

Dominique Perrault Architecte

REFURBISHMENT OF THE PAVILION DUFOUR

CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

2016



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UN INSTRUMENT D'OPTIQUE =  
POUR CONDUIRE LA LUMIÈRE  
AU CENTRE DE LA TERRE.

## The Pavilion Dufour, Old Wing and Perrault Staircase

The redevelopment of the Pavilion Dufour and the Old Wing creates two new public spaces in the Château de Versailles. The old administrative offices have now made way for a new reception area between the Cour Royale (Royal Courtyard) and the Cour des Princes (Princes' Courtyard), as well as a large staircase leading to the gardens. Visitors to the Palace are invited to follow a loop, just like in most of the world's greatest museums.

The feeling of "narrowness" has now disappeared: by digging a trench under the buildings and the Cour des Princes, the redevelopment opens up new spaces on the ground level and creates larger volumes on the garden level.

The new reception area, entirely dedicated to enhancing visitor experience, starts in the Galerie des Lustres (Chandeliers Gallery) on the ground floor of the Old Wing. This high-ceilinged space, which opens on to the Cour Royale and the Cour des Princes, is the first room visitors see as they make their way into the Palace. The Versailles they discover – draped in metal, elegant and modern – echoes the stone and woodwork of the historic buildings.

The gallery allows immediate access to the Cour Royale, where the visit begins. Before they exit, visitors follow a lower path on the garden level, underneath the Cour des Princes, which takes them to a string of new rooms including a bookstore in refurbished tanks, restrooms, a checkroom and a cloakroom.

The main attraction on this level is the natural light brought into the new space by a gold-colored glass corridor. Acting like a large prism, the glass panels reveal the facades of the Old Wing and the wide marble staircase which connects the inside to the outside, and the Château to its gardens.

The loop begins and ends with the reception area and the marble staircase alongside its golden prism: the two new spaces are thus connected like the clasp on a necklace.

The Pavilion Dufour and the Old Wing are revived on their upper levels as well as their foundations. On the second floor, a new restaurant and adjoining tea rooms in gold and listed wood paneling, now welcome visitors. Finally, the third floor now hosts a new auditorium, covered in wood sheathing like an upside-down boat hull and surrounded with period rooms on either side.

This redevelopment evidences the intrinsic qualities of classical architecture: under the guise of stillness and symmetry, everything remains the same and yet everything changes. Historical heritage is entirely preserved, while allowing for new contemporary usages that remain to be invented. The Pavilion Dufour and the Old Wing of the Palace are part of a whole, and yet they also exist as an independent area, separate from the rest of the Château. By working "under the skin" of the buildings, the redevelopment offers a functional, sustainable and efficient solution while preserving the larger layout of the Palace and the outline of its wings.

Throughout each era in its long history, the Château de Versailles has acted as a showcase for modern talents. With the Pavilion Dufour, the Old Wing and the Perrault Staircase, the Château remains faithful to its heritage.

Dominique Perrault, February 2016

# REFURBISHMENT OF THE PAVILION DUFOUR VERSAILLES, FRANCE

competition, winning project May 2011, completion summer 2016



**Client** Opérateur du patrimoine et des Projets Immobiliers de la Culture (OPPIC) - Etablissement Public du Château, du musée et du domaine national de Versailles

**Architect** Dominique Perrault Architecte, Paris

- artistic direction, chandeliers and furniture design: Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost Design
- civil engineering: Khephen Ingénierie S.A.
- MEP: INEX SAS Ingénierie
- acoustics and lighting: Jean-Paul Lamoureux
- security / ADA: AADT / Folacci
- ergonomist: Thomas Vallette FCBA
- economist: RPO

**Location** Château de Versailles, Versailles, France

**Area** 3000m<sup>2</sup>

## Program

Redevelopment of the Pavillon Dufour and creation of the main entrance for individual visitors, in close collaboration with Frédéric Didier, Chief Architect of Historical Monuments of the Château de Versailles.

Garden level: entrance and reception of individual visitors, information and starting point of the visit of the Palace for thousands of individual visitors per day.

Ground floor: Réunion des Musées Nationaux shop in the former cisterns, including interior and furniture design, bathrooms, cloakrooms, restaurant kitchens built in the new underground areas, and exit stairs for all visitors - individual and groups (7,5 millions per year in total).

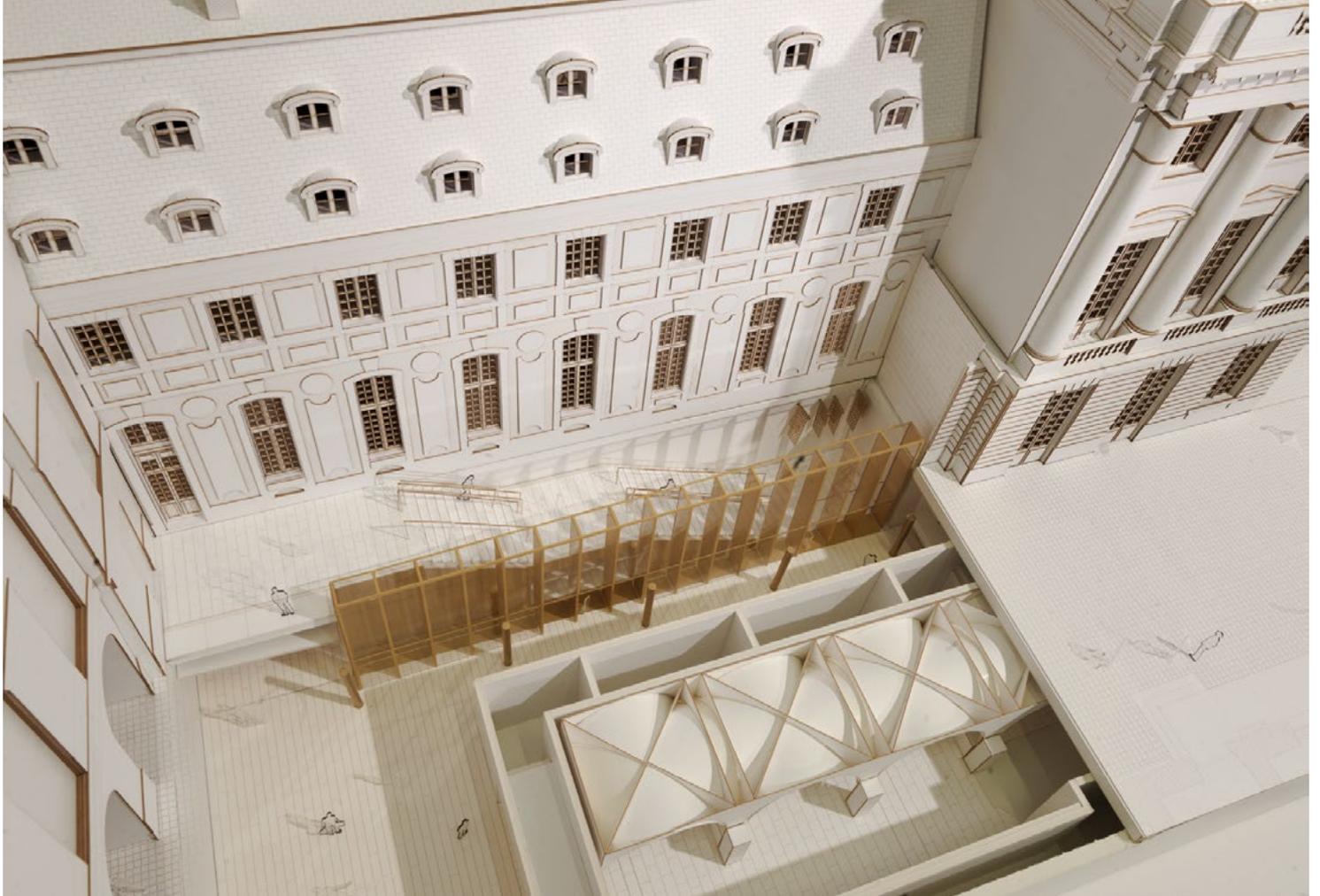
Second floor: Alain Ducasse's restaurant (120 covers) including interior design, furniture design, services areas and landmark Salons looking down on the Royal Courtyard.

Third floor: auditorium (150 seats), technical room, interpreters' rooms and meeting rooms.

