

PRESS RELEASE

« POMPEII, A FORGOTTEN STORY »

Musée de la Romanité, Nîmes

Exhibition from the 6th of April until the 6th of October 2019



On the 24th of August of the year 79 A.D. the Mount Vesuvius woke up and a few hours later its terrible eruption will bury the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. From his naval base in Miseno, Pliny the Elder, admiral of the Roman fleet and man of letters and say, watched the phenomenon and decided to send twelve vessels to allow the inhabitants of Pompeii to flee by sea.

The exhibition "Pompeii, a forgotten story" reflects on this little-known episode, which is considered today as the first documented case where civilians were rescued by a military force. The use of a naval fleet during this tragic event shows the complete mastery that Rome had developed on the sea, which allowed them to impose their military, economic and cultural supremacy throughout the whole Mediterranean region.

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The tour is organised around more than 250 archaeological objects from Pompeii, Herculaneum and other important sites in Campania, that were exceptionally lent out by major Italian museums. The scenography offers a real immersive experience with plenty of reconstitutions, different settings and interactive multimedia devices (moving maps, videos, games).

Through this event - exhibition the new Musée de la Romanité in Nîmes invites the visitor to relive the last days of Pompeii, a flamboyant city with a tragic destiny, immortal symbol of the power of Rome.

In despite of the fact that there were quite a few exhibitions recently on this sad chapter in history, here it is told in a whole new way, through the eyes of Pliny the Elder who was a direct witness of the tragedy.

The exhibition was designed by Contemporanea Progetti in Florence, in partnership with the Australian National Maritime Museum of Sydney.

It was exposed earlier in the National Maritime Museum of Sydney (30th of March - 2nd of September 2017) and in the Western Australian Maritime Museum of Fremantle - Perth (21st of September - 18th of February 2018).

Itinerary of the exhibition



Fresco representing an aquatic landscape of the bay of Naples

The exhibition starts by introducing Pliny the Elder, the key figure who will accompany the visitor throughout the tour. The man of letters and say and admiral of the Misenon fleet is on the front line when the Vesuvius erupts. In the middle of the night he decides to leave with twelve vessels to rescue Pompeii.

His nephew Pliny the Younger, seventeen years old at the time, witnessed the happenings and writes down his testimonies in two letters to the historian Tacitus, who are considered nowadays as the most important source of knowledge on the event.

The tour then continues with more details on the naval base in Miseno and the expansion of the Roman military fleet by showing numerous technological innovations during the everlasting Punic Wars, until the victory at the naval battle of Actium which confirms the final domination of Rome over the Mediterranean Sea (*Mare Nostrum*). The story continues with a reflection on the economical profits generated by this naval supremacy: the rise of an increasingly rich commercial network which supplies other Roman centres such as Pompeii.

After that we learn a bit more about everyday life in Pompeii. Thanks to its natural beauty, the fertile region of Pompeii and the Bay of Naples become a major place of luxury and Roman art de vivre. This attracts Roman emperors and aristocrats who build beautiful palaces and villas in the area. The city has become a unique testimony, a true mirror of the Roman world, thanks to its preservation after the eruption. A precious selection of objects found during the excavations tell us about the prosperous life in Pompeii, until the fateful day of its ruin.



Necklace : gold, emeralds and pearls



Bracelet : gold



Bracelet : gold

The last part of the exhibition is entirely dedicated to the description of the days of the eruption. In this last chapter the visitor follows the exact course of the events: from the first signs, ashes and stones coming down, until the last and lethal pyroclastic flow (fast-moving current of hot gas and volcanic matter) that will cause the death of all the inhabitants of Pompeii that are still present.

Probably the most moving testimonies of the event are shown in the final chapter of the exhibition: the casts of the human bodies that were trapped in their last attempt to survive. Almost 2000 years later, this exhibition makes it possible to understand the process which allowed the existence of such testimonies and it offers the visitors a unique experience full of emotions.



Plaster mould of a victim of Pompeii (woman)

Exhibition commission committee

Daniela Giampaola, Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio per il Comune di Napoli / **Grete Stefani**, Parco Archeologico di Pompei / **Pierfrancesco Talamo**, Parco Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei / **Prof. Sebastiano Tusa**, Assessore Beni Culturali - Regione Siciliana

Partner museums

Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples / Parco Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei - Museo Archeologico dei Campi Flegrei nel Castello di Baia, Naples / Parco Archeologico, Pompéi / Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per il comune di Napoli / Soprintendenza del Mare di Palermo



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Practical information

Exhibition « Pompeii, a forgotten story »

From the 6th of April until the 6th of October 2019

Musée de la Romanité

04 48 21 02 10

www.museedelaromanite.fr

16 boulevard des Arènes

30000 Nîmes

OPENINGS

Everyday from 10am until 7pm

RATES

Full rate: 8 euros

Reduced rate: 6 euros

Child (7 to 17 years old): 3 euros

Free until 7 years old

Family ticket: 19 euros (2 adults - 2 children)

PRESS CONTACTS

Alambret Communication

nimes@alambret.com

PR France

Anne-Laure REYNDERS / +33 (0)1 48 87 70 77

PR International

Leïla NEIRIJNCK / + 44 (0)7 519 667 861

SPL Culture et Patrimoine - Musée de la Romanité

Isabelle LÉCAUX, Chief of Communications
isabelle.lecaux@spl-culture-patrimoine.com
+33 (0)4 48 21 02 01

City of Nîmes - Communications department

Chloé HAUDECOEUR, Press relations officer
chloe.haudecoeur@ville-nimes.fr
+33 (0)4 66 76 74 07 / +33 (0)6 12 62 86 53