



# Muséum

La Rochelle

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[larochelle.fr](http://larochelle.fr)

LA  
ROCHELLE

# The Museum

The Natural History Museum is a scientific institution established in the city of La Rochelle nearly two centuries ago. It is both a place for preservation and a place for exchanging knowledge. Whether you are museum professionals, scientists or curious visitors, the Museum has many means to quench your thirst for knowledge. The exhibition covers a surface area of 2,300m<sup>2</sup> and offers a fantastic journey into the very heart of natural and cultural heritage. You will discover almost 10,000 objects from the naturalist and ethnographic collections gathered since the 18th century. The museum has been open to the public since 2007, after extensive reconstruction and renovation work. The Museum now offers modern and interactive museography. The contemporary scenography integrates very harmoniously into restored ancient rooms, and highlights the charm and the beauty of the three-hundred-year-old architecture.

Ground floor – Room 5 :  
The Lafaille Cabinet



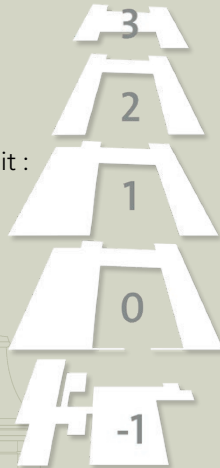
Floor 3 – Room 25 :  
Interpreting nature



Floor 1 – Room 9 :  
The zoology gallery

# The Museum - Instruction

## Floors map :



Recommended order of visit :

- Ground Floor
- Lower Ground Floor
- Floor 1
- Floor 2
- Floor 3



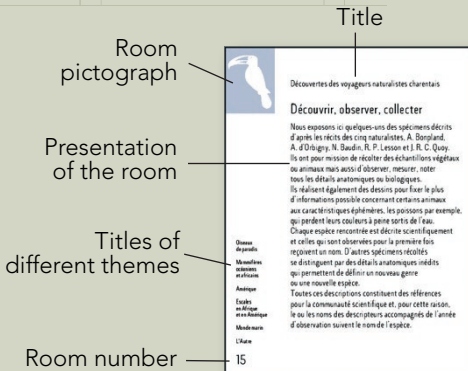
For kids ... and for older people : animals and objects are precious (rare or unique specimens) : please do not touch them ! Thank you.



## On each floor



## In each room



## Pictographs



They are located in each room entrance and they show the theme.



# ground Floor

## 0 the coastal area



Since the 18th century, the scholars of the region have been studying the marshland in the area of La Rochelle and gathered their collections together in natural history cabinets such as the Lafaille Cabinet.

As early as the 19th century, the naturalists started to draw up an inventory of the fauna and flora of the marsh to satisfy their curiosity and to help with the development of this unwelcoming land.

Nowadays, we know that exploitation jeopardizes the biodiversity of these specific areas. The scientific community is committed to protecting these fragile ecosystems.

