



CULTURE · ART · PATRIMOINE

PRESS KIT

CONTENTS

1. Press Release

2. Why CAP?

3. Presentation of the Three Sites

Fine Arts Museum

Collections House

Hardenpont's BATTERY Pear Tree Garden

4. Artistic Partnerships

VOID Collective

Raphaël Decoster

Lucile Soufflet

5. Project Partners

6. Visitor Information

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All the images in this press kit are available in HD on request from the BE CULTURE press agency (info@beculture.be).

1. PRESS RELEASE

On 13 April 2024, a new museum complex is opening in the heart of Mons — CAP. Focusing on Culture, Art and Heritage, this innovative project aims to redefine the museum experience, as well as acting as the main gateway to the City of Mons Museum Complex.

CAP — which stands for **Culture, Art and Patrimoine** (Culture, Art and Heritage) — symbolises the core values of this new museum complex in Mons. It aims to offer a unique visitor experience by linking art, nature and heritage in order to question and reinvent our relationship with society. It will become the main gateway to the City of Mons Museum Complex, which comprises three sites: **the Fine Arts Museum, the Collections House, and Hardenpont's Buttery Pear Tree Garden.**

The newly refurbished BAM becomes the **Fine Arts Museum**, and will continue to host temporary exhibitions that showcase the city's art collections. Thanks to the interaction with the other two CAP sites, the art museum is freeing itself from its traditional confines by opening up to the city to better explore its historical, urban, memorial and societal issues.

The **Collections House**, housed in the former home of Jean Lescarts, explores the history of Mons through the city's municipal collections. This will showcase Wallonia's rich cultural heritage to better advantage. Thanks to the collections on display, this new space offers an insight into the city's past thus prompting reflections about its present and future.

Hardenpont's Buttery Pear Tree Garden provides the perfect link between the two other museum sites. Accessible to the public from the rue Neuve, the garden is divided into three sections: the botanical & historical garden featuring sculptures and plant species associated with local history; the permaculture garden in which residents are invited to get involved; and La Guinguette, a place where visitors can relax over a cup of coffee.

In order to create the links between the different sites, three artists were selected to play an integral part in the CAP project: the VOID collective of visual artists, the designer Lucile Soufflet, and the visual artist Raphaël Decoster. In particular, the **VOID Collective** designed the immersive audio experience in the tunnel linking the Fine Arts Museum to the Collections House, which explores the city's shared identity through sound. **Raphaël Decoster** was commissioned to design the monumental fresco that accompanies visitors



from the rue Neuve to the garden. The street furniture created by **Lucile Soufflet** has been designed in a coherent, harmonious manner that complements the approach to the Collections House, reflecting the desired unity of the garden.

Through this new museum project, the City of Mons wants to become more open and offer visitors a different kind of museum experience, i.e. one that is both civic-minded and inclusive. Challenging traditional museum norms, the CAP project represents a genuine commitment to change by embracing contemporary values, such as interaction, encounters and inclusiveness. It is hoped that the three CAP sites — the house, the garden and the museum — will encourage people to become more aware of the importance of culture and history in everyday life. The CAP project also aspires to be a space for interaction and participation, promoting accessibility to art, strengthening human bonds, and examining social issues.

A new approach to museum design with the **major inaugural Rodin exhibition. Une Renaissance moderne (A Modern Renaissance)** from 13 April.

Project funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Wallonia.

Visitor Information

CAP

Rue Neuve 8
7000 Mons
+32(0)65/40.53.30
www.cap.mons.be

Main access to the site via the Fine Arts Museum

Opening times: throughout the year from Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Reservations and ticket sales: www.visitmons.be or visitMons Grand'Place, 7000 Mons

2. WHY CAP?

CAP stands for "Culture, Art et Patrimoine" (Culture, Art and Heritage). By highlighting these core values in the name of this new museum complex, the City of Mons wants to offer visitors a unique journey of discovery devoted to Culture, Art and Heritage.

The museum complex comprises three sites:

- the **Fine Arts Museum** (formerly BAM), which will continue to host temporary exhibitions that showcase the city's art collections;
- the former home of Jean Lescarts, which has recently been renovated in order to house the **Collections House**, a museum dedicated to the history of Mons through the city's municipal collections; and
- the **garden**, comprising a sculpture collection, spaces that encourage social interaction, and a permaculture garden that creates a link between the two other sites.

The launch of the CAP project also sends out a strong signal of our desire to embrace change and growth. This means changing the traditional paradigm by being more receptive to society's current values, namely of interaction, encounters and inclusiveness. The CAP project is underpinned by a desire to explore new horizons and to become a new space for dialogue and citizen participation in the framework of inclusive projects undertaken by the City of Mons.

