

# Your Daily Dose of Van Gogh

22 March 1889

Did Van  
Gogh think  
he was  
mad?

20 March 1890

Did  
Gauguin  
like Van  
Gogh's  
paintings?

27 September 1888

Was Van  
Gogh a food  
lover?

19 February 1890

What was so  
special about  
the women  
from Arles?

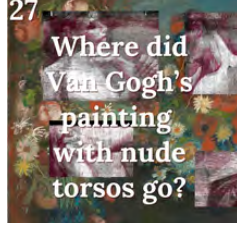
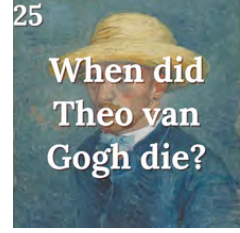
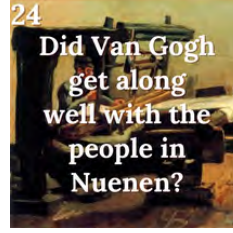
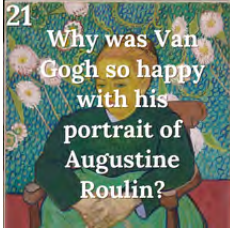
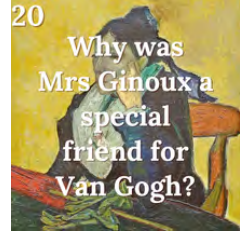
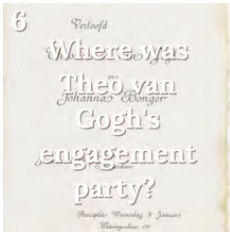
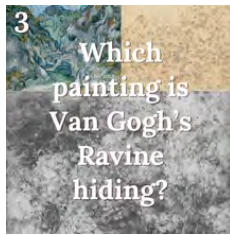
20 August 1888

Was Van  
Gogh poor?

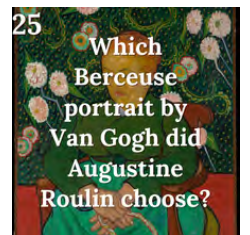
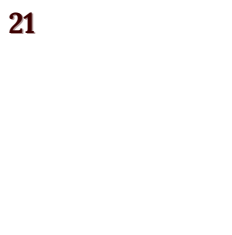
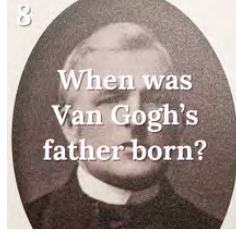
Hundreds of questions  
answered by Vincent  
van Gogh himself!

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# January



# February



# March

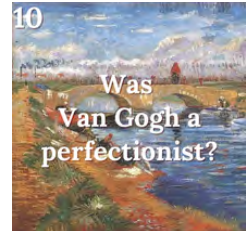
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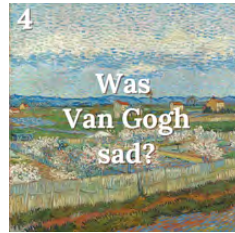
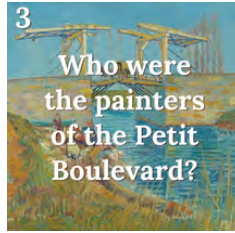


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# April



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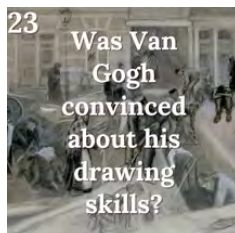
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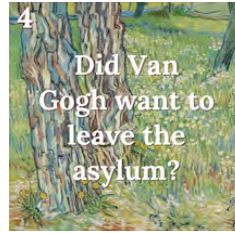


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# May

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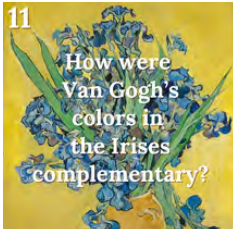


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# June

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# July

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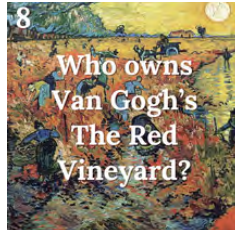
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How often are new Van Gogh paintings discovered?

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Who owns Van Gogh's The Red Vineyard?

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Did Van Gogh feel lonely in a crowd?

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How many bird's nests did Van Gogh paint?

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Was Van Gogh excited to become an uncle?

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How many letters did Van Gogh receive from his brother?

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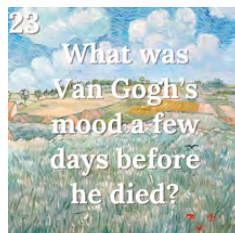


Who inspired Van Gogh to paint Cart with red and white ox?

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What was Van Gogh's mood a few days before he died?

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Why did John Peter Russell not buy Van Gogh's paintings?

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When did Van Gogh move to Paris?

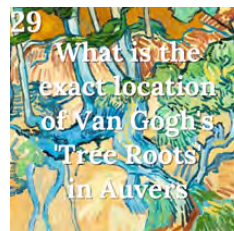
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Did Theo van Gogh see Vincent before he died?

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What is the exact location of Van Gogh's Tree Roots in Auvers?

