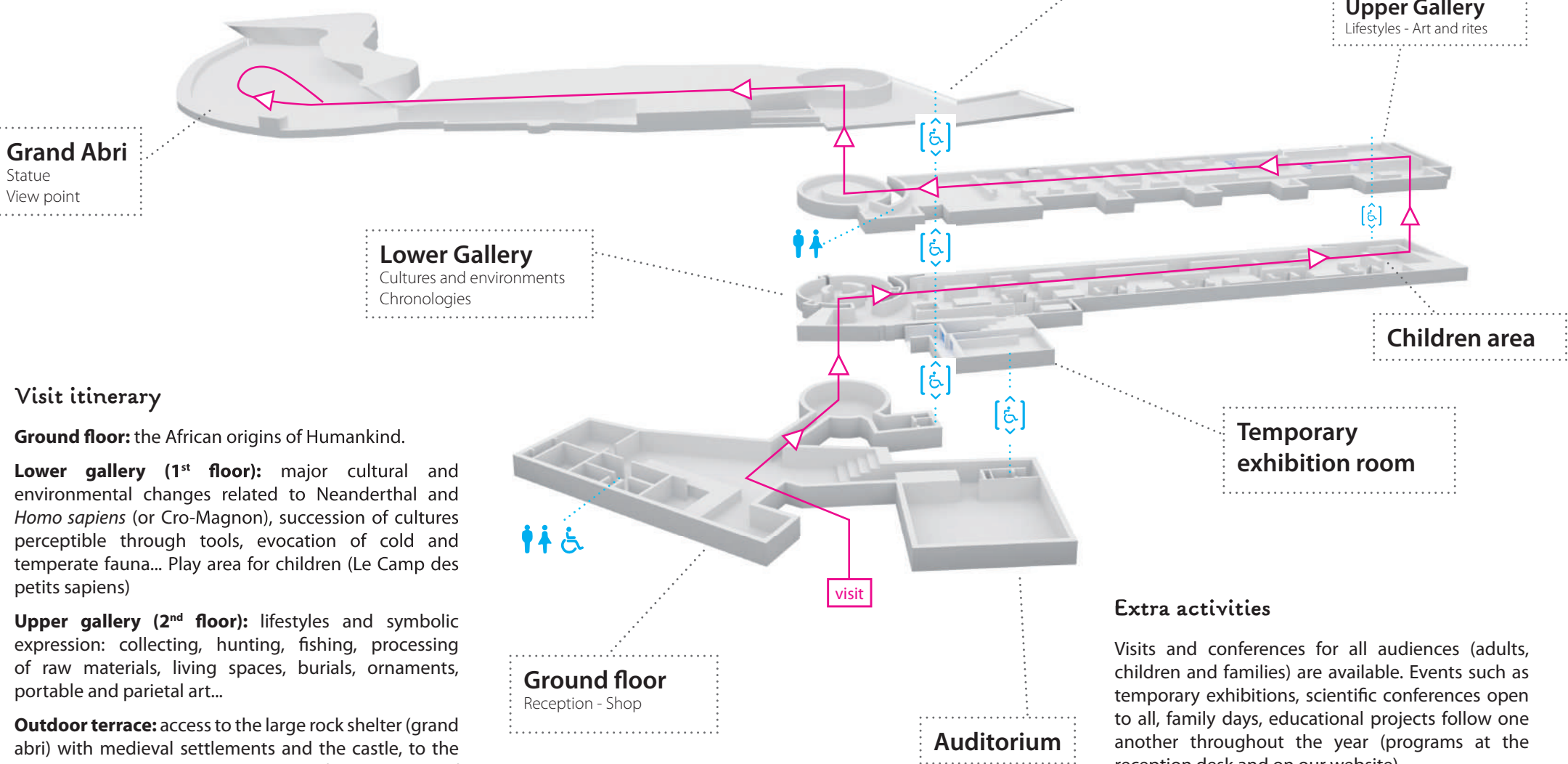




The National Museum of Prehistory

At the same time place of memory for the History of Prehistory, place of conservation of archaeological objects, study center and place of dissemination of constantly increasing knowledge, the National Museum of Prehistory has been, since its founding at the beginning of the 20th century, a place of reference for prehistorians as well as visitors from all over the world. It was created in 1913 thanks to Denis Peyrony in the sixteenth century castle. After a first extension in the late 1960s (Froideveaux buildings), the current museum, designed by the Parisian architect Jean-Pierre Buffi, was inaugurated in 2004.



