ROUEN, FRANCE

# Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen: Masterpieces

Twenty paintings from Rouen's fine arts museum, from Monet's cathedral and Pissarro's Pont Boieldieu to portraits, myths, history pictures and religious scenes by French and other European artists.



The Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen holds one of the notable public collections of painting outside Paris. It spans several centuries of French and other European art and includes important works by artists associated with Normandy. Monet painted Rouen Cathedral repeatedly, but the city's artistic history goes well beyond that famous series.

Of the twenty paintings chosen here, two take Rouen itself as their subject: Monet's cathedral and Pissarro's Pont Boieldieu at sunset. Around them are Sisley's landscapes, portraits by Ingres, Sargent and Blanche, history paintings by Delaroche and Delacroix, myths by Fontana, Boucher and Moreau, religious scenes by Le Brun and Van Loo, Judith Leyster's card players, a village funeral by August Hagborg and a crowded church ceremony by Herman van der Mast. Some are easy to walk past on a first visit. Géricault's study of a seated model seen from behind is one of them.

The selection is independent of the museum and drawn from its documented holdings. Dates and attributions keep the qualifications given in the linked records.

## Explore this selection in Artline

See the selected works alongside books and events from their period, or compare when the artists lived. The books and events provide context, not evidence of direct influence. Works without confirmed dates remain in this guide.

Artworks in context  Who lived when?

artlines.org/guides/beaux-arts-rouen

# The selection · 20

1. Hill Path in Sunlight
   Alfred Sisley · 1891
2. Male Academy Study, Seated and Seen from Behind
   Théodore Géricault · 1816
3. Portrait of Jacques-Émile Blanche
   John Singer Sargent · c. 1886
4. Madame Aymon, Known as La Belle Zélie
   Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres · 1806
5. Venus and Cupid
   Lavinia Fontana · 1592
6. Portrait of a Carabinier
   Théodore Géricault · 1814
7. Burial of a Sailor in a Village in La Manche
   August Hagborg · 1911
8. Diomedes Devoured by His Horses
   Gustave Moreau · 1865
9. Joan of Arc III and Questioned in Prison
   Paul Delaroche · 1824
10. Rouen Cathedral: The Portal and Albane Tower, Grey Weather
    Claude Monet · 1894
11. The Justice of Trajan
    Eugène Delacroix · 1840
12. The Virgin and Blessing Child
    Charles-André van Loo · 1738
13. Lady's Cove, Wales
    Alfred Sisley · 1897
14. The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche
    François Boucher · 1744
15. Pont Boieldieu, Rouen: Sunset, Misty Weather
    Camille Pissarro · 1896
16. The Church at Moret in Full Sunlight
    Alfred Sisley · 1893
17. A Game of Cards
    Judith Leyster · 1633
18. Solemn Mass in Honour of Henry III
    Herman van der Mast · 1575–1604
19. Portrait of Paul Valéry
    Jacques-Emile Blanche · 1923
20. Saint Genevieve before Paris
    Charles Le Brun · c. 1638

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# Hill Path in Sunlight

Alfred Sisley

1891 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Alfred Sisley. Hill Path in Sunlight. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/alfred-sisley/hill-path-in-sunlight-1891 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

Nothing dramatic happens. A path climbs through warm, sunlit ground towards the trees, and a few walkers appear along it at different points. They work less as characters than as a scale: their shrinking size measures out the depth of the open hillside.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Male Academy Study, Seated and Seen from Behind

Théodore Géricault

1816 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Male 'académie' Seated and Seen from Behind. WikiArt; Théodore Géricault. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

An academy, in this sense, is a study made from the nude model. Géricault's model sits with his back turned, so there is no face to read and the back has to carry the pose. Light picks out the join between back and raised arm. Lower down, the compressed legs take the weight of the seated body.

Object source · Open artwork

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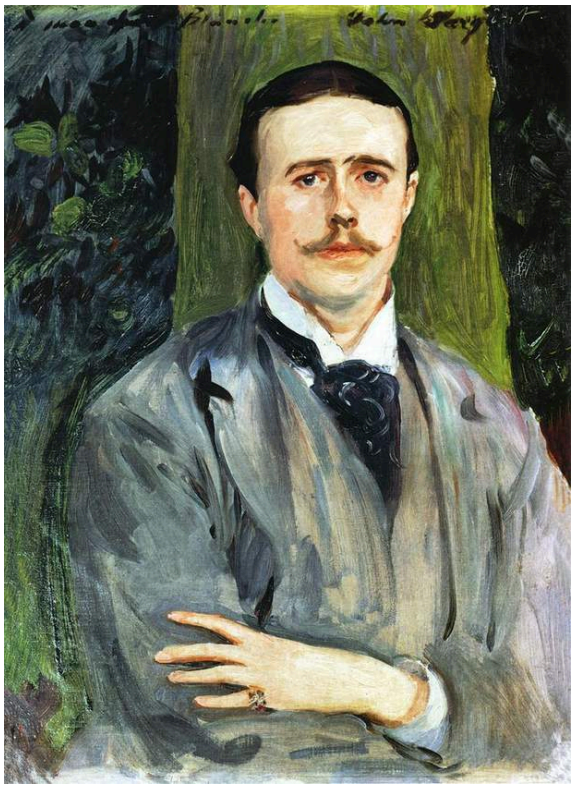
# Portrait of Jacques-Émile Blanche