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# August

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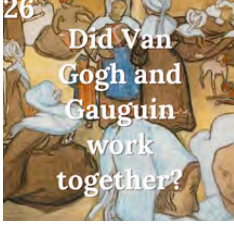
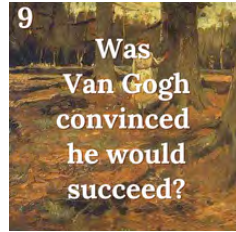


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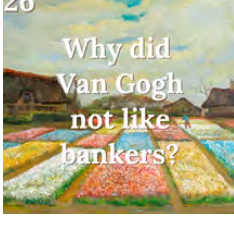
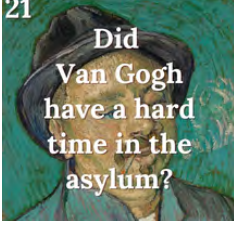
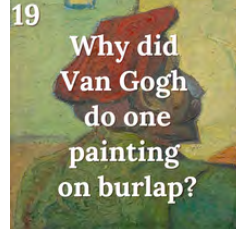
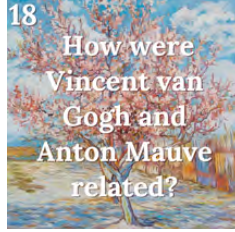
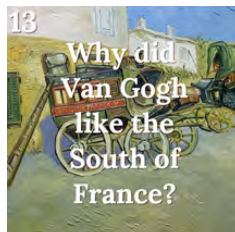
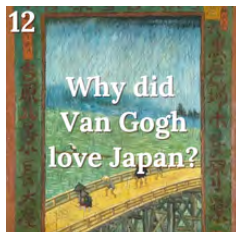
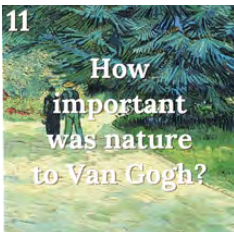


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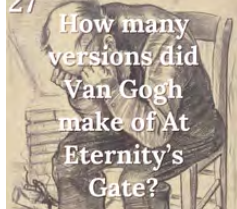
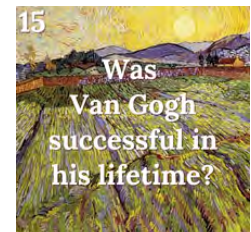
# September



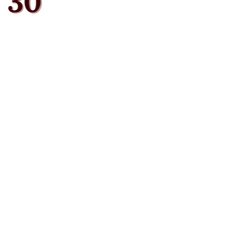
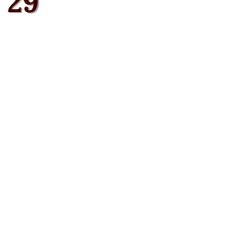
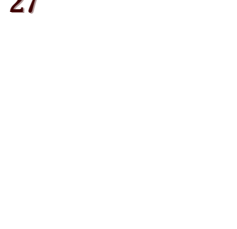
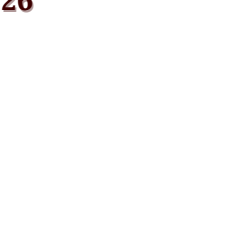
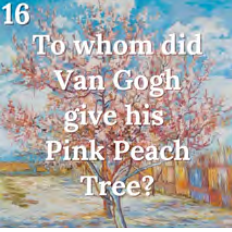
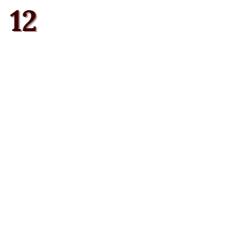
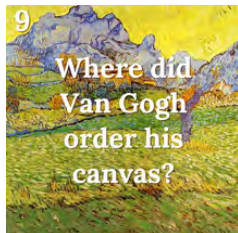
# October



# November



# December





Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh really eat paint?

Mr Peyron had written to Theo that Vincent had eaten paint to poison himself. This was during another mental breakdown, from about 24 December to about 30 December 1889, exactly one year after the first one in Arles.

Doctor Théophile Peyron ran the mental hospital of Saint-Paul-de Mausole in Saint Rémy de Provence.

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh grateful to his brother?](#)

## **Women picking Olives**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 92 cm**

**Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation, Athens**

## On 1 January 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

“Odd that I'd worked perfectly calmly on canvases that you'll soon see, and that all at once, without any reason, the confusion took hold of me again.”

One of the paintings Van Gogh was working on was Women picking Olives.

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How long did Van Gogh stay in the hospital in Arles?

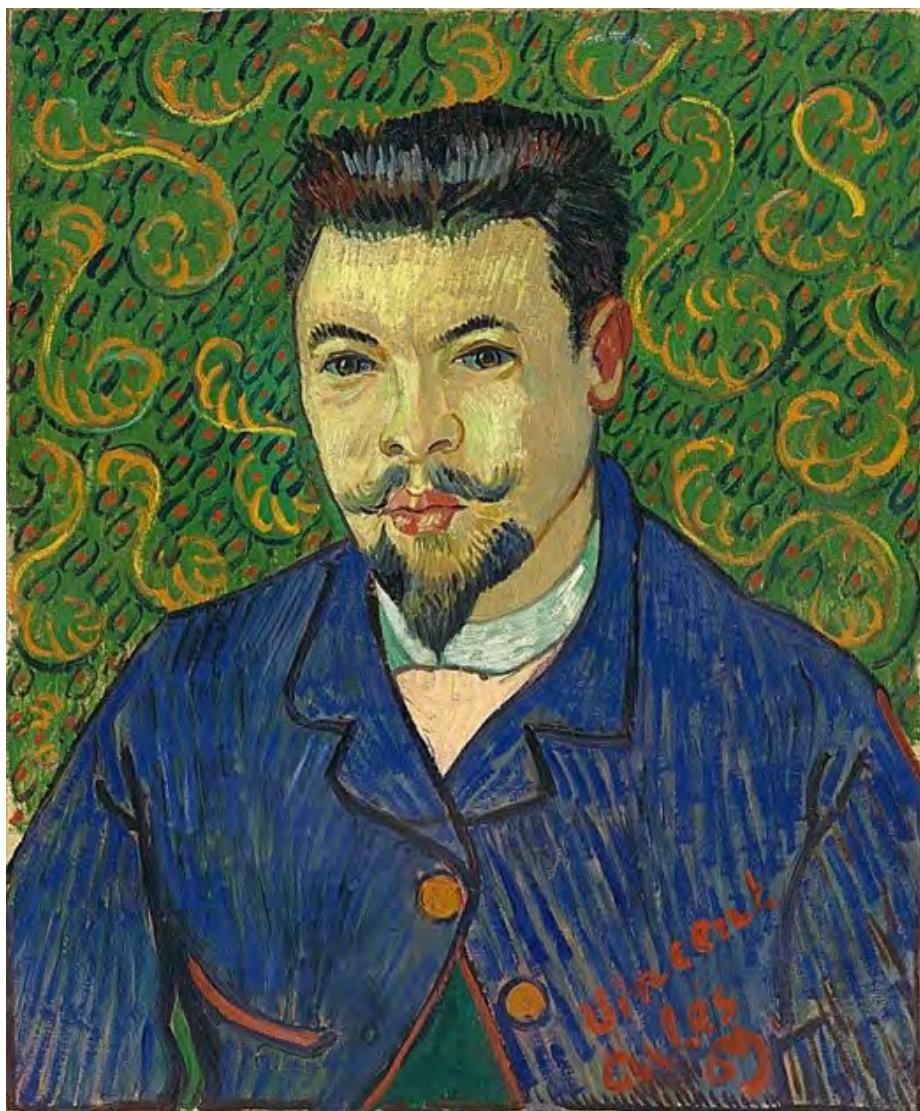
The first time Van Gogh spent two weeks in the hospital in Arles. The ear accident happened on 23 December 1888. The morning after on 24 December 1888 Van Gogh was brought to the hospital in Arles and he stayed there until 7 January 1889.

