

**Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
Evaluation Cycle 2017-2018**

Impressionisms Routes

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The opinions expressed in this independent expert report are those of the author, and do not engage the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes nor the European Institute of Cultural Routes.

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1. Executive Summary

'Impressionisms Routes' is an umbrella title for European routes linked by the common theme of Impressionism as an artistic moment, its development across Europe – within and outside France- and its proliferation thanks to movement and exchange of artists united by common aims and experimentations in the field of late 19th and early 20th centuries open-air painting.

Its aim is to highlight, on a European level, the places where artists lived, worked and created their colonies, the landscapes that they drew, the buildings they socialised in and the ways in which they were then connected to the history of their time, and are today relevant to current understandings of their era, as well as contemporary enjoyment, education and creation.

Summary of the conclusions

The theme still complies with the eligibility criteria for themes, CM/Res(2013)67, I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.

The Cultural Route still complies with the criteria listed in CM/Res(2013)67, II. List of priority fields of action, CM/Res(2013)67.

The Cultural Route still complies with the criteria for networks, as in CM/Res (2013)67, III. List of criteria for networks.

2. Introduction

'Impressionisms Routes' is an umbrella title for European routes linked by the common theme of Impressionism as an artistic moment, its development across Europe – within and outside France- and its proliferation thanks to movement and exchange of artists united by common aims and experimentations in the field of late 19th and early 20th centuries open-air painting.

The initiative is managed and promoted by 'Eau et Lumière', a French Association (Association Loi 1901), based in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France. The Association was founded in 2009 and was reorganised in 2016, in an effort to align itself more fully with the requirements of the EICR. It is composed of 47 organisational members from France and Europe, plus some individual members. These are paying members, with fees according to the size and nature of each organisation, and are actively involved with the Association to about 80-90%.

'Impressionisms Routes' was initially quite centered in on France, as was expected to a certain extent, due to its subject matter. In the last two years, however, it has realized its importance as a Europe-wide network, moreover with a potential extra-European reach and has worked towards its sustainance. As such, it has expanded its scope since 2016 and was, more significantly, active towards this aim in 2017. More specifically, it has formed external alliances with, notably, *EuroArt* (the European Federation of Artists' Colonies, with 72 members in 43 artists' colonies in 13 countries), as well as ICEAC - International Center for European Artists' Colonies.

It has also narrowed down its activities to form a more closely-knit and better managed network, which will be the basis of its development, by focusing on the efforts of the thus far most developed sub-routes, namely those of Gustave Caillebotte, Bethe Morisot, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet, and Alfred Sisley (France), Bunke and painters of Schwaan (Germany), Jan Toorop (Netherlands) and Ivan Grohar (Slovenia), Francisco Llorens-Diaz (Spain) and the Macchiaioli Painters (Italy).

The network aims to grow larger and connect even more places on the common theme of Impressionism along the way, as the basic routes have established some common communication and cooperation principles and have secured their base functions as places of a distinctive cultural interest and increasing tourist value.

The present report is based on the analysis of the documents provided by 'Impressionisms Routes', as requested by the EICR, on a field trip conducted in France in January 2018 and

on online interviews and further email discussions held with leaders of the basic sub-routes (Netherlands and Slovenia), members of the scientific committee and administration officers.

3. Main Body Evaluation

3.1 Cultural Route Theme

'Impressionisms Routes' revolves around the theme of Impressionism and its development across Europe from the end of the 19th century to early 20th century. It is concerned with the life and work of open-air painters known as 'Impressionists' and aims to highlight the areas in which they lived, painted, socialised, created artist colonies and lent themselves to artistic experimentation. The theme also seeks to highlight the places that these painters used as their subjects, sometimes unchanged until the present day. It also places emphasis on Impressionist artworks of that are shown in the museums and cultural organisations of these places, as well as related heritage buildings, including houses and studios of artists, and places of leisure and exchange.

The theme represents a value that is hitherto widely mostly linked to France, due to the large number of Impressionist painters who lived there and the consequent scholarship that proliferated in the last century. However, Impressionism as cultural value is of shared European interest, as the achievements of these artists and their work spread to many other European countries, through travel and exchange, and inspired creation in other places outside France.

As such, the Route assumes an important role in highlighting that Impressionism was not a one-country phenomenon, but instead was adopted, developed and disseminated by other artists, in other European countries, who were often in direct contact with the main hub of Impressionists in France. This is a little-researched fact in the history of art, and therefore becomes particularly interesting through the initiative of 'Impressionisms Routes', as it has the power to dissolve the one-sided, erroneous perception of the movement and offer a fresh perspective to a common European cultural phenomenon.

The theme offers a solid basis for youth cultural and educational exchanges, particularly among student and emerging artist communities. Most importantly, it is ideal for cultural tourism products development, as Impressionism-related products and activities are much sought-after and extremely popular in an enduring way throughout the world. The them has been researched and developed by academics and experts from primarily France but also different regions of Europe (the Netherlands, Spain, Slovenia) and, in one case, the USA.

