



Preview of Major 2024 Anniversaries **From 1124 to 2004**

1124 | 900th anniversary of the birth of Aliénor d’Aquitaine

Born: 1124, Château de Belin in the Gironde, Aquitaine

Died: April 1, 1204 in Poitiers

Aliénor d’Aquitaine, also known as Eleanor of Aquitaine was arguably one of the most powerful women in history, being first queen of France and later of England. Married to Louis VII, she began her 15-year reign in France and took part in the Second Crusade. Their marriage was annulled in March 1152. Her second marriage was to Henry II of England, with whom she had Richard the Lionheart. She was heavily involved in administering the kingdom, but was also a great patron of the arts, poetry in particular.

Around 1524 | 500th year anniversary of the birth of Louise Labé

Born: 1524 in Lyon

Died: April 25, 1566 in Lyon

Louise Charlin Perrin Labé, a.k.a *La Belle Cordière*, was a unique French poet of the Renaissance. Unverifiable legends were born because of her wit and because of the freedom she enjoyed. She was said to have fought on horseback alongside the Dauphin at the siege of Perpignan and used to dress like a man. Her book of love sonnets published in 1555 are still remarkable to this day for their emotional and stylistic intensity.

1524 | 500th year anniversary of the death of Pierre Terrail, knight of Bayard

Born: 1476 in Château Bayard, Pontcharra, Rhône-Alpes

Died: April 30, 1524 in Romagnano Sesia, Italy

The seigneur de Bayard Pierre Terrail, best known as the “knight without fear and beyond reproach”, was a French soldier and military leader who lived between the Middle Age and the Renaissance. He was one of the most skillful commanders of the 16th century in France and Europe and fought in numerous battles under King Charles VIII, Louis XI and Francis 1—France’s famed Renaissance king.

1774 | 250th anniversary of the birth of Marie-Denise Villers

Born: 1774 in Paris

Died: August 19th, 1821 in Paris

Marie-Denise Villers (born Lemoine) was a French painter specialized in portraits who trained with Francois Gérard and Jacques-Louis David. Her art was first exhibited at the Paris Salon in 1798. Her most famous *painting Portrait of Charlotte du Val d'Ognes* was at first wrongly attributed to David then rightly attributed to her when the NY MET purchased the painting in 1922, where it is still on display.

January 26, 1824 | 200th anniversary of the death of Théodore Géricault

Born: September 26, 1791 in Rouen, Normandy

Died: January 26, 1824 in Paris

Jean-Louis André Théodore Géricault was a French painter and lithographer and one of the pioneers of the Romantic movement. Besides major works such as *The Charging Chasseur* and the *Wounded Cuirassier* he is best-known known for his painting of *The Raft of the Medusa*. All three masterpieces of the Romantic Movement can be seen at the Louvre.

July 12, 1824 | 200th anniversary of the birth of artist Eugène Boudin

Born: July 12th, 1824 in Honfleur, Normandy

Died: August 8th, 1898 in Deauville, Normandy

The French landscape artist Eugène Boudin, was one of the first to paint outdoors, capturing nature through brilliant light while including impressionistic touches. Boudin is best known for his paintings of wealthy vacationers enjoying the beaches of fashionable Deauville & Trouville. In 1858 he met 18-year old Claude Monet and persuaded him to become a landscape painter.

April 15, 1874 | 150th anniversary of the first Impressionist Exhibition

The idea for the first Impressionist Exhibition was a direct and defiant response to the Academy des Beaux-Arts' rejection of these pioneering artist's work depicting scenes from every day and modern life, for its prestigious annual *Salon de Paris* exhibition. The first show of the eclectic 'Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors and Engravers, etc...' which was founded by Claude Monet, Camille Pissarro and Edgar Degas among others, was held at the famed Nadar photo studio on the Boulevard des Capucines. A joint exhibit echoing the Nadar show will first held early 2024 at the Musée d'Orsay, then travel to the National Gallery in D.C. | [National Gallery release](#).

April 19, 1874 | 150th anniversary of Jane Poupelet

Born: April 19th, 1874 in Saint-Paul-Lizonne, Dordogne

Died: October 17th, 1932 in Talence, Gironde

Jane Poupelet originally began her career under the male pseudonym Simon de la Vergne. She was a French sculptress and artist, best known for her animal sculptures and her female nudes. After studying at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Bordeaux and later on in Paris, she met Auguste Rodin, Antoine Bourdelle as well as several French and English feminist artists. During WWI she created masks for disfigured servicemen in collaboration with American Anna Ladd. One of her sculptures is at the NY MET.

