

# MusBA Musée des Beaux-Arts Bordeaux



Exhibition guide

## Please Do Touch!

Art and Matter

June 2, 23 - January 7, 24

Auguste Rodin  
*The Fallen Angel*



Marta Pan  
*Balance en deux*



Anonymous  
*Virgin and Child*



Jean-Antoine Houdon  
*Summer*



Jean-Antoine Houdon  
*Seated Voltaire*



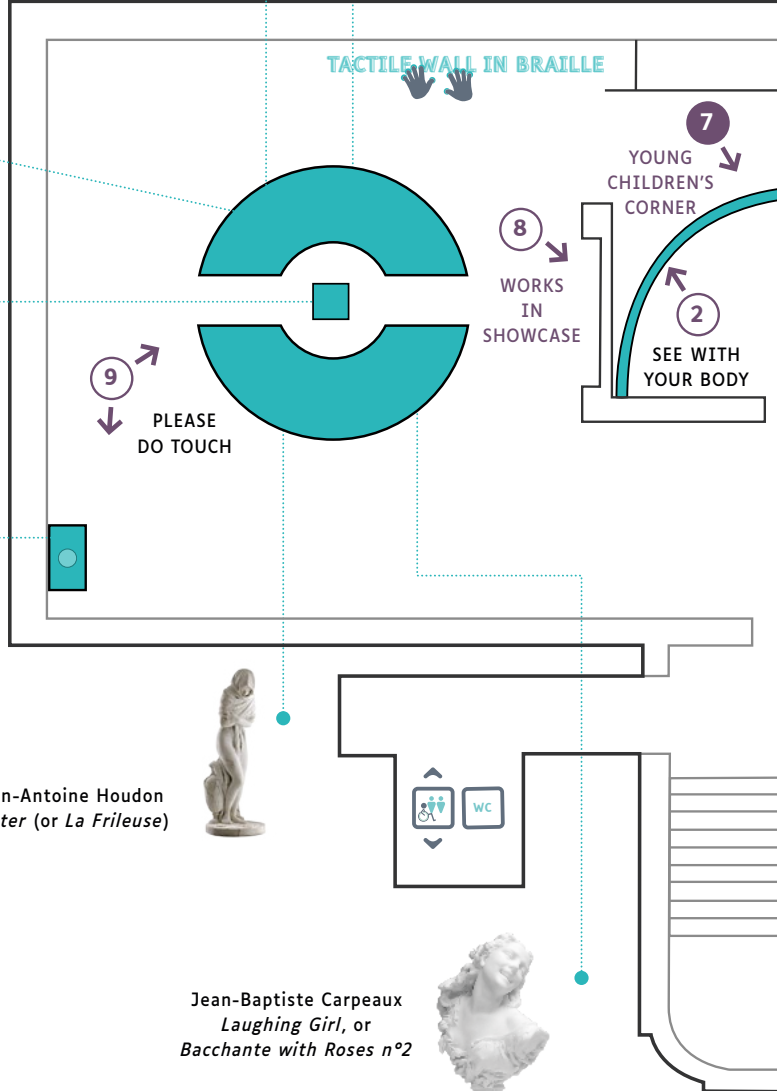
Anonymous  
*Kore*



Jean-Antoine Houdon  
*Winter (or La Frileuse)*



Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux  
*Laughing Girl, or  
Bacchante with Roses n°2*





Anonymous  
*Bust of a Woman in a Medallion*



Émile-Antoine Bourdelle  
*Head of the Figure of Eloquence*

TOUCH



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BAS-RELIEF  
TO BE TOUCHED

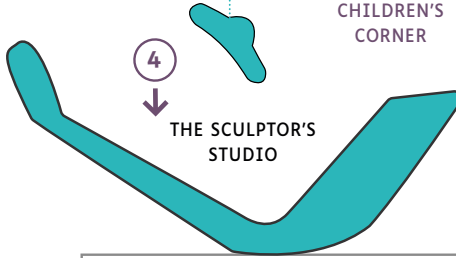
TACTILE WALL IN BRAILLE



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Denis Monfleur  
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DISCOVERY DIRECTION

