Support the Musée de *Cluny*

The unique setting for the Middle Ages in the heart of Paris

Séverine Lepape, Director of the Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages

The Musée de Cluny, the national museum of the Middle Ages, is the only museum in France to specialize in the art of medieval Europe: the age of the great cathedrals, of chivalry, of tapestries and châteaux. Over the past decade, as we initiated the first major restoration campaign since the 1950s, we have been actively seeking the support of patrons. Many came forward to make this fabulous renovation possible.

Since our reopening in 2022, more than a million visitors from all over the world, including many from the United States, have come to discover the new Cluny Museum.

Historically, some of our loyal donors are Americans of French descent. We are infinitely grateful to them. But the links between France and the U.S. run deeper than direct descent. Ours is an alliance forged between cultures since the 18th century.

We look for your support. We hope you will partner with us as we continue to build our outstanding exhibition program, restore our historic garden as an integral part of the museum visit, and pursue major acquisitions.

More than ever, we need the help of supporters who, by contributing to the Musée de Cluny, forge bonds of trust and loyalty with our institution—bonds that we are happy and proud to see maintained in the long term.

The Musée de Cluny
Bringing the Middle Ages to life in the 21st century

A unique place in the heart of Paris

The Musée de Cluny in Paris, situated in the heart of the Latin quarter between the Sorbonne and Notre-Dame cathedral, invites you to travel through time, from the 1st to the 21st century. At its core is a 15th–century private mansion remarkably set between a courtyard and garden—the residence of the Abbots of Cluny. Extended in the 19th century, it stands alongside Gallo-Roman baths (1st–2nd centuries). It is based around a contemporary visitor reception extension designed in 2018.

The Musée de Cluny–National Museum of the Middle Ages. View of the visitor reception building designed by Bernard Desmoulin (architect) in 2018, and the Gallo-Roman baths (1st-2nd centuries)

The largest collection of medieval art in Europe

The Musée de Cluny, which was established in 1843, is best-known for the La Dame à la licorne (The Lady and the Unicorn) tapestry, one of the most famous medieval artworks in the world.
Its collection also boasts such masterpieces as sculptures from Notre-Dame de Paris, stained glass from the Sainte-Chapelle, the gold crowns from Guarrazar, the Colmar treasure and the earliest surviving gold papal rose, precious ivories, and tapestries.
Altogether more than 24,000 works demonstrate the extraordinary richness and diversity of European medieval artistic production, covering almost 1,000 years of history, from the end of Antiquity to the start of the Renaissance.

A museum accessible to all

The major interior renovations completed in 2022 now mean the buildings are accessible to all visitors and showcase both the collections and our architectural heritage. The Musée de Cluny offers a clear, chronological visit through 21 rooms, each an evocative, historic space enhanced by contemporary, light-filled exhibition design.

It welcomes nearly 275,000 visitors from all over the world each year and, through its dedicated staff, implements a very rich, varied program of exhibitions, conferences and guided tours, concerts, workshops, for all audiences—visitors for the day, or loyal enthusiasts of art and history, families, schoolchildren, students—to bring the Middle Ages to life in all its variety.

Major challenges lie ahead

In the coming years, the museum will undertake major work to preserve its exceptional historic buildings. This includes work on the roofs of the frigidarium (cold room of the Gallo-Roman baths), protecting and restoring the ancient remains of the Gallo-Roman baths, restoring the facades and roofs of the medieval private mansion, recreating the intimate garden of the Abbots of Cluny, and restoring the historic iron railings surrounding the public garden.

To successfully complete these major works, which are vital for preserving this unique heritage, the Musée de Cluny needs everyone's support.

To *facilitate support for the Musée de Cluny*, Americans can donate through Friends of Fondation de France

Friends of Fondation de France
USA

Friends of Fondation de France is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit registered in New York with a mission to advance French American philanthropy, dedicated to creating an ecosystem of mutual support, innovation, and ambition between US based donors and charitable projects in France, Europe and around the world.

Friends of Fondation de France has over 25 years of experience in international giving. Charitable projects approved by Friends of Fondation de France, including ours, can solicit and receive tax-deductible donations from US donors.