Before he moved to the asylum in Saint-Rémy Van Gogh stayed in the hospital in Arles two more times: from 7 February 1889 - 18 February 1889 and from 26 February 1889 - 8 May 1889.

## On 2 January 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"My dear Theo, In order to reassure you completely on my account I'm writing you these few words in the office of Mr Rey, the house physician, whom you saw yourself. I'll stay here at the hospital for another few days — then I dare plan to return home very calmly. Now I ask just one thing of you, not to worry, for that would cause me one worry too many."



**Portrait of Doctor Félix Rey**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**64 x 53 cm**

**Pushkin Museum, Moscow**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Vincent van Gogh have a drinking problem?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which painting is Van Gogh's Ravine hiding?

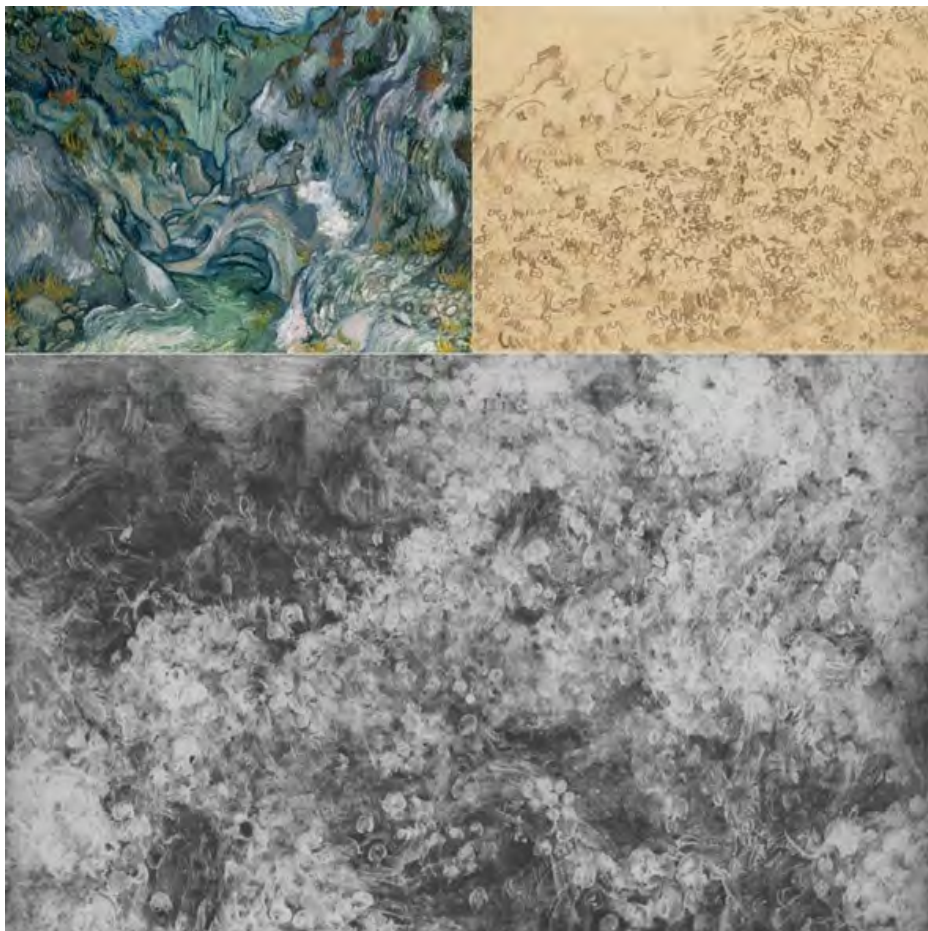
Vincent van Gogh painted two versions of The Ravine. One version resides in the Kröller-Müller Museum in The Netherlands. The second version in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston hides a painting underneath the surface: Wild vegetation. This was only discovered by x-rays in 2007, 118 years after he painted it.

It is unlikely that Van Gogh was not happy with the painting and therefore painted over it. He had made sketch of it and wrote about it to Theo. Probably Van Gogh was short of canvas and used it again. And another masterpiece was lost forever..

## On 3 January 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"The ravine. This is the study done on a day when the mistral was blowing; I had wedged my easel in place with large stones. The painting of this isn't dry, it's in a tauter drawing style, and there's more suppressed passion and it has more colour."



### **The Ravine**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 91,7 cm**

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

You may also like to read:

- [Van Gogh's missing paintings](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh give his paintings away?

Vincent van Gogh's paintings were not in demand when he was alive. He probably only sold one: *The Red Vineyard*. Van Gogh also exchanged his paintings with art works from Gauguin and Bernard.



Van Gogh also traded his paintings for food or painting supplies. Or he gave them away, like the *The White Cottage Among the Olive Trees* to his good friend in Arles, postman Joseph Roulin.