John Singer Sargent

c. 1886 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



John Singer Sargent. Portrait of Jacques-Emile Blanche. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/john-singer-sargent/portrait-of-jacques-emile-blanche · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

The grey coat is one broad shape, and the hand crossing the chest breaks into it and loosens its stiffness. Beyond that, a pale shirt and a green background divide the canvas into a few clear areas, and nothing else clutters the setting. Sargent saves his sharpest painting for the face and handles the clothes broadly.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Madame Aymon, Known as La Belle Zélie

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres

1806 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres. Portrait of Madame Aymon, La belle Zélie. WikiArt source label: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. Source: https://www.wikiart.org/en/jean-auguste-dominique-ingres/portrait-of-madame-aymon-la-belle-z%C3%A9lie-1806 · Public domain (WikiArt source label)

The title gives the sitter a formal name and a nickname: Madame Aymon, known as La Belle Zélie. The portrait is an oval, and its edge repeats the curves inside it, in the curls, the shawl and the turn of the face. Ingres gives each of these shapes a firm outline, which makes the design of the likeness emphatic. It could hardly be further from the broad handling Sargent gives Blanche's coat.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Venus and Cupid

Lavinia Fontana

1592 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Lavinia Fontana. Venus and Cupid. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

Cupid leans in towards Venus's cheek, bringing the mythological pair unusually close. Fontana picks out the pearls, veil and embroidered fabric with the kind of attention a portrait would receive. The picture may in fact be closer to portraiture than its subject suggests: tradition names a particular model for it, although the identification is not certain.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Portrait of a Carabinier

Théodore Géricault

1814 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Portrait of a Carabinier. WikiArt; Théodore Géricault. Proportional resizing and JPEG compression; source frame preserved. · Public domain

The title gives a rank, not a name. Géricault sets the polished breastplate, a hard surface across the torso, against the flesh of the face and hand, and the large hat takes up much of the space beside the soldier. The equipment is conspicuous throughout, yet it never entirely encloses the man wearing it. Géricault's academy study is the reverse case: a model with no uniform and no rank, and his face turned away.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Burial of a Sailor in a Village in La Manche

August Hagborg

1911 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



August Hagborg. Burial of a Sailor in a Manche Village. Image credit: August Hagborg; Source credit: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

Hagborg spreads the funeral along a road instead of gathering the mourners into one tight group. Villagers walk at different distances among the village's ordinary buildings, and the effect is closer to an event passing through a place than to a staged scene of grief.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 1911.6

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# Diomedes Devoured by His Horses

Gustave Moreau

1865 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Gustave Moreau. DIOMEDE DEVORE PAR SES CHEVAUX. WikiArt: Public domain. Proportional resize and JPEG compression; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt per-object label)

An enormous ruin looms over the horses and small figures beneath it and almost outweighs them. The violence of the myth is hard to make out at first. You have to find it among the vast architecture and its dark openings, which slow down any quick reading of the scene. For once, the title is blunter than the painting.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 931.16.1

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# Joan of Arc Ill and Questioned in Prison

Paul Delaroche

1824 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Paul Delaroche; WikiArt · Public domain

This meeting never happened. The museum notes that Winchester never visited Joan in prison, so what Delaroche paints is an imagined interrogation, and he makes it work through colour and space. The cardinal's red robes fill the cell with their weight, while the ill Joan is hemmed into what room is left.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 982.6.1