Visit itinerary

Ground floor: the African origins of Humankind.

Lower gallery (1st floor): major cultural and environmental changes related to Neanderthal and *Homo sapiens* (or Cro-Magnon), succession of cultures perceptible through tools, evocation of cold and temperate fauna... Play area for children (Le Camp des petits sapiens)

Upper gallery (2nd floor): lifestyles and symbolic expression: collecting, hunting, fishing, processing of raw materials, living spaces, burials, ornaments, portable and parietal art...

Outdoor terrace: access to the large rock shelter (grand abri) with medieval settlements and the castle, to the viewpoint on the Vézère valley, to the famous statue of primitive man sculpted by Paul Dardé (1931).

Extra activities

Visits and conferences for all audiences (adults, children and families) are available. Events such as temporary exhibitions, scientific conferences open to all, family days, educational projects follow one another throughout the year (programs at the reception desk and on our website).

Practical information

en.musee-prehistoire-eyzies.fr

Address

Musée national de Préhistoire
1 rue du Musée
24260 Les Eyzies

Opening Hours

July and August | 9.30 am – 6.30 pm every day
June and September | 9.30 am – 6 pm, closed on Tuesdays
October to May | 9.30 am – 12.30 pm and 2 pm – 5.30 pm, closed on Tuesdays
Closed on 25th December and 1st January
Last admission 45 minutes before closing time
Evacuation of the Lower gallery 30 minutes before closing time

Services



-Ticket office / shop / individual bookings | Tel. 00 33 (0)5 53 06 45 49
-Booking for Conferences at the Museum Auditorium | Tel. 00 33 (0)5 53 06 45 49
-Group bookings | Tel. 00 33 (0)5 53 06 45 65
Email : reservation.prehistoire@culture.gouv.fr
Wheelchair access

Guided Tours

Guided tours in English are available
Detailed program at the reception desk and on the internet : en.musee-prehistoire-eyzies.fr/prepare-your-arrival/program

Keep in touch!

Museum newsletter (in French only) : <http://musee-prehistoire-eyzies.fr/newsletter/subscriptions>

Download the smartphone application :

PlayStore



AppStore



Find us on :

