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# LARGO WINCH

## ECONOMIC PATHFINDER

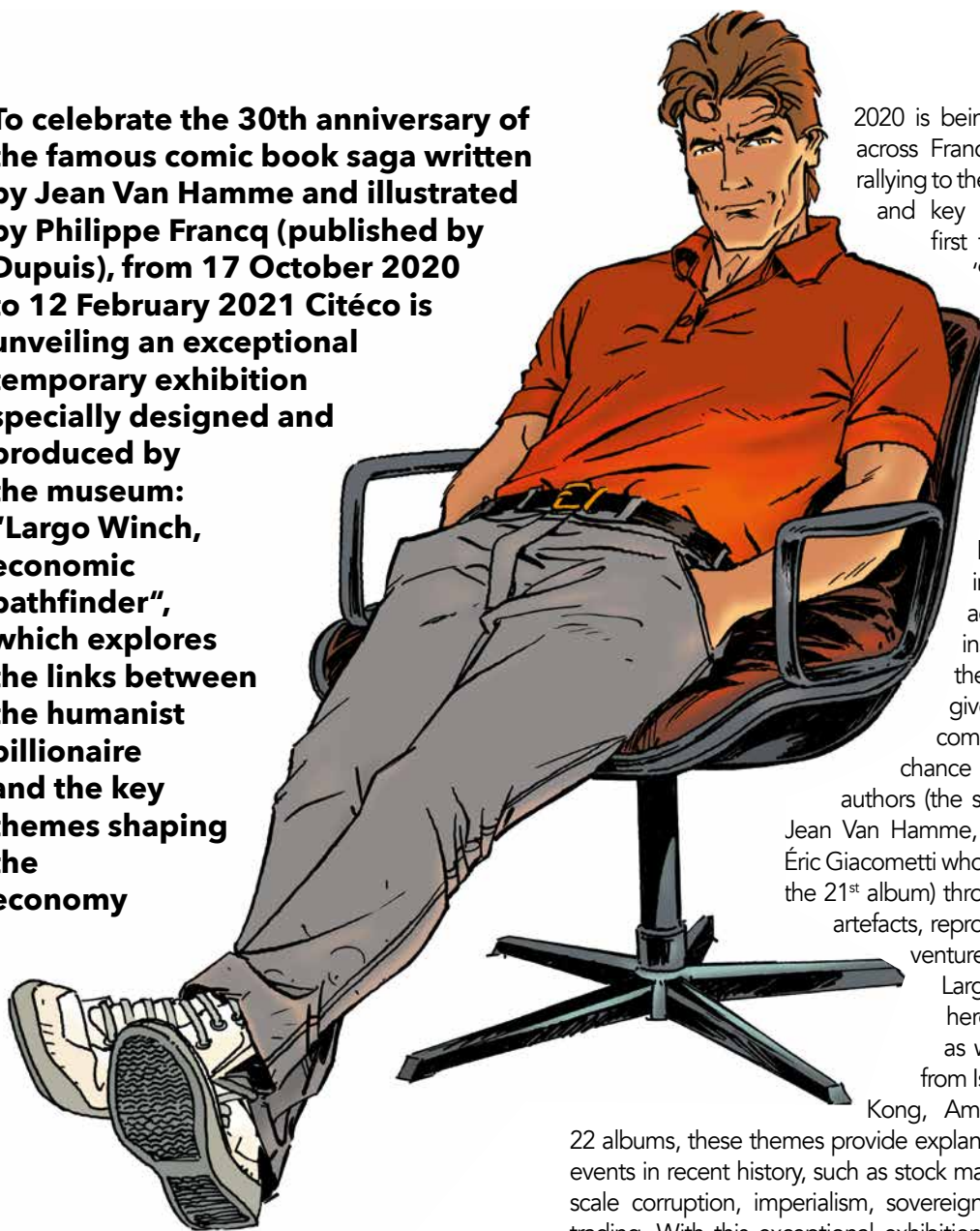
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PRESS RELEASE

# LARGO WINCH Economic pathfinder

## From 17 October 2020 to 12 February 2021 At the Cité de l'Économie

**To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the famous comic book saga written by Jean Van Hamme and illustrated by Philippe Francq (published by Dupuis), from 17 October 2020 to 12 February 2021 Citéco is unveiling an exceptional temporary exhibition specially designed and produced by the museum: "Largo Winch, economic pathfinder", which explores the links between the humanist billionaire and the key themes shaping the economy**



2020 is being fêted as the Year of the Comic across France, and the Cité de l'Économie is rallying to the cause by analysing the mechanisms and key issues driving economics, for the first time ever, through the lens of the '9<sup>th</sup> art' as this genre has become known. The exhibition Largo Winch, economic pathfinder, is an opportunity to paint a picture of 30 years of economic practices and to analyse the changes that have taken place since the first album was published back in 1990, while delving into the world of the hero who, at just 26 years of age, inherits a vast financial empire. His adventures yield a highly original insight into the mysterious workings of the economy. This exhibition will thus give visitors of all ages – fascinated in comics, economics and adventure – a chance to witness the great talent of the authors (the scriptwriter and creator of the saga, Jean Van Hamme, the illustrator Philippe Francq and Éric Giacometti who has taken over the plot-writing from the 21<sup>st</sup> album) through some sixty original illustrations, artefacts, reproductions, videos and sets. A way to venture into the makings of a bestseller, the Largo Winch galaxy by lingering over the hero, his team, his friends and enemies as well as the extraordinary cityscapes: from Istanbul to Chicago, London to Hong Kong, Amsterdam to Venice. Through the 22 albums, these themes provide explanations about the defining economic events in recent history, such as stock market crashes, sub-prime crisis, large-scale corruption, imperialism, sovereign wealth funds and high-frequency trading. With this exceptional exhibition, Citéco is showcasing its ambition to make sense of the key debates shaping society whilst shedding light on economic questions in an educational and entertaining way.

## Editorial

### Philippe Gineste Director of Citéco



© HELOÏSE BLIER

The opportunity to pair economics up with the 9<sup>th</sup> art in 2020, the Year of the Comic, made perfect sense. To mark the occasion, Citéco decided to welcome Largo Winch into its fold by turning the Hôtel Gaillard mansion into the life-sized playground of this wholly unique pathfinder. Here, at the Cité de l'Économie – this Renaissance Revival historical monument – the hero with a thousand faces is right at home. For the museum and the comic book series fit seamlessly amidst the backdrops enhanced by heritage and artistic creation – and chime naturally with our overarching key theme: economics. Whilst this subject is embedded in most areas of our day-to-day routines, the art of presenting it and illustrating it in an educational and entertaining way seemed to destine our young centre for an encounter with Largo Winch. Accordingly, Philippe Francq and Éric Giacometti immerse readers in a modern and contemporary world.

