



musée des confluences

A unique building – for its view of the Rhône and Saône river confluence as well as for its architecture. An unprecedented project in the eclectic world of European and world museums. **A place of encounters dedicated to human knowledge and its wonders...** The musée des Confluences opened its doors on the 20th December 2014.

An architecture based on confluences

When glass Crystal met stainless steel Cloud, the architecture of the musée des Confluences was born, **inspired by the two converging bodies of water at its feet**. Beneath its 33 metres of glasswork, the Crystal functions as an urban space: an area dedicated to the entrance of the public, a place for greeting and sharing, bathed in natural light. In its centre, the gravity well whirls as if caught between the two streams of water. An architectural *tour de force*, the well bears the entirety of the structure. Each visit constitutes a journey through the Cloud, constructed as a large vessel of approximately 11,000 square metres which, under its stainless steel cover, contains the treasures of the museum: the rooms dedicated to its permanent and temporary exhibits. When the visitors finally reach the roof, they enjoy an unrivalled view of Lyon and its river confluence.

The museum was **designed as a place of permanent learning**, rather than simply as a collection of objects. As such, the exhibit rooms are punctuated by interactive entertainment and learning zones, engulfing black boxes and linking passages which freely traverse the length of the museum and lend it the impression of being transparent: from the basement-level pools up to the sky, natural light touches every floor. *“The public is invited to confuse interior with exterior, thus providing a new architectural experience”*, states **Wolf D. Prix**, lead designer and co-founder of Coop Himmelb(l)au, the Austrian agency world-renowned for its deconstructivist architecture, of which the museum provides its only presence on French soil.

The building is supported by a large basement that is accessible to the public: a milling area around a water pool glistening on stainless steel, which leads up to the garden: 24,400 square metres of green spaces and paths embodying confluence at its cutting edge, and a new entrance to the city owing to a river stop planned for 2016.





From collections to exhibits: a museum of narratives

Chosen from of myriads of “curiosity” items collected by individuals and scientific societies from the 17th century, **the museum’s artefacts are inserted into narratives that interact with social and existential questions.**

The permanent exhibit area, occupying an area of 3,000 square metres, recounts a master narrative of humanity structured into four distinct exhibitions:

- Origins, stories of the world
- Societies, human theatre
- Species, the web of life
- Eternities, visions of the beyond.

Created in collaboration with world-renowned scientists and thinkers and enhanced by specific scenographies, each of these four permanent exhibitions offers a **lively visiting experience** closely linked to the theme that they embody. The objects are interpreted beyond the disciplines, countries and cultures that define them.

Meteorites, ammonites, birds from Cochinchina, a Huygens microscope, a Homo sapiens mandible, Sputnik, Senufo sculptures, Samurai armour: the scenery setting of these treasures, mainly originating from museum collections, aids visitors’ understanding without imposing objective truth values – opening up their mind to past and current knowledge while leaving the door open to new problematics.

The musée des Confluences awakens our curiosity and, using emotion and marvel to invite us to taste of its knowledge. Between the 20th December 2014 and the end of March 2015, nearly 300,000 visitors came to the musée des Confluences (counted by number of tickets and passes distributed), which constitutes a real witness to its attractiveness for a large public.

“Beyond the geographical situation that defines it, the musée des Confluences aptly lives up to its namesake. It is a philosophy of encounter, a sense of exchange and an intelligence of converging viewpoints. It is a museum that opens up the doors of the world, and embraces the minds of all: that of the child and the student, that of the scientist and the learned; that of the public masses.”

Hélène Lafont-Couturier,
manager of the musée des
Confluences.





A lifestyle in Lyon

Inspired by a culture and lifestyle typical of Lyon and its surrounds, the musée des Confluences is more broadly a promenade space open to the public. The public is invited to visit the Crystal, mill around the basement area and enter the gardens.

The gardens will be open from May this year, allowing the public to **enjoy for the first time the unparalleled vista of the Lyon Confluence** (between the Rhône and the Saône river) framed in greenery conducive to thought and reflection. This exceptional European site has achieved, thanks to the design of the museum and its surroundings, a new prominence that has been heralded by UNESCO.

The museum also offers a gastronomy worthy of Lyon's own reputation, with the *Brasserie des Confluences*. Surrounded by water pools, this restaurant is established on the professional partnership of Jean-Paul Pignol and Guy Lassausaie, both awarded *Meilleur Ouvrier de France*. Guy Lassausaie is also a Michelin two-star chef. These two chefs are widely known for their dedication to and perfect mastery of traditional French cuisine. Guy Lassausaie offers a refined cuisine, adapted to provide a moment of pleasure at lunchtime or, at night, a real fine dining evening experience in a unique atmosphere.

Temporary exhibitions

Each year, the museum offers between four and six temporary exhibitions. Currently among the temporary exhibitions, "*Dans la chambre des merveilles*", presents the history and imagination of the cabinets of curiosities (wonder rooms) that blossomed across all of Europe in the 17th century. Gathered by collectors fascinated by the complexity of nature and the inventiveness of mankind, these cabinets of curiosities summarized their world, with accumulations of rare, strange or mysterious objects in their windows. The resounding success of this exhibition has resulted in its **continuation until spring 2016**.

In October 2015, the museum will open its new season with an exhibition event on the theme of Art and the Machine, from October 2015 until January 2016.

Photos

page 1, top: **musée des Confluences**;
bottom: **Gravity well**;
photos, Quentin Lafont -
musée des Confluences,
Lyon—

page 2, top: **Nô masks**,
scenography of the
gallery *Species*; photo,
Quentin Lafont - musée des
Confluences, Lyon;
bottom: **Radiology
Equipment**, Radiguet and
Massiot, Gaiffe-Gallot and
Pilon, Coolidge, Rochefort,
on loan from the Musée des
Hospices civils de Lyon,
Albert Renaud collection,
inv. D2010.16.1; photo,
Pierre-Olivier Deschamps/
VU'—

page 3, exhibition **Dans la
chambre des merveilles**;
photo, Quentin Lafont -
musée des Confluences,
Lyon

page 4, top: **corridor**;
bottom: **musée des
Confluences at the fall
of dusk**; photos, Quentin
Lafont - musée des
Confluences, Lyon



Scientific and Cultural Programmes

Around its collections and exhibitions, the musée des Confluences also offers cultural and scientific encounters: dance, theatre, music and scientific lectures allowing new kinds of knowledge to meet, emerge and be exchanged.

The museum offers also an ideal venue for the great cultural events of the Lyon metropolis: Fourvière Nights (Les Nuits de Fourvière – June-July 2015), Lyon Biennial (Biennale d'Art Contemporain – October 2015-January 2016) or the Festival of Lights (Fête des Lumières)!

For International Visitors

The museum itself, its signage and explanatory materials, are presented in French and English.

A large panel of guided tours allows groups to explore permanent and temporary exhibitions in English, Italian, German and Spanish on a regular basis – and, by prior reservation, Russian, Chinese, Portuguese, Japanese and Arabic.



Press contact :

Musée des Confluences
Claire Cécile David
claire-cecile.david@
museedesconfluences.fr
T. +33 4 28 38 12 14

Press area online :

Press release and press kit
downloadable, pictures
dedicated to press
publications
id confluences
mdp presse!

Musée des Confluences
86 quai Perrache - CS 30180
69285 Lyon cedex 02 France

www.
museedesconfluences.fr