Room 5 : the Lafaille Cabinet



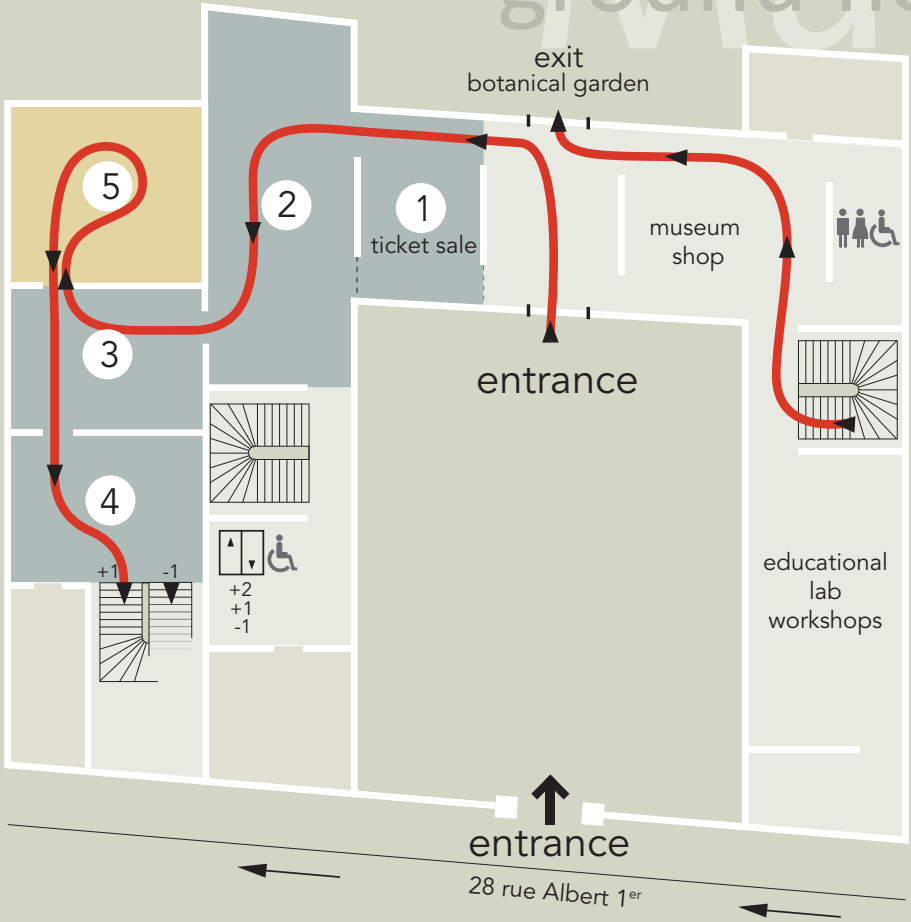
Crayfish from Louisiana



Room 2 : Coastal marshes

# Map

ground floor



1 The Museum of La Rochelle



4 Marshland : an environment in jeopardy



2 Coastal marshes



5 The Lafaille Cabinet



3 Birds, lords of the marshland

# lower ground floor

## -1 the birth of the littoral



For two centuries, geologists have surveyed this region where they have collected fossils -most of them coming from the sea- which are now exhibited in the Museum. These animals and plants have disappeared over time but they tell us about the close relation which has bound this territory and the sea together for hundreds of millions of years. Furthermore, the minerals collection gives us an insight into the materials which formed our planet, including a remarkable collection of gypsum.



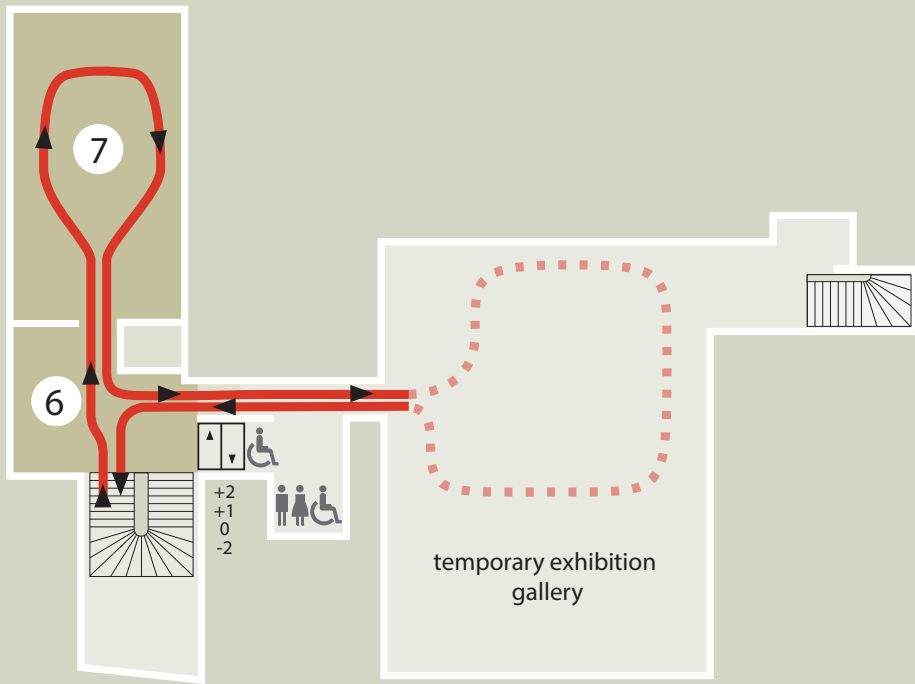
Room 7 : Fossils are witnesses to shore extinction

