

# THE FRENCH CONNECTION

From its world-famous art collections to its high-fashion heritage, Paris is a cultural powerhouse. **Emma O'Kelly** explores the City of Light as the Biennale des Antiquaires returns to boost its artistic offerings.



The opulent Grand Palais, home of the Biennale des Antiquaires.

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This summer, curators at the Louvre had to evacuate some 250,000 priceless artworks from the museum's cellars for fear they would be damaged in the city's worst floods in 100 years. Luckily, the waters receded, and as Paris prepares for *la rentrée*, it brings with it an autumn cultural calendar bursting with new hotels, restaurants, shows and exhibitions.

It all starts in the Grand Palais on 10 September, with the 28th edition of the Biennale des Antiquaires, a grande dame of art, *haute joaillerie* and rare antiques fairs on par with The European Fine Art Fair in Maastricht.

Organisers have dubbed 2016 "a year of renewal," after exhibitors protested that previous Biennales had lost their way. One insider explains: "In 2014, the jewellery houses such as Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Bulgari and Graff moved in, and there were criticisms that the fair had become a showcase for big luxury brands rather than antiques and rare objects, which was its original mission." This year all the contemporary houses (with the exception of De Grisogono, which last took part in 2008) have pulled out, and jewellery is very much vintage, or *haute*, thanks to exhibitors such as New York-based Lee Siegelson, Delhi-based newcomer Nirav Modi and Paris's Martin du Daffoy.



(This page, from top) The Louvre Pyramid; the Roi Soleil mirror by Line Vautrin, brought by New York's Maison Gerard to the Biennale des Antiquaires.

(Opposite) Biennale regular Mayoral gallery brings Calder's *Crag with Yellow Boomerang and Red Eggplant* along with works by Miró and Picasso.

GRAND PALAIS: HEMSALAMY COURTESY MAISON GERARD COURTESY GALERIA MAYORAL

Unlike other fairs, the Biennale does not spawn satellite events across the city. The collectibles on show are simply too precious. But there is a wealth of art and objects to see without venturing beyond the stairs of the Grand Palais. The number of antiques exhibitors is back up this year, from 63 in 2014 to 118, and there is also more fine art in the mix. Beginning next year, the Biennale will be an annual event, and as such, it has joined forces with Paris Tableau, a smaller fair founded in 2011 and dedicated to European Old Masters. The 25 or so galleries that form Paris Tableau's exhibitors roster will show alongside Biennale regulars such as the UK's Tomasso Brothers Fine Arts, Paris stalwart

Applicat-Prazan and the Barcelona-based Mayoral gallery. Director Jordi Mayoral explains: "The Biennale is one of the most important luxury fairs in the world, so we make a big effort to create a museum-quality booth."

This year Mayoral pays homage to the Pavilion of the Spanish Republic, designed for the Paris World's Fair Exhibition of 1937 by Spanish architects Josep Lluís Sert and Luis Lacasa. The pavilion's centrepiece was the iconic *Guernica*, Picasso's powerful anti-Fascist statement, which hung near works by Alexander Calder and Joan Miró. Mayoral has sourced artworks from the original pavilion, and its booth features related photographs, drawings and

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music. A life-size replica of *The Reaper*, a mural by Miró that went missing when the pavilion was taken down, has been recreated by the gallery and will be exhibited in a separate venue in the city.

Every visitor to the Grand Palais feels the space's grandeur, and exhibitors face the challenge of being overshadowed by its mighty dome. Paris-based stage designer Nathalie Crinière has been assigned the task of tackling these challenges and curating a coherent space for the Biennale.

"The monumental architecture guided our process," she explains. "We magnified it with large mirrors to increase its effects and ensure that nothing seems out of proportion. At the same time, we had to create a notion of conviviality and easy orientation." Crinière is an obvious choice. She has spent the past decade conceiving exhibitions for stalwart luxury houses such as Cartier, Dior and Hennessy and is currently collaborating with Pierre Bergé and interior architect Jacques Grange on the transformation of the Yves Saint Laurent Foundation into a museum in Paris and another in Marrakesh, a city adored by Saint Laurent and where he spent a substantial amount of time.