*On 4 January 1890,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"Yesterday I sent 2 canvases to Marseille, i.e. I made a present of them to my friend Roulin, a white farmhouse among the olive trees and a wheatfield with a background of lilac mountains and a dark tree, as in the large canvas I sent you."

***The White Cottage Among the Olive Trees***  
***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889***  
***Oil on canvas***  
***70 x 60 cm***  
***Private collection***

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Postman Joseph Roulin move out of Arles?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How much is a Van Gogh painting worth today?

Van Gogh's paintings in museums are not for sale, but his most famous masterpieces like *Starry Night* could be worth a billion.

Sometimes a Van Gogh painting from a private owner is auctioned. Like 'Head of a Woman', painted in Nuenen in Van Gogh's darker early style. It fetched 4,842,000 British Pounds (6,027,321USD) at Christie's on 28 February 2023.

## On about 5 January 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anton Kerssemakers from Nuenen:

"Anyway, I'm working with almighty pleasure these days, for I would much rather paint figures than anything else. Then — the heads of these women here with the white caps — it's difficult — but it's so eternally beautiful. It's precisely the chiaroscuro — the white and the part of the face in shadow, that has such a fine tone"



**Head of a Woman**  
**Nuenen, March - April 1885**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**41.3 x 32.6 cm**  
**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Vincent van Gogh poor?](#)

5 January

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where was Theo van Gogh's engagement party?

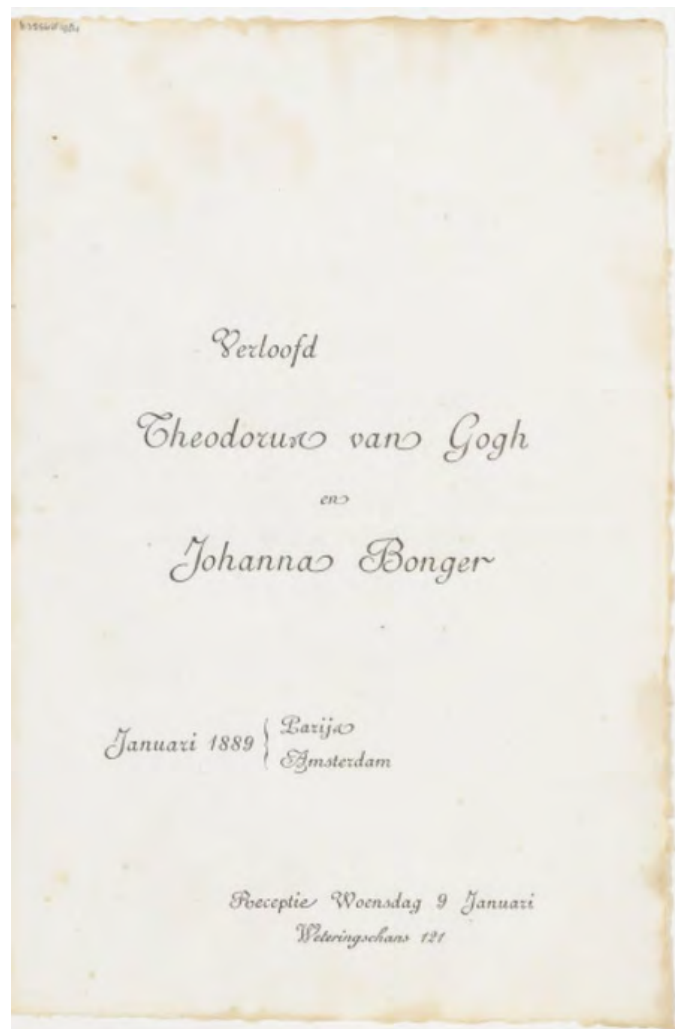
The engagement party was at Weteringschans 121 in Amsterdam, the address of Jo's parents, Hendrik Christiaan Bonger and Hermine Louise Weissman.

Theo and Jo's son Vincent Willem was the founder of Van Gogh Museum just 700 meters away 84 years later. If only they knew..

## *On 6 January 1889,*

Theo van Gogh and Jo van Gogh-Bonger sent the announcement of their engagement party to Vincent van Gogh from Paris/Amsterdam.

Theo van Gogh and Jo Bonger got married on 17 April 1889. One year before Theo declared his love to her. Johanna, who barely knew him, was a little irritated by his sudden proposal of marriage, and thus turned him down at first. Determination ran in the family though..



### **Announcement of the engagement party**

You may also like to read:

- [Thank you Jo van Gogh - Bonger](#)



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Which paintings did Van Gogh show at the Independents exhibition in Paris in 1889?

The fifth exhibition of the Société des Artistes Indépendants was held in Paris from 3 September to 4 October 1889. Vincent van Gogh sent *Starry Night over the Rhône* and *Iris*, two masterpieces that he made in Arles in 1888 and Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in 1889.

You may also like to read:

- [Why are Van Gogh's Irises not purple?](#)

### *Iris*

*Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889*

*Oil on canvas*

*71 × 93 cm*

*J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles*

## *On 7 January 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I just think that we must still keep calm regarding my own painting. If you want some I can certainly send them to you now, but when calm returns to me I hope to do something else. In any case, as regards the Independents, do what seems best to you and what the others will do."

*7 January*



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh actually copy Millet?

Vincent van Gogh copied 21 art works of Millet. But did he actually copy them? Were Van Gogh's paintings only inspired on Millet's art? Van Gogh clearly changed color, composition and perspective. The expression is also different. They gave Vincent comfort, translating Millets into another language. What did Theo think?