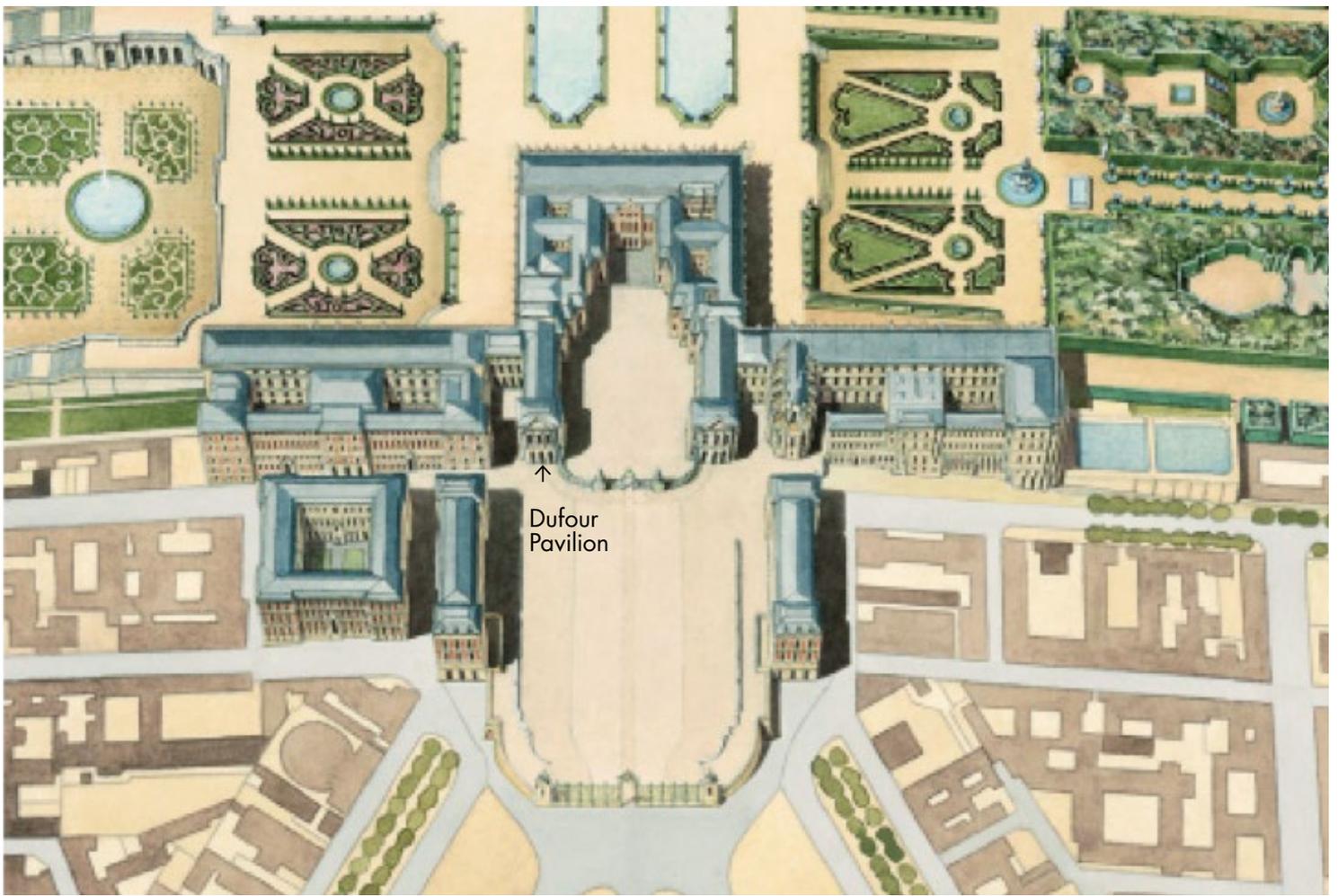




Cour des Princes - study model



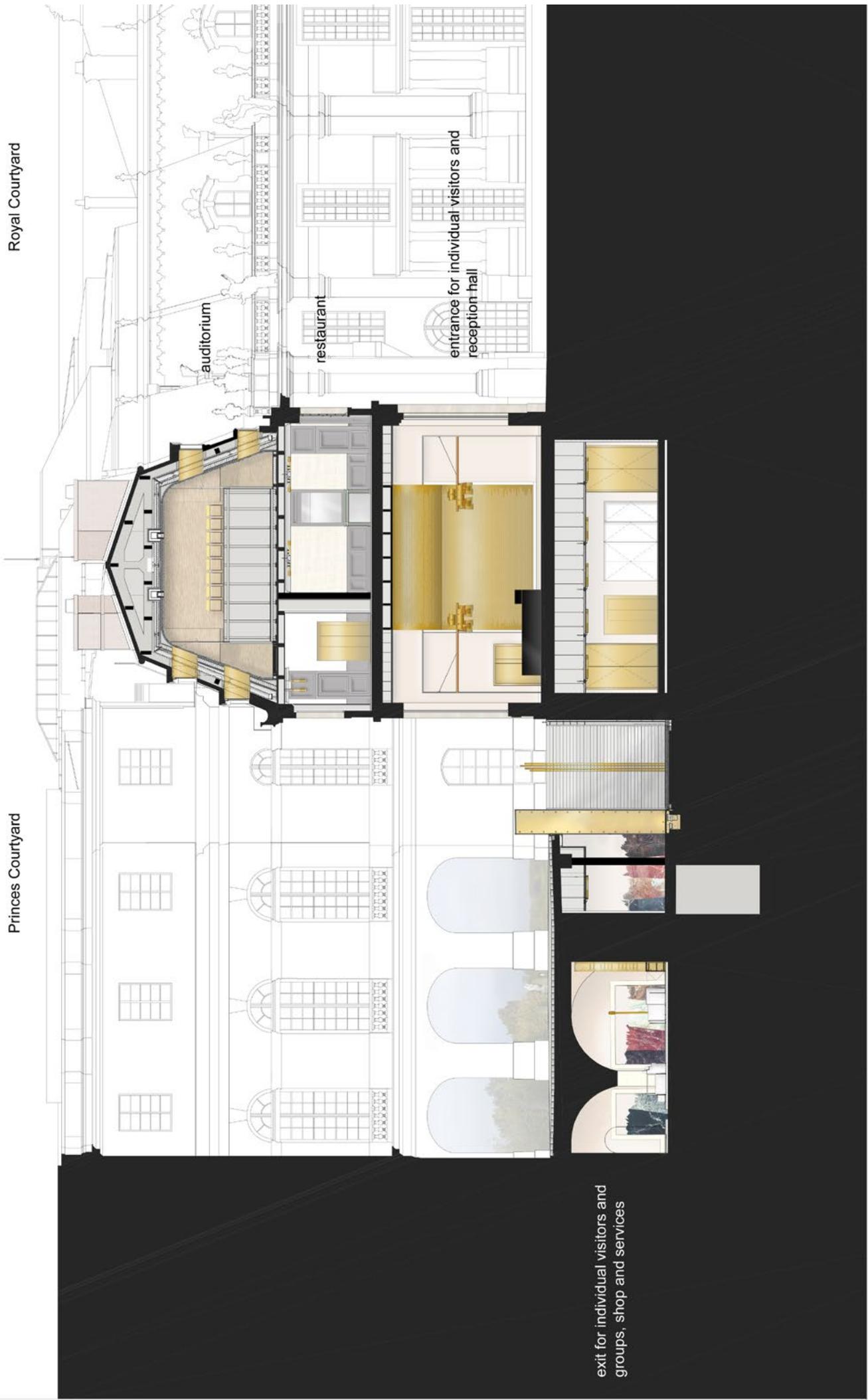
Cour des Princes underground - study model



