

Town Hall of Condé-sur-Noireau
The Studio

Exhibition

Edouard CORTÈS (1882–1969) and Normandy

4 July to 24 October 2015

www.musee-charles-leandre.fr

PRESS Release

Since its opening in June 2007, the Musée Charles Léandre of Condé-sur-Noireau (Calvados) has sought to promote the work of Norman artists or those with ties to Normandy.

For the summer of 2015, our programming thus foresees a tribute to the Post-Impressionist painter Edouard Cortès (1882–1969), who lived in Cormelles-le-Royal from 1939 to 1954. Today, an internationally renowned painter, he is a very sought after artist, especially by American collectors.

The exhibition that we are presenting features nearly seventy works, mainly on the theme of Normandy. These paintings come from public collections but especially from numerous private collections: once again, the generosity of enlightened connoisseurs permits the sharing of a sensitive and relevant tribute to a painter who was fully appreciated during his lifetime and whose “brilliant palette, style and elegance” (as said *Le Bonhomme Normand* in 1943) continues to excite interest.

Allow me to express my infinite thanks to Nicole Verdier, expert on the work of Edouard Cortès, and to Eric Lefèvre, expert on Norman artists and curator of this beautiful exhibition which, without them, would have never been possible.

Pascal ALLIZARD,
Senator from Calvados, Mayor of Condé-sur-Noireau

Edouard Cortès and Normandy

Édouard CORTÈS knew Normandy from his youth and would keep a special attachment to this region for his entire life. As early as 1900, a trip to Tréport is attested to in the company of his elder sister, the painter Jeanne FROMENT. We know that at the end of the 1920s, he also stayed in the Hague, near Landemer, for the summer holidays.

The painter was 57 years old when, as war was declared in 1939, he and his wife settled in Cormelles-le-Royal,

near Caen, at the home of his brother- and sister-in-law, the Wiskirchens, industrialists¹ and horse breeders.

He had already come to the region several times since when in 1929, Albert Wiskirchen had purchased a lovely property on Rue du Lavoir. But leaving Lagny-sur-Marne where he usually lived was certainly not easy for him, since he was one of the leaders of its local artistic life.

Nevertheless, the artist seems to have fit in very well in the circle of Caen painters and he quickly joined the Société des Artistes Bas-Normands, founded, it should be recalled here, by par Louis BULOT (1894–1985), in 1926. Directed since 1936, by Louis-Edouard GARRIDO, each spring it organised a very well attended annual salon in which the cream of the era's artists made a point of participating, so that their works might be discovered. Their names were Géo LEFEVRE (1876–1953), André HARDY (1887–1986), Charles-Victorien TOUTAIN (1889-1945), Henri LEVAVASSEUR (1881-1962), André LEMAITRE (1909–1995) among others. A letter kept at the Municipal Library of Caen, which Cortès personally addressed to Louis BULOT attests to this membership.

(...) CORTÈS painted. He set up a studio in one of the buildings of the property where he was living. And it was there that he worked, although it did sometimes happen that he worked outside from nature.

(...) He painted Norman scenes here – quite a few – but from memory he continued to create views of Paris to supply the Parisian salons in which he participated (French Artists, Winter) and the galleries, such as Herbert Arnot in New York, and the American clients of the Galerie F. Clair in Paris.

But his excursions in Normandy – to the seashore or surrounding countryside – inevitably inspired him. He was not indifferent to the poetry of the place, to the marvellous changing skies sung by Baudelaire and, little by little, the Parisian painter became a provincial painter, every bit as Norman as those who had never seen other horizons.

Until his final departure in 1954 – the date at which he returned to live in Lagny – CORTÈS would have an exceptional production, shown during local exhibitions (mainly at the Salon des Bas-Normands or at the Galerie Alleaume in 1946 and 1948). But he was also able to send paintings from his Norman period to the capital. We can, however, assert that this Norman period was much more than just a stage in CORTÈS' career. It even played an essential role – as did the Mediterranean coast for some – thanks to the painter's wonderment with the light. CORTÈS was drawn to a new use of colour, which changed his way of painting.

(...) As receptive to Normandy as he was to Paris, CORTÈS, a generous artist, has thus left us an artistic heritage of the highest order that we are happy to bring to light for the first time in more than half a century. A serene work that sacrifices to no mode or to any mannerism.

Eric Lefèvre, exhibition curator

Edouard Cortès - Repères biographiques par Nicole Verdier

1882: Edouard, Léon, Cortès born on 6 August, at 3 Rue des Etuves in Lagny-sur-Marne.