Enthralling the public with a story, adventures and striking images whilst conveying knowledge resonates with Citéco's own philosophy: our ambition is to approach economics from an outsider's point of view, thereby enabling everyone to gain an understanding of it – and find enjoyment in doing so. The multi-faceted world Largo Winch inhabits makes it ideal for exploring the myriad aspects of the economy. Citéco's ambition is also to show that this subject is very much interwoven into our everyday life.

In art, cooking, travel and a whole host of other spheres. Economics is very much part of our lives – you just have to think to look. Citéco is gearing up to roll out the red carpet for this young economic pathfinder with an exciting programme of wide-ranging events to accompany the exhibition and designed to spark encounters and discussions. Authors Philippe Francq and Éric Giacometti will be the guests of honour at the special evening event on 5 November: a wonderful opportunity to soak up the creative universe behind the work. Another event will see us fast-forward to the year 2049 as we imagine what finance and currency might look like by then, during a special evening in partnership with the current affairs magazine *L'Obs*.

We look forward to seeing you at Citéco for this exceptional cultural season in the company of Largo Winch!

## EXHIBITION CURATOR: DIDIER PASAMONIK

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© ANNA LAILLET

**Renowned comic book specialist Didier Pasamonik is Managing Director of ActuaBD.com, France's leading news website on comics.**

**His publications include *Critique de la bande dessinée pure* (Berg, 2008), *Regards croisés de la bande dessinée belge* (Snoeck, 2009), *Mickey à Gurs - Les Carnets de dessin de Horst Rosenthal*, which he co-wrote with Joël Kotek and Tal Bruttman (Calmann Levy and Mémorial de la Shoah, 2014). He was also the curator of the exhibition *Shoah et bande dessinée* at the Paris Shoah Memorial (2017) and scientific advisor for the exhibition *Goscinny, au-delà du rire* at the Museum of Jewish Art and History (mahJ, 2017).**

In turn journalist, bookseller, publisher and exhibition curator, Didier Pasamonik has more than forty years of experience in the comic book industry. His Belgian roots surely have something to do with that. He was acquainted with the great household names of comics – Hergé, Jacobs, Franquin, Peyo, Morris, Jijé, Hugo Pratt and Moebius among them – as well as Jean Van Hamme of course and above all Philippe Francq, whom he met while still a student at acclaimed Belgian comic book figure Claude Renard's Atelier R. It is therefore as a respected authority that he has embarked on this project delving into Largo Winch's universe.

The world of economics has changed beyond recognition in the space of thirty years. And that's not all: our vocabulary has gained new words and new concepts, such as public takeover bid, Dow Jones, globalisation, sub-primes or offshoring. These have now entered the mainstream and are widely understood. The image of Largo Winch reflects this change in perception: the "humanist billionaire" is in stark contrast with the image of the potbellied banker or ironmaster of Balzac's or Zola's great 19<sup>th</sup> century novels. With Largo Winch, we find that economics is an adventure where everyone can find fulfilment and, who knows, perhaps even help make our world a better place.

## PARCOURS DE L'EXPOSITION

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The quality of the Largo Winch series stems first and foremost from its fast-paced, straightforward plots with punchy dialogue that enables us to easily grasp the basics of economics, as well as a touch of humour, thanks to finely honed, perfectly captured characters who evolve in stories shot through with a hint of social satire. Largo Winch above all reveals that managing an empire like the W Group is a thrilling and rewarding adventure with twists galore, as well as a whole host of opportunities for sharing one's values and enthusiasm.

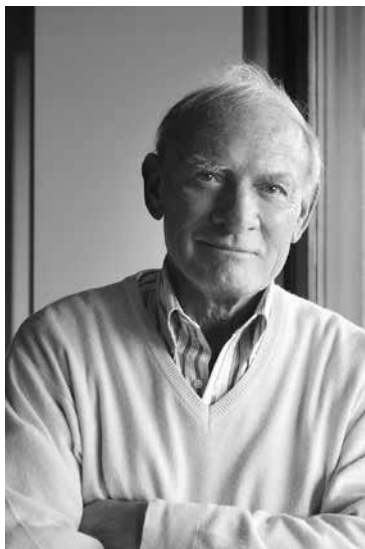
"Largo Winch, Economic pathfinder" has been laid out in four sections that immerse visitors in the twists and turns of his universe – particularly the world of economics through the economic factsheets written by Olivier Bossard (Professor of Finance and Executive Director of the MSc Finance at the HEC Business School) which provide context and insight to accompany the exhibition's descriptive panels.

In the first room, visitors will find out more about the authors behind this enthralling saga; the second introduces us to Largo Winch and the people around him – friends and enemies alike; the third unveils the main cities his adventures bring him to and, last but not least, the fourth delves into how, in the 30 years since the first album was released, economics has been impacted by the myriad social and technological changes and upheavals and how this is conveyed in the 22 albums relating the humanist billionaire's adventures.



# ROOM 1: THE MAKINGS OF A BESTSELLER

**This room introduces the creators behind Largo Winch - a graphic novel initially drawn from the novels by Jean Van Hamme for the first ten two-part albums, followed by original titles for the next ten two-part albums, while the albums since have been written by another novelist, Éric Giacometti, with brand new storylines.**



© PATRICIA MATHIEU

## JEAN VAN HAMME, A BRILLIANT STORYTELLER

As the son of a businessman with a taste for adventure who worked all over the world, Jean Van Hamme is also a globetrotter himself. Starting out as an executive in multinationals which took him around the world, he went on to become a writer and scriptwriter and has travelled as much as Largo Winch to document the countries he has visited.

Business is an adventure, but writing is too. Jean Van Hamme's first album, Epoxy, came about in Paris during the nationwide civil unrest of May '68, with illustrations by Paul Cuvelier, while the young author was organising the first comic book exhibition in Belgium at the Bibliothèque Royale in 1968. Through this he encountered all the great names of the Belgian comic book scene, from Franquin to Hergé, not forgetting Jacobs. A long career as a scriptwriter would follow, from Epoxy to Thorgal, from XIII to Largo Winch.

At the same time, from 1980, Jean Van Hamme became fascinated in cinema – the '7<sup>th</sup> art' as it is dubbed in France – writing the script for Diva with Jean- Jacques Beineix (1980), Marc Lobet's Meurtres à domicile (1982) and, more recently, the adaptation of his own comic book, *Lune de guerre* by Dominique Derrudere (2000). Finally,

he has worked on the script for the movies Largo Winch 1 (2007) and Largo Winch 2 (2009) directed by Jérôme Salle, which reached a total of three million cinema admissions. He is currently working on Largo Winch 3, which is still in the making. Largo Winch is a creation by Jean Van Hamme firstly designed for comic books.

