



Ushaw

THE POWER OF IMAGE

VERSAILLES & THE SUN KING

An exhibition of rare books with stunning engravings of the architecture, interiors and gardens of Louis XIV's Palace of Versailles.

1 April – 25 June

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Introduction



Jean le Pautre (1618-1782), *The Festival of Love and Bacchus* (detail), 1678, Engraving, XI.E.1.14/12

Ushaw is home to a rich and varied collection of fine art, objects of religious significance and books. Within the book collection are fifteen volumes collectively known as the *Cabinet du Roi*. Dating from the second half of the seventeenth century, these finely bound books contain over 700 etchings and engravings reflecting the life, achievements and taste of Louis XIV of France, the Sun King.

The engraving reproduced above is instructive and revealing of the life of Louis. It can be seen as a metaphor for the life Louis created and for the France he ruled.

Louis is in the centre of the image, his back to the viewer, surrounded by his courtiers and nobles. Before him the action is taking place on a stage. This opulently decorated theatre set was purpose built for Louis's amusement; comparable developments took place at the stage's location – the Palace of Versailles.

A modest hunting lodge at the time of Louis's accession, Versailles and its gardens, under the King's direction, were transformed, becoming the centre of the Sun King's universe, and by extension, the fulcrum about which France revolved. The Château de Versailles and the *Cabinet du Roi* were developed and produced for the same reasons and with the same goals in mind: to reflect the king's glory and to promote his image.

This exhibition explores Louis's relationship with, and development of, Versailles through the illustrations in the *Cabinet du Roi*, the massive printing project undertaken to promote the King's image within France and beyond. Enlarged versions of some of the engravings are displayed on the gallery walls; the original volumes, now around 350 years old, are shown in the display cases.



Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743)
Portrait of Louis XIV
Oil on canvas
Louvre, Paris



Adriaen Frans Boudewijns (1644-1719)
after Adam Frans van der Meulen (1632-1690)
View of the Palace of Versailles, 1685
Engraving
XI.E.1.4/13



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
View of the Palace of Versailles, 1682
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/31

The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle

The *Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle* was the first of a number of large-scale festivals staged at the behest of Louis XIV in the gardens and grounds of Versailles. Three of these festivals were the subject of later series of printed engravings and were distributed as part of the Cabinet du Roi.

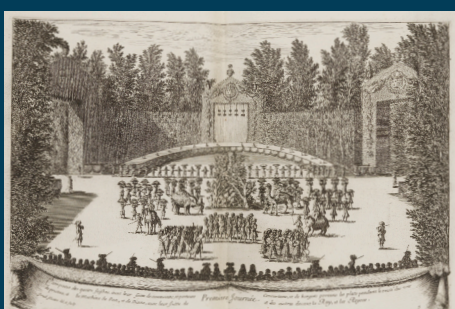
The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle took place over three days and nights between 7 and 13 May 1664. The festivities were arranged around the story of Roger and Alcina from a poem by the Italian writer Ludovico Ariosto. As the images here show, the grand entertainment spanned theatre (including the premiere of Molière's *Tartuffe*), dance and tournaments. The festivities culminated in a spectacular fireworks display.

Ostensibly, the fête was produced to honour the two Queens, Louis's mother, Anne of Austria and his wife Maria Theresa of Spain. However, Louis's real motives may have been otherwise. In an age of decadence and intrigue, it was an open secret that the festival was actually held to celebrate Louise de Vallière, the King's latest mistress.

The event also introduced Louis's court to Versailles, although there was not enough space to accommodate all guests. Some courtiers found lodgings in the small adjacent town; others had to settle for straw in stables. Despite these minor inconveniences, the event was proclaimed a great success. The poet Jean de la Fontaine wrote that 'Everyone will have heard of the marvels produced at this latest festival – the palaces transformed into gardens, the gardens changed back to palaces. The astonishing speed with which these wonders were performed will make people believe in magic.'

The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle marked the beginning of the massive campaign of building, developing and enlarging which would transform this spot, 12 miles to the west of Paris, from a modest château into one of the grandest and most richly decorated estates in Europe.

The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
A suite of nine engravings
illustrating elements of
*The Pleasures of the
Enchanted Isle* festival
various dates
Engravings
XI.E.114

Ground Plans

The reproductions of engraved ground plans give an indication of how the Château expanded and how the gardens were developed during the period of Louis's reign.

The earliest plan dates to the mid-1660s. The Menagerie, constructed in 1664, is visible in the top left corner of the grounds. Louis, who loved animals (some of which can be seen taking part in the Enchanted Isle festival), was keen to ensure that the Menagerie was constructed at a reasonable distance from the Château in order to prevent unwanted smells from permeating the building. The construction of the Grand Canal, built between 1668 and 1671, had not yet begun. The house is as it was in Louis XIII's time.

The plan of 1667 provides more detailed insight into the shape and extent of the original château. The rectangular structures below the main building, built in the early 1660s, functioned as the kitchens and the estate's original stable block. Also shown are the Parterre du Midi on the left and the Grotte de Téthys to the right.

