

Exhibition Facts



Dates	June 9 to September 3, 2001
World Première	The Provincial Museum is the launch site and the only North American venue for this exhibition.
Curator	Monsieur Noël Coret, Curator and author from Gatién-Bonnet Museum, Lagny, France.
Number of Paintings	This exhibition showcases 207 original watercolour, gouache, oil and pastel paintings.
Exhibition Design	The design allows visitors to imagine that they are strolling through a Parisian boulevard alive with flowers and trees while admiring splendid works of art.
Exhibition Themes	The paintings by Edouard Cortès and his contemporaries are grouped into four themes: * Paris * Interiors * Landscapes * Creative Influences
Intriguing Highlights	* Of the original works on display, two are by a master of French Impressionism, Pierre-Auguste Renoir. * Two of the paintings on display by Edouard Cortès are from the Edmonton's McDougall Collection, which was donated to the Provincial Museum of Alberta in 1989.
Featured Artists	Nineteen artists accompany the Cortès collection in this exhibition: Albert André (1869 – 1954) Pierre Montézin (1974 – 1946) Antoine Blanchard (1919 – 1988) Fernand Pinal (1881 – 1958) Antonio Cortès (1827 – 1908) Paulemile Pissaro (1882 – 1974) Marcel Dyf (1899 – 1985) Denis-Henri Ponchon (n.d.) Jules Hervé (1887 – 1981) Auguste Renoir (1841 – 1919) Galien-Laloue (1854 – 1941) Pierre Sicard (1900 – 1980) Henri Lebasque (1854 – 1937) Constant Troyon (1810 – 1865) Albert Lebourg (1849 – 1828) Luigi Loir (1845 – 1916) Léon Lhermitte (1844 – 1925) Louis Valtat (1869 – 1952) Maximilien Luce (1858 – 1941)
Exhibition Destination	The Gatién-Bonnet Museum in Lagny, France will be the next venue to host the exhibition, <i>Edouard Cortès (1882 – 1969) Paris and the French Countryside Revealed</i> . Lagny is the birthplace of Cortès.
Definitions	Impressionism: The French Impressionist style of painting is characterized by the attempt to accurately and objectively record visual reality through the use of unmixed primary colours and small strokes to simulate actual reflected light. Impressionist painting was at its height between 1867 and 1886. It remains as one of the most popular artistic styles among collectors. Artists of this era include Monet, Degas, Renoir and Pissaro. Post-Impressionism: A French art movement, which describes the various styles of painting that flourished in France during the period of 1880 to about 1910. Post-Impressionist artists focused on expression, structure and form rather than on the fleeting effects of light. Artists most associated with Post-Impressionism are Van Gogh, Cézanne and Gauguin.

Images and Captions



Image # 36484
Title Village en hiver
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 13" x 18"



Image # 36521
Title Les Bouquinistes
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 15" x 21.5"



Image # 36522
Title Place du Tertre, Montmartre
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 13" x 18"



Image # 36523
Title Place de l'Opéra
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 13" x 18"



Image # 36531
Title Place Saint-Michel (Crépuscule)
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 9.5" x 13"



Image # 36536
Title Place Vendôme
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 18" x 22"



Image # 36630
Title Le Pont Neuf
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 13" x 18"



Image # 36865
Title Veillée betonne
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 20" x 26"



Image # 37390
Title Village au printemps
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 13" x 18"



Image # 40104
Title La Madeleine depuis la rue Royale
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 18" x 21.5"



Image # 40184
Title Repos au bord de l'eau
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 18.5" x 22"



Image # 40964
Title Fleurs et fruits devant la fenêtre
Medium Oil on canvas
Size 15" x 18"

Edouard Cortès

A life devoted to painting



Edouard Cortès was born at Lagny-sur-Marne, a little town located just twenty miles east of Paris on August 26, 1882.

Cortès was born into an exciting period in which art, literature, music, and political thought were reaching for new schools of expression. These vital conditions transformed France into the centre of the art world beckoning artists from across the world to study and paint its beautiful countryside and cities.

At the age of 13, Cortès learned the basic rules of landscape painting from his father who had been an accomplished painter for the Spanish Royal Court. Then at 17, Cortès began formal studies at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris where, for five years, he studied the genres of classical and impressionistic art.

Cortès had remarkable impressionistic flair. A splash of purple became a woman's cloak; a heavy stroke of blue became a man's tailored vest and suit. With strict precision in the use of his brush and oils, each movement of paint on canvas had enormous impact.

In some paintings his stonework almost seems to "weather" before our eyes, and in others it glistens like pearls against a summer sky. In evening compositions, his windows shine brightly, his lamps glow, signs shimmer and streets appear wet from a nocturnal rain.