While Crinière makes her mark on the Grand Palais, other notable designers are renovating and rejuvenating venerable institutions across the city. At the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, architect Joseph Dirand has designed its new eatery, Loulou, to "look like the dining room of a decorative arts collector." The location is spectacular, and the concept is unfussy Riviera cuisine courtesy of chef Benoit Dargère.

A stone's throw away, in the Louvre's Denon Wing, a space that connects the Carousel and the Jardin des Tuileries, Paris designer Mathieu Lehanneur has modernised Café Mollien with new lighting and furniture. His solar-powered street lamps and benches were installed last year along the Champs-Élysées to coincide with the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Lehanneur's talents are also on show at the Biennale, with a booth he has created for Galerie Chenel, specialists in archaeological treasures. Metal-panelled walls pierced with alcoves house Roman busts, 2,000-year-old marble heads and a statue of Hercules. Lehanneur explains: "The space feels both ancestral and futuristic. Artworks and style trends come and go, but antiquities remain. In these accelerated times, archaeological works have never had so much resonance."

At the Château de Versailles, a new auditorium, shop and entrance represent the first phase of what is to be a major renovation of the estate. This month chef Alain Ducasse will open Ore on the first floor of the chateau's Pavillon Dufour.

(Above) Daniel Buren's *Une pause colorée* at Le Bristol.

(Right) Mathieu Lehanneur has modernised Café Mollien with new lighting and furniture.



The Hôtel Saint-Marc.



ALFIERI SOUVENIR PHOTO © DBADAGP PARIS PICTURE JULIE JOUBERT/KAMEL MENNOUR ARCHIVES. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND KAMEL MENNOUR, PARIS

During the day Ore will offer elegant, contemporary cafe fare; in the evening it will metamorphose into an exclusive dining experience, a stage for grand dinners and special events. Ducasse, who has accumulated an astonishing 21 Michelin stars over the course of his career, wants to pay tribute to the splendourous excesses of the Sun King. French architect Dominique Perrault has been behind all the renovations so far, and his interpretations of Louis XIV's decorative opulence have led to a pared-down, modern dining room. By 2018, visitors who once had to settle with a day trip to the palace will be able to sleep there like, well, kings. Three of the estate's buildings are being turned into a no-expense-spared, 20-room boutique hotel, courtesy of the Lov Hotel Collection. The renovation will cost a princely \$19 million, a budget that would surely please the chateau's original resident.

## STAY IN STYLE | SIX STUNNING HOTELS TO ENSURE A LUXURIOUS TRIP



### The Amastan Paris

Located between the Champs-Élysées and Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, the Amastan attracts a fashionable crowd not only to its coolly designed rooms (24 in total), but also its nightspot, Anouk. Adjacent to the entrance is a project space dedicated to art, fashion and design pop-ups. [amastanhotels.com](http://amastanhotels.com)

### Hôtel André Latin

Location and decor are the key features of this boutique hotel near the Luxembourg Gardens and the Panthéon. Created by Michael Malaper, it combines 1950 silhouettes and colour with original belle époque details. [andre-latin-paris-hotel.com](http://andre-latin-paris-hotel.com)

### Le Bristol Paris

Offering Old-World elegance with contemporary details – and a Michelin-starred restaurant – the Bristol is located on the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, in the heart of the city's art and fashion district. [lebristolparis.com](http://lebristolparis.com)

### Hôtel Montalembert

Built in 1926, this newly refurbished hotel is situated in the bustling heart of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, just a few steps from the Musée d'Orsay and the Louvre. Known for its fine restaurant (right), the hotel has also become an important literary address thanks to the Montalembert Prize, which was created in 2006 for a first novel by a female writer and is awarded there annually. [hotelmontalembert-paris.com](http://hotelmontalembert-paris.com)

### Hôtel Saint-Marc

Built in 1791 for a duke, the Hôtel Saint-Marc (above) is near the fashionable Rue Vivienne. Milanese duo Dimore Studio designed all 26 rooms. Amenities include a pool, but for dining, it offers light snacks and room service only. [hotelsaintmarc.com](http://hotelsaintmarc.com)

### The Ritz Paris

Having undergone the most extensive renovation since it opened in 1898, the refreshed Ritz has 15 historic suites and 71 rooms, 5 bars and restaurants, and a spa area with a pool, gym and beauty treatments courtesy of Chanel. New York design firm Thierry W Despont also added five boutiques and a concept store to the mix. [ritzparis.com](http://ritzparis.com)



Sophisticated fare at the Hôtel Montalembert.