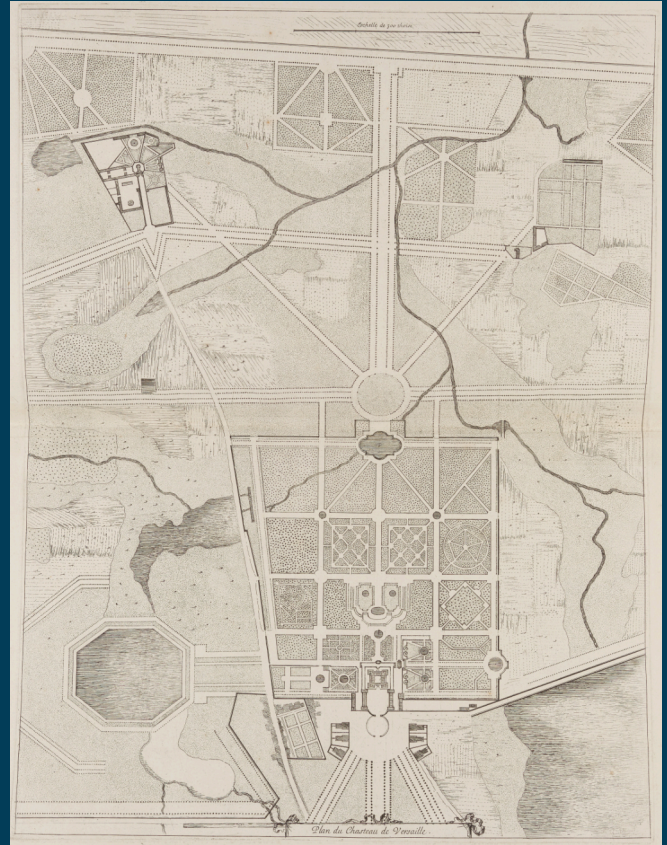
The 1674 plan illustrates how the original hunting lodge was enlarged by the addition of the *enveloppe*, an architectural encasement that wrapped around the earlier building. Louis had prevaricated over whether to demolish the original structure or build upon it. Against the counsel of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, his First Minister, Louis decided to retain and expand. The gardens, under the management of André Le Nôtre, have also developed significantly by this time.

The plan of 1680 shows the addition of the South Wing and the beginnings of the developments to the north. These aspects were designed by Jules Hardouin-Mansart, the architect most closely associated with the developments at Versailles after the death of Louis Le Vau in 1670. The Château was beginning to acquire the dimensions and the appearance we know today. The South Wing (built to house the Princes of Blood), constructed in 1679 is 528 feet long. The construction of the North Wing (undertaken during the 1680s) necessitated the demolition of the Grotte de Téthys.

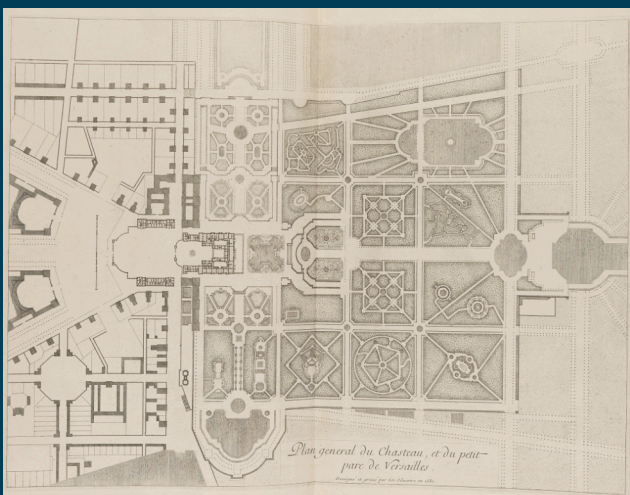
Ground Plans



Aerial view of Versailles



Seventeenth Century French School
Plan of the Palace of Versailles
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/4

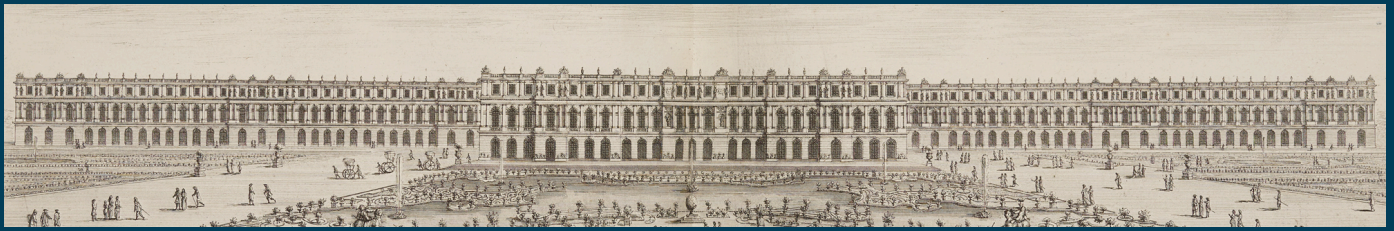


Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
Plan of the Royal House of Versailles, 1674
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/13



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
General plan of the Château, 1680
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/25

Ground Plans



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691), *View of the Palace of Versailles and the two wings from the Garden* (detail), 1682, Engraving, XI.E.1.8/31

Silvestre's engraving, above, shows the Château's garden façade as it is today. Once finished, towards the end of the 1680s, Hardouin-Mansart's North and South Wings created a complete and unified aspect with the earlier enveloppe. The original hunting lodge is completely encased within these later additions.

The external wall of the Hall of Mirrors, located on the first floor of the central section, is visible. Work began on this gilded masterpiece in 1678 and was completed in 1686. Also occupying the central section are the War Drawing Room to the north and the Peace Drawing Room to the south. These three elements were overseen by Charles Le Brun, Chief Painter to the King, from 1664 to his death in 1690.

The Orangerie elevations provide an insight into the architectural details of this important element of the gardens, located beneath and to the south of the Parterre du Midi. These images show aspects of the second, expanded, Orangerie designed by Hardouin-Mansart between 1678 and 1688. The first Orangerie, designed by Le Vau, was constructed in 1663.

In 1661, Nicolas Fouquet, Louis's Finance Minister, hosted an ostentatious fête to introduce the court to his newly-built château Vaux-le-Vicomte. The King, suspicious of Fouquet and encouraged in his suspicions by his first minister Colbert, had him arrested on charges of treason and corruption. Subsequently, the King engaged the three men responsible for Vaux, Charles le Brun, the painter, Louis le Vau, the architect and André Le Nôtre, the gardener, to work at Versailles. He also had Fouquet's 1,000 orange trees transported from Vaux to Versailles.