Son of Antonio Cortès y Aguilar (Seville, 1827–Lagny, 1908), at twenty years old painter to the Royal Court of Spain, and his second wife, Léontine Frappart (1850–1922).

That year, the Museum of Brest bought a painting by Antonio Cortès.

1895–1897: After having earned his Elementary School Certificate, the young Edouard studied in his father's studio, where he received solid academic training and in the Parisian studio of Eugène Froment (1844–1926), a renowned wood engraver, father-in-law of his sister, Jeanne Froment (1874–1954), herself and artist painter who exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants from 1922 to 1933.

1899: The youngest exhibitor was admitted to the Salon des Artistes Français; the international press praised his canvas *Le Labour [Ploughing]*, which he kept until his death.

¹ Albert Wiskirchen owned a company located at 23 Rue des Envierges, in the 20th arrondissement of Paris: Le Paquetage Moderne – Appareils “AUTOPAQ” Patented in France and abroad.

Presented works at the first exhibition of the Union Artistique et Littéraire de Lagny and did so until 1904.

1900: Discovered Normandy, with his sister Jeanne, during a stay in Tréport where he returned in 1905.

1902–1904: Attended classes at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where Eugène Froment was a professor.

1907: As a member of the Artistes Français he exhibited there until 1920.

He organised an auction sale at the Hôtel Drouot of 52 of his *Vues de Paris*.

1908: Was a member of the “Association Amicale des Paysagistes Français”.

Participated in the Toulouse International Industrial Salon where he was awarded a medal and at the Salon des Industries et du Mobilier in Paris.

Death of his father Antonio Cortès at Lagny-sur-Marne.

1910: Bought the former home-studio of Emile Cavallo-Peduzzi in Lagny-sur-Marne.

In July, he stayed in Brittany with his mother, his sister and his nieces; he painted the port of Locquirec.

1911: Edouard Cortès was mentioned in the first edition of the Bénézit dictionary.

1912: Works titled *Effet de lumière* were sent to the Salon de la Société des Amis des Arts de la Manche.

1913: In August Cortès was in Locquirec where he painted landscapes of the pink granite coast.

A biographical note on Cortès appeared in a German dictionary of artists.

1914: Sent one of his paintings to the Salon des Artistes Français: *Débarquement de poisson au Tréport [Unloading fish at Le Tréport]*. In October, Edouard Cortès and Fernande Joyeuse were at Port-en-Bessin in Normandy. They were married in December in Paris.

1915: Enlisted volunteer, he was appointed to a post in the Infantry. During the conflict, he made numerous sketches of military life and war-torn landscapes.

1916: Birth of his daughter Simonne Jacqueline in Paris.

1917: Wounded at the front.

1918: His wife Fernande died in Paris.

1919: Married his sister-in-law Lucienne Joyeuse in Paris.

1920: Returned to his home in Lagny-sur Marne. He spent the summer in Brittany and Normandy.

His fame drew art dealers including the Galerie Léon Gérard, Rue Drouot in Paris, which bought small *Vues de Paris*. Hugo Arnot, an Austrian art dealer established in Vienna, who had exhibited Claude Monet’s paintings in 1911 and 1912, began to buy those of Cortès.

1922: As a member of the Société des Artistes Indépendants, he exhibited works there until 1930.

Stayed at Le Tréport with his wife and his daughter Jacqueline.

Death of his mother at Gouvernes.

1923–25: Spent the summer on the Normandy coast with his wife and his daughter.

1926: Founded the Union des Beaux-Arts de Lagny over which he presided until 1938.

1927: Presented his works at the first exhibition of the Union des Beaux-Arts de Lagny.

1928: In August, Cortès, his wife, his daughter and the Wiskirchens were at Landemer on the Channel coast. The Canadian company T. Eaton ordered 30 paintings, which were exhibited in November–December, in Montreal, Winnipeg and Toronto.

1929: On 25 July, Albert Wiskirchen bought a property on Rue du Lavoisier at Cormelles-le-Royal. Cortès and his wife often stayed there before residing there from 1939 to 1954.

Named Officer of the Académie des Beaux-Arts.

1930: The town of Lagny-sur-Marne bought the canvas *Place de l’Hôtel de Ville, jour de marché – 1930*.

1931: Awarded the Croix d’Honneur de Chevalier de l’Éducation Sociale.

His name was mentioned in the “Dictionnaire Biographique des Artistes Contemporains 1910–1930” by Edouard Joseph.