Our vocation as a museum is not just to "show", but also to encourage encounters, debate, interaction, scepticism, questioning, etc. This is the only way we can change our way of seeing things and becoming more open to today's world.

Visitors are no longer seen as customers but as citizens; the museum is no longer inward-looking but open to the world. The CAP initiative aims to change the way in which we consider the role of museums in society.

The house, garden and art museum invite citizens to become aware of the importance of culture and history in their lives, and to reclaim artistic and historical language and local traditions, as well as the tangible, intangible and ancestral heritage that has long been overshadowed by Cartesian or rational thinking despite being an essential part of our well-being and daily lives.

It is through these values that the CAP project feeds into the dynamic of the City of Mons Museum pole, which comprises thirteen individual sites in total. While each site enjoys its own identity, they share a common approach, i.e. launching audacious projects that dare to invent, probe and explore new forms of sharing.

Where did the name CAP come from?

A process based on collective intelligence

While redeveloping the former home of Jean Lescarts into a museum, the City of Mons Museum pole took the opportunity to rethink the strategic positioning of this site in relation to the Fine Arts Museum, and the sculpture garden that links the two sites.

The idea was to create a sense of **coherence** between the three city-centre sites, thus forming a major museum complex in the Mons socio-cultural and tourist landscape. The aim of the CAP project is to enable as many people as possible to discover the history of Mons, while also pursuing its policy of hosting temporary exhibitions at the Fine Arts Museum, and providing free public access to the sculpture garden.

Discussions around the project took the form of collaborative workshops with the project's stakeholders, assisted by Marie Godart (Denali/MUE) and Nathalie Cimino (RETH!NK). This collaborative approach helped to pinpoint the purpose of the site (which is shared by all three sites), i.e. to shed light on the specificities, missions and challenges that transcend the three sites and that become specific to the site, and finally, to find a name — with help from the Ex Nihilo agency — that would chime with the project's *raison d'être*.



© A&G Architecture

"As the main gateway to the Museum Complex, the site aims to link art, nature and heritage in order to question and reinvent our relationship with society". (CAP's raison d'être.)

Three Specific Features of the Site

The Link Between Art, Nature and Heritage

By creating a natural link between the gardens, collections, architectural heritage and temporary exhibitions, the site encourages a dialectic in which art, nature and heritage respond to and inspire each other. A three-dimensional approach that structures the visitor experience.

The Main Gateway to the Museum Complex

Given its central location and the complementary, accessible and representative nature of its offering, the site is both one of the first showcases and the main gateway to the museum complex.

A Space for Dialogue and Citizen Participation

The site wishes to be as accessible to as many people as possible, and become a focal point dedicated to outreach and projects that create opportunities for citizen-led initiatives.

Three Identified Missions

To promote access to art and culture

By introducing the arts and culture through universal themes (e.g. nature), employing diverse methods of educational outreach, attracting a wider public, and opening up to Mons' society.

To strengthen human bonds through culture

By promoting intergenerational approaches, grassroots initiatives, well-being and rejuvenation, as well as intercultural dialogue.

To contribute to the transformation of society

By exploring societal issues through its educational programmes and outreach activities, and by inviting the public to take part in this change.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE THREE SITES



THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM

Through temporary exhibitions, the Fine Arts Museum of Mons showcases the incredible wealth of the city's art collections. It also explores regional artists and movements, e.g. L'École de Mons: Deux siècles de vie artistiques/The Mons School: Two Centuries of Artistic Life (2019), Anto-Carte, De terre et de ciel/Of Earth and Sky (2021), as well as high-quality exhibitions showcasing international artists, such as Vincent van Gogh (2015), Niki de Saint-Phalle (2018), Roy Lichtenstein (2020), Fernando Botero (2021) and Joan Miró (2022).

Today, the Fine Arts Museum of Mons is embarking on a new direction, thus affirming its essential role within the city. With Hardenpont's Buttery Pear Tree Garden and the Collections House, the museum is extending far beyond its physical walls, opening up to the city and its historical, urban, memorial and societal issues.

The conservation and protection of the city's heritage remains an essential mission of the museums. However, the definition of "what a museum space is" is changing. By no longer attaching so much importance to the physical walls of the museum, we can liberate ourselves from self-imposed restrictions.

It was the 2018 Niki de Saint Phalle exhibition — a major event in Mons — that initiated this new approach. The French-American artist developed a highly original rapport with the city through her "Nana Maisons" and totems that were installed in urban areas. Her works had a re-humanising effect on our neglected towns and cities.



The Jaume Plensa exhibition held in the summer of 2023 while the museum was being renovated, was not an interlude in the exhibition programme, but rather a confirmation that we were opening up our scope of action to the entire city.