Living in the heart of Paris, Cortès was surrounded by famous landmarks such as Notre Dame, the Opera, the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs-Élysées, the Eiffel Tower, and the Church of Sainte Madeleine (which was undoubtedly the artist's favourite). Inspired by these monuments, Cortès painted them from different points of view, at certain times of the day, and in varying seasons.

Edouard Cortès made his mark on the Canadian scene in 1928 when thirty paintings were sent to Eaton's for an exhibit touring Toronto, Winnipeg and Montreal. It made his work accessible to new markets.

With his friends, Pierre Montézin and Maurice Monnot, the Union des Beaux-Arts de Lagny was established and the Salon de Lagny-sur-Marne was relaunched. Cortès assumed presidency of eleven regional salons.

On November 26th 1969, at 87 years of age, Cortès died. The painter now lies in the Lagny-sur-Marne cemetery in the town where his father, Antonio Cortès, settled more than a century before.

First Exhibitions, First Successes



Cortès submitted his first painting in June 1899, at the Salon of French Artists. The painting *Le Charrette* on display in the exhibition reflects the artist's early sense of naturalism and colour. The dedication on the painting reads "To my friend Léo Gausson, his buddy Ed. H. Cortès."

The artistic and literary union of the Lagny district established regional exhibitions known as "Salon de Lagny", where artists could display their work. They took place in 1899, 1900, 1901, 1902 and 1904.

The star of the 1899 Lagny Salon had just triumphed in Paris during the latest Salon of French Artists. He was just 17. His name, Edouard Cortès. The painting that received praise from the press and fellow art exhibitors was entitled *Le Labour*. Cortès was equally applauded at the 1904 exhibition for the intimate teatime painting *Around the Lamp*, which is included in this exhibition.

The titles of the paintings exhibited at the Lagny Salon between 1899 and 1902 revealed themes that Edouard was passionate about: views of Paris, provincial landscapes, interior scenes and still lifes.

A walk through Paris "The City of Lights" Landmarks and Monuments



Cortès often used the great monuments and landmarks of Paris in the background of his paintings. Among the most important of these are:

- Church of Sainte Madeleine** Construction began under Louis XV and was completed under the Restoration.
- The Champs-Élysées** The world famous avenue lined with coffee shops and luxurious stores leads to the *Arc de Triomphe*.
- The Eiffel Tower** Built toward the end of the century to serve as a centerpiece for the Paris Exposition (World's Fair) in 1889. It is now the city's most famous symbol.
- Place de la Bastille** Built in 1370 as a fortress, then adapted as a prison by the 17th century; Voltaire and the Marquis de Sade were among its most famous inmates. The Bastille was demolished soon after the French Revolution of July 14, 1789.
- Notre Dame** One of Europe's masterpieces of Gothic architecture was begun in 1163 and dedicated to the Virgin Mary.
- Obelisk from Luxor** A gift from the Viceroy of Egypt in 1829. It took four years to ship the 230-ton, 23 metre monolith of pink syenite from Thebes to Paris, where it was installed in 1836. At 3,300 years old, the obelisk is Paris' oldest monument and the central feature of the *Place de la Concorde*. The obelisk was built under the order of Ramses II (13th Century BC) for the entrance to the Temple at Luxor in Egypt.
- Place de la Concorde** The largest public square in Paris dates from 1757. The site was used for public executions by guillotine during the Reign of Terror between 1793 and 1795. Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette, Danton, Robespierre and 2,800 others were executed here.
- Place Vendôme** Louis XIV planned the square in 1685. It is now a centre for luxury shops.
- The Louvre** A medieval fortress, the palace of the kings of France and a museum for the last two centuries. The architecture of the Louvre Palace bears witness to more than 800 years of history.
- The Arc de Triomphe** Napoleon Bonaparte commissioned the Arc in 1806 to pay tribute to French military victories, including his own. The Arc became the tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Armistice Day, 1920. It is known as the national war memorial of France.
- The Opéra** A temple of music and dance and an architectural masterpiece of grace and elegance. It was built between 1861 and 1875.

Then, there are the unmistakable Boulevards of la Madeleine, des Capucines, des Italiens and Montmartre timelessly captured by Cortès' brush strokes. Lined with trees, terraces, coffee houses and luxury stores, the boulevards are among the capital's most beautiful and liveliest thoroughfares.

Exhibition Themes



* Paris

The enchantment Cortès felt for Paris, the “City of Lights” is the inspiration for his paintings. He analysed the luminosity and atmospheric variations in all their shades from misty early morning to the flamboyance of night of the French capital.

Recurring elements stand out in his Parisian scenes: white and sometimes dark horses drawing a carriage or an omnibus, a soldier in his blue uniform, a kitchen boy or a butcher whose white overalls provide a providential source of light, a pedestrian reading his paper and, often in the foreground, you will find the artist’s daughter and wife.

