

CITÉ IMMERSIVE VIKING

Cité Immersive Viking Rouen

Press kit



DISCOVERING HISTORY IN SPECTACULAR AND IMMERSIVE SPACES

An immersive experience in the heart of Rouen, the city of the Vikings

As the very first site in the Cités Immersives network, Cité Immersive Viking is located on the banks of the Seine in Rouen, just 1.5 km from the city's iconic cathedral. Inaugurated on 15 June 2024, this venue offers an educational and immersive experience that explores the fascinating world of the Vikings in Normandy, to bring their story to life.

Through a richly designed journey that is at once sensory, narrative, and entertaining, Cité Immersive Viking highlights Scandinavian culture, its craftsmanship, mythology, history, and its essential contributions to today's world. The visit is available in French and English thanks to audio headsets.

How did Normandy become, within a century, the most powerful region in Europe?After repeated Viking invasions, Rollo (also known as Rolf the Walker), the warrior leader of the Vikings in the region, allied with Emperor Charles III and was baptised in Rouen in 911. He was named Count of Rouen, paving the way for the creation of the Duchy of Normandy. This marked the beginning of a process of integration that remains a symbolic milestone in French history—its legacy is still felt across Normandy today.

The exhibition traces a century of Viking raids along the Seine, culminating in Rollo's decision to make peace and found a new territory that would shine for over a thousand years. The journey unfolds across several themed spaces, narrating the key chapters in the Viking settlement in Normandy: the attacks, the encampments, the peace treaty, and the legacy. A succession of video portraits, curated artefacts, historical set pieces, sensory installations, and multimedia experiences unveils the true face of the first Normans. At the end of the visit, a dreamlike and contemplative room invites visitors to travel through time and space.

The exhibition's scientific advisor is Vincent Samson, a historian specialising in medieval history and Scandinavian philology. The scenography was designed by Sophie Liger.

Throughout the year, Cité Immersive Viking hosts a rich programme of events, aimed in particular at encouraging audiences who are less familiar with history to reconnect with this powerful chapter of their local heritage.

1000 m²	1h30-2h	360°
OF INNOVATIVE SCENOGRAPHY	OF UNIQUE EXPERIENCE	VIDEO-MAPPING SHOW

CITÉ IMMERSIVE VIKING

An unique sensory and historical journey

The Scriptorium

The visitor begins their journey by entering a dimly lit library. The mysterious silhouettes of two young adults appear. They are Adèle and Guillaume, Rollo's two children. They introduce the exhibition, the mystery of Rollo's life and his legacy, in Normandy and beyond. From black and white, the light shifts to a fiery red, signalling to the visitor to continue their path towards the corridor of fear.

The Room of Smoking Ruins

The visitor then enters a desolate landscape, which stages the origins of Rollo's story and immerses the audience in the violence of the Viking incursions that took place throughout the 9th century. In the aftermath of the attack, among the still-smouldering ruins of the abbey, while threatening shadows roam and distant war chants echo, the survivors—a monk, a peasant and a mother superior—recount the chaos and devastation caused by the Viking raids. Behind the ruins stands a wrecked drakkar longship, a relic of the violence on land and sea. Its tattered sail becomes a screen, revealing spectral faces of the fearsome Scandinavian warriors—including the young Rollo.

The Ornamented Passage

After discovering the scale of the Viking attacks, the visitor enters a corridor made of raw wood, carved with rich symbolic ornaments, revealing another, more human and civilised side of the Vikings.

Inside, a tiny tent is hidden, in which the youngest visitors can find a treasure. Using a game booklet, younger children can access a version of the exhibition adapted to their age.

The Camp Scene

The corridor opens onto a Scandinavian camp, full of life and colour on an island in the Seine. It is night; the call of an owl and the crackling of flames can be heard. The visitor settles around a campfire, where three generations of women—a völva (seer), a mother and a teenage girl—recount their daily lives. Dawn breaks, revealing a shipyard where a magnificent vessel is being built. Two new characters appear: a craftsman who explains how to build such a ship, and a trader who recounts his sea adventures. They all hope that Rollo will succeed in negotiating peace with the Franks, so that they may secure their future in these lands whose customs and traditions they are beginning to adopt.