# PLEASE DO TOUCH! ART AND MATTER

At the opposite end of the spectrum from the usual museum visit, *Please Do Touch! Art and Matter* invites visitors to enjoy a new sensory experience. Five Fine Arts Museums (Lyon, Rouen, Lille, Bordeaux and Nantes) are pooling reproductions of sculptures from their collections – as well as four reproductions of works from the Musée Fabre in Montpellier – to offer a tactile discovery of masterpieces depicting the human form in its many guises from Antiquity to the 20th century.

The exhibition is the result of a unique cooperation with visually impaired people and draws on their sensory approach to sculpture to create new experiences for audiences of all kinds. It aims to show how the experience of touch can offer a variety of sensations to enrich the understanding of the artworks in their entirety as well as their finer details. One of the main objectives of this project is to raise awareness of otherness through the perception of the visually impaired and persons with low vision while, at the same time, implementing an ambitious policy of accessibility for people with disabilities.

This inclusive and humanist approach is backed by the FRAME (FRench American Museum Exchange) consortium which supports the exhibition bringing together six of its member museums.

The *Kore* – or young girl in Greek – is the female counterpart of the *kouros*, the most representative type of Ancient Greek sculpture. On the Acropolis in Athens, these statues of young people were dedicated to Athena, goddess of the city.

The *Lyon Kore* is characteristic of this type of statue. Upright, majestic and powerfully built, the young woman holds the offering of a bird to her chest. She is dressed in a fine tunic (*chiton*) with

a woollen shawl (*himation*) and wears a head-dress (*polos*). Braided hair and delicately carved earrings set off her graceful face.

It is difficult to imagine today that the *Kore* was originally brightly coloured. However, some tiny fragments of colour (red, blue and yellow) can still be seen in the original work, particularly traces of reddish-brown pigment in the hair. This exceptional work is a precious testimony of Greek sculpture of the 6th century BC.

## GREECE, ATHENS

*Kore*, around 540 BC., original statue in Pentelic marble,

H: 63 cm; W: 34 cm; D: 23.5 cm

Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts

Image © Lyon MBA - Photo Alain Basset



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The work presented in the exhibition is a bonded marble reproduction. Modelling by Arskan, moulding and casting by Tactile Studio with Corinne Durand © 2018

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Large for the materials used (an elephant's tusk emptied of its pulp cavity), this statuette is one of the few known ivory sculptures in the round dating from the end of the Middle Ages. The Virgin, wearing a long cloak and dress whose ample folds do not completely conceal the female form, tenderly clasps the Infant Jesus, who is holding his right hand to his mouth. The oval face, the large rounded forehead and almond-shaped eyes of the Virgin evoke the idealized forms of feminine beauty of the period.

In the Middle Ages, ivory was as precious as gold or the rarest gemstones. This soft, silky organic material lent itself perfectly to polishing.

As part of the growing practice of private devotion, these statuettes could be touched during prayer. The devotional caress reproduces, in a way, the intimacy depicted between the Virgin and Child.



### ANONYMOUS, FRANCE (?)

*Virgin and Child*, late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century, original work in ivory,  
H: 41 cm; W: 13 cm; D: 12 cm  
Rouen, Réunion des musées  
métropolitains, Musée des Antiquités  
Image © Yohann Deslandes / Réunion des  
musées métropolitains Rouen-Normandie

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The work presented in the exhibition is a cast  
in patinated resin. Produced by the Réunion des  
Musées Nationaux - Grand Palais cast workshop

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This high relief depicts a bare breasted woman seeming to emerge from a medallion. It originally adorned the façade of a building in the town of Vienne (in the Isère region). Her half-closed eyes and parted lips suggest a disturbing and sensual image. Her elegant coiffure features a feathered cap, and her wavy hair is held back in a net, with a lock of hair knotted on the forehead, above a jewelled headband. This gives her a refined air,

enhanced by the wide-link chain necklace. The rounded shoulders, full-cheeked oval face, the long neck with the head tilted to one side, and the curved feather create soft lines which echo the curve of the medallion.

