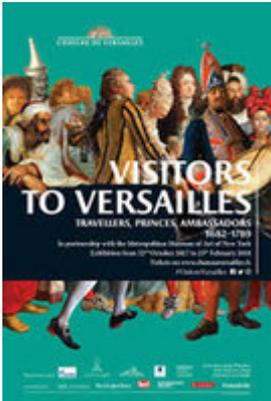


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The palace of Versailles and its gardens have attracted travelers ever since it was transformed under the direction of the Sun King, Louis XIV, from a simple hunting lodge into one of the most magnificent and public courts of Europe. French and foreign travelers, including royalty, ambassadors, artists, musicians, writers, scientists, grand tourists, and day-trippers, all flocked to the royal palace surrounded by its extensive formal gardens. Versailles was always a truly international setting, and not only drew visitors from Europe and America, but also hosted dignitaries from as far away as Thailand, India, and Tunisia. Their official receptions at Versailles and gift exchanges with the king were among the attractions widely recorded in tourists' diaries and court gazettes.

Bringing together works from The Met, the Château de Versailles, and over 50 lenders, this exhibition will highlight the experiences of travelers from 1682, when Louis XIV moved his court to Versailles, to 1789, when the royal family was forced to leave the palace and return to Paris. Through paintings, portraits, furniture, tapestries, carpets, costumes, porcelain, sculpture, arms and armor, and guidebooks, the exhibition will illustrate what visitors encountered at court, what kind of welcome and access to the palace they received, and, most importantly, what impressions, gifts, and souvenirs they took home with them.

The exhibition is made possible by The International Council of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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It is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Palace of Versailles.

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