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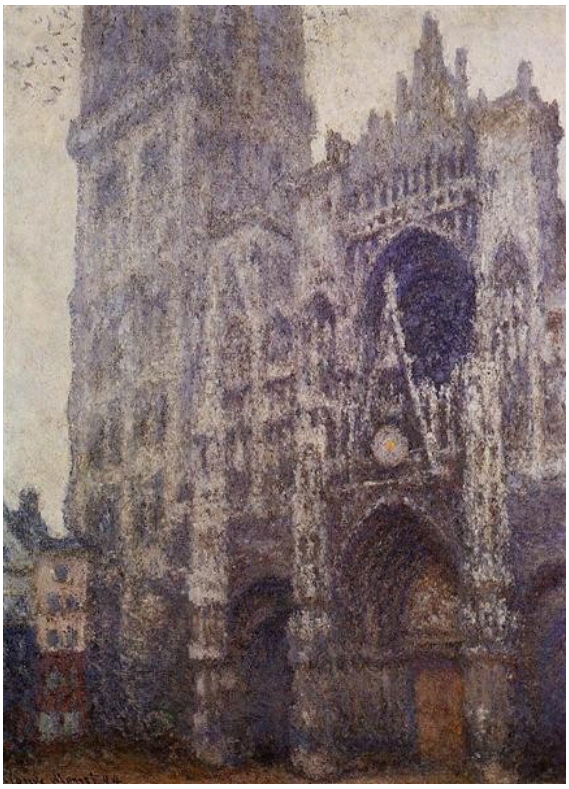
# Rouen Cathedral: The Portal and Albane Tower, Grey Weather

Claude Monet

1894 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Claude Monet; WikiArt · Public domain

Monet crops so closely that almost none of the surrounding city appears, and the façade fills the canvas. Its stone is built up from grey and blue-violet marks that record the grey weather of the title.

The museum dates this canvas 1894, but notes that Monet worked on the cathedral series in 1892–1893 and dated the paintings later.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 909.32

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# The Justice of Trajan

Eugène Delacroix

1840 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Eugène Delacroix. La Justice de Trajan. Image credit: Eugène Delacroix; Source credit: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Proportional resize and JPEG compression; full source frame retained. · Public domain

After Delaroche's cell, a crowd. Delacroix fills the canvas with banners, figures and crossing gestures, and you need the emperor's bright horse to find Trajan at all. His justice is shown as a public encounter in motion. The people around him are part of the subject, since the judgement is given in front of them.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: D.844.1.1

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# The Virgin and Blessing Child

Charles-André van Loo

1738 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Шарль Андре Ван Лоо. La Vierge et l'enfant bénissant. Image credit: Charles André van Loo. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

The blessing is the point, and Van Loo makes sure it reads at once by setting the standing Child's raised hand clearly against the background. Yet the child making this ceremonial sign can only stand because Mary holds him up.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: SR 53

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# Lady's Cove, Wales

Alfred Sisley

1897 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Alfred Sisley. Lady’s Cove, Pays de Galles. Image credit: Alfred Sisley; Source credit: https://www.alfredsisley.org/the-complete-works.html?ps=96&pageno=9. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Proportional resize and JPEG compression; full source frame retained. · Public domain

This time surf, not walkers, measures the distance. Bands of breaking water, one beyond another, lead out towards the rocks and the headland. Sisley handles the coastline fairly firmly and the water in changing, broken marks, so the shore can still be followed as it recedes.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 909.1.48

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# The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche

François Boucher

1744 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



François Boucher. Le Mariage de l'Amour et Psyché. Image credit: François Boucher. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

Cupid again, now at his own wedding rather than leaning towards Venus's cheek, and Boucher's arrangement is about as far from Fontana's close pairing as it could be. The figures spread in an open curve across the clouds, with nothing earthly beneath them. Gaps are left between them, so the celestial company never closes into a solid crowd, and smaller winged figures and drapery carry the gathering further.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Pont Boieldieu, Rouen: Sunset, Misty Weather

Camille Pissarro

1896 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Camille Pissarro. Le Pont Boieldieu à Rouen, soleil couchant, temps brumeux. Image credit: Camille Pissarro; Source credit: http://mbarouen.fr/fr/oeuvres/le-pont-boieldieu-a-rouen-soleil-couchant-temps-brumeux. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Proportional resize and JPEG compression; full source frame retained. · Public domain

Monet crops the city away. Pissarro lets it in. The bridge runs as a clear diagonal through smoke and evening haze, and people and vehicles are small marks along it. Smoke and weather share the same air, and the river and buildings are seen through both. It is not easy to say where the mist of the title ends and the smoke begins. This is Rouen as a working city.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: D.2000.1.1

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# The Church at Moret in Full Sunlight

Alfred Sisley

1893 · Oil on canvas · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Alfred Sisley. L'Eglise de Moret (plein soleil). Image credit: Alfred Sisley; Source credit: The Yorck Project (2002) 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei (DVD-ROM), distributed by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH. ISBN : 3936122202 .. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Proportional resize and JPEG compression; full source frame retained. · Public domain

This is a second closely cropped church, and it pairs naturally with Monet's cathedral. Sisley paints the sunlit stone yellow and the shadows blue-violet, so the building divides into warm and cool areas. Monet uses blue-violet too, but for overcast light rather than shadow. The bigger difference is that Sisley keeps the street. Small awnings and figures set the church in its surroundings, while the close crop still gives its walls considerable scale.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 909.1.47

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# A Game of Cards

Judith Leyster

1633 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Judith Leyster. A Game of Cards. Image: WikiArt. Public domain (WikiArt label). Proportionally resized and JPEG compressed; no crop. · Public domain (WikiArt label)

The game is already under way, round a barrel that serves as a table. The woman in red turns from the players' circle towards the space beyond it, and another player holds cards where they can be seen. Both gestures take in someone outside the group, perhaps the viewer. Who is meant to see those cards? The picture does not settle it. Glances cross the barrel in several directions, and you are left to work out how the players relate to one another.

