

GrandPalais June 20 - August 17, 2025

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Exhibition catalogue

*Royal Tapestries. From French Craftsmanship to Contemporary Danish Tapestries*  
GrandPalaisRmnÉditions, softback, 23.5 x 18 cm, 48 pages, 50 illustrations.  
Available in French, English, Danish and German.  
€14.90

Adults

**Guided visit**  
Discover the wealth of weaving techniques in a celebration of Danish craftsmanship and cultural heritage.  
**90 minutes**  
**€215**

Families and children

**Guided visit - individuals / adults**  
This major exhibition presents 16 tapestries that were commissioned for the 750th anniversary of Koldinghus royal castle in Denmark. Created by Mobilier National's most talented weavers, these vast hangings are based on original designs by four renowned Danish artists. Accompanied by a guide, discover the wealth of weaving techniques celebrating Danish craftsmanship and cultural heritage.  
**90 minutes**  
**Full price: €12 / Reduced price: €10**

**Explorer visit - individuals / families**  
Adapted for younger visitors, age 7 to 16. This major exhibition presents 16 tapestries that were commissioned for the 750th anniversary of Koldinghus royal castle in Denmark. Created by Mobilier National's most talented weavers, these vast hangings are based on original designs by four renowned Danish artists. Accompanied by a guide, discover the wealth of weaving techniques celebrating Danish craftsmanship and cultural heritage, with stories and games.  
**60 minutes**  
**Full price: €8 / Reduced price: €5**

School groups

**Explorer visit – school groups (age 6 to 10)**  
Accompanied by a guide, discover the wealth of weaving techniques celebrating Danish craftsmanship and cultural heritage, with stories and games.  
**60 minutes**  
**€84**

**"Petit Mob" visit and workshop – school groups (age 6 to 14)**

**The art of weaving**  
Every Tuesday, "Petit Mob" hosts fun activities that introduce younger visitors to handcrafts and manual techniques. Explore the secrets of tapestry-making in a visit/workshop, led by an educator and adapted to different age groups. Would-be weavers choose different coloured wools and try their hand at weaving.

Maximum group size: 30 for a class, 20 for individuals

**Tuesdays from June 24 to July 22**

10.00-11.30  
13.00-14.30  
15.00-16.30  
**90 minutes**  
**€105**

Visitors with a disability and social inclusion

**Guided visit in French Sign Language - individuals**  
Discover the wealth of weaving techniques in a celebration of Danish craftsmanship and cultural heritage.  
**June 25 at 14:45**  
**120 minutes**  
**€7**

**Guided visit – groups**  
Accompanied by a guide, explore the techniques and stories behind Danish tapestries.  
**90 minutes**  
**€30**

Accessible labels for younger and older visitors are proposed throughout the exhibition.

**Self-guided visits – groups**  
Explore the exhibition spaces at your own pace. Free with a reservation

**Information at**  
[www.grandpalais.fr/fr/vous-etes/visiteurs-relevant-du-champ-social](https://www.grandpalais.fr/fr/vous-etes/visiteurs-relevant-du-champ-social)

Reservations and information: [contact.association@grandpalaisrmn.fr](mailto:contact.association@grandpalaisrmn.fr)

Visitor information

June 20 to August 17, 2025 at Grand Palais

**Access:** 17 Avenue du Général Eisenhower  
75008 Paris  
Gallery 7.2

Tuesday to Sunday, 10.00-19.30  
Late opening on Friday until 22.00

**Full price:** €8  
**Reduced price:** €5 Group price: €21  
(four people including two aged 18-25)

**Free**  
Under-18s, job-seekers, visitors with a disability,

Pass GrandPalais

Pass GrandPalais gives holders free and unlimited access to Grand Palais exhibitions, as well as to collections and exhibitions at 15 national museums. Holders also benefit from reduced rates for History of Art talks, live performances and Palais des Enfants.

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# Royal Tapestries

## From French Craftsmanship to Contemporary Danish Tapestries

GrandPalaisRmn presents an exceptional commission for tapestries, the result of a generous donation by the New Carlsberg Foundation in 2018, on the occasion of the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Koldinghus royal castle in Denmark.

Jointly produced by GrandPalaisRmn, the Royal Danish Collection and Manufactures Nationales - Sèvres & Mobilier National, this exhibition offers a unique opportunity to admire 15 of these 16 monumental tapestries. They were woven at Manufacture Nationale de Beauvais, Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins and private workshops in Aubusson, prior to hanging in Koldinghus Castle.

