

PRESS KIT

EXHIBITION AT
THE ARAB WORLD INSTITUTE

THE EPIC OF THE SUEZ CANAL



FROM THE PHARAOKHS TO THE 21st CENTURY

28 MARCH 2018 TO 5 AUGUST 2018

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MUSEE
D'HISTOIRE
DE MARSEILLE

INSTITUT
DU MONDE
ARABE

المعهد
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A word from Jack Lang, President of the Arab World Institute

After « Osiris, Egypt's Sunken Mysteries », Egypt is once again with us at the Arab World Institute - this time not only for its ancient past, but also for the modernity represented by the Suez Canal. Though I should say the four-millennia-old modernity of this wonder of the world that has united seas and continents since the first canal was dug eighteen centuries before our era.

On 5 August 2015, attending the inauguration of the new parallel section of the Suez Canal alongside the Presidents of France and Egypt, I was thinking that few countries have been capable of amazing the world, over such a long period, with the immensity of their achievements – to such an extent that the word pharaonic has entered everyday use to qualify anything far greater than the norm. I was thinking that it would be nice to find a subject that illustrates the permanence of the oldest country in the world. Yet I had the subject right in front of me : the canal itself, started by Senusret III eighteen centuries before the common era to unite, via the Nile, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, the west with the east. The « Association du Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez » [Association of the Memory of Ferdinand de Lesseps and the Suez Canal], which manages the cultural heritage of the former international company, has given us its full support. The idea was enthusiastically received by the Arab World Institute teams, who called on French and Egyptian experts on the many facets of the Canal.



Toward the South Seas © GG

Our exhibition does not present a French history of the canal, but a truly Franco-Egyptian history, a history of two peoples that are friends, whatever divergences may have existed in the past. We will share historic moments, like the inauguration by the Khedive Isma'il Pasha – attended by Empress Eugénie – of an undertaking that symbolized the rebirth of Egypt. We will also address confrontations, such as the 1956 aggression led by France, the United Kingdom, and Israel after President Nasser nationalized the canal.

Those times have passed, and we now turn toward the future, a future in which the Suez Canal and the economic zone developing around it are major assets.

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A bit of history

« A bit of imagination is a good seed for the hand of human enterprise. »

Ferdinand de Lesseps

« No one is more a canalist than I, but I want the Canal to belong to Egypt, not Egypt to the Canal. »

Isma'il Pasha, Khedive of Egypt



Panoramic view of the Isthmus of Suez and the direct route of the canal between two seas (Linant de Bellefonds, 1855). © BNF

Starting on 26 March 2018, the Arab World Institute will recount one of the most exciting human undertakings in history: the epic of the Suez Canal. From the Pharaohs to Ferdinand de Lesseps, from Napoleon Bonaparte's plans to nationalization under Nasser, this extraordinary 4000-year saga is presented in a ground-breaking exhibition bringing together powerful personalities, superhuman challenges, and the critical moments that have marked the singular history of this symbolic location where three continents converge: Asia, Africa, and Europe.

To tell this story is to recount world history and the great civilizations that came together and confronted each other at this nerve center of trade between peoples, between North and South, East and West. It is also to present the rebirth – political, economic, and cultural – of the world's oldest state, which was also the first of an Arab world in the making.

Employing a cinematic and immersive approach, the exhibition will plunge visitors into the heart of the 1869 inauguration, then take them back in time through the historical development of this epic construction.

Archaeological objects, scale models, photographs, and period films highlight this marathon exhibition that guides visitors through the history of Egypt and the world from the time of the Pharaohs to the most recent extension and parallel construction.

The journey begins...in 1869 : for the inauguration of the Suez Canal, Khedive Isma'il Pasha welcomes representatives of the royal families of Europe, envoys from the Sultan, as well as the Emperor of Austria and the guest of honor, the Empress Eugenie. It is with this grandiose scene – **presented through paintings, vast animated screens, and a diorama from Port Said** – that the exhibition begins, to the sound of the trumpets from *Aida* (the opera commissioned from Verdi by the Khedive for the occasion). The Canal open to navigation and Cairo renovated on the model of a European city: the Egyptian renaissance is underway. The Suez Canal stepped directly into history. A history that began 4000 years earlier.

● Already the Pharaohs... (1850 BCE)

It was the pharaoh **Senusret III** who, by connecting the Nile to the Red Sea, first made it possible, 18 centuries before the common era, to navigate between the Mediterranean and the seas to the south. That ancient canal, often silted up and regularly repaired, continued to exist for nearly 20 centuries. After it became unusable, new projects were developed in Constantinople and Venice, without ever being built.

The exhibition presents ancient works that show the importance of the canal for Egypt : a history that has never stopped shaping the canal. Thanks to numerous scale models, the visitor will discover the audacity of the Pharaoh's building project, for which machines were invented and used for the first time.

That early canal, a slice through the desert, is described by a **relief map created for the Universal Exhibition of 1878**, but also by **scale models of period machines and boats, engravings, and photographs**, as well as films that reflect the contrasting visions that Egyptians and Europeans later had of the construction.



Worksite Number 6: water from the Mediterranean arriving in Lake Timsah on 18 November 1862 » by François Pierre Bernard Barry
© Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez / Lebas Photographie Paris

- **Towards modern Egypt, or when the dream becomes true (1797-1849)**



Dredge, H. Arnoux © Archives nationales du monde du travail (Roubaix), dépôt du Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez

The Suez Canal was an Egyptian project because it took place in a re-emerging Egypt. After a confrontation with European modernity under Napoleon Bonaparte, Egypt re-emerged during the reign of Muhammad Ali Pasha and his descendants. The new dynasty, increasingly independent of the Ottoman Empire, rapidly modernized the country by bringing in French experts. Among them, **Ferdinand de Lesseps** – a character beyond classification, a brilliant diplomat and adventurer

– struggled to keep alive a project already studied by Bonaparte's engineers, and then by the Saint-Simonians, but about which Muhammad Ali had been very mistrustful: a maritime canal crossing the Isthmus of Suez. Ferdinand de Lesseps and **Saïd Pasha**, a modernist sovereign of Egypt and the grandson of Muhammad Ali who had inherited his grandfather's powers, threw themselves alone into the adventure, up through the spectacular international inauguration in 1869. Egypt was on the move toward progress. The digging of the Canal is presented through numerous **archives from the Association de la mémoire de Ferdinand de Lesseps: sculptures, photographs, maps, engravings, paintings...**



Inauguration of the Suez Canal. Tribune des Souverains © Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez / Lebas Photographie Paris

- **The canal as object of desire (1854-1882)**

The optimistic era during which Isma'il Pasha could say that his country was « no longer in Africa, but in Europe » was followed by a darker time: **bankruptcy, foreign stranglehold, English military occupation starting in 1882**. What for Europeans remains a mythical setting became for Egyptians a symbol of servitude where, nonetheless, life went on, cities grew, the countryside became green again. Those very different visions are shown **through images, films, and paintings**. The Suez Canal zone became a world apart within Egypt, extraterritorial, with its own lifestyle and a cosmopolitanism very different from that in Cairo and Alexandria. The visitor can travel the Canal as one still did in 1920 on the way to India or the Far East and dream of the charm of long-distance sea travel.

- **Egyptian aspirations for independence (1914-1945)**

During the First World War, the British and French negotiated the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Middle East into zones of influence: France obtained a protectorate over Syria and Lebanon; the United Kingdom over Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt. In 1936, under the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, the Kingdom of Egypt obtained almost complete independence: the protection of the Suez Canal would remain under British monopoly for only twenty years.

