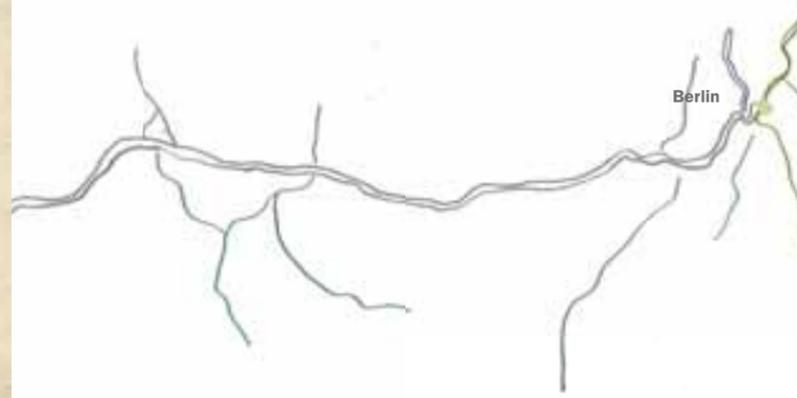
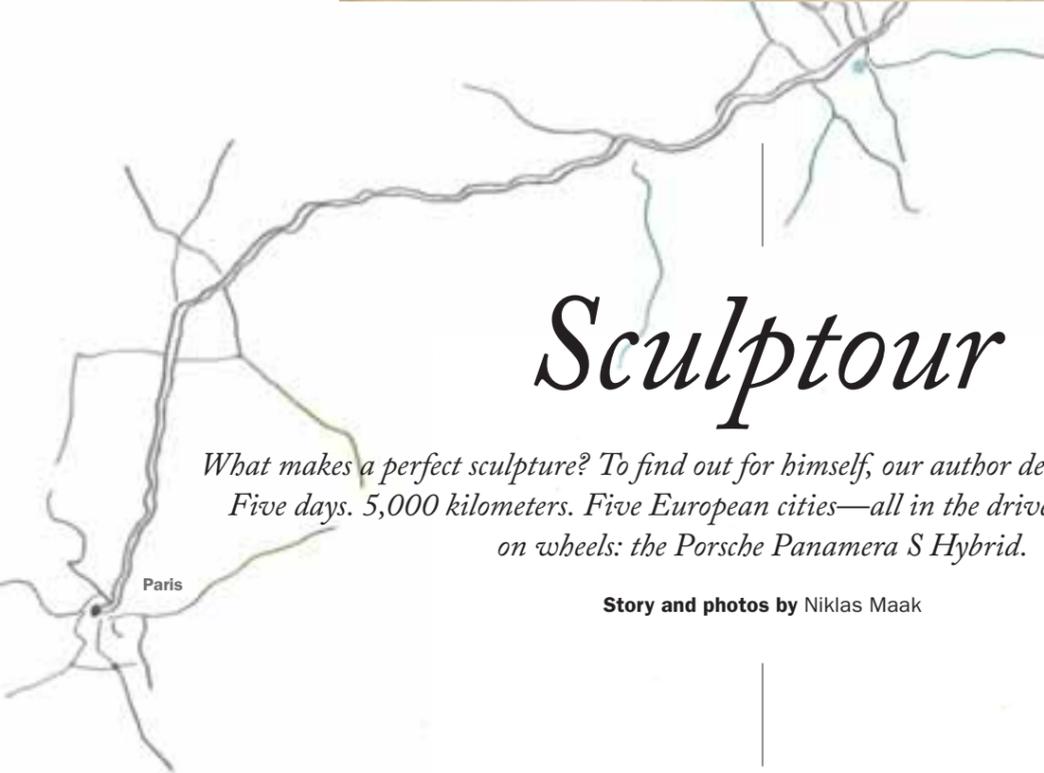




Berlin, Germany
The *Funkturm* (radio tower) is not exactly ancient, but this historic landmark is a protected monument, including the exhibition grounds



En route to Paris
Centralism applies to highways as well: the A1 and A2 "Autoroute du Nord" takes you straight to the capital



Sculptour

What makes a perfect sculpture? To find out for himself, our author decided to hit the road ... Five days. 5,000 kilometers. Five European cities—all in the driver's seat of a sculpture on wheels: the Porsche Panamera S Hybrid.

