



La Perouse Museum



1 April - 16 October 2022
FREE ENTRY


Randwick City Council
a sense of community

La Perouse Museum
1542 Anzac Parade, La Perouse
9093 6190, lpm@randwick.nsw.gov.au
randwick.nsw.gov.au

Opening hours
Wednesday, Friday | 10am - 2pm
Saturday, Sunday | 10am - 4pm



"Lesueur and Péron's cabin, French Explorers" Photography by David Thomas

**Randwick City Council
and La Perouse Museum
acknowledge the Bidjigal
and the Gadigal people who
occupied the Sydney Coast,
as the Traditional Custodians
of the area on which the
Museum stands and serves.
We acknowledge and pay our
respects to the Elders past,
present, and emerging.**

French Explorers – Voyages to Australia
introduces some of the great 18th and
19th century French explorers who
visited these shores. This exhibition
celebrates one of the La Perouse
Museum's key storytelling themes;
European Arrivals and the French
Connection. Through rare objects,
archives, costumes and even a ship
cabin installation, this show chronicles
the personalities of the men – and
women – who played a major part in the
strong ongoing connections between
France and Australia.

This exhibition has been made possible
with the generous support of the
following individuals and organisations:
Dr Edward Duyker OAM, FAHA;
Anne Boillon, Consule Générale,
Consulat Général de France à Sydney;
Joël Hakim; The Friends of the Lapérouse
Museum Inc.; the National Institute of
Dramatic Arts (NIDA); John Mullen and
the Silent World Foundation Museum,
Thomas Creative; the artist Paul Mason.



Jeanne Baret



Voyage 1766 - 1768

aboard Bougainville's ship Étoile

Jeanne Baret is perhaps one of the greatest discoveries of this exhibition. She was the first woman to sail around the entire globe in a time when Navy regulations strictly prohibited a woman from boarding a ship.

Baret was a botanist in her own right but was also the housekeeper, nurse and lover of botanist Philibert Commerson. Commerson was invited by Louis-Antoine de Bougainville to join his 1766-69 expedition but was in poor health. Unable to join him aboard as his nurse, she dressed as 'Jean' and became Commerson's male assistant instead.

There are differing accounts on how she was discovered. Some say she was immediately recognised as a woman by the Tahitians while others report the sailors had suspected her for some time and forcibly stripped her while ashore at Papua New Guinea. Either way, by the time the expedition passed through Australia's Great Barrier Reef and reached Mauritius in 1768 her identity was known to de Bougainville. As commander, he must have been relieved to escape official censure from France when she and Commerson decided to

remain on the island. Commerson died in 1773 and Jeanne returned to France the next year, thus completing her full circumnavigation of the globe.



Jeanne Baret, 1817, artist unknown. In Navigazioni di Cook pel grande oceano e intorno al globo, 1816-1817, Milano: Sonzogno e Comp. Courtesy of State Library of NSW.

Louis François Marie Aleno de Saint-Aloüarn



Marc-Joseph Marion Dufresne



Voyage

Aloüarn 1771 - 1772 / Dufresne 1771 - 1772

Gros Ventre / Marquis de Castries and Mascarin

Dufresne and Saint-Aloüarn play a seminal part in the story of the French in Australia. They were the earliest French explorers to land in Australia.

Dufresne reached Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in early March 1772 and was the first European explorer to meet the Indigenous peoples of Tasmania, before they were devastated by the impact of colonialism. Close behind Dufresne came St Aloüarn, who set off in 1771 with fellow explorer Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen-Trémarec primarily to search for the mysterious Terra Australis (Antarctica). However, they were separated by bad weather and while Kerguelen turned back, St Aloüarn sailed on and anchored at Cape Leeuwin (Western Australia) in March 1772, just two weeks after du Fresne.

These events marked the beginning of an enduring French legacy. 2022 is the 250th anniversary since these first French explorers landed.

St Aloüarn
attempted to make
a claim of sovereignty -
ultimately unsuccessful
- over Western
Australia.

Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de Lapérouse



Voyage 1785 - 1788

on La Boussole and L'Astrolabe

The legacy of Jean-François de Galaup, Comte de Lapérouse, spans the globe.

Lapérouse's mandate, given by King Louis XVI, was influenced by the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment. He was to lead a voyage of scientific and political discovery and to complete James Cook's unfinished mapping of the Pacific.