- **The canal for the Egyptians (1956)**

« *Welcome. We are part of the Arab Nation. We will move forward, united, forming one block, one heart, one hand to lay the foundations and the principles of liberty, glory, and dignity, and to achieve political and economic independence at the same time.* »

Speech by Gamal Abdel Nasser
(Alexandria, 26 July 1956)



Nasser nationalizes the Suez Canal in 1956. D.R

1956: after the Second World War, while seemingly serene, the Arab world was aspiring to independence and revolt was brewing. After being received at the exhibition by the theatrical pomp of the 1869 inauguration, the exhibition visitor is now immersed into the heart of a central event of 1956: when on the Egyptian national day, Nasser announced to a crowd carried away by enthusiasm that he had nationalized the Suez Canal. **The exhibition dedicates a large space to that critical moment, to the implementation of the decision, to the souvenirs of those who witnessed it, and finally to the military operation and the fiasco that followed.**

- **A new world emerges (1956-1975)**

The fiasco of the Franco-Anglo-Israeli expedition of 1956, foiled by the Americans and the Russians, marked the end of European colonial imperialism, though the Russians and the Americans continued to rule in Central Europe and Latin America. The Canal, henceforth Egyptian, continued to function, and the political and financial disputes were settled. But very quickly the Canal again became a war zone: the Six Day war in 1967, to start, followed by the closing of the Canal and six years of sporadic but deadly combat, and then the war of 1973, with its two major crossings, first by the Egyptians and then by the Israelis. The final result of that dual victory, extensively illustrated in the exhibition, was the renewal of navigation and the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

- **The Canal of the future (1975-2018)**

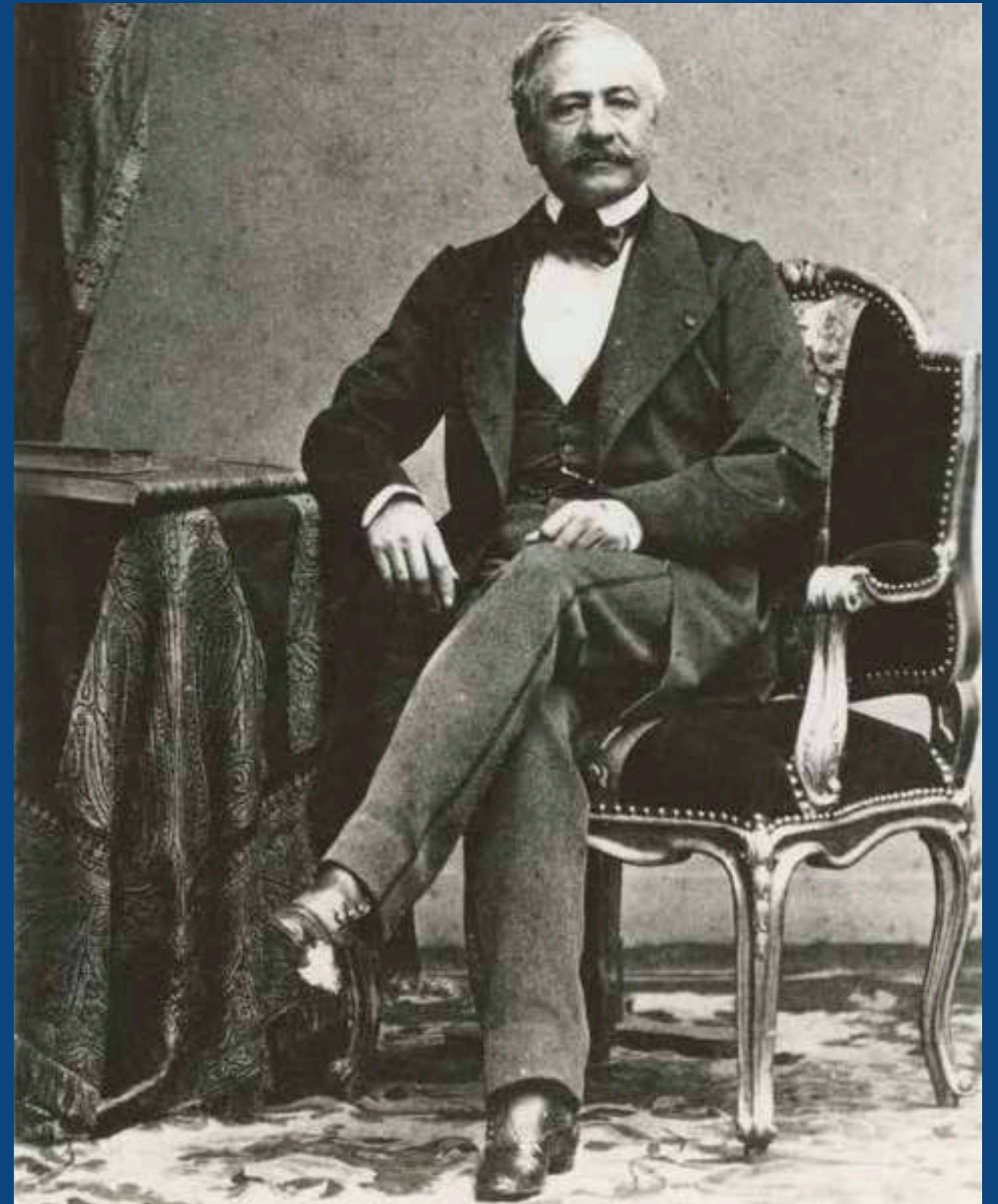
Between 1975 and 2015, the canal was considerably widened, deepened, and modernised. It became one of the main sources of foreign exchange for Egypt, which, in 2015, launched a new pharaonic project: doubling the canal and building a vast industrial and urban zone intended to draw millions of inhabitants. That is the Egypt of the future that the visitor discovers, before dreaming again of grand journeys. They are still possible, even though the décor has changed, as we see in the **filmed images that close the exhibition, travelling the 193-kilometres of this mythical water route as it is today.**



Traffic on the new Suez Canal.

The 1869 inauguration will be commented by Frédéric Mitterrand, who has accepted to play the reporter at this nearly 150-year-old event! In fact, his voice will accompany the entire visit for French-speaking visitors using the audioguide and the special exhibition app.

THOSE WHO MADE THE HISTORY OF THE CANAL



Portrait of Ferdinand de Lesseps, 19th century © Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez / Lebas Photographie Paris

Those who made the history of the Canal by Claude Mollard and Gilles Gauthier



Head thought to be Senusret III © RMN-Musée du Louvre



Bust of Darius I



Napoléon Bonaparte and Gaspard Monge, Count of Péluse (in *Histoire populaire des sciences, inventions et découvertes depuis les premiers siècles jusqu'à nos jours*, d'A. Bitard, 1880). © Lee/Leemage

On 5 August 2015, when the new canal running parallel to the historic Suez Canal was opened to navigation, it was the continuation of a four-thousand-year epic. In the nineteenth century BCE, under the reign of **Senusret III**, Egyptian influence extended from Byblos to southern Nubia. Goods and merchants of every origin circulated throughout that zone linking the Middle East to Africa. And it was then that the first canal connecting the Mediterranean to the Red Sea was excavated. The link was not direct, of course : for part of the route navigation followed the course of the Nile. The canal sometimes silted up, but the masters of Egypt periodically restored it. Monuments testify to the will of every powerful ruler – Egyptian, Persian, Greek, and Arab – to preserve that instrument of prosperity and power. Until it was closed in the eighth century CE for strategic reasons.

During modern times, the need for the canal again became clear. In the sixteenth century, to counter competition from Portugal – whose ocean trade route went around southern Africa – Venice and the Ottoman Empire developed projects that were never completed. The scholars who accompanied **Napoleon Bonaparte** to Egypt in 1798 led the first study of what would become the modern canal. But for that project to come alive, Egypt would have to be reborn. After three millennia of glory during the time of the Pharaohs, after the cultural effervescence of Alexandria under the Ptolemaic dynasty, one of the oldest states in the world became Christian, and then welcomed Islam, whose civilization flourished under Fatimid Caliphate, the Ayyubid dynasty, and the Mamluk slave sultans. But in 1517, Egypt became an Ottoman province far from the center of power. In 1798, the jolt produced by Bonaparte's expedition brought the old country out of its torpor. Conditions were ripe for Muhammad Ali Pasha, a brilliant adventurer originally from what is now northern Greece, to take power and begin restoring Egypt's glory. He brought experts from France to modernize every sector of the country : the army, the navy, medicine, education, agriculture, and archaeology.

But **Muhammad Ali Pasha** did not support the proposed maritime canal developed by the Saint-Simonian engineer Barthélémy Prosper Enfantin. The viceroy of Egypt feared the international waterway would be an object of desire for the world's powers. But Ferdinand de Lesseps, an aristocrat, fine horseman, and former French consul in Alexandria, was a friend of his son Saïd Pasha, who later succeeded him as leader of the country. The two men embarked together on the adventure. Against them : the Ottoman Empire to which Egypt was nominally attached; England, which feared losing control of the sea route to India; part of the Egyptian elite who remained suspicious; and international public opinion, shocked by the forced labor imposed upon Egyptian peasants. As for France, it waited until the works were underway before getting involved.



Muhammad Ali Pasha (1760-1849) meeting Patrick Campbell, Consul-General of Great Britain and French engineers circa 1840 in Alexandria (lithograph circa 1845) © www.bridgemanimages.com

Saint-Simonianism is a social, economic, and political doctrine founded by Claude Henri de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) who considered that, at the time that the industrial revolution was beginning, society should move from a theological and feudal age to a positive and industrial one. People should see each other as brothers, come together and help each other. A generation later, it was **Barthélémy Prosper Enfantin** (1796-1864) who took the reins of the movement after meeting Saint-Simon a few months before his death. Enfantin transformed Saint-Simonianism into a religion of which he became the supreme leader.