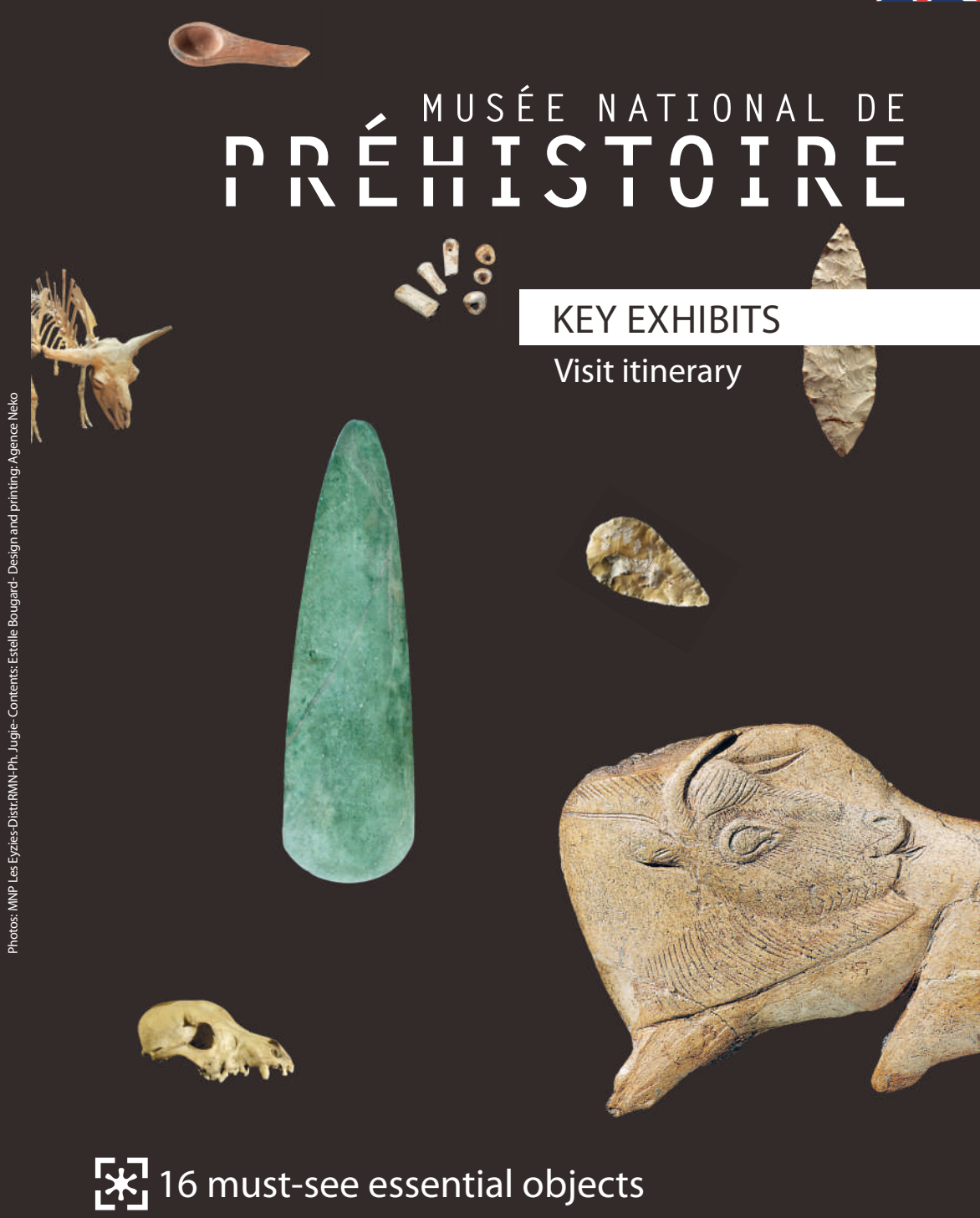


16 must-see essential objects



MUSÉE NATIONAL DE PRÉHISTOIRE

KEY EXHIBITS Visit itinerary



Photos: MNP - Les Eyzies-District-RMN-PH - Jurgie - Contents: Estelle Bougard - Design and printing: Agence Nelo

Stratigraphy of Le Moustier

This section is showing the gradual accumulation between 56,000 and 36,000 years ago of sediments, rocks and traces of human occupations (in blue-gray, flint fragments) at Le Moustier. Neanderthal people have long occupied the site, before the final occupation by *Homo sapiens*. The relative dating by stratigraphy is based on one principle: the deepest levels are the oldest. From the 1950s, it was supplemented by various methods of measurement or counting, called absolute dating.



Biface

Versatile tool fashioned in stone (flint, sandstone, quartz...), the biface (or handaxe) appears in Europe around 700,000 ago, at the time of pre-Neanderthals (*Homo heidelbergensis*), as a characteristic of the Acheulean. Later, it was found throughout the Middle Palaeolithic, or Mousterian, associated with Neanderthals. A perfectly symmetrical tool that may indicate some aesthetic research, the biface highlights the emergence of abstract thinking in human evolution.



Solutrean laurel leaf

In the Upper Palaeolithic (*Homo sapiens* time), flint knapping was brought to its peak by the Solutreans, who fashioned real "stone leaves." Utility objects for the smaller ones (projectile points or knives), perhaps laden with symbols for the largest ones, they show a great technical mastery. About 20,000 years ago, a series of inventions accompany them, such as the needle and the spear thrower.



Domestication of the dog

Recent research, supported by the progress of genetics, has made it possible to assert that the first animal domesticated by *Homo sapiens* was indeed the dog (from the wolf), as early as 15,000 years ago and perhaps even earlier. Afterwards, it is only in the Neolithic with the invention of agriculture that the practice of domesticating animals extended.



Sculpted aurochs from Fourneau-du-Diable

These carved aurochs, accompanied by indeterminate animals, were originally on a rock shelter wall that collapsed about 20,000 years ago. They illustrate the mastery of relief sculpture and show connections with the painted art of Lascaux, perhaps contemporary, through their style (proportions, perspective, anatomical details...).



Aurignacian decorated block from La Ferrassie

In the early Aurignacian, the first *Homo sapiens* arrived in the Vézère Valley developed an artistic expression on rock walls or blocks made of sexual symbols (mostly female: "vulvae") and, more rarely, schematic animals. The female symbols, deeply engraved, are human representations typical of this period: fragmentary (a part to symbolise the whole?) and/or caricature-like.