He was one of the first Europeans to explore the coasts of North America, Alaska and Russia, and regularly sent instalments of journals, maps, artworks, letters and dispatches back home throughout his voyage.

However, his disappearance after leaving Botany Bay in 1788 is a key part of his story. From letters sent back with the British, Lapérouse's superiors were aware he planned to visit New Caledonia before turning home, but France grew worried when a year passed with no news. It is said that the last words of King Louis XVI on the way to the Guillotine were, 'Any news of Lapérouse?'

His disappearance became one of the greatest mysteries of the age and was instrumental in drawing French explorers out to the Pacific in a quest to find him.

Lapérouse was not the first French explorer to die on his voyage. However, he was the first to have his whole expedition, ships and all, disappear without a trace. We now know Lapérouse was shipwrecked off the coast of Vanikoro in mid-1788.



Bottle of Lapérouse – This unassuming object in the Museum's collection, found in an Aboriginal midden represents a profound meeting of cultures. Photo by Glenn Duffus.

Lapérouse: The Adventure Continues

*A message from the Consule
Générale, Consulat Général de
France à Sydney*

Lapérouse is arguably the most brilliant and tragic figure in 18th century Pacific exploration. The expedition he led was the biggest scientific exploration ever planned by France, epitomizing the search for progress through science and discovery during the Enlightenment when the mapping of the world echoed the mapping of human knowledge, or Encyclopaedia. The disappearance of La Boussole and L'Astrolabe after they left Sydney endowed the expedition with a mythical aura. Many expeditions followed in search of Lapérouse.

In 1864 a street of the Haussmannian Paris, close to the Champs-Élysées was given his name. This original street sign of this "Rue de La Pérouse" is made of enamelled lava manufactured in the Manufacture de Sèvres.

Two centuries later, the legend of Lapérouse and the values of adventure and scientific discovery are more than alive. In February 2022, a project was launched at the One Ocean Summit in Brest, to build a replica of the frigate La Boussole, an idea supported by the President of the Republic of France.

The adventure continues...

Anne Boillon
Consul General de France
Sydney, 14 February 2022



*Parisian Street Sign "Rue La Pérouse" (c. 1864).
Gift of the Consulate General of France.
La Perouse Museum Collection.*

Joseph-Antoine Raymond Bruni d'Entrecasteaux



Voyage 1791 - 1793

on La Recherche and L'Espérance

Joseph-Antoine Raymond Bruni d'Entrecasteaux was appointed by the French Assembly in 1791 to find what had happened to Lapérouse. This heralded a legacy of French explorers trying to solve one of the greatest mysteries in French maritime history.

Some of the great successes of his voyage were in botany and cartography. The hydrographer Beautemps-Beaupré produced maps and charts that were so finely detailed they were later used by the English, and the naturalist Labillardière identified and collected nearly one hundred plant species previously unknown to France.

Their search for Lapérouse, however, was unsuccessful. D'Entrecasteaux actually passed within a few kilometres of Santa Cruz and Vanikoro, where Lapérouse's ships were smashed to pieces, but rising conflicts amongst the crew cut short the search and turned him north instead.

Sadly, D'Entrecasteaux's expedition ended in tragedy. He died of scurvy off New Guinea with no news of Lapérouse and the expedition eventually broke up

in Java as tensions between the royalist officers and republican crew reached boiling point.



Eucalyptus Globulus (1800) by P. J. Radouté.
Voyage of Bruni d'Entrecasteaux (1791 – 1793)
Banque Nationale de Paris (1981) reproduction
plate, La Perouse Museum Collection

Baudin's Colonial Prospecting Reliquary (2017)

Paul Mason

Diorite, brass, pewter, nylon, silver braid, Kimberly coastal rocks.

54 x 17 x 32cm

*For Sale – contact La Perouse
Museum Reception*

**“The contemporary reliquary –
an object that is good to think.”**

“An art exhibition that references the Baudin expedition might lead one to expect realist work influenced by the Enlightenment tradition of the artist scientist. Paul Mason, however, references another artistic tradition, that of the reliquary. While he eschews the directly religious and spiritual connotations of the reliquary, Mason preserves the relic's symbolic density and concern with veneration and celebration of the object and its link to larger themes. Thus Mason uses gold and gold leaf from Imperial France and Diorite from aboriginal Australia as materials that confer sacred value on otherwise ordinary objects.”