Barthélémy Prosper Enfantin, patron of the Saint-Simonians

On 22 March 1844, Enfantin left for Egypt, where he remained for three years. Due to his reformist ideas, he was welcomed at first by Muhammad Ali Pasha. For Enfantin and the « brothers » who accompanied him or were already there, it was in Egypt that eastern spirituality and western science would cross-pollinate for the salvation of humanity. Convinced that means of communication served universal understanding, the Saint-Simonians took up the idea studied by the French scientists on Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition of digging a canal through the isthmus of Suez. But the viceroy of Egypt was not interested in a geostrategic project that he thought would make arouse the greed of the major powers and would be fatal to his goal of making Egypt an independent country. So he decided to use the skills of the Saint-Simonians – who included many graduates of the Polytechnic, including Enfantin himself – to build a dam on the Nile delta that would in fact never see the light of day. It was the end of the Saint-Simonian dream in Egypt, where Ferdinand de Lesseps would take up the project in a more pragmatic way. However, once rid of its mystical excesses, Saint-Simonianism would irrigate the whole of political, economic, and social thinking in the nineteenth century, in Europe and in countries such as Egypt where elites were engaging in the pursuit of modernity.

But the history of the canal is not only political. It is also the history of a technical revolution : without steam engines to propel the ships and run the dredges, the Suez Canal would not exist. It succeeded because industrialists and bankers believed in the innovation. That vertiginous technical progress can be measured in three figures : today a tanker can carry 500,000 tons, which is 2,500 times more than an ancient Egyptian boat and 5 million times more than a donkey!



Portrait of Empress Eugénie, nineteenth century
© Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez / Lebas Photographie Paris



Photograph of the Khedive Isma'il, 1868



Auguste Edouard Mariette, librettist of *Aida*,
Nadar, circa 1861

The digging of the canal was the subject of considerable staging encouraged by the emergence of early media: photography and press drawing combined to present what contemporaries knew was a major historic moment. In 1869, the opening of the canal was celebrated with sumptuous feasts, presented by the Arab World Institute exhibition through an immersive experience of the cruise of **Empress Eugénie** and other crowned heads of state invited by the **Khedive Isma'il Pasha**. It was for that renewed Egypt at the center of the world that Bartholdi imagined raising a monumental statue of an Egyptian peasant lighting the way for humanity, even if the project finally came to fruition in New York under the name Statue of Liberty.

Khedive Isma'il Pasha commissioned **the opera *Aida* from Giuseppe Verdi**, to be based on an idea from **Auguste Edouard Mariette**, founder with Champollion of Egyptology. We owe him the discovery of the sphinxes in Saqqara and many other ancient wonders. He is buried in Cairo.

The opera presents Aida, an Ethiopian slave in the service of the Egyptian Pharaoh, who, to thank his captain Radamès for his bravery offers his daughter in marriage. But Ramadès prefers Aida, which will lead to the death of both lovers. The opera was to be presented at the new Cairo Opera House that opened on 1 November 1869, a few days before the inauguration of the Suez Canal, with a performance of *Rigoletto*. *Aida* would only be performed on 24 December 1871 due to the siege of Paris, by which Mariette was blocked with the sets and costumes. It would go on to be an enormous success.

The exhibition is cinematographic, in the image of the emerging modern times, with dolly shots, close-ups of personalities and crowds, and flash-backs to pursue the course of history.

Once it was inaugurated, the Canal that brought the world closer became part of the universal imagination. It is one of the places people dream of seeing. It fed the imagination of writers and filmmakers. On its desert banks, cities emerged where people from Egypt, France, Italy, and Greece came together. Despite its injustices and inequalities, a unique form of cosmopolitanism came about, for which nostalgia persists.

This four-thousand-year adventure reached a critical moment in the nineteenth century, when industry and trade propelled Europe above the rest of the world, despite the efforts of certain Asian and African countries to compete in a race in which most (except Japan) succumbed. It was the apogee of imperialism, the first consequence of which was the political failure of the revival of the Egyptian nation. Even though it had started well. In 1869, when the canal was inaugurated, the Egyptian government held 44% of the actions in the Suez Canal Company. But, too heavily in debt, in 1875 the Khedive was forced to sell that share to



Aida, by Giuseppe Verdi

England, which, overcoming its initial reluctance, invested in the canal to the point of occupying the country militarily in 1882. Henceforth, the canal would be one of the major focal points in the struggle for independence as well as a of strategic international confrontations.

On 14 February 1945, a few weeks before his death (12 April 1945), U.S. President Franklin **Roosevelt** met **King Ibn Saud**, founder of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in Ismailia, aboard the USS Quincy. Roosevelt was returning from Yalta. Also present at the meeting were the Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie and King Farouk of Egypt. Roosevelt did not receive the King's support for the creation of Jewish national home in Palestine, but, unbeknownst to the British, the two leaders concluded an agreement, the so-called Quincy Pact, guaranteeing the Saudi monarchy military protection in exchange for privileged access to its oil. The leadership of Saudi Arabia was henceforth one of the « vital interests » of the United States. The Saudi kingdom would provide most of its oil needs to the United States. The ARAMCO oil company would enjoy a drilling monopoly for a period of 60 years. The agreement was renewed for a second 60-year period by President George W. Bush in 2005.

What happened next was no surprise: on 26 July 1956, **Gamal Abdel Nasser** nationalized the canal. Egyptians of every social level rejoiced. But that was the beginning of a series of wars, presented in the exhibition through photographs, oral histories, and feature films. That troubled, often tragic period ended in 1975. From then on, the regularly deepened, widened, and re-equipped canal was one of the main sources of foreign exchange for Egypt. As the country's population increased, urbanization continued, and the canal – running, when it was dug, through the middle of the desert – ended up at the gates of the capital (from which it is separated by only 130 kilometers, largely occupied by new cities).



Gamal Abdel Nasser

On 5 August 2015, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi inaugurated a new section of parallel canal that allows for simultaneous navigation in both directions and shortens crossing times by eleven hours. The canal is once again at the heart of Egyptian concerns. Located along the most important trade route in the world, linking the Asian and European markets, it presents exceptional conditions for the development of an economic zone of global importance. And so the story of the canal, condensed into



Verdi conducting *Aida* with the Paris Orchestra



Meeting between the King of Saudi Arabia and Roosevelt in 1945 in Ismailia



Inauguration of the parallel section of the Suez Canal, 5 August 2015

a zone only 162 kilometers long but expanded to the scale of the planet, ends on an Egypt in the making, with the region extending from Alexandria to the Sinai and from the Mediterranean to Cairo now one of the densest concentrations in the world of people, activity, and – let us make the wish and the wager – prosperity.

For us, the adventure of the Suez Canal is also that of a team of French and Egyptian experts who shared their counsel. Together we were committed to reaching the same historical vision of an adventure shared unequally by our respective countries.

Next autumn, part of the Arab World Institute exhibition

will travel to our partner-city Marseille. Afterwards, the French and Egyptian governments have decided that it will be presented in Cairo, on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the inauguration. It will be an opportunity to celebrate the depth of the relationship between our two countries.

