



## A Festival of Impressionism

Paintings and places in Paris and Normandy

26–31 May 2024 (MK 301)

6 days • £2,740

Lecturer: Professor Frances Fowle

The finest collections of Impressionism in France and places associated with the artists.

Coincides with an Impressionist festival in Normandy, celebrating the 150th anniversary of Impressionism with special exhibitions across the region.

See also the Musée d'Orsay's major exhibition *Paris 1874: Inventing Impressionism*, which commemorates the Impressionism anniversary.

Visit Monet's house and garden in Giverny and see some of his most renowned paintings, including *Impression: Sunrise* and the *Water Lilies* series, and the sites and landscapes that inspired them.

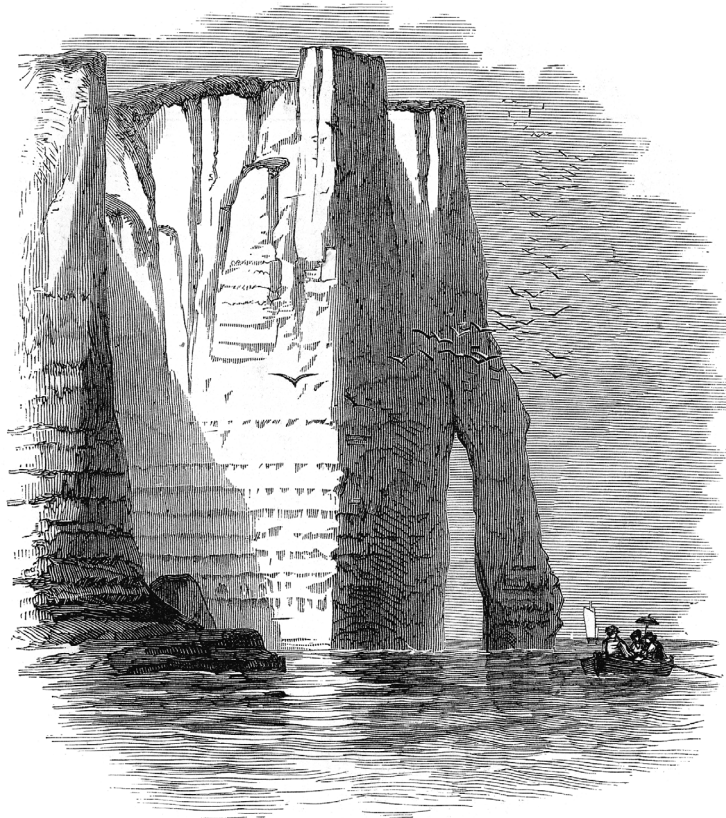
Travel in comfort by Eurostar from London, and good hotels in Paris and Rouen.

Far more Impressionist pictures can be seen in the region covered by this tour than in any other territory of comparable size. This should be no surprise, as this is the region where Impressionism was born and where it was most practised, and the tour visits some of the key sites in that development. Attention is also paid to the precursors – pre-Impressionists such as Eugène Boudin and Jongkind – and to some Post-Impressionist successors.

As it was for mainstream artists, so it was for rebels and innovators: throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, Paris was the centre of the art world. All the French Impressionists spent time here, many lived here for most of their lives.

Yet the essence of their art – the recording of the world about them as it presented itself in its immediate, transitory aspect – required them to spend time in the countryside. And the countryside they frequented most was in the north and north-west of Paris, the broad valley of the meandering Seine and of its tributaries the Oise and the Epte, and on to the coast with its vast skies and dramatic limestone cliffs.

This can be illustrated by the case of Claude Monet, the major exponent of Impressionism. He was born in Paris in 1840 and was brought up in Le Havre on the Normandy coast, where he was encouraged by Boudin to paint out of doors. Returning to Paris in 1859, he encountered the artists who would form the Impressionist group. From 1871 he made his



Étretat, wood engraving c. 1880

home in the suburbs, often working from his studio boat and progressing downstream from Argenteuil to Vétheuil and Poissy, before settling in Giverny in 1883.

Monet made frequent trips to the Normandy coast, where Impressionism was developing in tandem with tourism and the new fashion for sea bathing. Water, fresh or salt, was an important ingredient of Impressionist pictures, its fleeting, changing, evanescent qualities similar to the transient effects of light they sought to capture on canvas. The Impressionist emphasis on the importance of painting *en plein air* makes a tour that includes sites where painters set up their easels particularly rewarding.