Ground Plans

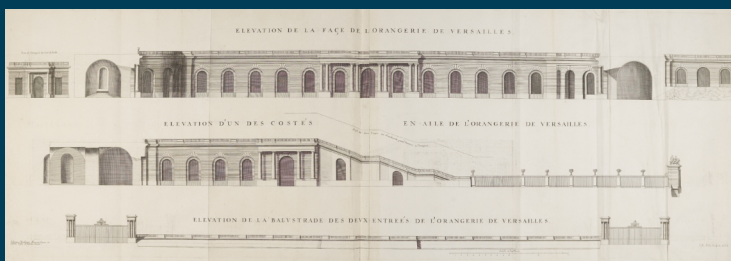
According to the scale on the elevation shown top, the illustrated side wall is roughly 75 fathoms in length; equivalent to about 137m. This is one wall of one of two stables constructed to the east of the Château. Facing the Avenue de Saint-Cloud, this stable was used to house coaches and their horses. Its companion to the south was for horses of the hunt. The Royal Stables, staffed by over 1,000 men, could accommodate around 2,000 horses.

Architectural detailing is not overlooked, even in what might be considered a utilitarian building. Sculptured heads top the arched windows of the central section; the low wall to the left, interrupted by a richly decorated pedimented archway, is surmounted by a series of carved urns.

The stable wall illustrates how the architectural style – French Baroque – and attention to detail were applied throughout the entire scheme.



Pierre Le Pautre (1652-1716) after Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708)
on the avenue at Versailles, 1689
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/36



Jean-Baptiste Nolin (c.1657-1708)
after Jules Hardouin-Mansart (1646-1708)
Elevations of the Orangerie at Versailles, 1688
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/33



The Orangerie, Versailles

The Ambassadors' Staircase

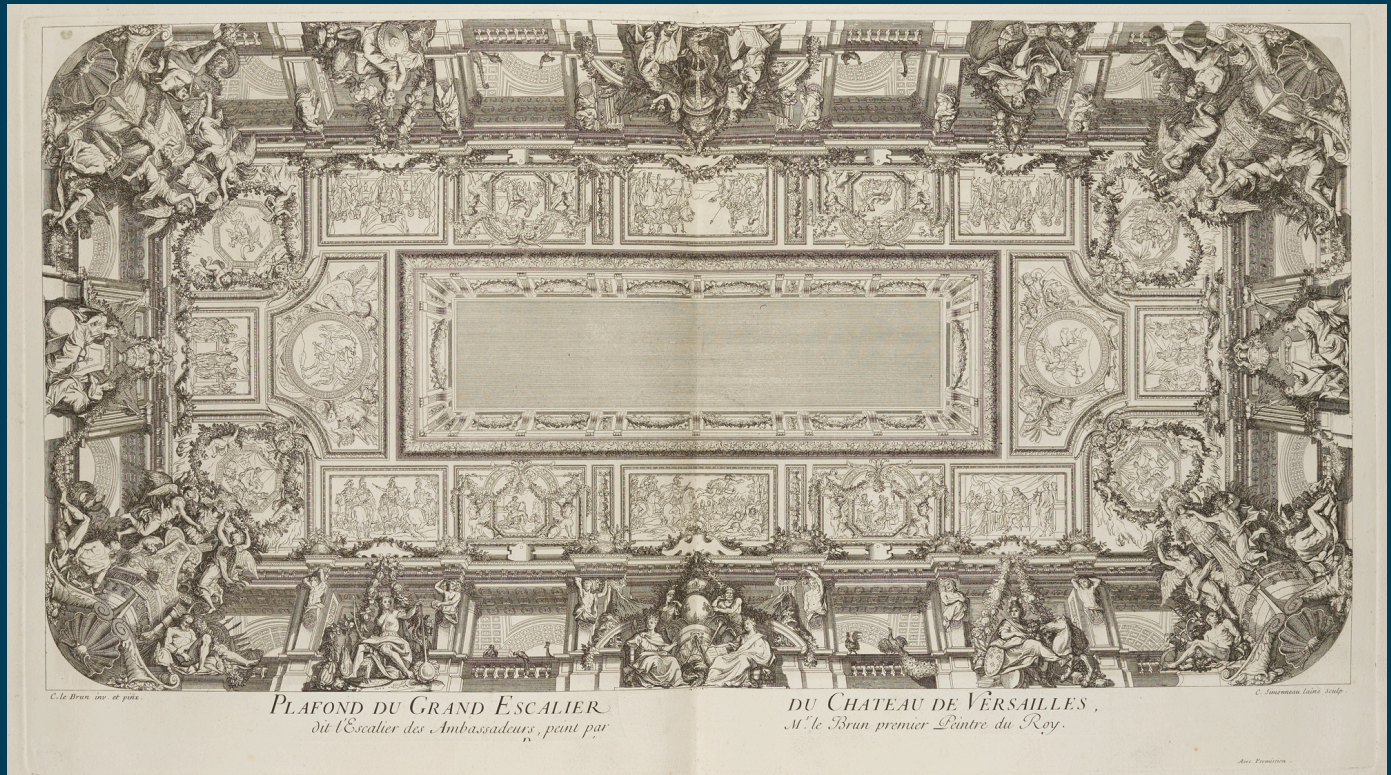
The development of Versailles's outward appearance was complemented by grand and opulent interior decoration in many of the Château's rooms, salons and spaces. Comparable to the Hall of Mirrors in terms of design and impact (if not in scale) was the Grand Escalier, also known as the Ambassadors' Staircase. The staircase is not as well-known as the Hall of Mirrors due to the fact that it was demolished in the middle of the eighteenth century.

