MONET IN LE HAVRE

MUMA - LE HAVRE

PRESS RELEASE

5 JUNE
27 SEPTEMBER 2026

NORMANDIE IMPRESSIONNISTE

with exceptional support from

Musée d'Orsay

Musée Marmottan Monet

ACADÉMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS

UN ÉTÉ AU HAVRE

MuMa | leHavre

MONET IN LE HAVRE

5 JUNE
27 SEPTEMBER 2026

Claude Monet
Après la pluie, 1868

Pastel sur papier, 17,8 x 29,5 cm,
Denver, Denver Art Museum,
The Esmond Bradley Martin Collection
© Courtesy of the Denver Art Museum

Claude Monet
Bord de la mer à Sainte-Adresse, 1864

Huile sur toile, 40 x 70 cm, Minneapolis
The Minneapolis Institute of Art
© The Minneapolis Institute of Art

To mark the centenary of the death of Claude Monet (Paris, 1840–Giverny, 1926), MuMa presents an unprecedented exploration of the youth of the father of Impressionism via the exhibition "Monet in Le Havre". The exhibition reveals how the thirty years the painter spent in Le Havre and Paris were crucial in shaping Monet's gaze and technique, from his earliest sketchbooks to maritime landscapes and port scenes. In the course of an itinerary featuring nearly 100 artworks and archival documents from renowned museums and galleries, some public and some private, and the collections of the artist's descendants, it sheds new light on Monet's links with the city of Le Havre.

Exhibition curators

Géraldine Lefebvre, Director of MuMa,
with assistance from **Michaël Debris**, Collections Officer at MuMa,
and **Pascal Perrin**, art historian

Claude Monet
Le Jardinier de Graville
Carnet de dessins n° 2
"le 5 septembre / Graville", 1856

Crayon noir sur papier, 20,5 x 27 cm, collection particulière © François Doury

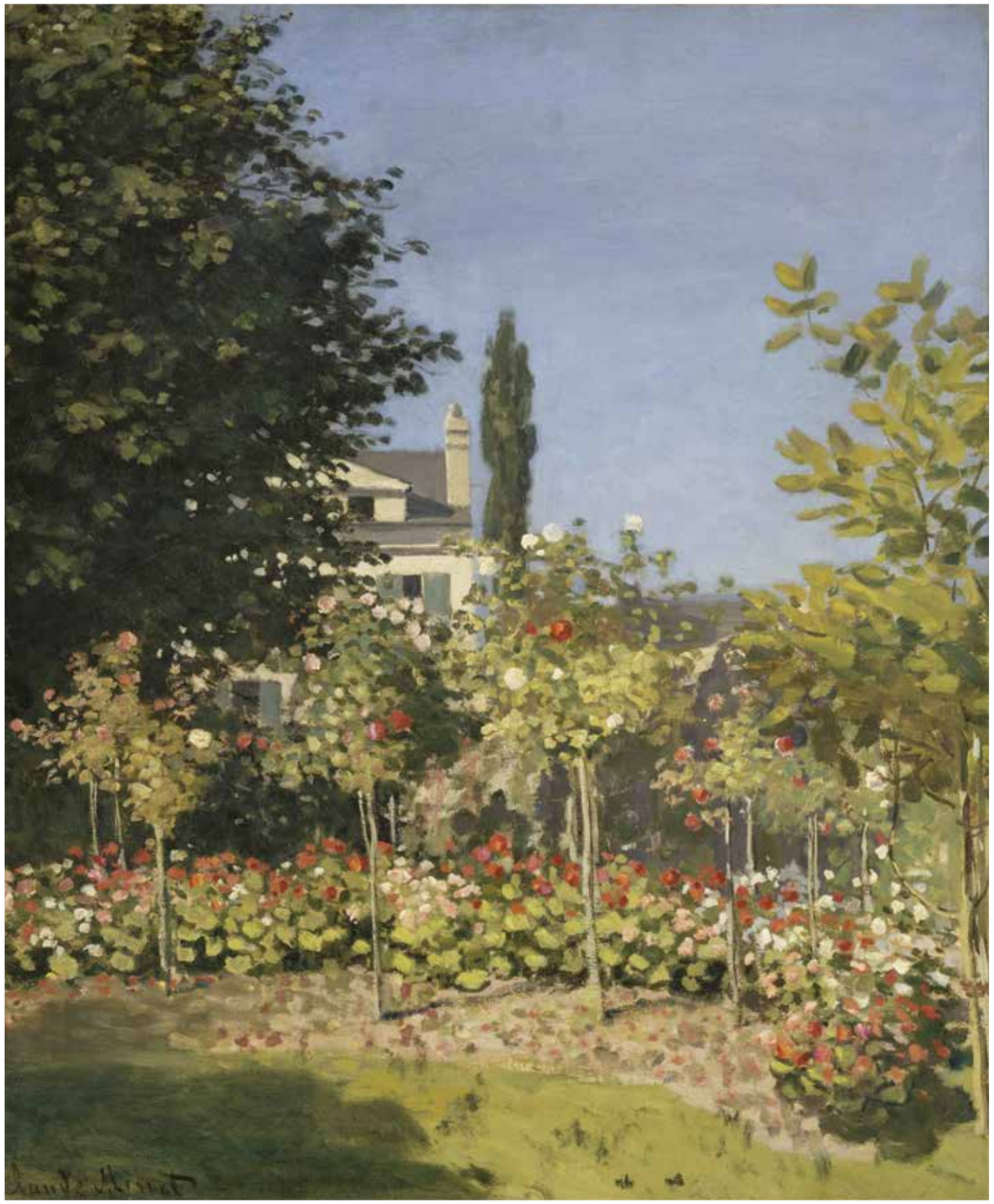
Claude Monet
Enfant assis à la poupée
Carnet de dessins n° 2
"D'après nature / le 9 septembre", 1856

