

Toile de Jouy Museum

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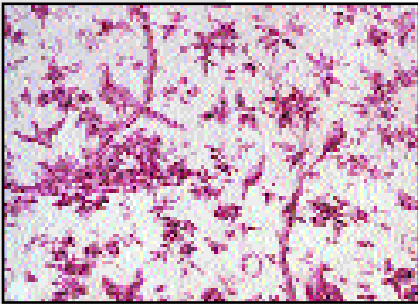
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The Museum's Collections

The Toile de Jouy Museum, created in 1977, and dedicated to the activity of the Jouy factory and textile printing, was transferred to a XIXth century château in 1991, to which a contemporary building was added.



More than 30 000 original toile de Jouy designs exist. They are of two kinds: polychrome floral designs (les Indiennes) and monochrome scenes with figures. A fair place should be restored to the floral designs. To the collective memory, "toile de Jouy" evokes the monochrome scenes with figures. These toiles were mainly used for furnishing and decoration, and therefore preserved in attics. Forgotten for many years, then rediscovered, they reappeared in their original colours, as if they had just been printed.

The polychrome designs, mostly of floral inspiration, were, on the contrary, used predominantly for clothing (as well as furnishing). Caracos, petticoats, scarves, waistcoats, neckerchiefs often ended up as rags. According to known design archives and prints, 30 000 motifs were created for block printing (wood block) as compared with 650 for copper.

During the past twenty years, the museum has put together an exceptional collection of more than 5 000 items.

This collection is enriched regularly by toiles de Jouy, objects in relation to Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf, founder of the factory, and printed cottons originating from other French and foreign factories: Nantes, Alsace, Provence, Italy, Great Britain, Russia etc. The Museum also collects contemporary fabrics of direct Jouy-en-Josas inspiration. These facets of historic and decorative acquisitions are supplemented by a technical section: plates, copper rollers and wood blocks evoke the techniques used for printing on cotton.

In order to develop a heritage of high quality, as comprehensive as possible, on the subject of printed cotton, the Toile de Jouy Museum looks for original Indiennes, source of inspiration to the craftsmen of the XVIIIth century.

The Museographic Itinerary



A model evokes the site and innumerable buildings, the longest of which, at one hundred and ten metres, was unique in its time. In the technical exhibition room, documents and objects (engraving tools, wood blocks, plates, copper rollers, machines, painted models, prints and engravings...) describe the different printing techniques.

On the first floor, bed hangings and ornaments, textile panels, caracos, dresses, waistcoats and petticoats bear witness to the decorative and technical evolution of toile de Jouy. The riche collection of printed toiles from other French and foreign factories is presented at the end of the visit.

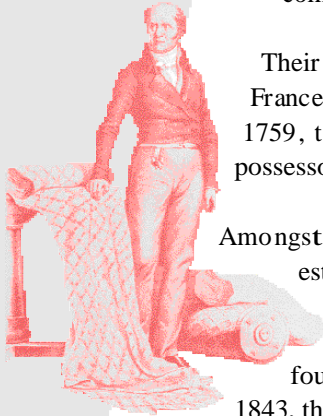
The museum also pays particular attention to the evocation of the founder of the factory, Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf, through the presentation of his personal belongings and paintings representing his family.

A Specialised Archive Collection

The Toile de Jouy Museum possesses several works of reference on textiles and printed toiles, numerous exhibition catalogues, as well as the major part of Oberkampf's correspondence. These acquisitions are in keeping with the effort to build up a specialised archive collection, accessible to the general public.

A Short History

At the end of the XVIIth century, Europe discovers and adopts the beautiful brightly coloured flower and animal painted toiles, imported from India via the important shipping companies.



Their success makes them seriously competitive with the traditional cloth and silk factories in France and, in 1686, Louis XIV decrees the national-wide ban on import and production. In 1759, the lifting of this ban leads to the arrival in France of numerous foreigners, the last possessors of the know how on the subject.

Amongst them, Christophe-Philippe Oberkampf, engraver and colourist from Wurtemberg, establishes a factory for printed cottons in Jouy-en-Josas in 1760. The factory becomes, due to the exceptional qualities of its manager, the most important in Europe. In 1805, nearly one thousand five hundred workers are employed there: the buildings cover more than fourteen hectares. It is Barbet de Jouy, the Oberkampf family's successor, who will suffer, in 1843, the decline and bankruptcy of the factory due to unfavourable circumstances.

Inspired by the Indian methods, the printing technique used at Jouy enables the factory to obtain solid "fast colours" by the application of mordants in the form of metallic salts on the cotton, developed by the dipping in a vat of madder roots. These mordants are printed according to three techniques: wood block (1760), copper plate (1770), copper roller (1797).

Throughout the first ten years, the factory produces polychrome "Indiennes", wood block printed in floral and botanical designs, mainly used for clothing. From 1770, monochrome copper plate prints, used for furnishing, make their appearance. In 1797, the use of copper rollers announce a new style, where geometric forms are mixed with subjects inspired by antiquity and mythology.

Toile de Jouy and the style of today

In times past, every home boasted walls hung with toile de Jouy. Even today, numerous fabric companies perpetuate this very special expression of decorative art. Some have, even, long used the methods which had, in their time, attained the highest mark of perfection.