Photo: BE CULTURE

Moreover, the focus is no longer simply on promoting a collection or an artistic movement. We are also embracing other disciplines that link the fine arts to the architectural heritage, history and memory of a city and its inhabitants. Among the latest projects of the Fine Arts Museum of Mons, the 2021 Botero exhibition was no exception to the rule: "To be universal," he said, "you have to be deeply rooted in the region and its culture."

By exhibiting Botero's work, the museum started a new chapter in the concept of "popular art". The revival of local cultures (legends, myths, traditions, etc.), the inclusion of origins and the past, and the importance of listening to citizens' voices are all factors that will shape future programming.

Finally, another pivotal moment occurred in 2022 with the outstanding exhibition devoted to Joan Miró, which revealed an artist in search of an ancestral link with a "primitive" creative energy.



While certain notions seem to have been accepted for decades and

even centuries, the way we are looking at art history is changing as demonstrated by the Miró exhibition held at the Fine Arts Museum. If this exhibition enabled us to take a different look at the work he presented throughout the 20th century, it is because our challenges are no longer centred on a desire for modernity and inventing new images at all costs. The way in which we look at art today, with our scepticism, challenges, hopes, questions our convictions about what we thought we knew about history and the history of art.

CAP's inaugural Rodin exhibition, *Une Renaissance moderne/A Modern Renaissance*, is a way of affirming these milestones, thus laying the foundations of the new identity of the museum complex. This marks a significant change, but one which will not disrupt the museum's programme. The main theme of the exhibition is Rodin's treatment of the body in space throughout his career. During his time in Belgium — a pivotal period in his life — Rodin became enormously influenced by the Italian Renaissance following a trip to Italy. The City of Mons is fortunate to possess some major works by Jacques Du Broeucq, the renowned renaissance sculptor from the Southern Netherlands. The exhibition, held in the Saint Waltrude Collegiate Church in Mons, offers a dialogue between the works of Rodin and the sculptures of Du Broeucq. The exhibition also takes a bold step by including contemporary sculpture by Berlinde De Bruyckere — one of Belgium's most important contemporary artists — and her perspectives on Rodin.

Around fifteen drawings and etchings from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries from the Chanoine Puissant collection (owned by the City of Mons and housed at the Artothèque) are displayed alongside drawings and gouaches by Rodin and De Bruyckere, allowing us to appreciate the visual relationship between the surfaces of these drawings through the way in which these artists looked at ancient art, while at the same time giving different meanings and intentions to them.

To mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of the surrealist movement in Belgium, the Fine Arts Museum will host an exhibition (autumn 2024) devoted to the "Surrealist Object" with a clear link to the collections and history of Mons.

The Surrealist Object has attracted the attention of international museums for several years, yet no exhibition has been devoted to the subject in the Belgian context. The "object" is at the very heart of the definition of Surrealism. It is directly linked to the movement's quest for social impact. The exhibition traces the history of the object (three-dimensional, but also in poetry, painting, photography, collage and film) through the surrealist movement of the 1920s and 1930s, and the new consumer society that developed in the post-war period. In particular, it highlights surrealism's multi-faceted relationship with commercial imagery. Following the theme of the "object" offers a new perspective on the surrealist movement as a whole.

> Rodin: Une Renaissance moderne/Rodin: A Modern Renaissance from 13/04 to 18/08/2024

> Le surréalisme : bouleverser le réel/Surrealism: shaking up reality from 19/10/2024 to 16/02/2025

To conclude, the 2024 programme to celebrate the reopening of the Fine Arts Museum of Mons and CAP establishes a strong link with the collections of the City of Mons, while at the same time highlighting our heritage and history.

THE COLLECTIONS HOUSE

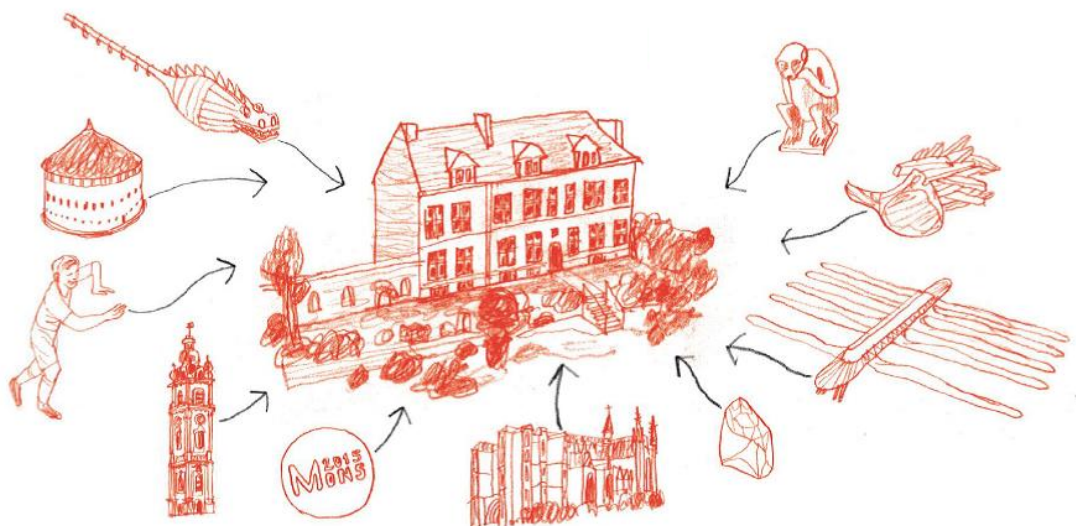
In this rapidly-changing city, the role of a municipal museum is to present its history and heritage, while also shedding light on the social, societal, environmental and urban issues inherent in its development.

