

# Digital Cultural Resources for Education: the new Portal [histoiredesarts.culture.fr](http://histoiredesarts.culture.fr)<sup>1</sup>

On 20 September 2010 the French Ministry of Culture and Communication launched [www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr](http://www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr), a site dedicated to the "history of the arts". This portal, which has been open to Internet users in a first version since the end of 2009, offers educational digital resources produced by the Ministry and its public institutions in charge of the preservation, study and development of French cultural heritage. The site will grow with contents from cultural institutions from the whole territory of France.

[www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr](http://www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr) offers a new service and is primarily intended for the teachers who are responsible for delivering the new educational programme "history of the arts" in the primary and middle schools and - soon - in high schools. More generally it can be of interest for the whole educational community.

The site is designed as a "meeting place" with cultural works and creators. It offers to the users direct access to several thousand documents classified according to three fundamental criteria for the "history of the arts": historical periods, artistic domains, thematic classification. The site also aims at facilitating visits to institutions and has a role in accompanying the training of the cultural mediators in their professional activities.

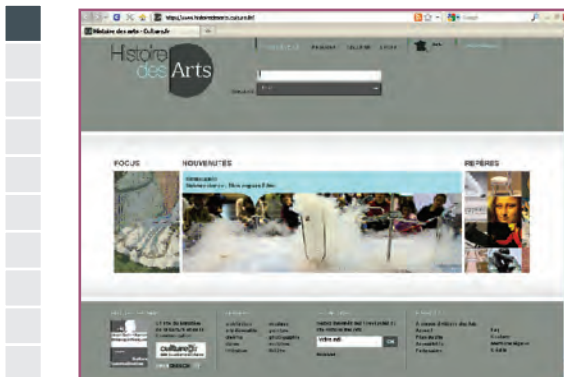
As an anthology of the arts, [www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr](http://www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr) represents an opportunity to enrich the offer of on-line educational resources proposed by the networks involved in "artistic and cultural education". It increases the visibility of cultural heritage for the younger generations.

[www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr](http://www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr) offers a new model for the dissemination of cultural heritage and the transmission of knowledge and encourages new partnerships between institutions thanks to its horizontal framework.



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The portal is on-line through the gateway [www.culture.fr](http://www.culture.fr)<sup>2</sup>, which is the national portal for culture in France, where it is integrated in the series of transversal or thematic portals offered as national access points by the Ministry of Culture: the national aggregator of content "Collections"<sup>3</sup>, the genealogy portal "Genealogie" or the national inventory of digitised collections "Patrimoine numérique"<sup>4</sup>. As a tool for inter-ministerial co-operation, the portal "history of the arts" is also accessible through the inter-ministerial national portal for artistic and cultural education<sup>5</sup>.



### A portal for the history of the arts?

The first objective of this portal is to fulfil the needs that arose with the introduction in 2008 of a new programme on "history of the arts" in primary and secondary schools in France. To do this, the Ministry of Culture has developed, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education, the portal for "the history of the arts" (histoire des arts), an on-line directory of relevant resources. This tool is accessible to every Internet user; but it is firstly conceived for the educational community (teachers from

schools under the responsibility of the ministries of Education, of Culture, of Agriculture, of local authorities), in particular primary and secondary school teachers who have to integrate quickly this new field into their teaching practice.

In this context, the purpose of this directory is to facilitate access to on-line resources that are relevant and validated by cultural institutions.

The portal plays the role of an interface between the sections of the program of history of the arts and a rich offer of digital resources already produced by the Ministry of Culture, its public institutions and other partner institutions. Every resource is identified by a short descriptive record (the directory itself does not contain any resources but rather provides the URL to access them).

It currently contains approximately 4000 records and will grow by another thousand records. The directory has no ambition to be comprehensive; it is conceived to offer a representative set of resources for each section of the programme.

### What is the structure of the database?

Thanks to the structure of the database, the teachers can perform fast and easy searches, by directly using the headings of the official programme of the history of the arts as access points to the resources.

The information is organised according to three criteria:

1. historic periods
2. artistic domains
3. themes (a list of references for primary schools)

This structure is detailed for each educational level:

- Primary schools
- Secondary schools
- High schools

The same resource can be indexed according to several criteria and several levels. As the directory addresses primarily the teacher or the cultural mediator, it is the responsibility of the professional to extract from the resource the elements adapted to the level of his pupils within the framework of the lesson.

The user can combine criteria from all three axes by selecting, for example, 19<sup>th</sup> century [historic periods] + painting [artistic domains] + Arts and Power [theme]. He will obtain a list of relevant resources.



The proposed lists of results allow the teachers to become more familiar with the headings of the programme of "history of the arts".

### Example:

Napoléon's coronation and anointment  
The "Coronation and anointment of emperor Napoleon 1<sup>st</sup> and the crowning of empress Joséphine in the cathedral Notre-Dame de

Paris, on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1804" is displayed in the red rooms of the Louvre. This immense painting is a real page of History of France to be discovered in this multimedia resource.

Access to the resource:

[www.histoire-image.org/site/oeuvre/analyse.php?i=313d=1&m=sacre%20de%20Napol%C3%A9on](http://www.histoire-image.org/site/oeuvre/analyse.php?i=313d=1&m=sacre%20de%20Napol%C3%A9on)



### What are the criteria for selecting and describing the resources?

The directory is not a comprehensive census. It is derived from the programme of "history of the arts" and based on a selection of relevant resources. These resources must be rich enough to constitute an interesting piece of documentation and specific enough to illustrate a question from the point of view of the three criteria (historic periods, artistic domains, and thematic approach). If the selected document has several aspects, it can be subdivided into several chapters individually indexed in the directory.

The criteria of the selection are:

- On-line accessibility of the resource,
- Relevance with regard to the official programme of "history of the arts",



- Intellectual validity of the content (guaranteed by the publisher of the resource),
- Comprehensibility for a non-specialist audience (no complex scientific documents),
- Media richness (text, video): the resource has to be rich enough to help in the preparation of a lesson,
- Ease of description.

All document types can propose: text, sound, audio-visual.

The directory for the history of the arts is a contribution to the entry of this new domain in the field of the education; it aims at facilitating the use and the usability of the resources offered on-line by cultural institutions in an educational context.

### How is the cooperation with participating institutions organised?

The success of this project relies on strong collaboration between the project team (with-

in the General Secretary of the Ministry) and the contributing institutions. Several levels of collaboration are possible, depending on the resources available and on the availability of the institutions for proceeding with a selection of them. The richness of the directory comes also from the variety of interpretation of the program by different institutional contributors.

The description of the resources is done via a standard form by the contributing institution or directly by the project team if necessary. In any case, every contributing institution is invited to nominate a contact person, who will be in charge of the integration of the digital resources of the institution into the database.

### Contact

Département des programmes numériques -  
Secrétariat général Ministère de la Culture et de  
la Communication

[www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr/contacts](http://www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr/contacts)

*August 2010*

1 [www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr/](http://www.histoiredesarts.culture.fr/)

2 [www.culture.fr/](http://www.culture.fr/)

3 [www.collections.culture.fr/](http://www.collections.culture.fr/)

4 [www.numerique.culture.fr/](http://www.numerique.culture.fr/)

5 [www.education.arts.culture.fr/](http://www.education.arts.culture.fr/)