Story and photos by Niklas Maak

The *Grand Tour*. With origins in the Renaissance, by the early 18th century the Grand Tour had become a tradition: Princes and poets, aristocrats and well-to-do commoners traveled—often for years—to view paintings, architecture, and sculptures, in the belief that no journey through life would be complete without having done so. And their must-see list included the art treasures of Europe.

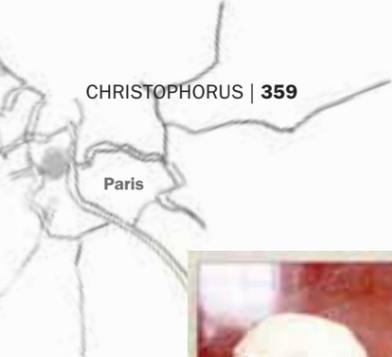
Not a bad resolution for our own day, either. So: why not a grand tour of the finest works of European art? A faster, more comfortable expedition than in days of yore, in the perfect car for this endeavor: a four-door Porsche Panamera S Hybrid. The plan? Quality, not quantity. The route? Five cities, five centers of art history. And the goal? Five world-renowned sculptures dating from antiquity to the present that every art lover should see.

Stage One: Berlin–Paris, 1,052 kilometers

More than 1,000 kilometers separate Paris and Berlin, but that's easy to forget when you're behind the wheel of a Panamera. As you drive past Hanover, your surround-sound system showers you with music from John Coltrane and Dexter Gordon; you soon reach the Belgian border, and then the outskirts of Paris. In the evening, a drink at the Café de Flore before checking in at L'Hôtel, Oscar Wilde's last home. And then off to the Louvre first thing the next morning.

Antiquity: Venus de Milo, Paris, the Louvre Museum

Those who set off too long ago on their grand tour missed out: the Venus de Milo, now considered one of the finest works of Hellenistic art, was not discovered until 1820 by a Greek farmer on Milos, one of the Cyclades group of islands.



Art on the Seine 35,000 exhibits are on display in the Louvre—the Venus de Milo is one of the loveliest



An art of its own Hunting for a parking spot in Paris; further down alongside the Eiffel Tower; the small replica of the Statue of Liberty



Architecture Escape the traffic and enter a street of tranquility on Rue Mallet-Stevens and its avant-garde architecture of the 1920s



Artful arrangement The Jardin du Luxembourg public park was created in the 17th century around the palace of the same name



Art in Provence
In Saint-Paul-de-Vence, the Middle Ages rub shoulders with modernity. Marc Chagall painted here; the sculpture is by Alberto Giacometti

It was a chance find by a man who was actually searching for building materials. Slightly over two meters high, this statue was probably created around 100 BCE. It is assumed that the statue was originally painted and that it represents Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love (Venus in Roman mythology) in the famous story of the Judgment of Paris, as she steps out of the bath to stand before Paris and prove that her beauty outshines that of her rivals Pallas Athena and Hera.

The sculptor—now believed to be Alexandros of Antioch—vividly portrays a moment in time, somewhere between the act of unveiling and that of concealment. One forgets that this is marble, and not flesh and blood. The folds of the robe are so three-dimensional that the viewer has the impression that it may slip off at any moment. The sculptor was one of those rare artists capable of transforming marble into a material that comes to life: gently rippling fabric, the softness of freshly bathed skin; even rarer, the ability to create a snapshot in stone, capturing that fleeting moment as drapery falls—all without losing the lightness of this point in time.

