

## Versailles: in Every Sense

24 January – 1 April 2025

at the French Institute in London



The French Institute in London presents *Versailles: in Every Sense*, revisiting the Sun King's court through dance, music, cinema, fragrance and fashion from 24 January to 1 April 2025.

This series of events echoes the *Versailles: Science and Splendour* exhibition at the Science Museum and invites audiences to embark on a sensory journey.

On 12 February, **choreographer, guest principal artist and former soloist at the Royal Ballet, Fernando Montaña** will lead a **workshop**, introducing **ballroom dancing** from menuet to gavote, Court of Louis XIV style. After the workshop Fernando Montaña will treat the audience with a **solo inspired by the legendary *Ballet royal de la Nuit***. In 1653, Louis XIV, aged 15 and 'dressed as the Rising Sun' appeared on stage for the first time to dance 'his' ballet in front of the Court and a large audience.

On 4 March, music lovers and purists will enjoy **baroque music** as it sounded in the 17th century with the French **Ensemble Sarbacanes** who uses **period instruments**, reconstructed by the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles. These reconstructed double reed instruments such as the oboe and the bassoon showcase French instrument making in the era. The performance will be preceded by a discussion with **Benoit Dratwicki**, artistic director at the Centre de musique baroque de Versailles.

Through an exclusive **olfactory workshop, expert in fragrance, Elisabeth de Feydeau**, will uncover the secrets of Versailles's perfumes on 1<sup>st</sup> April. In this unique event, blending storytelling and olfactory exploration, she will unveil which fragrances adorned the Court, the favoured natural resources of the era, and the intricate methods of perfume-making. Elisabeth de Feydeau is a Professor at the Versailles School of Perfumers and acts as a cultural advisor to some of France's most renowned perfume houses, including Christian Dior, Chanel and Guerlain.

A film programme will feature *Marie Antoinette* by Sofia Coppola, *The Taking of Power by Louis XIV* by Roberto Rossellini, *The Death of Louis XIV* by Albert Serra and Sacha Guitry's *Royal Affairs in Versailles*. This landmark movie retraces the history of the Palace of Versailles from its origins until the

French Revolution. Produced in the aftermath of WWII, from which France was struggling to recover, it was also designed to reunite the French people around a historical panorama. The casting matched the political aims behind the project and included Jean Marais, Micheline Presle, Gérard Philippe, Brigitte Bardot and even Edith Piaf and Orson Welles. After the **UK premiere of Gianluca Jodice's *The Flood* on 24 January** a discussion will explore the **relationships between fashion, cinema and costume design**.

### **Versailles in Every Sense**

French Institute, 17 Queensberry Place, London SW7 2DT

Tickets from £5 to £20 – early booking recommended

Films shown in their original language with English subtitles

**Full programme, info & booking: [www.institut-francais.org.uk/versailles](http://www.institut-francais.org.uk/versailles)**

---

### **NOTES TO EDITOR**

#### **Versailles: Science and Splendour** Exhibition

Thursday 12 December 2024 - Monday 21 April 2025

Science Museum, London

Ticketed, from £12 (Ages 11 and under go free)

Opening on 12 December, the *Versailles: Science and Splendour* exhibition at the Science Museum in London invites visitors to discover fascinating yet unexpected stories of science at the Palace of Versailles, exploring how scientific knowledge became widespread, fashionable, and a tool of power to enhance France's prestige. Visitors will be transported to the world of the French royal court to discover spectacular objects including Louis XV's rhinoceros, an extraordinarily detailed map of the moon by Jean-Dominique Cassini and a beautiful sculptural clock evoking the creation of the world.

---

### **PRESS CONTACTS**

For press requests related to *Versailles in Every Sense* series of events at the French Institute, please contact Natacha Antolini: [natacha.antolini@institut-francais.org.uk](mailto:natacha.antolini@institut-francais.org.uk) | 020 7871 3021

For press requests related to the *Versailles: Science and Splendour* exhibition at the Science Museum, please contact Laura Nebout: [Laura.Nebout@ScienceMuseum.ac.uk](mailto:Laura.Nebout@ScienceMuseum.ac.uk).