Claude Mollard,
Exhibition Curator

Gilles Gauthier,
Scientific Adviser

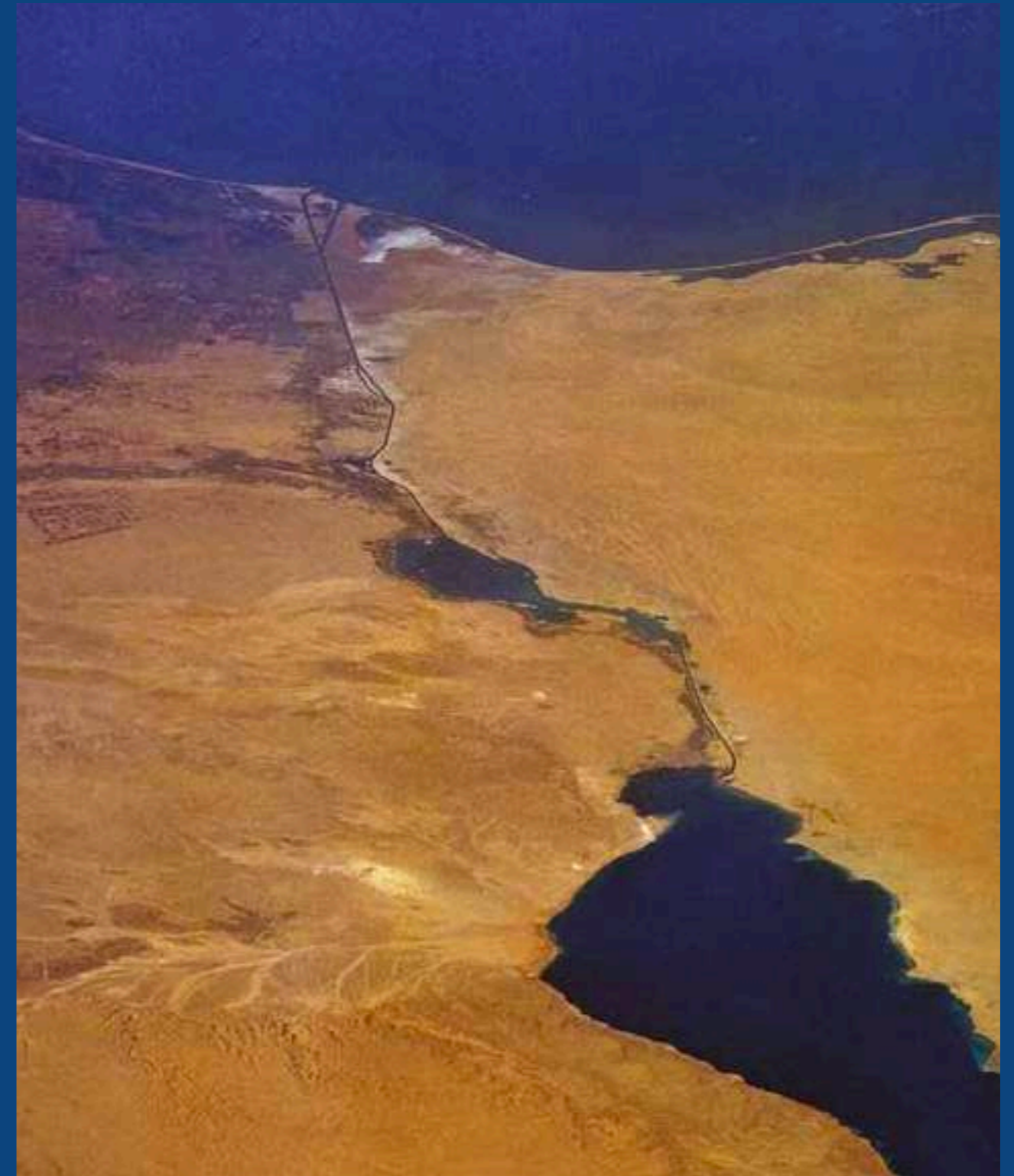


Claude Mollard is one of the fathers of the Centre Pompidou, the construction of which he coordinated (1970-1978). He continued his career in the 1980s alongside Jack Lang, then Minister of Culture, as a delegate for the visual arts. He was behind several major public commissions, such as Daniel Buren's *Colonnes* at the Palais-Royal; he developed the French Regional Funds for Contemporary Art; and he relaunched state support for photography, design, and comics. Between 1986 and 1996, he created and worked with the first cultural engineering agency, leading hundreds of cultural projects in France and around the world. In 2000, with Jack Lang and Catherine Tasca, he launched the 5-year Plan for the art in schools. Also known for his photography, especially during his recent show at the *Maison européenne de la photographie* (November 2017), he has curated exhibitions at the Arab World Institute such as *Once Upon a Time the Orient Express*, *Jardins d'Orient*, and now the *Epic of the Suez Canal*. He also develops scenographic projects in historical monuments such as *Historial Jeanne d'Arc* in Rouen, the *Ateliers de Léonard de Vinci* at the Château du Clos Lucé, and the *Abbaye de la Chaise Dieu*.




After teaching for fifteen years in Algeria, Morocco, and France, then his studying Arabic at the Institut National des Langues et civilisations orientales, **Gilles Gauthier** joined the Foreign Affairs Ministry in 1982. After postings to Iraq, Algeria, Bahrain, Lebanon, Egypt (cultural adviser in Cairo from 1991 to 1995, then Consul General in Alexandria from 1999 to 2003) and various positions in Paris (Deputy Director of Cooperation with Countries of the Maghreb, then Head of Department of Francophone Affairs), he was appointed French Ambassador to Yemen. Gilles Gauthier introduced Egyptian writer Alaa Al-Aswany to France, and is his translator. He is currently an adviser to Jack Lang at the Arab World Institute, after heading the scientific committee for the exhibition *Once Upon a Time the Orient Express*.

VISITING THE EXHIBITION



Satellite view of the Suez Canal. Its navigable width drawing 11 meters of water is 190 meters (initially 44 meters). The Canal between Port Said and Suez is 162 kilometers long. The north and south access channels bring the total length of the structure to 195 kilometers. © NASA Johnson

Visiting the exhibition

 New light on certain elements of History

1. From the Pharaohs to Venice (1850 BCE - 1505 CE)



Fragment of an Egyptian stela bearing the name of Darius I giving the order to dig the canal
© RMN-Grand Palais Musée du Louvre / Franck Raux

The idea of linking the Mediterranean and the Red Sea goes back to the time of the Pharaohs. Senusret III (1878-1762 BCE) joined the Red Sea to the Nile, at Zagazig in the Nile delta, north of Cairo. The sailboats that plied it were between ten and twenty meters long. A stela attests that **Darius**, Emperor of Persia, occupying Egypt from 521 to 486 BCE, completed construction and ensured maintenance of the canal, which tended to silt up.

The canal was again restored by Ptolemy II at around 250 BCE. Over the next thousand years, it was successively modified, destroyed, and rebuilt, notably by 'Amr ibn al-'As in 640 CE, becoming the « Canal of the Commander of the Believers ». It was destroyed for the last time in the eighth century by the Caliph Al-Mansur, who wanted to block access to the city of Medina.

In the early 16th century, Venice was facing competition from the Portuguese in the East. In 1498, Vasco de Gama had discovered a new sea route around the Cape of Good Hope, and the Portuguese could then avoid paying taxes to the Sultan of Egypt for the trade and transport of spices. The Republic of Venice had the idea of digging a canal connecting the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and sent an envoy in 1504 to the Sultan, but without success.

In 1586, a project undertaken by the Sultan of Constantinople was abandoned for lack of funds.



Copper engraving based on a drawing by André Dutertre. From *Description de l'Égypte*, vol. 1, private collection (detail) © AKG-Images



Giulio Carlini, *The Venetians Presenting their Canal Plans to the Sultan*, 1869 © Engie

THE CANAL OF THE PHARAOHS

It connected the Red Sea to the Nile at the level of the present city of Cairo in such a way as to take advantage of the navigability of the Nile. The Museum of the History of the Suez Canal displays a reconstruction of an ancient sailboat able to navigate the waterway. The boat is 17 meters long, 5 meters high, and five meters wide, for a volume of 400 cubic meters, allowing for the transport of 300 tons of goods.

River navigation then replaced transport by donkey (the camel only reached Egypt at the beginning of the Christian era). It was a real trading revolution : a donkey can carry 100 kilos, a sailboat 300 tons, or 300,000 kilos. So one sailboat is the equivalent of 3,000 donkeys!



The last blow of the pickaxe by Isma'il Pacha on the day the waters flowed together, 15 August 1869 (oil on canvas, nineteenth century, unknown artist) © Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez / Lebas Photographie Paris

● 2. From Bonaparte to Mohammad Ali Pasha and Saïd Pasha : towards modern Egypt (1797-1857)

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte landed in Egypt. The engineers who accompanied him studied the possibility of cutting through the Isthmus of Suez without going via the Nile. A first route simulation was completed. The idea persisted after 1820, with the support of followers of Saint-Simon. Several canal projects were presented to the Egyptians in the early 1830s, notably by Prosper Enfantin, a French engineer and economist.

The Viceroy of Egypt, Mohammad Ali Pasha, wanted to « westernize » Egypt, but was not interested in the project. The Saint-Simonians nonetheless pursued the project, and in 1846 created a « Society for the Study of the Suez Canal », which showed that the levels of the two seas to be joined were equivalent, contrary to estimations made in 1798. The difference was so small that a canal without locks became a possibility.



Hundreds of thousands of workers were involved in digging the canal, equipped only with picks and shovels, before machines arrived at the site © D.R.

SAÏD PASHA AND FERDINAND DE LESSEPS

Ferdinand de Lesseps began his career as a diplomat before becoming the founder of the Suez Canal Company and the businessman capable of building the canal. As a young French consul in Alexandria, he became friends with Saïd Pasha, of whom it is said he was the private tutor. Mohammad Ali Pasha was reserved about committing to build the Suez Canal. He particularly feared that the undertaking would lead to complications in the relationship between Egypt and the European powers. When Mohammad Ali Pasha died, power fell to Saïd Pasha, who did not share his father's reluctance and trusted his friend Ferdinand de Lesseps.

The construction of the canal was very much dependent on that friendship. It was also helped by another friend of Ferdinand de Lesseps, Emir Abdelkader, who was released from prison by Napoleon III in 1951 and left for exile in Damascus where he would save thousands of Christians during the 1860 massacre.



Inauguration of the Suez Canal, 1869

● 3. Saïd Pasha and Ferdinand de Lesseps : the construction of the canal and the British reaction in 1882 (1835-1882)

In 1854, Viceroy Saïd Pasha decided to begin work on the project, entrusting the works to Frenchman Ferdinand de Lesseps.