You may also like to read:

- [Van Gogh and Millet](#)

*Evening (after Millet)*

*Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889*

*Oil on canvas*

*74,5 x 93,5 cm*

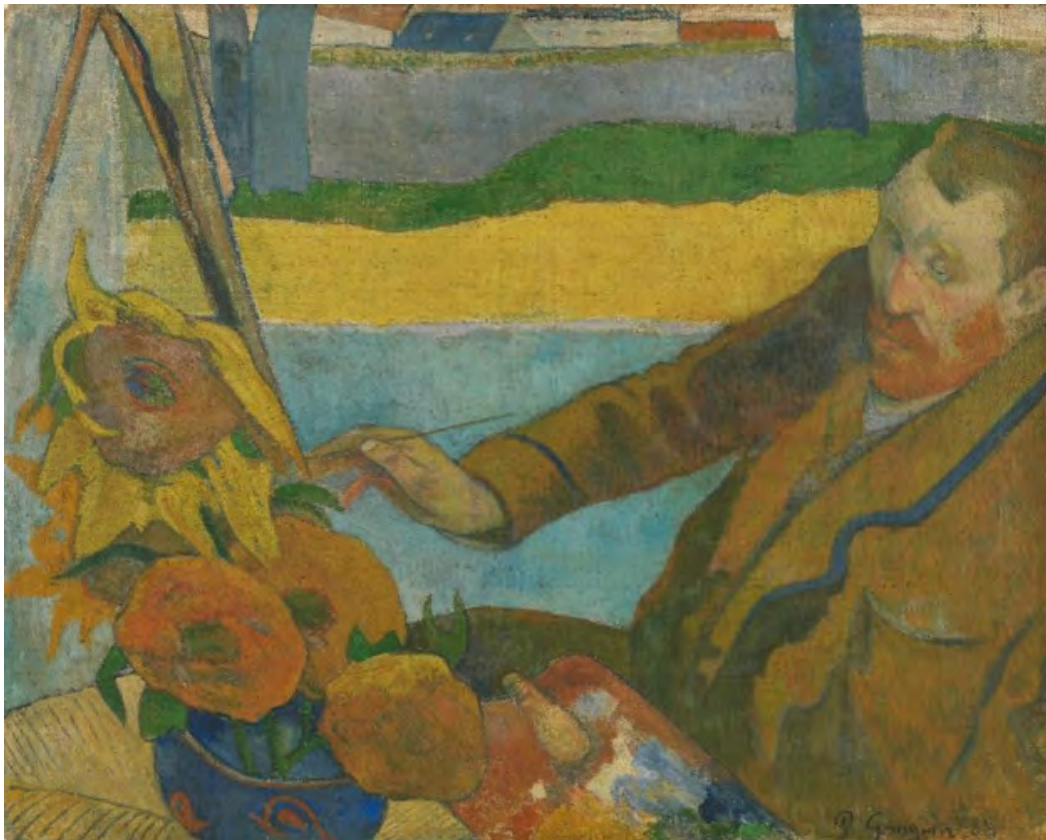
*Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam*

*On 8 January 1890,*

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"Yesterday evening your new consignment arrived, and it's very remarkable. You know, one of the things I like best is the Evening after Millet. Copied like that it's no longer a copy. There's a tone in it and everything is so harmonious. It's really very successful."

8 January



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Van Gogh and Gauguin get on after their clash?

Although the "Studio of the South" did not have a happy ending, the two artists maintained their friendship and corresponded through letters. They kept the paintings they exchanged and Vincent continued to observe Gauguin's artistic progress and shared his thoughts on his paintings with his brother.

**The Painter of Sunflowers by Paul Gauguin**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 × 91 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

**On 9 January 1889,**

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles,

"Have you seen the portrait of me that Gauguin has, and have you seen the portrait that Gauguin did of himself during those final days? If you were to compare this portrait which Gauguin did of himself then with the one I still have of him, which he sent to me from Brittany in exchange for mine, you would see that all in all he grew more serene here, personally."

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh and Gauguin clash?](#)

9 January

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many of Van Gogh's original frames have survived?



**Quinces, Lemons, Pears and Grapes**  
**Paris, 1887**

**Oil on canvas**

**48,5 x 65 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Did van Gogh frame his paintings?](#)

Only one original frame of Vincent van Gogh's paintings has survived. It is the frame of 'Quinces, Lemons, Pears and Grapes'. A painting he made in Paris in 1887, that he dedicated to his brother Theo. Theo had encouraged Vincent to change his colors from dark to bright. The art works of impressionists in Paris finally convinced Van Gogh and he even painted the frame in yellow and green.

After Paul Gauguin had left Vincent in Arles he saw this painting in Paris at Theo's house:

## On 10 January 1889,

Paul Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"...your sunflowers on a yellow background which I regard as a perfect page of an essential 'Vincent' style. At your brother's home I saw your Sower, which is very good, as well as a yellow still life, apples and lemons. Your brother gave me a lithographed reproduction of an old painting of yours, Dutch – very interesting as regards colour in the drawing. In my studio next to your portrait."

10 January



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Theo give Vincent van Gogh's art away?

Actually he did once. But of course not to just anybody. Soon after Paul Gauguin clashed with Vincent in Arles, Theo gave Vincent's lithograph of *The Potato Eaters* to Gauguin.

Gauguin already possessed Vincent's 'Self-Portrait Dedicated to Paul Gauguin' that he swapped for Gauguin's 'Self-Portrait Dedicated to Vincent van Gogh'

## **The Potato Eaters**

**Nuenen, 1885**

**Lithograph**

**31,2 x 39,6 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

*On about 11 January 1889,*

Paul Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"Your brother gave me a lithographed reproduction of an old painting of yours, Dutch – very interesting as regards colour in the drawing. In my studio next to your portrait."

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh exchange his paintings?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh take painting lessons in Antwerp?



Vincent van Gogh learned to draw from antique sculptures at the art academy in Antwerp in 1886. A reason he wanted to enroll painting classes from Charles Verlat was the cheap access to models to paint.

## On 12 January 1886,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

"At the moment I've left 5 paintings — 2 portraits, 2 landscapes, 1 still life — with Verlat's painting class at the academy. I've just been there again, but each time I haven't found him there. But I'll soon be able to let you know how that turns out. And I hope to arrange it so that I can paint from the model at the academy all day, which would make it easier for me, since the models are so awfully expensive that I can't keep it up."

***Still Life with Bible***

***Nuenen, 1885***

***Oil on canvas***

***65,7 x 78,5 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [What do Van Gogh's Sowers symbolise?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh finish Millet's work?

