



CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES



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## **The Hall of Mirrors at the Château de Versailles: end of the first major phase of the second half of the restoration project, the cleaning of the paintings**

An important stage in the restoration of the Hall of Mirrors at the Château de Versailles is drawing to a close. The team of restorers headed by Cinzia Pasquali is currently completing its cleaning of the paintings on the vaulted ceiling. It is now once again possible to appreciate the delicate purity of line and the palette of colours used by Charles Le Brun, characterised in particular by his use of a lapis lazuli blue - a bluish pigment, the transparency of which has the effect of opening up the ceiling towards the heavens. Such finer details had become obscured beneath the dust of the centuries and by a series of partial restoration campaigns, the first of them undertaken as early as the 18th century.

This particular stage, involving two months of work, has revealed the huge talent of the First Painter to King Louis XIV, deployed here in developing a vast decorative scheme boasting sculptural features in stucco work, lead and even wood, all entirely covered in gilding.

The first results were presented on 3 April 2006 to the International Scientific Council. This body of experts on the painting and architecture of the 17<sup>th</sup> century expressed itself satisfied with what had been achieved during this cleaning phase, and encouraged the restorers to continue their efforts in preparation for the subsequent tasks of consolidation and pictorial reintegration.

VINCI is in charge of the entire restoration operation, which is being implemented by teams made up of restorers from within the Group as well as outside specialists. VINCI is thus responsible for both managing the project and for the administrative and financial management of the operation. Decisions of a technical, artistic or methodological nature are taken by the head architect at Monuments Historiques, the Monitoring Committee and the International Scientific Council.

This first comprehensive restoration of the Hall began in July 2004, within the innovative framework of a skills-based sponsorship arrangement. VINCI is funding the works - 12 million euros - and making available to the project the expertise of Group firms specialising in the restoration of historic buildings.

The next stage will involve cleaning the other major decorative features in the Hall of Mirrors - the polychrome marbles, the mirrors and bronzes - with a view to restoring them to their lustre of yesteryear and ensuring their long-term preservation.

### **Press contact:**

VINCI - Olga Giacomoni (ogiacomoni@vinci.com)