The Impressionists were also masters of figure painting and invigorated the genre of portraiture in their depictions of family, friends, and the wider Parisian circle. While Degas recorded the women of the city

– dancers, milliners and washerwomen – Pissarro preferred to focus on rural workers. Influenced by photography and Japanese art, these artists recorded the society of their time: from critics and political figures to singers at the café concert, capturing a snapshot of life in France at the end of the nineteenth century.

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Paris.** Leave London St Pancras at c. 10.30am by Eurostar. In Paris visit the Musée Marmottan which, through a donation by Monet's son, has one of the world's largest collections of Impressionists including *Impression: Sunrise*. Continue to Rouen in Normandy where four nights are spent.

**Day 2: Rouen, Étretat.** Spend the morning in Rouen at the Musée des Beaux Arts. Impressionist works are in the François Depeaux gallery, named after the local donor.

A Festival of Impressionism  
continued

Exhibition: *James Abbott McNeill Whistler, the Butterfly Effect*. Either spend a free afternoon in Rouen, architecturally and scenically one of France's finest cities, or join an excursion to Étretat, a little seaside town flanked by dramatic chalk promontories scooped into arches by wind and sea, painted by Monet and many others.

**Day 3: Giverny.** The morning is devoted to the premier site in the history of Impressionism, Monet's house and garden at Giverny where he lived from 1883 until his death in 1926, designing and tending the gardens which grew in size as his prosperity increased. Also at Giverny is the Musée des Impressionnismes, hosting the exhibition *Impressionism and the Sea*, including works by Monet, Degas, Manet, Caillebotte and Jongkind. Return mid-afternoon for some free time in Rouen, perhaps to study the cathedral, the subject of over 30 of Monet's paintings.

**Day 4: Honfleur, Le Havre.** Honfleur is an utterly delightful fishing village at the mouth of the Seine, now crammed with art galleries and antique shops. In the museum are many works by Eugène Boudin, a major influence on the Impressionists. Cross the Seine estuary to Le Havre. After a recent donation and refurbishment, the Musée André Malraux has become the second largest collection of Impressionists in France and for the 2024 festival will host the exhibition *Photography in Normandy (1840–1890)*, celebrating Normandy's role in early photography and the influences between painters and photographers.

**Day 5: Auvers, Paris.** Auvers-sur-Oise was a popular artists' colony, frequented by Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. See sites associated with Van Gogh, who spent the last few weeks of his life here, and the studio of Daubigny. Return to Paris for a visit of the Orangerie, where an excellent collection of Impressionists, Monet's famous water-lilies and 20th-century paintings are housed. Overnight Paris.

**Day 6: Paris.** Entire day dedicated to the Musée d'Orsay. See here the permanent collections; not only the world's finest collection of Impressionism but also masterpieces by important precursors such as Courbet and Millet. Visit also the major exhibition *Paris 1874: Inventing Impressionism*, which celebrates the 150th anniversary of the first Impressionist exhibition in Paris and features a selection of works that were displayed in the 1874 show.

Return to London by Eurostar, arriving St Pancras at c. 6.30pm.

## Lecturer

**Professor Francis Fowle.** Senior Curator of French Art at the Scottish National Gallery and Reader in History of Art at the University of Edinburgh. She is also a Trustee of the Burrell Collection and has curated several major exhibitions at the National Gallery of Scotland, including *Impressionism & Scotland, Van Gogh & Britain* and in 2014 *American Impressionism*. Her publications include *Monet & French Landscape: Vetheuil & Normandy, Impressionism, Urbanism Environment, Van Gogh's Twin: The Scottish Art Dealer Alexander Reid* and *Symbolist Landscape in Europe 1880–1910*.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £2,740 or £2,510 without Eurostar. **Single occupancy:** £3,170 or £2,940 without Eurostar.

**Included:** Eurostar (Standard premier); coach travel; hotel accommodation; breakfasts, 1 lunch and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; all admissions; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Mercure Rouen Centre Cathédrale** (accorhotels.com): modern, functional 4-star hotel in the historic centre. **Hotel Édouard 7, Paris** (hoteledouard7-paris.com): comfortable 4-star hotel, a short drive from the museums. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

**How strenuous?** There is a fair amount of walking as well as standing in the art galleries. You need to be able to lift your luggage on and off the train and wheel it at stations. Average distance by coach per day: 82 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.