The engravings reproduced here, by Étienne Baudet and Charles Simmoneau after the designs of Le Brun, provide an excellent visual record of what was lost. The majority of the elements we can see are illusions – the loggias and balconies, and the birds and figures that inhabit them, are *trompe l'oeil* paintings designed to misdirect the eye and astound the mind. The illusions in the space's covings include openings (each of these positioned above the lower loggias) populated by perching birds, Apollo, Hercules, the Muses, the months of the year and the four continents are also represented across this vast tableau.

The double staircase below the ceiling, ascended by visiting dignitaries en route to the King's Apartment, was richly decorated with coloured marble. La Vau was responsible for the initial design and Le Brun the decoration. Following five years' work, the space was completed in 1679.

The whole piece – staircases, walls, coving and ceiling - rose to meet the lofty skylight. This vast slab of glass was the first element of its type to be constructed in France. Indeed, it was the skylight, in part, which contributed to the relatively short life of the feature. By the middle of the following century, the skylight's brass fixtures were beginning to degrade. Louis XV, fearing that the glass would be too troublesome to maintain and wishing to remodel adjacent spaces to provide a new apartment for his daughter Marie Adélaïde, had the entire space dismantled in 1752.

The Ambassadors' Staircase



Charles Simonneau (1645-1628) after Charles Le Brun (1619-1690)
The Ceiling of the Grand Staircase, c. 1683
Engraving
XI.E.1.3/22



Etienne Baudet (c.1636-1711)
after Charles Le Brun (1619-1690)
The Ceiling of the Grand Staircase, detail, c. 1683
Engraving
XI.E.1.3



Recreation of the Ambassadors' Staircase

The Ceiling of the Petite Galerie

The images displayed here, in common with the reproductions of the Ambassadors' Staircase, provide detailed illustrations of an aspect of the Château that no longer exists. During Louis's time, the Petite Galerie formed part of the King's Apartment situated on the first floor of the Château above the vestibule of the Grand Escallier.

Pierre Mignard's ceiling painting, faithfully engraved by Gérard Audran and first published in 1686, depicts an allegory of royal patronage. Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom, occupies the centre with Apollo beside her distributing gifts to figures representing the arts and sciences. The side panels portray allegories of evidence and secrecy (left) and vigilance (right). The work provides an interesting insight into the political and artistic rivalries which were key characteristics of the age. If Charles le Brun, the pre-eminent artist of the period and the man who had one of the most significant influences over the look and design of Versailles, can be said to have had a rival, it was Pierre Mignard. Mignard was not favoured by Colbert, Louis's First Minister. Only after Colbert's death in 1683 did Mignard secure this, his only commission at Versailles.

The *Petite Galerie* was demolished in 1752 as part of the modifications Louis XV required for remodelling this area of the Château.



Gérard Audran (1640-1703) after Pierre Mignard (1612-1695)
The Ceiling of the Petite Galerie, Versailles, a suite of three engravings, 1686
 Engravings
 XI.E.1.3/26/28/30

Approaching Versailles

The three images shown here, all taken from the volume known as *Plans, Views and Ornaments of Versailles (1689)*, present the changing appearance of the front of Versailles over a period of twenty years. These are the façades that greeted visitors 350 years ago and, in terms of the 1684 image, still greets visitors today.

The earliest engraving dating from 1664, shows the frontage as it was at Louis's accession. This is his father's property, the building that had been described as a hunting lodge. The original moat is visible in front of the Château.

The 1674 image shows the addition of the Le Vau's *enveloppe*. This engraving gives a good impression of the successive and receding courtyards that visitors would cross to reach the Château. In front of the first gate is the Place d'Armes with the Cour Royale behind. Beyond the second gate, within the boundary of the *enveloppe* is the Cour de Marbre.

By 1684 much of the building work was complete. Extensions to the north and south can be glimpsed at the edges of the image; below these are the jutting walls of the stables. The bollards at the corners of the stable walls are still in place.

The last major building completed during Louis's lifetime was the Royal Chapel (the fifth and final chapel on the estate), designed by Hardouin-Mansart. Sited at the south wall of the North Wing, the chapel was consecrated in 1710.

It is worth noting that the Sun King, who might appear to have resided in a gilded palace, was, for much of his time at Versailles, living in a building site. Scaffolding, noise and dust were part of the daily routine of the place. Thousands of people were involved in construction work and conditions could be brutal. Madame de Sévigné, the renowned chronicler of the period, wrote of, '...the prodigious mortality of the workmen, of whom every night wagons full of the dead are carried out...these melancholy processions are kept secret as far as possible in order not to alarm the other workmen.'

Approaching Versailles



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
View and perspective of Versailles,
from inside the forecourt, 1664
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/9



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
View of Versailles, from the middle
of the Grand Avenue, 1674
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/15



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
View of Versailles,
seen from the Main Square, 1684
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/27



Pierre Patel (1605-1676)
The Palace of Versailles, 1668
Oil on canvas
Musée de l'Histoire de France, Versailles

The People of Versailles

At any one time up to 10,000 people lived and worked at the Château (not including those involved in construction work). This vast body of people – gardeners and servants, nobles and courtiers – were all there in the service of the King. It was an industrial-sized complex with Louis at its centre.

Louis's day began with the *lever* at 8.30am, during which he was awoken, washed, shaved and dressed. His day ended with the *coucher* at 11.30pm. Both of these ceremonies were watched by favoured, and all male, courtiers as were many of the king's other daily activities and duties. Mornings included a visit to the Royal Chapel and, often, meetings with ministers. Afternoons could include a walk in the gardens or else the king might go hunting, a favourite pursuit.

Establishing the court at Versailles in 1682 concentrated the King's power and gave him a degree of control over the nobility. This was a nobility that had rebelled against the imposition of new taxes in the protests known as *La Fronde*. Centred on Paris, the *Fronde* of 1648 to 1653 left Louis with an abiding mistrust of the aristocracy. Members of the noble class were able to observe all aspects of the King's day. This was an arrangement that enabled the King, in his turn, to keep a watchful eye on the nobility.