The exhibition sets these tapestries within the long history of French royal commissions, in particular under Louis XIV.

Areas are set aside where visitors of all ages can discover the secrets and expertise of the Mobilier National manufactories and GrandPalaisRmn studios, with activities and demonstrations.

# Interview with the exhibition curators

Maria Gadegaard, Senior Curator, The Royal Danish Collection  
Emmanuel Pénicaut, heritage conservator, executive director of collections, Manufactures Nationales  
Sophie Radix, art historian, exhibition programmer, GrandPalaisRmn

Royal Tapestries. From French Craftsmanship to Contemporary Danish Tapestries takes place in a recently restored gallery at Grand Palais. Could you tell us something about the layout and scenography of the exhibition?

S. R.: The exhibition is presented in a magnificently restored, 1,200 square-metre space on two levels, including a mezzanine.

On the first level, the layout is designed as a continuous flow between centuries, the creativity of artists in response to royal commissions and the expertise of France’s craftsmen and craftswomen, illustrated by tapestries, cartoons, tools and plaster busts. The second level, which offers a vantage point from which to view the works below, presents weaving looms. There is also an educational space.

Our three establishments worked together to offer the best possible environment, in terms of scenography, engagement and experience, for visitors to admire and enjoy these tapestries.

The tapestries are on display at Grand Palais for almost two months. They were woven, thanks to the patronage of the New Carlsberg Foundation in Denmark, at Mobilier National. What made you choose a French institution?

M. G.: In 1988 Bjørn Nørgaard was commissioned to create a series of tapestries or the fiftieth birthday of Queen Margrethe II in 1990. These 17 tapestries, which hang in the Knights Hall at Christiansborg Palace, next to the Danish Parliament, were woven in Paris by Mobilier National with such nuance that it seemed obvious this new commission should also be entrusted to Mobilier National.

As an institution, Mobilier National has a profound respect for time-honoured crafts. Weaving has been practiced there throughout history and its extensive knowledge of this art is unrivalled anywhere in the world.

How were the subjects and artists chosen for these prestigious tapestries?

M. G.: The New Carlsberg Foundation’s donation enabled one of the largest site-specific art projects in the history of Denmark: 16 tapestries of the finest quality, designed by four contemporary artists, were commissioned for the historic halls of the royal castle.

Kirstine Roepstorff, Bjørn Nørgaard, Tal R and Alexander Tovborg were chosen by the New Carlsberg Foundation. They designed 16 detailed cartoons as the basis for the tapestries.

Each of these artists based their work on themes connected to the location and history of Koldinghus: the border castle (Kirstine Roepstorff), the royal castle (Alexander Tovborg), the ruin (Tal R) and the rebuilding (Bjørn Nørgaard).

The brief for the project emphasised that the artists must be given complete artistic freedom. The idea was never to reproduce illustrations of historic events at Koldinghus or in Denmark but for them to imagine engaging and creative visual narratives.

These tapestries, which will hang in the armoury at Koldinghus Castle in Denmark, are impressive in size. How long did it take to make each one and how many weavers were involved?

E. P.: Weaving began on the three large tapestries – two at Manufacture des Gobelins and one at Manufacture de Beauvais – in June 2020 and finished between end 2024 and early 2025: so a good four years in total.

The size of the tapestries meant that two or three weavers could work simultaneously on each one - generally three for the two tapestries at Gobelins and two for the tapestry at Beauvais – with teams rotating over time. So there were eight weavers working on the tapestries at any given time and 20 weavers in all.

Cartoonists transpose the artist’s design to the cartoon. Do they have a role in choosing the colours and type of wool for the tapestry?

E. P.: That may have been true in the seventeenth century but not today, when the cartoon is entirely the work of the artist. For the Danish project, it’s possible that the three artists made preparatory sketches, which we didn’t see, but more to the point they produced the full-scale cartoons themselves.

The choice of colours, materials and techniques is made by the weavers when they receive the cartoons and begin preparations. The artists then approve these choices. As a general rule, they can give useful guidance as to the colours but not the materials or techniques, which are not their domain.

What messages do you hope visitors will take away from this remarkable exhibition?

M. G.: When Danish contemporary art and French craftsmanship are woven together, this isn’t just about artistic creation. It’s also part of an extensive and lasting collaboration between two countries. In a broader context, the exhibition supports the solid and cordial alliance between Denmark and France.

