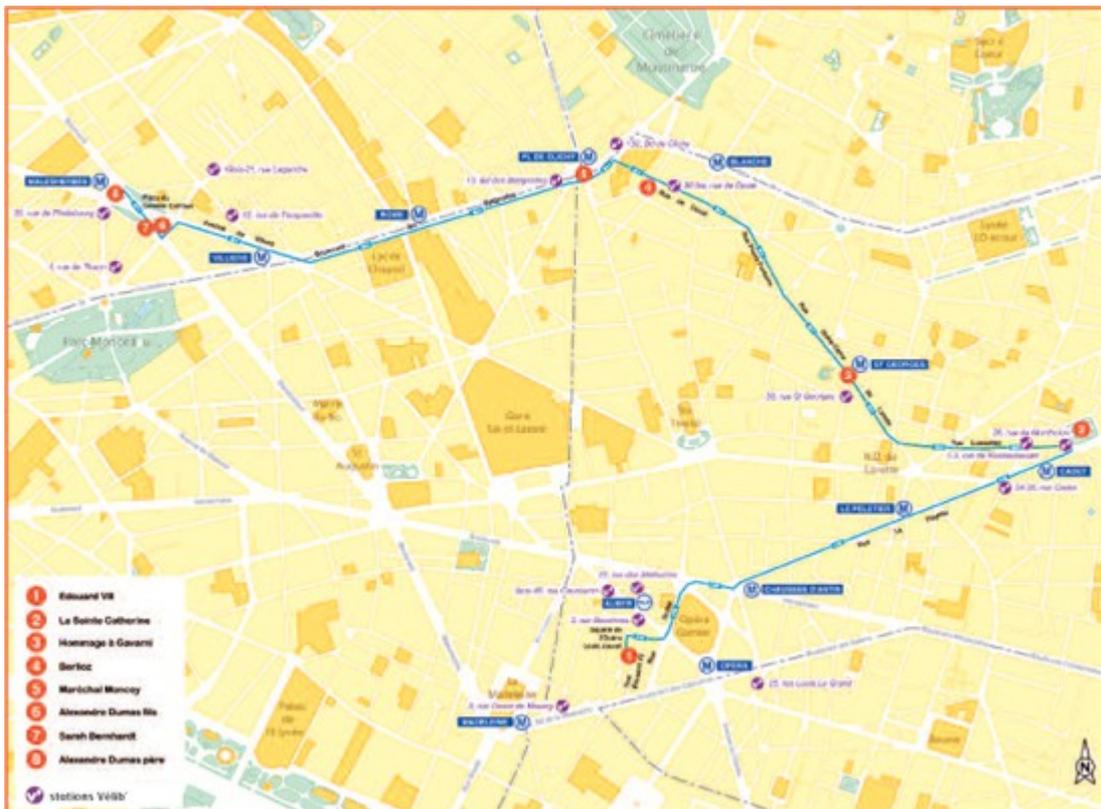


Fashions in statuary

FROM EDWARD VII TO ALEXANDRE DUMAS (FATHER)

The human body has constantly been the subject of attention from sculptors. Antiquity gave us representations of naked gods and goddesses, which served as models throughout the Renaissance. Full nudity gradually came to be seen as indecent and idealised bodies lost their sensuality. In 1776, Pigalle, showing an elderly, half-naked Voltaire, caused a scandal due to the realism he brought to the old man's wrinkled body. It was then Pajou's turn in 1785, when he exhibited his Psyche, her body completely naked, full of a disturbing sensuality and her face showing extreme pain. The controversy surrounding these works and their underlying realism soon opened up a new debate: in what kind of attire is it honourable to represent Great Men? As the days of Heroes were in the past, they were first of all dressed as Roman emperors under the aegis of David. They were then dressed as men. In this way, sculpture brought bronzes down from their pedestals and made them mingle with the vulgum pecus, dressed before long in a simple frock coat: they were citizens among citizens. This immediate quality gradually transformed commemorative statuary into a real art of propaganda, representing the heroes of the Revolution and paying tribute to the great and small benefactors of Humanity and France and the little people of Paris. In order to have an even greater effect on the spectators, sculptors made their works even more informal, dressing them in the current fashions, or in contrast shrouded them in mystery by dressing them in historical costumes.