It invites us to renew and refine our perspective on the city. It helps us to understand the past, while bearing witness to the people who make Mons the city it is today.

To achieve these objectives, the municipal collections will inform questions and the visitor journey through the long history of the City of Mons. The museographic approach places heritage and contemporary society face to face, thus the heritage object invites us to enter into a dialogue with history, heritage and society.

The collections featured in the project include:

- The City of Mons collections held at the Artothèque acquired through bequests, donations, purchases and acquisitions made over the years (archaeological collection, art collection, Glépin, fine arts collection, prehistory collection, Puissant collection, etc.);
- Partner collections (AWAP, UMONS, etc.); and
- Contemporary collections, and objects that bear witness to history in the making (contributory collections, partnerships, etc.).



Visitor Journey

The way we live together, our relationship with rules and freedoms, means of transport, sense of celebration, language, cultural practices, as well as our identity and our relationship with the city are intimately connected to the environment in which we live. This environment is the result of a long history that is being added to every day. The principles of urban development, the changing nature of the layout, topography, town-planning rules and the factors that made a town prestigious and wealthy at certain times, all influence its development.

The Collections House aims to tell the origin story of Mons at the same time as the story that is being written today through the prism of its collections.

It highlights the importance of memory and the transmission of a city's heritage in terms of shaping its development. It reveals the links, and brings together different heritages, cultures and the different strata of history to explain the contemporary city and prompt questions about its future.

The House's approach is structured around "verbs" enabling a thematic-chronological approach, complemented by societal issues that are both timeless and cross-cutting. This approach covers all the subjects required to understand how the city works and to develop bridges, links and comparisons between different epochs and regions. After an introduction to the history of the house and a soundscape of the City of Mons, the visit comprises two main sections. On the ground floor, the 'interpretative' rooms offer a socio-historical panorama of the city. At the centre of each room is a digital device for collective experimentation, showcasing the city's plans, archives and iconographic material. Upstairs is designed to be more hands-on and showcases Mons' intangible heritage; the upper rooms feature an immersive art installation that links the various collections on display in the showcases.

In this way, the language and social issues raised are presented in a dedicated space:

- **Relaying:** Should a town's heritage be a community issue?

Through the discovery of the House and its history, the aim is to explore what constitutes a city's heritage (without forgetting its emotional dimension) and to "geographically" reinstate the original use of the Collections House in the neighbourhood. Graphic references will be made to the architectural heritage of the site in the basement (cobblestones, brick walls, tomb, architectural details, *porte cochère*, etc.) and archival documents in order to reveal the past functions of the house.

Visitors enter the house accompanied by an **immersive** and **auditory** experience of the urban environment. This immersive sound experience takes place in the **tunnel** (built in a medieval alleyway) leading to the Fine Arts Museum. It questions our sensory relationship with the city and changes as visitors progress along their journey. The soundscape audible to the visitor at the entrance to the tunnel (on the Fine Arts Museum side) is the city's current soundscape. However, as visitors make their way through the tunnel, they go back in time. The second sound sequence focuses on the history of the House, highlighting its successive uses and the richness of Mons' past.

- **Living:** Living in the city yesterday and today; rethinking how we live together.

It is an invitation to discover the topography, the urban plan and the tangible and intangible civil heritage of the City of Mons from a **social perspective**. How is human settlement conditioned by the natural environment? How has the city's urban structure shaped its development and impacted human interaction? What legacies and heritage remain in contemporary Mons society? What kind of human interaction do we want for the future, and what kind of architecture and town planning will we need?



Salt cellar, 16th-17th century, found in Mons, rue Jean Lescarts, produced in Antwerp?, pottery, Antwerp majolica. Wallonia Heritage Agency Collection.

- **Interacting:** The economy, population flows, trade, i.e. what has constituted and what constitutes the wealth of Mons?