### The metamorphoses of a character

In 1973 US cartoonist John Prentice had the first stab at illustrating Largo Winch, but his drawings were not selected as they were not in keeping with the spirit of the series. These initial illustrations are on show in the exhibition. The billionaire's adventures were therefore initially published in the form of a series of six novels by Mercure de France (1977). But with sales not high enough to earn

a living, Van Hammel turned his attention to comic book script. Thanks to his meeting with illustrator Philippe Francq, Largo Winch became a comic book published in the "Repérages" collection of Editions Dupuis (1990). The series immediately became an astonishing bestseller which has seen more than 12 million albums sold in its French edition and been published in twenty languages. Today it celebrates 30 years in existence.



**When you're a sales engineer with an advanced teaching qualification in political economics, you're bound to be delighted on receiving an invitation, through a billionaire, to the Cité de l'Économie. I should therefore like to extend my deepest thanks to the organisers of this amazing exhibition."**

## PHILIPPE FRANCO, AN ILLUSTRATOR WITH PERFECTION IN HIS SIGHTS

In just a few albums, Philippe Francq carved a reputation out for himself as one of the greatest realistic illustrators of his generation. He studied at Brussels' Institut Saint-Luc in the graphic design section before joining the comic book studio run by Claude Renard, François Schuiten and Philippe Berthet. He then honed his skills at the Hergé studio with Bob de Moor. Heeding the advice of the best Belgian realistic illustrator of his time, Hermann, with Bob de Groot writing the script he published two albums for the series *Des Villes et des femmes* (1987) followed by another two for the *Léo Tomasini series* (1988) with Francis Delvaux. A meeting with Jean Van Hamme in 1989 saw the latter ask him to illustrate Largo Winch.

### A masterpiece of perfection

His draughtsmanship is in the tradition of the Belgian school and that of Hergé: precise, perfectly executed in the attitudes of the characters, fabric folds and drape, architecture, cars, boats, aircraft... And jet-set scenes. It is very carefully documented, each album being subject

to location research, often shored up by a reporting assignment at the site where the adventure is taking place, where Philippe Francq takes thousands of photos. At times Jean Van Hamme has given him pictures that he had taken himself during his travels. When it's time to put pencil to paper, the first stage involves sketching the scene, laying out what it will look like, as clearly and fluidly as possible; then comes the inking stage which, since the 15th album, has been done on a graphics tablet, which sets the drawing in stone as it were. The final stage involves adding colour, "when light fills the picture".

Over 30 years, just like Hergé's Tintin back in the day, he has described the era (computers, mobile phones, architecture, etc.). "Details make perfection, and perfection is not a detail..." In Largo Winch's adventures, Philippe Francq has truly made this aphorism of Leonardo da Vinci his own, with each scene retaining its truth and emotion thanks to a drawing that is a masterpiece of perfection. The exhibition displays more than 40 outstanding original illustrations.



© DAVID CRESPIN



**I am thrilled that this first ever major exhibition on Largo Winch is being held at the Cité de l'Économie.**

**I am looking forward to sharing some secrets of creation with visitors."**





© CHLOÉ VOLLMER LO

## ÉRIC GIACOMETTI, FROM ONE NOVELIST TO ANOTHER

Éric Giacometti was an investigative journalist before becoming deputy editor of the "society" then "economics/finance" sections in the leading national daily newspaper *Le Parisien / Aujourd'hui en France*. In 2005, he teamed up with his friend Jacques Ravenne to create the successful thriller about the freemason cop *Antoine Marcas* (published by Jean-Claude Lattès), a series that has been translated in 18 countries and has sold nearly three million copies. He produced a graphic novel version of it with illustrations by Gabriele Parma and then by Éric Albert (published by Delcourt). In 2016, his longtime friend Philippe Francq asked if he wanted to take over the writing for Largo

Winch after Jean Van Hamme decided to stop. What a challenge! But thanks to his experience as a novelist, he was able to analyse the Largo albums "with a professional eye". The series was initially set against the economic backdrop coming out of World War II. He therefore set himself the task of ushering it into a new era. For him, Largo Winch, the recalcitrant billionaire, is Spartacus who becomes Caesar. On 6 May 2010, while still a journalist for the economics section of *Le Parisien*, Eric personally witnessed the flash crash of the New York stock exchange, caused by high-frequency trading, and he drew inspiration from this for *l'Étoile du matin*.



**With Largo Winch, economics becomes fun, sexy and educational. Just like it is at Citéco.**

**It seems entirely logical for the boss of the W Group to invite you on a VIP tour of this museum quite unlike any other in the world."**



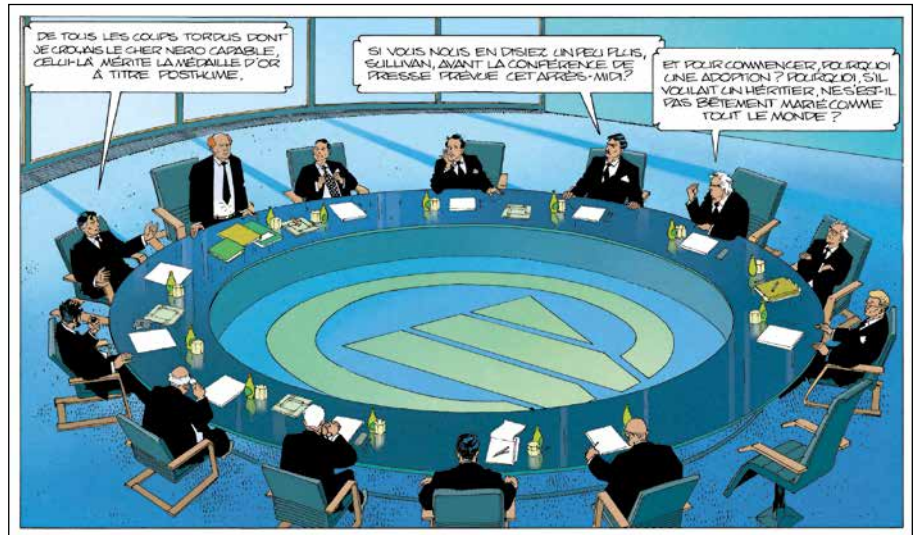
### IN THE EXHIBITION

Particularly on show in this room are: the original manuscript of the first version of Largo Winch as a comic book, the complete typescript of the first script by Jean Van Hamme, myriad original illustrations including the first three of the saga, as well as the making-of a previously unseen illustration from the forthcoming album due out in 2021, with a focus on the three key stages in its production (pencil sketch, inking and adding colour). Visitors will also be able to access a recreation of the three authors' studies with their respective bookcases.



