

ART IN THE STOUR VALLEY

The Stour Valley is a nationally significant area for artists, positioned on the border between Essex and Suffolk - an area sometime referred to as Constable Country - and under an hour by train from London. With its wide skies, abundant natural light and gentle green horizon, this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is an inspiration for landscape artists in particular.

For centuries its inhabitants and visitors have celebrated this valley with their artistic skills and talents. From famous artists of the past who painted this special landscape, such as Constable, Gainsborough, Nash and Munnings, to contemporary artists working, teaching and displaying their works in galleries today, the Stour Valley is a unique and exciting destination for those with an interest in art.

VISITING THE STOUR VALLEY



Please consider travelling sustainably where possible. For up to date local public transport timetables, contact traveline on: www.traveline.info or 0871 200 22 33.

For detailed maps of the area, use Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No's. 196 (Sudbury, Hadleigh and the Dedham Vale), 210 (Newmarket and Haverhill), 211 (Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket) and 195 (Braintree and Saffron Walden)

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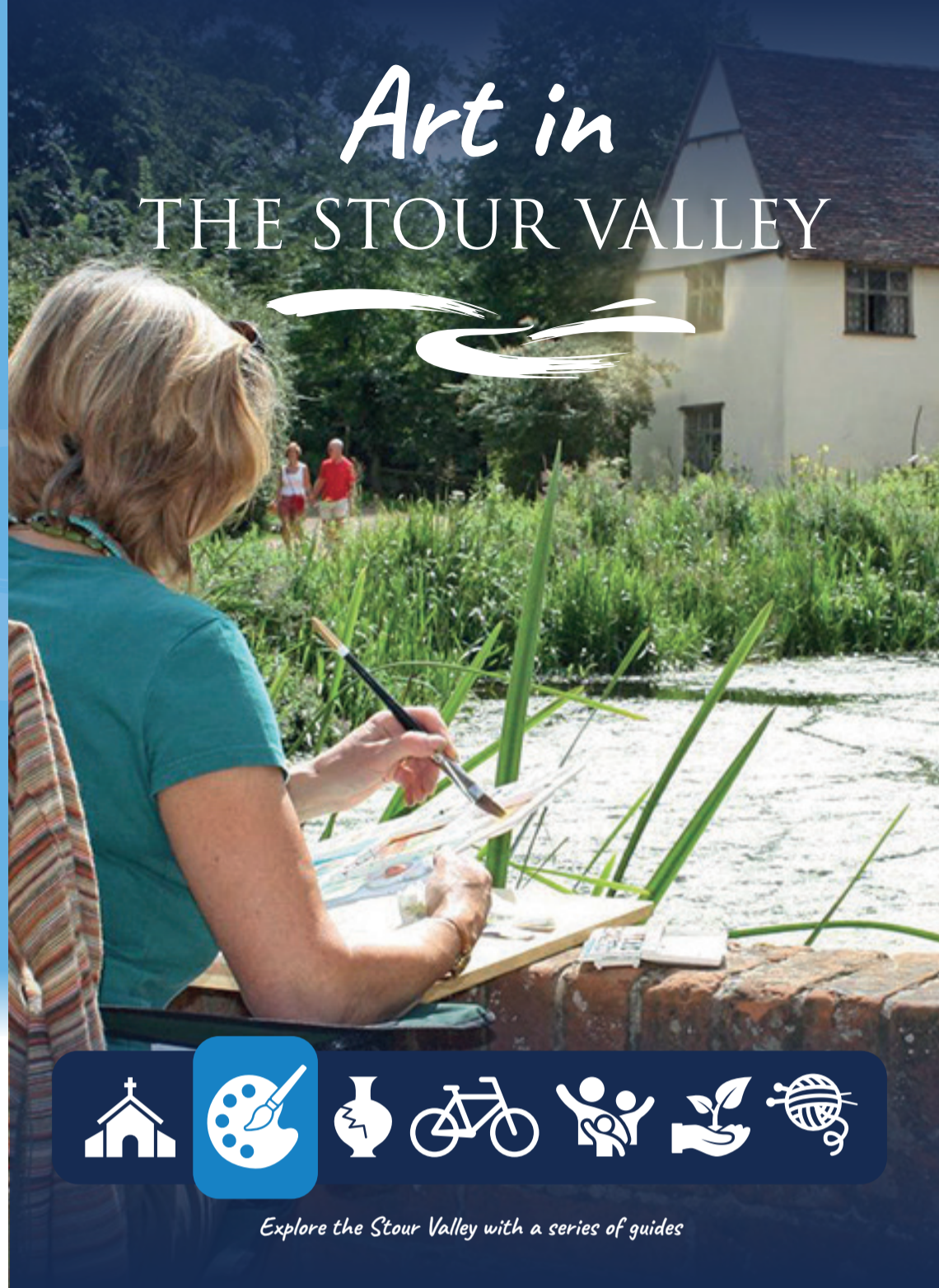
Improving the Stour Valley for Visitors Project is a business development project to support high quality visitor products and services, funded by:

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas



Front cover image: Artist painting Willy Lott's House, photograph courtesy of The Field Studies Council at Flatford Mill

With additional support from:



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Explore the Stour Valley with a series of guides

STOUR VALLEY ARTISTS OF THE PAST: Where they lived and painted



Left: The Munnings Art Museum, Castle House with Studio. Centre: Visitors have the opportunity to purchase featured art at Mill Tye Gallery. Right: Painting Horses from Life Workshop, copyright The Munnings Art Museum



Left: Main Hall, The Munnings Art Museum, copyright the estate of Sir Alfred Munnings. Centre: Visitors enjoying an exhibition at Mill Tye Gallery and Arts Centre. Right: Willy Lott's House at Flatford, which appears in several Constable Paintings

1 John Constable
John Constable (1776-1837) is a true East Anglian artist and unquestionably one of the world's finest landscape painters. He was born in East Bergholt and spent much of his time in the countryside near his home. It was here he developed a love of painting and drew inspiration from his beloved Suffolk and Essex landscapes, which sustained him creatively for the rest of his life. His paintings of the Dedham Vale made him one of the most famous landscape artists of the 19th century. Constable's first great success (which brought him recognition by the Royal Academy) was with *A Boat Passing a Lock* painted at Flatford. Other notable works include his depiction of Dedham Church and *The Hay Wain*, both reflecting rural scenes around the River Stour. In later years, he wrote nostalgically: "all those things that lie on the banks of the Stour, they made

me a painter". Today, in the Stour Valley, you can find a Constable painting (*The Ascension*) inside Dedham Church and more of his paintings are held in The National Gallery and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich.

2 Thomas Gainsborough
Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) was born in Sudbury and from an early age displayed a talent for drawing and painting, spending much of his childhood sketching in the woods and fields surrounding Sudbury. After training in London, Gainsborough returned to Suffolk in 1748, first living in Sudbury, then Ipswich, to work as a portrait painter for the local gentry and mercantile classes. Despite portraiture remaining more lucrative, Gainsborough always maintained that he much preferred painting landscapes, and views of rural Suffolk and the Stour

Valley landscape such as *Cornard Wood* remain some of his most notable works. A large collection of Gainsborough's work can be found at a museum gallery in his former home in Sudbury. Gainsborough's House is closed for redevelopment throughout 2020 and into 2021 - check the website for post-refurbishment opening hours: www.gainsborough.org.

3 Cedric Morris
Cedric Morris (1889-1982) lived with his partner Arthur Lett-Haines in Higham from 1929. Together they established the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing in Dedham. After the school burnt down in 1939 - possibly as a result of star student Lucian Freud leaving a smouldering cigarette on his easel - they relocated to Morris and Lett-Haines's home, Benton End Farm near Hadleigh. As well as his famous portrait paintings, Morris often painted the exotic flowers that he planted in the gardens of Benton End. This earned him the nickname of 'the Artist Plantsman'. Morris co-founded the Colchester Art Society, he also lectured at the Royal College of Art. Maggi Hambling, another notable former pupil, visited Morris the day before he died, and afterwards drew his portrait. Today, Morris' works can be found in various public collections, including at The Minories Galleries in Colchester and Tate Britain.

4 Alfred Munnings
Sir Alfred James Munnings (1878 - 1959) was born in north Suffolk and lived and painted in Dedham between 1919 and 1959. Famous as one of England's finest painters of horses and as a war artist, he also painted a large collection of landscapes of the Stour Valley, including *White Canoe on the*