Vincent van Gogh copied 21 of Millet's art works and many of them were drawings. Van Gogh himself often made a drawing as a study for a painting. Was that Millet's intention too? Did Millet simply lack time to paint the drawings he made? In that sense Van Gogh and Millet were a team in a historic chain of artists developing art in general. Van Gogh wrote about this in another [letter](#).

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh an individualist?](#)

**Evening: The end of the day**  
**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**  
**72 x 94 cm**

**Menard Art Museum, Komaki, Japan**

## On 13 January 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"The more I think about it the more I find that there's justification for trying to reproduce things by Millet that he didn't have the time to paint in oils. So working either on his drawings or the wood engravings, it's not copying pure and simple that one would be doing. It is rather translating into another language, the one of colours, the impressions of chiaroscuro and white and black. In this way I've just finished the three other 'times of the day' after the wood engravings by Lavielle."

13 January

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where in The Hague did Van Gogh live?



Vincent van Gogh lived at Schenkweg 138 from 1 January 1882 to 4 July 1882, close to his cousin and teacher Anton Mauve. The buildings in the street were bombed in the Second World War. In case you would like to visit the renamed place, navigate to Hendrick Hamelstraat 8–22, which is close the... Van Gogh park.

***Meadows near Rijswijk and the Schenkweg***  
***The Hague, 1882***  
***Watercolor***  
***38 × 56 cm***  
***Private collection, London***

You may also like to read:

- [Who taught Van Gogh to paint?](#)

## *On 14 January 1882,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

“I’m planning to go on making small pen drawings whenever possible, but different from the large ones I made this summer. A bit sharper and a bit angrier. This is a sketch of Schenkweg, the view from my window. Well, adieu, with a handshake. Ever yours, Vincent”

The watercolor painting based on the sketch mentioned above is one of the first paintings by van Gogh. Vincent had been drawing for many years but basically started painting after his study visit to his cousin-in-law and mentor Anton Mauve at The Hague in December 1881.



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh sell his paintings to his brother?

Vincent was very grateful to his brother for his financial support. Already in 1884 he didn't feel comfortable with such generosity though. So he suggested to Theo, a successful art dealer, to have his paintings and keep the sales. The monthly donations Vincent received could then be considered as earnings.

Unfortunately Theo wasn't able to sell one of Vincent's paintings until 1890 when Anna Boch bought 'The Red Vineyard'.

## **The Vicarage at Nuenen**

**Nuenen, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**33,2 x 43 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

## On 15 January 1884,

Vincent van Gogh to Theo from Nuenen:

"Now I have a proposal to make for the future. Let me send you my work and you take what you want from it, but I insist that I may consider the money I would receive from you after March as money I've earned. And I don't mind at all if it's not as much at first as I've been receiving up to now."

At that time Van Gogh was living with his parents in the vicarage in Nuenen.

You may also like to read:

- [Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in Nuenen](#)

15 January

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which secret did Van Gogh learn from Gauguin?



Vincent van Gogh learned a lot from Paul Gauguin by discussing art and painting techniques. But Gauguin also taught Van Gogh a practical trick to reline his paintings. (Re)lining is the process of retouching paintings to strengthen, flatten or consolidate oil on canvas.

*On about 16 January 1889,*

Paul Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"The grape harvests are totally covered in scales as a result of the white which has separated. I've stuck all of it back down using a process shown to me by the reliner. If I tell you about it it's because the thing is easy to do and can be very good for those of your canvases that need retouching – you stick newspapers on your canvas with flour paste.

Once dry, you put your canvas on a smooth board and with very hot irons you press down hard on it. All the breaks in your colour will remain but will be flattened down and you'll have a very fine surface. Afterwards you soak your paper covering well and take off all the paper. That's largely the whole secret of relining."

The grape harvests refers to:

**The Wine Harvest. Human Misery.**

**Paul Gauguin**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on jute sackcloth**

**73,5 × 92 cm**

**Ordrupgaard Museum,  
Charlottenlund, Copenhagen**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh do one painting on burlap?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh pick up painting after he cut off his ear?



**Still life with a plate of onions**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**49,5 x 64,4 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

Vincent van Gogh was in the hospital in Arles between 24 December 1888 and 7 January 1889 after he had cut off his ear. He got back to work immediately after although his house was damaged by the flooding Rhône and he was short of money.

One of his first new paintings, 'Still life with a plate of onions' shows an envelope that probably contains the letter from Theo that arrived on 23 December 1888, the day of the ear accident.

## On 17 January 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I was hoping for a letter from you around the tenth, but as that letter only arrived today, 17 January, the interval has been a fast of the most rigorous sort, all the more painfully so because my recovery couldn't take place under those conditions. Nevertheless, I've started work again and I already have 3 studies done in the studio plus the portrait of Mr Rey, which I gave him as a keepsake."

The 3 studies are: Self-portrait with bandaged ear, a second Self-portrait with bandaged ear and pipe. And:

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh cut off his ear?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh trade his art for?

Vincent van Gogh would sometimes trade his paintings for food and art supplies.

