

VEILHAN VERSAILLES

INTRODUCTION BY
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Throughout its existence, Versailles has encapsulated the creativity of artists from France and other nations. No sooner had building work begun on the Château than Louis XIV called on the services of Hardouin Mansart, Le Brun, Le Nôtre, Lully, Molière, Vigarini, Francini, Bernini, all of whom left their mark on the site with masterpieces of their period. In later years, the Château and estate were enhanced by such as Lalande, Lemoine, Nattier, Riesener, Mique, Gabriel and Hubert Robert. When Louis Philippe set up the Museum of the History of France at Versailles, he in turn commissioned work from the leading artists of the century: it is to him that we owe the masterly decorative schemes produced by Delacroix, Horace Vernet and Meissonnier for the Hall of Battles or the Hall of the Crusades.

It is in the same spirit that the State authority now entrusted with the running of the Château and Park, the Etablissement Public du Musée et du Domaine National de Versailles, wishes to ensure that outstanding artists of our time should be present at Versailles. Following the worldwide acclaim for the exhibition *Jeff Koons Versailles* in 2008, this year it is the turn of Xavier Veilhan to present his works inside the setting of the Château and its estate and to take on the task of working specifically for the site. He will be the latest in a centuries-old line of artists and designers: producing work for the Gardens, the Royal Court, the apartments of the Château, always in reaction and relation to the stunning heritage left by those who went before. His exceptional talent for capturing the spirit of the place will certainly intrigue and challenge the perceptions of the visitors from all over the world for whom Versailles is one of the chief jewels of France.

Jean-Jacques Aillagon,

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President of the Établissement public du musée et du domaine
national de Versailles, May 2009