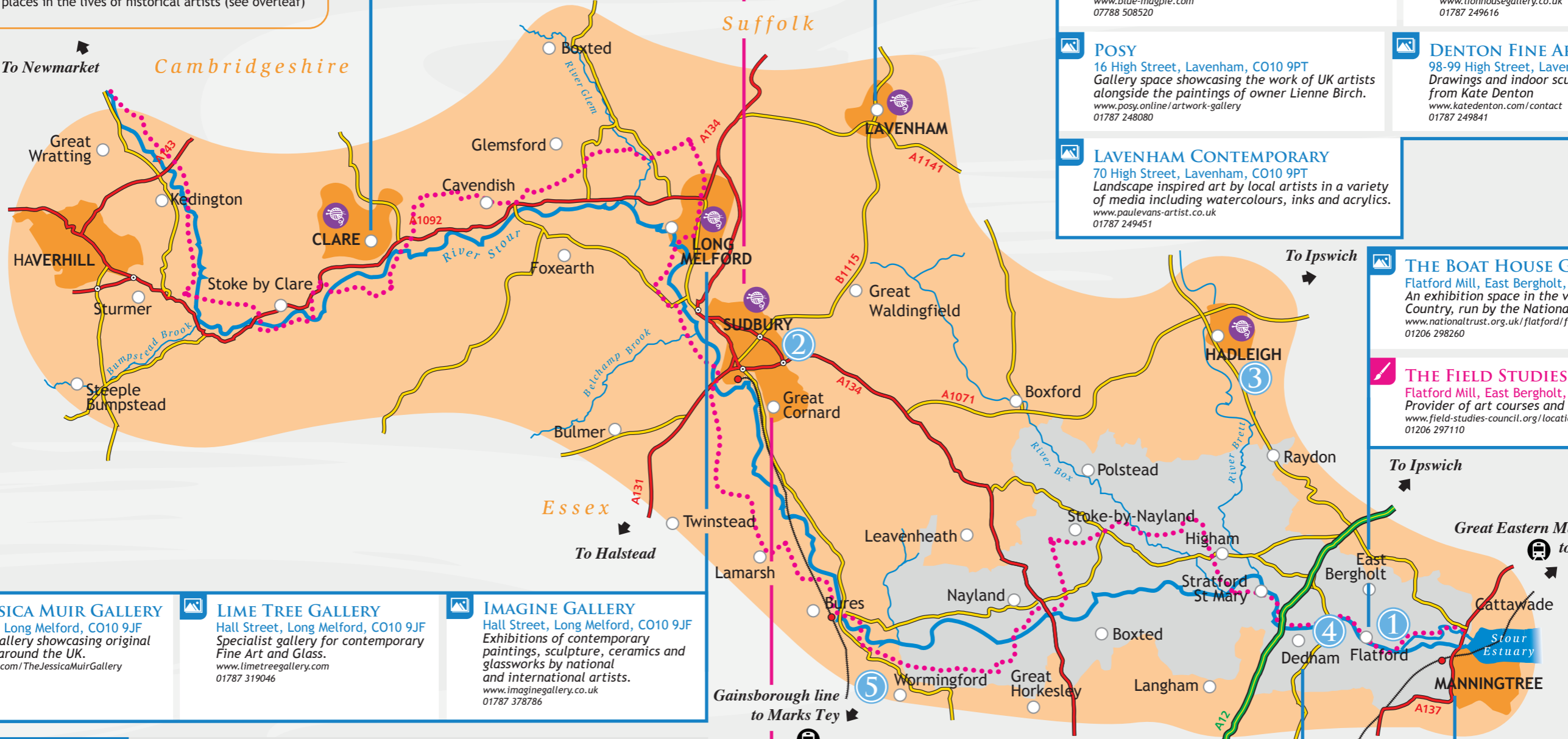
Stour at Flatford and Barge on the Stour at Dedham. Munnings wrote in his autobiography, "My one joy, was in knowing that my home was near a perfect river, the banks grown with sedge and meadowsweet; groups of cattle against the sky reflected in the water". His Dedham home, Castle House, is open as a museum and gallery displaying his art.

5 John Nash
John Nash (1893-1977) was an esteemed painter, illustrator and engraver who spent many years of his life in his beloved Bottengoms Farm in Wormingford. Here he painted features of the surrounding landscape, depicted in works such as *Wormingford Mill*, *The Mill Pond* and *Disused Canal at Wormingford*. The views from Bottengoms are used in paintings such as *Frozen Ponds* and *The Garden in Winter*. John Nash is buried with his wife in Wormingford churchyard, overlooking the panorama of fields and woodland amongst which he had made his life. Nash bequeathed his personal library and several of his paintings and engravings to The Minories Galleries in Colchester. Most can now be found in many private and public collections at the Tate Gallery, the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, and the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco.

ART ACTIVITIES & ARTISTS in The Stour Valley

- Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Stour Valley and surrounding Wool Towns
- Stour Valley Path
- Wool Towns
- G View & Buy:
Galleries, Exhibitions and Art Museums
- C Get Creative:
Courses, Classes and Workshops
- Significant places in the lives of historical artists (see overleaf)

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SEA PICTURES GALLERY
Well Lane, Clare, CO10 8NH
Contemporary marine related art in all media.
www.seapicturesgallery.com
01787 279024

SUDBURY ART & FRAMING CENTRE
8 Friars Street, Sudbury, CO10 2AA
Framing services, monthly art exhibitions and sales of local artists work
www.sudburyframing.co.uk
01787 310900

LUXSTONE STONE & MONUMENTAL MASONS AND LETTER CARVERS
Stour Valley Business Centre, Sudbury, CO10 7GB
Courses and workshops available for letter cutting and stone carving
www.neilluxton.co.uk
01787 371570

