

Bruno Monnier

Bruno Monnier is a French cultural entrepreneur. He is the founder of Culturespaces specialized in operating historic monuments and museums, as well as in creating and managing digital art centers. He also created the Culture for Children endowment fund, which works to provide access to art and cultural heritage for children who are sick, experience social exclusion, or live with disabilities.

Biography

Background and education

Bruno Monnier was born on March 27th, 1955 in Kapellen, Belgium. He is a French citizen. His father, Jean-Philippe Monnier, a shipowner turned promoter, came from a family of Protestant pastors and entrepreneurs linked to Protestant banking. His mother, Dominique Herbette, belonged to a family of jurists and diplomats who served the Third Republic.

Bruno Monnier was educated in Antwerp and Aix-en-Provence, then studied in Paris. He is a graduate of Sciences Po Paris, Université Paris-Panthéon-Assas and holds an MBA from HEC Paris.

Professional career

Bruno Monnier began his career in 1981 at Havas in Paris and Belgium. Passionate about art history, he joined the Ministry of Culture of France in 1986 as a project manager to work on the “Patrimoine 2000” commission and to revamp the Château de Versailles.

In 1988, he left the Ministry of Culture and created Culturespaces, initially as a consulting and cultural planning department for Havas. In 1990, inspired by the Anglo-Saxon model of management of monuments and museums by private organizations, Culturespaces became a fully-fledged company as a subsidiary of Havas, Crédit National and Groupe Suez (now Engie).

Culturespaces, led by Bruno Monnier, advises local authorities, private players and public institutions on the cultural development and management of their monuments and museums.

In 1990, Bruno Monnier effectively established the business of delegated management of cultural monuments when he signed his first contract to manage the Palais des Papes for the municipality of Avignon. Then followed in 1992 the management of the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild in Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, owned by the Académie des Beaux-Arts, and the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris, owned by the Institut de France.

Other local authorities entrusted Culturespaces with the management of monuments and museums within the framework of public service delegations, such as the Roman monuments in Nîmes and Orange, the Château de Valençay and the Waterloo battlefield in Belgium.



Birth	March 27, 1955 Kapellen (Belgium)
Nationality	French
Education	Sciences-Po Paris Paris II Assas MBA HEC ²¹ Ecole du Louvre

In just a few years, Bruno Monnier developed a successful model for the cultural and economic management of monuments and cultural establishments that places the visitor experience at the heart of the concept, receives no public operating subsidies, frees up resources to restore buildings and collections, and contributes to enhancing the cultural and tourist appeal of the region.

The creation of art centers

In 2013, Bruno Monnier set out to create an art center. It was in Aix-en-Provence, the city of his youth, that Culturespaces acquired and restored the historic monument the Hôtel de Caumont in order to turn it into an art center. Open to the public since 2015, the art center presents two temporary exhibitions a year and welcomes over 350,000 visitors a year.

In 2015, convinced by the importance of digital technology in developing access to culture and enabling a new creative narrative, Bruno Monnier imagined a digital art center in a former foundry in the 11th arrondissement of Paris. And so, in April 2018, the Atelier des Lumières opened with a first immersive digital exhibition “Gustav Klimt” with resounding success. The site now welcomes almost a million visitors a year.

Alongside his longstanding business of managing monuments, museums, art centers and traditional temporary exhibitions, and boosted by the success of the Atelier des Lumières, Bruno Monnier decided to develop a new generation of digital art centers in France and abroad. To offer audiences exceptional immersive exhibitions, he created a production subsidiary, Culturespaces Digital, which later became Culturespaces Studio.

In 2017, he signed a franchise agreement with the Korean company [T-Monet](#) to create a new digital art center on [Jeju](#) Island in South Korea, the Bunker des Lumières⁵ to host digital exhibitions. It opened in 2018 and welcomed 560,000 visitors in its first year. Under the same agreement, the Théâtre des Lumières opened in Seoul in 2022.

In 2018, Bruno Monnier signed a contract with the city of Bordeaux to create a major digital art center in a former submarine base, called the [Bassins des Lumières](#) dedicated to huge immersive digital exhibitions. It opened to the public in 2020 and welcomes 800,000 visitors a year.

In 2020, Bruno Monnier launched a project to create a major digital art center in New York opposite City Hall, the Hall des Lumières, which opened in 2022. It quickly attracted a large number of visitors, as well as corporate clients for major events.

In continuation of the objective of international development, Bruno Monnier launched the Fabrique des Lumières digital art center in Amsterdam, in a former factory in the Westergas Cultuurpark, which opened in 2022 and welcomes almost 600,000 visitors a year.

In 2022, he launched the Port des Lumières project in Hamburg's new Übersee district, developed by Unibail-Westfield, due to open in 2025.

In 2023, he opened the Phoenix des Lumières in Dortmund, in the former boiler room of the Phoenix steelworks, and the site promptly welcomed 500,000 visitors a year.

In 2025, Bruno Monnier announces his intention to step down after 34 years of commitment to culture. He will continue to support the company in its future challenges as Chairman of the Supervisory Board. He will also continue to chair the Culture for Children endowment fund and devote himself fully to his historic château de Boutemont.

In charge of producing immersive exhibitions, Culturespaces Studio has become a recognized production company specialized in immersive exhibitions, with a broad catalog of quality exhibitions on themes linked to: the great artists of art history, but also to the conquest of space, in association with CNES and NASA with "Destination Cosmos", to the world's last forgotten tribes with "The Last Sentinels" and photographer Jimmy Nelson, to the seabed with "Oceans", to comic strips with Tintin , Astérix, Petit Prince, and to contemporary creation with numerous artists and studios. These exhibitions are featured throughout Culturespaces' digital art sites, as well as

on other digital art sites around the world under license.

In 30 years, Bruno Monnier has developed [Culturespaces](#) into a group of 300 employees, with steady, innovative growth. An experienced cultural manager of monuments, museums and exhibitions, with over 100 temporary exhibitions, Culturespaces is also a unique operator in the world of digital culture. Culturespaces sites welcome 4 million visitors a year at its 2 museums and 8 digital sites. Operating in 5 countries and achieving sales of €100 million, Culturespaces has become France's leading international cultural operator.

Commitments and other cultural heritage activities

Endowment fund Culture for Children

In 2009, Bruno Monnier created the Culturespaces Foundation, now the "Culture pour l'Enfance" Endowment Fund. Its mission is to promote access to the arts and cultural heritage, and to combat the cultural exclusion of children who are sick, experience social exclusion, or live with disabilities. By 2023, nearly 13,000 children had been welcomed to Culturespaces workshops and sites. Today, Culturespaces is the leading national organization for children with limited access to culture.

Château de Boutemont

Passionate about cultural heritage and gardens, Bruno Monnier acquired the Château de Boutemont, a historic monument located in Normandy and open to the public. The château dates from the 15th and 16th centuries, and is surrounded by parkland classified as a "remarkable garden".

Honors

Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres, 2002

Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur, 2019