## ROOM 2: WHO IS LARGO WINCH?

The main exhibition hall takes an in-depth look at the character of Largo Winch, his friends, his companions along the way, his enemies, as well as the women he's loved. Between adventures with a small and capital 'A', Largo Winch is up against his "Big Board", in a "lion's cage", with formidable directors to contend with.



### THE RELUCTANT BILLIONAIRE

Largo is not a financier: he's a company manager, a captain of industry, and a pathfinder. A Serb from Montenegro, Largo Winczlav – his real name was subsequently Americanised by his adoptive father – was found in an orphanage in Sarajevo and adopted at the age of two by Nerio Winch. He was brought up in Liechtenstein until he was ten, by his tutors Hannah and Ernst Gleiber, whom he saw as his aunt and uncle. His father enrolled him in the best schools across Europe. At 26 years of age, his adoptive father died and the young man inherited an empire of 562 companies employing a staff of 600,000 – for which he was the majority shareholder through his holding.

Independent and headstrong, Largo is a "sort of boy scout", humanist and anti-conformist, at stark odds with the ruthless world of finance. Young, handsome, smart and extremely wealthy, Largo is courted and envied. So he surrounds himself with a group of dependable friends, bold and enterprising for the most part, either met during his travels around the world (Simon Ovrinnaz), hired by his father (Freddy Kaplan, John D. Sullivan, Miss Pennywinkle, etc.), or met in adversity (Silky) – all companions-in-arms, ready to help him out at any moment, which is easier said than

done with someone so reckless! In return, Largo is ready to leap to the assistance of any of his friends in difficulty.

As for women, in Largo Winch, they are not easily taken in. They are cut from the same cloth as the heir: uncompromising, free and independent. At times dangerous even. Largo, with his looks, can often rely on them. He charms and falls for their charms, but the W Group is always there to remind him of where his obligations lie. Our eligible bachelor keeps falling in love for all that, but as with Mélanie, alias Rifka, or Saïdée, the outcome for them is often fatal. That perhaps explains why Largo is reluctant to commit. Charity, the character we meet right in the first album and whom he comes across again in Voir Venise... understands him perfectly. He is like Kipling's cat that walked by himself and doesn't need anyone. And Domenica, the free-spirited Italian sculptor, adds, by way of a farewell: "I hope one day you'll find what you're desperately searching for".

So, what is Largo searching for? Not money, but rather the taste of a challenge: grasping and mastering the gigantic cogs that operate a trust like the W Group. Quite an adventure!

## LE GROUPE W.

This part of the exhibition sheds light on the structure of the W Group and introduces visitors to the 12 Chairs of the sectors comprising each of the dozens of independent companies established across 129 countries, including oil, banking, aeronautics, electronics, hospitality, media, the merchant navy, the retail industry, the metal and mining industries. The W Group's investments take a very down-to-earth approach, reflecting a mainly conservative vision of the business world. In 30 years, the team has changed a great deal. As a sign of difficulties and disagreements, two seats at the latest Big Board are vacant – for aeronautics and banking – while new divisions are emerging and taking the place of scrapped business sectors. All the while, revenues have skyrocketed, from \$30bn to \$750bn! The Board has also taken on more female directors.

The W Group is above all the multinational that had been built up by Nerio Winch, whose portrait lords over the Big Board room. A protective shadow behind which we find John D. Sullivan, his No.2, who briefly took over as CEO before Largo stepped up, while Dwight E. Cochrane oversaw management control. But the hazards of life (he lost the use of his legs in the two-part album OPA) force Sullivan to step down and take over the chairmanship of the Winch Foundation, which assists child victims of war. He continues to provide a loyal shoulder to lean on for Largo, however. For this immediate circle includes some "disloyal" administrators in its ranks, along with a string of unscrupulous individuals bent on putting him in harm's way: businessmen who fear neither



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God nor man, corrupt officials, shady politicians, bloodthirsty dictators or global terrorists ... Mistrustful of a legal system that, alas, proves more often than not to be powerless or downright blind, Largo often resorts to settling business his own way...

## ET DANS L'EXPOSITION

- ▶ **The exhibition will present the W Group Board with all the protagonists from the albums.**
- ▶ **A portrait of Nerio Winch (a special commission by the artist Didier Graffet for the occasion) will grace the hall for a clearer insight into the recalcitrant values that make Largo Winch the intrepid, rebellious explorer he is.**
- ▶ **The letters L and W will form a relaxation area where readers will be able to leaf through the albums in the collection, opposite the different sequences of the hall.**

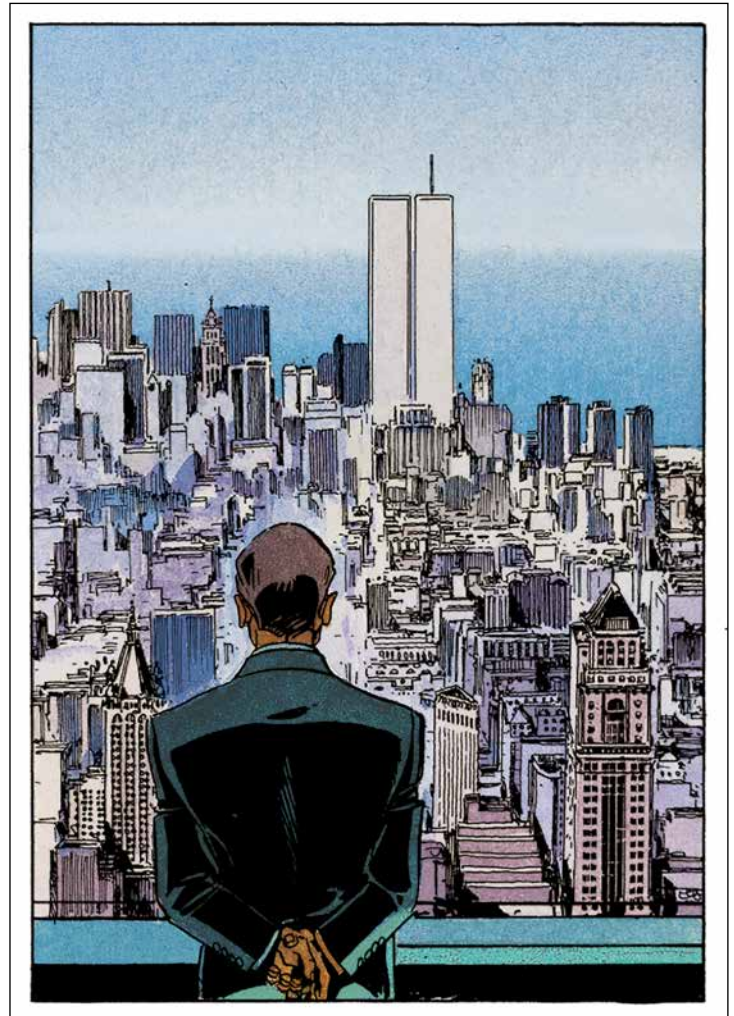
## LES " PLUS " ÉCO

- ▶ **The board bears a description of all the ins and outs of the economic and financial sectors in which the W Group does business: What is a multinational? What is an entrepreneur? A financial empire?, etc..**