The construction of the canal soon provoked tensions. The British opposed its construction, which strengthened French influence in the region located on the route to India.

The British halted the works on several occasions : in October 1859, with the support of the Ottoman Empire, then at the death of Saïd Pasha in 1863. Isma'ïl Pasha pursued construction with support from Napoleon III. Ferdinand de Lesseps's Universal Maritime Suez Canal Company built the canal between 1859 and 1869. When it was completed, Egypt held 44% of the capital in the company, the remainder being held by 21,000 French shareholders.

1.5 million Egyptians worked on the canal, and tens of thousands died, mainly of cholera.

The canal was inaugurated on 17 November 1869 by Empress Eugénie. Immediately after the opening, the canal became the focus of Franco-British rivalries.

In 1875, due to budget deficits, Egypt had to sell its shares in the company to the United Kingdom, which thereby regained its influence over the sea route to India.

In 1882, after the Anglo-Egyptian war, the British replaced the Ottomans as guardians of the country. They thereby succeeded in taking control of the canal.

On 29 October 1888 in order to settle disputes among the world powers, the Convention of Constantinople affirmed the neutrality of the canal, declaring it « free and of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag. »

👁️ **EMPRESS EUGÉNIE AND THE INAUGURATION OF THE CANAL**

Eugénie de Montijo, wife of Napoleon III, was a relative of Ferdinand de Lesseps. For the latter, the inauguration of the canal was a triumph for France.

Napoleon III suffered from kidney stones and could not travel. So it was Eugénie who was charged with presiding over the inaugural events. The English did not view the canal favorably due to the risk it posed, in their eyes, of depriving them of control of the sea route to India. Queen Victoria did not attend.

The Empress's journey had a very political tone. She embarked on a steamship called the *Aiglon*, in reference to Napoleon Bonaparte whose presence was still strong in Egypt. She was received in great pomp by the Sultan of Constantinople. Her ship led a procession of one hundred ships that would first meet at Port Said on 15 November 1869 before travelling to Ismailia on the 17th and then Suez on the 19th. She would, however, first go on an expedition to Luxor in the company of Auguste Mariette, the great Egyptologist. She stayed in an Arab-style palace made of cast-iron structures cast in France and shipped to Egypt. Those architectural elements can now be seen in the Cairo Marriott Hotel. A few months later, the French Emperor was defeated at Sedan by the Prussians.



Théodore Frère, Empress Eugénie's Camel Ride in the Desert, 1869

© Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez / Lebas Photographie Paris



Model of Bartholdi's project for The Suez Lighthouse. The planned dimensions of the monument are engraved on the base – 43 meters high. © MUSEE BARTHOLDI

👁️ **THE STATUE OF LIBERTY INSPIRED BY AN EGYPTIAN PEASANT**

Isma'ïl Pasha wanted the 1869 inauguration of the Suez Canal to be an international event. He undertook a complete renovation of the city of Cairo on a European model, ordered the construction of an opera house, etc. The sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, a lover of Egypt, shared that enthusiasm and imagined a colossal sculpture to mark the outlet of the canal into the Red Sea at Suez. Bartholdi sketched an Egyptian peasant draped in her veils and holding a torch in her upraised arm.

The opera was only finished in 1871... The Khedive had spent too much and was soon forced to sell his shares in the Suez Canal Company...and the plans for the sculpture were abandoned.

But Bartholdi quickly reworked them for the Statue of Liberty, offered by France to the city of New York. And so it is with the fate of great ideas.

4. The Canal and the two world wars : Egyptian aspirations for independence (1914-1945)

During the First world war, the British and French negotiated the Sykes-Picot Agreement, which divided the Middle East into zones of influence: France obtained a protectorate over Syria and the Lebanon; the United Kingdom over Palestine, Jordan, and Egypt.

In 1936, under the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty, the Kingdom of Egypt obtained almost complete independence: the protection of the Suez Canal would remain under British monopoly for twenty more years.

From 1940 to 1945, the Suez Canal was closed to all navigation except that of British allies.

5. Nasser, the end of foreign presence (1954-1956)

On 8 October 1951, Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa el-Nahas Pasha denounced the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. The United Kingdom protested and reinforced its land-based troops. Violent riots resulted, as well as guerilla warfare by the Muslim Brotherhood, Communists, and the Egyptian police against the British. There were several hundred victims on both sides. The British military withdrawal was completed in July 1956.

On 23 July 1952, a group of officers seized power. Within that group, Nasser soon emerged as the leader. On 26 July 1956, he nationalized the canal and transferred the property of the canal company to the Suez Canal Authority. The purpose of the operation was to finance the construction of the Aswan Dam after the United States and the World Bank refused to provide loans. Egyptian assets abroad were immediately frozen and food aid stopped following protests by major shareholders, mostly British and French. At the same time, Nasser denounced the colonial presence of

the United Kingdom in the Middle East and supported the nationalists in the Algerian War.

On 29 October 1956, the United Kingdom, France, and Israel launched a military operation dubbed « Operation Musketeer ». It was justified by the return to canal shareholders of their property.

The operation lasted one week. The United Nations condemned the Franco-Israeli-British expedition that resulted in a diplomatic and military fiasco. Negotiations between Egypt and the Company finally led to compensation, forming the basis of the Suez Financial Company. The concession lasted until 1968.



Nasser: Gamal Abdel Nasser welcomed by the crowds in Cairo after the nationalization of the Canal, 1 August 1956 © DR

NASSER AND NATIONALIZATION

In 1952 the Egyptian army overthrew King Farouk and won the support of the vast majority of the Egyptian people. Gamal Abdel Nasser soon took the lead of the movement, and British control of the Suez Canal came to an end. The Arab world was aspiring to independence. The Algerian War had begun in 1954. Nasser supported the FLN against the French government, and two years later decided to nationalize the Suez Canal Company. Great Britain, as a maritime power, and France, as the colonial power in North Africa, felt directly attacked. They reacted by organizing a military invasion, with the participation of Israel, at Port Said. The USSR and the United States denounced the intervention before the UN Security Council. In the face of general reprobation, and the impasse in which they found themselves, France, Great Britain, and Israel withdrew. It was a complete fiasco, embodied by Anthony Eden and Guy Mollet. The Algerian War would last until 1962.

● 6. Suez Canal and the wars between Egypt and Israel (1956-2018)

Eleven years later, in June 1967, during the six-day war, Israel occupied the Sinai Peninsula and the eastern bank of the canal, which would remain closed for eight years, until June 1975. Israel built a line of defense on the eastern bank: the Bar Lev Line.

In October 1973, Egypt and Syria launched surprise attack on Israel, the beginning of the Yom Kippur War. The canal zone once again became a battle zone. The Egyptian army crossed the canal and penetrated deeply into the Sinai before Israeli forces, after a few days, took the upper hand and crossed over the canal in turn. A UN peacekeeping force remained in place until 1974. During that long closing, oil companies adapted, accelerating the building of supertankers that could sail around Africa with no limit on their size.

After 15 months of works, clearing the canal and its surroundings of mines, the canal was officially reopened on 5 June 1975 by President Anwar el-Sadat, who travelled from Port Said to Ismailia. The next day, the first convoy travelled through the canal toward the Mediterranean.

THE TWO ARAB-ISRAELI WARS

In the early sixties, the development of the Palestinian movement heightened tensions between Israel and the Arab nations. In a verbal escalation, on 10 June 1967 Egypt announced the blockade of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli ships. Israel attacked Egypt, Syria, and Jordan on 5 June. By the end of the first day, the Egyptian air force was grounded. Israel seized the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and the entire Sinai Peninsula. The Suez Canal was closed. The war only lasted six days, but along the canal, a war of attrition followed.

On 6 October 1973, President Sadat – who succeeded President Nasser, assassinated in 1970 – sent his troops against the Bar Lev Line and managed to get them across the canal. A few days later, Israel crossed in turn. In Syria, Israel broke through the Golan line and got close to Damascus. The war lasted until 26 October. The situation was ripe for negotiations on more balanced foundations, Egypt having demonstrated its military capacities. On 5 March 1974, Israel withdrew its troops from the Suez Canal, which was reopened to shipping on 5 June 1975.

● 7. The Expansion of the Suez Canal (2015)

In the late 2000s, the increase in piracy around the Horn of Africa pushed world trade toward new routes. But revenue from the canal was vital for Egypt: bringing in 5 billion dollars a year (2013 figures), it represented 20% of the nation's budget.

On 5 August 2014, President el-Sisi announced his intention to dig a second canal parallel to the first one on its eastern side, allowing for the end of alternating traffic convoys. The new canal, a total of 72 kilometers of works, cost around three billion euros. The project reduced the maximum waiting time for boats from eleven hours to three. The works involved the deepening and widening of 35 kilometers of the existing canal as well as the digging of 37 kilometers of parallel canal at the level of the city of Ismailia. The new canal opened on 6 August 2015. The Suez canal brought in about 5.3 billion dollars in 2015 for Egypt. It should contribute 13.2 billion dollars annually by 2023. It is becoming the backbone of tomorrow's Egypt.

