



## ARTS & CULTURE

# Paris Fan Museum Might Disappear Without Help

January 24, 2021

France's well-known fan-making **museum** could soon disappear. The Musee de l'Eventail may soon be the cultural world's latest coronavirus victim.

The museum is in Paris. It has until January 23 to pay over \$142,000. The organization could not make enough money while shut down because of coronavirus restrictions. It has been unable to pay the money necessary for the use of its building.

If the museum closes, the knowledge of its workshop will be lost. The workshop teaches people how to make and repair hand-held fans.

Anne Hoguet, age 74, is the museum's director. She recently spoke to the Associated Press (AP), describing the news as a "tragedy." A tragedy is a very bad event that causes great sadness.

Hoguet said, "I can't believe Parisians will let a part of their **heritage** die. I have a problem, because I always believed there would be a **miracle**."

Hoguet said she was "exhausted," or very tired, by the fight for survival that has hit smaller museums.

"Like all small museums, we had troubles before..." she said, but the health crisis has been a disaster. Hoguet said her museum was forced to close for most of 2020 because of government restrictions.

On top of that, money coming from the workshop's fan repairs also disappeared because of reduced spending during the pandemic. Even when the museum opened for a short time in September, Hoguet had trouble getting the same numbers of visitors as before.

“Because people were **preoccupied** with the virus, culture and heritage got forgotten — and dangerously,” she said.

Hoguet is the fourth generation in charge of what is the last original fan-making workshop in Paris. Hoguet’s father bought the museum’s collection of fans in 1960.

She has trained five young fan-makers, whom she hopes will continue the tradition. Fan making, traditionally with wooden sticks and painted paper, has been considered important in many cultures. But in France, its **golden age** was more than 200 years ago.

At the time, women used fans as a kind of communication. The pictures painted on the fans would often show the current events of the world. To this day, fans remain part of France’s clothing culture. Fans often appear in collections by design companies Chanel, Dior and Jean Paul Gaultier.

Hoguet works alone and does not have financing tools to raise money except for email. She said French officials have failed to help her and she now has trouble sleeping.

The French Culture Ministry and Paris City Hall are the agencies she has been in touch with, but those efforts, she said, made no difference. Paris City Hall did not immediately answer when contacted by the AP.

Hoguet suggested that the problem with very special knowledge “is that it can very quickly die,” meaning it can disappear forever.

I’m John Russell.

*Thomas Adamson and Michel Euler reported this story for the Associated Press. John Reynolds adapted it for VOA Learning English. Mario Ritter, Jr. was the editor.*

---

## Words in This Story

**museum** – *n.* a building in which interesting and valuable things (such as paintings and sculptures or scientific or historical objects) are collected and shown to the public

**heritage** – *n.* the traditions, achievements, beliefs, etc., that are part of the history of a group or nation — usually singular

**miracle** – *n.* a very amazing or unusual event, thing, or achievement

**preoccupy** – *v.* to be thought about or worried about by (someone) very often or constantly

**golden age** – *n.* a time of great happiness, success; a time of highest success

---