

Museums team up
National inventory of sporting heritage

National Sport Museum, France, Nice

Claire Vasdeboncoeur

Head of Exhibitions and NISH partner project leader



The National Sport Museum, introduction in a few figures

Founded in 1963, the National Sport Museum is the only national museum on the theme of sport in France. It finally has a showcase worthy of its immense collections of around **45,000** objects and **400,000** documents and archives.

Main missions :

- Contribution to the progress of knowledge and research
- Conservation, protection and restoration of the State's cultural assets
- Study and presentation to the public of the practice of sport and related heritage
- Enhancement of national collections, protection and restoration of the State's cultural assets
- Implementation of education actions on the practice of sport for all

Main collection types

- 60% graphic arts and fine arts (posters, paintings, drawings, sculptures, decorative arts...)
- 15% sportswear and equipment
- 15% awards and insignia (trophies, medals, etc.)
- 10% popular arts and traditions, philately, etc.

“La Grande Collecte”, a model of collaborative synergies centred around sporting heritage: The example of Euro 2016

In 2015-2016, the National Sport Museum directed a major national collection operation, the first of its kind in the sports world, in collaboration with museums and institutions located in UEFA Euro 2016 host cities. The museums of the 10 cities that welcomed the competition were invited to take part in this project in order to gather personal accounts and/or collections during the competition from supporters of the clubs that normally reside in the stadiums.

Many exhibitions were produced jointly or concurrently with this big collection operation on the theme of football supporter culture. The digital portal for the collections of France's museums, **Joconde**¹, was dedicated to this operation and displayed all the objects and personal accounts gathered. They were then added to the collections of the National Sport Museum, contributing to enriching the History of sport in general and the Memory of football in particular.

A few examples of exhibitions organised during Euro 2016 :

The LOUVRE LENS

This exhibition, which included objects and personal accounts by Racing Club de Lens supporters, documented local residents' attachment to the club. It also provided an opportunity to explore the status and nature of the exhibits collected, certified by the club or made by the supporters. Some of them were added to the collection of the National Sport Museum in Nice².

GADAGNE MUSEUMS, Lyon

Co-produced by a European network of urban history museums, *Divinement foot ! ("Divine football!")* was an exhibition about the contemporary sociology of football held during UEFA Euro 2016. Amsterdam, Basel, Bremen and Lyon, then Luxembourg, Barcelona and Moscow: the museum of each city that co-produced and hosted the exhibition also told the story of this football phenomenon in its city. The exhibition described the ties between the worlds of football and religion in many countries. These connections are sometimes obvious, sometimes more subtle³.

The National Inventory of Sporting Heritage, a large-scale international operation

Driven by the actual growing popularity around major sporting events, National Museum of Sport aims to create a national inventory of sporting heritage in all its diversity and complexity.

At the dawn of the 2024 Olympic Games organised in Paris, it is crucial to bring French sporting heritage but also international sport heritage to light and reveal its richness through:

- Arts, photographs and graphism creations;
- Testimonies of sports phenomenon in the history of society
- Champions and athletes history thanks to their equipment and memories

¹ <http://www2.culture.gouv.fr/documentation/joconde/fr/pres.htm>

² <https://www.louvre-lens.fr/exhibition/rc-louvre/>

³ <https://www.gadagne-lyon.fr/mhl/divinement-foot>

- The history of physical and sports practises
- The history and technical evolution of equipment and outfits

This process has to be collective in order to present the variety of national collections around sport, its values and inspirations. The National Museum of Sport propose to promote the world sports heritage: the history and development of sport are part of the living together in cities without forgetting the creation and art that has existed for more than a century. The large popularity and strong media coverage of major sports events suggest the possibility of experimenting an innovative and participatory diffusion-collect of the sports heritage. This innovation will be based on numerical tools allowing knowledge and observation of its rich heritage.

The valorisation of collections around a heritage that has been lacking of legitimacy and visibility is timely and opportune. It will allow to discover the diversity of the collections of the world (archaeological, ethnological, historical, artistic, scientific, ...) around sport and its representation, etc.

The aim is to make every institutions contributing and bringing their visions on this unique project of sports heritage promotion. Indeed, it's important to federate around a promising and citizen-oriented project chiming with contemporary concerns.