As a final touch, the artist makes the intrusive architecture or the grayness of Paris vibrate with luminous patches manifested by the bright clothes of a passer-by the reflection of a car’s headlights, shop window lights, a bouquet of flowers or a trail of sunlight shimmering on the façades of buildings or the road.

Life is there, under his brush, in the shadow of the historical heritage whose monuments stand out as symbols.

* Landscapes

Cortès’ landscapes are regarded as the most innovative part of his work. The scenes of rural life, many of them painted at the early stage of his career, are definitely rooted in the naturalist genre inspired by the influences of his father, Antonio Cortès and Léon Lhermitte.

Cortès enjoyed the tranquility of rustic life and portrayed it with the sensitivity of a poet. There is a delight in silence and solitude that is often absent from the Parisian scenes.

* Interiors

However famous he was for his lively urban scenes, Cortès never gave up his representation of peaceful interiors where he proved faithful in the art of “painting with light”.

In the places he lived, Brittany, Normandy and Île de France, Cortès captured the intimacy and warmth of these interiors with family dinners under the lamp and grandmothers warming by the fire. Cortès works as a storyteller who conveys emotion through the realism of his technique.

* Creative Influences

By the turn of the century, the Lagny area had achieved a reputation and was attracting artists as residents. In truth, there was a true pictorial revolution-taking place throughout Paris and Cortès was not indifferent to it.

The influx of artists displayed a spectrum of talent and style. Some possessed extraordinary artistic skill that resonated throughout the world. Nineteen French painters accompany the Cortès collection in the exhibition because of their influence on his style and career. These artists captured the splendor of Paris and the French countryside from the mid 19th to early 20th Century.

The Painters of Paris at the dawn of the 20th Century



Nineteen artists accompany the Cortès collection in this exhibition. These artists captured the splendor of Paris and the French countryside from the mid 19th to early 20th Century.

Albert André
(1869-1954)

Influenced by Renoir, from whom he received advice, Albert André was a major figure in Post-Impressionism. His landscapes are distinctly Impressionist in style. He was a regular exhibitor at the Salons des Indépendants, d'Automne and des Tuileries in Paris. His paintings were exhibited in New York and Buenos Aires in 1924.

Antoine Blanchard
(1919-1988)

A Parisian street scene painter, Antoine Blanchard is considered to be among the followers of Cortès. He succeeded in asserting his own style, identified by whirling strokes used to illuminate the streets of Paris in a soft and milky light.

Antonio Cortès
(1827-1908)

Antonio Cortès was a native of Séville, and practiced as a Spanish court painter before moving to France for the World Fair of 1855. He settled with his family in Lagny-sur-Marne, France. A specialist in painting wildlife, with a particular focus on herds of cows modelled after the Barbizon style. He taught art to his children, André Cortès (1866-1898), Jeanne Froment (1874-1954), Edouard Cortès and Léo Gausson (1860-1944).

Marcel Dyf
(1899-1985)

Marcel Dyf was a skilled landscape painter and portraitist. As an admirer of the Impressionists, he modelled his skillful use of colour after Renoir and his subjects drawn from rustic life after Pissarro.

Jules Hervé
(1887-1981)

Hervés' supple illustrations reflect a style of tenderness and humour enveloped in the "Impressionists light" He received many distinctions at the Salon des Artistes Français where he was one of the star exhibitors.

Eugène Galien Laloue
(1854-1941)

A native to Paris, this painter was a prolific artist of Parisian life. He produced a considerable number of Paris street scenes, mostly in small scale using watercolour and gouache.

Henri Lebasque
(1854-1937)

Lebasque exhibited several times at the Salon de Lagny. His luminescent works show the influences of Renoir and Pissarro. Marked by Matisse and by the intensity of the Mediterranean light, his style evolved into being more synthetic and decorative, making him a celebrated representative of Post-Impressionism.

Albert Lebourg
(1849-1928)

Lebourg was a remarkable illustrator who made use of colour and prisms of light to capture landscapes in all their atmospheric variety. He joined the impressionistic movement very early.

Léon Lhermitte
(1844-1925)

Nicknamed *The Painter of Harvesters*, Léon was a true representative of the naturalist tradition. A remarkable charcoal and pastel artist appreciative of Van Gogh and associated with Manet and the Impressionists, his work had a profound influence on the younger generation and in particular on Edouard Cortès.

Luigi Loir
(1845-1916)

Painter and Lithographer, Luigi Loir started in 1865 at the Salon de Paris only to dedicate himself exclusively to scenes of Paris after 1870. Showing regularly at the Salon des Artistes Français, he received the gold medal in 1889 at the World Fair in Paris.

