

An Encounter with the petit prince

Press
Release

17 February
— 26 June 2022



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MUSÉE DES ARTS
DÉCORATIFS

«C'était un jardin fleuri de roses», illustration for chapter XX, c. 1943, watercolor and pencil on paper, Stiftung für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte, Winterthur
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ANTOINE DE
SAINT-EXUPÉRY

Exhibition realized with the sponsorship of the Antoine de Saint Exupéry Foundation,
with the support of the International Council, of the Friends of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs,
of Editions Gallimard and of Eden Livres.

With the exceptional support, through its loans, of the Morgan Library & Museum.

Le Petit Prince®

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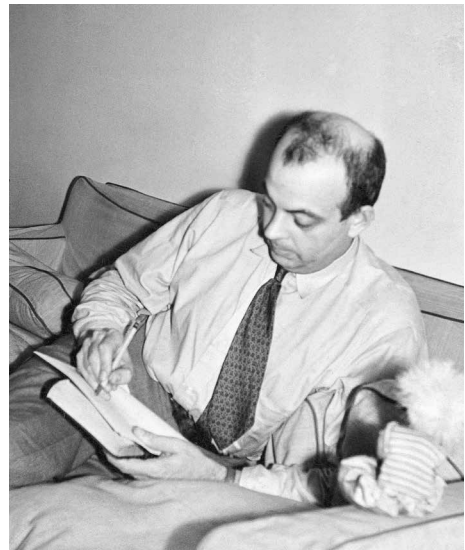
An Encounter with the petit prince

1. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry —
First edition of *The Petit Prince*
Reynal & Hitchcock
New York (in French)
1943
© Coll. Estate of Saint-Exupéry-d'Agay
© Photo: Fondation JMP
for LPP

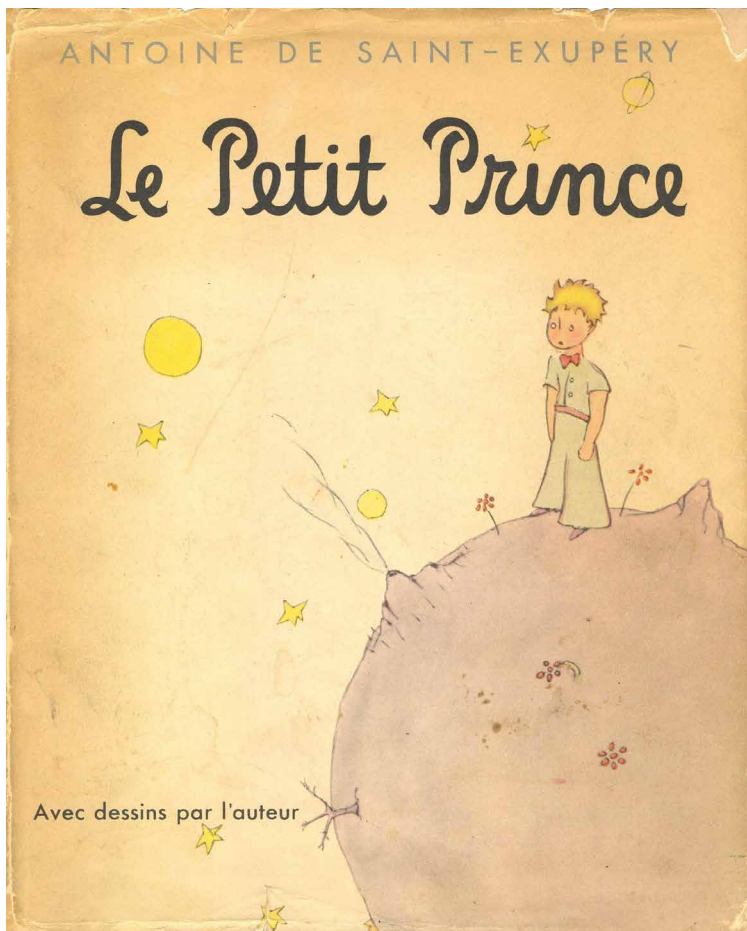
2. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry at the home of Silvia Hamilton
1942
© Coll. Estate of Saint-Exupéry-d'Agay

From February 17th through June 26th, 2022, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris presents the first major museum exhibition in France dedicated to the timeless literary masterpiece, *The Little Prince*, by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry.