Room 6 - crystals and minerals : pink granite , labradorite



# lower ground floor

# Map



**6** Fossils from the primary seas



**7** Fossils and the history of vanished coastlines



**8** Crystals and minerals

## 1 sciences and collections



The 19th century is one of the most auspicious periods in the history of sciences.

It was the time when the zoology gallery opened to the public, who could discover animals exhibited according to Georges Cuvier's classification. Naturalists gathered these animals and they made observations and sketches that you can now find in the cabinet of drawings.

The scholars of this area contributed to scientific expeditions : their discoveries changed the theories we used to believe in, and they gave birth to new scientific disciplines such as oceanography and biogeography which are represented through three rooms : one of them is dedicated to a beautiful collection of tropical shellfish.



Charles X's giraffe

Room 10 – Fauna from coast to abyss

Borda's reflecting circle





# floor 1 Map



**9** The zoology gallery



**10** Fauna from coast to abyss



**11** Oceanographic expeditions



**12** Molluscs and tropical habitats



**13** Cabinet of drawings



**14** Naturalists-travellers from Charente



**15** The discoveries of naturalists-travellers from Charente



**16** The last great scientific expedition

# floor 2

## 2 from one world to the others



Sao head



The specimens exhibited have been collected since the beginning of the 19th century by adventurers eager for new discoveries, and then by scientists who desired to understand these new civilizations and people who were so different from them.

Ritual objects and items from everyday life gathered over the years show the genius and innovation of these people, but also their social and cultural practices and their history which has been unknown for a long time. Furthermore, these objects show the evolution of the perception of those who gathered them.

Nowadays, they still help us to be aware of the diversity of societies, and how these civilizations existed.