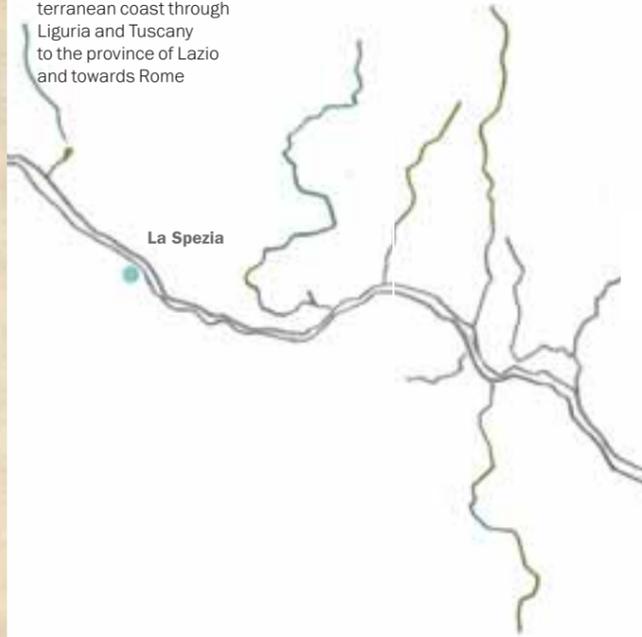
Two thousand years later, this figure still gives the impression that she is emerging from the bath. In the semi-darkness of the *gymnasion*, where the Venus de Milo once stood, she must have presented an eerily lifelike sight—as though the goddess of love had in fact arrived in town.
Hotel: L'Hôtel, 13, Rue des Beaux-Arts, 75006 Paris, www.l-hotel.com

Stage Two: Paris–Saint-Paul-de-Vence, 926 kilometers

The Mediterranean is our next destination: a cup of coffee in the early morning light of the Jardin du Luxembourg, then onto Autoroute du Soleil. The navigation system guides us over country roads: narrow, dirt roads that seem to take us back in time as we pass through the small, tranquil villages of rural France. Time for a brief break after the exhilarating curves between Marsanne and Mirmande along Route D57. We stop by a bakery on the market square: steaming croissants right out of the oven, a view looking out onto venerable plane trees, and a dog on the steps, dozing in the



Off to Italy
The Côte d'Azur fades into the Italian Riviera. A drive along the Mediterranean coast through Liguria and Tuscany to the province of Lazio and towards Rome



heat. Outside, the temperature is a balmy 34.5 degrees Celsius; inside the Panamera, the individually adjustable air-conditioning system fans us with refreshing, cool air. Blue highway signs appear: Aix, Toulon, Nice. There is now a salty tang in the air; the Mediterranean appears, sparkling in the distance beyond the highway. The light is brighter. By evening, we have reached our destination: the Belles Rives hotel in Juan-les-Pins. This is where F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, lived and wrote *Tender is the Night*.

Classic Modern:
Giacometti, Fondation Maeght, Saint-Paul-de-Vence

The following morning we immediately set out along the winding mountain roads for the village of Saint-Paul-de-Vence. Here, the art collectors Marguerite and Aimé Maeght created what may well be the most beautiful sculpture garden in Europe: Works by Max Ernst and Jean Arp are on exhibit, as well as the finest sculptures by Alberto Giacometti.

The collection includes a *Walking Woman*, an elongated figure, its human form difficult to discern. It's as though someone's long shadow had stood up, only to be frozen into a sculpture. The actual shadow cast by this sculpture in the noon-day sun is especially interesting: The sculpture may be thin as an arrow, but the silhouette it creates is quite curvaceous. In the sunlight, this sculpture creates its own art. *Hotel: Belles Rives; 33, Boulevard Edouard Baudoin, 06160 Juan-les-Pins, www.bellesrives.com*

Stage Three: Saint-Paul-de-Vence–Rome, 714 kilometers

Time for a small detour going south past Rome, along the shores of the Mediterranean, until we reach the coastal town of Sabaudia. Modern-day Romans enjoy coming here to surf against the backdrop of Monte Circeo, the mountain where—according to legend—Circe, the “loveliest of all immortals,” lived together with her docile lions, and where Odysseus and his men remained for one year, feasting and celebrating.



