

## MUSÉE DE LA ROMANITÉ

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## PRESS RELEASE

Temporary exhibition  
26 April 2024 – 5 January 2025

« Achilles and the Trojan War »



Mosaic depicting Achilles at Skyros  
© Musée de la Romanité - Ville de Nîmes

From 26 April 2024 to 5 January 2025, the Musée de la Romanité in Nîmes is presenting a fascinating exhibition about the myth of Achilles', highlighting a monumental mosaic never shown in the collections. It shows the episode of Achilles in Skyros.

A legendary hero in Greek mythology who stood out by his bravery and courage during the Trojan War, Achilles is the feature of this large exhibition at the Musée de la Romanité. It is based on a rich set of works at the museum—sourced mainly in the reserves—including a **mosaic measuring more than 30 sq. m and that has not been shown since its restoration in 2010**. Digital projection is used to show it in its original state. The exhibition also has an immersive art sequence accessible to all. It makes it possible to follow the story of this hero known to all from his birth to his death and recounts his involvement in the great Trojan War myth.

The route within the exhibition is centred on three main features:

- A **teaching approach** based on texts and an interactive multimedia cartographic application that makes it possible to follow the destinies of figures and the major stages of the war;
- An **iconographic approach** with a selection of 100 works drawn mainly from the collections of the Musée de la Romanité, and in particular the work forming the centre of the exhibition: the mosaic of Achilles in Skyros;

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Detail from a black-figured Attic hydria depicting Achilles and Ajax playing dice under the gaze of Athena  
© Musée de la Romanité - Ville de Nîmes

- A **dreamlike approach** via the creation of a monumental, audio-visual and immersive fresco by the video artist Dominik Barbier and Anne Van den Steen / FEARLESS (immersive scenography) that takes visitors as close as possible to the myth of Achilles.

The exhibition is in five sections starting with the **sources of the myth of Achilles and the Trojan War** and then followed by a detailed coverage of the **career of the hero in mythology**—from his birth to his death with description of his involvement in the war. It is completed by focus on how the 20th and 21st centuries appropriated the myth more recently.

It starts with an **introduction describing the character Achilles** in order to better put forward the approach of the exhibition: Achilles is presented as an archetype whose career, experiences and choices form an emblematic illustration of the strong and heroic Greek man while also showing his ambivalent features in order to avoid caricatures.

The exhibition continues with a description of the Trojan War and its origins, in particular with the use of an **interactive, cartographic multimedia application** that locates the **main sites in the myth of Achilles and the Trojan War** and the **movements on sea and land** of the main protagonists (Achilles, Paris, the Greeks). Visitors can thus run through a gallery of portraits to find out more about the main persons involved in this mythical war. This section shows sets of works related to participants at the marriage of Thetis and Peleus and the Apple of Discord at the origin of the war, the gods Zeus, Aphrodite, Athena, Hera, Hermes and Paris and Helen.



Bowl, « Scenes from the life of Achilles »  
Source : Bibliothèque nationale de France

The third section devoted to the youth of the hero Achilles covers his birth, his teaching by the centaur Chiron and his escape to the Island of Skyros. These subjects form part of the exhibition thanks to prestigious loans such as that of Achilles' Sarcophagus at Skyros dated 210 AD and loaned by the Musée du Louvre, and a 12th-c cup from the Cabinet des médailles de la Bibliothèque nationale de France and that shows scenes of Achilles' life. Together with the Skyros mosaic, they form the heart of the exhibition that shows **Achilles' dilemma between the feminine and 'virile' worlds** and that finishes with the fatal moment in which he decides to take arms.

Achilles' role in the Trojan War is addressed in a fourth part that also brings up the involvement of the gods in the conflict, the length and difficulty of the siege, the plague inflicted by Apollo on the Greeks after the capture of Chryseis, Achilles' fury against Agamemnon and finally his return to the battle to avenge the death of his friend Patroclus, an event illustrated by the sarcophagus of Hector dating from the second century AD.



*Sarcophagus, main face: redemption of Hector's body © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / image RMN-GP*

Finally, the final part shows **interpretation of the myth of Achilles over the years** in a few short extracts from epic films or series of animated films. This section explores other interpretations and features of the myth of Achilles and now intended in particular for fiction and entertainment.

### Scientific commissariat

**Nicolas de Larquier**, Head Curator, Musée de la Romanité

**Lucile Novellini**, Manager of the Public Department, Musée de la Romanité

**Raffaella Gafà**, Researcher, Musée de la Romanité

### Executive commissariat

**Claire Champetier**, Assistant Curator, Musée de la Romanité

### Loans from museums

This exhibition shows the collections of the **Musée de la Romanité** and is enriched by loans from the **Musée du Louvre**, the Cabinet des médailles de la **Bibliothèque nationale de France**, the **Musée de Picardie** in Amiens, the **Musée des Antiquités** in Rouen, the **Musée d'Aquitaine** in Bordeaux and the **Musée Saint-Raymond** in Toulouse.

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### Informations :

[www.museedelaromanite.fr](http://www.museedelaromanite.fr)



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