The Peace Room

The adventure continues. The visitor now finds themselves in a baptistery whose beauty and tranquillity invite contemplation, while female Gregorian chants blend with Viking melodies, lending a majestic solemnity to the suspended moment that is about to unfold. Indeed, Rollo's baptism—portrayed by Philippe Torreton—and that of his Vikings is taking place. Surrounded by key figures in the integration of the Scandinavians in Normandy, such as the Archbishop of Rouen and Pope John X, they all pass one by one beneath an evocative cascade symbolising the rite of passage. This highly symbolic event bears witness to a historical turning point: the Treaty of Saint-Clair-sur-Epte in 911. In exchange for lands on Carolingian territory, Rollo pledges allegiance to Charles III and undertakes to protect the mouth of the Seine from all Viking incursions. He thus becomes Count of Rouen.

The Throne Room

The scene shifts to the warm interior of a palace worthy of the Count of Rouen, where a throne stands under soft lighting and courtly music fills the space. Seated at a grand banquet table, Rollo is joined by his children, Adèle and Guillaume, his chosen heir. He reflects on his life as he prepares to pass on power. Once a stranger, he has become the founder of Normandy—once a destroyer, now a builder. The room features multimedia installations inviting visitors to engage with interactive quizzes on Scandinavian cuisine and Viking explorations around the world.

Question for a Norman

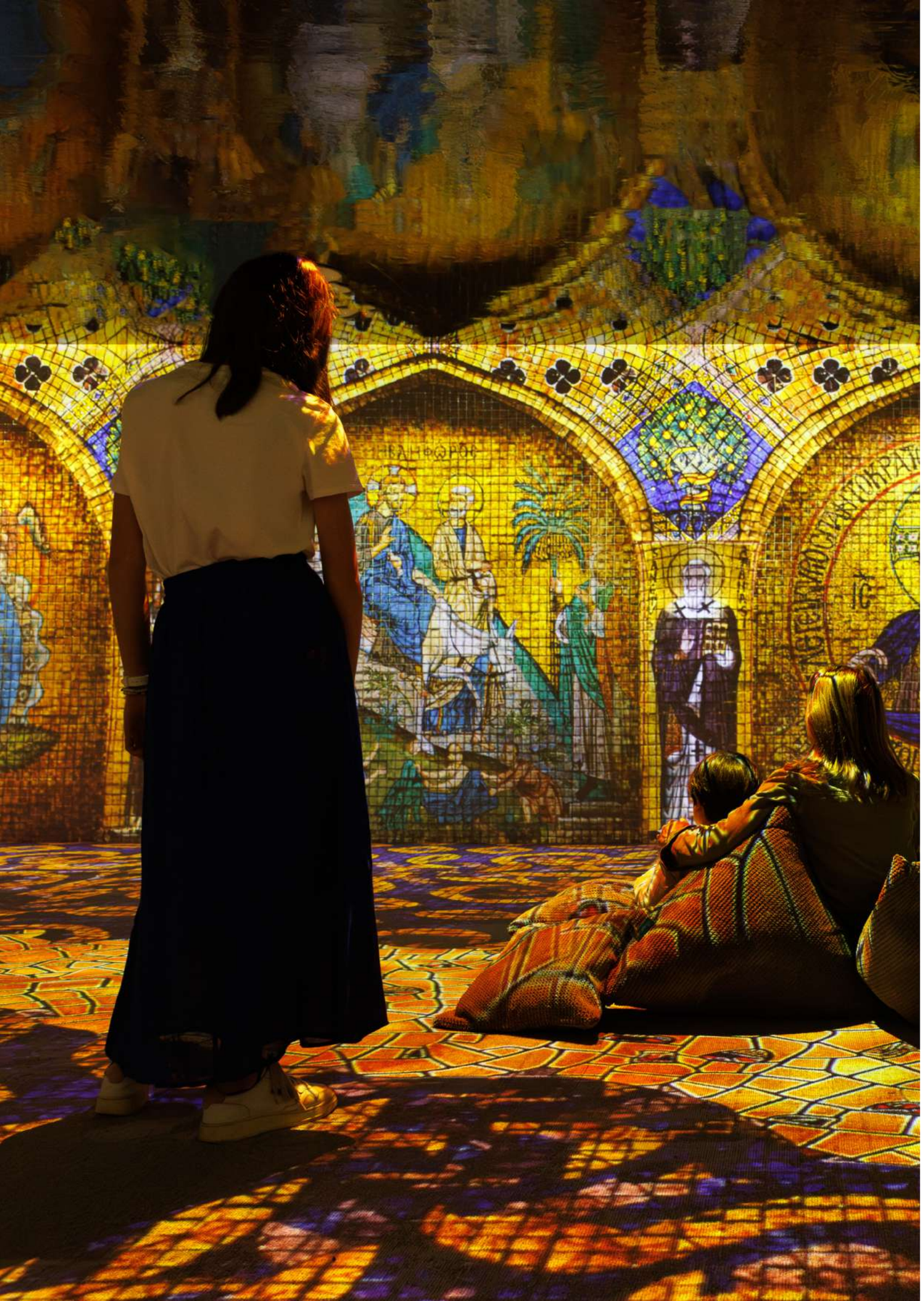
In this journey through time, the visitor now enters a library that resembles the one at the beginning of the experience. However, here the room serves as a game space. With the help of clues, the visitor can answer questions about the Vikings, who have become icons of popular culture.