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(9th) Place Edouard VII

Sculptor Paul Landowski (1875 – 1961)

Edward VII

Throughout his reign, Edward VII (1841 – 1910) focused his attention on foreign and military affairs. He was the architect of the Entente Cordiale (was a series of agreements signed in April 1904 between The UK and

France, putting an end to almost one thousand years of sporadic conflict between the two nations and formalising the peace which had existed since the end of the Napoleonic wars) between France and England. Paris, which he liked principally for its spirit, gastronomy and women, paid tribute to him in 1913. The young Paul Landowski wanted to make his mark here, far removed from the style of his Sainte Geneviève or Christ the Redeemer. In the great tradition of equestrian statues, the King, calmly guiding his horse, is represented in his role as Head of the Army. He is wearing the realistically created Marshal's uniform which befitted his role: plumed helmet, cloak, jacket (probably red), crossed by a sash and adorned with military decorations, white breeches and riding boots. The choice of this classic iconography is reminiscent of the portraits commissioned by the sovereign in his own country. This was an official portrait meant to express nobility and power, in the centre of a well laid-out Square.



(9th) Square Montholon, 79 Rue Lafayette

Sculptor Julien Lorieux (1876 – 1915)

Sainte Catherine

The Square Montholon was designed in 1862 – 1863 when Rue Lafayette was opened. In 1913, the City of Paris bought the work by Julien Lorieux, composed in 1908. But it was not until 1923 that the group was installed, even though its creator had been dead since 1915. The five young women in this group are joyfully celebrating Sainte Catherine's Day. This celebration (every 25 November), which has been popular in cities since the 19th century, was then considered to be the festival of feminine youth. Young women aged 25 who were still unmarried put on hats, as shown here, specially made for the occasion, decorated with green and yellow ribbons, and sometimes orange blossom (held by the girl on the left, as well as the one in the centre wearing a bodice, with perhaps papier-mâché oranges on her hat).

This "late" unmarried status mainly affected modest professions such as seamstresses and milliners (hat-makers) in particular, for whom the event became a real corporative festival. With the advent of industrialisation, increasing numbers of young women wanted to work to support themselves; here they are wearing suits, sombre clothes made of plain dyed fabric, simply and practically cut and particularly well suited to an active, urban life.

The festival was held at women's workplaces (seamstresses' workshops, drapers' shops, etc.) and then spilled over into the public area of the street – as seems to be the case in this work; the women seem to be spontaneous and in a mad race - before going to the ball, the last chance for the Sainte Catherine's Day girls to find a husband.



(9th) Place Saint-Georges

Sculptor Denys Puech (1854 – 1942)

Tribute to Gavarni

Paul Gavarni, whose real name was Sulpice Guillaume Chevalier (1804 – 1866) was, together with Daumier and a few others, one of the great names in press caricatures in the 19th century. Like Daumier, he spent his life taunting bourgeois pretensions in lively, cruel sketches. In 1904, the Society of Painter Lithographers commissioned Denys Puech to create a fountain to his memory. Gavarni's bust dominates the entire work. Sketching a drawing in his notebook, he is casually wearing his cape over his shoulder, while his morning coat is open at the collar to show a knotted cravat, in the fashion of the Romantic period. The pedestal is decorated with scenes alternating high relief and bas-relief, showing famous characters from his works. At the front can be seen characters from the Paris Carnival which inspired him, particularly The Dockworker, the young woman who, behind Harlequin, is wearing trousers for the occasion, clothes women were not allowed to wear at the time. At the back on the right can be seen The Pretty Milliner carrying a hat box, no doubt on her way to make a delivery. She is wearing a dress-coat over her dress and on her head is a hood, a type of hat which

covered most of her head and was very characteristic of the period.



(9th) Square Berlioz

Sculptor Alfred Lenoir (1850 – 1920)

Berlioz

The original work by Alfred Lenoir, in bronze, was melted down under the Occupation but replaced after the war by a copy in stone. According to the photographs by Pierre Petit, Berlioz is portrayed as a romantic genius, standing on a rock which represents the inspiration of nature. His gesture, and the wide drape of his cape, which seems ready to unfurl, express the power of his music intended to stir the soul. His hair is parted in the Romantic fashion and under his cape he is wearing a shawl-collar dress-coat which opens onto a cravat tied several times around his neck and just allowing the tips of the shirt collar to be seen. His trousers are wide but gathered at the ankles, in accordance with the fashion in 1834 – 1845. Although Berlioz did not receive the celebrity he wanted in Paris, the erection of this monument, located near his residences during the 1830s (particularly 4, Rue de Calais), testifies to the recognition, albeit late, he received.



(18th) Place de Clichy

Sculptor Amédée Doublemard (1826 – 1900)

Marshal Moncey

Moncey sees the enemy threaten the walls of Paris. “We have to defend ourselves” said the old soldier. Moncey’s hearty words and their sincere tone revived the militiamen. Crowds of volunteers came forward to go and take up their positions. Such was their exaltation that they refused to lie in ambush in the houses following Moncey’s orders. “We are not afraid”, they said, “we do not want to hide”. “Do you believe”, cried Allent, “that this most senior Marshal would advise you to carry out an act of cowardice!” So they sheltered from the bullets. (H. Houssaye). Amédée Doublemard (1870) represented the Marshal with his sabre in his hand, extending a protective hand to the Invalides and the national guards who made up the militia, during the defence of the Barrier of Clichy against the Russian troops on 30 March 1814. He is wearing the military uniform of the Imperial period, consisting as in the preceding era of a dress-coat and breeches, and his hair is long and tied in a bow. Dominating the structure, the City of Paris, represented as a woman wearing a crown in the form of a rampart, is brandishing an eagle above the scene.