General plan



Entrance and reception hall - Garden Level



Royal Courtyard

Princes Courtyard

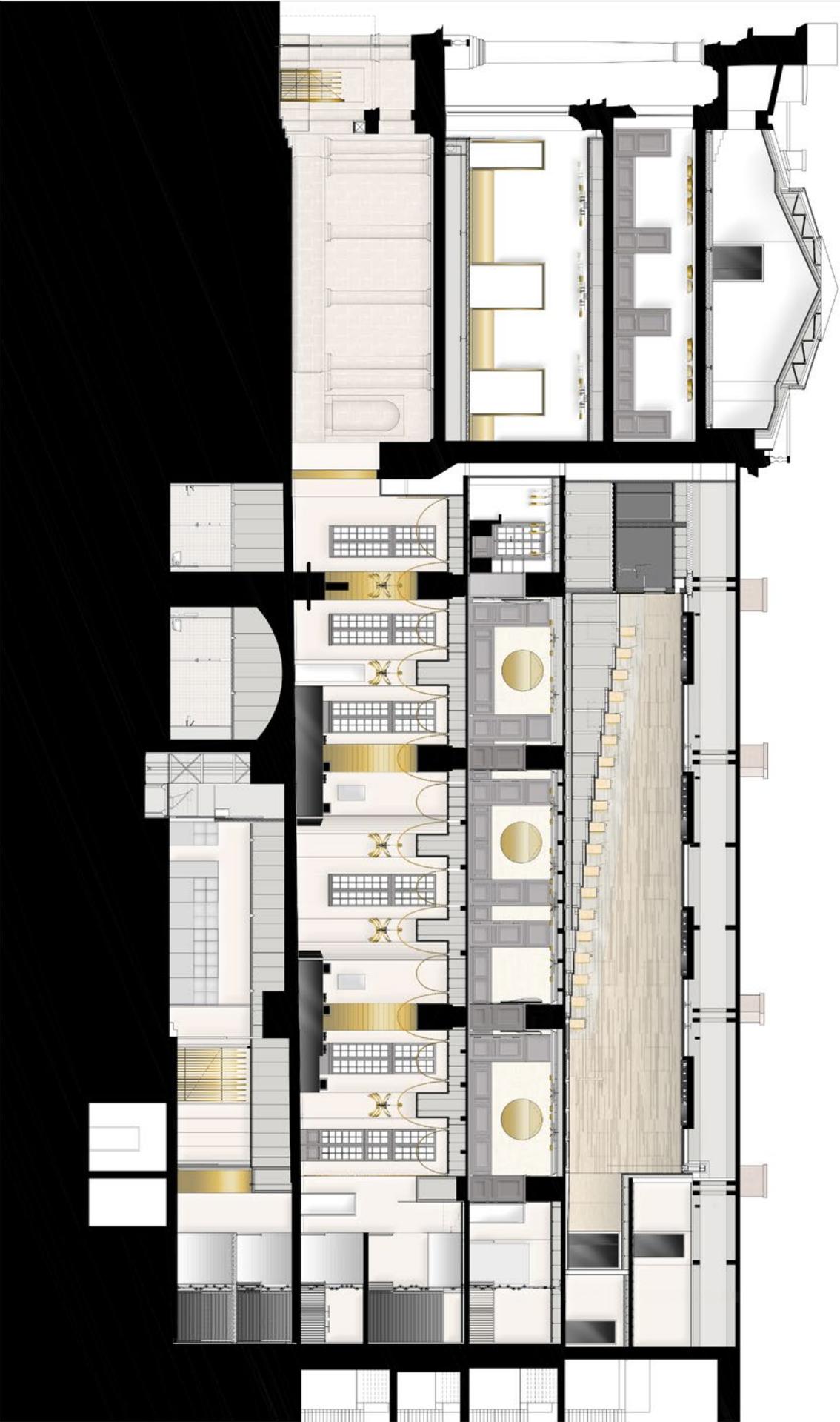
auditorium

restaurant

entrance for individual visitors and  
reception hall

exit for individual visitors and  
groups, shop and services





auditorium

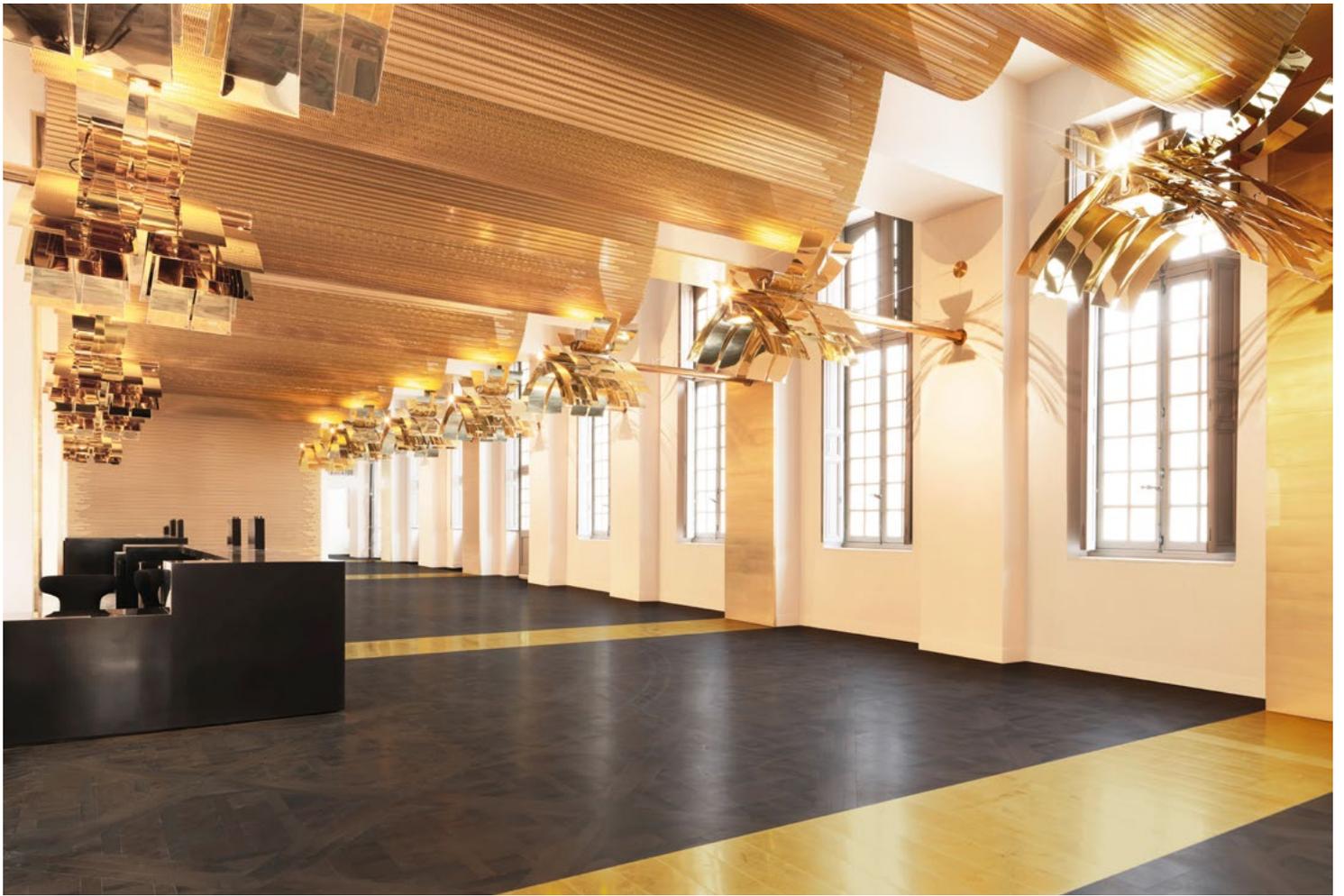
restaurant

entrance for individual visitors and reception hall

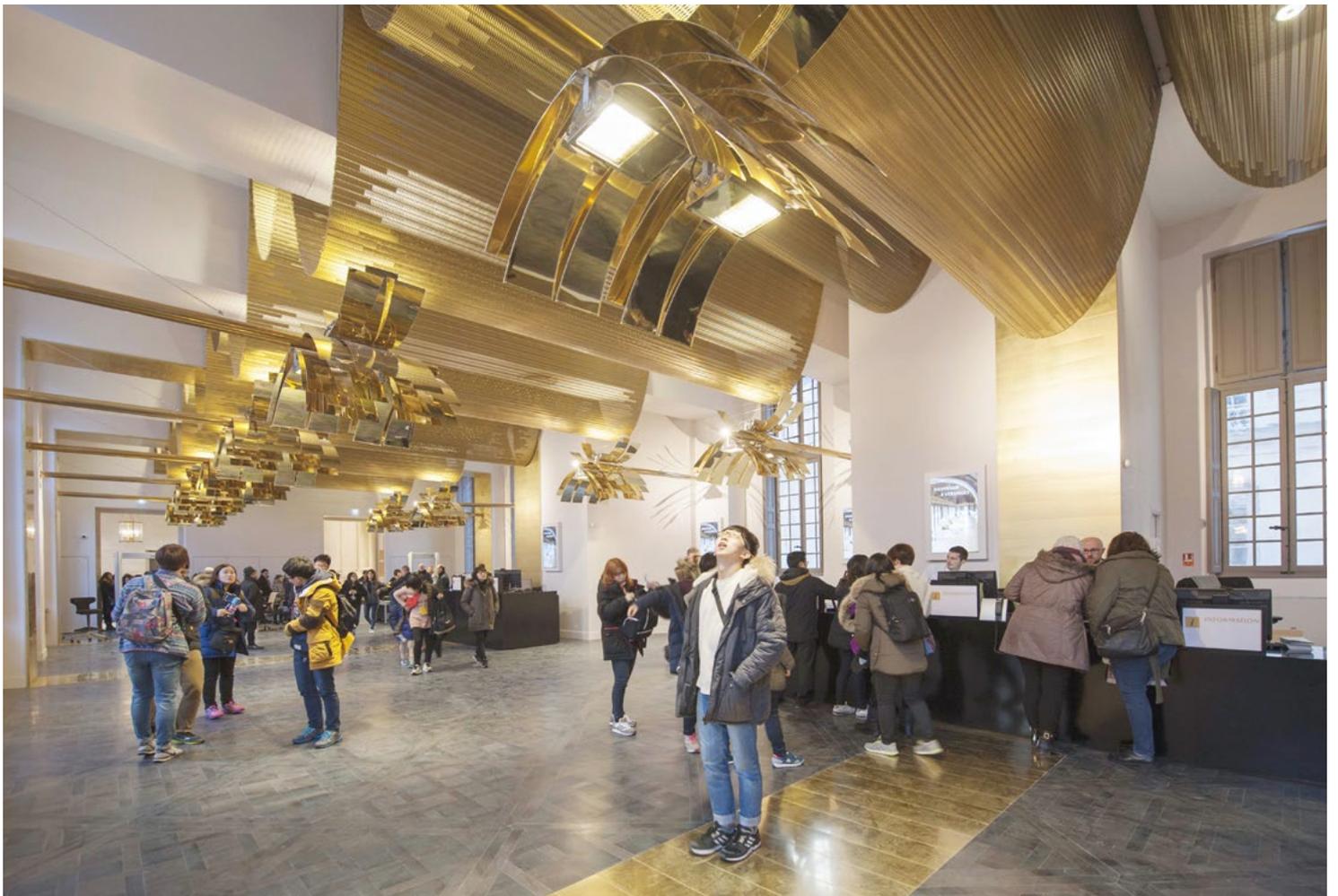
exit for individual visitors and groups, shop and services