A playful and educational game that invites visitors to collaborate in order to win.

The hall of Dreams

A grand finale to this extraordinary journey, the experience ends in a 180 m^2 space imbued with dreamlike qualities. Through immersive 360° video projections, the visitor is plunged into a historical dream, that of the life of Rollo and his great-great-great-great-grandson, William the Conqueror, also travelling across the world, following the course of Viking explorations.

Under the artistic direction of Ateliers BK, this final room is a distillation of cutting-edge technologies, featuring 3D scenes created using motion capture, animated texturing inspired by medieval illuminations, and video mapping on the walls and floor, topped with a mirrored ceiling for maximum immersion.



Collectible pieces to bear witness

As the visitor wanders through the exhibition, they can also discover a series of archaeological objects dating from the 8th to the 11th centuries: swords, knives, axe heads, as well as everyday items such as keys, pins and jewellery, along with religious artefacts.

Among these treasures, swords stand out as emblems of the Viking era, symbols of power and social status, as well as formidable weapons of war.

The demand for high-quality materials and the expertise of specialised craftsmen give them a privileged place among these relics. These blades, often given as gifts, were invaluable possessions for their rare and fortunate owners.

They all bear witness to the delicate work of goldsmithing and the mastery of ironworking techniques of the Scandinavian people, offering the viewer a journey through time.

These invaluable objects are delicately displayed in backlit chests, placed on sand, shells, tree branches, stones and other natural elements. This meticulous scenographic work enhances their precious character and invites visitors to lean in and examine these treasures, immersed in an atmosphere evocative of the Viking era.

A fun and educational visit, unique in France

15
VIDEO PORTRAITS
TO RELIVE AND UNDERSTAND THE VIKING SAGA

6
ROOMS
OF HISTORICAL DISCOVERIES

0-99
YEARS
A VISIT FOR ALL AUDIENCES

CITÉ IMMERSIVE VIKING

Rouen, a leading historical and cultural destination

In the heart of Europe, Rouen stands as an enduring witness to some of the richest pages of history. Once a Gallo-Roman city, it became the birthplace of the Duchy of Normandy in 911 under the leadership of the Viking chieftain Rollo. Over the centuries, the city flourished, establishing itself as a commercial power, particularly under the influence of William the Conqueror and Philip Augustus.

The city is home to a truly living heritage, such as the moving remains of Jumièges Abbey, a masterpiece of Romanesque art, or the timeless majesty of its cathedral, immortalised by Claude Monet. Rouen, the birthplace of Impressionism, is now a major tourist destination.

In resonance with the city's unique history, Cité Immersive Viking offers a dedicated space highlighting the rich Scandinavian heritage in relation to Rouen. Close to the iconic cathedral, Cité Immersive Viking is set within a new leisure area. Today, it is an original and essential destination for the people of Rouen, French and international tourists alike, as well as enthusiasts of lifestyle, culture and history.

Cité Immersive Viking works closely with Normandie Tourisme and the Rouen Tourist Office to promote the cultural destination centred on the Viking theme.

The project's partners



Ubisoft

The company Ubisoft is a partner in an educational video installation presented in the Camp Room, created using the video games *Assassin's Creed Valhalla* and *Discovery Tour: Viking Age*.



Nota Bene

The well-known YouTube channel Nota Bene is collaborating with Cités Immersives to create *Nota Bene Runes*—steles offering visitors 12 video clips on themes covered in the exhibition, allowing them to explore further and complement the experience.