November 4, 1874 | 150th Anniversary of the death of Louisy Mathieu

Born: June 17th, 1817 in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, FWI

Died: November 4th, 1874 in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, FWI

Louisy Mathieu was the first freed slave to be elected to the National Constituent Assembly from 1848 to 1849, during the short lived Second French Republic. 1848 was the year of the second abolition of slavery in France. At 31, his candidacy was supported by, and was elected as substitute, of the famous abolitionist Victor Schoelcher. Schoelcher was elected to represent both Guadeloupe and Martinique, chose to represent Martinique & ceded his seat as representative of Guadeloupe to Louisy Mathieu.

January 7, 1899 | 125th anniversary of the birth of Francis Poulenc

Born: January 7th 1899 in Paris

Died: January 30th 1963 in Paris

Francis Poulenc was a largely self-taught French composer and pianist. His compositions ranged from songs, solo piano works, chamber music an choral pieces to operas, ballets, and orchestral concert music. His most famous compositions are the “Concert champêtre” (1928), the ballet “Les biches”(1923) “La Voix Humaine” (1959) and his opera “Les dialogues des Carmélites (1953).

March 31, 1889 | 135th anniversary of the completion of the Eiffel Tower

Originally conceived and built for the 1889 World Fair, the Eiffel Tower was finished in only two years and 2 months on 31st March 1889. The date coincided with the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution. The Eiffel Tower was not meant to be permanent and was, at the time was criticized; however, the 300-meter tall steel tower conceived by engineer and entrepreneur Gustave Eiffel, quickly became one of the French capital’s major monuments and is until today the most visited and recognizable monument of Paris. [More on the Eiffel Tower.](#)

July 5, 1889 | 135th anniversary of the birth of Jean Cocteau

Born: July 5th, 1889 in Maisons-Laffitte, Paris Region

Died: October 11th, 1963 in Milly-la-Forêt, Paris Region

Jean Maurice Eugène Clément Cocteau is most-known for his impact on Surrealism, avant-garde and Dadaism, being a poet, playwright, novelist, designer, filmmaker, visual artist and critic. Some of his most influential novels are Le Livre blanc (1928), les Enfants Terribles (1929), Beauty and the Beast (1946) and Orpheus (1950). Cocteau painted the interiors of several chapels: Chapelle Saint-Blaise-des-Simples in Milly-la-Forêt, Chapelle Notre-Dame-de-Jérusalem in Fréjus and the Chapelle Saint-Pierre in Villefranche-sur-Mer. They are all referred to as Cocteau chapels or *Chapelles Cocteau*. His works can also be seen in Menton—The Salles des Mariages (Wedding room) of Menton City Hall and two museums dedicated to his works. More on [Cocteau in Menton](#)

1924 | Olympic Games in France (winter in Chamonix & Paris Summer Olympics)

The Summer Olympics were held in Paris between May 4 and July 27 1924, the Winter Olympics were held from January 25 until February 5 1924 in Chamonix and Haute-Savoie. More than 44 countries and 3000 athletes, including more than 100 women, participated in the games held in Paris to pay tribute to Pierre, baron de Coubertin, the retiring president of the International Olympic Committee and founder.

July 4, 1934 | 90th anniversary of the death of Marie Curie

Born: November 7, 1867 in Warsaw, Poland

Died: July 4th 1934 in Passy, France

Marie Curie, born Maria Salomea Skłodowska, was a Polish and French physicist and chemist who pioneered in research on radioactivity with her husband Pierre Curie. Not only was she the first woman to win a Nobel Prize but also the first person to win a second one in a different field. In 1906 she also became the first female professor at the University of Paris. Until 2014, Marie Curie was the first woman to be enshrined in the Panthéon in Paris on the basis of her own merits. Her ashes were placed next to her husband's in 1995.

June 6, 1944 | 80th Anniversary of the D-Day - Normandy landings

After airborne drop behind enemy lines came the early morning D-Day Landings of over 160,000 allied infantries on June 6, 1944. The largest amphibious invasion ever, launched the 80-day battle of Normandy, leading to the liberation of Paris, France and the rest of Europe. To understand this huge undertaking, visitors to the D-Day sites are invited to discover the recently-opened high-tech version of the [Arromanches D-Day Museum first built in 1954](#).

