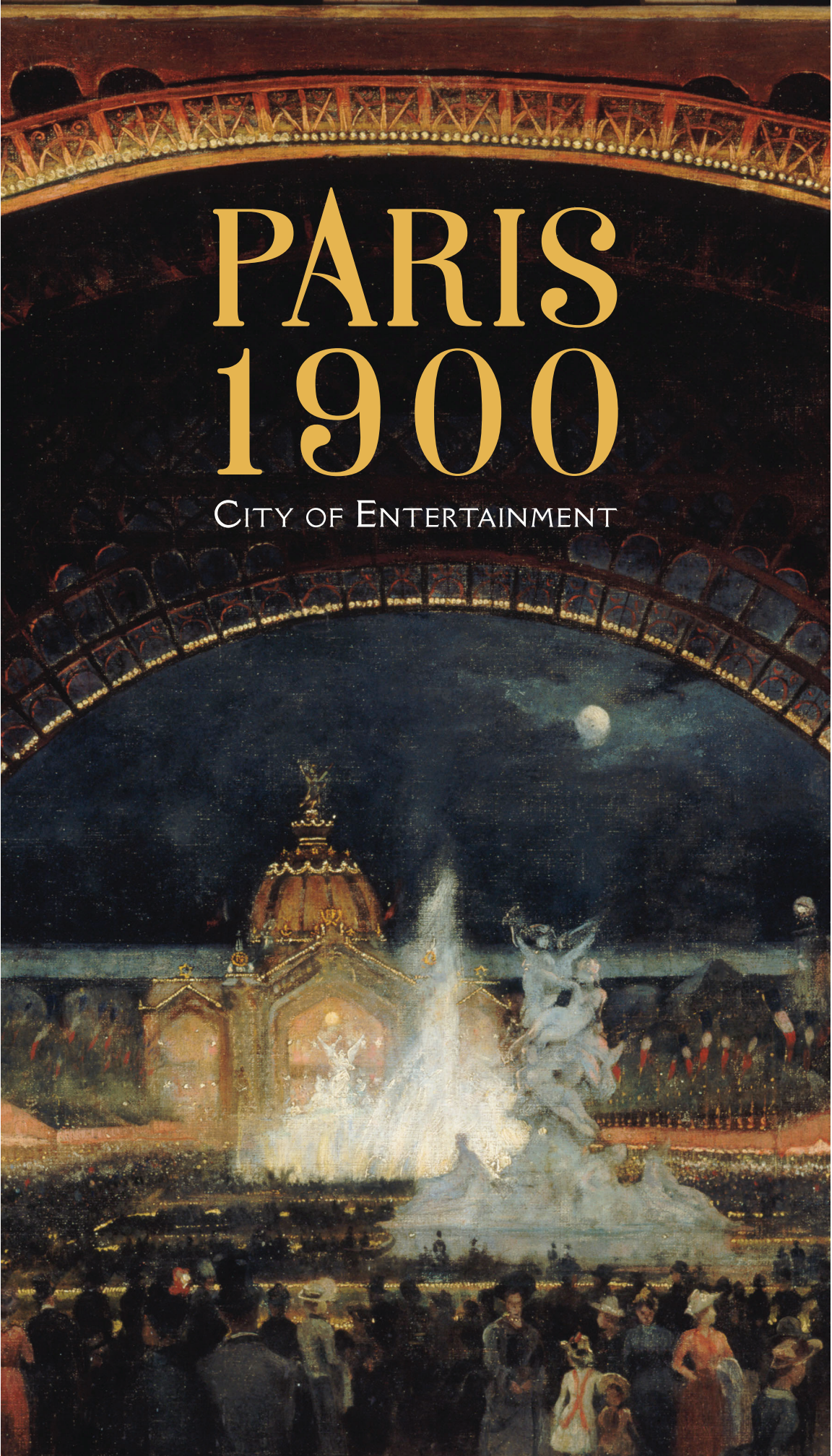


PARIS 1900

CITY OF ENTERTAINMENT







For more than a hundred years, Paris has been celebrated as the City of Light, standing as a symbol of elegance, pleasure, and festivity. This exhibition is intended to immerse visitors in the Parisian Belle Époque, a period that encompassed the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was known for fantasy, excess, and boundless faith in progress through science and technology. Originally presented in 2014 at the Petit Palais in Paris, the exhibition offers a selection of more than three hundred works of art, from paintings, prints, and sculptures to furniture, garments, and souvenirs. These objects, which hail from several City of Paris museums—including the Petit Palais, the Musée Carnavalet, the Palais Galliera, the Musée Bourdelle, and the Maison de Victor Hugo—form a portrait of a vibrant and swiftly changing city.



PARIS: SHOWCASE OF THE WORLD



In 1900, thirty years had passed since war had touched the city of Paris. During the Third Republic (1870–1940), the capital city prospered, witnessing advances in science and technology as well as an unprecedented population increase: between 1872 and 1914, it grew by almost one million people. Large-scale projects initiated by Baron Haussmann during the Second Empire (1852–1870) continued to be

built, providing Paris with mass transportation and modernizing its infrastructure. The broad avenues, green spaces, and public squares created during this period are among the most important structural elements of the Parisian landscape. Many emblematic monuments also date to this era, such as the Sacré-Coeur Basilica at the peak of Montmartre, and the Eiffel Tower, constructed for the International Exposition of 1889. The International Exposition of 1900 was the culmination of these projects and showcased the cultural power of the French capital to the world.