Crayon noir sur papier, 20,5 x 27 cm,
collection particulière © François Doury

Growing up in Le Havre

MuMa's exhibition offers visitors a sensitive, in-depth overview of the years Claude Monet spent in Le Havre as a child and a young man, from 1845, when his family moved there five years after his birth, to 1874, the year when the first Impressionist exhibition was held in Paris, and when he produced the last major series of seascapes he painted in the port of Le Havre. During those three decades, Monet experienced the awakening and increasing certainty of his artistic vocation.
It was in Le Havre that the young Monet took his first steps as an artist. He filled his sketchbooks with drawings from life, mischievously caricaturing prominent citizens, produced his first landscapes in the company of Eugène Boudin, then Johan Barthold Jongkind, absorbed the teachings of his masters and composed his first still lifes. As he oscillated between the city where he grew up and Paris, where he met the future Impressionists, his gaze was gradually formed and his ambition confirmed.

In Le Havre, he also encountered photographers, who had been lured there by the picturesque subjects it offered or the technical challenges presented by a fast-changing port city. Their pictures provided a pool of subjects that recur in his *oeuvre*. Be it the wild landscapes of the headland of La Hève in Sainte-Adresse, known locally as the "world's end" and a favourite spot with the denizens of Le Havre, the regattas in which the roadstead teems with sailing boats, or the heart of the great industrial port, Monet's Norman paintings recount the birth of a painter and of a modern way of seeing.



Claude Monet
Paul Eugène Lecadre, vers 1858

Crayon noir avec rehauts de craie blanche
sur papier, 20,5 x 27 cm, collection particulière
© François Doury

Claude Monet
Jardin en fleurs, à Sainte-Adresse,
vers 1866

Huile sur toile, 65 x 54,5 cm, Paris,
musée d'Orsay, inv. MNR 216, retrouvé en
Allemagne après la Seconde Guerre mondiale
et confié à la garde des musées nationaux,
1949, dépôt au musée Fabre, Montpellier
© GrandPalaisRmn (musée d'Orsay) /
Hervé Lewandowski

Claude Monet
Madame Louis Joachim Gaudibert, 1868

Huile sur toile, 216,5 x 138,5 cm,
Paris, musée d'Orsay
© GrandPalaisRmn (musée d'Orsay) /
Hervé Lewandowski

