



# musée

## Despiau-Wléricq

20th century figurative sculpture

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# MONT DE MARSAN, CITY OF SCULPTURE

The Despiau-Wlérick museum has a unique collection of 20th century figurative sculptures with a large collection from the interwar period, featuring the works of two sculptors from Mont de Marsan, Charles Despiau and Robert Wlérick. The large task of collecting and restoring the works over many years has again placed the museum as third among the museums of the Aquitaine region.

The richness of its collections, which include more than 2200 sculptures and a graphic art department focusing on the works of sculptors of that period, places the Despiau-Wlérick museum at the forefront of all French museums in this speciality.

Beyond its museum, Mont de Marsan is a city of sculpture, which can be observed everywhere, even in the streets. Exhibiting works in the city illustrates the idea that art should be accessible to all. The last instance of the three-yearly «Mont de Marsan sculptures» in 2013 was held with the same vision and met with public success, with more than 30,000 visitors arriving in Mont de Marsan.

The public showing of a unique masterpiece, a model of the equestrian statue of the Marechal Foch, was a significant event during this edition of "Mont de Marsan sculptures", with an animal theme. I am very proud to give this original and unusual monument a lasting and prominent place again (in the centre of the Jean Rameau park).

I invite you to go and look at it when you come to our city.

The museum and collection are "alive" all year round. Conferences are regularly organised and guided tours are offered to discover or deepen your knowledge. The museum services also hold temporary exhibitions such as Arte Flamenco and retrospectives like the one dedicated to Arlette Cinioux starting at the beginning of August.

Access to art goes along with education, particularly for children. The education department of the museum welcomed more than 8,500 children in 2013. With workshops and visits focusing on materials, techniques and use of the five senses, the children are awakened to culture in a fun way.

Feel free to discover sculpture in Mont de Marsan in the way you would like (this access to the museum and masterpiece are free) and in any place you find it come to visit and let yourself be charmed!

**Geneviève DARRIEUSSECQ**  
*Mayor of Mont de Marsan  
President of the Marsan Urban Area  
Aquitaine Regional Councillor*

# A PLACE OF HERITAGE



Since its opening in 1968, the Despiau-Wlérick museum has been located in a group of medieval buildings from the 14th century in the historical centre of Mont de Marsan. Dominated by the massive Lacataye “dungeon”. This group of buildings has been renovated to host the city’s collection of figurative sculptures as well as the collections from the former Dubalen museum.

The Despiau-Wlérick museum has been built around a garden of sculptures (an open air museum). Since the creation of the Saint-Vincent garden in 2007, it now has two gardens accessible to visitors where monumental sculptures from the collection are displayed.

A unique heritage testimony, the two Norman houses composing the Lacataye “dungeon” used to be part of the fortification system of the medieval city and continued the defensive role of former ramparts from the 12th century and prior to this the Neolithic era. These were discovered on the site of the actual Saint Vincent garden.

Another Norman house is now the museum entrance. Do not miss the wonderful rose ornament on the left façade.

In addition to the permanent collections, the museum has a programme of temporary exhibitions displaying 20th century figurative sculpture, completed by an opening to local heritage. In July the exhibitions will be linked to the Arte Flamenco festival. Thematic conferences are also offered throughout the year, as well as a set of diverse educational activities for schools, associations and families.

Whether you are on your own or in a group, child or parent, newcomer or an expert, feel free to come and see the museum for yourself !

The Despiau-Wlérick museum has taken sculpture beyond the museum’s walls to make Mont de Marsan the “City of sculpture”. Everyday ramblers can enjoy the sculpture walk in the city centre, and every three years the “Mont de Marsan Sculptures” event, focusing on a particular theme, exhibits the work of contemporary artists in the streets and emblematic places of the city.

# THE COLLECTION



Third museum of Aquitaine\*, the Despiau-Wlérick museum hosts a unique collection of French figurative sculptures from the first half of the 20th century, the largest in this category in France. The integration of sculptor Léopold Kretz's studio collection allows the work of figurative sculptors from the second half of the 20th century to be shown. Now with a total of 2,200 sculptures of all sizes, the Despiau-Wlérick museum displays a complete overview of the works produced by the sculptors of the entire period.

Endowed with an important archeological collection, the museum also holds a complete natural history assortment gathered mostly by Pierre-Eudoxe Dubalen, founder of the first municipal museum of Mont de Marsan.

Charles Despiau (1874-1946) and Robert Wlérick (1882-1944) went to Paris for training. There they grew close to the group "La Bande à Schnegg", whose work suggested a return to smoother lines after Rodin's plastic expressionism. Despiau is known as a remarkable portraitist while Wlérick developed a warmer style.

Most artists from "La Bande à Schnegg" are represented in Mont de Marsan: Lucien and Gaston Schnegg, Louis Dejean, Alfred-Jean Halou, Henry Arnold, Léon Drivier, Jane Poupelet, Auguste de Niederhäusern-Rodo and François Pompon. More than sixty different sculptors from the independent movement have their work displayed in the collection, completed with several studio collections.