ALONGSIDE THE EXHIBITION



Several cities, such as Port Said, have grown up around the Suez Canal. Here: view of Ismailia, between 1856 and 1860. Approximately 750,000 people now live in the city founded in 1863. © Library of Congress



A boat cruises the new canal, 29 July 2015, across from the port of Ismailia, east of Cairo.

Alongside the exhibition

● PUBLICATIONS

> EXHIBITION CATALOG (in French)

Jointly published with Gallimard and co-edited with the Musée d'Histoire de Marseille. Publication date : 22 March 2018 - 160 pages - 22€



> SPECIAL EDITION BEAUX-ARTS MAGAZINE (in French)

Beaux-Arts Magazine traces the 4000-year history of this extraordinary undertaking in 60 pages. With amazing visuals (sketches, maps, drawings, photographs, advertisements, post cards, « front pages » of period newspapers ...), detailed texts, and surprising eyewitness accounts (from Michel Serres, for example, in charge of reopening the canal from the south in 1957), this special issue condenses the history – great and small – of this pharaonic construction. It brings together authors from the catalog as well as specialists on the subject under the editorial responsibility of Raphaël Turcat. 60 pages



> LA BD DU CANAL DE SUEZ (in French)

Alter comics, age 8 to 14, by Marianne Coadou, story by Claude Mollard. 48 pages, 9€.

> QANTARA n°106

The Suez Canal, a modern utopia (in French)

This dossier in Qantara is dedicated to the adventure of the Suez Canal. Within its thirty pages are historical analyses that explore the Isthmus of Suez up until Bonaparte and the Egyptian Expedition, the utopia of the Saint Simonians and their failure in relationship to Ferdinand de Lesseps. With him, the construction of the canal became a reality. A real technical achievement, it was above all a modernizing impulse that mobilized Egypt and galvanized its viceroy, Isma'il Pasha, whose portrait is presented alongside that of the pragmatic Ferdinand de Lesseps. Both would be celebrated by the prestigious guests from around the world who attended the inauguration of the canal on 17 November 1869. Writers, photographers, and painters were also present on those November days to complete the crossing of the canal and provide us with a breathtaking account.

7.50€ - qantara@imarabe.org

Digital version on the AppStore GooglePlay : 3.99 €



> BAÏKA, SPECIAL ISSUE

A special issue of Baïka, a quarterly magazine for 8 to 12 year olds to « raise awareness about cultural diversity and its riches », that tells the history of Egypt old and new along with that of the Canal. Special investigations, interviews, games, recipes...

Joint publication of the Arab World Institute/éd. Salmatina
9.60€

● CONFERENCES AND DEBATES

Debates at the Arab World Institute, every thursday
7 p.m | Salle du Haut Conseil (level 9)

> 17 april

The Canal Novel

The modern Egyptian novel has developed a plot of struggle, desire for identity, and glory around the Suez Canal. Numerous stories, from Naguib Mahfouz to Gamal El-Ghitani and Sonallah Ibrahim to Edward al-Kharrat, have made it a symbol, if not a true romantic hero. This conference will attempt to decipher the motives and dynamics of this great mythical national story.

Intervenants : Fawwaz Traboulsi, Khaled Osman, Robert Solé et Paula Jacques.

> 10 may

Conference with Michel Serres: Crossing the Suez Canal in 1956

In 1956, after studying at the French Naval Academy, Michel Serres was a naval Ensign. He was sent by the French Army to Djibouti with the mission of accompanying a captain to bring back to Toulon a ship that had returned from Indochina. The goal was to navigate the Suez Canal with this French warship that had, three months earlier, attacked Egypt at Port Said.

Michel Serres will tell how, in December 1956, the warship managed to make it through the canal, which at the time was restricted to merchant ships.

> 7 jUNE

The Suez Canal through the Diplomatic Prism

With a burst of laughter, Gamal Abdel Nasser announced in Alexandria in 1956, in front of an immense crowd, the nationalization of the Suez Canal. The West, France and Britain above all, denounced it – some as a heresy of the Rais, some as a sign of his madness – calling for a military intervention. We all know the rest. Diplomats came on the scene to redefine and master the new order. So what was the role of diplomacy in the context of recurring crises? Gilles Gauthier, a diplomat who has worked in Egypt, an co-curator of the *Epic of the Suez Canal* exhibit, and Caroline Piquet, a historian and Middle East specialist, will discuss the pivotal and eventful history of the time.

● LIVE PERFORMANCES

› **Friday 1 and Saturday 2 June 2018, 8 p.m. | Auditorium**
31 May | Hall de la Chanson

Les Orientaux de la Chanson

Creation

In partnership with the Hall de la Chanson, and in the context of the Suez exhibition, the Arab World Institute presents an arranged re-reading in song, in French and sometimes in Arabic, of the greatest standards of artists born in the land of the Pharaohs, including Claude François, Dalida, Demis Roussos, George Moustaki, Richard Anthony, and Guy Béart.

› **Sunday 3 June 2018, 5:30 p.m. | Auditorium**

Egypt at Heart

With Dounia Massoud

Dounia Massoud was born and raised in Alexandria (Egypt), leaving for Cairo at age 19 before settling in France. What makes her approach so original is her ability to revive the old-fashioned theatrical staging of the Egyptian singers of the early twentieth century. Theatrical gestures now forgotten that Dounia recreates in close harmony with a still untapped musical repertoire. She achieves a rare synthesis of her ancestral heritage by interpreting it in the most original style. A leap back in time to a carefree Egypt that sang in the streets of its mythical cities.

› **Saturday 9 June 2018, 8 p.m. | Auditorium**

Villoteau's Instrumental Legacy

Considered to be the founder of ethnomusicology, Guillaume André Villoteau was a member of the Commission des Sciences et des Arts that accompanied the Army of the Orient during Napoleon Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition. In addition to the hundreds of pages about music that he contributed to the monumental Description de l'Égypte, he also assembled a precious collection of period instruments. This concert as two-way mirror, at the initiative Ahmed Al Maghraby (creator of Mozart in Egypt), reconstructs the essential works from the musical notes Villoteau made during Bonaparte's Egyptian expedition, all of them performed by contemporary Egyptian musicians. *In partnership with the Philharmonie de Paris.*

› **Sunday 10 June 2018, 5:30 p.m. | Auditorium**

Duo subtil

With Naïssam Jalal et Hazem Shahee

Born in Alexandria in 1978, Egyptian Hazem Shaheen, on the charming oud, was in good hands at the Haut Institut de Musique Arabe, starting in 1999, then in 2002 the prestigious school directed by Naseer Shamma, the Arabic Oud House in Cairo. Even as he taught his art, Hazem recorded albums and recorded alone or in fusion with other musicians. Here, he performs as part of a duo, for an album, Liqaa, with the remarkable and inspired Franco-Syrian flutist Naïssam Jalal.

● CINÉMA

Program in progress, can be consulted on the Arab World Institute website (in French): www.imarabe.org

● EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The complete program of Arab World Institute activities can be consulted on the Arab World Institute website (in French): www.imarabe.org

› GUIDED TOURS

All ages : from Tuesday to Friday at 2:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays at 11:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m., and 4:00 p.m.

Online booking and payment required 01 40 51 38 14 | 20 people

Groups : from Tuesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays, Sundays, and public holidays from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Booking required 01 40 51 38 45 or 01 40 51 39 54 | 20 people

Tours in French Sign Language (LSF) : 28 April and 30 June 2018 at 2 p.m.

› CREATIVE WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

• The Epic of the Suez Canal

Visit of the exhibition followed by a creative workshop to create a storyboard recounting the various steps involved in digging the Suez Canal. The plates will be treated in black and colored by participants.

Age 6 and up | 20 people

Saturdays from 5 May to 7 July and 10, 11, 12 and 13 July 2018

Prices: 1 child + 1 parent 13€, 2nd child 6€. Online reservation or at 01 40 51 38 14

• Drawing with sand

Visit of the exhibition followed by a creative workshop making landscapes of abstract compositions using various colors of sand.

Age 6 and up | 20 people

Saturdays 21 July to 4 August 2018

and 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31 July and 1, 2, 3 August

Prices: 1 child + 1 parent 13€, 2nd child 6€;

Online reservation or at 01 40 51 38 14

• Writing workshop for adults

Stopovers along the Suez Canal. Writing the city between fiction and non-fiction.

