

Christofle

A Brilliant Story

—
Press release

Nov 14, 2024
— April 20, 2025



MAD

Exhibition designed by the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris
Produced with the support of Christofle

Christofle

MUSÉE DES ARTS
DÉCORATIFS

Dip, Maitaison coffee pot. Christofle. École cantonale d'art de Lausanne (ECALE) and Adrien Rovero (b. 1981), designer. 2006. Silver-plated, rubber. Conservatoire Boulhet Christofle © François Coquerel


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Christofle

A Brilliant Story

1. Steps for partial gilding of a *Jardin d'Eden* table spoon — Christofle
Marcel Wanders (b. 1963), designer
2018
Silver-plated and gilded
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Gwenaëlle Dautricourt for Christofle

2. *Flèche* candelabra — Christofle
Gio Ponti (1891-1979), designer
Model of 1928, produced between 1928 and 1942
Silver-plated
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Christophe Dellièrre

From November 14, 2024 to April 20, 2025, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs will celebrate the creations and extraordinary expertise of the renowned silversmith Maison Christofle by organizing a major exhibition dedicated to this French company, which boasts nearly two hundred years of history. From the 1830s to the present day, this line of talented silversmiths, begun by Charles Christofle (1805-1863) and Henri Bouilhet (1830-1910), has transformed the lines and decorations of silverware, allowing it to become a feature of daily life. In collaboration with leading artists and fashion designers – such as Gio Ponti, Andrée Putman, Karl Lagerfeld and Pharrell Williams –, Christofle is an artistic laboratory that revolutionizes traditional silversmithery by reinventing its uses and enhancing it with new colors and decorations.



1.



2.

From the teaspoons to monumental vases for the World Fairs, nearly 1,000 pieces of silverware, jewelry, paintings, drawings and posters recount the extraordinary story of this heritage company. *Christofle, a Brilliant Story*, curated by Audrey Gay-Mazuel, curator in charge of the 19th century – Art Nouveau collections, is presented in the Christine & Stephen A. Schwarzman Fashion Galleries, in a spectacular and immersive scenography that highlights the hidden side of the silversmith's profession and the most legendary sumptuous tables.



3.

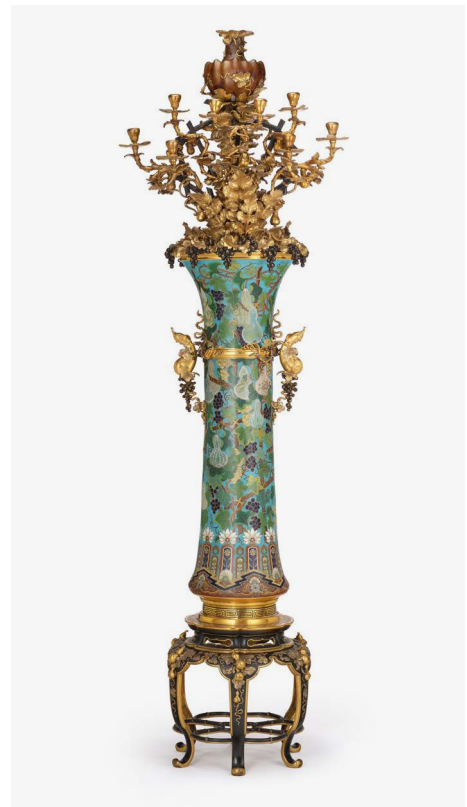
3. *L'Union fait le succès*
coffee pot —
Christofle
Albert-Ernest
Carrier-Belleuse
(1824-1887), sculptor
Model of 1880,
produced after 1935
silver-plated, ivory
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Christophe Dellière

A jeweler by trade, Charles Christofle revolutionized gold- and silversmithing in 1842 by developing innovative techniques combining chemistry and electricity to silver- or gold-plate non-precious metals. Thanks to these new processes, he was able to make the tableware once the preserve of the elites an accessible, becoming part of our everyday lives, transforming the most common objects, such as video game consoles, coffee cups or sneakers boxes, into true works of design.

4. *Gourdes et vignes*
grimpantes torchiere —
Christofle
Émile Reiber
(1826-1893), designer
1874
Gilded and patinated
copper alloy, cloisonné
enamel
Paris, Musée des
Arts décoratifs
© Les Arts Décoratifs /
Christophe Dellière

The exhibition opens with a spectacular presentation of Christofle's contribution to the world of decorative arts. It then recreates the atmosphere of the Christofle workshops, successively located in Paris, Saint-Denis and now Normandy, and takes the visitor behind the scenes to discover the secrets of silvering and gilding, and how a fork is made. The reconstruction of a silversmith's workshop, combining traditional tools with digital devices, reveals the mastery of this artistic profession.

Three rooms are dedicated to the masterpieces that Christofle presented at the World Fairs, from 1851 to 1925. Winner of gold medals at every event, the company has continued to innovate, creating monumental and spectacular pieces adorned with vibrant colors and patterns embodying the most avant-garde trends, from Japonisme to Art Deco.



4.