Landscape architecture The hybrid has the perfect temperament for a ride through the provinces



City of antiquity A brief stop in Rome at the Piazza della Minerva and a flying visit to the Esquiline Venus and Marcus Aurelius



Florence The figures in the *Rape of the Sabines* spiral upward; the grand tour picks up the pace



Bella macchina “Gran Turismo” says it all: The Panamera feels very much at home in Italy





Antiquity:
Esquiline Venus, Capitoline Museums, Rome

When the heat becomes unbearable, it's time to flee to the palaces on Rome's Capitoline Hill. This is where the Esquiline Venus stands: a first-century copy of a statue that is thought to be a donation by Julius Caesar to the Temple of Venus Genetrix in 45 BCE. She shares much in common with the Venus de Milo: She, too, is emerging for the bath; one of her missing arms appears to have been holding her hair in place; the other could have been reaching for her robe. Yet she is utterly different: the effect is smoother, the lines are more severe, almost cool in their idealized, sharp-edged beauty. And the Esquiline Venus may hold a secret: some of the world's experts on the ancient world believe that this statue portrays none other than Cleopatra. Among other clues to support this theory, they point to the Egyptian-style baluster vase at the base and the royal cobra descending over the vase, an attribute of Egyptian queens. And, in contrast to other statues, this Venus has a crease on her abdomen that usually indicates a woman had already borne a child. During the Alexandrian Wars, Caesar was stationed in Egypt, where he became involved in a passionate affair with the Ptolemy queen. By the time he left Egypt, Cleopatra was in the late stages of pregnancy, and soon afterwards she gave birth to Caesar's son.

Hotel: La Posta Vecchia, Palo Laziale, 00055 Ladispoli (37 kilometers outside of Rome), www.lapostavecchia.com

Stage Four: Rome–Florence, 280 kilometers

Mannerism:
Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence, *The Rape of the Sabines*

The Loggia dei Lanzi, in the center of Florence, was built in the 14th century for assemblies and public ceremonies held by the Republic of Florence. Later, in the 16th century, it was named for the Swiss bodyguards (*lanzichenecchi*, shortened to *lanzi*, derived from the German term *Landsknecht*) who were in the employ of Grand Duke Cosimo I and were housed there. Today, one of the masterpieces of Mannerism can be admired under the arches of the Loggia dei Lanzi: Giambologna's *Rape of the Sabines*. The Medicis did not allow the sculptor (1529–1608) to leave Florence, because they feared (with good reason) that should he leave, he would never return. Indeed, his skill in finding aesthetic solutions to spatial problems was seldom equaled. *The Rape of the Sabines* is a moving work, in every sense of the word. The manner in which the three figures dramatically spiral upward is called “serpentinata”—and Giambologna was a master of this form. The stone seems to be in motion; the sculpture takes on a different aspect depending on the angle of view. And thus, this masterpiece ultimately sets the viewer in motion, as well.

Hotel: Four Seasons; Borgo Pinti, 99; 50121 Florence, www.fourseasons.com/florence/



Stage Five: Florence–Berlin, 1,230 kilometers

From Florence up through the top of Italy's boot. And then along the north-south axis across Germany.

Modern art after 1945: Barnett Newman, *Broken Obelisk*, Neue Nationalgalerie (the New National Gallery), Berlin

Back in Berlin, for a focus on postwar art. In front of the Neue Nationalgalerie, which opened its doors in 1968, you are welcomed by Barnett Newman's *Broken Obelisk* (1963). This is an abstract sculpture. It does not represent a person, but rather a formative principle of modern art: an adventurous, delicate balance that pushes the material and the viewer to the limit. You stand before it, just as during the Renaissance people stood in front of sculptures by Giambologna and Cellini ... and the thought runs through your mind: No way that's going to work. But it does. There it is, a

kind of exclamation mark, an affirmation that yes, the unimaginable is not beyond our reach. That, too, is the kind of conviction that the history of art can teach us.

Epilogue

Later on, I meet up with a friend in Berlin who lives on a one-way street and hardly ever drives. He looks appalled: “You must be absolutely exhausted!” Not a bit. Was that really—taking detours and little trips into account—1,000 kilometers a day? I could easily have kept on going. And if I had found one perfect piece for me, and been allowed to take it along, there would have been plenty of room in the rear of the Panamera for a life-size sculpture to take home.

Niklas Maak heads the art department of the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.