Claude Monet
Vue prise à Rouelles, 1858

Huile sur toile, 46 × 65 cm,
Saitama (Japon), Museum of Modern Art,
dépôt du Marunuma Art Park, Asaka
© Marunuma Art Park, Asaka

Eugène Boudin
Paysage normand, 1854-1858

Huile sur bois, 34 x 57,5 cm,
Saitama (Japon), Museum of Modern Art,
dépôt du Marunuma Art Park, Asaka
© Marunuma Art Park, Asaka

His first supporters

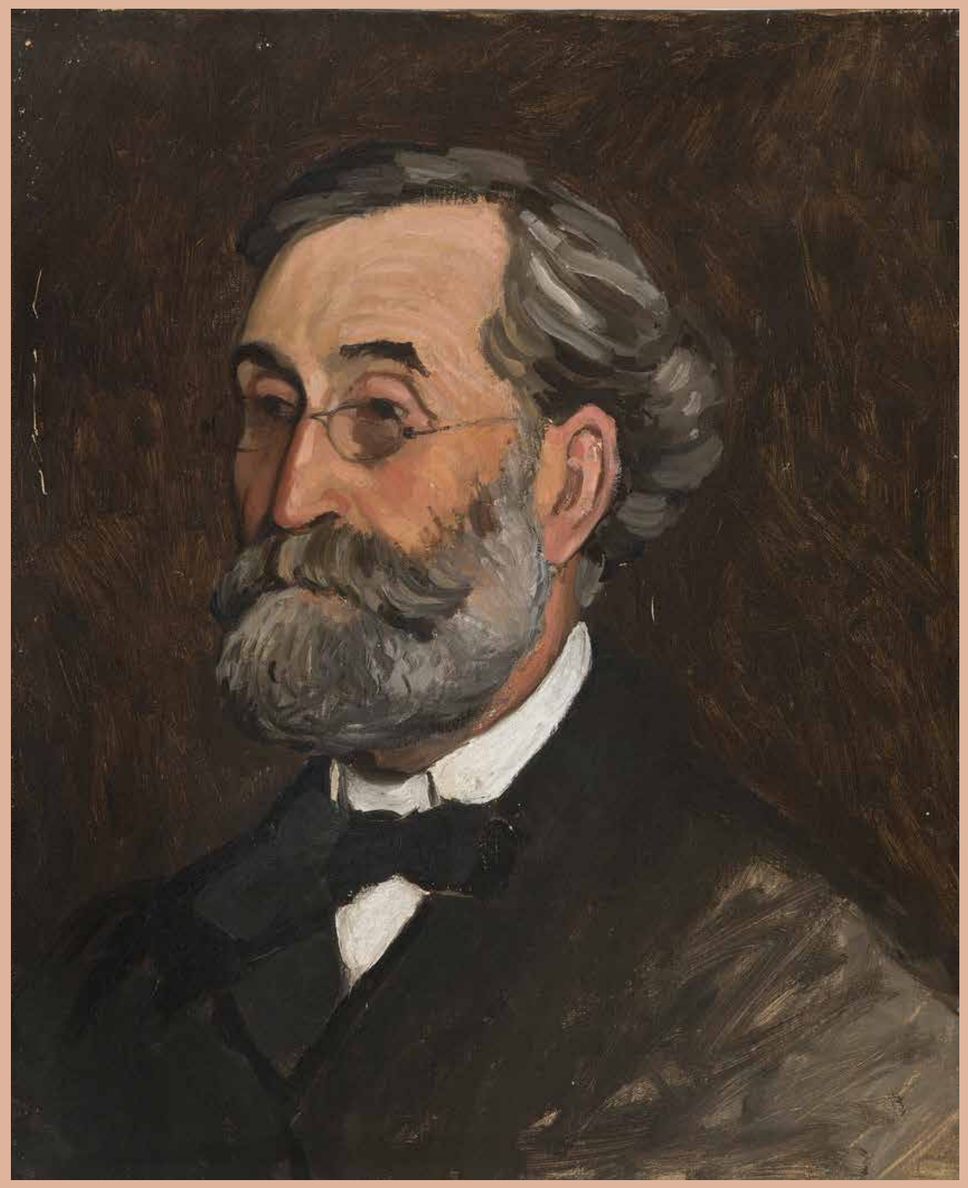
It was also in Le Havre that Monet found his first supporters. Within his family, his brother Léon Monet encouraged him; among local collectors, the Gaudibert family bought his earliest pictures. Later on, founding members of the Cercle de l'Art moderne Olivier Senn, Pieter Van der Velde and Charles-Auguste Marande regularly purchased his work. Through his painter friends Eugène Boudin and Gustave Courbet, the young artist gained access to a wider circle of patrons and was able to carve out a place for himself on the art scene.