(17th) Place du Général Catroux

Sculptor François Sicard (1862 – 1934)

Sarah Bernhardt

“Paris loves Sarah Bernhardt in that obsessive, unhealthy way certain women love their “soul mate”. The beating of the heart of Paris can be timed using the pulse of Mrs Sarah Bernhardt. Paris used everything, the slightest domestic event, the most banal incident in her life, to return to her” (Octave Mirbeau).

In 1926, François Sicard erected this monument to one of the first stars, who prided herself on her knowledge of painting and sculpture. For both the pose and the general characteristics of her clothes, he was inspired by

postcards edited during performances in 1893. However, he adapted Phaedra's toga (peplos) in accordance with the Art Deco idea of Antiquity. The comedienne's figure has been changed to make her more slender and shapely and her clothes have been simplified to fit in with the Neo-Classical aesthetics of the 1920s and 1930s. These aesthetic choices are consistent with the gravity of the scene when, in the fifth act, Phaedra appears transformed, thinner, as if wearing a shroud, announcing her forthcoming suicide.



(17th) Place du Général Catroux

Sculptor René de Saint Marceaux (1845 – 1915)

Alexandre Dumas (son)

The fashion for public tributes had brought together three generations of Dumas on this Place: the grandfather, a mixed-race General who had won fame during the Revolutionary wars (his statue was destroyed during the German Occupation), Dumas (father), who spent his last years on the corner of Boulevard Malesherbes and Dumas (son), who ended his days at 11 Rue Ampère.

The successful writer Zola said of him, "I am not keen on his talent. He is an overrated writer, whose style is mediocre and whose ideas are lessened by the strangest theories. I think posterity will be hard on him".

Together with Maxime Ducamp, he took the sides of law and order and roundly condemned the Revolutionaries during the Commune, insulting Courbet and his friends. Of his works, only La Dame aux Camélias (The Lady of the Camellias) has really survived. At the request of the Dumas family and a committee dedicated to it, René de Saint Marceaux created this work in 1906 showing the writer with his quill and wearing a stylised coat, circled by his muses, who are enveloped in a long veil and seem to join him in the clouds on which he is sitting. This ascending, spiral movement and the wide drapes accompanying it denote the great influence of Art Nouveau on this sculptor from Reims.



(17th) Place du Général Catroux

Sculptor Gustave Doré (1832 – 1883)

Alexandre Dumas (father)

"Alexandre Dumas is one of those men who could be called the sowers of civilisation; he creates a thirst for reading: he opens up the human heart and cultivates it. Alexandre Dumas seduces, fascinates, interests, amuses and teaches. Of all his works, which are so numerous, so varied, so alive, so charming and so powerful, shines the kind of light which belongs to France alone. All the most moving emotions of drama, all the ironies and depths of comedy, all the analyses of the novel and all the intuitions of history are in the surprising body of work created by this important and versatile author" (Victor Hugo).

Gustave Doré, better known for his humoristic drawings, proved to be a skilled sculptor, faithfully transcribing Hugo's letter into the bronze. Dumas is depicted here in casual artist's clothes, wearing a shirt and trousers. He sits imposingly like a giant at the top of the structure, with a young woman below him reading to the worker and student leaning towards her, while d'Artagnan keeps watch on the other side of the pedestal.

Sainte Catherine

Alexandre Dumas (father)

Sarah Bernhardt



Throughout the capital, the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Paris maintains some six hundred commemorative monuments and statues which form part of the municipal heritage. These works, most of which date from the beginning of the Third Republic, are the result of an active policy of artistic commissions intended to decorate the squares and streets, in accordance with the wishes of the elected officials of Paris. They include some of the masterpieces of French sculpture: The Fountain of the Four Continents by Carpeaux and The Triumph of the Republic by Dalou.

The 20th century was for a long time more cautious in this respect, but over the last twenty years or so, the City of Paris has revived the tradition of commissioning public art. In 2004, it set up the Art Committee in the City, a consultative committee of elected officials and experts to provide an opinion on policy in this area. Together with this Committee, the City of Paris commissioned 35 permanent or temporary public works between 2004 and 2008.

From Exercise Tower by Wang Du (Paris 17th) to the Dance of the Emerging Fountain by Chen Zhen (Paris 13th) and the Forest of Candelabras by the Berlin collective Inges Idee (Paris 19th), all these works can be discovered throughout Paris.