This Renaissance work, with such a distinctive presence, recalls the ideals of womanhood and love that were dear to poets such as Pierre de Ronsard and Louise Labé.

## ANONYMOUS, FRANCE

*Bust of a woman in a medallion,*  
1532, original work in limestone,  
H: 60 cm; W: 56.5 cm; D: 24.5 cm  
Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts,  
loan by the Musée de Vienne (Isère)  
Image © Lyon MBA - Photo Alain Basset

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The work presented in the exhibition is a cast in patinated resin. Produced by the Réunion des Musées Nationaux - Grand Palais cast workshop

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## JEAN-ANTOINE HOUDON

(Versailles, 1741 - Paris, 1828)

*Seated Voltaire*, around 1780-1790,  
original is in terracotta and patinated  
plaster, H: 121 cm; W: 62 cm; D: 95 cm  
Montpellier, Musée Fabre  
Image © Musée Fabre,  
Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole -  
Photograph Frédéric Jaulmes

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The work presented in the exhibition  
is a patinated resin reproduction.  
3D scanning, moulding and casting  
by Tactile Studio with the SNBR, l'Office  
de la Pierre Dure et Corinne Durand © 2016

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This portrait of Voltaire seated in an armchair is strikingly realistic. The posture, the hands, the face brought to life with its wrinkles, the smile and sparkling eyes show a man with a tired body but a lively mind. He is draped in a robe whose deep, regular folds evoke a toga and he wears the headband of the ancient philosophers.

The work bears witness to the portraiture skills of Jean-Antoine Houdon who modelled Voltaire's head during his lifetime. Houdon was one of the best known and most widely admired sculptors of the Enlightenment, a period marked by the questioning of traditions and the search for scientific truths.

*Seated Voltaire* was a huge success and Houdon made many replicas of the statue (on the same scale and smaller copies) in terracotta, marble and bronze to respond to art market demand.





*Winter* and *Summer* are allegories of the seasons. The subject is classical but Jean-Antoine Houdon surprises with the originality of his figures. In a departure from traditional representations of the seasons, winter is not depicted in the guise of a bearded old man, but in the form of a barely clad young woman huddling beneath an inadequate shawl. Summer moves away from antique portrayals of Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, and takes the form of a peasant girl.

Both sculptures were commissioned by the king's secretary, Anne-Charles Modenx de Saint-Waast, to adorn his library. They are designed to face each other: one leaning on her right leg; the other on her left. *Summer*, peaceful with her arms at her sides, stands upright looking outwards; *Winter* cowers, shivering, her arms folded over her chest — a posture that gave the statue its other name *La Frileuse*. In 1785, Houdon exhibited a smaller version of *Winter* at the Paris Salon where the statuette's nudity caused a scandal.



## JEAN-ANTOINE HOUDON

(Versailles, 1741 - Paris, 1828)

*Winter, or La Frileuse*,  
1783, original work in marble  
H: 145 cm; W: 57 cm; D: 64 cm

*Summer*, 1785, original work in  
marble, H: 155 cm; W: 56 cm; D: 49 cm  
Montpellier, Musée Fabre  
Image © Musée Fabre,  
Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole -  
Photograph Frédéric Jaulmes

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The works presented in the exhibition  
are bonded marble reproductions.  
3D scanning, moulding and casting by  
Tactile Studio with the SNBR, l'Office de  
la Pierre Dure et Corinne Durand © 2016

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*Laughing Girl* derives from the group of *The Dance*, a work sculpted by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux for the façade of the new Opera in Paris in 1869. The realism and voluptuousness of the naked Bacchante (priestesses of Bacchus) dancing around the *Spirit of the Dance* caused a furore at the time – the work was even spattered with ink – and brought the artist close to ruin.