Street names, signs, language, crafts from the past and present — Mons is full of treasures that bear witness to a flourishing past. What influence did **commercial practices** have on the development and organisation of the city? What types of interactions contributed to the city's know-how and influence? How did **migratory flows** and social diversity contribute, are contributing and will continue to contribute to its equilibrium? Jobs, local shops, the circular economy, relocating skills — what are the challenges for the future?



Currency changer's scales, late 18th-19th century, wood, iron, copper. Jean Lescarts Collection, property of the City of Mons.

- **Deciding:** Power, democracy, citizenship — who or what dominates the city over time?

Mons' geographical location has played a role in the construction of its governance system, its security and the place it occupies today in Wallonia, Belgium and internationally. What does history tell us about the formation of political, religious, public, judicial and military organisations in Mons? What **power dynamics** have shaped the political history of Mons, and what democratic principles underpin the way the city is organised today? What role will citizens play in shaping the city's future?

- **Reconnecting:** What is the role of culture in Mons?

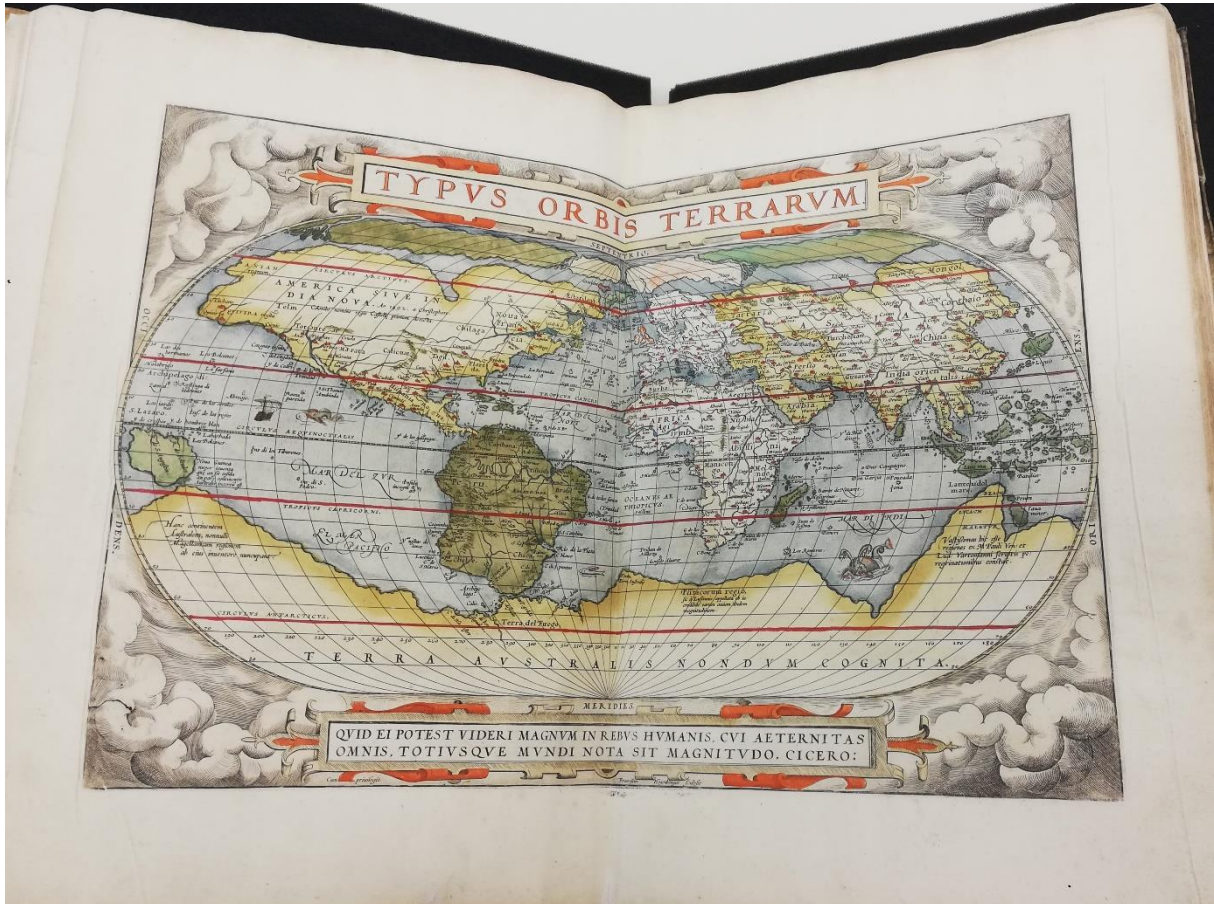
Mons' culture can be traced back to the Palaeolithic period. What foundations underpin the cultural practices in Mons that have been constructed and developed? What does the collection tell us about the **role of culture** and its symbolism in Mons' society? How does Mons' diverse cultural heritage help bring people together and promote cohesion? How does Mons' cultural scene contribute to the life of the city today?