The graphic art department has more than 11,000 drawings by different sculptors from the period, as well as Kretz's large graphic collection.

*\* Palmarès des musées, Journal des Arts award - June 2010, June 2011, June 2013, and also 29th national museum for art conservation - June 2012, 1st museum in Aquitaine for cities with less than 200,000 inhabitants - June 2013*

# A UNIQUE MASTERPIECE



The former plant nursery transformed into a public park, has had sculptures on display for many years. In 1908 it was already possible to look upon "la Liseuse" (the Reader), an early work of Charles Despiau (currently exhibited in the museum).

The last work, a monumental sculpture by Roland Cognet, was installed in 2012 and starts the sculpture walk of the park.

Further, under the park pavilion, a model made of Poplar trees is the legacy of a project by Robert Wlérick (1882-1944) and Raymond Martin (1910-1992). It represents an equestrian statue of the Marechal Foch in its final size.

At the end of an illustrious line of mounted soldier and monarch representations dating back to Antiquity, this masterpiece is both the largest ever conceived by Wlérick and the last monumental equestrian statue set up in France in the 20th century.

4.6 meters high and 3.8 metres wide, this monumental work was unknown to the public, as it had not been exhibited since 1939 (more than 75 years). It is a unique piece in the history of western sculpture.

The Despiau-Wlérick museum owns a very complete set of preliminary sketches. These range from the very first wax draft to the various versions presented for the project, in addition to two items from the original plaster mold used to make the final bronze masterpiece standing in the Trocadero in Paris.

Unique in the history of sculpture, this equestrian model has only one twin, in Italy: the Condotiere Gattamelata. The Italian model was made by Donatello in the early Renaissance, an era of artistic revival in which Wlérick was particularly interested.

Discover this surprising legacy handed to Mont de Marsan thanks to the generosity of the two artists' families.

Since the beginning of the 1980's, the Despiau-Wlérick museum has been developing an original documentation centre with information about modern figurative sculpture. Located in the premises of the conservation centre, it is accessible upon request to art history students and researchers.

This specialised documentation centre includes a set of publications (case studies, temporary exhibitions catalogues, permanent collection catalogues, academic work, etc.) about 19th and 20th century sculptors. This document collection focuses mostly on French artists. It currently houses a little over 1,000 publications. It is regularly completed with periodicals, including around twenty ongoing subscriptions.

This documentation centre also includes a set of 1500 documentary files, classified by sculptor and constantly being updated.

**Free admission**

**OPENING HOURS**  
10am-12pm / 2-6pm

**Around fifteenth april to September**  
Open every day except public holidays

**October to around fifteenth april**  
Open every day except tuesdays and public holidays

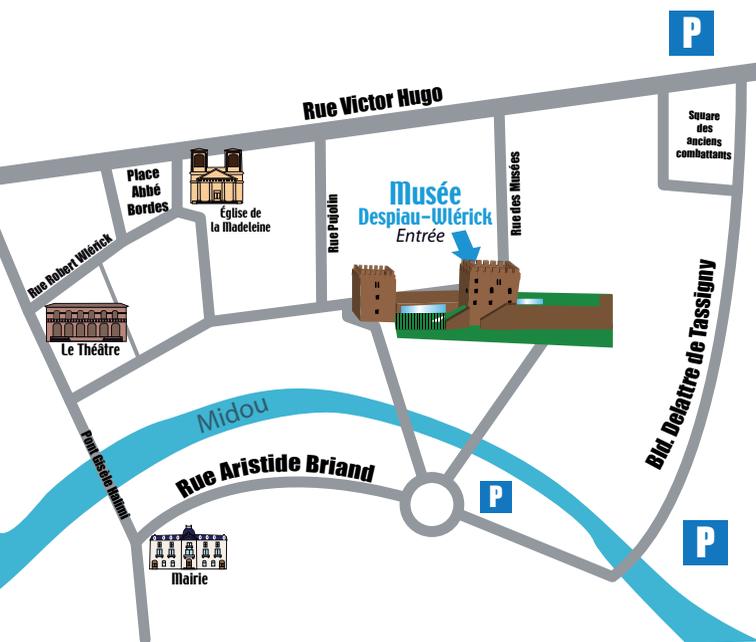
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**montdemarsan.fr**

*Closed during christmas public holidays*

## SITE PLAN



**musée**  
**Despiau-Wlérick**  
sculpture figurative du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle  
**MONT DE MARSAN**

• Crédits photos :  
Service communication Mairie de Mont de Marsan, Musée Despiau-Wlérick  
• Conception maquette et mise en page :  
Service communication, Mairie de Mont de Marsan  
• Rédaction : Musée Despiau-Wlérick et service communication  
• Impression : Castay - Aire sur l'Adour



Les  
Landes  
en  
capitale

**MONT** de  
**ARSAN**

**musée**  
Despiau-Wléric  
sculpture figurative du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle  
**3<sup>e</sup> musée**  
**d'Aquitaine**

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