Beat: Arts

"THE CITY OF GIFTS - FRANÇOIS MITTERRAND" IN CHATEAU-CHINON

REOPENS ITS DOORS ON SUNDAY, MAY 10TH

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USPA NEWS - In Château-Chinon, "The City of Gifts - François Mitterrand" will reopen its Doors on Sunday, May 10th, 45 years after the Election of François Mitterrand, with a Revamped Layout combining Two Museums: "The Museum of Presidential Gifts" and "The Fashion Museum"...

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From this Ambition arose the Renovation and Development Project for the Site of the Two Museums. Following an Architectural Competition in 2014, the Architect Patrick Mauger was selected to lead the Transformation of the Buildings.

This New Cultural Space, where the Past engages in Dialogue with the Present, offers, across nearly 2,000 m^2, a Poignant Immersion into the Memory of a Presidency through Emblematic Objects: Diplomatic Gifts from the Five Continents, Works of Art presented during State Visits, Exceptional French Craftsmanship, Haute Couture Creations, and Iconic Silhouettes from the History of Fashion.

- Several Major Milestones have marked the Project's Development:

* The Renovation of the Historic Buildings that housed the Former Museums in order to improve their Accessibility and Presentation.
Located in the Town where François Mitterrand served as Mayor, these Two Museums reflect his Desire to make Château-Chinon a Place of Cultural Transmission, inscribing his Political and Artistic Legacy at the Heart of the Region to which he remained deeply attached.

* The Creation of New Spaces with a Pavilion connecting the Collections, a Welcoming Reception Area including a Shop and Shared Services with the Tourist Office.
For Several Years, the Nièvre Departmental Council has been pursuing an Ambitious Project: to bring Together the Collections of the Two Museums in Château-Chinon, the "Septennat Museum" and the "Costume Museum", in a Single, Modern Facility.

* The Development of Landscaped Gardens to offer Visitors a Pleasant and Immersive Environment.
This Project, conceived in the 2000s, aims to offer Visitors an Enriched Experience by showcasing Two Unique Collections: on the One Hand, the Gifts received by François Mitterrand as President of the Republic (1981-1995), and on The Other, a Remarkable Collection of Costumes and Accessories tracing the Evolution of Clothing through Time.

- "The Septennat Museum" opened in 1986 following a Donation by François Mitterrand, then President of the Republic, of Some of the Gifts he received during his Two Terms In Office, to the General Council of Nièvre. Initially housed in the Former Hospital in Château-Chinon, built between the 17th and Mid-19th Centuries, the Museum expanded in 1992 into a Second Building designed by the Architect Jean-Jacques Fernier. Between 1986 and 1995, more than 4,500 Objects were transferred from the Élysée Palace to Château-Chinon.

These are Gifts offered by French People (Local Authorities, Businesses, and Citizens), by Foreign Powers (Diplomatic Gifts), or by Artists and Craftspeople of All Nationalities.

In Addition to exhibiting Remarkable and even Unusual Objects, the Redesigned Layout of the "Presidential Gifts Museum" tells the Story of the Collection: François Mitterrand's Donation, his Attachment to Château-Chinon and the Nièvre Region—One of his "Little Homelands"—and the Journey of the Gifts, from the Moment they were chosen by their Donor to their Display in the Museum.

All These Objects bear Witness to the Ceremony and Protocol surrounding the Gift, as well as the Presidential Figure.

- Initially a Museum of Folk Arts and Traditions of the Morvan Region, "The Costume Museum" took shape in 1970 when François Mitterrand, then mayor of Château-Chinon, decided to acquire a Significant Collection of Clothing, Accessories, and Everyday Objects from the Collector Jules Dardy. The Museum was then housed in the Former Private Mansion of the Buteau-Ravisy Family, built in the 18th Century, the Building in which it remains Today. Enriched by a Second Acquisition in 1983 and renovated in 1992, "The Costume Museum" is now evolving, with the Exhibition presented in 2026, into a True Fashion Museum.

The Collection has since been continually enriched through Acquisitions and Donations, most recently the Exceptional Donation from the Nevers-based Couturier Pascal Millet.

Under its New Name, the Fashion Museum presents the Historical and Socio-Cultural Context of Clothing and showcases the Influences that make Fashion a Living and Constantly Evolving Art Form.

The Conservation of the Textile Works necessitates an Annual Rotation of the Displays; the Objects and the Narrative will therefore be Regularly Updated. Significant Work is undertaken by the Museum Teams: removing Objects from the Museum Displays, protecting and transporting them; preparing Objects for Transport; removing and protecting Objects stored in the Reserves; ensuring the Transfer of All Collections to Temporary Storage.

The Exhibition invites Visitors to discover the Evolution of Shapes, Materials, Uses, and Styles, and shows how Clothing reflects the Transformations of Society and Lifestyles. From the Oldest Preserved Piece—a Wedding Purse dating from 1690 under Louis XIV—to a Dress created by Alexis Mabille in 2018, the Collection spans more than Three Centuries of Clothing History and continues to grow to complete this Journey through Styles and Eras.

The Fashion Museum's Collection was built around the Jules Dardy Collection, acquired from 1970 Onwards, and has since been enriched by Donations from Individuals and Acquisitions made by the Department of Nievre (Approximately 2,500 Pieces).

More recently, an Exceptional Donation from the Designer Pascal Millet has completed this Collection, with 130 Pieces representative of his Work and his Career within Major Fashion Houses. Carven & Yves Saint Laurent Collections are well represented (13 Pieces in the Collections).

Other Major Fashion Houses are represented in the Collections, including Balenciaga, Dior, Alaïa, Courrèges, Jean-Paul Gaultier, and Hermès. Some Pieces reflect Contemporary Fashion and Popular Culture, through Designs or Creations similar to Outfits worn by Celebrities such as Lady Gaga, Rihanna, Catherine Deneuve, and Cristina Cordula.

Source: From the Museum of the Seven-Year Term to the Museum of Presidential Gifts
A Cultural Program is offered from May to November
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