Gerry Gill Sociology Department at La Trobe University.



Nicolas Thomas Baudin



Voyage 1800 - 1804

on Le Géographe and Le Naturaliste

Nicolas Baudin is one of the most famous of all the French explorers who visited Australia, and with good reason.

Under orders from Napoléon, Baudin led a voyage of discovery and national pride that resulted in an enduring scientific and cultural legacy for both France and Australia.

The four-year voyage returned with thousands of specimens that were later donated to the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. This scientific bounty led to a greater understanding of Australia's unique biodiversity. Additionally, the expedition's charts, published in 1811, produced the first complete map of Australia's coastline.

But Baudin's expedition had problems as well as success. There was a divide and a lack of understanding between the new profession of 'scientist' onboard and the sailors. Baudin was caught between both worlds as he was from a working-class background, but had the status of ship commander.

This conflict, and widespread ill-health, amongst the crew resulted in the voyage being cut short. Tragically, Baudin died of tuberculosis in Mauritius on the return journey. In the end only three of the original 24 scientists returned to France in 1804.



Empress Josephine's Coastal Profile Reliquary (2017)

Paul Mason

Kauri, pewter, nylon, Kimberly
coastal rocks.

40 x 30 x 25cm

*For Sale – contact La Perouse
Museum Reception*

Many of the specimens from
Nicolas Baudin's 1800 – 1804
expedition were sent to the
Empress Josephine's personal
gardens at Malmaison.



François Péron



Charles-Alexandre Lesueur



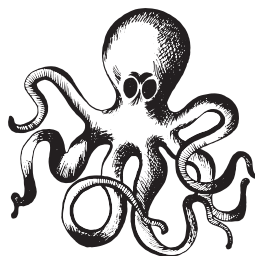
Voyage On Baudin's 1800 - 1804 Expedition

Péron 1775 - 1810 / Lesueur 1778 - 1846

François Péron was the leading scientist on the Baudin Expedition. He collected some two and a half thousand species on the voyage; one of the greatest achievements in scientific history.

Péron's zeal for anthropology, hydrographic surveys, natural history and zoology saw him and Charles Lesueur collect and catalogue over one hundred thousand specimens of plant and animal life that were new to France. In fact, he was so enthusiastic for scientific exploration he regularly got lost on expeditions – a habit that annoyed Baudin greatly. "This is the third escapade of this nature that our learned naturalist has been on," Baudin wrote in his diary, "but it will be his last, for he shall not go ashore again unless I myself am in the same boat." Sadly, Péron died in 1810 before he could fully catalogue his huge collection.

Charles-Alexandre Lesueur originally joined Baudin as a gunner, but soon became the expedition's illustrator and artist after a mass desertion in Mauritius. He worked closely with Péron and was responsible for nearly all the expedition's natural history sketches and drawings. Lesueur eventually became an accomplished naturalist in his own right and in his later life spent twenty years travelling in America where he served as curator at the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences. He died in 1846.

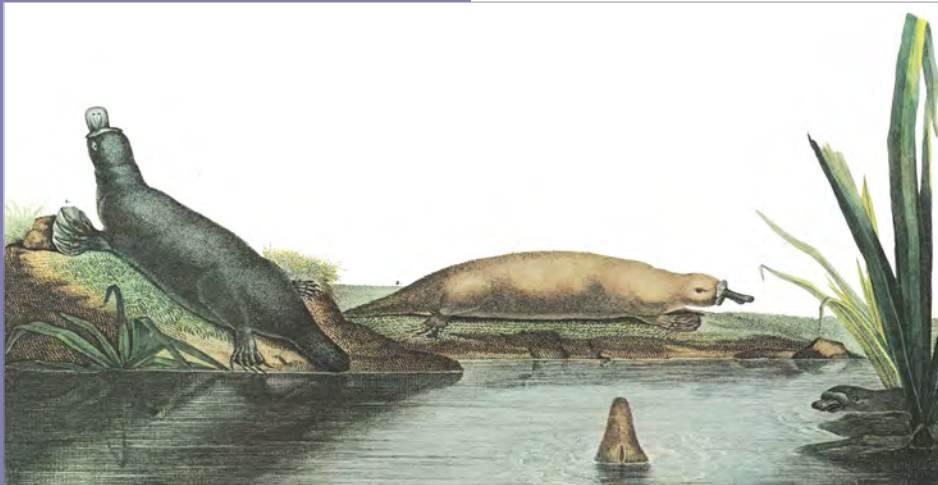




KOALA BRUN (between 1841 and 1855) by Louis Le Breton, Voyage of Jules Dumont D'Urville (1837 -1840) Banque Nationale de Paris (1981) reproduction plate, La Perouse Museum Collection