Serpent, wind instrument, early 17th century, wood. Jean Lescarts Collection, property of the City of Mons.

- **Sharing:** Sharing knowledge and know-how

At the crossroads of major cities and ideas, Mons developed within the Humanist context that shaped Europe from the late 16th century to the end of the 18th. Humanism is the pivot that makes societal, artistic and cultural developments possible. What foundations underpinned the gradual development of **teaching** in Mons? What groups and corporations have resulted from these changes in thinking? What impact did printing have on the sharing of knowledge? How is **knowledge** shared today?



Theatrum orbis terrarum, Abraham Ortelius, Antwerp: A.C. Van Diest, 1574, printed book. Chanoine Puissant Collection, property of the City of Mons held at the University of Mons

- **Thinking:** Mons, anthropocene city?

The tunnel is designed as an **open-ended conclusion** to the visit to the permanent spaces. It raises new questions about society in relation to the city, and examines the relationship that humans have with their environment in the context of the Anthropocene Epoch.

- **Participating:** LABO room

This room has a dual objective: firstly, to promote Mons' participatory approach to visitors and secondly, to question and inform how we can live together in an urban environment based on citizen-led experimentation. It is a place for dialogue and interaction between local resident initiatives (neighbourhood committees, not-for-profits, school groups, etc.) an artist, and visitors to the site.

On one hand, it is about presenting a finished product, the results of the interaction between the artist and the public, but also about offering a narrative of this process. It is a place where we can leave a trace of the shared experience, where we invite visitors to immerse themselves in the creative process that leads to artistic production. We enter into the very heart of the approach in order to understand the whys and wherefores. It is a snapshot of a shared, lived experience.

To complete the links with the Fine Arts Museum, the project will collaborate with one of the four artists who are exhibited each year in the Salle aux Piliers. This creates an additional connection between the two museums and allows the artist to express his or her sensibility both individually and collectively.

With regard to the second objective, the aim is to inform visitors and raise their awareness of the issues involved in transforming cities in relation to the content of the museum.

A participatory project already underway

Since September 2023, work has been underway with the Ecole du Futur in Mons and the VOID collective, who are working on the installation and design of the tunnel linking the Fine Arts Museum to the Collections House. The aim of this tunnel is create a link with the modern-day city of Mons.

Workshops were organised between the students, the VOID collective and Juliette Karlsson (artist-sculptor). Young people were invited to collect testimonies, impressions, emotions and sounds that chimed with their vision of Mons.

In the tunnel, 22 large-format photos of teenagers' views of the city will be installed, along with a soundscape installation featuring recordings made in the city.

Teams in Action

Commissioning and conservation: Xavier Roland, Sophie Simon, Caroline Dumoulin

Educational outreach: Laurence Herman & Boris Iori (for the participatory citizen initiative)

Architecture: A&G Atelier d'Architecture SRL and Arcadis Belgium nv/sa

Scenography: Martial Prévert sprl

Museography: Nathalie Cimino

Video and film content: Danse La Pluie

Models and displays: Weerloos

Multimedia touch tables: Hovertone

Graphic design: Ex Nihilo

Translations: Be Translated

Display cases and plinths: Bruns

General contractor: ACH Construct sa

HARDENPONT'S BUTTERY PEAR GARDEN

The garden is named after a variety of pear — the "poire beurré" (buttery pear) — created by Nicolas Hardenpont in 1759 at the foot of Mont Panisel (Mons).

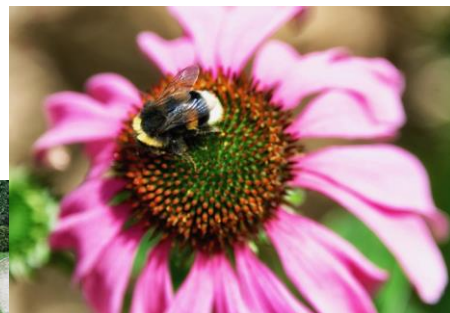
The garden comprises three sections:

- a botanical and historical garden featuring sculptures and plant species with a connection to local history;
- a community permaculture garden; and
- La Guinguette, an open-air café where visitors can relax and enjoy light refreshments.

Geographically, the garden forms a link between the Fine Arts Museum and the Collections House.

Free and open to the public via rue Neuve, the garden encourages visitors to wander and discover it for themselves. It is a place to relax after a visit, a place for people to meet, and a place of beauty and calm.

We also want to turn it into a third place, i.e. a vibrant, inclusive and participatory venue that offers new experiences that complement the museum visits.



The Botanical and Historical Garden

The botanical and historical garden contains species developed, cultivated and/or studied in the region, such as Obourg tobacco, medicinal plants with ancient healing properties used in convents, and redcurrants and vines whose cultivation is confirmed by archaeological excavations in the town centre dating back to the 14th century.