Techniques have evolved, the engraved roller has been all but abandoned, and even if screen printing has replaced the wood block, it can still be effected "by hand": a sign of particular refinement which today's textile firms are careful to underline on the selvage of their cloth.

After more than two hundred years, the toiles printed by the factory continue to inspire contemporary designers.

"Toile de Jouy", a term with a double meaning

Even if this term has survived times and fashions, its meaning has little by little been widened. It no longer applies just to fabrics created at the Jouy-en-Josas factory: bucolic toiles, or with mythological figures, Indiennes decorated with flowers and fruits in bright colours, the major bulk of the production, and geometric designs.

By extension, similar designs depicting country scenes, formerly interpreted in red, blue, purple or black monochrome, are labelled "toile de Jouy". Thus to the geographic origin of the name, a new meaning has been superimposed to designate a style of print. Toiles termed "de Jouy" may thus come from the factories of Nantes, Alsace, Aquitaine, England, or elsewhere.

Printing Techniques

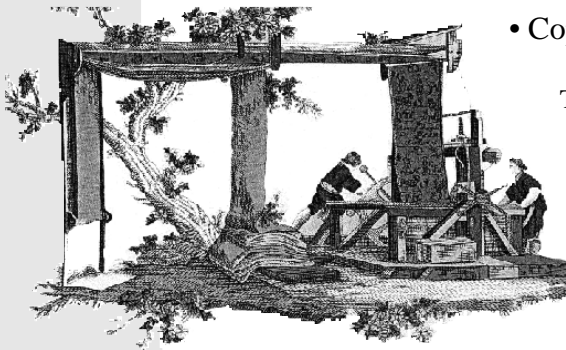
Printing on textiles is the art of fixing a coloured design on cloth. In order to obtain fast colours, the cloth must be plunged into a vat of dye. Two processes succeed one another. The first consists of applying a “mordant” (starch, iron acetate or alumna) on the areas destined to receive the same colour. The second, the “garançage” (bath of dye made from madder roots) will serve to reveal the colours on the areas of the toile stamped by the mordant. These two operations will be repeated as many times as there are colours.

To apply the mordant to the fabric, three techniques succeeded one another: **wood block**, **copper plate**, and **copper roller**. These three techniques, introduced to Europe in the middle of the XVIIIth century, are used together by the factories according to the design.



- Wood block

In use since Vth century in the Far East, and later in the East, Europe discovers this process at the end of the XVIIth century through the navigation companies. A block, carved in a raised design measures about 40 cm wide by 30 cm high. Picots, placed at the corners, insure that the motif is placed correctly, and repeated all over the surface of the piece. The design repeat, or distance between two identical motifs, therefore never exceeds 40 cm.



- Copper plate

This process, used in Ireland from 1752, is adopted by the Jouy factory from 1770, and owes its renown mainly to the historiated style (decor composed of scenes with figures), made famous by the Oberkampf factory. The etched copper plate renders motifs of such quality and refinement, as to rival the print. The toiles are characterised by red, violet, blue etc. monochrome. The plates usually measure between 80 cm and 1 m high.

- Copper roller

In 1783, an Englishman, Thomas Bell, invents copper roller printing. This process will be used in Jouy, and in Alsace, from 1797 and offers an output 30 times superior to that of the copper plate. As the first mechanised process, it is possible to obtain an unbroken print on the whole length of the fabric. The cylinders are deep etched, or more rarely carved with a raised motif. The average pattern repeat is 50 cm.

Thanks to this new technique, the background of the cloth, up until then, either white, all over dyed, or print dotted, can be enhanced by a decor. Whilst the designs from the XVIIIth century toiles are spaced out, those from the following century are more compact. The space between the motifs is filled by the “contrefond” made up of simple, small repetitive designs (diamonds, stripes, cloverleaves etc.).

Practical information

- Address

Musée de la Toile de Jouy
Château de l'Eglantine
54, rue Charles de Gaulle - 78350 Jouy-en-Josas - France
Tél: + 33 1 39 56 48 64 • Fax: + 33 1 39 56 17 98

- Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11am to 6pm. Closed Monday.

- Admission fees

Admission: 4,30 euros

Half-price: 2,60 euros (children 7-12 years, students, groups, war veterans, "famille nombreuse").

Admission free: children under 7 years and local school groups.

- Guided visits

Organised by appointment.

In French (max 30 adults): 75 euros weekdays ; 90 euros Sundays.

In English (max 30 adults): 90 euros weekdays ; 105 euros Sundays.

- The Oberkampf boutique and the Museum tea room (free entrance) are open at the same times as the Museum. Accessible to disabled visitors. Parking. Buses can set down passengers at the Museum's second car park situated on the other side of the rue Charles de Gaulle.

- Access by road

Porte de Saint-Cloud (Pont de Sèvres)

Follow the national N 118, direction Autoroute Chartres-Orléans. Exit at Vélizy-centre and follow the direction Versailles (A86), exit Jouy-en-Josas.

- Access by public transport

At the Gare Austerlitz: RER ligne C direction Versailles Chantiers, stop at Petit Jouy / Les Loges.

At the Gare Montparnasse: ligne SNCF direction Versailles Chantiers. At Versailles Chantiers change for Juvisy, and leave the train at Petit Jouy / Les Loges.