With the aid of hitherto unseen archival documents, the exhibition presents the artist's family circle, Le Havre society and its decisive influence on Monet, the young painter's sources of inspiration, his early training as an artist, his many caricatures, the places he chose to depict, how his technique developed and the vital role played by his first collectors. A detailed chronology, maps of the area and extracts from correspondence – many of them never previously displayed – will shed uniquely valuable light on the origins of an *oeuvre* and the career of an artist who was to change the course of the history of painting.

THE EXHIBITION ITINERARY

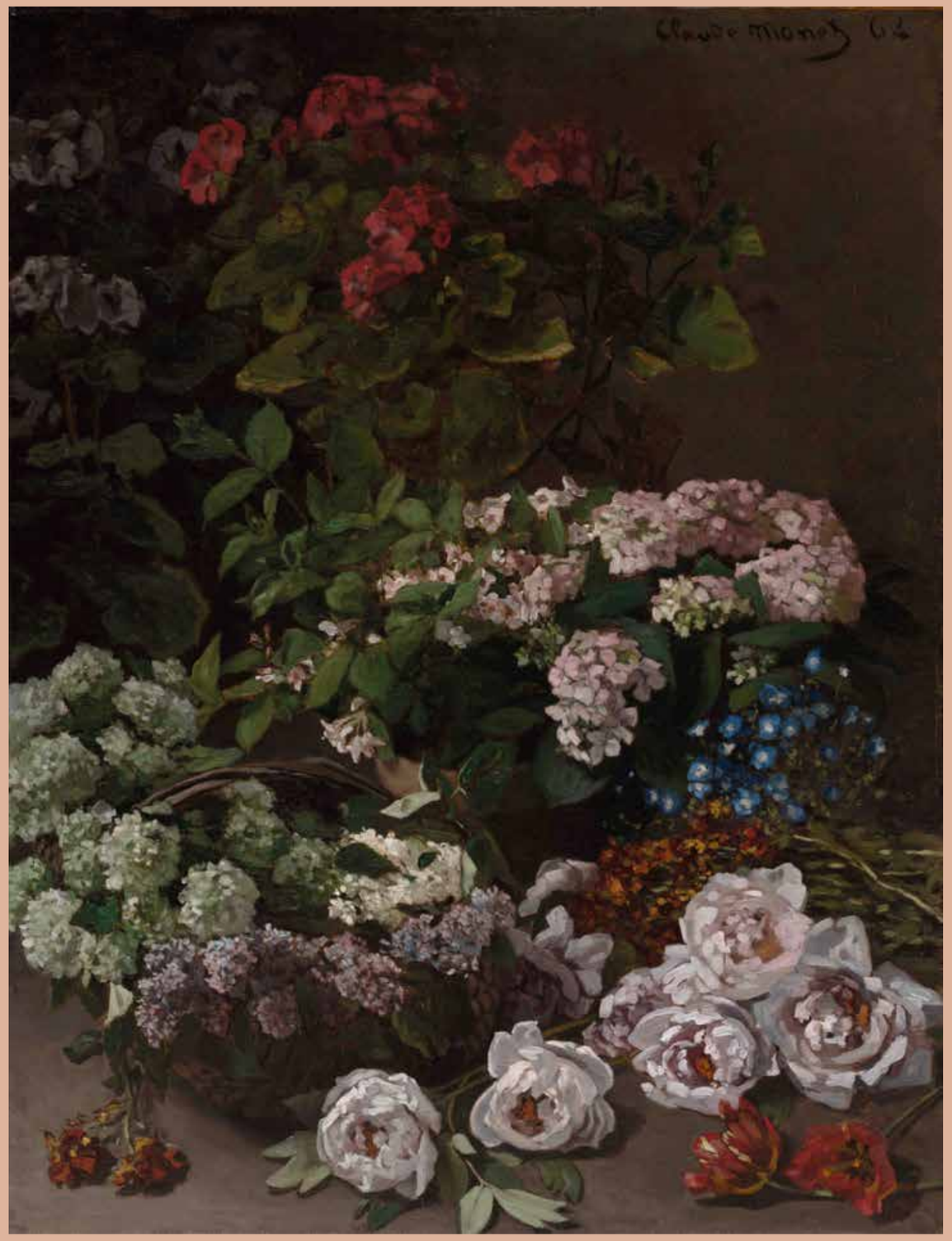
MuMa's exhibition will shed new light on the Monet family and Le Havre society with its local worthies, caricatured by the youthful artist, and numerous artistic influences. Its itinerary consists of the following ten sections, which will be organized thematically and chronologically and will feature approximately 100 items including Monet's own paintings and sketchbooks, archival documents and numerous family photographs.