© Anna Maria Miranda

A passionate team led by
Ludovic Garnier

Conductor of Cité Immersive Viking, Ludovic Garnier is a Viking at the helm of a great ship. Since 2019, he has been president and founder of the association *Les Enfants de Rollon*, based in Rouen and bringing together nearly 200 volunteers who are committed to staging Viking culture. Through this association, he carries a deep commitment to the values promoted by the Vikings, such as gender equality, courage, boldness and an unceasing quest for adventure. For several years, he has been preserving this memory in Rouen in order to bring this glorious past back to life through performances, medieval fairs, and the construction of the famous longships.



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Vincent Samson
Scientific Advisor

A medieval historian specialising in ancient Nordic civilisation, Vincent Samson is the scientific advisor of Cité Immersive Viking. He is the author of a doctoral thesis on the "berserker warriors" of the Viking Age, published in 2011 and since translated into several languages. He is currently preparing several studies devoted to the religion of pre-Christian Scandinavia. He ensures the historical accuracy of the content produced, enriches the exhibition with his expertise, and contributed to the writing of the exhibition catalogue alongside other renowned historians specialising in Scandinavia.



© Anna Maria Miranda

Sophie Liger
Scenographer

A scenographer for over 25 years, Sophie Liger has designed a rich and ambitious exhibition pathway alongside Jean Vergès and Elizabeth Yardeni, Creative Director. The epic of Rollo, oscillating between legend and reality, serves as the guiding thread of this immersive fresco in which the poetry of myths blends with the course of history, guiding visitors throughout their journey through Cité Immersive Viking.

A project led by Cités Immersives

“While the world is a land of history, rich in heritage and epic tales, much of these stories remain little known to the general public. We are convinced that adopting an approach different from that of the traditional museum makes it possible to reach a wider audience. We believe that emotion and spectacle should serve education.”

It was from this observation that the Cités Immersives project was born, founded in 2023 by Jean Vergès and Anthony Samama, with the aim of harnessing the power of immersion and new technologies to tell history with rigour, passion and poetry, thereby broadening access to knowledge.

While 83% of French people say they are interested in history, only 30% visit museums regularly. Cités Immersives therefore offers a new model for cultural venues: spaces of over 1,000 square metres that combine rigorous historical and scientific content with immersive scenography.

Each Cité offers a journey through the stories, figures and narratives of France, Europe and the wider world, shedding light on the diversity of perspectives and collective memories.

Historical sets, special effects, audiovisual productions, collectible objects, 360° projections, sound and lighting design, staging and storytelling come together to create a sensory experience in which emotion enhances understanding.

Designed as true living spaces, the Cités also regularly host meetings, events and cultural activities. Their content is frequently renewed to encourage repeat visits, with affordable pricing aimed at making them accessible to the widest possible audience.

Each project is developed in collaboration with local stakeholders (cultural institutions, researchers, associations and public authorities), in order to respect and highlight the specific characteristics of each region.

An innovative company committed to bringing history and its cultural richness closer to the widest possible audience, Cités Immersives designs, produces and operates immersive cultural venues in France and internationally. Its ambition is to rethink the museum experience by combining scientific rigour, education and entertainment, in order to foster a love of history among all audiences. This approach encourages intergenerational transmission, builds bridges between curious visitors, enthusiasts and experts, and nurtures a shared culture grounded in documented sources.

By making the events and cultures that have shaped societies tangible, Cités Immersives helps to bring lesser-known narratives back into focus, to contextualise the most famous ones, and to give visitors interpretative tools to better understand the past and the present, and to strengthen social bonds. By helping people rediscover these stories, Cités Immersives aims to reinforce the desire to live together and to foster collective curiosity.

Cités Immersives opened its first venue — the Viking Immersive City — in Rouen on 15 June 2024. It is now the most visited paid cultural attraction in Rouen and in the department. Building on this success, Cités Immersives opened a second space on 20 December 2024 in the Île-de-France region, at Westfield Carré Sénart in Lieusaint, as a temporary format. The Immersive Fables City will then continue as an international touring project across several major cities in France and Europe.

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Practical Information

Cité Immersive Viking Rouen

Hangar, 105 bis 105 Allée François Mitterrand 76100 Rouen

Opening hours and ticket price :

For more information, please refer to the website :
viking.cites-immersives.fr

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