0 1 2 5m

Accueil Royal, Pavillon Dufour, Chateau de Versailles  
DPA Coupe longitudinale



Reception hall - Garden level



Reception hall and information - Garden level



Exit hall - Ground floor



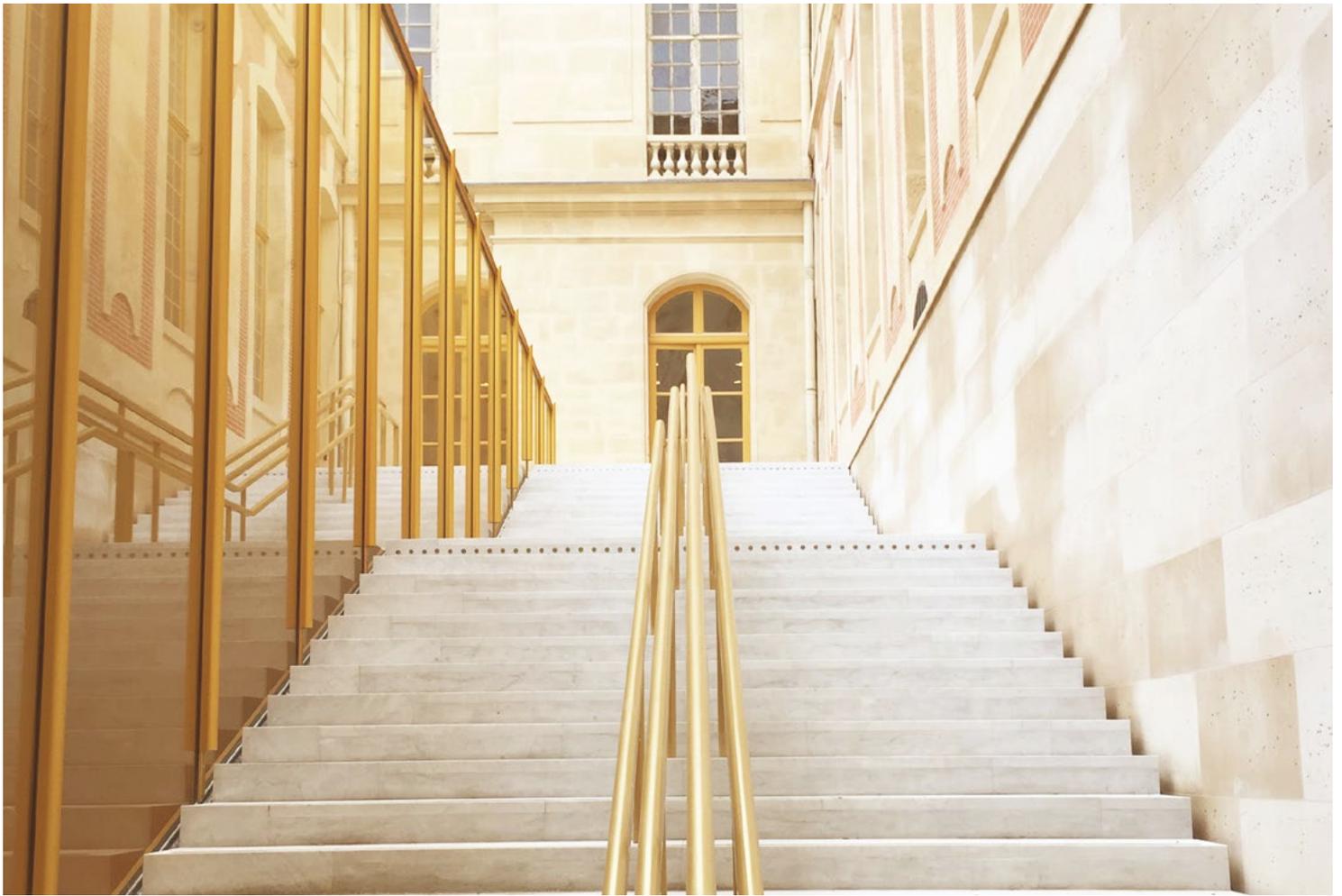
Réunion des Musées Nationaux shop in the former cisterns - Ground floor