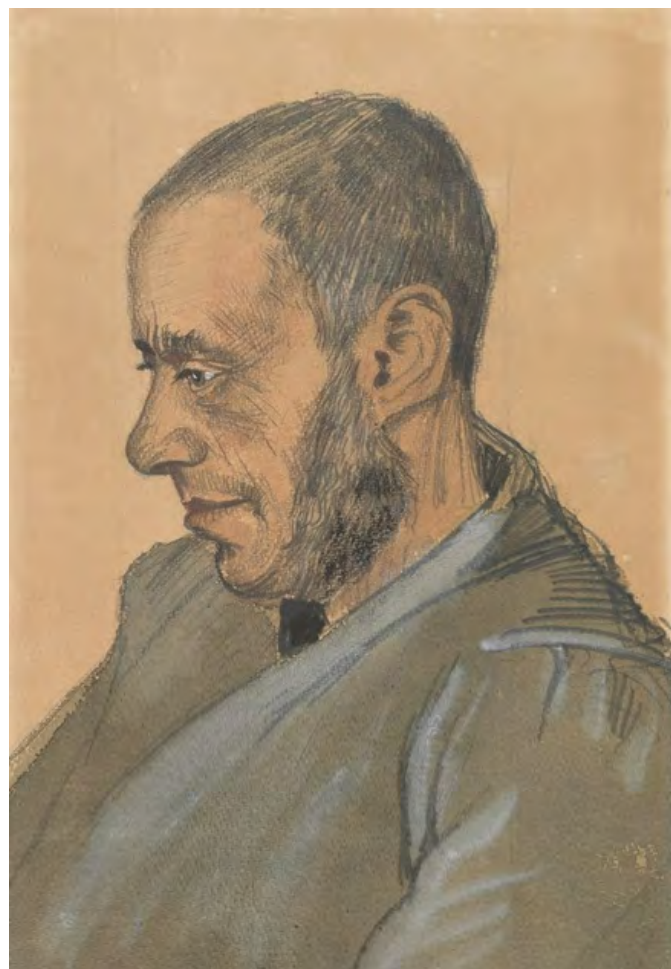
And in 1883 Van Gogh not only paid 21 guilders for 21 volumes of *The Graphic*. As part of the deal he also made 4 portraits of the Jewish bookseller Jozef Blok's parents to get 1870-1880 editions of this British weekly illustrated newspaper.

21 guilders was nearly 7 times Vincent's weekly rent at that time.

## On 18 January 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard from The Hague:

"I had to go to some trouble to get *The Graphic*. For example, I had to do two portraits (two of each!) of the father and mother of the Jew I bought them from."



**Portrait of Jozef Blok**

**The Hague, 1883**

**Pencil, watercolour, lithographic crayon, on paper**

**38,5 x 26,3 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh want to become a magazine illustrator?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Van Gogh paint when he was not feeling well?

Vincent van Gogh made more than 2000 art works in ten years. He was very productive when he stayed in the asylum recovering from severe mental problems. When Van Gogh was physically weak he still painted. Painting seemed like a remedy to him to get well.

You may also like to read:

- [Which paintings did Van Gogh make from his bedroom?](#)

***Blue gloves and a basket of oranges and lemons***  
**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**48 × 62 cm**

**National Gallery of Art, Washington**

**Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon**

## On 19 January 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

“I’m still very weak, and I’ll have difficulty in regaining my strength if the cold continues. Rey will give me some quinine wine, which I dare believe will have some effect. I would have a lot more things to say to you in response to your letter, but I have a painting on the easel and am in a hurry.”

19 January

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why was Mrs Ginoux a special friend for Van Gogh?

Vincent van Gogh painted 7 portraits of Madame Ginoux. He rented from Joseph-Michel Ginoux and Marie Ginoux at 30 Place Lamartine (The

Night Cafe) from May to mid- September 1888 before moving into the Yellow House.

They became good friends and Van Gogh kept writing them after he left Arles.

## *On 20 January 1890,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Joseph Ginoux and Marie Ginoux-Julien from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"My dear friends Mr and Mrs Ginoux, I don't know if you'll remember, I find it quite strange, that about a year ago Mrs Ginoux was ill at the same time as I was; and now it has been so again since – just around Christmas – for a few days I was again taken quite badly this year, however it was over very quickly; I had it less than a week. Since, therefore, my dear friends, we sometimes suffer together, it makes me think of what Mrs Ginoux said – 'when people are friends they're that way for a long time'."



***L'Arlésienne***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas (burlap)***

***92.5 x 73.5 cm***

***Musée d'Orsay, Paris***

You may also like to read:

- [At which restaurant in Arles did Van Gogh eat?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why was Van Gogh so happy with his portrait of Augustine Roulin?



Vincent van Gogh was extremely satisfied with his use of colors in his portrait of Augustine Roulin. Only two weeks after he got out of hospital Van Gogh was focussed on discovering the effects of color combinations.

**Augustine Roulin / La berceuse  
Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**92,7 x 72,7 cm**

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

*On 21 January 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Paul Gauguin from Arles:

"Today I made a fresh start on the canvas I had painted of Mrs Roulin, the one which had remained in a vague state as regards the hands because of my accident. As an arrangement of colours: the reds moving through to pure oranges, intensifying even more in the flesh tones up to the chromes, passing into the pinks and marrying with the olive and Veronese greens. As an Impressionist arrangement of colours, I've never devised anything better."

You may also like to read:

- [Which berceuse portrait did Augustine Roulin choose?](#)

21 January

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which was Theo van Gogh's favorite olive tree painting?



Vincent van Gogh painted no less than 15 paintings of olive trees. It was one of his favorite subjects when he was allowed to paint outside of the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence.

His brother Theo was not only happy that Vincent was recovering well from his mental problems, he also noticed further artistic development. One of Vincent's olive trees stood out to Theo.

## On 22 January 1890,

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"Do you know that when I saw your olive trees again, I found them more and more beautiful, the one with the sunset is especially superb. How you have worked since last year, it's prodigious."

***Olive Grove: Orange Sky***

***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889***

***Oil on canvas***

***74,5 x 92,5 cm***

***Göteborgs Museum of Art, Sweden***

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh not dare to paint the olive tree?](#)



## Your daily dose of Van Gogh Why was Vincent van Gogh worried about Theo's business?

Vincent's brother Theo was a successful art dealer in Paris. Despite economic recession since 1873, Theo's business in high-end works by well-established artists had been going fine. But would prices keep going up? Vincent 'did not expect a future of success, but a future of struggle.'

It would be beyond Van Gogh's comprehension that his relatively unknown painting 'Huts surrounded by Olive Trees and Cypresses' was auctioned for \$71.4 million USD in 2021.