June 10, 1944 | 80th anniversary of the Oradour-sur-Glane massacre

Having been urgently ordered to Normandy after D-Day from their bases in and around Montauban (Occitania), German Waffen-SS troops from the 2nd SS Panzer Division Das Reich murdered 643 individuals in the village of Oradour-sur-Glane four days later. It was a collective punishment for resistance activity. This included women and children and people merely passing by the village. After the massacre, the village was never rebuilt, and President Charles de Gaulle ordered that the ruins should be preserved as a permanent memorial. Right before Oradour, on June 9, Das Reich troops hanged 99 hostages from the town of Tulle (Limousin, Nouvelle Aquitaine) and deported many more.

August 15, 1944 | 80th anniversary of the Other D-Day | Le Var, Provence

In addition to the June 6th landings in Normandy, it's also the 80th anniversary of Operation Dragoon, a crucial Franco-American landing that occurred on August 15, 1944. The primary landing sites were located in Le Var County of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region. After these landings, allied forces advanced up the Rhone Valley, executing a coordinated pincer movement to cut off and engage retreating German troops. This strategic maneuver culminated in a historic meeting with D-Day veterans in Dijon on September 12, 1944.

December 13th 1944 | 80th anniversary of the death of Wassily Kandinsky

Born: December 16th, 1866 in Moscow, Russia

Died: December 13th, 1944 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

Russian painter Wassily Wassilyevich Kandinsky is recognized as a pioneer of abstract art in the West. After studying in Russia and Germany, he moved to France where he produced some of his most prominent art. His most famous contributions to the expressionism and abstract movements are "On White II" and "Der Blaue Reiter."

November 3, 1954 | 70th anniversary of the death of Henri Matisse

Born: December 31, 1869 in Le Cateau-Cambrésis, Hauts-de-France (Northern France)

Died: November 3d, 1954 in Nice

Henri Émile Benoit Matisse was not only an illustrious painter, but also a draughtsman, a sculptor and a printer. His artworks overflow with intense colorism, and fluid original draftmanship and have strongly marked the Post-Impressionism, Modernism and Fauvism movement. Some of his most memorable work is *Woman with a Hat* (1905), *The Joy of Life* (1906), *Nu bleu* (1907), *La Danse* (1909), *L'Atelier Rouge* (1911), *The snail* (1953). You can admire his art at the [Matisse Museum in Nice](#). Also worth a visit, the [Chapelle Matisse in Vence](#).

1964 | 60 years of the Maeght foundation

2024 marks the 60th anniversary of the Maeght Foundation which is located on the outskirts of one of the gems of the Côte d'Azur, the village of Saint-Paul de Vence. It was inaugurated July 26, 1964 by celebrated writer & Minister of Culture, André Malraux, who was also a close friend of the Maeghts. The foundation was at the time France's very first private art institution, modeled on American institutions like the Guggenheim Foundation and the Barnes and Phillips Collections. To coincide with the 60th anniversary of the foundation, a significant expansion to its exhibit spaces is being built. Also, a major exhibition *Amitiés, Bonnard-Matisse pour les 60 ans de la Fondation Maeght* will be held starting June 29, 2024. For more on these developments, [click here](#).

January 24, 1974 | 50th anniversary of the first Angouleme International Comics Festival

Originally founded by French writers and editors Francis Groux, Jean Mardikian and Claude Moliterni to highlight the diversity of comic strip art and manga artists, the Angouleme International Comic Strip Festival has been taking place for 50 years. The four-day event attracts between 6 to 7000 professionals and showcases comics artist creations for which prestigious industry prizes are awarded. The festival is the second largest in Europe and the third worldwide, attracting over 200,000 visitors. The 2024 edition will take place January 25 to 28.

March 8, 1974 | 50th anniversary of the inauguration of Charles-de-Gaulle Airport

The construction of the third Parisian airport (Le Bourget and Orly) began in 1966, in order to maximize passenger capacities following the economic boom and a growing population. After eight years of construction and a cost of 275 million USD, the airport was opened by Prime Minister Pierre Messmer. Five days later the first commercial flight from New York's Kennedy Airport landed at Charles-de-Gaulle. Today CDG handles about 70 million passengers a year making it the second busiest airport in Europe.

August 3, 2004 | 20th anniversary of the death of Henri Cartier-Bresson

Born: August 22nd, 1908 in Chanteloup-en-Brie, Paris Region

Died: August 3d, 2004 in Céreste, Alpes-de-Haute-Provence

"For me the camera is a sketchbook, an instrument of intuition and spontaneity, the master of the instant which, in visual terms, questions and decides simultaneously". Henri Cartier-Bresson was a French humanist photographer who is considered as a pioneer in the genre of street photography. Being involved in the Surrealism movement, he was a master of candid photography and an early user of 35mm film.