Carrying a notebook, participants will visit the exhibition and jot down their impressions, discoveries, everything that draws the eye. A writer's aide-mémoire that will serve in writing a text between fiction and non-fiction. Sessions led by Françoise Khoury. Workshop organized in partnership with the Labor des histoires. 10 people

Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., 3 session cycle. 29 March, 5 April, and 12 April 2018

Free, reservation required | Library / level 5

• Story Time

Tales from Egypt : this weekly program offers young and old the chance to discover tales from Ancient and contemporary Egypt.

Age 4 and up | 25 people maximum

3 p.m. on Wednesdays and Saturday from 14 April to 13 July and from 8 to 28 September 2018

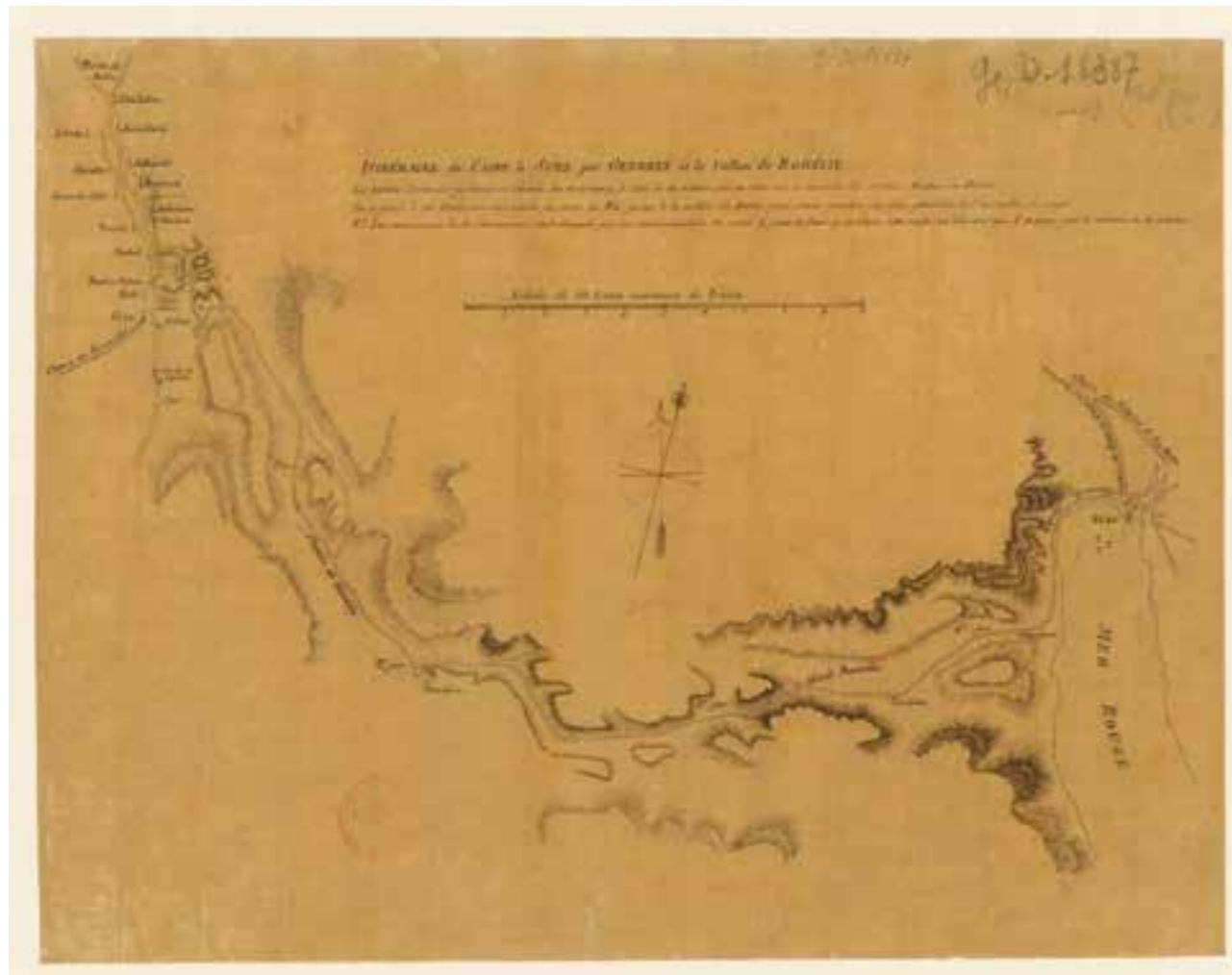
Free, reservation required by phone at 01 40 51 39 80.

Subject to a minimum of 5 participants | Young-people's library / level -2

● **THE FUTURE OF THE EXHIBITION**

After the Arab World Institute, the exhibition will be presented at the Musée d'histoire de Marseille from 17 October 2018 to 31 March 2019, and will then travel to Egypt where the Ministry for Antiquities plans to receive it at the new National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation for the 150th anniversary of the Canal.

After that presentation, elements of the exhibition design will be made available to the Suez Canal Authority to contribute to the future Suez Canal Museum planned in Ismailia.



Caravan route between Cairo and Suez, by Gendely and La Vallon de Romélie. © Bibliothèque Nationale de France

IN COLLABORATION WITH



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● **A UNIQUE GREAT SHOW ON THE FAÇADE OF THE ARAB WORLD INSTITUTE**

The Atelier ATHEM will present a video mapping on the façade of the Arab World Institute for the *Epic of the Suez Canal: from the Pharaohs to the 21st Century* exhibition.

Every evening, from 7 p.m. to closing time, from March 26 to 31 2018, an original outside museography in the form of video-mapping will be offered to exhibition visitors and passers-by: a 7-minute animated video loop projected onto the entrance of the Arab World Institute. The goal of this presentation is to create an atmosphere that prepares for immersion in the show, piquing the curiosity of visitors and their thirst for knowledge. An ambitious and poetic spectacle had been imagined to reach the general public, organized around the history of the Canal represented by several horizontal bands inspired by Egyptian frescoes. Thematic tableaux such as « Famous Builders », « Incredible Machines », and « Celebrations and Inaugurations » will evoke, side by side or face to face, the three main periods in the life of the Canal (Ancient Egypt, the 19th century, and the contemporary period).

ATELIER ATHEM
CRÉATION SCÉNOGRAPHIQUE



● **EPHEMERAL RESTAURANT ON THE ARAB WORLD INSTITUTE PARVIS**

Especially for the exhibition, a 300-square-meter food court will be set up on the Parvis, offering Arab World Institute visitors a selection of Mediterranean cuisines. The space will invite visitors on journey through the dishes and entertainment that will be offered. It will be open throughout the exhibition for lunch and afternoon tea, and soirées will be organized during the month of Ramadan.

Further information will soon be available on the Arab World Institute website.



Parvis of the Arab World Institute



Parvis of the Arab World Institute

● **VENUE RENTAL AND PRIVATE TOURS OF THE EXHIBITION**

The Arab World Institute, a unique venue for your event

Take advantage of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Arab World Institute, the repair of the mashrabiya, of new possibilities for light play on the façade that can be adapted to use the colors of your choice and identity, of the breathtaking view over Notre-Dame, and the extraordinary exhibition, *The Epic of the Suez Canal: from the Pharaohs to the 21st Century* to organize your event. You and your guests can discover in the privileged setting of a private tour the exhibition event: *The Epic of the Suez Canal: from the Pharaohs to the 21st Century*, from 28 March to 5 August 2018. Private tours, with expert guides, can be programmed mornings, from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. or evenings after 7 p.m.



Hypostyle (lower basement)



Mashrabiya Room, adjoining the terrace with view over Notre-Dame (9th floor)

Personalized quote : Dhauïa ASSOUL
01 40 51 39 78 – espaces@imarabe.org



EGYPTIAN TOURISM AUTHORITY

The Arab World Institute thanks the Egyptian Tourism Authority for its support for the *Epic of the Suez Canal: From the Pharaohs to the 21st Century*.

Egypt, travel in time.

« Egypt is the gift of the Nile, » wrote the historian Herodotus, and it was on the Nile that the most beautiful stories of Egypt and the Ancient world have been written. Avoided by tourists for six years, Egypt is now at a new beginning thanks to its many treasures: the Nile Valley - cradle of civilization; the Red Sea and its unique ecosystem: the Mediterranean and its magnificent coasts; and the western desert with its spectacular landscapes.

3rd FRIENDS OF THE ARAB WORLD INSTITUTE AWARD FOR CONTEMPORARY ARAB CREATION 2018



Most recent works on the Canal, during the extension.



View of the Suez Canal today.

Presentation of the 2018 Friends of the Arab World Institute Award for Contemporary Arab Creation to Franco-Syrian artist Bady Dalloul

The Friends of the Arab World Institute Award for Contemporary Arab Creation aims to support each year a young artist from the Arab world. The prize seeks to discover and reveal new talents. Accompanied by a creative grant of 5000 euros, the award also offers the winner the opportunity to participate in a group exhibition at the Arab World Institute. The work then enters its collections.