3.2 Field of action

3.2.1 Cooperation and research

Cooperation in research and development has potential within the Route's framework, though it is still at its initial stages. Routes mostly concentrate on their own research. There are, however, interesting examples that go beyond this and indicate the gradual adoption of common methods, as well as an expansion towards extra-European areas. 'Impressionisms Routes' is associated to ICEAC-International Center for European Artists' Colonies, which is developed within the Musuem Maria Tak Van Poortvliet (MVTP) in Domburg (NL), member of the Association and responsible for the Jan Toorop sites. With the new extension of the museum building, to be completed in 2019-2020 the research centre will also be expanded, and is projected to further enhance research carried out on the theme of European Impressionisms, among others.

On another level, Eau et Lumière in collaboration with the most developed routes has introduced a methodology of research/publicity/development, which is based on publications per geographical area. So, for instance, after the initial publication *Impressionisms Routes* (2016), a dedicated publication which analyses all routes per country under the umbrella title there is another publication, produced by the National Gallery of Slovenia and entitled *The Route of the Sower – The Route of Slovenian Impressionism: Part One* (2017). The publication, which traces the life and work of the Slovenian Impressionist Ivan Grohar will be completed in 2018 by a second part, offering information on the places where other three Slovenian Impressionists worked, namely Matija Jama, Matej Sternen and Rihard Jakopič. The other sites will, apparently, soon follow suite with similar initiatives.

The heads of the above routes (Netherlandish and Slovenian), as Directors of the respective museums, are also specialists participating in the Scientific Committee. The latter, which is composed, also, by academics and specialists (especially in the fields of art history, history and geography) from France, Italy, Spain and the USA.

Some sub-routes have undertaken research relating more to their own, particular content. However, their reaching out to certain individuals and organizations, some of whom are in extra-European areas seems to have positive repercussions to the other route leaders, as transpires from discussions with them. Indicatively, the Renoir network leaders are discussing with their counterpart associations, municipalities and individuals in Italy to highlight Renoir's passage, and with Algeria to highlight his brief stay in the country. The

USA is linked to this initiative, as well, as 'Renoir and Algeria' formed the subject of a Clark Art Institute travelling exhibition and an accompanying publication. 2019, being Renoir's passing anniversary will form the basis for collaborations with the above. Likewise, the USA is important for the Morisot route, as is England and collaborations are currently forged with the two countries. Moreover, exchanges are carried out between Bougival and St Petersburg, particularly on the subject of Ivan Repin and the exchanges and influences of the time. In the case of Jan Toorop route 19 Institutions (15 in the Netherlands and the rest in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Serbia) keep each other informed about their Jan Toorop Collections and possible Toorop Projects. The aim is to create a thread with stops and to exhibit in common in 2019 and 2020. Toorop also worked in Paris and London, which creates yet another link between the collaborating routes. This indicative expanded research is supported by cooperation between the various sub-routes and gradually creates an interesting network of common approach, exchange and education.

For the next three years the network foresees a collaborative project that will bring together many of the participating sub-routes, along the theme of the 'Sower' – a common thread in Impressionist art. It will be implemented with a series of conferences, exhibitions, events etc. and will run through France, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Spain for at least 4 months.

Also, in terms of expansion, the following routes will soon be integrated in 'Impressionisms Routes': Karoli Ferenczy (Hungary), Emile Claus (Belgium), Peter Hansen (Denmark) and Vasily Polenov (Russia).

3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage

'Impressionisms Routes' enhance the memory, history and European heritage in a variety of ways. First, they link back to one of the most exciting times of European history, the turn of century, during which big changes took place in society. It was a time of turmoil, but also of progress. Members of the Impressionist movement took part in various discussions and actions relating to human liberties.

Besides that, they immortalised in their work landscapes, people during times of leisure, fashion, architecture, habits. Impressionism is an interesting puzzle of the open air culture of Europe and serves to enliven its memory of the times. Both tangible heritage,

such as paintings, but also the buildings in which Impressionist painters lived and worked, their paraphernalia, publications and other, as well as intangible heritage such as music all come into a coherent whole. Cities also figure prominently in the theme, such as Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Madrid and London. The theme, highlighted in its European dimension and being one of worldwide recognition, as Impressionism is a very popular subject also has the potential to raise awareness among decision-makers. It will thus ideally serve the enhancement of common memory and values.

3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans

The network functions as a good platform for cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans. First, its close association with EuroArt means that there is a multitude of emerging artists from many European countries who can benefit from the experiences. Certain already organised offerings, such as the programme of the Centre d'Etude d'Histoire de l'Art (Chatou, France) which proposes a number of longer and shorter courses for students from all over Europe have been proposed to serve as a template for other events.

