



Press Release (February 15, 2007)

From CNAM reserves to the SOLEIL synchrotron: a century of X-rays

Through March 31, 2007, an exhibition created in partnership with the Museum of Arts and Crafts (National Conservatory of Arts and Crafts in Paris) will be offered to the public during visits to SOLEIL. Historic objects from the museum's collection, signs, a historic frieze, and astonishing experiments retrace the history of X-ray sources from the great steps that preceded their discovery by Roentgen in 1895, through their applications at the beginning of the previous century, such as radiography, and finally to SOLEIL, a source par excellence of X-rays.

To mark the inauguration of the exhibition on February 15, guests can enjoy the science presentation "A century of X-rays: from the first sources to the SOLEIL synchrotron", presented by Pierre Dhez, former director of research for the CNRS, and Maurice Chapellier, former CEA researcher. Schoolchildren and high school students attending one of our educational visits in February and March will be able to participate in the exhibition's competition; the winning class will receive the opportunity to discover the prestigious CNAM museum.

SOLEIL, the new French synchrotron beam source inaugurated by Mr. Jacques Chirac last December, welcomes several thousand visitors each year—schoolchildren, high school students, university students, industrial workers, retirees, scientists, and the public at large.

REMINDER

Located on the Saclay Plateau in Essonne, SOLEIL is the second 3rd-generation synchrotron constructed in France; the first, the Grenoble ESRF, is a European synchrotron. SOLEIL is a public company whose two shareholders are the CNRS and the CEA, and in which the Ile-de-France region and the General Council of Essonne are quite deeply invested. The construction of such a facility requires both large sites and highly precise mechanics. It involves the acceleration of packets of electrons so that they produce an exceptionally bright light ray that covers a very wide range of wavelengths, from infrared to X-rays, including ultraviolet light. The characteristics of this light (intensity, focus, stability, polarization, etc.) permit the observation of matter at the atomic level and makes experiments possible that were inconceivable before, in fundamental as well as applied and industrial research. At SOLEIL, there are various fields mobilized by science and industry today: biology, chemistry, material sciences, environment, physics, Earth sciences, and cultural heritage and archaeology. The criteria defined for SOLEIL (operating energy, number of wavers, large spectral range from infrared to X-ray, brilliance, continuous injection for stability of micron beam, etc.) place it at the highest level of international competition.

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