The high quality of the museum's collection is to a large extent due to the generosity and curiosity of Genevans who, from the mid-16th century, began to gather artefacts from ancient cultures for the museum's ultimate benefit. Statues, sarcophagi, reliefs, inscriptions, ceramics, objects of daily life, coinage: these pieces illuminate a historical voyage over several millennia through prehistoric, regional, Etruscan, Roman, Greek, Egyptian, Nubian and Middle Eastern civilizations.

This tradition of patronage was also bolstered by a "spirit of collecting" that can be traced back to 1535 when a collection of ancient coins was officially established in Geneva, laying the foundation for the museum's numismatics cabinet that today is the largest of its kind in Switzerland.



FROM THE LOCAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL

Prehistoric, Egyptian, Classical, Nubian and Gallo-Roman archaeology have pride of place in the museum's collections. Some of these unique pieces found in local, Swiss and foreign archaeological digs have been specially highlighted with a contextualization approach explaining the relationship of the object to where it was found.

26,000 objects
from Classical
Antiquity, 4000
from Egypt
and 2000 from
the Middle East

47,000 prehistoric
objects

A numismatic
collection
comprising
100,000 coins
and medals

APPLIED ARTS

Censer
Byzantine Empire, 8th–9th century
Silver, graven inscription in Greek,
H. 12.5 cm, detail
© MAH, photo: Andreas F. Voegelin
Inv. AA 2004-258

AN EMPHASIS ON DAILY LIFE

In harmony with the other collections, the applied arts section establishes a transversal dialogue in accordance with the museum's encyclopaedic approach. The collection provides an understanding of the crafts, technical developments and human activities over time, and notably those of the Geneva region and its industries.

This diversified section covers the fields of goldwork, silverwork and copperware; antique musical instruments; textiles, including tapestries, lacework and costumes; and furniture. The Armoury Room, with its reflections of the Escalade episode when the city repulsed the assault of the Duke of Savoy's troops in 1602, reveals some magnificent examples of arms from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries.

The return of the group of clocks, watches, enamels, jewels and miniatures enriches an already considerable collection inherited from a number of 19th-century Geneva museums (Musée Académique, Musée Archéologique and Musée d'Arts Décoratifs). These works will find the setting they deserve in the soon-to-be renovated and enlarged museum.



A LOOK TOWARDS THE ORIENT

The Eastern Christian world occupies centre stage, in particular the arts of the Coptic and Byzantine periods with rich series of bronzes, silverwork, seals and weights, ceramics and Byzantine liturgical objects. The museum conserves moreover the largest public collection of Greek and Russian icons in Switzerland.

900 musical
instruments

23,000
decorative
and utilitarian
objects

20,000 watches,
clocks, utensils,
jewels, trinkets,
enamels and
miniatures

FINE ARTS

Jean-Etienne Liotard
Madame Louise La Live d'Épinay, ca. 1759
Pastel on parchment, 69 x 55 cm
© MAH, photo: Bettina Jacot-Descombes
Inv. 1826-7

With Zurich and Basel, the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire of Geneva can claim to have one of the most important fine arts departments in Switzerland. It holds that position due to generous donations and judicious acquisitions aimed at consolidating the series of works already in its possession. On top of the important group related to the identity of the region, the different collections built up over time pay homage to early, modern and contemporary art.

6200 paintings
1400 sculptures

SCHOOLS AND MONOGRAPHIC GROUPS

With special emphasis on the schools of Geneva, France (17th, 18th and 19th centuries), Italy (16th and 18th centuries), and Holland and Flanders (16th and 17th centuries), museum visitors can contemplate a number of key moments in the history of Western painting. An important group of drawings in the Cabinet d'Arts Graphiques adds an extra dimension to the collections by providing other perspectives. Even if Mannerism, England around 1800 and Impressionism are particularly well represented, the museum also holds the works of some famous names who have left their mark upon the history of art, including Konrad Witz, Veronese, Avercamp, Rubens, Pissarro, Cézanne, Monet and Bram van Velde.