A drum from Mali



Room 22 - Dress ornaments and signs of social hierarchy



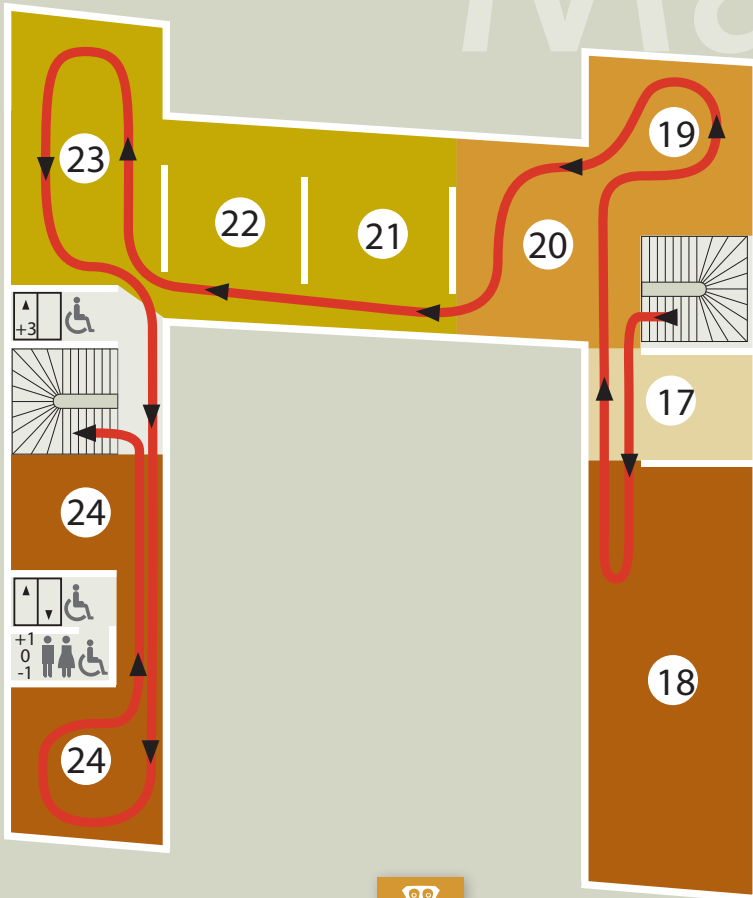
Room 24 - Musical arts



Room 18 – After scientific explorations



# floor 2 Map



17 Etienne Loppé :  
his worldview



18 After scientific  
explorations



19 The evolution of  
Western perception



20 African pre &  
proto history



21 African metallurgy



22 Dress ornaments and  
signs of the social order



23 Non-European  
decorative Arts



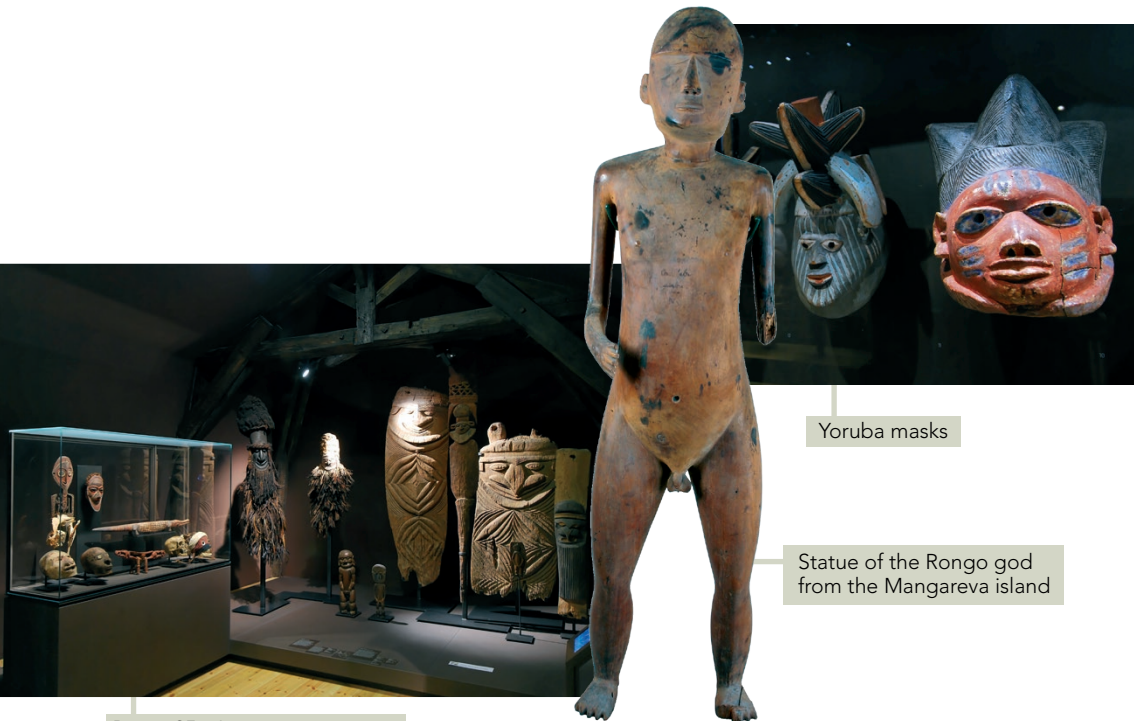
24 Music

# floor 3

## 3 beyond the sacred : the universal



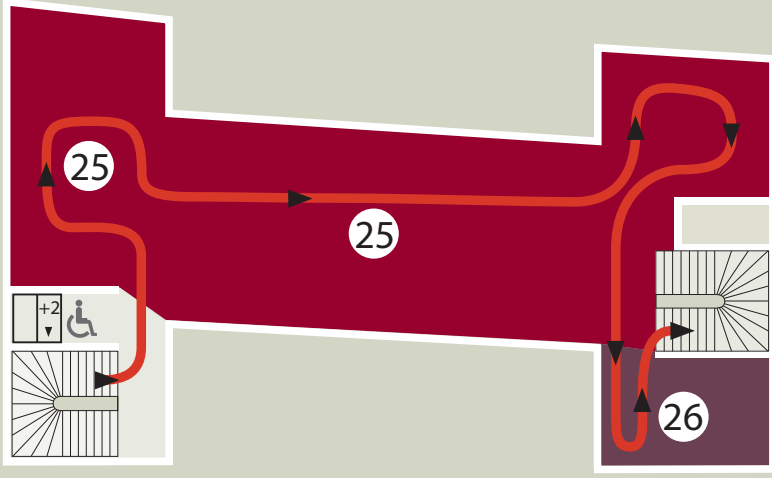
The observation of the religious rituals allows us to anticipate other conceptions of the world, but science cannot reveal everything and the ethnologist is not always able to decrypt all of the meanings that can be ascribed to a ritual object. Thanks to Etienne Loppé, the Museum exhibits a spectacular Oceanic, African and American collection. This collection shows how the study of human beings progressively prevailed over the fascination for the colonial empire's riches. Now, the Museum wants to be a multicultural crossroads in the city of La Rochelle, as it has demonstrated with the recent acquisition of new American collections.



Yoruba masks

Statue of the Rongo god from the Mangareva island

# floor 3 Map



**25** Interpreting nature



**26** The shaman in the Americas : a mediator.



# let's continue the visit ...

## The scientific library

is both a research and heritage library and a public library. It houses a 45,000-volume documentary library specialized in biology and ethnology.

This place is open to everyone : researchers, students or curious visitors. You can read documents in the two reading rooms of the library - with a view of the garden - where you can find documents related to the different collections of the Museum. Entry is free



## The auditorium

On the 1st floor of the Museum, you can find the auditorium where many screening presentations and lectures take place.