1933: Stayed with friends at Rémalard in the Orne.

1934: Member of the Salon d’Hiver in Paris where he had exhibited since 1922.

Was at Cormelles-le-Royal in July.

1935–38: Edouard Cortès and Lucienne spent the summer at Cormelles-le-Royal.

1939: Cortès and his wife left Lagny to live at Cormelles-le-Royal.

1940: Participated at the Salon des Artistes Bas-Normands with six works.

1942: Exhibited six paintings at the Salon des Artistes Bas-Normands including *L’Orne, automne*.

1943: Awarded the first prize in painting during the 17th exhibition of Salon des Bas-Normands.

Exhibited *Vue de Caen* at the Salon des Provinces Françaises, organised by the Parisian review *Beaux-Arts* in the rooms of the Musée de Caen.

1944: His studio at Cormelles-le-Royal was destroyed by bombing.

1945: The Oblin family, whose farm was destroyed at Cormelles, was welcomed into the Wiskirchen home.

1946: Placed some thirty paintings on consignment at the Galerie Alleaume in Caen.

1947: Resigned from the presidency of the Union des Beaux-Arts de Lagny.

1948: Presented three works: *Caen, rue Saint Jean – Caen, Place Fontenelle – Mondeville*, at the Salon des

Artistes Bas-Normands.

1949: Much sought after by the Galerie F. Clair. Deliveries of his painting to the United States would continue until 1969.

1952: Received in Cormelles an American couple, Merlin and Lydia Hamilton, who collected his pictures and to whom he had dedicated his self-portrait. They were again his guests in Lagny in 1955.

1954: Left Cormelles-le-Royal and returned to live in his house in Lagny.

One of his paintings *Spring in Normandy* was published in an American revue.

1955: Became Honorary President d'Honneur of the Union des Beaux-Arts de Lagny until 1969.

One of his paintings, *Le Port de Ouistreham en Normandie*, illustrated the Paris-Artistic catalogue.

Learned of the death of M. Alleaume and the closing of the Caen gallery.

1957: Exhibited four paintings at the Salon des Beaux-Arts de Lagny, including *Route de Grentheville*.

1958: Monsieur F. Clair died suddenly; His daughter Marcelle, then very young, took over the gallery.

1959: Met Herbert Arnot whose great-grandfather already sold his paintings.

1963: Exhibition *The Poet of Paris in Oil – Edouard Cortès*, Findlay Galleries, Palm Beach, Florida, U.S.A.

1967: Death of his wife Lucienne.

1969: Awarded the Prix d'Honneur of the town of Vincennes.

Edouard CORTES died on 26 November at Lagny-sur-Marne. The press paid tribute to a great painter.

The exhibition

Curator of the exhibition: Eric Lefèvre – Tel: 06 81 83 25 45 – eric.lefevre-expert@orange.fr

With the precious help of Nicole Verdier, expert on the work of Edouard Cortès and author of the catalogue raisonné of his painted works and of the administrative, cultural and technical services of the Town Hall of Condé-sur-Noireau, especially the staff of the Musée Charles Léandre space.

The exhibition is produced by the Town Hall of Condé-sur-Noireau, with the support of the Conseil Départemental of Calvados and public and private collections.

Practical information – schedule – contacts

Exhibition and events contact:

Espace Musée Charles Léandre, Marie-Pierre Lefèvre – Tel: 02 31 69 41 16

contact@musee-charles-leandre.fr

Press, production contact, Town Hall of Condé-sur-Noireau:

Béatrice Olivier – Tel: 02 31 59 15 55

beatrice.olivier@mairie-conde-sur-noireau.fr

The exhibition is presented within the Musée Charles Léandre, first-floor temporary room, and on the ground floor of the municipal Médiathèque.

Free individual admission. 9/11 Rue Saint Martin at Condé-sur-Noireau. Tel: 02 31 69 41 16

Publication of an exhibition booklet

“Edouard Cortès et la Normandie”, July 2015, €8, on sale at the Musée Charles Léandre space.

From 4 July to 24 October 2015.

www.musee-charles-leandre.fr

From Tuesday to Friday 9:30am to 12:15pm and 2pm to 6:30pm,

Saturday from 10am to 6pm. Free admission. Open Sunday 5 July, 2 August, 6 September, 4 October from 2:30pm to 6pm.

Free admission.

Opening reception 4 July at 4pm.

First-page illustration: Jardin en automne, oil on panel, Slr, private collection. ©Adagp, Paris 2015