

PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION

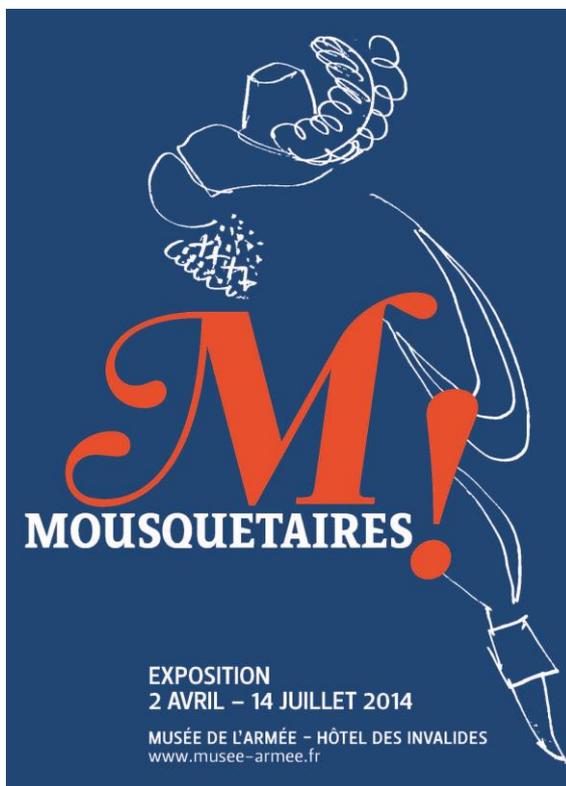
March 2014

MUSKETEERS !

From 2 April to 14 July 2014

With the support of the **CIC**, a major partner of the Musée de l'Armée.

Musketeers! The word sounds like a promise of style, fine sword thrusts and adventure. The Musée de l'Armée new exhibition offers the general public, through investigation and play, a means of finding out about the heroes who provided such inspiration for Alexandre Dumas, but whose real role is not well known, as the fiction finally overshadowed the historic reality of these soldiers who served the king.



Exhibition poster based on a drawing by Raoul Dufy

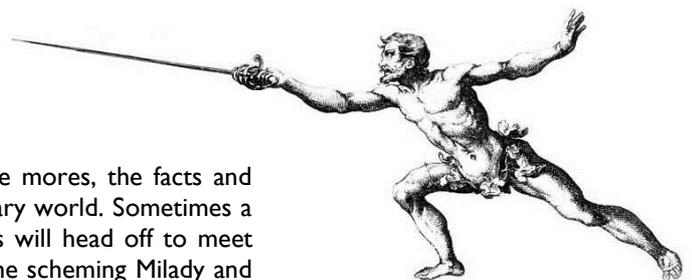
Fiction and reality

Without any doubt, Alexandre Dumas played a part in many people becoming historians and, all over the world, popularised characters such as Mazarin and Buckingham. Richelieu, d'Artagnan or the iron mask would certainly never have achieved the status of world-wide myths without the novelist's work.

An exhibition on the musketeers is therefore, also and above all, an opportunity to question the relationship between literature and history. Switching between fact and fiction, the exhibition offers the visitor a way to explore Alexandre Dumas' famous story, *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (*The Three Musketeers*). The exhibition plays on the contrast between the rarity of the objects and traces showing how the musketeers really lived – a company of mounted soldiers set up in 1622 under Louis XIII – and the abundance of their portrayals by the mass media. Because these warriors wearing a blue tabard with a silver cross inspired not only literature, but also the theatre, the cinema, advertising, strip cartoons, or more recently, video games. These portrayals offer so many points of comparison with the true history, so far removed from the picture of the swashbuckling gentleman.

True and false...

The historic images, closer to the truth of the mores, the facts and the personalities of the times, fit into this literary world. Sometimes a spectator, sometimes an archaeologist, visitors will head off to meet the real d'Artagnan, Louis XIII and Richelieu, the scheming Milady and the iron mask... Not forgetting themes and historic episodes such as fencing, the siege of La Rochelle or the Fronde. They will see the reconstitution of the queen's red haematites, by the crystal maker Lalique, be proposed a virtual walk through the Paris street through time with the *Dumartagnan* map, or will be plunged into the these soldiers' world by means of life-size dioramas, such as those of the siege of Maastricht, where d'Artagnan was killed in 1673.



Fencer from *Capo Ferro's Art and Use of Fencing treatise, 1610*.
Paris, Musée de l'Armée

Prestigious loans

Mousquetaires! offers the visitor an extraordinary selection of works of art, objects and documents from the museum's collection and generously lent by French or foreign institutions. Even if there are often few traces of the daily life of that era, as Louis XIII, the monarch founder of the company of musketeers, after Napoleon I, is the sovereign best represented in the Army museum's collections. The Rubens' portraits of Anne of Austria and the Duke of Buckingham, respectively held in the Louvre and the Pitti Palace in Florence, are facing each other for the first time, not far from the suit of armour of Louis XIII and lesser known items. A kaleidoscope of the many actors who played d'Artagnan on the screen fit the only engraving revealing the "true" features of the musketeer, and the imitation sword brandished by Gene Kelly in Georges Sidney's *The Three Musketeers* (1948) are side-by-side with real and murderous duelling swords.

An exhibition for the general public

Through the investigation and play mode, the exhibition offers a real plunge into the king's soldiers' dark world full of intrigues. Children and adults will all find something to interest them. Handling swords, visits and events for the young, a fencing demonstration and reading of the novel *The Three Musketeers*, concerts and films, and finally lectures and a symposium are on the programme. And to continue the adventure, it is suggested to wander through the major items of the museum's permanent collection such as the mural paintings in the Royal Room, Louis XIII's suits of armour or the tombs of Turenne and Vauban in the Dôme church.

Partners



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Mural painting representing the taking of Gheint, by Jozeph Parrocel.
Paris, Musée de l'Armée

Commissariat

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Dominique Prévôt, responsible for documentary studies in the modern department – Musée de l'Armée

Scenography

Agence Jung Architectures

Publication

Catalogue published by Editions Gallimard under the management of Olivier Renaudeau

Around the exhibition

Guided tours for adults, guided tours and events for children, concerts, lectures and a fencing week-end, reading.

Find out more on : musee-armee.fr

Admission and opening times

Every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Late opening on Tuesday up to 9 p.m.

Closed on 1st May

Entry charges: €8.50 for the exhibition alone, €12 for the exhibition and permanent collections

Free of charge – under 18 years of age

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The Musée de l'Armée is a public establishment of an administrative and cultural nature, which mission is to present French and European military history to the widest public through its permanent collections and its temporary exhibitions. Among the five most visited national museums, with more than 1.4 million visitors a year, it offers the world's greatest collections of military art and history with almost 500,000 items, from the bronze age to the end of the 20th century, from royal suits of armour to industrial weapons and offers two major exhibitions to the public each year.