ART NOUVEAU

Paris was one of the European capitals of art nouveau, an artistic trend that was at the height of its popularity in 1900. Art nouveau in Paris included artists from many countries and disciplines, such as the architect



Hector Guimard, the glass artist Émile Gallé, and the painter and designer Alfons Mucha. These artists championed a style that broke with the academic tradition. They glorified an aesthetic of curved lines and asymmetry and preferred ornamentation inspired by living forms. Art nouveau also reversed the hierarchy of the genres, moving the decorative arts and so-called minor arts like printmaking, bookmaking, and medal engraving to center stage. The dealer Siegfried Bing was one of the most important sponsors of the new style: his shop, which opened in 1895, was called L'Art Nouveau and gave the movement its name.

PARIS, CAPITAL OF ARTS



Art played an exceptionally important role in Parisian cultural life at the turn of the century. The energy of the city's art world was unparalleled: truly an artistic Babel, the City of Light exerted a magnetic attrac-

tion on young artists like no other European capital. Artists from many nations came to Paris to study at the École des Beaux-Arts or train at one of numerous private academies, such as the Académie Julian. Although the Parisian art scene was large and varied in 1900, the outsized fame of its best-known figures—Claude Monet, Auguste Rodin, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec—has tended to obscure this diversity, casting a shadow over many artists whose works are worthy of our interest today.

THE PARISIAN WOMAN



A twenty-foot-tall sculpture of a stylish woman wearing a ball gown from the Paquin fashion house stood atop the main gate leading into the 1900 International Exposition. The larger-than-life figure proudly declared the French capital's supremacy in fashion and luxury goods. Her presence also reminded visitors that the notion of *La Parisienne*—the iconic upper-class Parisian woman—was an essential part of the city's appeal: she set the standard in the world of fashion, and her style was imitated across the globe. Her refined silhouette inspired writers, artists, and fashion designers alike: images of *La Parisienne* can be found in many media, from mosaics to postcards.

TRAVERSING PARIS

Major advances in transportation technology took place during the Belle Époque. Horse-drawn carriages and trams now had to compete with Paris's Métro. Its first line opened during the International Exposition in July 1900, bringing Paris up-to-date with London and New York: both cities had built rapid transit systems in the late 1860s. In 1900, automobiles were still a rare sight in Paris, but bicycles had become a normal part of the Parisian landscape.



PARIS BY NIGHT



Paris offered an infinitely varied spectacle during the day, but the City of Light was at its most seductive at night. Synonymous as it was with festivities, the dreamlike Parisian evening attracted a coterie of night owls: bohemian aristocrats in search of forbidden pleasures and those who supplied them, hedonists and thrill seekers, and artists and actors in search of inspiration.

It would seem that Parisians hardly slept at all: evenings were for attending performances at the opera or the theater, followed by entertainment late into the night at cafés and cabarets. Some venues, like Le Chat Noir and Le Moulin Rouge, have taken on a mythic status. The theater, commanded by great figures like Sarah Bernhardt, was also extremely vibrant at the dawn of the new century—a time when, more than ever before, Paris was seen throughout the world as a sparkling city of luxury with a sophisticated way of life.



IMAGES (left to right):

Georges Leroux (1877–1957). *The International Exhibition's Palace of Optics*, 1900. Lithograph, 31 3/4 x 23 5/8 in. Musée Carnavalet. © Musée Carnavalet / Roger-Viollet

Eugène-Samuel Grasset (1845–1917), Paul Vever (1851–1915), and Henri Vever (1854–1942).

"Assyrian" comb, 1900. Horn, repoussé gold, cloisonné enamel, and sapphires, 5 7/8 x 3 7/8 x 3/8 in.

Petit Palais. © Patrick Pierrain / Petit Palais / Roger-Viollet

Camille Pissarro (1830–1903). *Pont Royal and Pavillon de Flore*, 1903. Oil on canvas, 21 1/2 x 25 5/8 in. Petit Palais.

© Petit Palais / Roger-Viollet

Antonio de La Gandara (1861–1917). *Portrait of Madame René Préjelan*, ca. 1903. Oil on canvas, 51 3/4 x 27 in. Petit Palais.

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Jean Léonce Burret (1866–1915). *The Georges Richard marque*, 1890. Lithograph, 36 1/4 x 49 1/2 in. Musée Carnavalet.

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Edouard Zawiski. *Place Blanche and the Moulin Rouge*, 1902. Oil on canvas, 21 1/2 x 15 in. Musée

Carnavalet. © Musée Carnavalet / Roger-Viollet

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INGRAM GALLERY



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COVER: Alexandre-Georges Roux, known as George Roux (1855–1929). *Nighttime festivities at the International Exposition of 1889 under the Eiffel Tower* (detail), 1889. Oil on canvas, 25 5/8 x 37 3/8 in. Musée Carnavalet. © Musée Carnavalet / Roger-Viollet
INTERIOR: Louise Abbéma (1853–1927). *Allegory of the City of Paris* (detail), 1901. Oil on canvas, 102 3/8 x 71 1/8 in. Musée Carnavalet. © Musée Carnavalet / Roger-Viollet

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