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Alongside these paintings are to be found some unique monographic series of pictures by Liotard, Calame, Corot, Hodler and Vallotton, presenting a summary or a period of the artist's work. The 20th century is represented with paintings and sculptures by Bonnard, Vlaminck, Picasso, Braque and Alberto Giacometti, among others, as well as an important group of works by the *Nouveaux Réalistes*. The Swiss artists Markus Raetz, Olivier Mosset and John M Armleder are also generously displayed.



Félix Edouard Vallotton
La Raison probante (The Convincing Reason), 1898
Xylographic print, state II d/II d
178 x 223 mm, detail
© MAH, Cabinet d'Arts Graphiques, Geneva
Inv. E 79-0534

DRAWINGS, PASTELS, AND PRINTED ART

The Musée d'Art et d'Histoire's collection of works on paper is one of the largest in Europe. Initially composed of engravings and drawings, it evolved over time in different directions. Its two main sectors were reunited in 2010 and now present an overview of the history of prints and drawings in Geneva from, respectively, the 15th and the 18th century to today.

Included among its exceptional holdings are the largest collections in the world of works by Jean-Étienne Liotard and drawings by Ferdinand Hodler, as well as a distinguished group of prints by Félix Vallotton, John M Armleder and Georg Baselitz. 18th-century Venetian prints and Russian and Hungarian avant-garde artists are also remarkably well represented.

27,000 drawings
and pastels

350,000 prints
covering more
than 5 centuries
of engravings

ONLINE COLLECTIONS

Jacques-Antoine Dassier,
The Founding of the University of Moscow,
1754 (struck in 1758)
Obverse: Elizabeth Ist,
Empress of all the Russias
Reverse: Russia beholds the monogram
of the Empress surmounting a pedestal
Gold; 50.5 mm; 69.49 g
© MAH, photo: Bettina Jacot-Descombes
Inv. GdN 60409

The Musée d'Art et d'Histoire is progressively putting its collections online. Launched in 2010, the database already contains nearly ten thousand pieces. With new additions every day, its main objective is to give online access for users such as researchers, teachers, or art and history buffs to all the works under its roof, including those that are not being exhibited. A smartphone version is also available.

www.ville-ge.ch/mah/collections/



BIBLIOTHÈQUE D'ART ET D'ARCHÉOLOGIE

The Romance of Tristan and Iseult
by Joseph Bédier
Preface by Gaston Paris. 20th ed.
Paris: H. Piazza, [1920–1930 ?], detail
© BAA, photo: Bettina Jacot-Descombes
Inv. VA 631

At the disposal of museums and the general public, the Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie (Library of Art and Archaeology) surely deserves the term of encyclopaedic tool. The largest library dedicated to art in the country, it holds a large variety of books related to all the museum's activities. Its shelves are brimming with works on art history, applied arts, archaeology, documentaries, and exhibition and museum catalogues, as well as artists' books and a large collection of ancient books.

A training centre par excellence, the library has undertaken an ambitious digitizing project to allow online consulting of its documentation. It has in addition joined several networks – Rero, IFLA, artlibraries.net, etc. – with the goal of facilitating access to its archives and intensifying dialogue between the different libraries of Switzerland and the world.



Cristian

et

11,000 old
and ancient
books

6000 artists' books

500,000 books,
catalogues and
digital resources

6000 journals

Sent



FRIENDS OF THE MUSEUM

Volute Krater
The arrival of Helen in Troy, around 340 BC
Italiote red-figure ceramic,
attributed to the de Schulthess Painter
H. 74 cm, detail
© MAH, photo: Bettina Jacot-Descombes
Inv. HR 44

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS OF THE MUSÉE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE (SAMAH)

The SAMAH was founded in 1897 with the goal of promoting the idea of building a large-scale museum to the city authorities and civil society. It has subsequently been involved with supporting the museum, expanding its collections, encouraging donations, bequests and patronage, and enhancing its profile with loans and exchanges. To help the SAMAH continue on this vital mission and increase the visibility of the museum's collections, become an Ami (Friend): www.samah.ch