Claude Rutault, *De la peinture sire...* - Ground floor



Glass prism - Ground floor



Exit by the Perrault Staircase from ground floor to garden level

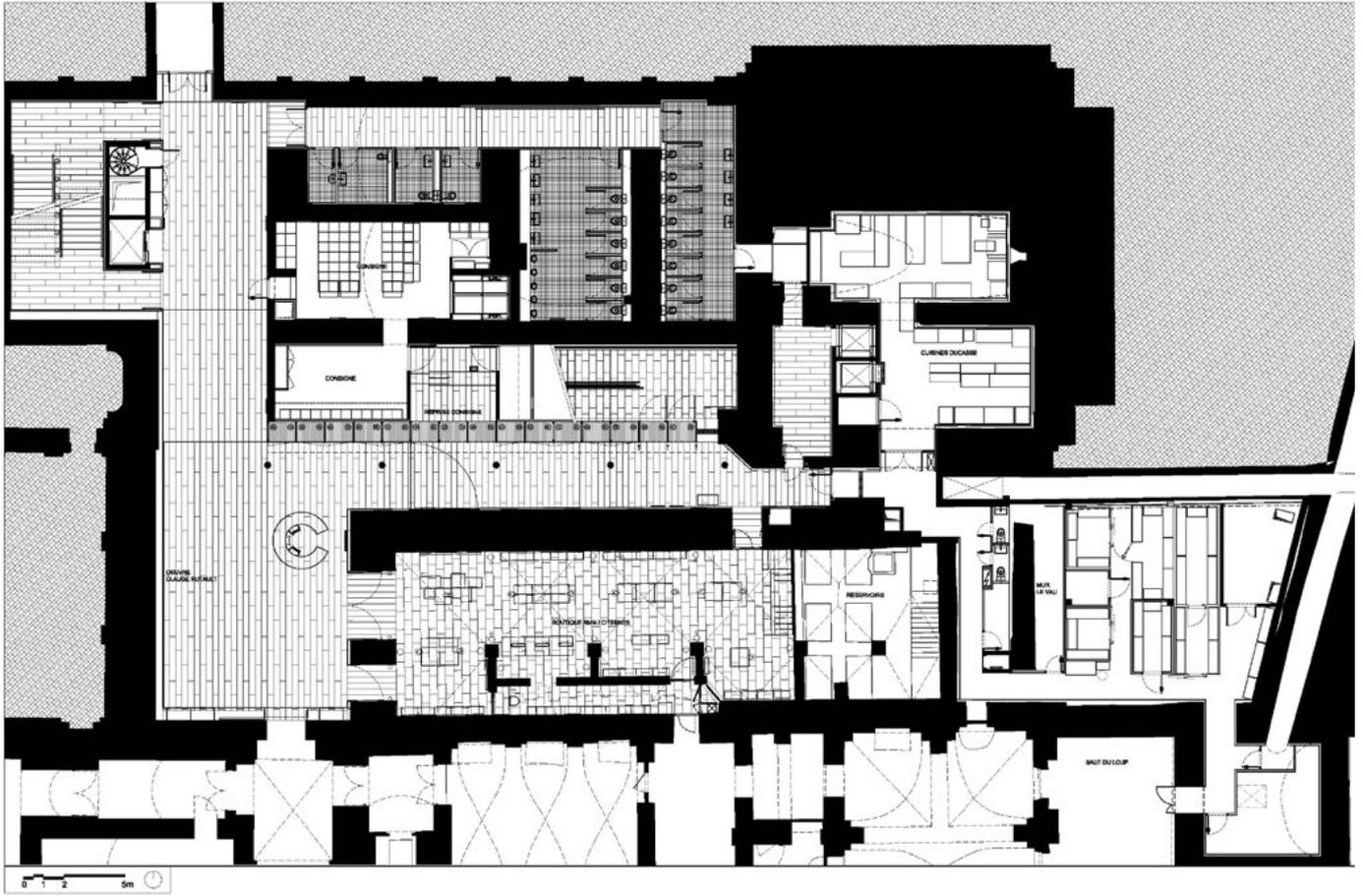


Visitors exit - access to the garden

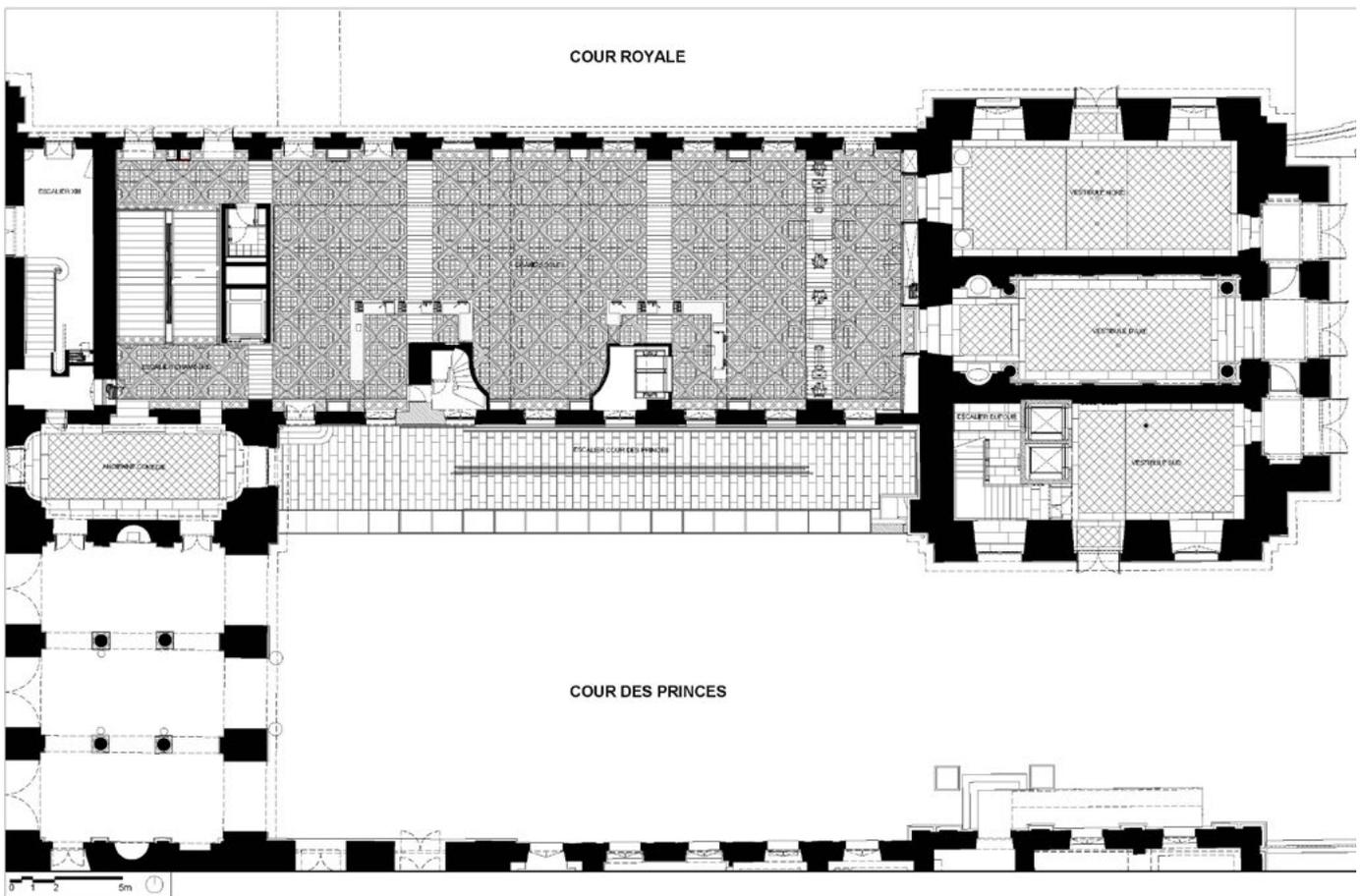


150 seats auditorium - Third floor



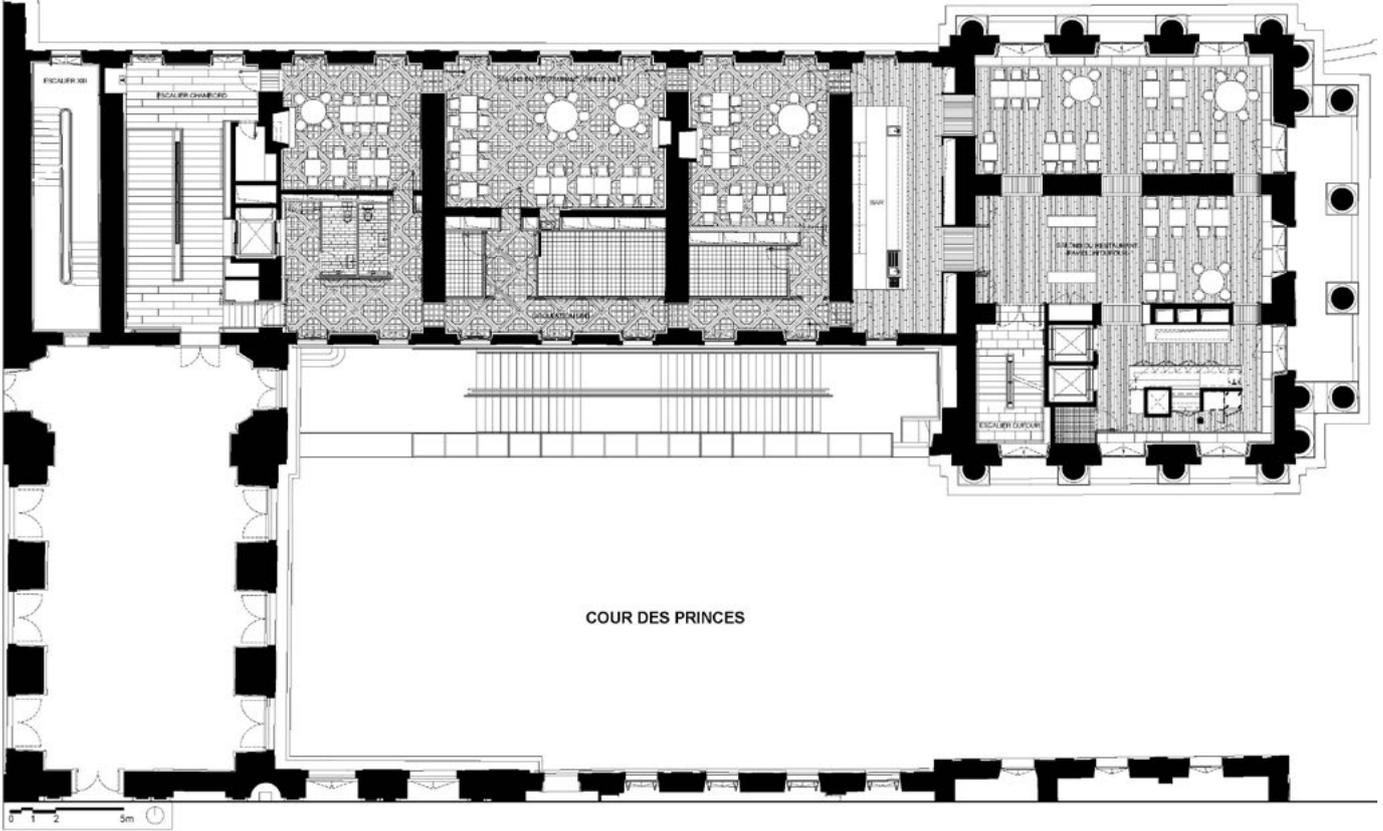


Plan of the Ground Floor



Plan of the Garden Level

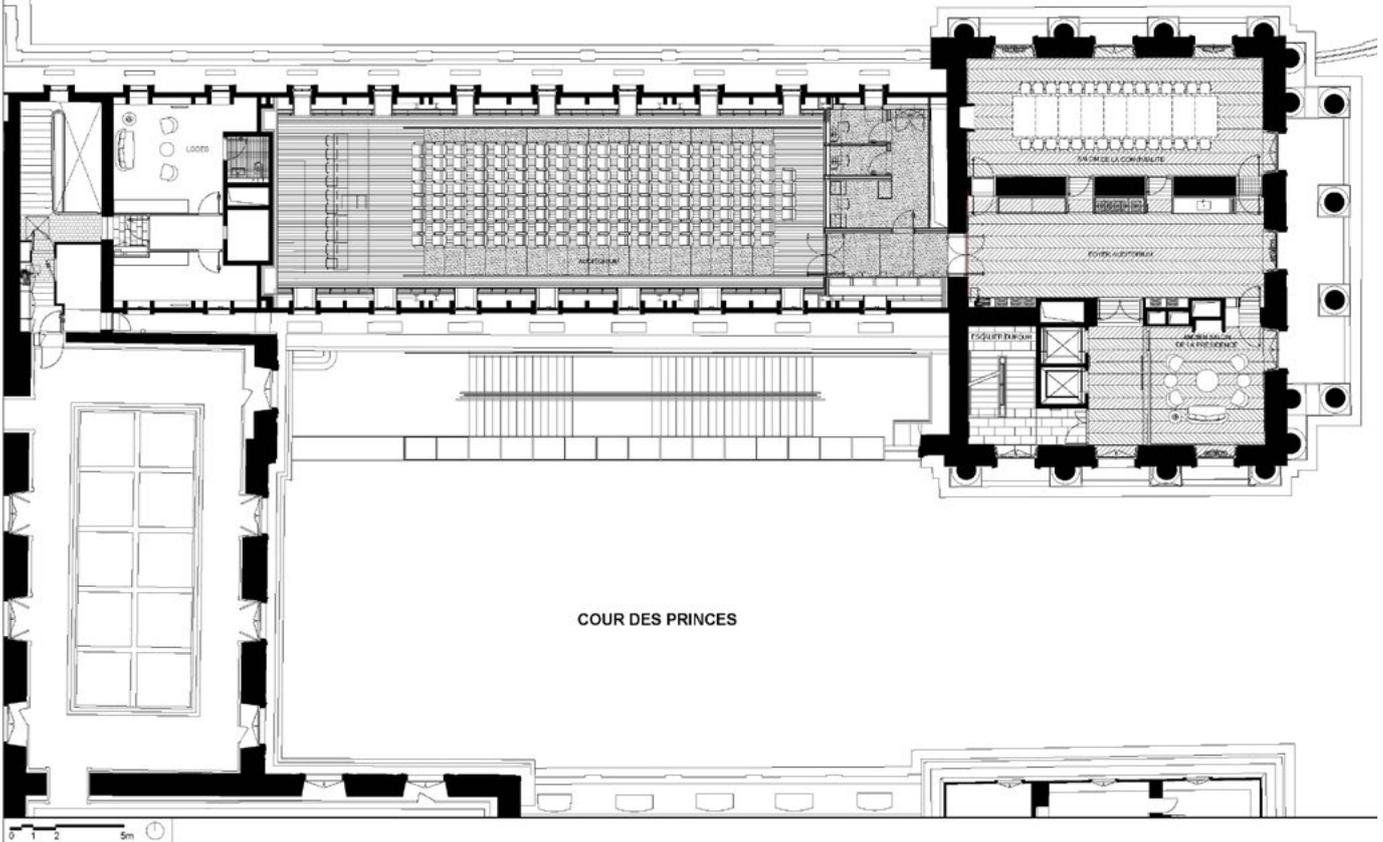
COUR ROYALE



Accueil Royal.Pavillon Dufour. Château de Versailles

Plan of the Second Floor

COUR ROYALE



Plan of the Third Floor



Detail of «Marie Leszczyńska, reine de France (1703-1768)» by Charles-André Van Loo, 1747. Château de Versailles  
Photomontage Dominique Perrault Architecture

## DESIGN AT THE PAVILION DUFOUR

The repurposing of spaces and of their interconnections is further enhanced by the subtle treatment of the interiors, with a focus on three key areas: flooring, ceiling, and chandeliers. Metal, the main material utilized, pulls the project into a coherent whole, while highlighting the contemporary character and strengthening the visibility of the intervention.

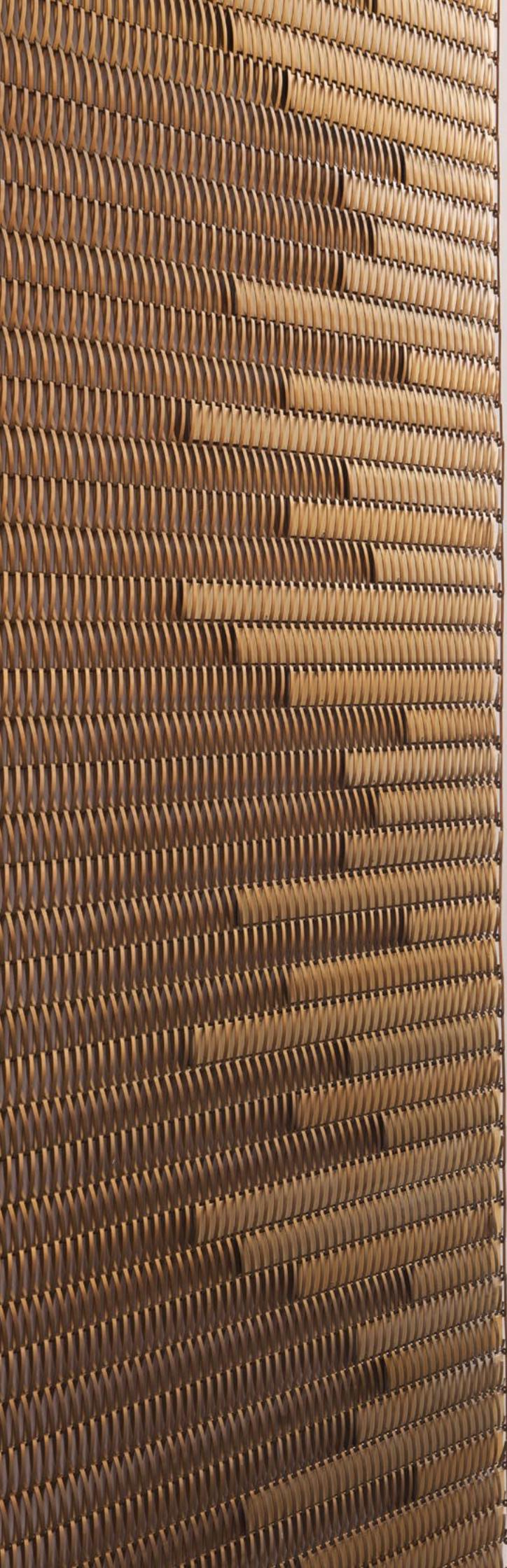
Parquet with metal slats covers the floors, in places repeating the renowned "Versailles" pattern. Punctuating this space are the light fixtures, like the ones in the form of standards for example, affixed between the windows of the reception gallery; their curves and reverse curves in harmonious dialog with the broad gadroons formed by the covering hanging from the ceiling, with the interior all in amber or flamboyant tones. The auditorium is clad in wood. Echoing the gilded formal wrought-iron entrance to the palace forecourt and the recently restored gilded lead roof ornaments, decorations and furnishings designed for the site blend a range of materials into a sort of flavescent cameo, while reflections from the mesh and the floor cast a satin appearance on them.