- Create a major action of culture all over the world
- Set up synergies collaborations between museums
- Organize a collaborative inventory attracting a large public on the constitution of the memories of the "heritage communities".
- Reveal and promote the collections dedicated to the sports heritage, art work, objects, archives, photographs but also intangible heritage like video, song, testimonials, gestures
- Extend and enrich the documentation of collectibles.
- Reach new publics and actors for heritage and heritage institutions (museums, libraries, archives) around sports through a digital tool.
- To use the digital tool to reach new audiences and heritage actors, and the heritage institutions on the topic of sport

The diffusion will concern the entire world because of the numerical diffusion. The inventory of art work, objects, memories or literature will mainly concern the museums, archives,

libraries.

The operational guide will be the National Museum of Sport in Nice, a “**Musée de France**” under the supervision of the Ministry of Sport. A MNS referent will collect all data exports from each institution and will be linked to the referent of the contributing institution; finally it will feed the database.

A scientific comity will be set up to follow this project until the term (evaluation included).

The diffusion on the website of the collected data is moderated by a device to be defined.

The data are valued on the site by the scientific managers of the institutions.

An MNS referent will collect all data exports from each institution, will be in contact with the referent of the contributing institution, and will feed the database.

The participating institutions: Publics museums | Private museums, private collections | Archives | Sports federations | Museums of clubs, federations | Artists

The collection concerned: Fine Arts | Decorative Arts | Graphic Arts | Ethnological heritage | Archaeological heritage | Technical and scientific heritage | Furniture | Clothing | Equipment | Photographs | Intangible Heritage

The digital sporting heritage library project

The valorisation tool: Gallica Marque Blanche (GMB)

Gallica is not only the digital library of France's national library, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), but also a distribution platform for the collections of 400 partner institutions which add to it daily. The BnF has proven experience in developing nationwide portals: 10 digital libraries have already been created and developed in GMB, such as La Grande Collecte 1914-1918.⁴

Gallica is the go-to collective digital library, one of the largest in the world.

In a spirit of openness and sharing, the BnF wanted its partners to benefit from its know-how by offering a white-label digital library: GMB. It allows partners to develop a collection portal with their own branding, based on a solid technical and functional foundation⁵.

⁴ <http://www.lagrandecollecte.fr>

⁵The "Gallica Marque Blanche" scheme has been nominated for the Victoires des Acteurs Publics 2020 awards, in the innovation category. Each year, these awards honour the best initiatives in the field of modernisation of public sector action.

Since 2018, the Musée National du Sport has been the BnF's documentation partner for the "sports" collections. It is also co-steering the programme for concerted digitisation and valorisation in Sport (2019-2024), whose monitoring committee is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the National Institute of Sport, Expertise and Performance (INSEP) and the City of Paris. This project aims to digitise a large portion of the national sporting heritage and make it available to the public ahead of the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games⁶.

The GMB solution therefore enables us to valorise the sporting heritage digitised in the context of this call for projects.

This portal provides a single entry point for consulting national sports collections: digitised works, objects or documents belonging to our sporting heritage (rights-free or negotiated by the custodian institution with the rights holders) from the collections of all voluntary stakeholders. A powerful search engine will make them easy to access.

About Gallica Marque Blanche:

<https://www.bnf.fr/fr/gallica-marque-blanche>

https://multimedia-ext.bnf.fr/pdf/gallica_marque_blanche.pdf

About the digital library of sporting heritage developed with Gallica Marque Blanche

- Free accessibility to the general public.
- Remote consultation on any computer device.
- A simple and advanced search engine.
- Geolocation feature. A collaborative tool named L'Arpenteur enables the public to geolocate documents (places, subjects, etc.).
- Complete notice on the item, along with one or more high-quality digital reproductions. Downloads of high-definition images can be allowed or blocked.
- Specific access to notices (by geographical areas, themes...)
- Editorial tools: themed features, focus on collections, tickets...
- Enrichment and updating of the portal.

⁶ To this end, an initial call for initiatives was made in 2019. Our museum heritage is relevant to this call, since collections of posters, postcards, drawings, prints and photographs, as well as medals, sportswear, equipment, films and videos are among its areas of interest. <https://www.bnf.fr/fr/appel-projets-de-numerisation-et-de-valorisation-concertees-en-sport-2019-2020#bnf-objectifs-du-programme-de-num-risation-concert-e-en-sport>

A project team from the National Sport Museum

As part of the project, the partner institutions will provide their metadata via standardised files (mostly in Excel) in accordance with BnF recommendations in order to avoid excessive data recovery by the Musée National du Sport, before they are forwarded to the BnF's services for integration.

Alongside the BnF's team of computer scientists and developers who provide operational project monitoring to integrate data into the digital library, as well as hosting and website maintenance, a project team at the MNS will harvest and process the partner institutions' metadata before transferring them to the BnF for integration.

Contact : patrimoine@museedusport.fr