

The Rothschilds in France in the 19th century

The exhibition focuses on the Rothschild story and the enlightened financiers of the 19th century. As the head of the family in France, James de Rothschild is at the centre of the display. Close to two hundred items are presented: manuscripts, outstanding paintings, archive photographs and documents. They illustrate the family's way of life – their houses, works of art and vintage wines – as well as banking activities and family-owned industrial enterprises. The exhibition also shows how James de Rothschild, a philanthropist and cultural patron, also influenced economic and financial affairs in Europe.

James, one of the five Rothschild brothers from Frankfurt, arrived in Paris in 1812. His talent in financial affairs soon made him one of the main protagonists in the world of high finance. Inspired by him, bankers from all over the world made Paris a financial hub and a prominent centre of the industrial revolution.

By following the progress of the Rothschild family, visitors to the exhibition can discover the history of the early 19th century and how an aristocratic and rural society turned into a middle class and industrial society. This period covers the First French Empire, the Restoration, the reign of Louis Philippe, the Second French Empire and ends with the dawn of the Republic.

These bankers were businessmen who invested in industry, raw materials and transportation. As patrons, they encouraged the fine arts. As philanthropists, they supported medical research and promoted innovative town planning. Thanks to their family ties and contacts, they developed business in various countries. In the case of the Rothschilds there were business houses in Frankfurt, London, Vienna, Naples as well as Paris.

The exhibition will examine James de Rothschild, the archetype of the 19th century businessman, and other famous bankers - friends or rivals - the Pereire brothers and the Camondos. It focuses on their banking and industrial activities. James invested heavily in railways, in particular the Paris – Boulogne railway, the construction of Gare du Nord station and of the stations between the two cities. These bankers also invested in mines, foundries, Paris urbanization, and philanthropic activities such as the foundation of the Rothschild hospital.

Away from business an enlightened and cultured world is presented to visitors, a sophisticated social world within which James de Rothschild mixed with acquaintances such as Rossini, Chopin, Delacroix, Ingres and Balzac.

Depicted in Balzac's *La Comédie Humaine* as well as in Stendhal's and Zola's novels, these real life characters who greatly influenced their times, have been immortalized in classic literature.

Presented in the spectacular Mansart gallery, the exhibition offers a rich diversity of paintings among which some outstanding loans such as Greuze's *La Laitière*, the first work bought by James de Rothschild and now housed at the Musée du Louvre. Other items on display include objets d'art, books, illustrations, photographs, documents from archives and collections belonging to the Rothschild family, the Bibliothèque nationale de France, several major museums and French institutions.

With the support of Rothschild & Cie Banque and the Edmond de Rothschild Group

Exhibition

20 November 2012 | 10 February 2013

BnF | Richelieu

5, rue Vivienne, Paris II^e

Tuesday to Saturday 10h > 19h Sunday 12h > 19h

Closed Mondays and holidays

Admission : 7 euros, reduced admission : 5 euros

Reservations FNAC au 0892 684 694 (0,34 euros TTC/mn) fnac.com

Organizers

Claude Collard, general librarian, BnF

director of the Department of Philosophy, History and Humanities

Melanie Aspey, Director of The Rothschild Archive, London

Publication

Les Rothschild en France au XIX^e siècle

with texts from : Claude Collard, Melanie Aspey,

Claire-Amandine Soulié, Sophie le Tarnec,

Youssef Cassis, Michael Hall, and Harry Paul

196 pages, 130 illustrations

39 euros

BnF Publishing

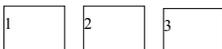
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1. Anonyme,
La Banque du 19 rue Laffitte
vers 1880
Coll. Part. Rothschild, Paris
2. Baron James de Rothschild,
vers 1820, huile sur toile
The Rothschild Archive London

3. Jeton permettant à Lionel de Rothschild
de voyager gratuitement sur les
chemins de fer du Nord, dont il était
l'administrateur.
The Rothschild Archive, London