Donate to Friends of Fondation de France

Friends of Fondation de France carefully vets each charitable project before approving it. This ensures that American donors are supporting nonprofits that are effective, trustworthy and transparent. As a registered, 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the United States, all contributions to Friends of Fondation de France are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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Many ways to donate to Friends of Fondation de France to support the Musée de Cluny

- GIFTS BY CHECK

Simply fill out the attached donation form designating your donation to the Musée de Cluny, which is one of the pre-approved programs by Friends of Fondation de France. Once completed, mail this donation form with a check made out to Friends of Fondation de France, Inc. to:

572 Valley Road, Unit 43019
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You will find all the details for each way of giving at:
www.friendsoffdf.org/donors/ways-to-give/

For any question, you can also reach out to Friends of Fondation de France:
info@friendsoffdf.org
+212 812 4362

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Projects to *support* 2026–2028

View of the stairs leading to the chapel of the medieval hotel, edified by Abbot Jacques d'Amboise, 15th century (detail)

Works 2026–2028

Recreating the historic garden of the Abbots of Cluny

TOTAL AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED: €500,000
(The total estimated budget for the operation is €1,900,000)

View of the gable of the chapel of the medieval hotel from the new public garden, inaugurated in July 2025 (detail)

In order to put the finishing touches to the major construction works completed in 2022, the museum would like to recreate the Jardin des Abbés and in doing so, restore the perimeter of the Hôtel de Cluny's original garden. A more extensive public garden created in the 19th century, which opened onto boulevard Saint-Germain, meant the boundaries of this old garden were lost, but historic sources show their outline.

Therefore, in July 2025, a major initial stage was completed with the opening of the new public garden at the Musée de Cluny. It now offers a very pleasant fully accessible area covering almost 4,000 m², suited to current environmental and climate challenges, and offering wonderful unobstructed views of the ancient remains and the medieval private mansion.

This work also enabled the contours of the medieval private garden to be defined. This was an essential element of the mansion design, built between a courtyard and garden, which Abbé Jacques d'Amboise applied when constructing the Hôtel de Cluny at the end of the 15th century. By making clever use of the irregular plot and presence of the ancient buildings, the architect of the Hôtel de Cluny found innovative solutions to these constraints to construct a prestigious building in the heart of Paris, set back from the street and with a shallow private garden laid out along the axis of the main building.

The recreation work aims to restore it as the ornamental garden of a private residence from the late Middle Ages and to integrate it fully into the museum's visitor experience.

In addition, re-establishing it in this way is all the more significant from the perspective of architectural history, as the Hôtel de Cluny is one of the earliest examples of the hôtel particulier style of a private mansion, featuring a courtyard and garden. It is the only complete example in Paris from medieval times.

This work, funded entirely by the Musée de Cluny's own resources, will be carried out under the supervision of the Chief Architect of Historical Monuments. The studies for this new project will be conducted in 2026, and work is set to begin in 2027, with completion anticipated in spring 2028.

Exhibitions 2026–2028
Exploring the medieval world and how it has been received up to the present day

COLLECTION TARGET: €250,000 PER YEAR

View of the exhibition "Arts in France during the time of Charles VII (1422-1461)", from March 12 to June 16, 2024

Deeply committed to its prominent role in sharing the latest insights into the Middle Ages, the Musée de Cluny organizes two to three exhibitions each year in partnership with major Parisian, European, or international museums: a main exhibition co-produced with the GrandPalaisRMN and one to two smaller exhibitions using its own resources. These are highly anticipated events for our visitors, as visitor numbers show.

Between 2026 and 2028, particular attention will be given to the legacy of the Middle Ages and how this period has fascinated artists, collectors, and the general public over time. From March to July 2026, unicorns will be the focal point of an exhibition that explores their representations from Antiquity to the present day. This ancient, legendary animal continues to spark public curiosity and inspire contemporary creativity. Then, in the fall of 2026, the museum will look at the enigmatic figure of Nicolas Flamel, the father of alchemy and the presumed keeper of the secret of the philosopher's stone, as well as the sources of his fame in popular culture including, recently, Harry Potter books. In 2027, the museum will look at medievalism, a vast and prolific historical artistic phenomenon, around how the Middle Ages and this period's post-medieval representations have been received and interpreted, from the early 16th century to the present day.