Moreover, the initiative 'Be An Artist', developed in collaboration with euroArt proposes a project for young people's exchange in four countries, namely Germany, France, the Netherlands and Belgium. Further, Italian students will work on works of art by Renoir, while students from the ISA (Institut Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel et du Cinéma de Paris) will work on a film on the artist. The Morisot route hosted in September 2017 six artists of the 'Repin Institute of the Fine Arts Academy' in St Petersburg. The ICEAC organises also possibilities for young artists from various European countries to study the artist colonies of Impressionists. Similarly, the Jan Toorop responsible (Domburg) create summer meetings, one-week residencies for artists and young people.

3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

There are many instances of contemporary cultural and artistic practice related to the route. Indicatively, the young artists who come over to the various routes create through a contemporary lens, but in the style of Impressionists. Contemporary interventions that are more aligned with today's artistic production happen in other areas, such as, for example, in El Ferrol (Spain), with the project 'Meninas de Canido'. This is project that uses mural/street art inspired by historical painting, among which Impressionist paintings

to revitalize run-down buildings and areas. A new contemporary art space opens next to the Maison Fournaise (Renoir network) and will be in close collaboration with the museum for contemporary creation and exhibitions that get inspired by the Impressionist era. In Croissy-sur-Seine there is an exhibition with an approach linking contemporary creation, namely dolls dressed up with impressionist era attires, and entire models of Lego cubes and Playmobil.

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable development

There are very good plans in place for cultural tourism and sustainable development. Indicatively, the French routes are in collaboration with the local municipal and tourist authorities towards this aim, while the other partners exploit the position of their leaders that are museums of art and by default enjoy tourism and development. Domburg focuses on a combination with eco-activities, such as cycling. This both tallies with the Dutch population's tendency towards cycling, but also constitutes a good proposal towards new tourists, who can thus also acquaint themselves with the Dutch nature. The Slovenian partner combines approaches with the flourishing tourism in the city of Ljubljana. However, there seems to be no common strategic cultural tourism plan for the route. Sustainability, if seen independently regarding the routes, derives easily as a positive effect. Also, local authorities, and local and central governments are warming up to the financial support of the routes, as they realise the importance of the theme and the potential gain, both in cultural and practical terms.

One very important aspect of the work carried out in terms of sustainable development is the exploitation and furthering of the interest shown by Chinese visitors to Moret-sur-Loing (Alfred Sisley Network). The officers in charge have put in place a project, through which there are exchanges of artists effectuated. There is also an opening out to China, with the possible creation of a replica city of Moret in China, a project on which students of architecture are working at the moment. The work with China is through a tightly knit network of exchange and is under fast development.

3.3 Cultural Route Network

The Network is structured as mentioned above. Its main partners at the moment are museums, cultural organisations and municipal authorities from France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

There are, also, 47 paying members of the Association, most of which are active, however their role is not always clear.

The network benefits from a strong scientific committee, which, however, does not have regular meetings as a whole. Its members are passionate and contribute to the project either individually, or in smaller collaborations.

A network of universities and research centres equally supports really well the initiative.

3.4 Route Presentation

The Route Presentation is a little weak. The logo is mainly found in the publications *Impressionisms Routes*, *The Route of the Sower* and the Domburg leaflets in tandem with Euroart. The logo is not yet combined with the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe's logo.

Otherwise, the routes are visible on the dedicated website of the project, as well as in the publications. A comprehensive map with the possibility of some interaction – for a freer choice of route stops is missing.

Finally, signage is not available in any of the sites at the moment. Partners said they are looking into ways of developing that in the future.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations should be given for each criterion.

This is a structured initiative, with people who support it passionately and with hard work and who are prepared to work even hard to make this is very coherent project. As an Evaluator, I recommend their certification, on several conditions that the network will have to satisfy in the next year or two.

- With regards to cooperation and research, the work carried out is of high quality. However, it would greatly benefit for further systemizing and central management, so as to be equally beneficial to all partners and all aspects of the Route. It would also be helpful to decide which parts of the already established, very rich activities will be selected to form part of the dedicated, European-wide route. Communication among members should be brought to at least once monthly, with a dedicated newsletter and other modes of internal to the network exchange of information and ideas.
- Memory, history and the European heritage are well represented. An added benefit is that there are dedicated historians in place towards this scope.
- Regarding cultural exchanges of young Europeans these are, for the time being, good but kept within the artistic realm. It would be very good for the route to enable exchanges for people from different disciplines and/or backgrounds.
- Partners should finalise negotiations with municipalities for support and to reach out to the private sector for enhanced financial backing.
- Partners produce a common plan of sustainability, based on their individual ones.
- As per the previous evaluation, it would be more fruitful to change the concept of biographical routes to a network of nodes and/or hubs related independently to the life and work of the painters, with associated resources.
- The network should enhance its existing brand identity and apply it to all material with the Route itself.
- Partners should adopt all methods of dissemination of their work. At the moment they are quite good with print, but they should enhance their presence with other methods, including social media (FB, Twitter, Instagram etc.) and a multilingual and more interactive version of the website.
- Partners should work on integrating their logo onto all their communication and dissemination material, and aligning it with EICR requirements, to enhance visibility and common identity of the Route, and the Institute itself.
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5. List of references