1. Growing up in Le Havre
2. Monet's first sketchbooks (1856) and first painting (1858)
3. Monet and still life
4. Caricatures, Le Havre and Paris
5. Monet's and Boudin's pastels of skies
6. Gustave Le Gray and photographers in Le Havre in 1856
7. Maritime and port landscapes
8. Art patrons in Le Havre
9. Monet's gift to the City of Le Havre, 1910
10. *Water Lilies #1* and *#2* by Ai Weiwei, 2022.



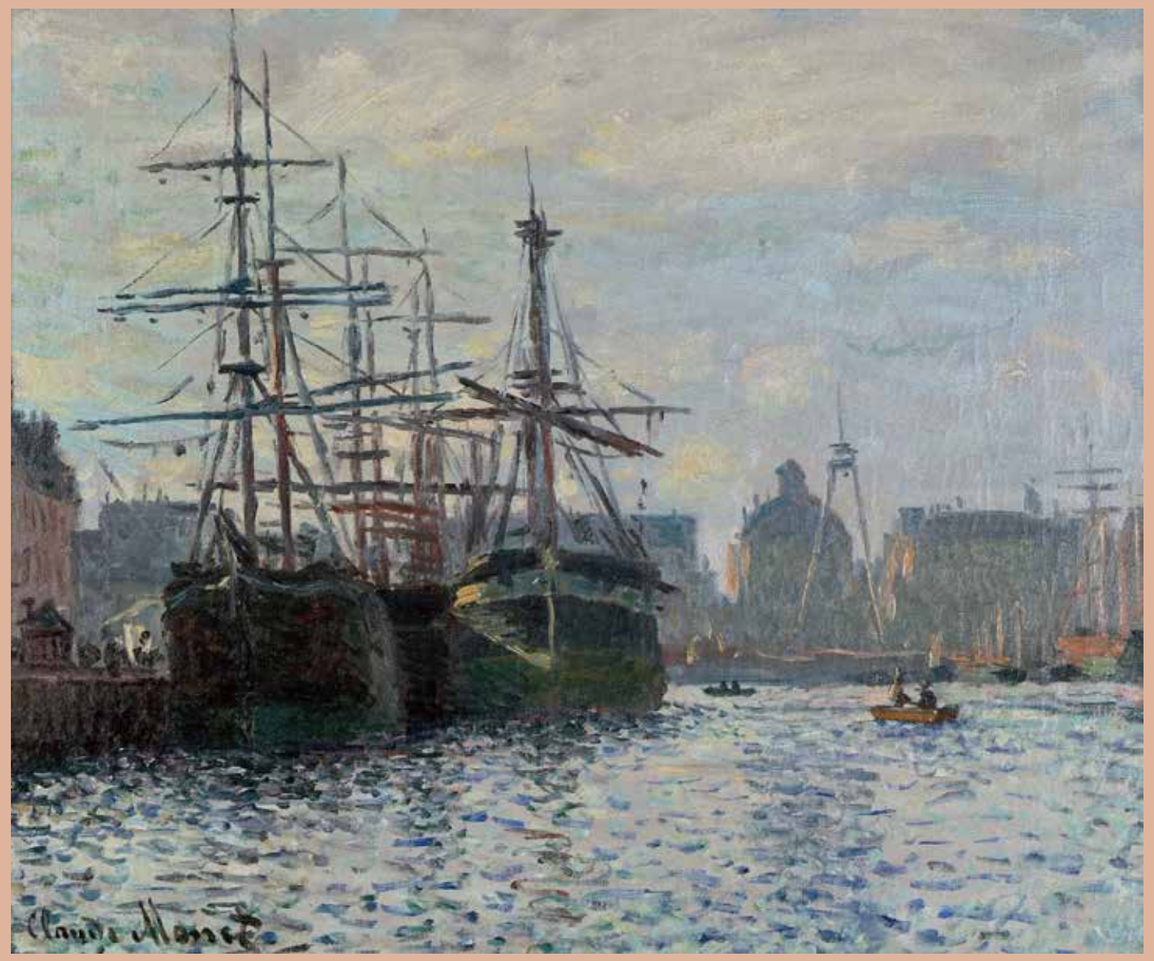
Claude Monet
Portrait d'Adolphe Monet, père de l'artiste, 1865