The Painters of Paris at the dawn of the 20th Century



Maximilien Luce
(1858-1941)

Beginning in 1885 Luce frequented the town of Lagny-sur-Marne where he became a legendary figure of the Group de Lagny (a group of artists who joined forces and established a following in Lagny area around 1880.) His works are displayed in the great Modern Art museums in France and abroad.

Pierre Montézin
(1874-1946)

Pierre Montézin was Edouard Cortès' travelling companion. He captured light in colourful patterns and proved himself as a brilliant luminist. He was a faithful exhibitor at the Salon des Artistes Français and the honorary President of the Salon de Lagny from 1927 to 1938.

Fernand Pinal
(1881-1958)

Fernand Pinal was an undisputed specialist at painting trees in bloom and at reflecting the splendour of spring in the Impressionist style. He appeared on several occasions at the Salon de Lagny along with Cortès.

Paulémile-Pissarro
(1884-1974)

A pastel artist and watercolourist, Paulémile-Pissarro, his pseudonym Paul-Emile Pissarro, was the son and student of Camille Pissarro and who consequently gained the support of Claude Monet.

Denis-Henri Ponchon
(n.d.)

Ponchon was a member, participant and a silver award winner in 1924 at the Salon des Artistes Français. The artists works present all the characteristics of classical Post-Impressionism with landscapes animated by scenes of rural life that are flattered by light.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir
(1841-1919)

Painter, pastel artist, engraver, lithographer, ceramist and sculptor, Pierre-August Renoir holds an important place in art history. His power to exert his creative genius through different modes of artistic expression, made him an artist of exceptional scope during the Impressionist movement.

Pierre Sicard
(1900-1980)

After contact with Claude Monet and the Impressionist period the painter and decorator evolved towards a more decorative painting style. He settled in the United States after the Second World War, and painted cities using a geometric style with violently contrasting colours.

Constant Troyon
(1810-1965)

Influenced by a thorough study of 18th century Dutch masters, Constant Troyon displayed loyalty to realism and overall harmony. A landscape and wildlife painter, his style shows several similarities to that of Antonio Cortès.

Louis Valtat
(1869-1952)

Not afraid to accentuate contrasts, Louis produced Fauvist* paintings long before the term existed. His immense body of work has been associated with the pantheon of Post-Impressionism.

***Fauvism**, a relatively short-lived movement in French painting (from about 1898 to about 1908). They achieved a poetic energy through intense use of colour.

**What is significant about the painter, Edouard Cortès?**

Cortès was a great romantic illustrator of the “City of Lights”, who captured Paris in its splendour during the early 1900s. This exhibition examines the extent of Cortès’ achievements spanning the decades, from his earliest paintings influenced by the traditional style of his father through the era of Post-Impressionism.

When were these paintings created?

It was not common for artists at this time to date their work. However, from researching the artists’ careers, we know that most of the work was created between the mid 19th to early 20th Century.

What inspired the development of this exhibition?

Gallery owner, Mario Simic and Madame Renoir (exhibition patron) have long felt that Cortès’ talent has not been fully appreciated. Many are familiar with his romantic Parisian street scenes, but few are aware of his moody landscapes or the variety of styles in which he painted.

What role does the Renoir Foundation for the Arts have in this exhibition?

In 1991, Louise Renoir and her sons created the Renoir Foundation for the Arts. The foundation’s goal is to promote artist exchanges and education between countries. The foundation’s involvement with the Provincial Museum of Alberta includes the development and planning of this exhibition.

How do you describe Cortès’ style of painting?

Cortès style changed through his life as he absorbed the painting revolution taking shape around him. There is an adherence to “painting with light” in some of his landscape and Parisian scenes that signifies the stamp of impressionism.

Why are other artists introduced in conjunction with the Cortès exhibition?

The influx of artists into France displayed a spectrum of talent and style. Some possessed extraordinary artistic skill that later resonated throughout the world. The 19 painters included in this exhibition had a direct impact on Cortès’ career and for this reason accompany the Cortès collection of paintings in this exhibition.

What is significant about the Cortès paintings from the Provincial Museum of Alberta’s McDougall collection?

It is thought that the John A. McDougall family acquired the two Cortès paintings in their vast art collection on one of their many trips abroad in the early 1900s. The paintings signify an era in which wealthy families passionately collected art objects that were of interest to them and reinforced their social status and wealth.

Where are these paintings from?

The paintings are drawn from a variety of private collections, the Simic Museum collection in Carmel, California and the Provincial Museum of Alberta’s McDougall collection.

Acknowledgements



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Special Recognition

Mario B. Simic, Founder/ Artist, Simic New Renaissance Galleries.
Madame Louise Renoir, President, Renoir Foundation for the Arts.
Monsieur Noël Coret, Curator and author.

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