

# THE SMALL COURTYARD

REMARKABLE ELEMENTS

## THEATRES, FAIRGROUNDS AND TELEVISION EXHIBITION ROOM



### At that time...

#### The small courtyard, a potted history

The small courtyard gives visitors a view of the elevation of the museum: from the ceiling of the reception area, which it serves, as far as the garden. It also reflects a potted history and long-term development.

During the Middle Ages, the bottom of the slopes was still undeveloped, and hardly suitable for draining or levelling. Only a few outbuildings were erected to the north, on the right, belonging to the luxurious house of la Boyssette. Between 1510 and 1530, these outbuildings were gradually transformed into living areas and attached to the main dwelling (elevated over the big courtyard). Thus, up until the 17<sup>th</sup> c., this fine building had nothing blocking its view as far as the Montée du Garillan. The courtyard was, however, hollowed out on the slope of the hill and really became evident when the De Balmes family built a permanent structure in the form of a stable with a hayloft above on the southern plot, to the left. On these primitive walls, Falconet went on to construct a new building that sheltered a cellar and a kitchen level. In the 19<sup>th</sup> c., another floor was added to the same southern building to provide living quarters. During the 20<sup>th</sup> c., the small courtyard became the setting for new facilities with the inclusion of the puppet museum and the latest modern-day refurbishment works.



Small Gadagne courtyard prior to restoration, 2003

### The small courtyard

#### Windows onto the courtyard

The façade to the right, situated on the northern plot (10-12 rue Gadagne), is the most remarkable. It dates from the 1520-1530s and was created by the Pierrevives on the walls of the former la Boyssette outbuildings. The type of prominent doorframes and the geometric lines were inspired by Italian models and especially those of Sienna. A detail seldom found in Lyon, which reflects the interior of the **remarkable rooms**. Oval spy holes are dotted here and there between the first-floor windows, which were extensively restored in the 1960s. Today, this building shelters a condensed version of the museum: from the bottom to the top, the Puppets of the World Museum, the History Museum and the Documentation Centre on the top floor.

The façade to the left, located on the southern plot (14 rue Gadagne), is less remarkable. It dates primarily from the 17<sup>th</sup> c. and the work of Falconet. Its transverse, mullion windows with sharp edges and no beading are typical of this era. The last elevation was constructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. It is nowadays used by the small theatre.

#### Restored door

During the 1960s, the refurbishments carried out as part of the project to restore and extend the puppet museum had an element of surprise! The small courtyard was presented with a fine arched door dating from the early 17th century, made from panelled wood and flanked by two columns with Corinthian canopies. The door, which had once served as the main entry point to the hospice des Chazeaux, demolished after 1930, was given a new lease of life.



Small door of the Hospice des Chazeaux on Saint-Barthélemy Mount, photograph: Doctor Loison, 1911, Inv. n 4132

### Horses, hens and pigs...

The first functions of this courtyard date back to the time when Lyon was populated by numerous animals. The bottom of the hillside is a semi-rural area where poultry and pigs bred for food were frequently encountered. Up until the end of the 16th century, the actual montée du Change was also known as the "rue de la porcherie" (pigsty) or the "rue du puits de la porcherie".

Horses were also a key component for the high society way of life since they were classed as prestigious and essential for travelling. The reconstruction of a stable in the 17th century building highlights the importance attached to this aspect.

The presence of animals is considered a tradition because, as far back as the Middle Ages, the Antonin pigs frequented the streets and were entitled to roamed freely – thus posing a law and order problem since these pigs caused numerous problems, hence complaints from inhabitants and even legal proceedings!

## Choice of restoration

### Excavations and light

Numerous excavations were carried out on extending and restructuring the museum during the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> c. The hillside was dug out, over long and short distances, to increase the space and manage traffic, the Tony Garnier monumental staircase and the temporary exhibition rooms in the basement. Over 7 000 m<sup>3</sup> of earth were evacuated...using a mini excavator, bucket and wheelbarrow given the difficulty involved in accessing the region.

The museum reception and ticket office were created from the room just below the small courtyard. To light them, the small courtyard floor is fitted with two long, parallel shafts covered in glass. This natural lighting system is fitted with shutters to control variations in daylight.

### glossary

**oculus:** an opening on an arch or a small viewing area on a wall elevation.

### Portrait

#### Claude Dalbanne, Museum Curator from 1936 to 1955

The new international puppet museum was set up around this small courtyard in 1950 by curator Claude Dalbanne (1877-1964). Trained as an artist and a key figure in education in Lyon, with a passion for the history of printing, engraving and illustrating, he was appointed curator of the Gadagne Museum by Édouard Herriot in 1936: the history museum had only 5 rooms.

*"He set out to revamp the premises of his museum, balancing its picture rails, defining its spaces and rooms, controlling traffic and distributions, and always in a well-thought out, artistic way. Claude Dalbanne is creating some remarkable exhibition rooms in this complicated structure."*

René Déroutille, *le Tout Lyon*, 1 April 1965

On handing over the management of the Gadagne Museum to Monique Ray on completion of this important work, the Gadagne Museum also incorporated the Puppet Museum, and included 20 rooms.

#### The curators of the Gadagne Museum:

Félix Devernay, sponsor for the creation of a Lyon History Museum

Eugène Vial, curator from 1921 to 1936

Claude Dalbanne, curator from 1936 to 1955

Monique Ray, curator from 1955 to 1994

Simone Blazy, curator from 1994 to 2010



Claude Dalbanne, curator of the Gadagne Museum from 1936 to 1955, discussing the possibilities of performing in the courtyard of the Gadagne Hotel, with Mr. Trillat, Conservatory Director, 1940s, Inv. 45.1160.a, gift M. Thabuis