Object source · Open artwork

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# Solemn Mass in Honour of Henry III

Herman van der Mast

1575–1604 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen




Herman van der Mast. Messe solennelle en l'honneur d'Henri III. Image credit: David.Monniaux; Own work. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Messe_solennelle_en_pr%C3%A9sence_dHenri_III_IMG_7446.jpg. CC0 (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/). Full-frame resize and JPEG compression; applicable ShareAlike terms retained. · CC0

Many people take part in this ceremony, but they are not each treated as a separate portrait. Groups kneel or stand at different points in the church, and their dress and bearing mark out their roles. The architecture leads back to the mass further inside and gives the large assembly a common order.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: SR 89

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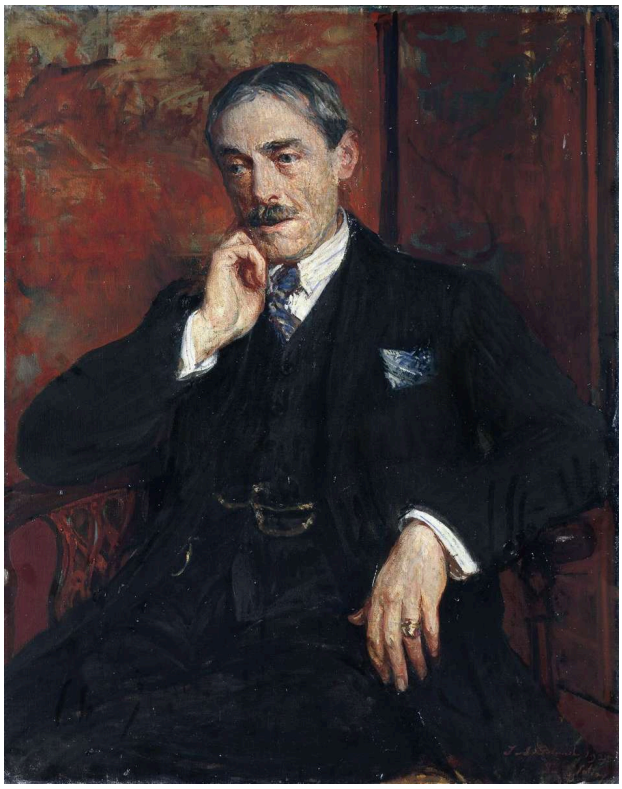
# Portrait of Paul Valéry

Jacques-Emile Blanche

1923 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Jacques-Émile Blanche. Portrait de Paul Valéry. Image credit: Jacques-Émile Blanche. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

Blanche, Sargent's sitter earlier in this selection, is the painter here. Valéry sits upright but rests his cheek against his hand. The hand props up his head and eases the formality of the pose, and the gesture may suggest thought. His pale face is set against a patterned red ground.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 1930.1.2

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# Saint Genevieve before Paris

Charles Le Brun

c. 1638 · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen



Charles Le Brun. Sainte Geneviève devant Paris. Image credit: Charles Le Brun. Wikimedia Commons. Public domain (https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/). Resized and JPEG-compressed; selected source frame preserved. · Public domain

The "before Paris" of the title can be taken literally: Genevieve reads beneath an angel, with the city visible in the distance. Light falls mainly on the figures in the foreground, so the scene looks like secluded devotion. The city behind them ties it to a world beyond.

Object source · Open artwork · Inventory: 975.4.45

# The cathedral and the bridge today

You can still visit the places Monet and Pissarro painted, and comparing them with the canvases shows how much each picture selects. No modern view will match the painter's position or weather, and the historical surroundings have changed.

# Further reading

## Impressionism: A Centenary Exhibition

Anne Dayez, Michel Hoog and Charles S. Moffett · Read online or download · English

This Metropolitan Museum publication combines catalogue entries with historical essays on Impressionism, including material on Monet, Pissarro and Sisley. It gives useful background for their paintings in this selection. The other artists here fall outside its subject.

Museum website · Official collection guide

Sources and visitor information checked: 2026-10-12

Artline · Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen: Masterpieces