Candidature files

Certification grid

Communication files

Administration Annex

Publication references

Exhibitions and Conferences

Activity files

Publications *The Route of the Sower. The Route of Slovenian Impressionisms*, Part One (National Gallery of Slovenia, Ljubljana 2017), *Impressionisms Routes* (Eau et Lumiere/Les Itinéraires, Paris 2016)

6. Expert field visit

Wednesday, January 17, 2018, Paris

16h00: Arrival, Me Baniotopoulou

19h30: Working dinner with Pierre Bedouelle (President of Eau & Lumière) and Georges Lucenet (Vice-President and General Delegate of Eau & Lumière)

Thursday, January 18, 2018.

09h00: Departure for Moret-sur-Loing(Alfred Sisley Network)

10h30: Meeting and visits: Evaluation Sisley Network. Town house of Moret-sur-Loing

Pilotage: Christian Recoing, President of the Association "Les Amis de Sisley", Vice-President and Treasurer of Eau & Lumière

Participation:

Jacques Bel, Deputy Mayor (Culture, Heritage) of Moret-sur-loing

Emeline Schafer, in charge of the Sisley Reasoned Catalog

Luc Paylot: Vice President "Friends of Sisley"

Monique Lucenet, Member of the Scientific Committee of Eau & Lumière

Marie-Claude Paylot, Point Manager Sisley

Arlette Fermigier, Secretary Documentalist

Claudine Protet, Attached to the Mayor's Office

Marie Striebel, Director of the Tourist Office of Moret-sur-Loing

13h00: Lunch chaired by Patrick Septiers, Mayor of Moret-sur-Loing / Orvanne, Vice-President of the Departmental Council of Seine-et Marne, in charge of Culture, Heritage and Tourism, Vice-President of Eau & Lumière .

15h00 : Departure to Paris

16h30: Arrival Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Private visit of the Orsay Museum led by Catherine Burger, Administrator of Eau & Lumière, in charge of the Morisot's Network, President of the Tourist Office of Bougival.

Friday 19th January 2018

09h00: Departure for Chatou, Ile des Impressionnistes, Museum and Maison Fournaise

09h30: Renoir Network Evaluation Meeting. Chatou, Maison Fournaise

Steering:Patrick Ozanne, Past President of the Tourist Office of the Pays des Impressionnistes, Administrator of the Saint-Germain-Boucle Seine Tourist Office and Eau & Lumière

Participation:

Michelle Grellier, Deputy Mayor, Chatou

Marie-Adine Touraine, Deputy Mayor, Croissy-sur-Seine

Marie Christine Davy, President "Friends of the MaisonFournaise"

Brigitte Gollety, Administrator of the Grenouillère Museum

Catherine Burger, President of the Bougival TO

Anne Galloyer, Curator of the Fournaise Museum
Monique Lucenet, Member of the Scientific Committee of Eau & Lumière
Jean-Louis Ayme, Founding President of the Grenouillère Museum

11:00 am: Morisot Network Evaluation Meeting. Mairie de Bougival

Steering: Catherine Burger, President of the Tourist Office of Bougival, Administrator of Eau & Lumière

Participation:

Laurence François, Director of the Bougival Tourist Office
Luc Watelle, Mayor of Bougival
Monique Lucenet, Member of the Scientific Committee of Eau & Lumière

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12h30: Lunch at Bougival (Holiday Inn)

14h00: Private tour of the Grenouillère Museum and Château Chanorier in Croissy-sur-Seine

Steering: Croissy's elected representatives (Marie-Adine Touraine, Cécile Cesbron-Lavaux, Charles Ghipponi). In presence of **Jean-Louis Ayme**, President-Founder of the Grenouillère Museum and Marie-Louise Schembri, President of the Friends of the Grenouillère.

15h00: Departure for Paris/Gare du Nord/Eurostar

I also interviewed via Skype and email

14 January 2018

Dr. Barbara Jaki (Director of the National Gallery of Slovenia) - in charge of the I. Grohar network

Ms Tanja Orel Šturm, Minister Plenipotentiary at the Embassy of the Republic of Slovenia in France (in retirement), Coordinator of the Grohar project

15 January 2018

Ms Francisca van Vloten, Francisca van Vloten (Director of the Museum of Domburg / Chairperson of the euroArt Scientific Committee) - in charge of the J. Toorop network.