These species share the garden with the sculpture collection, many of which have a connection with Mons' heritage.

The sculptures follows a concentric plan with, at its heart, the Grand'Place and its adjoining streets, before gradually radiating out to the outskirts of the city. There is a real desire to anchor this heritage to the area and to help visitors to (re)discover it.

The Permaculture Garden

The permaculture garden, which was created three years ago, has attracted a great deal of interest from the public. The kitchen garden creates opportunities for vibrant interaction between gardeners and visitors, discussions about the project, and about gardening in general.

The unique nature of this site is that it is able to bring together groups of people of all ages around a shared passion for gardening and permaculture. Therefore, people become active in this inclusive project rather than "mere onlookers," A group have formed a de facto association, which meets regularly in the permaculture garden. Members include people living in the neighbourhood who do not have their own private garden.

They have become ambassadors and genuine partners of the Museum Complex.

They inhabit the space, making it their own, transforming it, shaping it and giving it a soul. It is a space that invites contemplation and discovery — a veritable haven of calm in the centre of the city.

La Guinguette

The garden has been transformed into a space where visitors can relax and enjoy a moment of peace in the centre of Mons. In the near future, the plan is to offer food cooked by local independent artisans.

La Guinguette is accessible to visitors and the general public via the rue Neuve.

4. ARTISTIC PARTNERSHIPS

In order to create links between the themes developed in the Fine Arts Museum, the Collections House and the garden, we felt it was important to involve different artists in the museum's redevelopment.

VOID

VOID is a group of visual artists, including Arnaud Eeckhout and Mauro Vitturini. They have lived and worked in Brussels since 2013. Active both in Belgium and abroad, they won the Prix Médiatine (2015) and the Salomon Residency Award at ISCP New York (2019).

VOID has developed an artistic approach that questions sound as a vector of representation, i.e. using the medium of sound in the same way that a painter uses a brush to depict the contours of reality. The invisibility and immateriality of sound become the starting point for the duo's exploration of the phenomena of language and memory. Their multidisciplinary work takes a wide variety of forms, including video, installations, books, performances, drawings, objects, sound pieces, and public performances.

As part of the opening of CAP, the VOID collective worked on the immersive sound experience in the tunnel linking the Fine Arts Museum to the Collections House, exploring the city's shared identity in terms of sound (tangible and intangible heritage, language, daily activity, night-time sounds). VOID also oversaw the design and production of the artistic sound installations presented throughout the tour of the Collections House.



© VOID

RAPHAËL DECOSTER

Raphaël Decoster is a visual artist with a degree in visual arts from the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Tournai. His artistic practice centres on lithography, installations, video and music.

His drawings are often narrative, but also include performance, as well as questioning gesture and time. He oscillates between bitter-sweet scenarios and harsh lines. Nature is often portrayed through details and spectacular phenomena is interpreted in a free and poetic way. Fascinated by detail, he painstakingly draws substances in motion, such as water, lava, hair and feathers, in order to capture their raw emotions.

Decoster was commissioned to create a monumental fresco made from perforated aluminium sheeting, which starts in the rue Neuve and accompanies visitors to the first section of the garden.

The fresco comprises two distinct sections: the first depicts the mount on which the Belfry was built. Composed of successive geological layers, the artwork evokes the Belfry, which is the symbol of the city of Mons, in the process of blossoming through a succession of strata. The fresco then continues in the form of a stratigraphic column revealing the mineral composition of the city. This cross-section creates a visual echo with the garden. Decoster's work offers a poetic interpretation of the city's visible and invisible identity.

LUCILE SOUFFLET

Lucile Soufflet studied industrial design at La Cambre in Brussels. Early on in her career, she worked with ceramics, in particular reinterpreting certain pieces from the collection of the Royal Museum of Mariemont and producing a series for the Royal Boch factory.

However, it was in the field of urban furniture design that Soufflet finally specialised, having acquired a passion for this discipline during an Erasmus exchange programme in London. This was the starting point for her reflections on cities and public spaces, where design is still relatively absent.



Favouring an artisanal approach, she creates one-off commissions for local authorities keen to embellish public spaces by proposing functional furniture designs that meet basic needs.

The outdoor furniture for the area around the Collections House, including benches and café furniture, needed to be designed in a coherent and harmonious manner. A

certain degree of uniformity had to be reflected in the designs, which is why the assignment was entrusted to a street furniture designer. Playing on the evolution of steel profiles, the style of furniture designed by Lucile Soufflet seemed to us to be the most appropriate to respond to the specific identity we wanted for the garden.

Her highly distinctive style of street furniture, which gently stretches and elongates to create a variety of seating positions and views of the surrounding environment, marries perfectly with the garden's narrow, winding paths. Her designs will play an essential role in the ethos and spirit of this new public garden, which promotes interaction and community initiatives.