SUDBURY POTTERY CLASS
8 Friars Street, Sudbury, CO10 2AA
Pottery classes taught by a local potter and ceramic artist
www.sudburypotteryclass.co.uk
07572 574763

BLUE MAGPIE STUDIO
72 Water Street, Lavenham, CO10 9RW
Framing studio, gallery and shop with an eclectic mix of work by talented local artists, antiquarian prints and decorative pieces.
www.blue-magpie.com
07788 508520

THE LION HOUSE GALLERY
12 High Street, Lavenham, CO10 9PR
A gallery showcasing the work of owner-artist Lizzie Stevens and leading artists from East Anglia and beyond.
www.lionhousegallery.co.uk
01787 249616

POSY
16 High Street, Lavenham, CO10 9PT
Gallery space showcasing the work of UK artists alongside the paintings of owner Lienne Birch.
www.posy.online/artwork-gallery
01787 248080

DENTON FINE ART BOUTIQUE
98-99 High Street, Lavenham, CO10 9PT
Drawings and indoor sculpture from Kate Denton
www.katedenton.com/contact
01787 249841

LAVENHAM CONTEMPORARY
70 High Street, Lavenham, CO10 9PT
Landscape inspired art by local artists in a variety of media including watercolours, inks and acrylics.
www.paulevans-artist.co.uk
01787 249451

THE BOAT HOUSE GALLERY
Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, CO7 6UL
An exhibition space in the very heart of Constable Country, run by the National Trust.
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/flatford/features/boat-house-gallery
01206 298260

THE FIELD STUDIES COUNCIL
Flatford Mill, East Bergholt, CO7 6UL
Provider of art courses and holidays
www.field-studies-council.org/locations/flatfordmill
01206 297110

THE JESSICA MUIR GALLERY
Hall Street, Long Melford, CO10 9JF
Artist led gallery showcasing original work from around the UK.
www.facebook.com/TheJessicaMuirGallery
01787 310400

LIME TREE GALLERY
Hall Street, Long Melford, CO10 9JF
Specialist gallery for contemporary Fine Art and Glass.
www.limetreegallery.com
01787 319046

IMAGINE GALLERY
Hall Street, Long Melford, CO10 9JF
Exhibitions of contemporary paintings, sculpture, ceramics and glassworks by national and international artists.
www.imaginegallery.co.uk
01787 378786

MILL TYE GALLERY AND ARTS CENTRE
3 Cornard Mills, Great Cornard, CO10 0GW
Workshops, classes and short courses in photography, fine art and print making
www.milltyegallery.co.uk
01787 376796

NORTH HOUSE GALLERY
The Walls, Manningtree, CO11 1AS
Exhibitions of paintings, drawings, sculpture, and original prints by modern and contemporary artists.
www.northhousegallery.co.uk
01206 392717

MUNNINGS ART MUSEUM
Castle Hill, Dedham, CO7 6AZ
Presenting the largest single collection of paintings and drawings by this prolific East Anglian painter, inside his former home. Events and art workshops throughout the year.
www.munningsmuseum.org.uk
01206 322127

DEDHAM ART AND CRAFT CENTRE
High Street, Dedham, CO7 6AD
Located in a converted church in the heart of Constable Country, the Centre showcases the work of more than 60 artisans over three floors.
www.dedhamartandcraftcentre.co.uk
01206 322666

DEDHAM HALL
Brook Street, Dedham, CO7 6AD
Country hotel providing art courses in the tranquil setting of Constable Country and the Essex countryside.
www.dedhamhall.co.uk
01206 323027

Art just beyond the Stour Valley:

CHRISTCHURCH MANSION in Ipswich
Beautiful Tudor mansion that houses the biggest collection of Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable paintings outside of London. The Wolsey Art Gallery offers a programme of changing exhibitions, featuring objects from the Ipswich collections as well as incredible loans. www.ipswich.cimuseums.org.uk/visit/christchurch-mansion

FIRSTSITE in Colchester
A visual arts organisation showing a diverse mix of historic, modern and contemporary art from around the world and the artistic legacy cultivated by the East of England's unique landscape and character. Open all year, free admission, varied programme of exhibitions and workshops. www.firstsite.uk

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM in Cambridge
A collection of paintings comprising of nearly 1700 works, ranging from the 13th to the 21st century, with a superb collection of landscapes, including a notable group of atmospheric outdoor oil sketches by John Constable. www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk

THE MINORIES GALLERIES in Colchester
A professional contemporary gallery managed and run by Colchester School of Art, part of Colchester Institute, providing exhibitions of contemporary art, craft and design in one of Colchester's most distinctive buildings. www.theminoriesgalleries.co.uk