It has become an accepted notion that Versailles was open to anyone who was dressed well and that those not wearing regulation attire could hire what they needed at the entrance. Whilst this may not actually be true, Versailles was certainly 'open' and to a greater extent than any of Europe's other royal seats of the period. Louis believed in the prevailing French custom that the monarch should be visible to his subjects.

The People of Versailles



Israel Silvestre (1621-1691)
View of Versailles from the Garden (detail), 1684
 Engraving
 XI.E.1.8/19



Pierre Le Pautre (1652-1716)
The Latona Fountain (detail), 1684
 Engraving
 XI.E.1.8/39

The Gardens

The vast gardens at Versailles, extending to an area of around 2000 acres, were a source of immense pride for Louis. He wrote a series of guide books relating to the grounds, proposing the prime itineraries to follow in order to enjoy them at their best.

The ground plans on display elsewhere in the exhibition give a good indication of the ways in which the formal gardens developed. Much of this work was undertaken to the designs of Le Nôtre. As the plans illustrate, by around 1680 the formal gardens had been designed and modified to include a range of parterres, groves and pathways. Other, more substantial, features included the Menagerie, the Labyrinth and the Grand Canal.

Shown here are the Latona Basin, the Apollo Fountain, the Water Theatre and the Fountain of Fame. The sculptures *Horses of the Sun* and *Apollo served by Nymphs* from the dismantled Grotte de Téthys were subsequently placed at this latter location. Today the Fontaine de la Renommée is known as the Bosquet des Dômes, after the two white marble pavilions.

Commenting on the state of the location prior to Louis's developments, the courtier and writer duc de Saint-Simon described the area as 'the most sad and barren of places, with no view, no water and no woods.' Of these suggested deficiencies, and due in large part to Louis's love of fountains, the most pressing was the lack of water.

Providing the gardens with an adequate amount of water was a persistent problem throughout Louis's reign. Numerous initiatives, including reservoirs, pumps and a 100-mile diversion of the River Eure (an aborted project on which 20,000 soldiers were employed) were pursued. None provided an ideal solution. As the fountains could not all operate at the same time, a team of 'fountaineers' was employed to turn individual features on and off as Louis approached.

The Gardens



Pierre Le Pautre (1652-1716)
The Latona Fountain, 1684
Engraving
XI.E.1.8/39



The Latona Fountain today

Other Festivals

In addition to the Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle, Louis held two further large-scale festivals at Versailles.

The festival of 1668, held on the night of 18 July, was a celebration to mark the signing of the Aix La Chapelle peace treaty which brought an end to the War of Devolution. The festivities included a lavish feast, dancing and a performance of Moliere's *George Dandin*. The finale was a magnificent display of fireworks over the Latona fountain and garden statuary, all illuminated for the occasion.

The single night's events cost one third of Versailles' annual budget for 1668. The last of Louis's grand *divertissements* took place over six nights during the summer of 1674, in celebration of the capture of the Franche Comté region during the Franco-Dutch War. Following the pattern of the earlier festivals, guests enjoyed feasts, dramatic performances and fireworks. The final element of the celebration took place at night on the Grand Canal, edged for the event with hundreds of illuminated statues. The royal party and their guests took to the water in gondolas and other decorated vessels. The entertainments shown here took place relatively early in Louis's long reign. The later years of his majority were marked by lack of funds, crop failures and reversals in the military victories he'd previously celebrated. By the time of his death in 1715, the gaiety displayed here was a distant memory. The pyrotechnics, however, found their devastating and deadly echo later in the century during the French Revolution.

On the evening of the 5 October 1789, an angry and violent group of revolutionaries marched to Versailles. The following morning they took Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette to Paris and – eventually – to the guillotine. The *Ancien Régime* and the absolute monarchy that Louis XIV had shaped and created were over. However, Versailles, the Château of the Sun King, endured and continues to endure to this day.

Other Festivals



Jean Le Pautre (1618-1682)
Illuminations at the Palace and Gardens of Versailles, 1679
 Engraving
 XI.E.1.14/32



Jean Le Pautre (1618-1682)
Fifth Day, Fireworks on the Canal at Versailles, 1676
 Engraving
 XI.E.1.14/61

What is the *Cabinet Du Roi*?