5. *Dip Malmaison* coffee service —
Christofle
École cantonale d'art de Lausanne (ECAL) and Adrien Rovero (b. 1981), designer
2006
Silver-plated, rubber
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Christophe Dellière

6. *Vertigo* vegetable dish with lid —
Christofle
Andrée Putman (1925-2013), designer
2003
Silver-plated
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Christophe Dellière

7. *Manche fraisier* Strawberry scoop —
Christofle
1894
Silver-plated
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Christophe Dellière

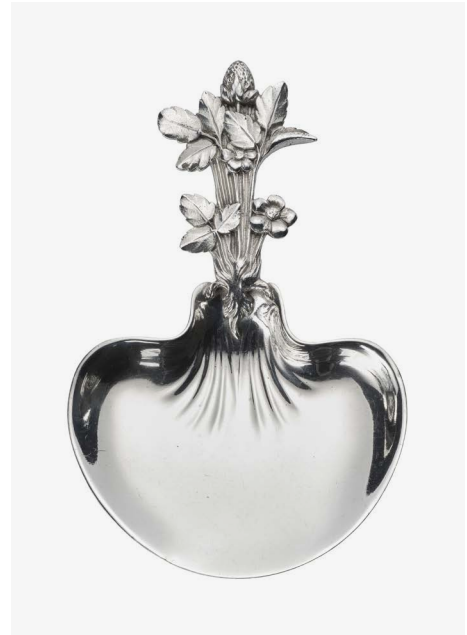
On the second floor, an idealized, museographic Christofle boutique offers a playful presentation of the endless variety of tableware and everyday objects that have become the hallmark of the company. From traditional cutlery sets to contemporary creations, from emblematic silverware to iconic tea sets, each piece echoes Christofle's successes. Posters, advertisements and catalogs from the mid-19th century to the present day reveal the commercial ambitions of this world-leading silversmith.



5.



6.



7.

As an ambassador of French luxury and *art de vivre*, Christofle has established itself in the mid-19th century as the preferred supplier of palaces, hotels and restaurants, as well as legendary trains, ocean liners and airplanes. From the famous *Tour d'Argent* duck press to the on-board service of the *Concorde*, visitors are invited to travel from the dining room of the Ritz to that of the ocean liner *Normandie*, from a coach of the *Orient-Express* to the cabin of *Concorde*.

Since the 1920s, Christofle has collaborated with leading designers to create pieces that are both modern and contemporary, imbued with the most *avant-garde* aesthetics. In the 1930s and 1950s, the Italians Gio Ponti and Lino Sabattini added dynamic lines and reinvented shapes with a touch of humor. At the same time, Danish and Finnish designers Christian Fjeringstad and Tapio Wirkkala also left their mark. Under the direction of Tony Bouilhet, Christofle immersed in the artistic circles of Jean Cocteau's, leading to collaborations with talents such as César and Arman.



8.

8. *Palmaceae* necklace —
Christofle
Michele Oka Doner
(b. 1945), sculptor
2005
Sterling silver
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Christophe Dellière

9. *Courge* tea service
kettle —
Christofle
Léon Mallet (active
1874-1900), sculptor
Circa 1891
Silver-plated, ivory
Conservatoire Bouilhet
Christofle
© Christophe Dellière

Since the 1990s, Christofle has surrounded itself with international designers, cementing its place in the history of contemporary art. Famous names such as Sylvain Dubuisson, Elisabeth Garouste and Mattia Bonetti, Martin Szekely, Richard Hutten, Marcel Wanders and Jean-Marie Massaud, as well as designers Christian Lacroix and Karl Lagerfeld, have all contributed their unique visions. Reconnecting with the legacy of its founder, Charles Christofle, since the mid-1980s, the Maison has made a name for itself again in the world of jewelry, with bold creations by Andrée Putman, Michele Oka Doner and Mademoiselle Aurélie Bidermann.

The silversmith of kings, princes, emperors and then presidents, Christofle supplies palaces, ministries and embassies since the 1840s. From Napoleon III under the Second Empire to the current President of the French Republic, Christofle services have adorned the most majestic tables. Comprising hundreds of pieces and featuring impressive table centers complete with sculptures, planters and candelabras, now a signature of the French art of hosting, these services are a must for major diplomatic receptions. As a spectacular conclusion to the exhibition, the last two rooms of the tour surprise visitors with a magical display of tables whose settings contrast tradition and modernity, from the splendor of the 1860s to the *Vertigo* service designed by Andrée Putman in 2002.



9.

Useful Informations

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19th century – Art Nouveau
collections

#Expo_Christofle

— Les Arts Décoratifs

**The not-for-profit organization
Les Arts Décoratifs brings together
the Musée des Arts Décoratifs,
the Musée Nissim de Camondo,
the Camondo School, the Ateliers
du Carrousel, and the Library.**

Johannes Huth, President
Sylvie Corréard, Chief executive
officer
Christine Macel, Director
of Museums, Deputy chief
executive officer

— Musée des Arts Décoratifs

107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
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Métro: Palais-Royal, Pyramides,
Tuileries

Opening hours

Permanent collections:
→ Tuesday to Sunday, 11 am – 6 pm
Temporary exhibitions:
→ Tuesday and Wednesday,
11 am–6 pm
→ Late night on Thursdays:
11 am – 9 pm in temporary exhibition

Admission

→ General admission: € 15
→ Concession: € 10
→ Free for under 26

— Musée Nissim de Camondo

63 rue de Monceau, 75008 Paris
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Opening hours

Closed from August 4, 2024
to early 2026

— Library

111 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
+33 (0) 1 44 55 59 36
Open Monday 1 pm – 6 pm
and Tuesday to Friday 10 am – 6 pm

— Publications and images

107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
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— Visitor engagement

Activities for individuals

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Activities for groups

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Conferences, round tables and colloquiums

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— Ateliers du Carrousel

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— Bookshop & Gift Store

105 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
+33 (0) 1 42 60 64 94
Open 11 am – 18:30 pm
Open late on Thursdays until 9 pm
Closed Monday

— Loulou Restaurant

107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
or access via the Carrousel gardens
Open daily 12 pm – 2:30 pm
and 7 pm – 11 pm
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— Le Camondo Restaurant

61 bis rue de Monceau, 75008 Paris
Open Tuesday to Saturday from
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the day
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