## **ROOM 3: EXTRAORDINARY CITYSCAPES**

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**Among the cities that Largo Winch visits, some 146,000 kilometres away with a total annual flight time of 97 hours, are global economic nerve centres including New York, Chicago, London, Hong Kong, Paris and Istanbul. This outing aboard Largo's private jet is a pretext to remember the extent to which finance is above all an urban phenomenon. An opportunity for visitors to learn more about the economic and geopolitical importance of these cities in the globalised economy and to admire for themselves - thanks to Philippe Francq's drawings - the magnificence of these dizzying cityscapes, recreated in an altogether unique set design.**





## SEATS OF POWER

Every empire has its capital. Nerio's was New York where the group's headquarters was located, in a building which he designed and built himself. But, as if to make a clean break with his father, Largo would soon opt for Chicago, where he would also erect his own building, larger and more modern than the last. Some of these cities – Lucerne, Vaduz, Panama, Dubai – bring tax havens to mind, while others are ports through which the bulk of the world's business transits: London, Amsterdam, Hong Kong or St Petersburg. They all beckon towards the far-flung horizons of adventure..

## VIVIDLY CAPTIVATING ARCHITECTURE

Each city harbours its share of charm and mystery, allure and danger. But some more than others, for they are steeped in a time-honoured history that encompasses our destinies. Philippe Francq's exquisite artistic talent captures their magnificence to perfection: Paris and Venice can still set us daydreaming. Largo doesn't seem to move through them as you or I might. No, he doesn't travel through these cities, he scales them!

## IN THE EXHIBITION

**This part of the exhibition plunges visitors into the world of Largo Winch as if they were standing alongside him - thanks to the dizzying illustrations soaring more than 2.2m high**

## ECONOMIC "INSIGHTS"

**The exhibition presents detailed factsheets on the economies of the global nerve centres visited by Largo Winch (Paris, Venice, New York, Chicago, Hong Kong) - fully-fledged concrete jungles to navigate at the heart of finance. Other themes are also delved into, such as "The big circuits of the movement of goods."**

## ROOM 4: THE HUMANIST BILLIONAIRE

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With time flying by, a lot has happened in the world of economics in the space of three decades! These events have inevitably influenced the thinking of the "humanist billionaire". The Largo Winch series, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, examines the modern-day economy from a human perspective - through a character who is a bit of an idealistic "boy scout", with this paradox: when you inherit an industrial and financial fortune, what perception can you truly have of social reality? How do you view fairness? Justice?

How can you change events and, crucially, to what end? What hopes and goals can an ultra-high-net-worth individual have apart from living off their private income? And last but not least, does a rich man deserve to be happy?

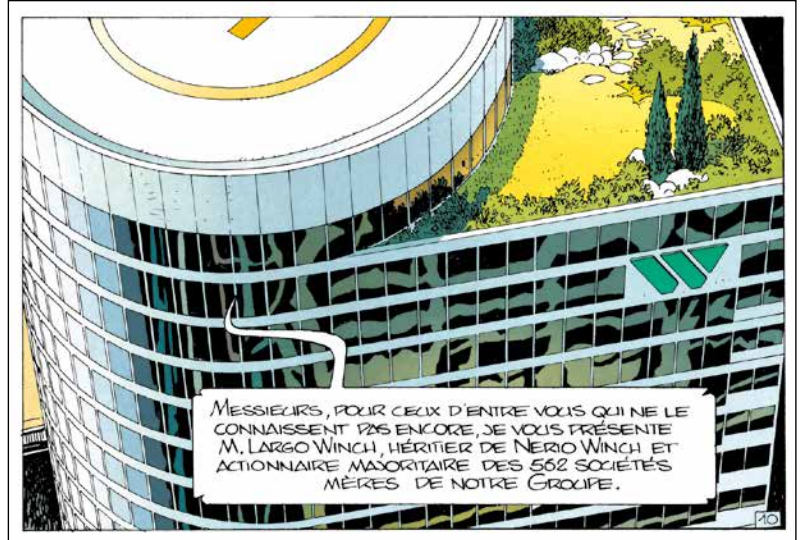
Is a company manager with a host of responsibilities allowed to have a taste for adventure? The exhibition sets out to answer these questions in chronological order.



## KING LEAR SYNDROME AND THE LONE PRINCE

In the same way as his father, a descendant of poor migrants from Europe who went on to conquer the Far West and become oil magnates, Largo Winch inherited a fortune which he did not make and sometimes seems to run counter to his values. Nerio's legacy to his adopted son is the cornerstone underpinning all of Largo Winch's adventures. It is a capitalistic, paternalistic and strategic legacy: aimed at sustaining a life's – or rather a whole lineage's – work. Nerio knows he is going to die and in his adopted son he sees a way to survive, to gain a slice of eternity. This is known as the "King Lear syndrome", because in Shakespeare's play King Lear chooses heirs he assumes are capable of safeguarding the kingdom, but turns out to be mistaken. In The Prince, Machiavelli postulates that States inherited by a monarch must be "shaped in obedience to the prince's family."

On the Big Board sit independent Chairs controlled by Cochrane. Largo must be certain of their loyalty in the face of adversity. The public takeover bid is a friendly or hostile acquisition process first practised in 1959 by the British merchant banker Siegmund Warburg. In theory, since the Winch Group is not listed on the stock exchange, it is not at risk of such a takeover bid.



Except if the "prince", always alone in these circumstances, falls victim to a betrayal.

*\*The theme of the King Lear Syndrome is prominent throughout the first two-part album L'Héritier / Le Groupe W while the 2<sup>nd</sup> two-part album (OPA / Business Blues) captures the Prince's isolation perfectly.*

## ECONOMIC "INSIGHTS"

**The exhibition devotes time to the subject of public takeover bids and presents an interview with Olivier Bossard, going over the landmark dates in the financial world over the 30 years of Largo Winch, from 1990 to 2020.**

## ORGANISED CRIME: A MULTINATIONAL IN ITSELF

With 1,052 companies operating across 129 countries, the W Group posts an overall accounting balance of \$750bn with a staff of 480,000 employees. This makes it a sprawling, atypical group where the search for maximum profits is not the priority for all that. Like all company managers, Largo Winch has no choice but to delegate, but is not immune from an error of judgment or potential corruption on the part of one of his subordinates whom he needs to trust. At times supervised by holdings located in tax havens, some powerful businesses can pretty much raise an army and corrupt the most virtuous of politicians and senior executives. The W Group and its managing director in particular sometimes find themselves having to reckon with the likes of these. The modern-day underworld has far outstripped the sta-

tus of individual criminals or "gangs" that were rampant in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Better integrated but above all with far greater riches, mafias were driven – under pressure from the tax authorities – to organising the laundering of their money.