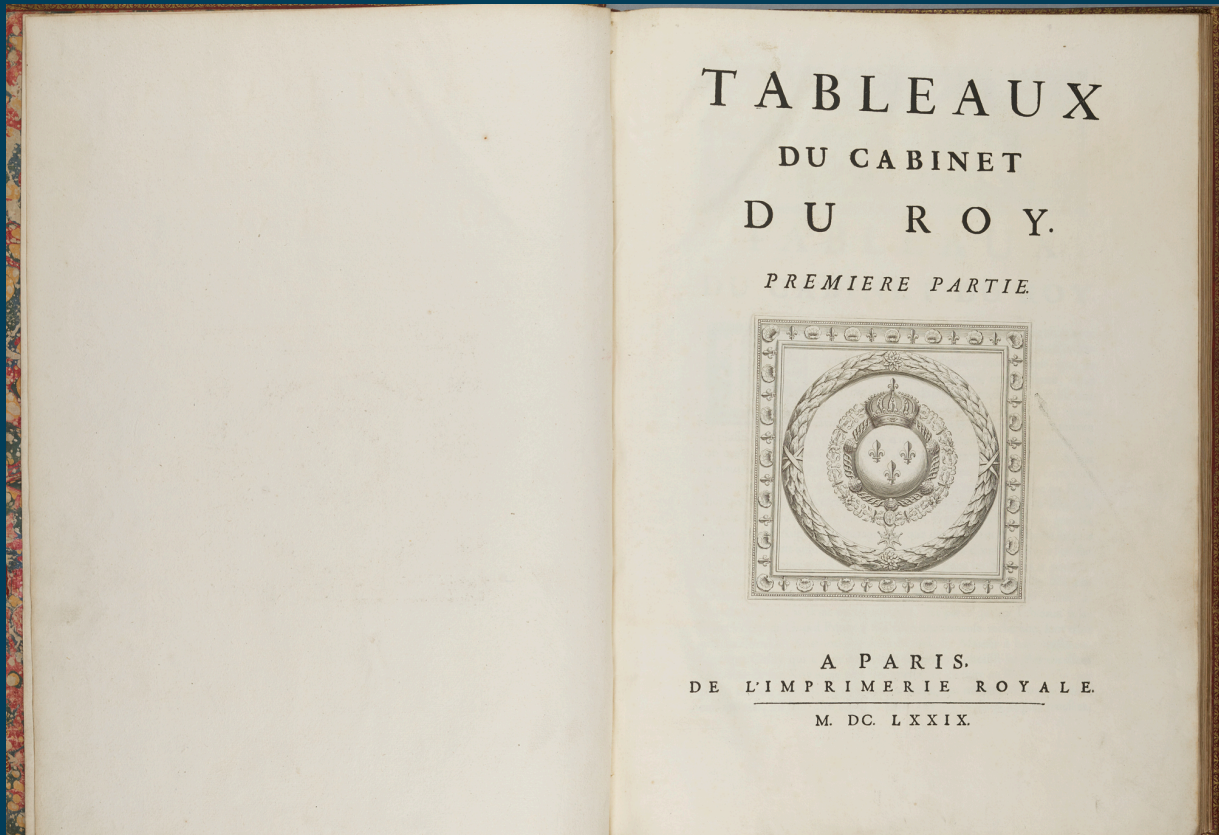
The collection of volumes known as the *Cabinet du Roi* contains a series of prints produced in France during the middle years of the reign of Louis XIV. Handsomely bound in red Morocco leather, the images reflect Louis's achievements in the fields of art, architecture, design and warfare.

The leading printmakers of the day were employed to produce original engravings and etchings and reproductions of works by other artists and designers. The results of their endeavours were subsequently printed by the *Imprimerie Royale* (the royal printing house). Some of the prints were bound, such as those on display in the exhibition, others were offered for sale as individual artworks.

Ushaw holds 15 volumes of the *Cabinet du Roi* in its Library. The earliest editions were each bound in volumes of varying sizes. Ushaw's volumes are all early copies produced during Louis's lifetime. Subsequent editions were issued from the 1720s – these later volumes are all of a uniform size. It is perhaps imprudent to describe any component of the *Cabinet* as a 'first edition'. The volumes weren't of uniform dimensions, nor seemingly were they consistently composed of uniform contents. In 1869, Georges Duplessis, the Curator of the Print Room at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, published a small booklet describing the national library's *Cabinet du Roi* holdings. Ushaw's collection closely corresponds with this record. In some cases, individual volumes are configured slightly differently. Additionally, Ushaw's collection does not include a copy of the volume relating to the Labyrinth in the gardens of Versailles.

In total, Ushaw's *Cabinet du Roi* volumes include 739 prints. This figure includes full page and multi-page engravings, header images, motifs and other decorative devices. Three of the images show Douai, the location of Ushaw's predecessor college in Flanders. The presence of Douai within the pages of the *Cabinet* may explain why the collection was donated to Ushaw. Some of the volumes also include text commentaries relating to the images. Many of these were written by André Félibien (1619-1695), a prominent chronicler of the age and Court Historian to Louis XIV.

What is the *Cabinet Du Roi*?



Cabinet du Roi, Tableaux du Cabinet du Roi, title page, 1679, XI.E.1.7



Cabinet du Roi, Plans, Views and Ornaments of Versailles, cover and spine, 1689, XI.E.1.8

The King's Image

The primary purpose of the *Cabinet du Roi* was to promote the King's image and achievements. He was the absolute monarch, answerable only to God. Wrapped up within this absolutism was Louis's desire to promote his all-powerful image within France and beyond. This self-promotion was encapsulated in the term *Gloire* and the King's glory was reflected in all that was done in his service. Wars were fought, buildings were constructed and enhanced, paintings, tapestries and furniture were designed and produced all in pursuit of *Gloire*. As Louis said to Colbert, 'I confide to you what is the most precious thing in the world which is my glory.'

The *Cabinet du Roi* was central to this pursuit of glory. A massive tapestry could adorn a wall in royal palace but, without travel, it couldn't be seen by a fellow monarch or dignitary many miles away. A solution to this problem was printed material. Prints, in the case of the *Cabinet du Roi*, intaglio engravings with some etched elements, provided a solution to this issue. Prints are portable and, crucially, easily reproduced. These qualities were ideal for Louis's purposes. The King would gift the finely bound copies of the *Cabinet du Roi* to visiting diplomats and dignitaries. In this manner, Louis's image and his prestige was spread throughout Europe and beyond.

During the course of his long reign, Louis variously identified with, and was portrayed in the guise of, Alexander the Great, emperors of Rome and Apollo. His most abiding motif was the Sun. It is not difficult to understand why the Sun King felt an affinity with a star then considered to be the centre of the universe.

At the time, 350 years ago, there was only one person in France with the means to undertake a sustained programme of self-promotion. Today, in the social media age this option is available to anyone with access to a computer or a smart phone.