Finally, this cycle will conclude in 2028, in collaboration with the Mayer van den Bergh Museum in Antwerp, featuring the collection assembled by the artist Carlo Micheli (1809–1898). These exceptional pieces, dating from the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, will eloquently illustrate how taste for this period emerged and became clear in the 19th century among collectors and art dealers, while the exhibition will also tell us the fascinating story of this collection.

Financial support is particularly crucial to cover the cost of transporting and insuring great works of art entrusted to us by institutions around the world.

In addition, the museum is developing a dynamic cultural program for each exhibition, featuring lectures, guided tours, concerts, workshops for all types of visitors. Similarly, to enhance the visitor experience, it is pursuing bringing in mediation tools tailored for children and individuals with special needs.

Finally, the publication of ambitious catalogues, the result of collaborative efforts among leading experts, enables us to explore the subject in depth and provide a permanent record of our exhibitions.

The Musée de Cluny is seeking €250,000 in additional funding each year to support all the components of its exhibitions, which are both ambitious and accessible to everyone, while ensuring the highest scientific, design, and educational levels of quality.

Museum developments 2026–2028
Continue showcasing the collection in the "Notre-Dame" room

TOTAL AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT NEEDED: €75,000
(Total budget of the operation estimated at €200,000)

The "Notre-Dame" room, new display of the fragments of the column statues from the Saint Anne portal (about 1145), and the statue of Adam (about 1260)

The "Notre-Dame" room, which was installed in the 1980s, brings together the main sculpted fragments of Notre-Dame de Paris discovered in 1977, including the famous kings' heads, alongside other pieces from the cathedral's decor that were already held at the museum. This unique space, which was not included in the major renovations completed in 2022, has mostly retained its 1980s appearance. The sculptures on display had been hardly studied or restored prior to the extensive program initiated by the Musée de Cluny in 2022, in collaboration with the C2RMF[1] and the LRMH[2]. The initial findings of this work were shown to the public in the recent exhibition "Making Stones Speak. Notre-Dame's Medieval Sculptures" organized for late 2024.

This study and restoration campaign for the collection continues, using the latest methods, allowing for the gradual replacement of old fills and repairs, fabricating more suitable bases, as well as implementing more sensitive ways of hanging works on historical walls and installing sculptures. Since the summer of 2025, the museum has been offering a new, highly educational presentation of the restored column statues from the Saint Anne portal, in order to make them easier for visitors to understand.

To continue adding to this important room and to support visitors in discovering the sculpted decor of Notre-Dame, the museum plans to install new display cases in 2026 or 2027 to exhibit important fragments from the cathedral that are currently held in storage.

1. Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France (C2RMF—Museums of France Research and Restoration Center)
2. Laboratoire de recherche des monuments historiques (Historic Monuments Research Laboratory)

This stone carvings are deceptively fragile. Some still retain traces of their original polychromy. Custom display cases that ensure the best conditions needed for preserving such precious works are costly.

At the same time, the museum will need to update the educational content of the touchscreen table by incorporating the newly added works and new findings about the collection. Located in the "Notre-Dame" room, the touchscreen table is an interactive mediation device available in three languages (French, English, and Spanish), which visitors love using. It allows the works and fragments displayed in the room to be shown in their place in the cathedral and provides detailed and updated explanations.

Finally, restoration of the sculptures is set to continue, particularly with the statues of the Saint Stephen portal in 2026 and the heads of the kings most likely in 2027–2028.
These vital operations cost substantial amounts of money, especially as they involve works that are often very heavy and large, which must be handled with the utmost care.

To successfully carry out this large-scale scientific and museum project in the "Notre-Dame" room, one of the most renowned on the tour, the Musée de Cluny is seeking support and is looking for an additional €75,000.