Organised crime can also take the form of State-wide corruption. In principle, Largo Winch carefully steers clear of dictatorships where economic practices tend more to involve the systematic bleeding of a State by a privileged, corrupt caste than they follow the rules of fairness and justice by which Largo sets store. Except when he has to come to his friends' rescue. With whom he discovers the murky role of officials from States who officially defend human rights but have no scruples about trampling them the moment their interests are at stake.

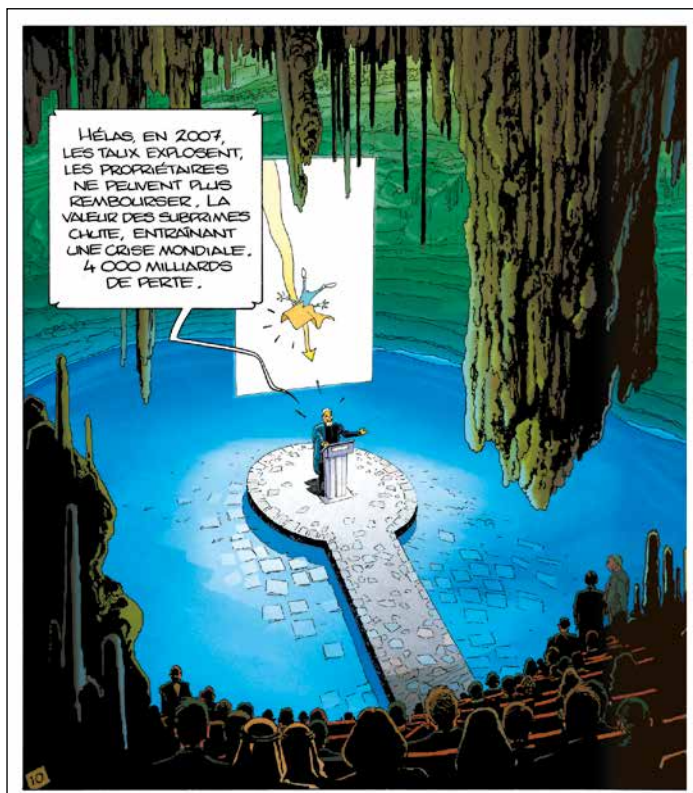
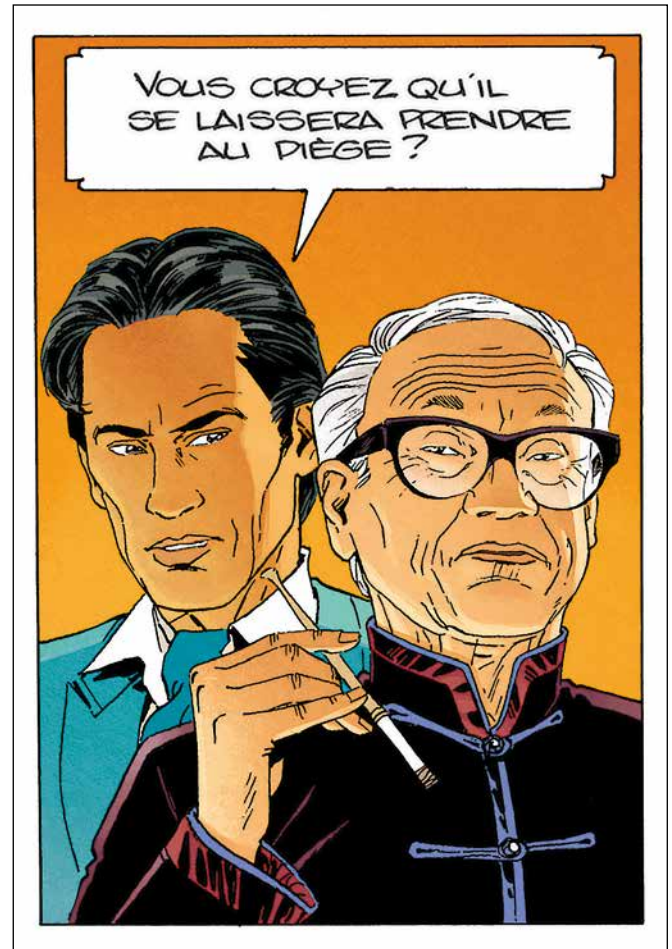
In this economic jungle, our hero has to grapple daily with double-dealing characters, plotters and traitors of all sorts. He has to constantly keep his wits about him to outsmart plots and get a sense of the "hidden side of the affair".

Economic "scheming" can also go on in the media via sordid financial dealings with the Mafia, against a backdrop of takeover attempts by a competitor of the Winch Group of the W9 channel, of a network involving prostitution and the shooting of violent and pornographic clandestine films. All of this brings to the fore the deceptive nature of a certain image conveyed by America, from Hollywood to Reno and Las Vegas.

\*This dark underside of organised crime is given extensive coverage in the following two-part albums: *Money laundering with H / Dutch Connection* inspired by the story of the French Connection dismantled in the 1970s, *La forteresse Makiling / L'Heure du tigre* for *State-wide corruption*, *Voir Venise... / Et Mourir* for *insider information* and *Golden Gates and Shadow* for *media manipulation*

## ECONOMIC "INSIGHTS"

In this sub-section of the exhibition, visitors will be able to consult the detailed factsheets on the following themes: "Money laundering", "Oil, an energy source powering the global economy" and "Screen societies".



## THE PITFALLS OF THE ECONOMY'S FINANCIALISATION

Globalisation has proved a game-changer for the business world. "I notice simply that in the space of a few decades, the economy has passed from the hands of industrialists to those of financiers," says Jean Van Hamme, who nevertheless points out that the economy is built by entrepreneurs and finance is mostly there to grow their business.

But our billionaire is a humanist. The brutality with which a company of the Winch Group transfers business, capitals and jobs to regions offering a competitive edge is often questioned by Largo Winch for whom this reality of offshoring is not always acceptable.

