

La Galerue by Raymond Moretti - Toulouse

The Capitole Arcades and the Paintings by Raymond Moretti

The arcades were built between 1851 and 1854 and today feature paintings by Raymond Moretti representing key moments and figures in the history of Toulouse. The façades themselves date from the 19th century.

There are 29 works in total, each one telling a chapter in the saga of Toulouse and its people — 29 panels displayed on the ceiling of the “Galerie des Arcades” at the Capitole.

From the Venus of Lespugue to aeronautics and space, from the Crusades to Carlos Gardel, Raymond Moretti's brush brings to life the story of the “Ville Rose” and its heroes.

The paintings were enlarged and printed using silkscreen techniques, designed to withstand the elements. For preservation, three copies of each were produced. The originals, which belong to the City of Toulouse, along with the silkscreen versions, are carefully stored at the Musée Paul-Dupuy.

The 29 Works by Raymond Moretti

1. The Venus of Lespugue – Over 20,000 years old, this prehistoric sculpture was discovered in a cave in the village of Lespugue, at the foot of the Pyrenees.
2. Saint-Sernin – In the 3rd century, Saint Saturnin, bishop of Toulouse, was martyred when he was dragged through the city by a bull. His relics are preserved in the Basilica of Saint-Sernin.
3. The Visigoths – Toulouse was once the capital of their kingdom, which stretched from the Loire to Gibraltar. The Visigoths were defeated by Clovis in 507.
4. Raymond IV and the Crusade – In 1096, Raymond de Saint-Gilles, Count of Toulouse, became one of the leaders of the First Crusade. He died in the Holy Land, and his descendants ruled the County of Tripoli for nearly a century.
5. The Capitouls – In the 12th century, a “common council” took charge of the city’s affairs — a forerunner of today’s municipal council. The Capitouls’ official robes were red and black.
6. The Crusade Against the Cathars – Declared in 1209, it soon became a war of conquest. By 1271, the provinces of Toulouse were annexed to the French crown.
7. Saint Dominic – A Castilian who settled in Toulouse in 1215, where he founded the Dominican Order. He fought the Cathar heresy through preaching, charity, and a life of simplicity.
8. The Death of Simon de Montfort – After an eight-month siege, legend says a woman hurled the stone that killed Simon de Montfort before the ramparts of Toulouse on June 25, 1218. The Crusaders’ army withdrew from the South.
9. Montségur – After ten months of siege, the Cathar fortress fell in the winter of 1244. The great pyre of the Camp des Crémats marked the tragic end of the Cathar resistance.

10. The Floral Games (Jeux Floraux) – On May 3, 1324, troubadours held a poetic joust — the birth of the famous literary contest still celebrated today.

11. Clémence Isaure and the Belle Paule – “Dame Clémence,” a mythical figure, has protected the Floral Games since the 14th century. Paule, a real beauty of the 16th century, was adored by Toulouse’s citizens, who loved to see her appear on her balcony.

12. Pastel (Woad) – This plant produces a blue dye that, in the 16th century, made Toulouse the “Land of Plenty” (Pays de Cocagne). Wealthy merchants built magnificent Renaissance mansions designed by renowned architects.

13. The Duke of Montmorency – Governor of Languedoc, he rebelled against Richelieu’s centralizing policies. He was executed by beheading in the Capitole courtyard on October 30, 1632.

14. Pierre de Fermat – The famous mathematician, born in 1601, served on Toulouse’s Parliament. A jurist and scientist, he corresponded with Pascal and debated with Descartes.

15. Architecture – From the medieval ostal to the modest toulousaine house, from monumental churches to modern buildings, Toulouse’s architecture is unified by one defining material: brick.

16. Riquet and the Canal du Midi – Stretching from Toulouse to Sète, the Canal Royal du Languedoc, designed by Pierre-Paul Riquet, was inaugurated in 1681. With its locks, bridges, and spillways, it is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

17. The Calas Affair – Protestant Jean Calas was wrongly accused of murdering his son, who wanted to convert to Catholicism. Executed on March 10, 1762, he became a symbol of injustice. Voltaire’s campaign led to his posthumous rehabilitation three years later.

18. Brick – Raw or baked, plastered or bare, brick has been the favorite material of Toulouse’s builders since antiquity. Reflecting warmth and light, it gives the city its distinctive pink hue.

19. Music – The Capitole is the temple of *bel canto*. The audience here is famously demanding. Toulouse lives and breathes music, home to an exceptional symphony orchestra.

20. Jean Jaurès – “The apostle of peace,” assassinated on July 31, 1914. A professor at the Faculty of Letters and deputy mayor of Toulouse, he was an eloquent defender of the working class.

21. Carlos Gardel – Born in Toulouse in 1890 as Charles Gardes, he became the legendary tango singer Carlos Gardel in Buenos Aires. By age 25 he had discovered tango and would go on to compose over 900 songs.

22. Aeronautics and Space – From the Aéropostale pioneers to the Caravelle, Concorde, Airbus, and Ariane, Toulouse’s love affair with flight and space exploration continues to soar.

23. The Spanish Civil War – In 1939, the Spanish Republican government took refuge in Toulouse. Thousands of exiles settled in the city.

24. Liberation – On August 19, 1944, Toulouse was freed. Today, 80 of its streets bear the names of heroes of the Resistance and the Liberation.

25. Rugby – The city’s passion sport. *Stade Toulousain* first became French champion in 1912 and has since remained one of Europe’s most successful clubs.

26. Claude Nougaro – His iconic song *“Ô Toulouse”* celebrates his hometown. Returning to the banks of the Garonne, he heard in its rhythms the music of the entire world.

27. Technology – From the “Rangueil Sphere” to modern research labs and high-tech companies, Toulouse stands firmly at the forefront of the third millennium.

28. The Garonne and the Metro – Without the Garonne, there would be no Toulouse. Once home to mills and later power plants, its banks are now crossed by six bridges — or you can travel beneath them by metro.

29. The People of Toulouse – Unique and proud, they share a common identity forged in the heart of their city. They are both the memory and the future of Toulouse.