The Danish monarchy and the New Carlsberg Foundation has, each in its own way, encouraged, nurtured and maintained this bond over hundreds of years.

S.R.: For the first and only time in France, Grand Palais is showing works which will then hang in Koldinghus Castle in Denmark. This is a unique opportunity to see the vitality of French craftsmanship in the service of Danish contemporary creation, but also to discover anew the tapestries depicting the reign of Louis XIV that illustrate our history books.

By bringing together these two sets of works, which bear witness to artists’ views of their time, we are also able to question the society in which we live, as well as its values, beliefs and hopes...

## Chronology

1604 Foundation of the Garde-meuble de la Couronne.

1662 Foundation of the Manufacture des Gobelins: commission for the Histoire du roi.

1665 Foundation of the Manufacture de Beauvais.

1665 Weaving of the Histoire du roi tapestry – commissioned by Louis XIV to 1679 glorify the significant events of his reign.

1768 King Christian VII of Denmark visits France in the autumn of 1768. During his visit to the factory, he is presented with a set of tapestries by Louis XV.

1964 Creation of the Atelier de Recherche et de Création (Workshop for Research and Creation) of the Mobilier National.

1990 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of Queen Margrethe II of Denmark – commission for a series of tapestries depicting the history of Denmark for Christiansborg Palace in Copenhagen.

2000 Installation of the tapestries at Christiansborg Palace.

2018 To mark the 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the castle of Koldinghus, the New Carlsberg Foundation commissions sixteen tapestries for the ballroom and the armory.

2025 Tapestries come off the looms and are exhibited at the Grand Palais before being installed in Denmark.

Curator

Maria Gadegaard, Senior Curator, The Royal Danish Collection

Emmanuel Pénicaut, heritage conservator, director of collections, Manufactures nationales - Sèvres & Mobilier national

Sophie Radix, art historian, exhibition programmer GrandPalaisRmn

Project manager, GrandPalaisRmn

Pierrette Besse, Jessica Crasnier

Registrars, GrandPalaisRmn

Arielle Lebrun, Candice Recca

Scenographers, Mobilier national

Clément Hado, Anthony Lelonge

Graphic designers

Atelier Pierre Pierre (Pierre Pautler, Florent Pierre, Kévin Lartaud)

