

Strasbourg, 24 March 2025

Exhibition:
" Backtrack"
Archaeological discoveries
along the A355"

Palais Rohan, Heitz Gallery
From 13 June 2025 to 21 June 2026

This exhibition presents to the public, for the very first time, the findings made during preventive archaeological operations carried out prior to the development of the Strasbourg Western Bypass. It is the result of a partnership between the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs Grand Est – Regional Archaeology Service and the Strasbourg Archaeological Museum. It has been labeled an Exhibition of National Interest by the Ministry of Culture.

In the late 2010s, 24 kilometers of motorway were built to the west of Strasbourg. As with any project of this magnitude, and within the framework of the heritage code, it was necessary to check for the presence of archaeological remains within the construction area and, if necessary, study them.

Thus, from September 2016 to August 2019, substantial resources were deployed on the orders of the State. Nearly 200 archaeologists, attached to five preventive archaeology operators (Inrap, Archéologie Alsace, ANTEA-Archéologie, Archeodonum and Éveha) were mobilised on the 34 excavation sites spread along the route. In total, 380 hectares were the subject of a diagnosis and 62.5 hectares were finally excavated.

The main interest of such an archaeological operation is the continuous and comprehensive observation of a territory. These excavations have made it possible to discover, uncover, and document the long, dense, and complex history of this area. Archaeologists have identified traces of more than 200 human habitations from very diverse periods, from the Middle Paleolithic to the First World War.

The exhibition "Backtrack" examines these discoveries from different perspectives: from the formation and evolution of landscapes in the Paleolithic period to the intimate remains of men's, women's, and children's graves. Numerous previously unseen accounts, profoundly update our knowledge and understanding of past societies. At the same time, the public is invited to discover the new methods and technologies that help archaeologists better understand these societies, their environment, and the evolution of the climate on the Rhine plain.

An accompanying exhibition publication presents all the discoveries and results of these excavations.

Curator: Bertrand Béhague, research engineer at the regional archaeology department of the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs Grand Est (Ministry of Culture) and **Mathilde Vilette** and **Quentin Richard**, Archaeological Museum of Strasbourg

Exhibition organised by the DRAC Grand Est and Strasbourg Museums.

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