The restaurant, located in a string of rooms on the second floor of the Pavilion Dufour and the Old Wing, is served by a special entrance on the garden level, in the South portico. Its furniture and chandeliers come in russet and metallic hues, matching the color scheme of the building. In the Pavilion Dufour, the structural intervention needed to level the floors was used as an opportunity to redesign the period rooms. A set of gilded geometric surfaces were applied to the doorways and door bases, giving the rooms a more contemporary look. In the Old Wing, the intervention took the more discreet form of a taupe tint, which was applied to the listed wood floors, paneling and woodwork. This homogeneous treatment, prescribed by Chief Architect in charge of Historical Monuments Frédéric Didier, bears the added bonus of honoring traditional usages. The bar area tying the two spaces together has a mysterious atmosphere created by metallic onyx-colored mirroring and vertical light tubes. The visual effect of the classic en-suite layout is heightened by a carpet running from room to room. The required servant spaces, located in the middle of the rooms, regulate usage while preserving access to the windows looking down on the Royal Courtyard and the Princes Courtyard. An auditorium nestles under the mansard roof of the attic, where the existing dormer windows shine like lightboxes on the wood-sheathed roof break. Thanks to the wide splays surrounding them, the daylight coming in is tinged with gold.

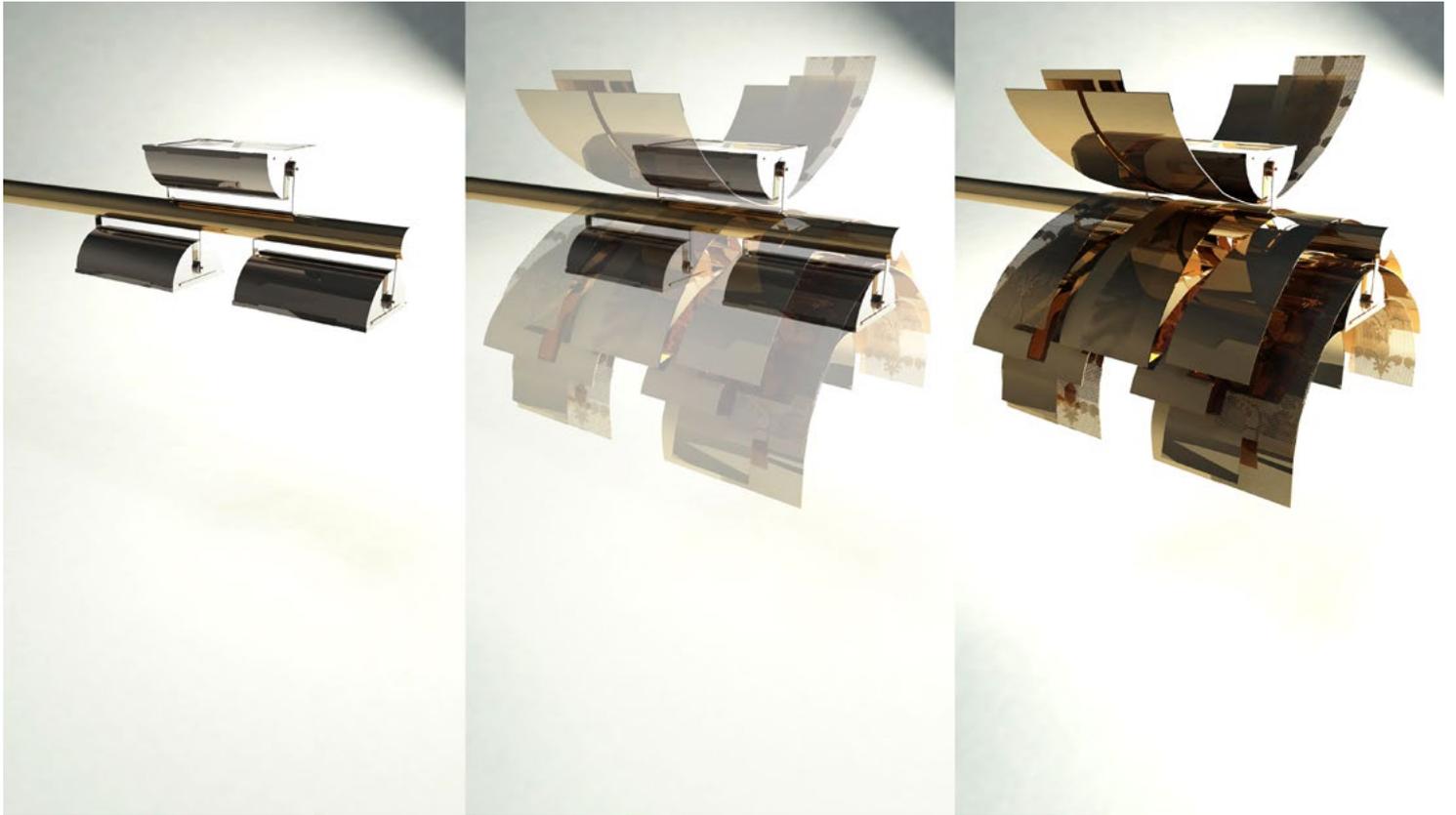
In the Princes Courtyard, the emergence of a pure glass prism signals the location of this contemporary intervention. In a reference to the famous parabolic reflector designed as an experiment for Louis XIV, the wall running alongside the staircase leading to the exit is composed of a collection of large gilded metal blades, which serve to reflect natural light into the ground floor areas. A discreet evocation of the sun king's emblem, the disk-shaped washers with radial grooves that cover the screws holding these blades in place are among the subtle elements we utilized in the contextualization of our intervention.