Huile sur toile 46 x 38 cm,
collection particulière © François Doury



Claude Monet
Fleurs de printemps, vers 1864

Huile sur toile, 116,8 x 90,5 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of the Hanna Fund, 1953
© Cleveland Museum of Art



Claude Monet
Le Bassin du Commerce, Le Havre,
vers 1874

Huile sur toile, 37 x 45 cm, Liège, La Boverie
© Musée des Beaux-Arts de Liège / La Boverie.

Claude Monet
Le Parlement de Londres,
effet de brouillard, 1903

Huile sur toile, 81 x 92 cm, Le Havre,
musée d'art moderne André Malraux,
don de l'artiste à la Ville du Havre, 1910
© MuMa Le Havre / David Fogel

AI WEIWEI, *WATER LILIES #1 ET #2, 2022*
A CONTEMPORARY GARDEN

In conjunction with the 2026 edition of the Normandy Impressionist Festival, MuMa will be presenting two installations by the Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei. This is the first time these monumental artworks – each of them is over fifteen metres long – have been shown in France. Made up of 650,000 LEGO® bricks, they revisit Claude Monet's *Water Lilies*. During his years in New York, Ai Weiwei spent many hours contemplating the painting in MoMa, absorbing its shimmering reverberations. From his memory of this arose an unusual reinterpretation, in which the industrial, serially produced coloured bricks are substituted for the Impressionist brushstrokes without losing the meditative impetus. Ai Weiwei's *Water Lilies* are also a filial gesture. They pay homage to the artist's father, a poet who studied in Paris and was profoundly influenced by Impressionism, but was silenced by the communist regime when he went back to China.

At MuMa, these two monumental artworks are presented at the beginning and end of the exhibit itinerary, in counterpoint with the 1904 *Water Lilies* given to the City of Le Havre by Monet in 1910. They also mark Ai Weiwei's first visit to Normandy, following in Monet's footsteps, setting this encounter between East and West and between past and present in the place where Impressionism was born.

NORMANDIE IMPRESSIONNISTE

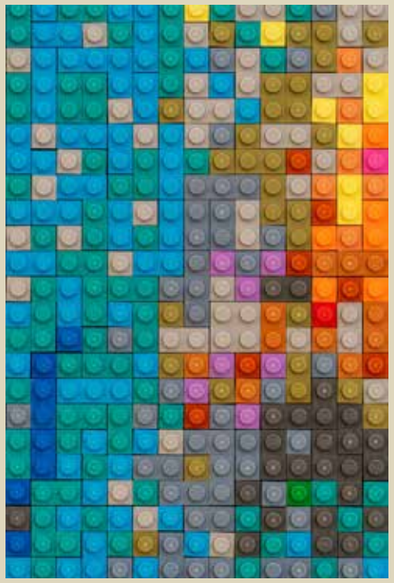
Exhibit curated by
Géraldine Lefebvre, Director of MuMa
and **Philippe Platel**, Director of the Normandy Impressionist Festival.

