

Press Release

Exhibition

1518, Dance Fever

**Œuvre Notre-Dame Museum – Arts of the Middle Ages
20 October 2018 – 24 February 2019**

In July 1518, dozens of people suddenly began dancing in the streets of Strasbourg. Men or women, it seemed that nothing could stop them. This ‘epidemic’, which lasted several weeks, shook the Strasbourg community and impressed people’s minds to the point of being recorded by many preachers or chroniclers of municipal history from the 16th to 20th centuries.

The exhibition aims to return to this phenomenon 500 years later and to observe how the city administration, the clergy or the medical profession tried to deal with it. Retracing the sequence of events, it will endeavour to shed light on the context of this particular historical episode and to relate it to other cases of ‘dancing mania’ that marked the Middle Ages or more recent periods.

Based on sources dating from the time of the event, the presentation seeks to distinguish the facts from abusive interpretations giving rise to a simplistic view of a medieval world traversed by irrational urges and shaken by crises. Reinforced by an immersive scenography, this approach to the reality and imagination of the Middle Ages also focuses on interpretations of these events given by historians and medical specialists up to the contemporary period. In conclusion, it questions other behavioural epidemics of various kinds and the mental or social processes underlying them.

Exhibition Curator: Cécile Dupeux, curator, Œuvre Notre-Dame Museum

Research Advisors: Georges Bischoff, Emeritus Professor, History of the Middle Ages; Elisabeth Clementz, Senior Lecturer, Institute of the History of Alsace, University of Strasbourg

This exhibition enjoys exceptional financial support from Strasbourg Eurometropolis and received the label “Année européenne du patrimoine culturel 2018” by the Ministry of Culture.



VISITOR INFORMATION

Musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame – Arts du Moyen-Âge

3, Place du Château, Strasbourg

Open 10 am à 6 pm. Closed on Mondays

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