

Charleston Mercury

The newspaper with a cosmopolitan attitude

Le Carnet de France: L'Été 2025 à Paris — Boudin and Hockney

By Martine P. Dulles and Frederick H. Dulles

The Fondation Louis Vuitton is one more time organizing an exceptional show. After Monet-Mitchell (2023), Mark Rothko (2023-24) and Tom Wesselmann (2024-25), this year the show is David Hockney's *Do Remember They Can't Cancel the Spring*.

Is it necessary to introduce David Hockney, one of the internationally renowned and most expensive living artists? Born in Yorkshire in 1937, Hockney studied at the Royal College of Arts in London and was one of the first artists to use acrylic paint. After leaving London, he lived in California for many years, incorporating dogs and swimming pools with the Californian sunshine beaming as the preferred themes his portraits. He also explored different media such as photography and collage that recalls Picasso and Braque's cubist paintings and designed many sets for opera houses including the Metropolitan Opera in New York, The Royal Opera House in London and the Glyndebourne Festival in England.

Back in his native country of England in 2018, Hockney crossed the Channel to Normandy and after falling in love with the beautiful region of France, purchased a *clos normand*, a typical farmhouse surrounded by apple trees and numerous flowers. When Covid arrived, he was unable to travel and began to experiment on his iPad, drawing the exquisite natural surroundings of his home.

At the age of 87, these

days David Hockney spends his time between London and Normandy and was very involved with the organization of 2014's *The Fondation Louis Vuitton*, the largest ever exhibition, featuring 400 paintings displayed in 11 rooms. *The Fondation* claims one needs around three hours to visit this show. Designed by Frank Gehry, the space is specifically for the purpose of presenting major art works. The rooms are vast with very high ceilings enabling large size canvases to be hung and appreciated from up close or far away.

The exhibit will be on display until September 1 of this year and reservations are highly recommended. The Fondation is located on the outskirts of Paris, at 8 avenue du Mahatma-Gandhi in the 16th arrondissement. A shuttle bus runs every 20 minutes from the top of Avenue de Friedland near the Arc de Triomphe to and from the Fondation.

Le père de L'impressionisme by Eugène Boudin is another special exhibit in Paris not to be missed, on display this summer at the Musée Marmottan-Monet. Born in Honfleur, Normandy in 1824 and died in Deauville in 1898, Boudin was a humble man who led a full and fascinating life doing what he loved best: Painting and drawing. During five decades, he painted around 4,000 canvases and produced at least as many watercolors and pastels. His career began in a printing and stationery store in Le Havre whose owner gave him a box of paints recognizing Boudin's gift for the art. It was in Le Havre where Boudin met Claude Monet (1840-1926). A



COLLECTION YANN GUYONVARCH © STUDIO CHRISTIAN BARAJA SLB

Plage de Trouville, Eugène Boudin, 1864.

lifelong friendship developed, and the two men spent many hours painting or drawing outdoors the breathtaking landscape of Normandy. Through to this friendship, Boudin met other artists, including Gustave Courbet (1819-1877), Constant Troyon (1810-1865), Camille Corot (1796-1875) and the Dutch painter Johan Jongkind (1819-1891), to name a few.

If Boudin painted numerous Normandy cows and harbors, he nonetheless traveled a lot and visited Paris, Brittany, Belgium, the south of France and Venice, Italy. One is always taken with admiring Boudin's art, which is what happened to Mr. Yann Guyonvarc'h, a very successful Franco-Swiss entrepreneur, while visiting the TEFAF (the famous Maastricht Art Fair in the Netherlands) in 2005, where he purchased his first Boudin painting entitled *La Plage de Deauville*, 5 Octobre 1894. The painting reminded him of

his youth when he spent time in Trouville, next to Deauville, where his grandparents lived. During the next two decades, he purchased more than 300 Boudin paintings, making it the richest privately-owned collection of Boudin's works.

This exhibit consists of 80 of those works, in addition to some owned by the Musée Marmottan-Monet, the Musée d'Art Moderne André Malraux (MuMa) in Le Havre and the Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Agen (southwest France). They are hung in chronological order and cover all the different periods and sites of Boudin's work. Mr. Guyonvarc'h lives in Switzerland and is planning on creating a museum because it is important for him to share his collection. The space will be big enough to hold temporary exhibits and will mostly contain art from Boudin's period as well as have an auditorium. Mr. Laurent Manoeuvre, the specialist

of Boudin has written many books about the artist and worked on this show and is assisting Mr. Guyonvarc'h in this major future project.

Meanwhile, the Boudin exhibit at the Musée Marmottan-Monet, 2 rue Louis-Boilly, in the 16th arrondissement ends on August 31, 2025 (The Musée is closed on Mondays). A trip to Normandy is always worthwhile: The MUMA in Le Havre owns a beautiful collection of Boudin works and in Honfleur, there is the Boudin Museum.

Bon été 2025!

Martine and Frederick Dulles live in France. Martine, who was a docent at the MET in New York and a licensed tour guide in Charleston, organizes bespoke guided visits in Paris and France (mpd@dullesdeleu.com). Frederick is an international business lawyer and an adjunct professor of law in French business schools (fhd@dullesdeleu.com).