The King's Image



Louis XIV, Sun motif, Hall of Mirrors, Versailles



Sébastien Leclerc (1637-1714)
Siege of the Fortress of Douai, Flanders, by the French Army in 1667, 1682
Engraving with hand colouring
Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg

The King's Gallery

Louis and Colbert viewed all aspects of the arts as tools to be used in their central pursuit of *Gloire*. During this time, branches of the arts were centralised within a series of academies. The *Académie royale des beaux-arts* (a reconstituted version of the earlier *Academy of Painting and Sculpture*) was formed in 1664; the *Manufacture royale des meubles de la couronne* (the furniture maker to the Crown) in 1667 and the *Académie royale d'architecture* in 1671. Additionally, the state purchased the *Gobelins manufactory* in 1661. Gobelins made tapestries, furnishings and other decorative objects.

Thus managed by the state, the arts served the King and reflected the image that the King wished to project. The accepted style was profoundly masculine, epic and Classical. In practice, this meant that the arts of Italy were revered above the Flemish tradition. To facilitate greater understanding of Italian art, Colbert and Le Brun established the *Académie royale de France* in Rome in 1666 in order to train artists in the Classical manner. Those who won the *Prix de Rome* were sent there for five years and were expected to produce a masterpiece every three months.

Louis was a considerable collector of fine art. Of the thirty-eight paintings by Poussin currently in the Louvre, for example, thirty-one were previously in Louis's collection. Additionally, the King filled Versailles and his other residencies with tapestries, furniture (often of solid silver) and ceramics, all placed within opulently designed interiors.

The status of prints and printmaking rose considerably at this time. The nature and quality of intaglio printmaking had improved steadily during the seventeenth century. Initial impetus was provided by the arrival of Flemish printmakers in Paris earlier in the century; French printmaking improved in response to this initiative. The status of printmakers was given an additional spur in the early 1660s when engravers were allowed to become, for the first time, members of the *Académie royale*.

During Louis's reign, Paris became the leading centre for printmaking within Europe, a position it was to hold for the next 250 years.

The Grotto

The Grotte de Téthys was a manmade feature situated to the north of the Château. Work began on the interior design of the space in 1664 and was completed around 1670. Prior to the interior remodelling, the structure already played an important role in the gardens of Versailles. The upper section contained a reservoir fed with water from the nearby Clagny pond which supplied the fountains in the gardens below.

A floor plan of 1676 shows how visitors would have entered the Grotto through one of three doorways. The interior contained an intricate marble floor leading to the grotto. Here, the sculpture *Apollo Served by the Nymphs* by François Girardon and Thomas Regnaudin dominated the scene. Apollo is shown at rest, tended by the sea nymphs at the end of his daily task of bringing the sun to Earth. In this context, Apollo is Louis and all visitors to the grotto would have understood this. The Apollo piece was flanked by two sculptured groups of the *Horses of the Sun* by Gilles Guérin and Gaspard and Balthazar Marsy. Complementing these were figures of the sea nymph *Galatea* and the river spirit *Acis* by Jean-Baptiste Tuby sited in niches in grotto's vestibule. The exterior and interior of the grotto were richly decorated with friezes, pebbles and shells (known in French as *coquillage* and *rocaillage*) contributing to the overall sea-theme.

The Grotte de Téthys was dismantled around fifteen years after it was completed in order to enable the construction of Hardouin-Mansard's North Wing. The sculpture groups were initially relocated at the grove of the Fountain of Fame before being sited at what is known today as the grove of the Bath of Apollo.

Versailles is the grandest and most visible achievement of Louis's long reign. It was influential, too. During the eighteenth century, particularly in Germany and Russia, palaces of ever greater scale were designed and constructed; the Château de Versailles had provided the blueprint for others to follow. It was not, though, universally admired. The philosopher and writer Voltaire described it as, 'A masterpiece of magnificent bad taste.'

The volumes of the *Cabinet du Roi* and the engravings they contain have, however, been roundly praised since they were first published. Antony Griffiths, former Keeper of Prints at the British Museum, described the collection as '...undoubtedly the greatest project in the history of engraving.'

The Grotto



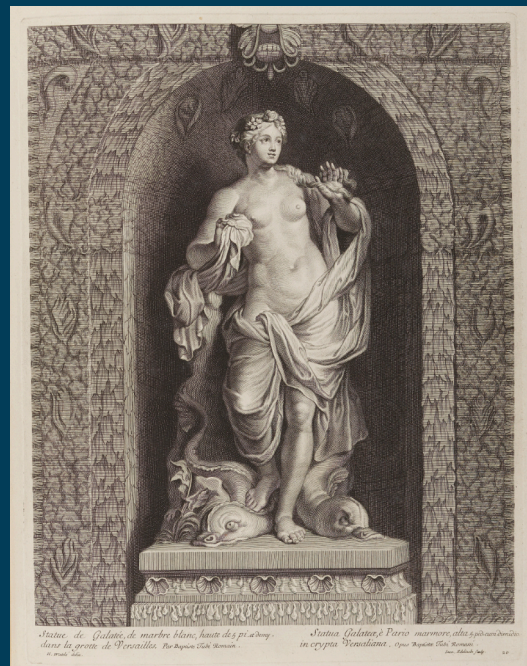
Jean Le Pautre (1618-1682)
Tritons and Nereids, 1673
Engraving
XI.E.1.10/17