Another example, the sub-prime crisis – because there is something ethical about it – touches a raw nerve with Largo Winch, an heir struggling to find his way in finance: thanks to the particular structure of his capital, because it is not listed on the stock exchange and does not distribute stock options, the W Group emerges unscathed from the financial

crisis unleashed in the wake of the sub-prime crisis in 2008. This shareholding structure where capital is individualised – whilst at other times having been a source of vulnerability – in this instance proves a strength because it is not impacted by speculative bubbles and their bursting. Sensing the impending crisis, Largo set up in-house training centres to enable employees to retrain. What's more, to manage the

fallout of the resulting economic crisis, he asked his group's top management to lower its wages and he stopped personally receiving any dividends for two years.

*\*The two-part album Le Prix de l'Argent / La Loi du Dollar gives an apt illustration of the theme of offshoring, bubbles and financial crises.*

## ECONOMIC "INSIGHTS"

Detailed factsheets on the themes "Reshoring, financialisation and globalisation" and "The sub-prime crisis" are available to visitors.

## THE NEW GLOBAL BALANCES

As the world changes, so too do its masters. The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the United States replace Europe and reign, almost unchallenged, over the rest of the world. But new powers are beginning to emerge at the same time as unprecedented rivalries, and US supremacy seems to be on the wane. For the W Group, the key is to try to come to terms with these masters of the emerging world.

On the death of Mao Zedong (1976), the new Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, negotiated the reunification of Hong Kong and Macao with China. He contested Taiwan's independence, repressed national and ethnic minorities such as those in Tibet and asserted the pre-eminence of his country over the southern seas. His leadership was marked by economic reforms which saw China join the global economy and by the partial lifting of social restrictions.

A few decades later, the world witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall and the disappearance of the USSR, while new powers emerged on the world chessboard, including India, Brazil and Turkey. Russia, meanwhile, has gone to great lengths to reassert itself as a global heavyweight. This all poses an undeniable challenge to the W Group, which must get to grips with this new world order.



*\*The two-part album Les 3 yeux du gardien du Tao / La Voie et la vertu touches on China's power, while Mer noire / Colère rouge broaches the power struggles with the emerging economies*

## ECONOMIC "INSIGHTS"

This sub-section of the exhibition presents explanations on "China's arrival on the global economic scene" and "The emerging economies".



## TOWARDS AN ETHICAL FORM OF CAPITALISM?

"Largo is a complex individual who is not leading the life he wants," says Philippe Francq. "Sure, he's a capitalist. But he's also a sort of idealist. He follows the rules and his moral code, in the style of a billionaire who has realised the state the planet is in." That moral code, Largo will apply it to himself: like a tightrope walker – at once a participant in a global economic forum and mindful of alternative globalism claims – he is aware that, despite his wealth, he has little control over economic forces which henceforth escape him. But he tries desperately to fight constructively against them. Little changes are made within the W Group: when Largo Winch decides to drop his anstalt (his holding in Liechtenstein) to bring it back onto taxable territory again, he shakes off his image as a tax evader and gradually distances himself from the legacy his father left him, to bring it into line with his own values, after 30 years and 22 albums.

But with Largo Winch, there's always another adventure lurking behind every street corner! Especially in London, Europe's financial marketplace where radical preachers praising the 11 September 2001 attacks and veterans of Afghanistan lived. A situation illustrating the escalation of Islamist rhetoric against a capitalism blamed as the root of all evils, for which Largo obviously ends up being the ideal target. Here, jihadism is intent on breaking up the W Group and buying up its assets on the cheap – incidentally indicating the sudden emergence of religion on the economic and financial scene.

Another example of ethical-related problems is the new finance tool of our day: "high-frequency trading" (HFT). The Largo Group already practises it in its "banking" division. HFT is grounded in powerful algorithms making it possible to run a multitude of buying and selling transactions in just a few milliseconds. This is what sparked these famous "flash crashes" when, in a stealthy split second, a crash of huge magnitude is offset just as quickly, without any real understanding of why it took place. This is a far cry from the human fat finger error when the wrong key is pressed, leading to an order of "billions" instead of "millions", or from frenzied traders placing orders behind their supervisors' backs. This aspect of finance which now escapes human perception is becoming ever more complex.

*\*The escalating tensions between North and South are vividly scripted in the two-part album Chassé-Croisé / 20 secondes, while the theme of robots replacing traders is central to the most recent two-part album released, L'Étoile du matin / Les Voiles écarlates*



## IN THE EXHIBITION

In the middle of this room, visitors will find a holographic elevation of the Winch Tower Mansion (adapted, modelled and animated by Gaëtan Francq), the W Group's new headquarters in Chicago, from the album Colère rouge which came out in 2012. As early as 2010, Philippe Francq felt the need to modernise the W Group's environment, not least its American headquarters, which was very "1990s". To do that, he took his cue from and gave his own interpretation to an architectural project by prominent French architect Hervé Tordjman: the Guangzhou Twin Towers which twist like a DNA structure. It turns out Tordjman was a fan of Largo

Winch and the two designers swiftly got in touch. From 2012, Hervé Tordjman became Largo Winch's "official" architect. His collaboration continues in further albums, particularly the Signal Tower project in Puteaux, which would feature in the two-part album Chassé-Croisé / Vingt Secondes. The W Group occupies the top seven floors, with the others reserved for the Group's hospitality division.



With the support of Oversea Production - Hyperhol

## ECONOMIC "INSIGHTS"

Factsheets on "Terrorism financing" and "High-Frequency Trading" will conclude this final section of the exhibition

# In connection with the exhibition

## EVENTS PROGRAMME

- **EVENING EVENTS "BD & Éco"** to discover the creative universe of comic book authors and illustrators, or how to link the words of economics and artistic design, presented by Laëtitia Gayet, a journalist with France Inter and specialist features writer on comics

- **5 NOVEMBER: Largo Winch, a highly colourful comic book hero.**

Encounter with Philippe Francq & Éric Giacometti, the "economic pathfinder's" "parents" as it were

- **3 DECEMBER: Destiny of an Ardèche-based carpenter's workshop.**

Conversation with Aurel, author of the comic book *La Menuiserie : chronique d'une fermeture annoncée* with the press illustrator and author (published by Futuropolis)

- **7 JANUARY Investigation on Black Gold.**

Discussion between Fred Blanchard, illustrator, and Jean-Pierre Pécau, scriptwriter of *La Malédiction du pétrole* (published by Delcourt)

- **4 FEBRUARY: The titans of economics in comic book form.**

Encounter with Benoist Simmat, author of *La Ligue des économistes extraordinaires* (published by Dargaud)

- **SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER: SCREENING OF THE DOCUMENTARY LARGO BY LAURENT SÉGAL.**

A documented and artistic approach to the process of producing a comic book from the idea to the form it takes. Meet the director in person for a social get-together.

- **THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER: Evening 2049 "Finance & Currency" in partnership with l'Obs.**

An exploration of our day-to-day lives in 30 years' time: in 2049, how will we make payments?