For its 3rd edition, the Friends of the Arab World Institute present the Award for Contemporary Arab Creation to the Franco-Syrian artist Bady Dalloul, for his installation «The Arabian Canal Document (Qanat al Akhar)».

«The Arabian Canal Document (Qanat al Akhar)», an installation exhibited at the Arab World Institute

The installation - consisting of archival photographs, drawings, marks on geographical and topographical maps, text, and video - shows men in uniform involved in a strange ballet: the construction of a canal in the middle of the Arabian desert to link the Arabian Gulf to the Mediterranean. It is presented in the context of the exhibition *The Epic of the Suez Canal*, from 28 March to 5 August 2018, and will then enter the collections of the Arab World Institute.

Bady Dalloul

Bady Dalloul's work invites reflection about the writing of history, the intention and use of archives. Manipulated, re-imagined to embody new information, these historical proofs sow doubt. The writing of history is no longer the prerogative of the Other with a capital O, but of each of us, all full-fledged actors in history.

Bady Dalloul participated in the group exhibition «Tous, des sangs-mêlés», MAC VAL, Paris, 2017

Friends of the Arab World Institute

With its president **Leïla Shahid**, the Société des Amis de l'Arab World Institute brings together all those who want to support the Arab World Institute in its mission of developing greater knowledge of the Arab world. Through their engagement with the Arab World Institute, the Friends of the Arab World Institute are the ambassadors of this unique institution

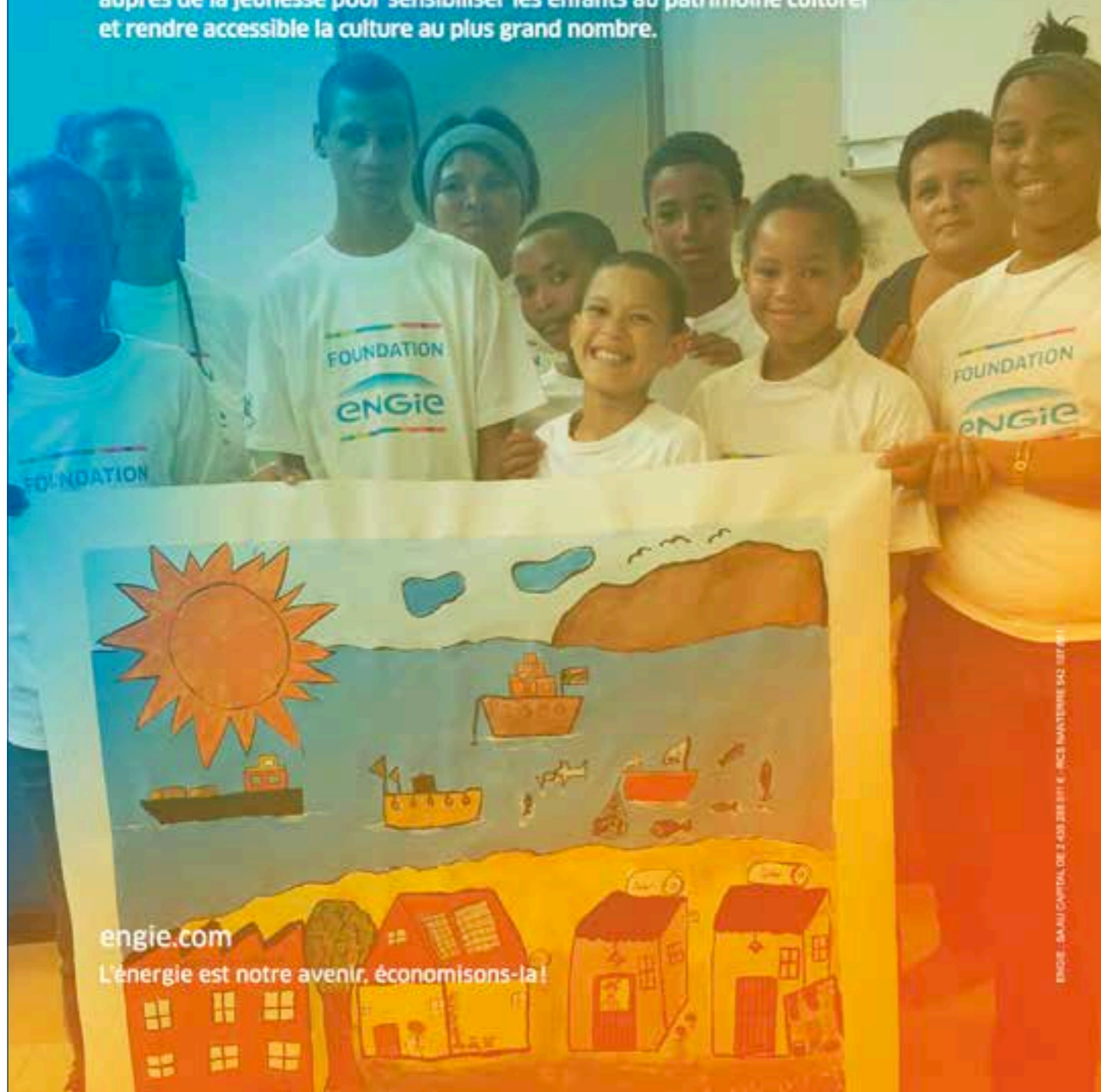


Four images from the installation *The Arabian Canal Document (Qanat al Akhar)* by Franco-Syrian artist Bady Dalloul

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Grand mécène de l'Institut du monde arabe depuis 2005, la Fondation Total soutient la saison consacrée à l'Égypte qui s'articule notamment autour d'une exposition retraçant l'épopée du Canal de Suez.

François Pierre Bernard Barry, Le chantier n°5 : rue du Canal de Suez, 1863
© Paris, Association du Souvenir de Ferdinand de Lesseps et du Canal de Suez / Lebas Photographie Paris.

**DEPUIS 2012 ET L'ANNIVERSAIRE
DES 25 ANS DE L'INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE,
LE GROUPE CASINO EST UN FIDÈLE PARTENAIRE**

Groupe mondial, leader en Amérique du sud et très présent en Afrique et au Moyen-Orient, se reconnaissant dans les valeurs de dialogue et de partage de l'institution culturelle, le Groupe Casino et sa filiale spécialisée dans l'énergie, GreenYellow, se sont associés avec enthousiasme à la présentation de l'exposition « L'épopée du Canal de Suez, des Pharaons au XXI^{ème} siècle ».

Cette exposition-phare de l'année culturelle 2018 va nous raconter l'histoire extraordinaire de la voie d'eau artificielle la plus célèbre au monde, point de rencontre entre les peuples et lieu d'échanges et de commerce, creusée de main d'homme depuis... quatre mille ans. Le Groupe Casino et GreenYellow sont fiers d'en être partenaires.



Navire SS Strasbourg dans les douilles d'El-Ghazir, 1934
© Paris, Association du Souvenir de l'érection et du canal de Suez / Archives Photographiques Paris



En 2017, le Groupe Casino a réalisé un chiffre d'affaires HT consolidé de 38 milliards d'euros dont 44% à l'international et emploie plus de 220 000 collaborateurs dont 70 000 en France.



**UN GROUPE
AU SERVICE DE L'HISTOIRE**

Saint-Gobain, présent dans 67 pays, est implanté en Égypte où 800 salariés travaillent dans ses activités Vitrage et Produits pour la Construction. Aujourd'hui, le Groupe s'associe à l'Institut du monde arabe en devenant mécène de l'exposition « L'Épopée du Canal de Suez, des pharaons au XXI^{ème} siècle ». Ce projet visionnaire, qui a relié Afrique, Europe et Asie et favorisé les échanges, illustre des valeurs qui ont beaucoup de sens pour Saint-Gobain, à travers son histoire et son implantation dans cette région stratégique.



Saint-Gobain conçoit, produit et distribue des matériaux et des solutions pensés pour le bien-être de chacun et l'aide de tous. Ces matériaux se trouvent partout dans notre habitat et notre vie quotidienne.

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Tickets

**Welcome to young people,
free entry**
with valid identification

Exposition gratuite pour les étudiants du 28 mars au 5 août 2018

Free entry for people under age 26 from 28 March to 28 April 2018

Special prices until 25 March :
Adults : 9 €, instead of 12 €

On the Arab World Institute website : www.imarabe.org and at FNAC stores : www.fnac.com



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Parking : Maubert Collège des Bernardins
39, bd Saint-Germain 75005
Exhibition Halls (levels 1 and 2)

Opening Hours :
Tuesday – Friday : 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Saturday - Sunday - Public Holidays : 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and May 1st

Prices :
Full Price : 12 €, reduce price : 10 €, Under 26 : 6 €
Guided tour : + 4 €

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