

LVMH

Fondation Louis Vuitton

Created at the initiative of Bernard Arnault by Frank Gehry, the Fondation Louis Vuitton is located in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris, at the Jardin d'Acclimatation. It supports French and international contemporary artistic creation and makes it accessible to as many people as possible through a permanent collection, temporary exhibits, artistic commissions and many multidisciplinary events – musical performances in particular – which punctuate the calendar.

Opened on Monday, October 20, 2014 by the French President François Hollande and Bernard Arnault, the Fondation Louis Vuitton asserts and continues LVMH and Louis Vuitton's commitment to sponsoring the arts and culture. It enhances the heritage of Paris with a monument that symbolizes 21st century architecture.

An exceptional building

Frank Gehry designed a building which, through its creativity and daring, represents the first work of art at the Fondation Louis Vuitton. Rising among the century-old trees of the Jardin d'Acclimatation, standing on a mirror of water, it integrates harmoniously into its natural wooded surroundings, with which the building initiates a real dialogue. Twelve glass “sails” envelop the “icebergs” which are home to the exhibition areas. *“To reflect a constantly changing world, we wanted to design a building that evolves depending on the time of the day and the light, in order to create an impression of intangibility and continual transformation”*, explain Frank Gehry. The interplay between the reflections and transparency of the sails gives the building a dynamism that echoes the Fondation's activities.

A host of exceptional technological innovations allowed the building's artistic ambition to be achieved. Both in the design of the concept itself and the approach to construction work, the Fondation Louis Vuitton project turned the principles of architecture upside down. From the very first stages onwards, all the partners brought together for the project learned to use a single tool: Digital project a 3D software program developed by Gehry Technologies based on the t the CATIA program created by Dassault Systems. The complexity of the construction and the unique nature of each element in the building – from the 19,000 Ductal® (ultra high performance fiber-reinforced concrete) panels to the 3,600 glass panels – meant that the engineers had to adapt industrial processes to custom manufacturing. The dialog between the wooden and metal frame represents both a technological and aesthetic feat.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the Fondation Louis Vuitton was chosen as a pilot project for the creation of a new HQE® standard (High Environmental Quality). The completion of several preliminary and detailed studies on the local fauna and floral, water table, acoustic impact and accessibility enabled the team to take into account and preserve all the ecological parameters at every stage of the project: design, construction and operation.

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Artistic program

From fall 2014 to spring 2015, the Fondation Louis Vuitton is being opened in several phases, each based on an exhibition, a specific choice from the Collection – made up of works belonging to the Fondation and Bernard Arnault’s personal collection-, as well as various multidisciplinary events.

For the opening, a specific exhibition was devoted to the architectural work of Frank Gehry. In addition, commissions to several internationally renowned artists – Ellsworth Kelly, Olafur Eliasson, Taryn Simon, Sarah Morris, Cerith Wyn Evans, etc. – make reference to the architecture of the building and enter into a dialogue with it.

The Fondation’s collection, whose artistic direction is overseen by Suzanne Pagé, is designed from assertive and identifying selections expressed by Bernard Arnault. Right from the opening, the choice was made to present a purposefully limited and targeted selection of artistic expressions, with the inclusion of works by Gerhard Richter, Ellsworth Kelly, Thomas Schlitte, Pierre Huyghe, Bertrand Lavier, Christian Boltanski and Frank Stella. The works to be on display throughout 2015 will reveal the collection’s four main elements: contemplation, pop, expressionism and music/sound.

With regards to the temporary collections, a monographic exhibition by Olafur Eliasson, who just a few weeks previously had produced a commission for the building’s pond level, was presented during the winter of 2015. In the spring, the Les Clefs d’une passion exhibition brings together a collection of exceptional works, some of which are on loan from the world’s most important museums.

Finally, music occupies a central position in the life of the Fondation Louis Vuitton. Located in the heart of the building, and designed to be a space for emulation, transmission and musical creation, the Auditorium is given over to encounters between musicians and artists from all the disciplines of contemporary creation. It provides the artists and their audiences with a unique setting, through its architecture and the quality of its equipment. On October 28, 2014, the pianist Lang Lang gave an inaugural recital, followed a few days later by a series of exceptional concerts by Kraftwerk.

The Fondation’s artistic program illustrates Frank Gehry’s intention: “*To design a magnificent vessel in Paris that symbolizes France’s cultural vocation.*”