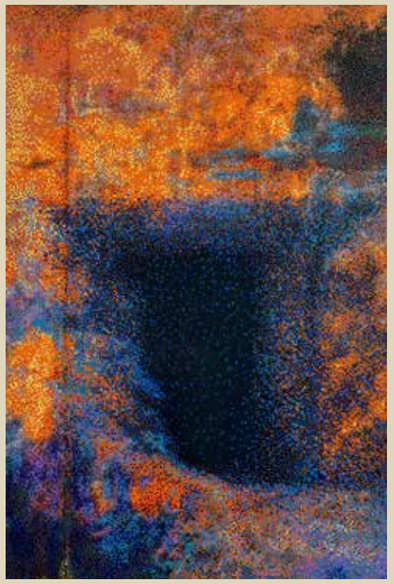
Ai Weiwei
Water Lilies # 1, 2022

Lego, 266 x 1 520 cm, San Gimignano, Galleria Continua, Courtesy Ai Weiwei Studio and Galleria Continua
© Ela Bialkowska, OKNO Studio

Ai Weiwei
Water Lilies # 1 (détail), 2022

Lego, 266 X 1 520 cm, San Gimignano, Galleria Continua, Courtesy Ai Weiwei Studio and Galleria Continua
© Ela Bialkowska, Okno Studio





Ai Weiwei
Water Lilies # 1 (détail), 2022

Lego, 266 x 1 520 cm, San Gimignano, Galleria Continua, Courtesy Ai Weiwei Studio and Galleria Continua
© Ela Bialkowska, Okno Studio

Ai Weiwei
Water Lilies # 1 (détail), 2022

Lego, 266 X 1 520 cm, San Gimignano, Galleria Continua, Courtesy Ai Weiwei Studio and Galleria Continua
© Ela Bialkowska, Okno Studio

Ai Weiwei
Water Lilies # 2, 2022

Lego, 268,1 x 1 531,8 x 3 cm, Berlin, neugerriemschneider
© Ai Weiwei, Courtesy of the artist and Neugerriemschneider, Berlin/ Jens Ziehe, Berlin

The exhibition "Monet in Le Havre" has benefited from exceptional support from the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée Marmottan Monet, which have fully associated themselves with its development via loans of artworks and specialist input. It assembles artworks from leading institutions in France and other countries including the National Gallery in London, the National in Edinburgh and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Denver Art Museum and Cleveland Museum of Art, Ordrupgaard in Charlottenlund, near Copenhagen, and La Boverie in Liège, the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, the Museum of Modern Art in Saitama and Tochigi City Museum of Art in Japan, the Musées de Honfleur, the Musée des Impressionnismes Giverny, the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen and the Bibliothèque nationale de France. In addition, Claude Monet's descendants have consented to lend artworks that have never previously been displayed, such as the portrait of the artist's father and one of his earliest sketchbooks, for the exhibition.

