

NORTH CAROLINA

Museum of Art

STORY IDEAS

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Monet in Normandy

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A Once-in-a-Lifetime Experience

During *Monet in Normandy*, North Carolinians and visitors to Raleigh will have the once-in-a-lifetime experience to view 50 paintings by Claude Monet, including some of his most celebrated works. This is the first exhibition to focus exclusively on Monet's paintings of Normandy, and the exhibited paintings have never been seen together, and likely will never be exhibited together again. The works come from museums and private collections across the United States and throughout the world, and many rarely travel.

The North Carolina Museum of Art has the distinction of being the only East Coast venue for this blockbuster exhibition. The NCMA will provide visitors an unparalleled opportunity to experience some of the most popular paintings in the world.

What does an exhibition of this magnitude mean for the broader cultural life of Raleigh and the Southeast? How is an exhibition like *Monet in Normandy* organized? What educational and cultural opportunities does such an exhibition provide to visitors and the community?

Normandy as Inspiration

Monet in Normandy represents the first in-depth look at Monet's paintings of the famed coastal region of France. While the allure of Normandy's beaches made it one of the first tourist destinations in France, this exhibition presents a comprehensive look at the entire region where Monet spent most of his life. The various images of Normandy—the countryside, the city of Rouen, Giverny, and the coast—are the thematic focus of the show. These paintings incite viewers to consider Monet's foremost artistic inspirations: landscape and light.

Why did Monet paint so many pictures of Normandy? Why was this region so inspirational to the artist? How did Monet portray the region, and what was it like in reality? How and why did Monet choose the subjects of his paintings, and how did he treat those subjects in his work?

(more)

A Revolution in Paint

In conjunction with *Monet in Normandy*, the Museum will present a focus exhibition called *Revolution in Paint*. This small show will examine the paint and painting techniques of Monet and the French impressionists.

The invention of the paint tube (c. 1840) was integral to the impressionists' ability to paint outdoors and allowed for easy portability and handling of paint wherever they set up their easels. For the first time, paintings could be created outside the studio, whether on the Normandy coast at Étretat or in the gardens of Giverny. Additionally, the Industrial Revolution, starting in the mid-18th-century, brought an unprecedented explosion in the number of new pigments available to the painter. Monet and the other impressionists used these newly created pigments for their inherent chromatic and physical properties, but they also chose them in reaction against the strictures of academic painting.

How did the changes in paint technology, or the “revolution in paint” affect painters like Monet? How did such advances impact the style and properties of the works created?

Monet's Influence on the Modern

Monet's work influenced the development of modern art. He and his contemporaries experimented with techniques and conventions, striving to capture the “impression” of a scene in a single moment in time by emphasizing not the subject itself but how the eye views a subject. Impressionism's use of unmixed colors and loose strokes paved the way for postimpressionism and the modern art movement and influenced artists such as Paul Gauguin and Vincent Van Gogh.

How did the impressionist movement affect the course of modern art? How did the Industrial Revolution, science and photography influence impressionism and the emergence of subsequent art movements?

A French Experience

To celebrate *Monet in Normandy*, the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitor's Bureau is partnering with the Museum to unveil Monet-themed visitor packages to Raleigh, N.C. Area restaurants, hotels, wine bars and other attractions will complement the blockbuster exhibition with French-themed festivities throughout town.

What does an exhibition of this stature mean for Raleigh and the Museum? How do such partnerships benefit participating organizations and the communities they serve?

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