Bison licking its side from La Madeleine

A major work of art from the Upper Palaeolithic, this small reindeer antler sculpture represents a bison turning its head to lick its back. The attitude and numerous anatomical details underline a search for naturalism mingled with a stylization typical of the Magdalenian. The site of the Madeleine (which gave its name to the period) shows numerous examples of this portable art.



Spear thrower

The fashioning of weapons and tools in bone material became common in the Upper Palaeolithic, with *Homo sapiens*. Thus the spear thrower, from 20,000 years ago, is intended to increase the power and the throwing range of the spear. It is rather a weapon for an open environment. Different types exist: simple hooks, carved objects, with grooves, etc.



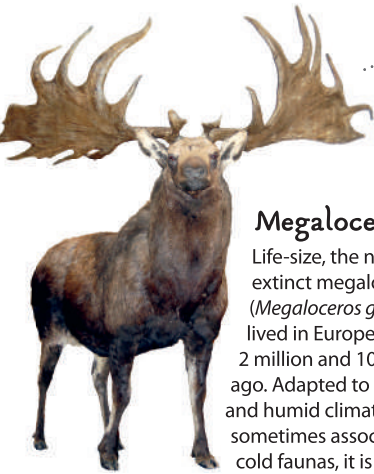
Lower gallery

Direction of visit →

Children area

Upper gallery

← Direction of visit



Megaloceros

Life-size, the now extinct megaloceros (*Megaloceros giganteus*) lived in Europe between 2 million and 10,000 years ago. Adapted to temperate and humid climate, sometimes associated with cold faunas, it is the largest of all Cervidae. It has been

occasionally depicted in some decorated caves including Pair-non-Pair (33), Arcy-sur-Cure (89), Chauvet-Pont d'Arc (07), Cugnac (46) and rather in the early Upper Palaeolithic.

Le Moustier's newborn

This skeleton of a Neanderthal newborn is the most complete in Western Europe. It was buried in a pit about 40,000 years ago, making it one of the last Neanderthals in the region, before they were replaced by *Homo sapiens*. In Europe, the Neanderthals were the first to bury their dead, showing the existence of symbolic thinking and a certain social structuring.



Steppe bison skeleton

The *Bison priscus* is particularly adapted to the cold. It lived in a steppe environment. Large, its shoulder height is up to 2 m and it weighs up to 1 ton. It is common in archaeological and natural sites. It disappeared from our regions about 12,000 years ago. It is frequently represented in Upper Palaeolithic art (for example in Font-de-Gaume).



Jadeite polished axe

The polished axe is the emblematic tool of the Neolithic period (from - 7,000 in France), when people settled in villages of farmers and herders and massively cleared forests for crop growing. The material (Jadeite imported from the Alps) and the size of this axe make it an exceptional object, a sign of wealth emphasizing an increase in the hierarchy of societies.



Lamp of Lascaux

Found in the cave of Lascaux at the foot of the famous Scene du Puits, this grease lamp is one of the most beautiful lamps fashioned in the Palaeolithic. Carved in pink sandstone, its handle is decorated with nested signs similar to those visible on the walls of the cave and on spearheads, also found in Le Puits. Lamps of this type have been found in deep decorated sanctuaries but also exceptionally on open-air sites as in Solvieux (neighboring showcase).



The child of La Madeleine and his ornaments

This grave sheltered the body of a young child buried in a simple pit with a lot of ochre. It is about 10,000 years old. Numerous ornaments accompanied the body (more than 1,500 elements), made of pierced teeth and seashells, probably sewn on a clothing worn during his lifetime. The great wealth of this ensemble is interpreted as the sign of a specific and, in the case of a very young child, hereditary social status.



Ivory ornaments from Abri Castanet

Jewelry seems to have held an important place among Palaeolithic *Homo sapiens*. In addition to sea shells and pierced animal teeth, a series of mammoth ivory beads have been made around 35,000 ago in various Aurignacian sites, including Abri Castanet. The manufacturing steps were reconstituted thanks to the discovery of true specialized workshops.



Hearth of Laugerie-Haute

The oldest documented traces of fire in Europe date back to around 500,000 years ago. The hearths certainly structured the living spaces, provided heat, light and protection against predators but also allowed various modes of food preparation... This small combustion structure dates back from 20,000 years ago, period of the last Glacial Maximum, and contains ashes, charred bone remains and heated river pebbles.