Another objective is to guide visitors toward the heritage in the city centre; thus the materialisation of these historical and heritage links is reflected in identical or similar street furniture that aim to emphasise the connection between the CAP site and Mons' city centre. Soufflet designed the circular benches that adorn many squares in Wallonia, including the Grand'Place in Mons, the rue de Nimy and Place Louise, as well as in Brussels and France.

Importantly, Soufflet creates her designs using sustainable materials, which are produced in France to reduce their ecological footprint. Conscious of environmental concerns and the challenges of urbanisation, her commendable approach chimes perfectly with the direction taken by CAP.

5. PROJECT PARTNERS

This project would not have been possible without the help of the many experts who helped us source and gather the scientific content relating to the history of Mons.

Without them and their specialised research in various fields of expertise, the Collections House might not exist today. We would like to offer our sincere thanks to all of them.

We would also like to thank the lending institutions (UMons, King Baudouin Foundation, Saint Waltrude Collegiate Church, Brotherhood of Saint-Jean-le-Décollé) and the private lenders who, through their generous loans, have contributed to development of the Collections House.

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to Marceline Denis and Cécile Ansieau, archaeologists from the Walloon Heritage Agency — our scientific partner in this exciting venture — for their ongoing involvement and support in this project.

Lastly, the whole project, and in particular the renovation work on the former home of Jean Lescarts, would not have been possible without the financial support of the ERDF - European Regional Development Fund - and Wallonia.

The vital importance of ERDF funds on the development of towns and cities as drivers of economic growth is undeniable. These resources are much more than investments, they are levers for building dynamic, resilient and prosperous communities. By supporting the CAP in Mons through the renovation of cultural infrastructures, such as the Collections House and the garden, and hosting international exhibitions at the Fine Arts Museum, the ERDF funds are contributing to improving the quality of life of citizens and strengthening the competitiveness and attractiveness of cities, while also maintaining a commitment to sustainable and inclusive urban development.

6. PRACTICAL INFORMATION



Rue Neuve 8
7000 Mons
+32(0)65/40.53.30

www.cap.mons.be

Main access to the site via the Fine Arts Museum

Opening times:

Open throughout the year. Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Annual closures: 01/01 and 25/12; during the Ducasse de Mons festival: Friday, Saturday and Sunday; and during the patron saint festivals (one day in early December).

Reservations and ticket sales: www.visitMons.be or visitMons Grand'Place, 7000 Mons

THE FINE ARTS MUSEUM

Opening times:

Open during temporary exhibitions: Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Admission:

Special exhibitions

Individual admission prices:

Full price: €16

Reduced price: €12

Young people and students: €2

Free of charge:

- children under 12 years
- on presentation of the museumPASSmusées*
- first Sunday of the month

Group admission:

Adults/Seniors: €12

Schools/secondary school students: €2

Schools/primary school students: €2

Temporary exhibitions

Individual admission prices:

Full price: €9

Reduced price: €6

Young people and students: €2

Free of charge:

- children under 12 years
- on presentation of the museumPASSmusées
- first Sunday of the month

Group admission:

Adults/Seniors: €6

Schools/secondary school students: €2

Schools/primary school students: free

Guided group visits (20 people):

Admission + €65/group (weekdays and Saturdays)

Admission + €80/group (Sundays, evenings and public holidays)

Information and bookings at visitMons: +32(0)65/40.53.46 or groupe@ville.mons.be

THE COLLECTIONS HOUSE

Opening times:

Open throughout the year: Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Admission:

Individual prices:

Full price: €4

Reduced price: €3

Young people and students: €2

Free of charge:

- children under 12 years
- on presentation of the museumPASSmusées
- first Sunday of the month

Group admission:

Adults/Seniors: €3

Schools/secondary school students: €2

Schools/primary school students: free

Around the Collections House:

On Sunday afternoons (2:30 to 5:30 p.m.), the exhibition is staffed by guides (included in the admission price).

Guided tours for individuals start at 11:00 a.m. on: 28/04, 23/06, 28/07, 25/08, 22/09, 27/10, 24/11, 22/12 - Price: admission + €2

Guided tours for groups (12 people):

Admission + €50/group (weekdays and Saturdays)

Admission + €65/group (Sundays, evenings and public holidays)

Information and bookings at visitMons: +32(0)65/40.53.46 or groupe@ville.mons.be

Accessibility:

The visit is entirely accessible to people with reduced mobility.

* The list of conditions allowing you to benefit from a reduction is available at the Fine Arts Museum reception (families, teachers, students, seniors, various reduction cards).



HARDENPONT'S BUTTERY PEAR TREE GARDEN

Opening times:

Open throughout the year: Tuesday to Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

CAP