Restorations and Acquisitions
Preserving and developing the museum's collections

COLLECTION TARGET: €150,000 PER YEAR

Giovanni Pisano (Pisa, about 1250—?, after 1314), The Crucified Christ (detail), Tuscany, about 1270-1280, elephant ivory, traces of gilt, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages

Restore, study and preserve for better transmission

One of the fundamental missions of the Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages is to preserve and showcase the works in its care. As such, working closely with external restorers and with the C2RMF[1], the museum's scientific team conducts annual restoration campaigns according to needs and ongoing research, and occasionally for emergencies.

The museum devotes a significant part of its budget to this task, which is vital for protecting, studying and presenting its collections. However, this task is vast and requires increasingly greater resources to meet all requirements and ensure the maintenance of the approximately 24,000 works for which the museum is responsible.

Furthermore, to ensure optimal conservation, safety, and display conditions, the museum is committed to implementing the latest and most rigorous recommendations. This state-of-the-art equipment is expensive and requires regular and thorough maintenance.

Enrich the public collections

At the same time, the Musée de Cluny is continuing **a very dynamic and ambitious acquisition policy for the national collections.** Since 2019, thanks to new discoveries, opportunities on the market, and direct donations of works, the museum has been able to acquire 59 works, including extraordinary pieces, such as the ivory Christ by Giovanni Pisano (13th century) classified as a work of major cultural heritage significance (€2,450,000) or a very rare wooden statue of Mary Magdalene (15th century), classified as a National Treasure (€430,000), and more modest works, valuable testimonies of the diversity of artistic production and everyday life in the Middle Ages. Certain generous patrons also make substantial donations, including a tapestry of The Months created in Strasbourg around 1450, which has been valued at €405,000. Without these donations of works and the substantial financial support from generous patrons, some of these acquisitions, which reach high prices due to their rarity, quality, and the interest they generate, would have been impossible for the museum.

In addition, the acquisition of these works and their inclusion in the public collections mean that they can be preserved, restored, studied, and presented to all visitors. And, whenever possible, the museum willingly lends its collections for exhibitions worldwide, and contributes to the exchange and sharing of knowledge.

Your donations to the collections, whether for acquiring new works or restoring existing pieces in the collections, provide vital support for the museum to have all the resources necessary to fulfill its missions of protection, research, and enrichment for the benefit of all audiences.

1. Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France (C2RMF—Museums of France Research and Restoration Center)

The Lady and the Unicorn: Hearing (detail), tapestry, wool and silk, Southern Netherlands or Paris (?), about 1500, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages
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Page from a Book of Hours depicting the Assumption of the Virgin, illumination on parchment, Bruges, 15th century, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages ©GrandPalaisRMN (Musée de Cluny—musée national du Moyen Âge) / Gérard Blot

Votive crown with cross, gold, sapphires, emeralds, amethysts, pearls, rock crystals, mother-of-pearl and jasper, Visigothic Spain, 7th century, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages ©GrandPalaisRMN (Musée de Cluny—musée national du Moyen Âge) / Michel Urtado

Book cover plaque: "The Rivers of Paradise" (detail), gilded, chiseled and engraved copper, Meuse Valley, mid-12th century, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages ©GrandPalaisRMN (Musée de Cluny—musée national du Moyen Âge) / Franck Raux

ARNA LG

Head of a crozier with flower palmette, champlevé, engraved, chiseled, enameled and gilded copper, Limoges, early 13th century, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages ©GrandPalaisRMN (Musée de Cluny—musée national du Moyen Âge) / Jean-Gilles Berizzi

Eagle clasp reliquary, engraved and partially gilded silver, enamel, precious stones, pearls, rock crystal, Prague (?), mid-14th century, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages ©GrandPalaisRMN (Musée de Cluny—musée national du Moyen Âge) / Michel Urtado

The Lady and the Unicorn: My Only Desire, tapestry, wool and silk, Southern Netherlands or Paris (?), about 1500, Paris, Musée de Cluny—National Museum of the Middle Ages, ©GrandPalaiRMN (Musée de Cluny—musée national du Moyen Âge) / Michel Urtado