This intentional use of references is not a series of isolated elements in our work. The abundant iconography of the palace provided us with a privileged source of inspiration for the design of the interiors, and notably for the chandeliers and other lightings. In fact, we seized upon a whole set of figures and motifs, which we have interpreted, and abstracted, to create a highly specific and contemporary decorative vocabulary, while mindfully seeking to avoid the trap of easy and immediate imitation.

Dominique Perrault, Architect  
Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost, Designer

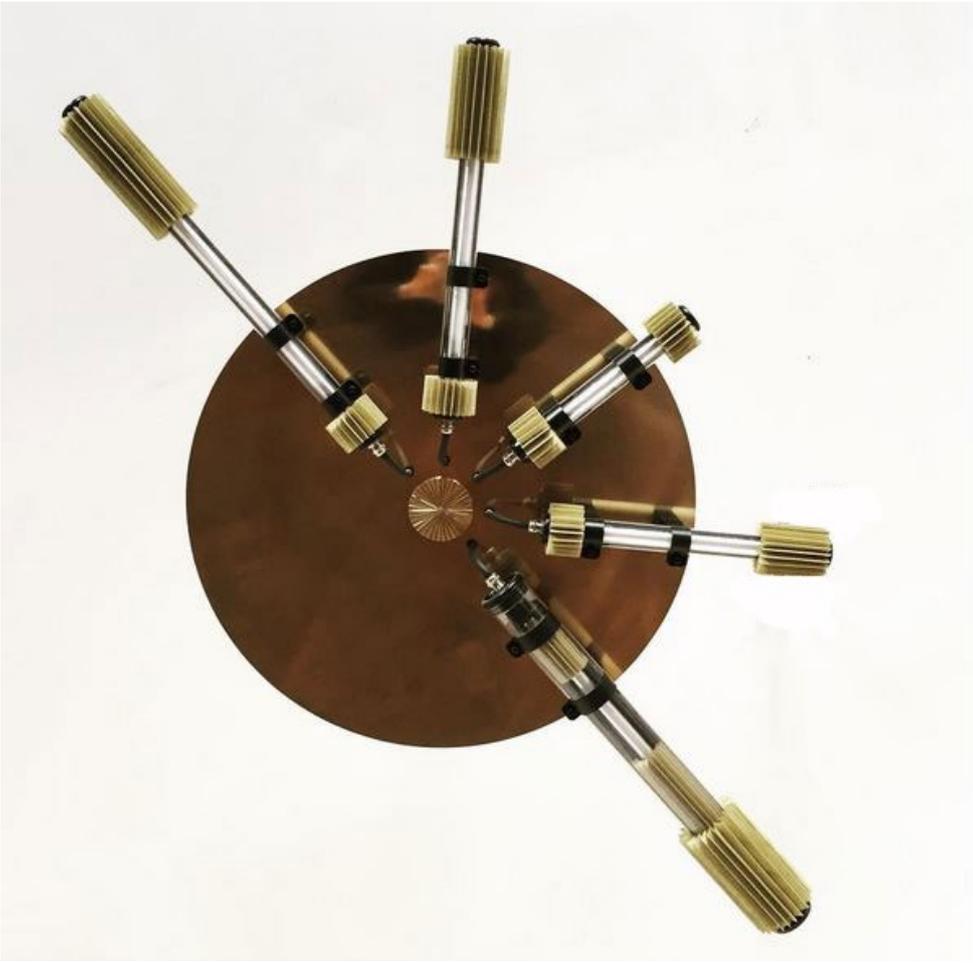


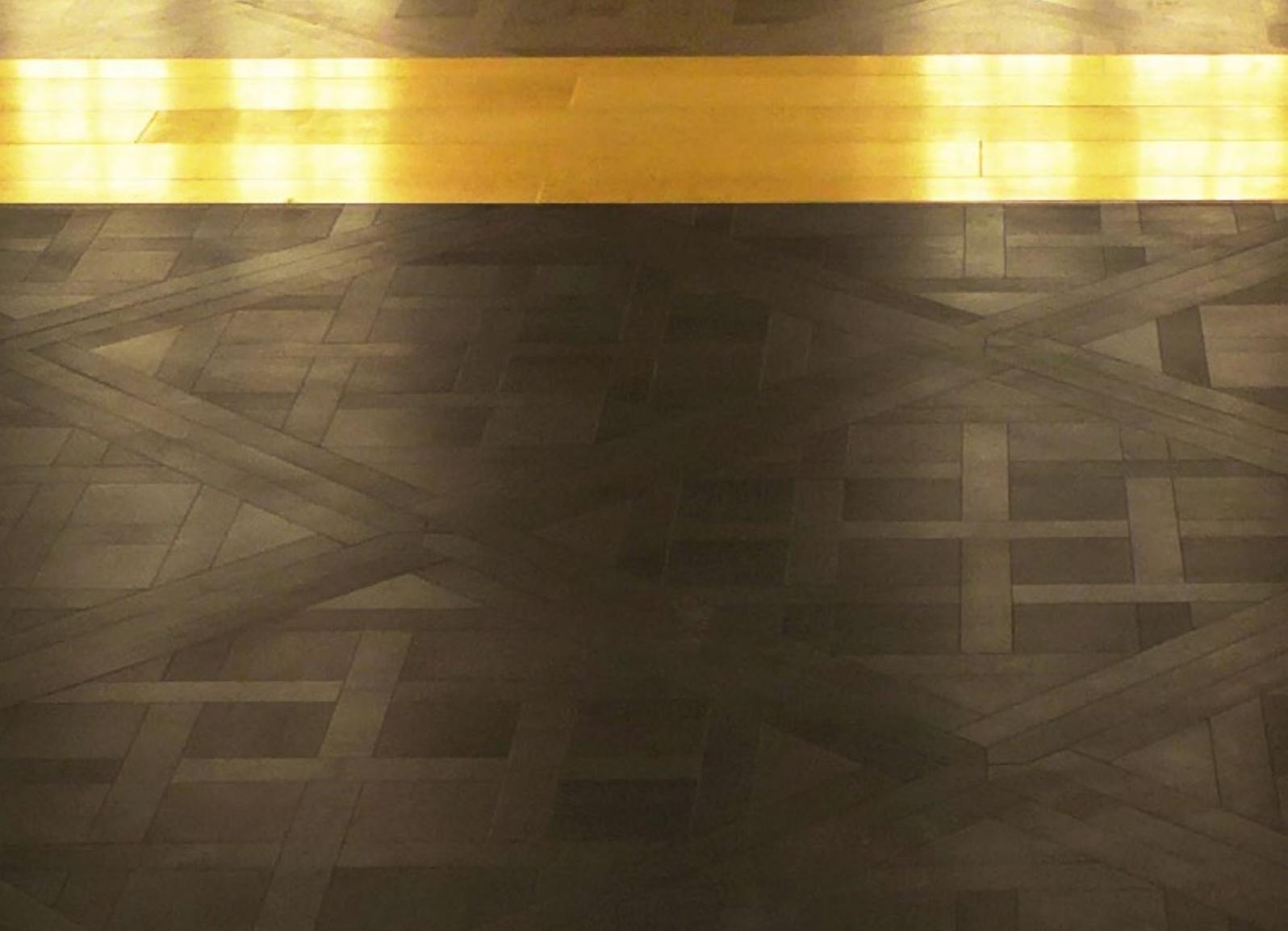


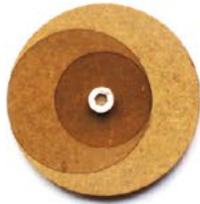


Prototype of the reception hall lighting









## Dominique Perrault



Dominique Perrault has made his own path in contemporary architecture, gaining in notoriety over the years both in and outside of his native France. Born in 1953 in Clermont-Ferrand, he studied in Paris and received his diploma as an architect from the *École des Beaux-Arts* in 1978. He received a further degree in Urbanism at the *École nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* in 1979, as well as a Master's in History at the EHESS (*École des hautes études en sciences sociales*) in 1980. He created his own firm in 1981 in Paris. Though he completed works before that date, Perrault's career took a sudden upswing when an international jury selected him to design the French National Library in Paris in 1989. The last of President François Mitterrand's *Grands Travaux*, a series of cultural projects that included the Louvre Pyramid by I.M. Pei, the Library is made up of four 79-meter high towers, imagined like open books around a sunken central courtyard. This project underlines a number of characteristics of Perrault's other work, in particular the use of "chain mail" cladding for surfaces, replacing the more usual smooth, modern appearance. The central garden merits attention. "The modern movement always had a very Puritan relationship with the earth," says Dominique Perrault. "When Le Corbusier imagined setting buildings up on pilotis so that they would not touch the earth, his attitude was very peculiar. In my project, the idea of the natural level of the earth disappears, and the building blends with nature. In Paris, one has the impression that the garden of the Library is at the level of the Seine, but in fact, it is ten meters lower. One almost feels that the garden was there before the building and that the Library somehow protects it. This relationship with the earth is complex, and it contradicts the usual Modernist