HELLAS ET ROMA

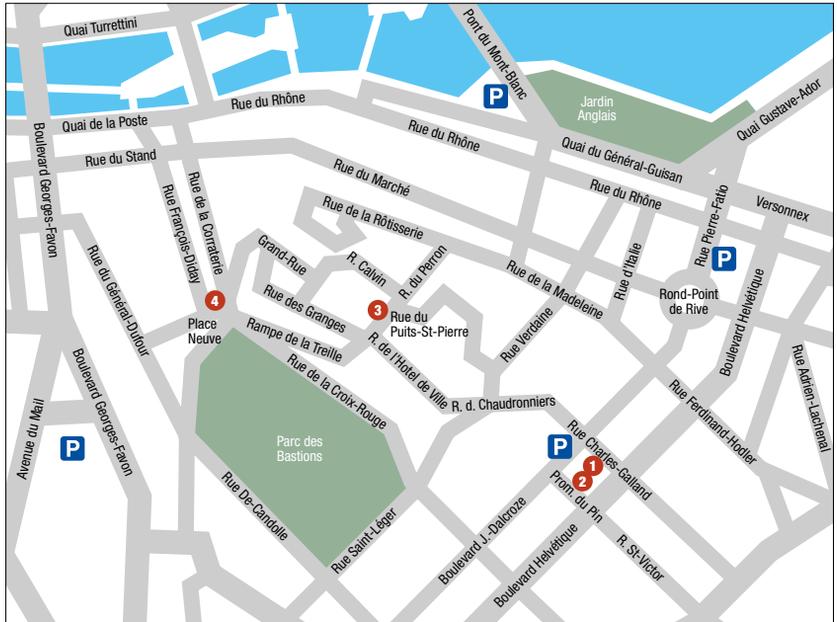
The Association Hellas et Roma, founded in 1983, has the goal of enhancing appreciation of Greek, Etruscan and Roman art. Associated with the museum's archaeological sector, it supports research and the publication of articles and books. It also adds to the museum's collection with antiquities it acquires or receives through donations and bequests. More generally, its mission is to promote public interest in the art of Antiquity by organising exhibitions, conferences, symposiums, excursions and study trips.

Hellas et Roma works in association with renowned archaeologists and scientists, giving an international character to its patronage.

www.hellas-roma.ch

- 1 Musée d'Art et d'Histoire
- 2 Cabinet d'Arts Graphiques of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire
- 2 Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire
- 3 Maison Tavel
- 4 Musée Rath

GENERAL INFORMATION



MUSÉE D'ART ET D'HISTOIRE

Rue Charles-Galland 2 | CH-1206 Genève
Open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed on Monday
Entry free of charge for permanent collections
Handicapped access: boulevard Jaques-Dalcroze 9

Restaurant Le Barocco

The restaurant keeps the opening hours of the museum.
T +41 (0)22 418 26 82

Cabinet d'Arts Graphiques of the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire

Promenade du Pin 5 | CH-1204 Genève
Open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed on Monday
Open only during exhibitions

Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie

Promenade du Pin 5 | CH-1204 Genève
Vol call guide T + 41 (0)22 418 34 11

- **Lending and consulting of documents, exhibition**
Reading room, 1st floor,
T + 41 (0)22 418 27 07, pret-local@ville-ge.ch
Monday to Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon.
Closed on Sunday
- **Reference and information services, computerised and multimedia**
Multimedia library, 2nd floor
T + 41 (0)22 418 27 18, info.baa@ville-ge.ch
Monday to Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Closed on Saturday and Sunday
Catalogue online access: <http://opac.rero.ch/ge>

MUSÉE RATH

Place Neuve | CH-1204 Genève
Open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed on Monday
Open only during exhibitions

MAISON TAVEL

Rue du Puits-Saint-Pierre | 6 CH-1204 Genève
Open from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Closed on Monday
Entry free of charge for permanent collections

Opening hours subject to change on holiday dates.

www.mah-geneve.ch

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Cover: Konrad Witz, *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, 1444,
detail © MAH, photo: Bettina Jacot-Descombes
Restoration of the altar piece by Konrad Witz by
the Geneva Musées d'Art et d'Histoire in 2011/2012



MUSÉES D'ART
ET D'HISTOIRE
DE GENEVE