*ARMILLARY (CELESTIAL) (c.1780)
French. Wood and paper
La Perouse Museum Collection
Photograph by Glenn Duffus*



Nouvelle-Hollande ornithorinque brun a et ornithorinque roux by Charles Lesueur, Voyage of Nicolas Baudin (1800 – 1804).Banque Nationale de Paris (1981) reproduction plate, La Perouse Museum Collection

Rose de Freycinet



Voyage 1817 - 1820

aboard her husband's ship L'Uranie

40 years after Jeanne Baret comes another remarkable woman in maritime history. Rose de Freycinet secretly boarded her husband's ship L'Uranie and recorded her experiences in various letters and journal entries which were eventually published.

Rose married the naval officer Louis Claude de Saulces de Freycinet in 1814. In 1816, Freycinet's proposal to command the first scientific global circumnavigation since Baudin was accepted by the French Navy. Determined not to be separated, the devoted newlyweds hatched a plan to smuggle Rose aboard dressed as a man.

Unlike Jeanne, Rose had the support of the commander of the voyage; her husband Louis. Her deception did not last long and soon became public knowledge. Though she disobeyed Navy regulations, the Uranie did not reach a French port for more than a year and so the Navy was unable to discipline them both. The public, on the other hand, was delighted with the romance of her story.

Her private correspondence to her dear friend Caroline de Nanteuil was eventually published in 1927, giving a uniquely personal insight into her adventures. After nursing her husband through a cholera outbreak in Paris, she herself succumbed in 1832.



Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville



Voyage 1826 - 1829

on Astrolabe

While commanding the ship *Astrolabe*, named in memory of Lapérouse, d'Urville helped solve one of the greatest maritime mysteries of the age.

D'Urville had visited Botany Bay in 1824 where he re-marked the gravesite of Père Receveur, the priest from Lapérouse's fateful voyage. In 1827 d'Urville was in Tasmania, part way through a new voyage to further explore Australia and the South Pacific, when news reached him of an Irish trader discovering the wreck of a French ship off the Solomon Islands. D'Urville altered course and arrived in Vanikoro the next year where he confirmed the wreck as *L'Astrolabe*, second ship in the long-lost Lapérouse expedition. Whilst there he salvaged an anchor and a canon, and made the first educated guess on how the wreck had happened and where the other ship, *La Boussole*, might lie.

D'Urville returned to France not only with news of Lapérouse, but with over two thousand specimens of flora and fauna and extensively revised charts of the South Seas. His next expedition in 1840, resulting in his discovery of land in Antarctica, was the last major French

expedition of exploration. He died eighteen months later in the Versailles rail accident, France's first railway disaster, bringing the legacy of the French explorers to a close.



*Replica Sword Hilt, from the 1826 original.
Courtesy of the Friends of the Laperouse Museum.*

Hopkins River Trade Reliquary (2014) (reconstructed)

Paul Mason

Diorite (Gunditjmara country),
casuarina, Australian cedar,
brass, gold leaf.

53 x 44 x 17cm

Private Collection

The La
Perouse Museum
invited the artist
Paul Mason to contribute
some of his extraordinary
work to this exhibition.
We extend our gratitude
to Mr Mason.



Hyacinthe Yves Philippe Potentien, baron de Bougainville



Voyage 1824 - 1826

on Thétis and Espérance

Hyacinthe de Bougainville commissioned the construction of the Lapérouse Monument that still stands proudly on the La Perouse Headland today. Whilst in Sydney for three months during his global voyage, he made a pilgrimage to Lapérouse's landing place, then known as the French Garden.

In his diary de Bougainville wrote, "As soon as I had heard that there were relics of the La Perouse's [sic] stopover in Botany Bay, I had hit upon the idea of erecting a monument to our illustrious and unfortunate compatriot on the very

spot from which his last message had been dispatched." After being granted permission by Governor Brisbane, he laid the Foundation Stone in September 1825 and the monument was completed in 1829.