tenets." When pressed on this point, Perrault goes on to explain "The garden is not only beautiful, it is sacred. Visitors cannot enter it. It is the symbolic place of origin of the Library, it brings calm and light to the interior. It is in some sense the first garden.<sup>1</sup>" Twenty years after its inauguration in 1995, the French National Library remains one of the most significant contemporary public buildings in France.

Perrault went on to dig into the earth in such seminal projects as the Velodrome and Olympic Swimming Pool (Berlin, Germany, 1992–99), or more recently the Ewha Womans University in Seoul (South Korea, 2004–08). The Ewha project appears like a slash in the earth, leading users down to the facilities. This kind of typological and stylistic inversion is indicative of the profound nature of Dominique Perrault's contribution to contemporary architecture. With the 2015 *Praemium Imperiale* award to Dominique Perrault, notice is duly taken on the international scale of the significance of his work.

With projects such as the reconstruction and expansion of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Luxembourg, 2008/ ongoing), the repurposing of the former Poste du Louvre (Paris, 2018) or the 250-meter DC Tower (Vienna, 2014), Dominique Perrault has engaged in different types of work, often on a large scale and with considerable technical challenges that he always meets with an inventive spirit. His innovation is first theoretical but then also esthetic. Although his work is identifiably contemporary it is also permeated with unexpected materials and surfaces. Dominique Perrault has actively sought to make his approach to architectural innovation known through an initiative he calls DPAX, a research platform "that calls for a multidisciplinary dialogue to explore architecture from a wider perspective."

Through his built work, his projects and his thought, Dominique Perrault has created a unique place for himself in the world of contemporary architecture. He is young by the standards of the highest level of his profession and it is clear that Dominique Perrault will more and more be considered one of the outstanding figures of his generation.

Philip Jodidio

Article written on the occasion of *Praemium Imperiale* 2015

Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost



Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost's career is closely linked to that of Dominique Perrault, as she conceives and supervises all projects of the studio as its art director. Dominique Perrault's work is also that of Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost, a product of a mutual collaboration for over than more than twenty years.

Educated at the school Camondo, Gaëlle Lauriot-Prévost joined Dominique Perrault in 1989, one year after graduation. For over twenty years Gaëlle

Lauriot-Prévost has been actively involved in the design and development of the largest projects of the office: the National Library of France, the Velodrome and the Olympic Pool in Berlin, and the European Court of Justice and the Olympic Tennis Centre in Madrid or Ewha Womans University, Seoul, awarded many prizes.

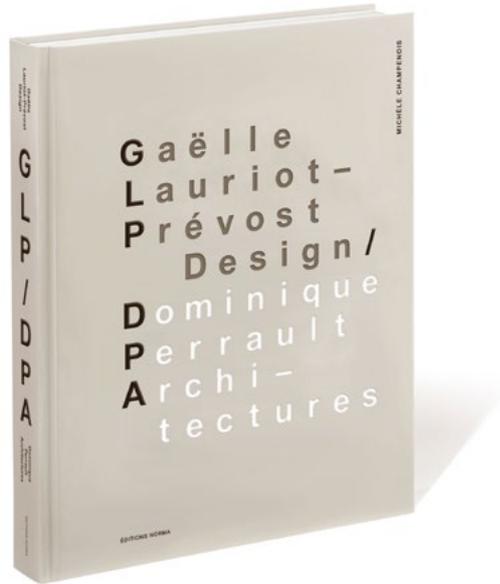
Its interiors invite to an introspective dive into the heart of the building that is not always reflected on the exteriors. They reflect the architect's intentions in an intimate scale, always remaining human. As the studio's artistic director, she plays a fundamental role in assuring the architectural quality in all projects, as her requirements not only technical an artistic but human.

[www.gaellelauriotprevost.com](http://www.gaellelauriotprevost.com)

# GAËLLE LAURIOT-PRÉVOST DESIGN / DOMINIQUE PERRAULT ARCHITECTURES

DESIGN MONOGRAPH - NORMA ÉDITIONS

RELEASED IN SEPTEMBER 2016



**Gaëlle Lauriot-Prevost** is an architect-designer.

She is the associate and the artistic director of the studio **Dominique Perrault Architecture**. In the past, she has collaborated with Élisabeth de Senneville in Paris and Zaha Hadid in London.

After her graduation from Camondo, she joined Perrault's team in 1989 for the international competition of the National Library of France, which was completed in 1995.

For the past 25 years, even if she is not always in the spot light, her work is closely associated to the elegant architecture of the studio. The magistral use – which was a first – of the metallic mesh in numerous buildings ; on interior walls, ceilings or exterior draping, as in Albi or Berlin; is the signature of the designer who does not limit her work to objects. The chairs, furnitures or lightings she designs are perfectly and rigourously integrated in Dominique Perrault's architectures.

From the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg (2008), to the recent redevelopment of the Pavillon Dufour at the Château de Versailles, major installations have been created as an emphasis of interior spaces.

Reflecting the buildings they are set in, her creations contribute to a dialogue between architecture and design.

Ever-present in Dominique Perrault's realizations, her work has been edited by numerous manufacturers, who

made her renowned throughout the years: DCW, Fontana Arte, Silvera, Poltrona Frau, Alessi, Baccarat, Chevalier, Sawaya & Moroni, Galerie Kréo, FSB...

**Michèle Champenois** is a journalist and an architecture and design critic. Previously, she has worked for the French newspaper Le Monde, and Le Monde 2. Today, she hosts a monthly radio show for Fréquence Protestante. She is the author of Marc Held, 50 ans de design, 2014, and Olivier Gagnère, 2015, published by Norma Editions.

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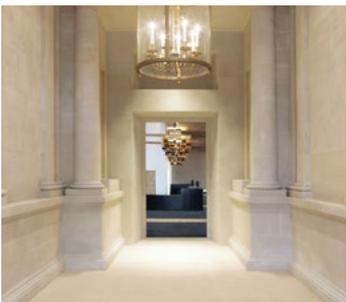
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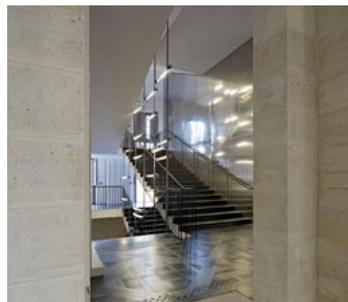
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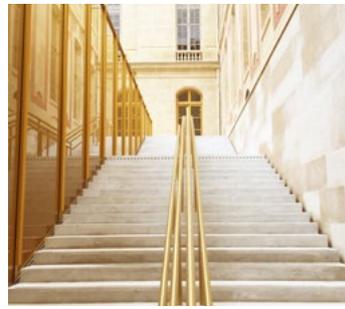
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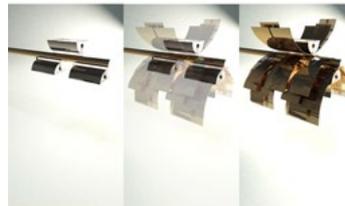
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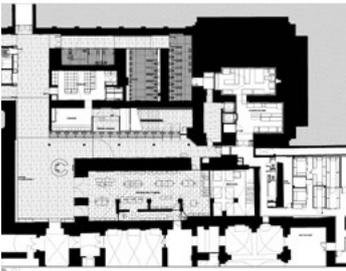
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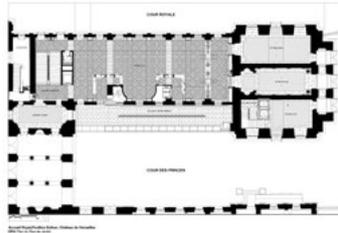
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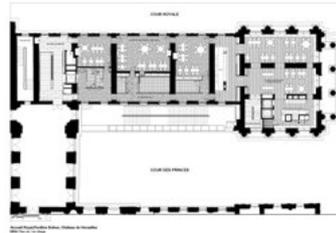
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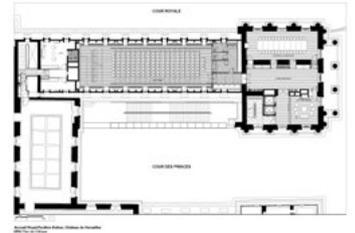
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