Will cash have disappeared?

Will cryptocurrencies have won the day? Will currency be private?

Where will biometrics come in?

Answers from economists, entrepreneurs, philosophers, politicians and other specialists.

## TOURS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

### GUIDED TOUR "LARGO WINCH, ECONOMIC PATHFINDER"

This tour whisks you away into the world of finance in the company of the famous comic book hero: Largo Winch, billionaire playboy. What better opportunity to get to grips with the workings of capitalism, the financial markets and stock markets – during a blockbuster exhibition not to be missed!

Guided tour for families, recommended for 8 years and over, available throughout the exhibition

**PRICE:** +€2 in addition to the admission fee; Cité + Pass: included in the subscription price

**LASTS:** 1h

### "DRAW YOUR OWN COMIC!" WORKSHOP

Create your own cartoon board by drawing inspiration from the famous adventures of Largo Winch, the hero of the financial markets! From writing your plot to the drawings, not forgetting the colouring stage, put yourself in the shoes of a comic book author, invent your own character, think up an adventure and make your own fiction!

Workshop available during October half-term and the Christmas holidays, for 9-14 year olds (without parents being present) or for families from 9 years and over at the weekend.

**Full price:** €10; 6-14 year olds: €8; Cité + Pass: €5

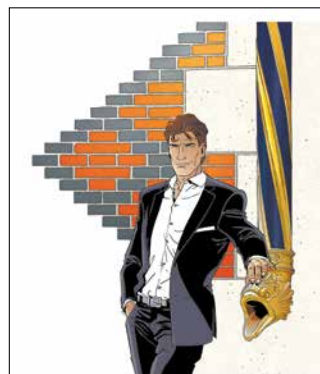
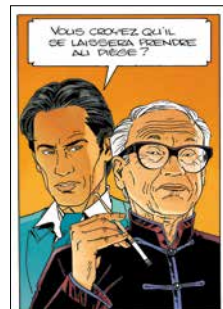
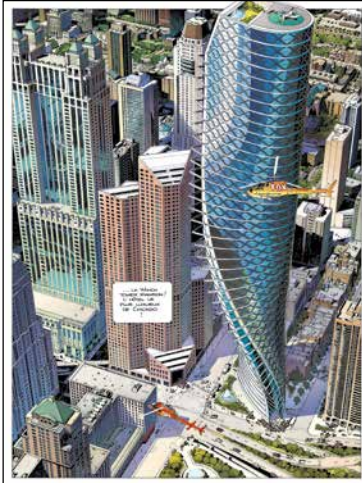
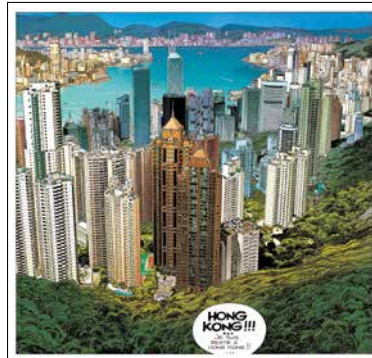
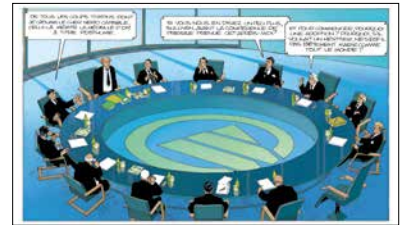
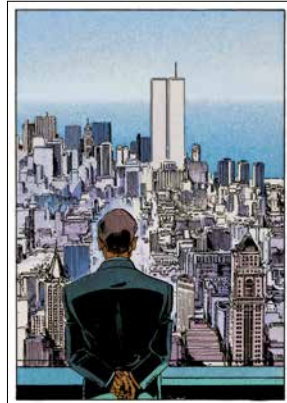
## LARGO AT A GLANCE...

**He owns 22 properties and travels 146,000 kilometres a year totting up 97 hours' worth of air time every month. He survives 0.3 assassination attempts a week. His albums are packed with 1,012 illustrations which represent 175,000 hours of drawing time and used up 223 pencils. His adventures (22 albums) have been translated into 20 languages and have sold more than 11 million copies in French; the series has been adapted to the big screen in 2 instalments, raking in more than 3 million cinema admissions.**



# Visuals available for the press

The character Largo Winch was dreamt up by Jean Van Hamme in 1973. The comic book series was created by Jean Van Hamme and Philippe Francq in 1989. Van Hamme - Francq - Giacometti © Dupuis



## GÉNÉRIQUE DE L'EXPOSITION

### Production :

Citéco – Cité de l'économie

### Commissariat :

Didier Pasamonik

### Fiches économie :

Olivier Bossard

### Muséographie :

Marie-Edith Agostini  
et Xavier Limagne

### Scénographie et éclairage :

Olivia Berthon et Vyara Stefanova  
(studio Vaste)

### Graphisme :

Cécilia Génard et Alma Gromard

### Audiovisuels :

Line Scheibling et Georges Aliferis

### Design sonore :

Bertrand Gauguet

## PRESS CONTACTS

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## USEFUL INFORMATION

### CITÉCO

As Europe's first ever interactive museum to be dedicated to economics, the Cité de l'Économie (Citéco) opened in June 2019. Inside the Hôtel Gaillard mansion, a masterpiece of Renaissance Revival architecture listed as a Historical Monument and a former branch of the Banque de France, Citéco hosts a permanent exhibition over 2,400 sq.m., providing visitors with "edutaining" access to the concepts, mechanisms and key issues shaping economics.

Within its temporary exhibition space, the Cité de l'Économie has held exhibitions on a wide variety of themes, including "Born somewhere: the exhibition where you're the hero" and "Malala Andrialavidrazana: Figures". Once a month, Citéco's Evening Events offer fascinating cycles from 19.00 to 22.00 with roundtable discussions, concerts, encounters, guided tours, pop-up bars and an exciting programme addressing such topical issues as women's entrepreneurship, video games, the domestic economy or the filmmaking economy. Citéco also harbours an auditorium where the great economic thinkers come, as well as a refreshments area and gift shop.

Open Tuesday to Sunday. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., until 7 p.m. on Saturday.

La Cité de l'Économie  
1, place du Général-Catroux - 75017 Paris  
citeco.fr

To welcome visitors in complete safety, visits will take place under certain conditions:

- Tickets can only be bought online from 11.00 to 18.00.
- Visitors must wear a mask and hand sanitiser will be available for them to use.
- Stylus pens will be provided so that the touch screens do not need to be touched, and the visitor trail has been redesigned as a one-way route to ensure visitors can keep a safe distance apart.

You can find out more (opening times, tickets, etc.) at [citeco.fr](http://citeco.fr)