This exhibition, entitled *À la rencontre du petit prince (An Encounter with the petit prince)*, brings together more than six-hundred works that celebrate the many facets of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's extraordinary life as a writer, poet, aviator, explorer, journalist, inventor, and philosopher who was driven all his life by a humanistic ideal, the true driving force of his work.



2.



1.

An Encounter with the petit prince showcases the original manuscript of *The Little Prince*, held in the permanent collection of the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City, alongside watercolors, sketches, drawings, papers, photographs, poems, newspaper clippings and correspondence produced by Saint-Exupéry over the course of his life.

Written and published in the United States in 1943 and in France in 1946 only, *The Little Prince* was the final work of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, published during his lifetime and undoubtedly his most prolific, sharing with readers a universal message while transcending borders and time.

The exhibition scenography was entrusted to Designers Unit.



3.

3. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry —
Edition of the *Petit Prince*
in Amharic
Addis Abeba
Translation: Habte
Maryam Markos
1974
© Fondation JMP for LPP

4. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry —
The little prince
in ceremonial dress
Illustration for chapter I
Watercolor and pencil
on paper
Private collection
© Coll. Estate of Saint
Exupéry – d'Agay
© Photo: MAD, Paris /
Christophe Dellière

This timeless story, punctuated by whimsical, poetic illustrations, has become a staple of children's literature while also presenting a message of considerable philosophical scope. Through the clues dispersed throughout the texts, drawings and artifacts presented, *An Encounter with the petit prince* sheds light onto often overlooked or unknown aspects of Saint-Exupéry's life while offering a more profound understanding of this internationally recognized and enigmatic story.

Heralded as a pioneer of aviation, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry quickly became a renowned writer. His first novel, *Southern Mail*, published in 1929, became an immediate success, while his second, *Night Flight*, published in 1931, won the author the Prix Femina award, a major French literary prize. Saint-Exupéry then partook in both air raids and promotional tours with Air France and wrote engaged pieces about the situations in Spain and in the Soviet Union.

This hectic decade in the life of the author is recounted in his autobiographical work, *Wind, Sand and Stars*, which was published on the eve of the Second World War and constitutes a lasting testament to the author's entrenched humanism. *The Little Prince* was written during Saint-Exupéry's exile in the United States, where it was published in French and English in 1943. Only in 1946 was it published, posthumously, in Saint-Exupéry's homeland.

An Encounter with the petit prince traces the life of the author, beginning with his birth on June 29th, 1900 and his aristocratic origins in Lyon, followed by his upbringing and education, his interest in poetry, and his fascination with airplanes, all of which influenced his writings.



4.



5.

5. Roger de Valério —
Dans tous les ciels,
Air France
1935
© Photo: MAD, Paris /
Christophe Dellière

6. 50 Franc note bearing
the effigy of Antoine
de Saint-Exupéry
(front and back) —
1990s
© Photo: MAD, Paris

The exhibition continues with Saint-Exupéry's enlistment in the French Air Force in 1921 before joining Aéropostale, a French air courier service, where Saint-Exupéry flew the Casablanca–Dakar route in 1926 and later managed the Cape Juby station in Sahara between 1927 and 1928. In 1929, Saint-Exupéry served as director of Aeroposta Argentina. All three experiences would go on to inspire his first two works, *Southern Mail* (1929) and *Night Flight* (1931).

The exhibition then reflects on the impact of the airplane crash suffered by Saint-Exupéry and his mechanic, André Prévost, on a Saigon–Paris route in December 1935. This episode played a central role in the narrative of *Wind, Sand and Stars* and served as the opening scene of *The Little Prince*.

The fourth segment of the exhibition explores the fundamental importance of drawing in the life of the author as a means of reconnecting with his childhood. In fact, it is through this artistic medium that the petit prince and the Aviator are acquainted: “If you please — draw me a sheep.”



6.

7. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry —
 « Un jour j'ai vu le soleil
 se coucher quarante
 quatre fois »
 Illustration for chapter VI
 1942 ou 1943
 Watercolor and pencil
 on paper
 Fondation Jean-Marc
 Probst pour *Le Petit
 Prince*
 © Coll. Estate of Saint
 Exupéry – d'Agay
 © Photo: Fondation JMP
 pour LPP

8. Charles-Edouard
 Derche —
*Winter, Spring,
 in Morocco,
 by Aéropostale*
 1929
 © Photo: MAD, Paris /
 Christophe Dellière



7.

The collection of drawings brought together in *An Encounter with the petit prince* further bears witness to the author's many talents, showcasing many letters, drafts, notebooks, and manuscripts adorned with drawings by Saint-Exupéry.

The exhibition goes on to highlight two major figures in the life of Saint-Exupéry from his time in the United States — he goes into exile in 1940 in an attempt to convince the U.S. government to enter the war alongside France. This includes his wife, Consuelo, who inspired the flower, as well as his dear friend, Léon Werth. Werth, a fervent opponent of colonialism and militarism, is Saint-Exupéry's literary mentor and closest friend and the one Saint-Exupéry dedicated *The Little Prince* to.



8.

An entire room of the exhibition is dedicated to the highlight of the exhibition: the original manuscript of *The Little Prince*, kept in the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City and presented for the first time ever in France at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. This exceptional loan is complemented by numerous unpublished original works from another private collection which have never before been shown to the public.

Finally, the posthumous life of the *Petit Prince* is explored, with the prince serving as the literary double who survives long after the death of the author. The disappearance of Saint-Exupéry, who died serving in the Free French Air Forces on July 31st, 1944, only helped to sanctify the *Petit Prince*. The exhibition ends with a 'universal library' that presents one hundred twenty foreign editions of his most recognized work, which has since been translated into nearly five hundred languages.

With *An Encounter with the petit prince*, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs continues its children's literature exhibition cycle, initiated with *Une Histoire, Encore ! 50 ans de création à l'école des loisirs* in 2016 and *Les Drôles de Petites Bêtes d'Antoon Krings* in 2019. Children, adults and their inner children are all invited to share in the humanistic message of hope brought to us by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and his friend, the petit prince.

Useful information

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Alban Cerisier

Archivist-Paleographer, Historian
of Publishing and Literature

#expopetitprince

— Les Arts Décoratifs

Johannes Huth, President
Sylvie Corréard, General Director
Olivier Gabet, Director of Museums
Yvon Figueras, Director
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— Musée des Arts Décoratifs

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Métro: Palais-Royal, Pyramides,
Tuileries

Hours

→ Tuesday to Sunday
11 am–6 pm
→ Open late on Thursdays until 9 pm
(temporary exhibitions only)

Rates

→ general entrance fee: €14
→ reduced entrance fee: €10
→ free admission for under 26

— Musée Nissim de Camondo

Olivier Gabet, Director of Museum
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Open 10 am–5:30 pm
Closed Monday and Tuesday
→ general entrance fee: €12
→ reduced entrance fee: €9

— Library

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+33 (0) 1 44 55 59 36
Open Tuesday to Friday 10 am–6 pm

— Visitor engagement

→ Activities for individuals

Reservation via the online ticketing

→ Activities for groups

Information and reservations
→ Young public, families, schools:
jeune@madparis.fr / 01 44 55 59 26
→ Adult public, higher education,
social field & disability:
adac@madparis.fr / 01 44 55 59 25

→ Conferences, round tables and colloquiums

Information and reservations :
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105 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
+33 (0) 1 42 60 64 94
Open 11 am–18:30 pm
Open late on Thursdays until 9 pm
Closed Monday

— Loulou, restaurant

107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris
or access via the Carrousel gardens
Open daily 12 pm–2 am
+33 (0) 1 42 60 41 96

— Le Camondo, restaurant

61 bis rue de Monceau, 75008 Paris
Open Tuesday to Saturday from
noon to midnight and Sunday during
the day
+33 (0) 1 45 63 40 40

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