



Sculpture

As the guardian of a once royal but now national heritage (collection), the Casting Workshop of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux (RMN) has been breathing life into the greatest masterpieces in the history of creation for 200 years. Reproductions of the world's most famous works of art are still made today using original processes that combine traditional craftsmanship with excellent modern techniques.

An Outstanding Tradition – Over 200 Years of Expertise

Moulds have been used in the teaching of art since the Renaissance and have permitted the transmission of the great classics of Western art.

A trade

The reproduction of a sculpture requires great skill and care. Throughout the process, from the preservation and restoration of the moulds, handling of the originals, taking of new impressions, digitisation and fabrication of the models to the reproduction of the sculpture and its patina, excellent teamwork, sure hands and specialised technical knowledge are required to produce first-rate replicas and protect the original artworks.

The team is made up of qualified statue casters. Their experience in taking impressions and working with piece moulds, and their knowledge of the original works gives the casting workshop special expertise. A team specialised in patinas works alongside the casters.

Materials

In the beginning, most casts were made of plaster, a material which is very plastic but does not wear to enthusiasts, alongside terracotta and bronze, both favourite materials for statuary.

The workshop has inherited traditional know-how but also develops its processes and techniques, particularly by using synthetic materials. These “noble” resins make the workshop's production more durable. The workshop has developed a composite material, a mix of resin and marble powder, which gives the casts remarkable finesse, “transparency” and quality. It is hard to tell the original from the “genuine” copy.

It is for its technical expertise and precision work as well as its respect for the original sculpture and the faithfulness of its replicas that many museums, institutions and art lovers call on the services of the casting workshop.

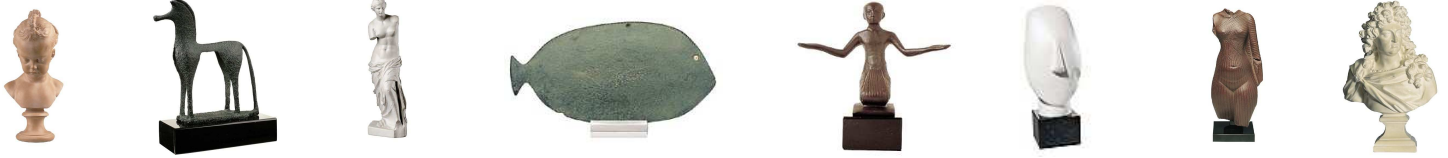
Plaster... Bronze... Synthetic materials (resin and composite materials containing marble powder)...
Terracotta

Authentic Patinas

Adding patina is a major aspect of reproduction.

The patina ensures that the replica is true to the model and has exactly the same character. The workshop offers a wide range of nuances and types of classical patinas. Special nuances can be developed on the client's request.





The RMN missions

Acquisition of works of art

Acquiring works of art to expand the national collections is the Réunion des musées nationaux's primary mission, for which it was set up in 1895. It makes purchases - from individuals or art dealers or bids at public auctions - and manages donations and dations.

In 2007, the RMN spent 11.4 million Euros on acquisitions.

Visitor reception

The RMN participates in the development of reception areas as well as in the administration and management of public services (access, ticketing, cloakroom, guided tours, booking, etc.), for the majority of national museums and for the exhibitions that it co-organizes with them. Its board of directors fixes entrance fees as well as exemptions and discounts granted to specific visitor categories.

Since 1990, the RMN has undertaken regular surveys of visitors attending national museums and exhibitions. Furthermore, the RMN is closely associated with the financial management of the musées et monuments Pass. This season ticket enables tourists to visit the 70 museums and monuments in Paris and in the Ile-de-France area at a fixed price calculated for one, three or five days.

Organization of temporary exhibitions

Since 1930, the RMN has been in charge of the administrative and logistic organization of most temporary exhibitions presented in national museums as well as the larger exhibitions of the Galeries nationales du Grand Palais since they opened to the public in 1966.

The organization of a major international exhibition requires a considerable amount of work that usually covers a period of four or five years.

Exhibitions in national museums are scheduled several years in advance by a special committee which meets regularly at the RMN's head office.

The RMN fixes the exhibitions' budget and supervises its implementation. It negotiates and signs co-production agreements with foreign museums when large international exhibitions are displayed successively in two or three countries or, in the case of regional exhibitions, within French territorial communities. The RMN also administers loan applications as well as the shipping and insurance of works of art. Together with the exhibition commissioners, the RMN chooses the architect-designer who will be in charge of mounting the exhibition. Once the exhibition is organized, the RMN carries out the promotional work (press relations, advertising...).

The RMN is also responsible for finding sponsors and partners who wish to bring financial support to these exhibitions.

In addition, the RMN co-produces or contributes on request to the organization of exhibitions which are presented by institutions other than national museums, sharing its own experience and know-how with them.

The RMN therefore works regularly with regional museums, institutions affiliated to the Direction du Patrimoine as well as with the Culturerance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on a selection of international exhibitions.

The RMN organizes around 20 exhibitions a year, which differ in size, subject and cost.

Cultural distribution and publication

The RMN has always had a commercial activity, although at the beginning it was limited to selling the engravings and molds produced by the Louvre's workshops. In the 1930s, it took over the publication of postcards, guides and catalogues for the national museums' permanent collections and the temporary exhibitions organized by the RMN.

The RMN also disseminates cultural material, striving to reconcile its mission as a public service with market forces. It therefore focuses on top quality, both in the choice and content of the products and in their production.

The products sold by the RMN fall into several categories: books, images, videos, CD-ROMs and DVD-ROMs, molds, engravings, jewelry and gifts.