Lighting designer, La Maison lumière

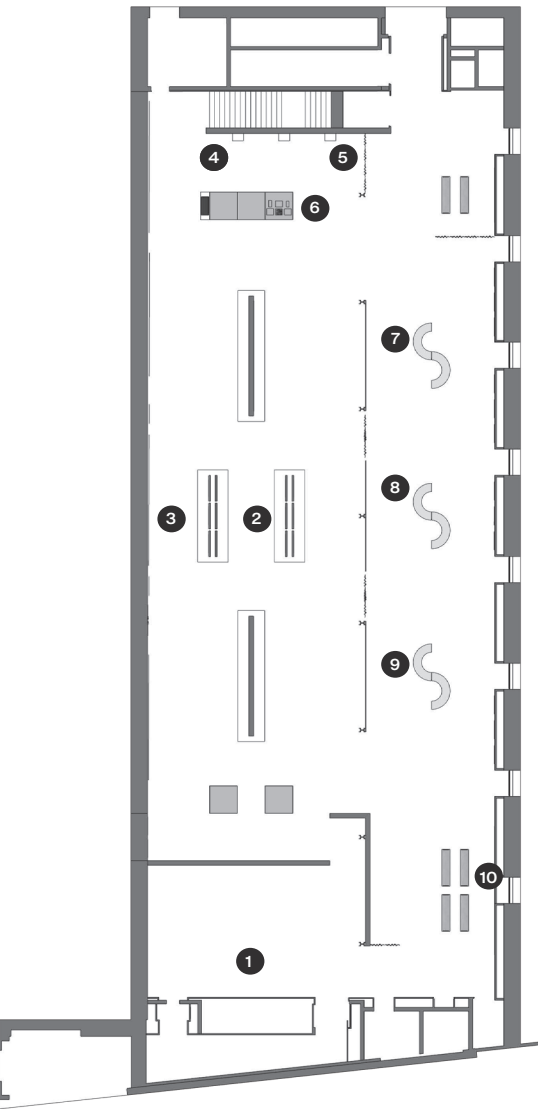
Simon Broggin

Communication officer

Émilie Jean Bouillaud

# Exhibition layout

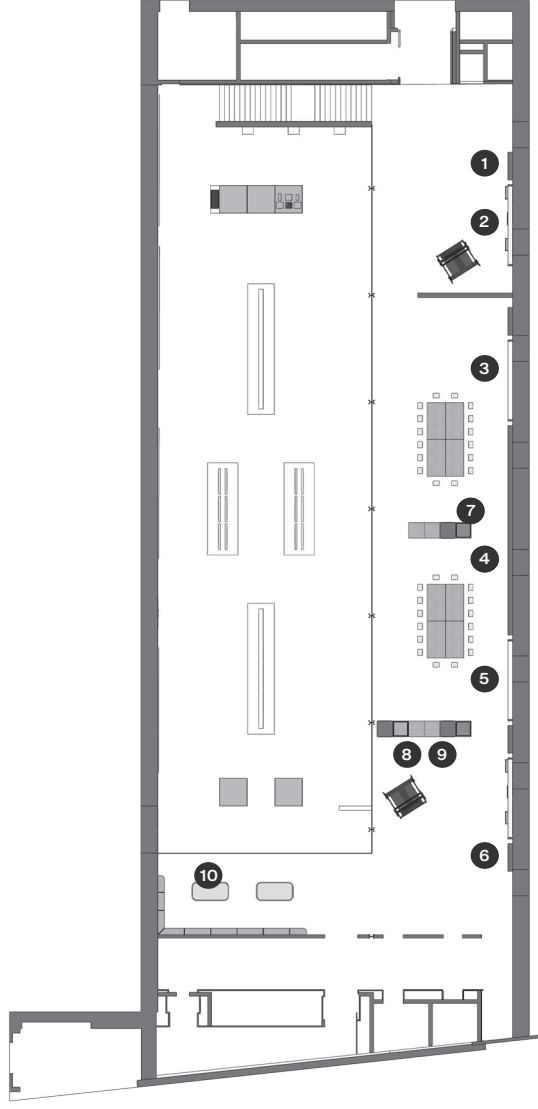
## Level 1, the tapestries



© Anthony Lelonge and Clément Hado, Manufactures nationales

- Entrance and introduction.
- Danish artists produced full-scale cartoons. These are the designs from which the tapestries are woven on looms.
- The History of the King after Charles Le Brun is one of the most famous hangings, comprising 14 tapestries. Four large compositions and two entrefenêtres are shown here.
- Coloured wool (chosen before weaving begins), pots of dye, sample weavings and tools are presented in display cases.
- In 1667 Manufacture des Gobelins became the “royal manufactory of furnishings for the Crown” at the initiative of Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683) (Bust by Antoine Coysevox, plaster, moulding and casting studio,
- Charles Le Brun (1619-1690) was court painter to Louis XIV and the first director of Manufacture des Gobelins. (Bust by Antoine Coysevox, plaster, moulding and casting studio, GrandPalaisRmn).
- Bjørn Nørgaard (b. 1947) depicts *The Origin of the Future*, charting history from the dinosaurs to the discovery of DNA.
- Men Falling off Horses by Tal R (b.1967)* suggests medieval tapestries with its blocks of colour and organisation in registers, from bottom to top.
- Alexander Tovborg (b. 1983) uses symbolic elements to evoke Denmark in *God, Queen and Country*.
- Work began on the first pieces in the summer of 2020. Weaving is entirely by hand and takes many years. One tapestry is unfinished and will be presented to visitors as a digital projection.

## Mezzanine, workshop and museum shop



© Anthony Lelonge and Clément Hado, Manufactures nationales

- Heirs to four centuries of history and merged in 2025, Mobilier National and promote the excellence of French craftsmanship. 53 skills are practiced and preserved at the nine Manufactures and Ateliers, in eight regions of France.
- Enclos des Gobelins : a brief history of the royal manufactories.
- Chemist Michel-Eugène Chevreuil studied dyes and colour theory. He was director of the wool dyeworks at Gobelins between 1824 and 1883. He devised a classification system for colours, known as a colour wheel. From three primary colours, Chevreuil established 72 pure colours for wool, which are broken down into 14,400 tones.
- Les manufactures nationales françaises : definitions, schemas and key figures.
- Focus on creation: preparatory drawing tapestry cartoon, woven tapestry.
- Focus on rugs : Manufacture de la Savonnerie and pompoms in every shade.
- The raw ingredients of a tapestry: wool and dye baths
- Artist and artisan, from cartoon to sampling.
- Weaving techniques : high-warp, low-warp removing the weaving from the loom.
- Museum shop