



Normandie Impressionniste brings the first-ever Impressionism festival to Normandy from June-September 2010

Initiated by the greater Rouen Area Authority under President Laurent Fabius, Normandie Impressionniste will be a cultural, touristic and educational celebration across the regions of Upper and Lower Normandy.

Headed up by festival president Pierre Bergé, as well as Jérôme Clément, president of the festival's consultative body, and guest curator Jacques-Sylvain Klein, for several months Normandie Impressionniste has been working flat-out on preparations for the event.

The festival will be the first of its kind and will take place from June to September 2010. Numerous cultural and economic institutions, as well as individuals, from both regions will work together to develop a unique, ambitious and accessible programme of events. This programme will be designed to appeal to residents, summer visitors, fans and art amateurs alike, whether they come from France or elsewhere around the world.

Normandy – cradle of Impressionism

Impressionism and Normandy are terms naturally associated with one another, not least because the region actively participated in the birth and development of this artistic movement over the course of the 19th century. Honouring the growth in the Norman countryside of this major school of painting, the Normandie Impressionniste festival will weave together a rich fabric of artistic, voluntary, educational and institutional threads across Normandy.

The enormous worldwide popularity of the Impressionist movement can be seen by the success of all large exhibitions on the theme. What is more, several countries, many of whose painters came to Normandy, played a significant role in the Norman foundations of Impressionism. These include England, whose landscape painters such as Turner, Constable and Bonington influenced the Romantic as well as the Impressionist painters, and the United States, who were the first to become enthusiastic about Impressionism and to form collections of exceptional quality, and whose artists such as Whistler worked in Normandy alongside the French Impressionists.

Normandy – a united region

With events taking place simultaneously across the regions of Upper and Lower Normandy, Normandie Impressionniste also marks a first in France as two regions collaborate on one project on an unprecedented scale.

By spreading the events across the two regions, Normandie Impressionniste will both bring the whole of Normandy together, as well as serving to highlight the penchant the painters had for wandering around the countryside in search of motifs to depict. Certain exhibitions will also be sent to other countries, thus acting as “ambassadors” for Normandy.

A blossoming of events

From painting and contemporary art through to cinema, theatre, dance, photography and literature, as well as light shows, firework displays, Seine River cruises, Impressionist trails and even *déjeuner sur l'herbe* picnics, the *Normandie Impressionniste* Festival will boast a hugely varied programme. The festival will be open to everyone and to all forms of expression, whether they are directly linked to Impressionism and its time, or whether they continue the ideals of the avant-garde.

Heading up the Festival will be the exhibition, *A City for Impressionism*. The Rouen Fine Arts Museum will present a number of outstanding works of art by painters such as Monet, Pissarro and Gauguin from public and private collections all over the world. Many are masterpieces which have never been shown in France.

Other art institutions in the region will host exhibitions including *Jongkind and Boudin* at the Eugène Boudin Museum in Honfleur, *Millet* at the Thomas-Henry Art Museum in Cherbourg-Octeville, *Renoir and Pissarro* at the Castle Museum in Dieppe, *Corot* at the Fine Arts Museum in Saint-Lô, *Impressionist Prints* at the Fine Arts Museum in Caen, and *The Seine* at the new Impressionism Museum in Giverny.

Meanwhile, other highlights of the festival will include concerts showcasing works by composers such as Debussy, Ravel and Satie; a dual exhibition of the photographer Maxence Rifflet at both the *Point du Jour* art centre in Cherbourg and the *Pôle Image* in Rouen; installations at Jumièges Abbey and video art at the Seine-Maritime *Hôtel du Département*.

A host of other outdoor activities will add to the festivities and the popularity of this fantastic event.

To receive your copy of the full 120-page press pack and programme of events for the *Normandie Impressionniste* festival contact Anne Samson Communications (+33 (0)1 40 36 84 33 or contact@annesamson.com)

For general information on Normandy, contact our UK-based Normandy Press Officer, Sarah Whitham (+44 (0)207 061 6616 or sarah.whitham@franceguide.com)

