

LA BOVERIE

LOUVRE

An impressionist painting depicting a busy market scene. The composition is filled with figures, mostly women, engaged in various activities. The color palette is dominated by vibrant blues, greens, and reds, with visible brushstrokes and a sense of movement. The figures are rendered with soft, blended colors, typical of the Impressionist style. The overall atmosphere is one of a bustling, outdoor marketplace.

EN PLEIN AIR

COROT, MONET, CÉZANNE
MATISSE, LÉGER, PICASSO...

EXPO 5.5 > 15.8.16
PARC DE LA BOVERIE
LIÈGE • LUIK • LÜTTICH

EN PLEIN AIR

5 MAI > 15 AOÛT 16
LA BOVERIE - LIÈGE

IN THE OPEN AIR

The relationship between mankind and nature has never been neutral. Mother Earth in olden times, a deity to be worshipped or feared, a source of poetic inspiration or – according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau – a place of meditation, nature progressively became, between the 18th and 20th centuries, a place of pleasure, games, walks and sporting activities, or better still: a partner for relaxation! Dawdling in front of a shop window, having a good time at an open air café by the water's edge, indulging in a physical activity in green spaces, spending a Sunday in the countryside, or in short, strolling around in the open air: the place for leisure, whether alone or with the family, was now outside.

Painters of the 18th century, such as Joseph Vernet or Louis-Gabriel Moreau, as well as artists involved in impressionism and its aftermaths, such as Monet, Cézanne and Bonnard, portrayed this new social reality and thus re-examined the depiction of nature in paintings. In the open air, the first exhibition organised in the wide open spaces of the La Boverie Park, expands on this theme of which the recent events at the Fine Arts Museum of Lille (La joie de vivre) or the Louvre-Lens (Dansez, embrassez qui vous voudrez) demonstrate its topicality. Imagined by Vincent Pomarède and Aline François-Colin from the Louvre Museum and based on the collections from Liège, the Louvre and major international loans, it studies, via a timeline of 80 works, the way in which the progressive rise of enthusiasm for the open air, from the 18th century to the present day, also coincided as it happens with the portrayal of the new pleasures of the modern world, walks, leisure and strolls.

THE EXHIBITION SEQUENCE



INTRODUCTION: FROM GENRE SCENES TO OPEN AIR VIEWS, FROM DAILY LIFE TO CONTEMPORARY SCENES

Already in the 18th century, the practice of outdoor pursuits and oil painting directly from life was developing and landscape artists openly sought a new balance between the time spent with the subject and the time spent in the workshop. At the same time, focusing on modern subjects and motives, the artists no longer only looked to the past for themes likely to inspire them, but explored the immediate present. In addition to these two factors, a third arose: that of depicting nature for its own sake, embodied in the landscapes of Corot. Inspired by reality and contemporary affairs, the painters could therefore not avoid portraying the clear evolution in the relationship between mankind and nature during this era: nature progressively became a friend that it was good to meet, relax with and walk around.



"LESSONS OF LOVE IN A PARK"

Far from the tormented Romantic landscapes, far from the fields of crops and working orchards, far from glorified décors, the painters sought, from 1750, to set down the memory of a simple daily walk in accessible and danger-free nature; they loved nature for its own sake and in their works they tried to portray a pacified relationship between nature and mankind.



VEDUTA

The art of the *veduta*, of the view, which spread through all Europe during the second half of the 18th

century, accompanied the adoption of modern subjects in depiction of the everyday environment. Indeed, inherently, when portraying a city, the artist also depicted the everyday activities taking place there, both the hustle and bustle of business and the strollers walking around.



Claude Monet (1840-1926),
Le Pont Neuf, 1871.
Oil on canvas, 53 × 73 cm
Dallas, Museum of Art

“LOVE LIES IN WAIT IN THE OPEN AIR CAFÉS!”

Open air cafés, whether on the banks of the Seine, Oise or Meuse Rivers, always fulfilled the same purpose as a venue for pleasure, relaxation and popular friendliness, demonstrating throughout Europe the desire for frivolity and to forget everyday worries.



Henri Evenepoel (1872-1899),
Sunday Stroll in the Bois de Boulogne, 1899
Oil on canvas, 190 × 300 cm,
Liège Fine Arts Museum

“A STROLL ALONG THE WATER’S EDGE”

The inexpensive form of entertainment that is a stroll along the water’s edge is, by definition, the opium of the masses. The Sunday strollers and lovers discovered the radiant pace of life along the banks of the Seine or Oise Rivers, an alternative to a dip in the sea which was less accessible in this era for workers and even shopkeepers.

OUTDOOR GAMES

More than ever, nature was proving to be a venue for all sorts of games and sports. The artistic accounts of these pastimes are frequent, as well as in the works of the most modern painters such as Fernand Léger or Pablo Picasso.

"THIS BEACH IS SUBMERGED WITH TOWNSFOLK"

The first displays of the fun relationship between mankind and nature, a relationship based on both the quest for pleasure and the cult of health, sea bathing emerged in the 19th century to become a genuine social reference throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, which the artists quite naturally studied and transcended.

"ROOMS WITH A VIEW"

Since the 17th century, the painters had been fascinated with the relationship between the darkness of an interior setting and the vibration, or sometimes violence, of outside light; in this way, the theme of a landscape seen through a window has been one of the most creative motives of the last two centuries. As La Boverie is a museum open to the outside world, this theme appears especially linked to its personality.



Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), La conversation à Arcachon (a conversation at Arcachon), 1926-1930
Oil on canvas, 56 x 48 cm, Paris, Petit Palais Museum

CONCLUSION: MUSEUMS IN A GARDEN...

Concerned by the radical development of the relationship with nature, many museums of the 20th century have chosen a green setting to install their collections and offer their visitors an exhibition designed in harmony with nature. Logically, the La Boverie Museum is proud to be part of this tradition and wishes to highlight the collections housed by its architecture as well as the surrounding green and urban environment.

Exhibition Commissioners : Vincent Pomarède and Aline François-Colin, Louvre Museum

GENERAL INFORMATION

LA BOVERIE Parc de la Boverie - 4020 Liège

DATES 5 May 2016 - 15 August 2016

OPENING HOURS Tuesday to Sunday 10 am to 6 pm. Closed on Monday

ADMISSION Access to "En Plein Air" and permanent collections. Adults: 12€ • Groups, seniors, students: 8€ • - 14 years old: free • Article 27 (social benefit vouchers): 1,25€ • Family deal (2 adults + 3 students max): 32€

GROUPS RESERVATION reservation.tourisme@liege.be - +32 (0)4 221 93 02

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