Jean Le Pautre (1618-1682)
Cupids and Dolphins, 1673
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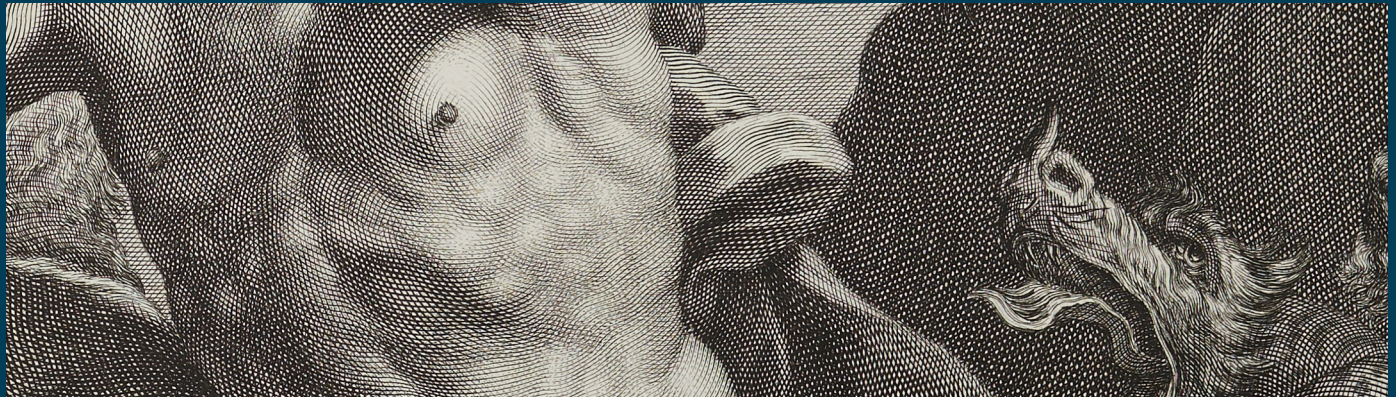


Gérard Edelinck (1640-1707)
Acis, c.1673
Engraving
XI.E.1.10/34



Gérard Edelinck (1640-1707)
Galatea, c.1673
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What is an engraving?



Gilles Rousselet (1610-1686) after Guido Reni (1575-1642), *Hercules Slaying the Hydra* (detail), 1669, Engraving

All of the printed images in the *Cabinet du Roi* are engravings. Some contain elements of etching. Both engraving and etching are intaglio printmaking techniques.

In intaglio, from the Italian for carving or incising, the ink is held in incised or etched grooves below the surface of the printing block. The ink is then transferred to dampened paper through pressure from a printing press. The first stage in the engraving process is the production of a preparatory drawing. This may be an original work or a reproduction of an existing painting or design. Chalk is applied to the reverse of the drawing and the design is then transferred to a metal plate with the aid of a stylus. At the time of the *Cabinet du Roi*, copper was the metal most often used for the plate. Once the design is visible on the plate, the engraver uses a sharp tool called a burin to incise, or engrave, lines on the metal. The deeper a line is engraved, the darker it will print.

In etching, the metal plate is coated in a layer of acid-resistant wax. The design is drawn on the wax with an etching needle. The wax-coated plate is then immersed in acid which bites away at the metal where it has been exposed through the wax. The longer the plate is exposed to the acid the deeper the line will etch and the darker it will print.

All of the images on display in *The Power of Image* are the products of these two techniques. All tones, textures, depths and definitions are the result of single lines engraved or etched into metal plates.

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The Glorious Conquests of Louis the Great
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Test and Ring Races made by the king and by the princes and lords of his court, in the year 1662
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Le Grand Escalier de Versailles
The Grand Staircase of Versailles
1681
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XI.E.1.3

Vues, Marches, Entrées, Passages et autres sujets a l'Histoire de Louis XIV, graves d'après les dessins de Vander Meulen
Views and other subjects from the History of Louis XIV, engraved from the designs of Vander Meulen
1686
35 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.4

Maisons Royales et Villes Frontières de France
Royal Houses and Border Towns of France
1682
47 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.5

Tableaux de Cabinet du Roy – Premiere partie
The King's Pictures – Part one
1679
40 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.7

Plans, Veues et Ornamens de Versailles
Plans, Views and Ornaments of Versailles
1689
79 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.8

Ornemens de Peinture et de Sculpture qui sont dans la Galerie d'Appolon, au Chasteau du Louvre, et dans le grand appartement du Roy au Palais des Tuileries
Painting and Sculpture which are in the Apollo Gallery, at the Louvre, and in the King's Grand Apartment at the Tuileries Palace
1710
29 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.9

Ushaw's Cabinet Du Roi Volumes

Description de la Grotte de Versailles
Description of the Grotto of Versailles
1679
23 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.10

Statuës et Bustes Antiques des Maison Royales – Premiere partie
Ancient Statues and Busts of the Royal Houses – Part one
1679
63 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.11

Description Generale de l'Hostel Royal des Invalides établi par Louis le Grand dans la Plaine de Grenelle près de Paris. Avec les plans, profils et Elevations de ses Faces, Coupes et Appartemens
General description of the Hotel Royal des Invalides established by Louis the Great in the Plain of Grenelle near Paris. With the plans, profiles and elevations of its faces, sections and apartments
1683
26 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.12

Médaillés du Roy
The King's Medals
c. 1671
148 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.13

Festes de Versailles
Versailles Festivities
i) Relation de la Fête de Versailles du 18 Juillet mil six cens soixante-huite
i) Description of the Feast of Versailles of July 18, 1668
ii) Les Plaisirs de l'Isle Enchantée, et divertissements du Roy, à Versailles, Diviséz en Trois Journées, et commencéz le 7eme Jour de May, de l'année 1664
ii) The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle, and Entertainments of the King, at Versailles, Divided into Three Days, and Beginning on the 7th Day of May, in the Year 1664
iii) Les Divertissements de Versailles Donnés par le Roy a Toute sa Cour au Retour de la Conquests de la Franche-Comté en l'Année 1674
iii) The Entertainments at Versailles Given by the King to His Whole Court on the Return from the Conquests of Franche-Comté in the Year 1674
1679
22 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.14

Tapisseries du Roi ou sont representez les quatre éléments et les quatre saisons
Tapestries of the King where the four elements and the four seasons are represented
1670
63 engraved and etched plates
XI.E.1.15

Grand Tableaux du Roy, représentant cinq sujets de l'histoire d'Alexandre le Grand
Large Paintings of the King, representing five subjects from the history of Alexander the Great
1680
8 engraved and etched plates
XVIII.G.1.1f