De Bougainville was also connected to other famous French expeditions. He had been a midshipman in Baudin's expedition twenty years earlier, and his father Louis-Antione de Bougainville was the first Frenchman to circumnavigate the world – with Jeanne Baret disguised aboard.



Monument Eleve a la memoire de La Perouse, 1825. Lithograph. La Perouse Museum Collection



The Combined Voyages of the French



Jeanne Baret
Voyage 1760 - 1768

**Louis Francois Marie
Aleno de Saint-Aloüarn**
Voyage 1771 - 1772

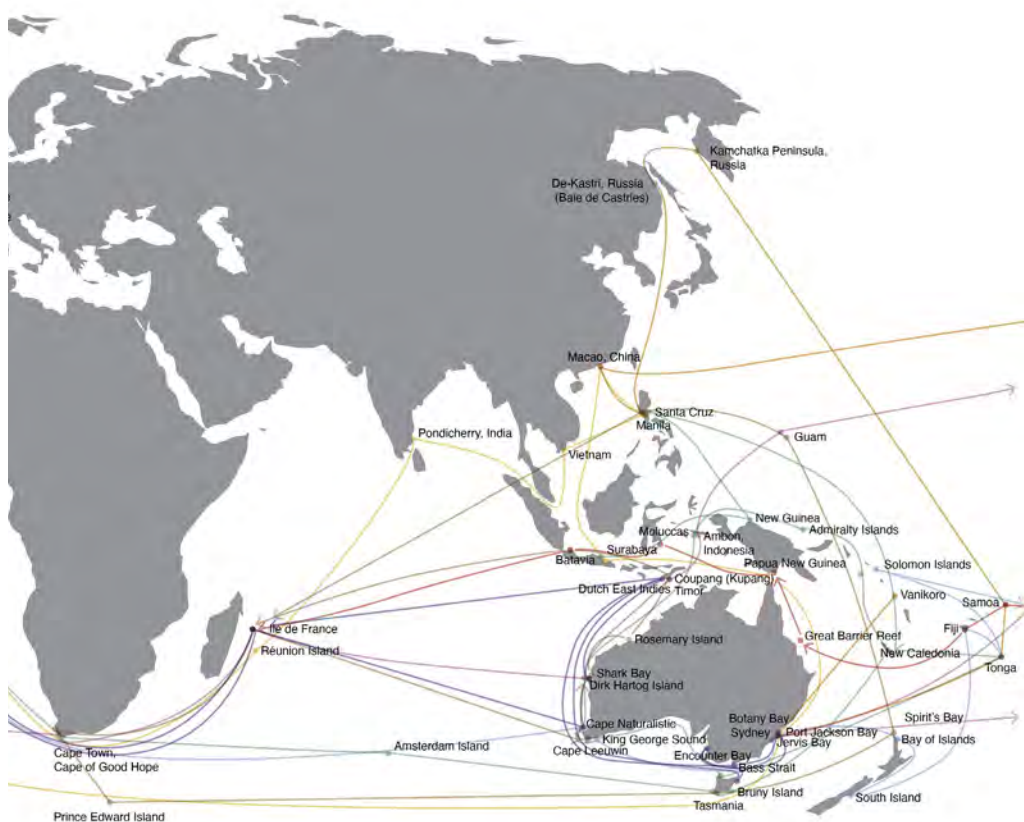
**Marc-Joseph
Marion du Fresne**
Voyage 1771 - 1772

**Jean-François de Galaup,
Comte de Lapérouse**
Voyage 1785 - 1788

**Joseph Antoine Raymond
Bruni d'Entrecasteaux**
Voyage 1791 - 1794



French Explorers from 1766 - 1829

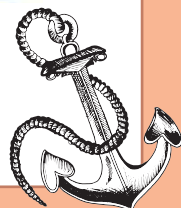


Nicolas Thomas Baudin
Voyage 1800 - 1804

Rose de Freycinet
Voyage 1817 - 1820

**Hyacinthe Yves Philippe Potentien,
baron de Bougainville**
Voyage 1766 - 1770

**Jules Sébastien César
Dumont d'Urville**
Voyage 1826 - 1829





Fragments du voyage de Laperouse, 1987-1992 (Detail). John Winch. Tapestry, mixed media. La Perouse Museum Collection.