Closer to the city centre, the Ritz Paris reopened in June on Place Vendôme after a four-year renovation, while the 90-year-old Hôtel Montalembert has also had a facelift. Paris abounds in small, chic boutique hotels, and the flurry of new openings cater to a fashion-forward crowd. There's the 24-room Amastan in the 8th Arrondissement, Hôtel André Latin in the 5th and Hôtel Saint-Marc in the 2nd Arrondissement. The last was designed by Milanese duo Dimore Studio, whose Midas touch fuses Art Deco, Modernism and colour.

At Le Bristol Paris's Michelin-starred restaurant L'Épicure, art lovers can dine under *Une pause colorée*, a pergola designed by French artist Daniel Buren. Each year the hotel commissions a contemporary artist to create an installation within its walls, and Buren's multicoloured structure is *in situ* until 6 October.

September closes out with Fashion Week, and there's a sartorial frisson in the air around Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré as showrooms prepare to reveal their spring/summer 2017 collections in 100-plus runway shows. On the retail front this summer, Italian heritage brand Salvatore Ferragamo opened its largest store in Europe on Avenue Montaigne, and earlier in the year Paco Rabanne's creative director, Julien Dossena, inaugurated a striking flagship on Rue Cambon for





the resurgent brand, its first store in fourteen years. Architects Kersten Geers and David Van Severen of the Belgian firm OFFICE created a linear, unfussy space that matches the chic pragmatism of Dossena's collections.

The connection between fashion and buildings is not unusual in this style capital. Claude Parent, one of France's great avant-garde architects, built Brutalist concrete churches, houses and shopping centres with a multitude of sloping angles. He worked (in misery) for Le Corbusier, was architect Jean Nouvel's mentor and did his national service with designer André Courrèges. Just before his death in February, Parent – a lifelong dandy – created a series of fashion drawings inspired by couturier Azzedine Alaïa's designs. On view at Alaïa's 3rd Arrondissement gallery through September, the singular show is one of those unexpected, off-the-track happenings that keep Paris on our minds and in our hearts.

Emma O'Kelly is editor-at-large of *Wallpaper\**.

The Biennale des Antiquaires runs 10–18 September. For more information, visit [biennale-paris.com](http://biennale-paris.com).

For information on sales, exhibitions and more at Sotheby's Paris this autumn, go to [sothebys.com/Paris](http://sothebys.com/Paris) or call + 31 1 53 05 53 05.

(Above) Salvatore Ferragamo opened its largest store in Europe on Avenue Montaigne.

(Opposite from top) A drawing by architect Claude Parent inspired by couturier Azzedine Alaïa; and the Salon Proust at the Ritz Paris.

# FEATURED PROPERTIES

SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY



## EIFFEL TOWER VIEWS

PARIS, FRANCE

In the immediate vicinity of the Champ de Mars in the 7th Arrondissement, this exquisite triplex offers breathtaking views of the Eiffel Tower. The high-luxury freestone building features two entrances, a triple reception area and a spacious eat-in kitchen.

**€3,470,000** Property ID: Y8HBER | [sothebysrealty.com](http://sothebysrealty.com)

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## 18TH-CENTURY CHARM

PARIS, FRANCE

This outstanding 350-square-meter apartment with an eleven-window facade and high ceilings lies steps away from the Place Vendôme and is housed in an exquisite 18th-century building. Beautifully designed, in pristine condition and offering six bedrooms, it is located on the building's third floor and accessible via staircase or elevator.

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