Musée d'Orsay

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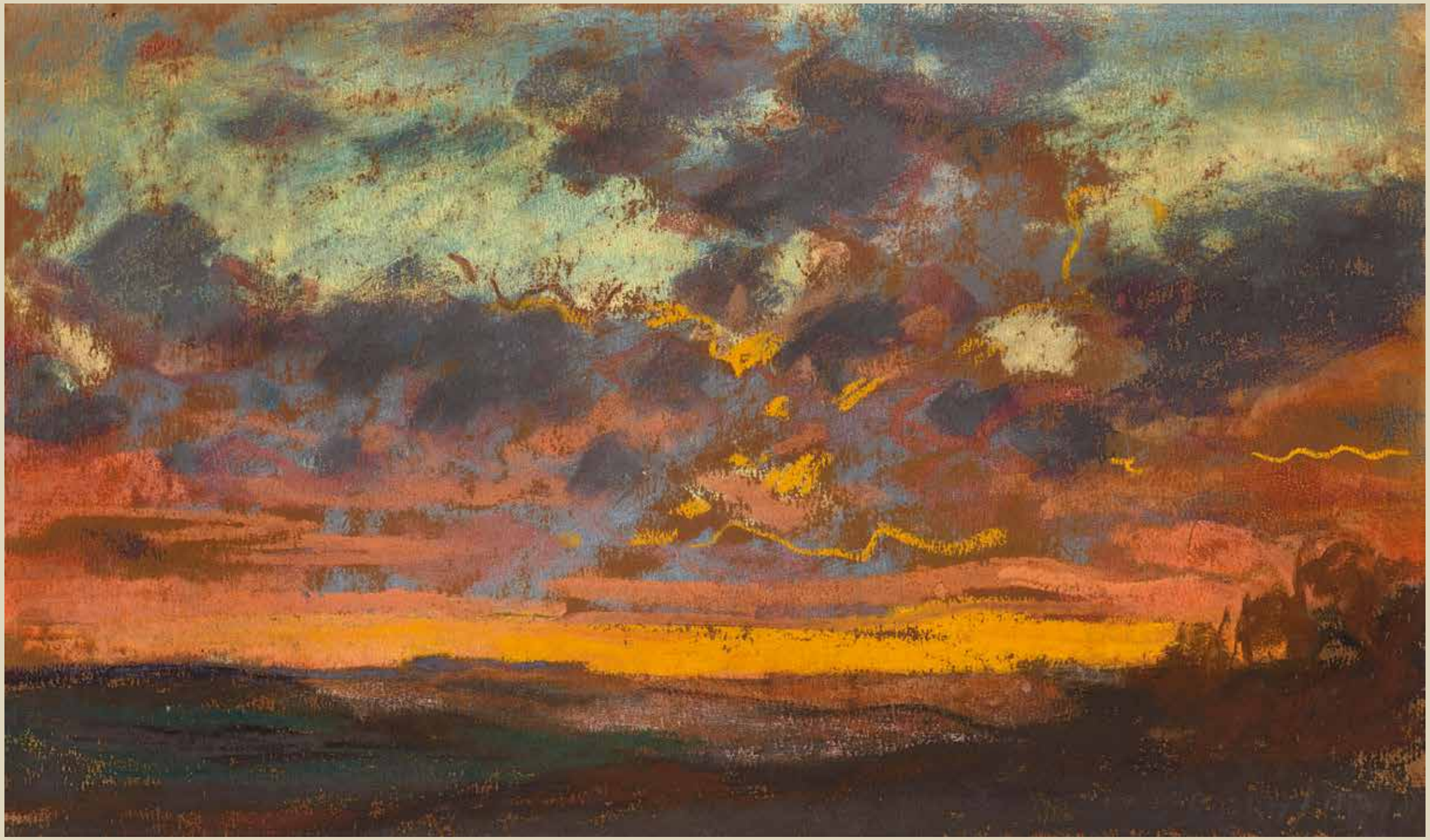
ACADÉMIE DES BEAUX-ARTS
INSTITUT DE FRANCE

Claude Monet
La Plage de Sainte-Adresse, 1864

Huile sur toile, 30 x 69 cm, Tochigi (Japon), Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts
© Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts



Claude Monet
Coucher de soleil, vers 1868

Pastel sur papier, 21 x 35 cm, collection particulière
© 2022 Christie's Images Limited

VISITOR INFORMATION AND PRESS ENQUIRIES

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MONET IN LE HAVRE

Exhibition from 5 June to 27 September 2026

Cultural programming "Around the exhibition"
to be found on muma-lehavre.fr

Opening days:
https://www.muma-lehavre.fr/en/practical/informations/getting-to-museum
Open on July 14th, thanks to the patronage of Matmut for the arts

Admission free on the first Saturday of every month
For ticket prices, visit https://www.muma-lehavre.fr/en/practical/informations/getting-to-museum/admission

Accessible to all visitors
Book and gift shop, restaurant and café facilities in the museum

Exhibition catalogue published by Octopus, to be released in June 2026

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Cover image

Claude Monet
Coucher de soleil (détail), vers 1868

Pastel sur papier, 21 x 35 cm,
collection particulière
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Translation: Victoria Selwyn
Graphic design: Benoît Eliot / Octopus
Printed by the City of Le Havre

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