After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, Carpeaux sculpted three busts of Bacchantes from *The Dance*, from which many copies were made. *The Bacchante with Roses n°2*, one of his most sensual works, portrays Mademoiselle Miette, an actress at the Palais-Royal theatre. Carpeaux succeeded in immortalizing in marble the fleeting moment of a face transformed by laughter.

This quest for life and movement is characteristic of his art. According to Alexandre Dumas fils, the work of this major figure of French sculpture in the second half of the 19th century was “more alive than life.”

## JEAN-BAPTISTE CARPEAUX

(Valenciennes, 1827 - Courbevoie, 1875)

*Laughing Girl, or Bacchante with Roses n°2*, around 1870, original sculpture in marble, H: 64 cm; W: 50 cm; D: 40 cm  
Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts  
Image © F. Deval - Mairie de Bordeaux

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The work presented in the exhibition is a bonded marble reproduction.  
3D photogrammetry, moulding and casting by Tactile Studio with Corinne Durand © 2018

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Two entwined figures seem to emerge from a block of marble. One, an angel, lies on a rock, its body arched, and wings spread on the ground.

The second figure, a woman, bends over the angel and embraces it. This fleeting moment of grace and sensitivity should not obscure the dark subject of the composition: the angel has fallen from heaven. Perhaps it is already dead?

*The Fallen Angel*, like most of Rodin's works, is characterized by its unfinished appearance. The marble is left partially unworked and only parts of the block are sculpted and polished. The sculptor frequently reused fragments of earlier works that he kept in his studio and incorporated them into new sculptures.

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Rodin established his reputation as the leading sculptor of his time. His innovative approach broke with traditional artistic codes and left a lasting influence on his contemporaries and later generations.

## AUGUSTE RODIN

(Paris, 1840 - Meudon, 1917)

*The Fallen Angel*, around 1895,  
original sculpture in marble  
H: 41.5 cm; W: 80 cm; D: 42 cm  
Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, loan  
from the Musée d'Orsay  
Image © Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille -  
Jean-Marie Dautel

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The work presented in the exhibition  
is a bonded marble reproduction.  
3D photogrammetry, moulding and casting  
by Tactile Studio with Corinne Durand © 2018

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## ÉMILE-ANTOINE BOURDELLE

(Montauban, 1861 - Le Vésinet, 1929)

### *Head of the Figure of Eloquence,*

around 1913-1923, original in bronze,

H: 48 cm; W: 36 cm; D: 45 cm

Montpellier, Musée Fabre

Image © Musée Fabre,

Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole -

Photograph Frédéric Jaulmes

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The work presented in the exhibition is a bronze reproduction. 3D scanning, moulding and casting by Tactile Studio with SNBR, l'Office de la Pierre Dure et Corinne Durand © 2016

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The oversized *Head of the Figure of Eloquence* is a bronze version of a figure on the monument to General Carlos Alvear, a leader of the 19th century independence movements in South America. Erected in Buenos Aires, this monumental work was commissioned from Émile-Antoine Bourdelle to mark the centenary of the Argentine Revolution. It comprises four figures representing Victory, Strength, Liberty, and Eloquence. The latter is portrayed by a man giving a speech, reminiscent of the orators of Antiquity. The simplified design of the head and the hairstyle, which leaves the sculptor's touch clearly visible, also echoes Antiquity.

Bourdelle was a fellow disciple of Rodin. But despite his admiration for the latter, he quickly found his own style. While Rodin analyzed form, Bourdelle synthesized it. He opened new avenues in sculpture, buoyed by his vision of Ancient Greek sculpture.