During the visit, this room allows you to view documentaries related to the collections exhibited in the Museum .



## The educational lab workshops

This educational area is equipped to receive a fifteen-person group. Visitors can visit it when there is no educational activity. The showcases display objects and specimens coming from general collections or educational collections. A multimedia system offers an insight into the taxidermic techniques.



Opening time, price, news : [www.museum-larochelle.fr](http://www.museum-larochelle.fr)

## The botanical gardens



Created in the 17th century by the College des Jésuites, it became a local botanical garden in 1800 to give lessons to the public. Nowadays, this garden presents original vegetable collections coming from every corner of the world. It refers to the 1st floor rooms dedicated to the 18th and the 19h century explorations and scientific missions, which enabled the introduction of many exotic plants in Europe.

## Entertainment for everyone



The Museum offers guided tours :

- discovery tours to have an overview of the collections exhibited in the Museum.
- thematic tours devoted to a part of the different collections.

All over the year, lectures take place in the scientific library or in the auditorium. Play activities and scientific workshops and screening presentations are organized for children, adolescents and families. The programme of these activities is available at the Museum's reception or on the Museum's website. Teachers and their pupils can enjoy exclusive activities organized by the educational department.

## The museum's shop



Here you will find a library and a shop. You can choose books, games, toys, not to mention original and scientific gifts for your family, children and friends.



▶ For any information (opening times, prices, news, etc ...), please visit our website : [www.museum-larochelle.fr](http://www.museum-larochelle.fr)



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