## MARTA PAN

(Budapest, 1923 - Paris, 2008)

*Balance en deux*, 1957,  
mobile sculpture in two parts,  
original woodcarving in walnut,  
H: 20.5 cm; W: 53 cm; D: 43 cm  
Nantes, Musée d'arts

© Fondation Martan Pan - André Wogenscky  
Image © Tifenn Richard / Musée d'arts de Nantes

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The object presented in the exhibition is a  
walnut copy. 3D photogrammetry, digital  
machining by Tactile Studio © 2018

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This work, part of the *Équilibres* cycle, comprises two independent elements, subtly placed one on top of the other in a delicate balance. Marta Pan's early wooden sculptures reveal her taste for movement and geometric simplicity, with natural, flowing and pure forms.

Of Hungarian origin, the artist settled in Paris in 1947 where she met the sculptor Brancusi. She testifies to his influence in these terms: "When he showed me *The Newborn*, he gave it a nudge. The sculpture swayed and Brancusi said, 'I think this must be how the world began.' Since then, I have always liked sculptures that move naturally."

The combination of formal purity and sensuality, movement and balance in Marta Pan's work inspired choreographer Maurice Béjart, who created a piece based on *Équilibres* in 1958.



Two sculptures by Denis Monfleur, a contemporary artist currently on display on the first floor of the Galerie du Musée des Beaux-Arts with the exhibition *Denis Monfleur. People of Stone*, are incorporated into the exhibition *Please Do Touch!*

With *Dubuffet* (2019), Denis Monfleur suggests with much humor to play with the senses of the visitor from the perception of the materials. Indeed, Monfleur exhibits the work in wood and the print that he executed in a second phase in bronze. Visually, nothing can distinguish them.

Denis Monfleur's work regularly refers to the masters in painting and sculpture. It is part of a secular tradition of sculpture, from Romanesque style to Louise Bourgeois, via Michelangelo, Brancusi, or Dubuffet. The latter, as well as Picasso, has truly changed his way of seeing.

Constantly experimenting and never shying away from any challenge, Monfleur willingly plays on the oppositions of textures and weights: lightness/density, power/fragility, smooth/rough, balance/instability. His works are often scarified. They bear, like stigmata, the rough or chiseled scars that the tool – grinders, chisels and tungsten drills or diamond disk – left on the matter.

The exhibition in Bordeaux includes the 21st century to the series with a surprise guest!

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## DENIS MONFLEUR

(Périgueux, 1962)

*Dubuffet*, 2019, two original copies in wood and bronze,

H: 114 cm; W 40 cm; D: 52 cm

The artist's collection

© ADAGP Paris 2023, Denis Monfleur

Image © Stéphane Briolant

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The two objects presented in the exhibition are original works by sculptor Denis Monfleur.

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## PLEASE DO TOUCH! ART AND MATTER

Exhibition from June 2, 2023 to January 7, 2024

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*Please Do Touch! Art and Matter* is an exhibition designed by the Musée Fabre - Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole in partnership with the Louvre Museum. It is organized as part of the FRAME (FRench American Museum Exchange) network, with the support of FRAME Développement. It is presented in partner museums (Lyon, Rouen, Lille, Bordeaux and Nantes) between 2019 and 2024.

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### Cultural programming

Find all the highlights on the museum's website: [www.musba-bordeaux.fr](http://www.musba-bordeaux.fr)

### Exhibition Curators

The exhibition is collectively curated by the teams of the different partner museums.

Curators for the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Bordeaux: Sophie Barthélémy, Director of the Museum  
Isabelle Beccia, in charge of Institutional Mediation at the Museum.

The exhibition was originally designed with the FAF APRIDEV associations and the collaboration of Laure Olivès, consultant in tactile mediation at the Musée Fabre - Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole.

**Scenography** : Version Bronze, Artprotec

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**Videos**: Cyril Laucournet, MStream

Cover image: Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux, *Laughing Girl*, (reproduction/detail) 19th century, Bordeaux, Musée des Beaux-Arts © Photo: F. Deval, Bordeaux City Hall.



Givaudan