You may also like to read:

- [Would Vincent van Gogh have been a bitcoiner?](#)

***Huts surrounded by Olive Trees and Cypresses  
Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889***

***Oil on canvas***

***45,5 x 60,3 cm***

***Private collection***

## *On 23 January 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"Prices have risen to their present heights in a very short time, relatively speaking — in, let's say, 40 years or so at most. And would it need more time than that to roll down the mountain again? As a rule, it's easier and quicker to go downhill than uphill. And yet — there's something in art which means that it's always possible — there's at least a chance to increase the numbers of the buying public. But again, will people create that new public? If not, I fear for my part that it will fall as quickly as it rose."

*23 January*

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh get along well with the people in Nuenen?



It wasn't easy for Vincent van Gogh to move back to his parents in Nuenen in 1883. Fortunately he got along well with the peasants and weavers there who were an excellent painting subject for Vincent.

He soon had a busy life where he even gave art lessons to locals Willem van de Wakker, Anton Kerssemakers and Antoon Hermans.

## On 24 January 1884,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"I can't keep my mind on writing and I have little time for it, because when I'm not with Ma I'm at a weaver's nearby, where I'm working on 2 painted studies. Write to me soon, with a handshake. Ever yours, Vincent"

**Weaver Facing Right**  
**Nuenen, 1884**  
**Oil on canvas on panel**  
**37 x 45 cm**  
**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [How was it for Van Gogh to move back in with his parents in Nuenen?](#)

Your daily dose of  
Van Gogh

# When did Theo van Gogh die?

Vincent's younger brother died at age 33. Theo suffered from dementia paralytica, an infection of the brain and his health declined rapidly after Vincent's death.



*On 25 January 1891,*

Theo van Gogh died.

This 1887 portrait by Vincent van Gogh, long thought to be a self-portrait, was reassessed in 2011 to be one of his brother Theo van Gogh.

**Portrait of Theo van Gogh**

**Paris, 1887**

**Oil on paperboard**

**19 x 14 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Vincent van Gogh's brother Theo successful?](#)

25 January

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh want to get married?

Vincent van Gogh's hyperfocus on his artistic development would balance well with some intimacy now and then. It helped maintain his mental well-being.

In The Hague, Van Gogh lived with Sien Hoornik (1850-1904), a seamstress who also worked as a prostitute. However, his family did not approve of this relationship, and in 1883, his brother Theo convinced Vincent to separate from Sien and go to Drenthe to focus on his painting.

## On 26 January 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"And I tell you frankly that I definitely think you mustn't be embarrassed about going to a girl now and then, if you know one you can trust and you can feel something for, of which there are many in fact. Because for someone whose life is all hard work and exertion it's necessary, absolutely necessary, to stay normal and to keep one's wits about one. One doesn't have to overdo that kind of thing and go to excess, but nature has fixed laws and it's fatal to struggle against them. Anyway, you know everything you need to know about it. It would be good for you, it would be good for me, if we were married, but what can one do?"



**Sien in a White Bonnet**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Pencil, black lithographic chalk, washed  
47,6 × 26,3 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [What kind of women was Vincent van Gogh attracted to?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where did Van Gogh's painting with nude torsos go?



Vincent van Gogh's painting with nude torsos was overpainted by Van Gogh in Paris with his Still life with meadow flowers and roses in 1886. Unfortunately when Van Gogh was out of money he used a painted canvas sometimes. And another of his nearly 900 paintings disappeared.

Thanks to x-rays and Van Gogh's description of his paintings in his letters we can get an idea of his lost art works.

## On 27 January 1886,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

"This week I painted a large thing with two nude torsos — two wrestlers, a pose set by Verlat. And I really like doing that."

**Still life with meadow flowers and roses plus Two Wrestlers**

**Antwerp 1886-1887 plus Antwerp 1886**

**Oil on canvas**

**100 x 80 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Is het Steen another missing Van Gogh painting?](#)



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Theo van Gogh get married?

Theo van Gogh, Vincent's brother, married Johanna (Jo) Bonger in Amsterdam on 17 April 1889. They met through Jo's brother Andries. In 1881, Andries Bonger became librarian at the Hollandsche Club, an expatriate club in Paris, and became friends with Theo van Gogh.

Theo and Jo's son Vincent Willem was born in Paris on 31 January 1890, who founded the Van Gogh Museum in 1973.

You may also like to read:

- [Thank you Jo van Gogh - Bonger](#)

## **The Harvest (at La Crau)**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73,4 x 91,8 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam**

## On 28 January 1889,

Vincent wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

"Now, in continuing the furious work this February and March I hope I'll have finished the calm repetitions of a number of studies I did last year. And these, together with certain canvases of mine that you already have, such as the harvest and the white orchard, will form quite a firm base. During this same time, so no later than March, we can settle what has to be settled on the occasion of your marriage."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did critics think of Van Gogh in 1890?

In his article titled 'The Isolated Ones,' art critic Albert Aurier (1865 - 1892) expressed admiration for Van Gogh's unconventional, passionate, and vibrant artistic creations and described Van Gogh as a deserving heir to the Dutch masters of the seventeenth century.

Aurier also argued that Van Gogh's true essence could never be fully comprehended because his art was 'too simple and at the same time too subtle for the contemporary bourgeois mind'.

The recognition as an artist brought immense joy not just to Vincent himself but also to his family.

## On 29 January 1890,

Jo van Gogh-Bonger wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"This morning Theo brought in the article in the *Mercure*, and after we'd read it Wil and I talked about you for a long time — I'm so longing for your next letter, which Theo is also looking forward to."



**French poet, art critic and painter Albert Aurier**

You may also like to read:

- [How many paintings did Van Gogh exhibit in 1890?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Is Van Gogh's sunflower painting in the Van Gogh museum his first version?



## **Vase with 15 Sunflowers**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**95 cm x 73 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Where are Van Gogh's sunflowers?](#)

In August 1888 Vincent van Gogh made 4 versions of Sunflowers in a Vase. The most famous of these is probably in the National Gallery of London. Then in January 1889 Van Gogh made 3 repetitions of the sunflowers in a vase. One of them is the painting that resides in the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

## *On 30 January 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"This morning I had a very friendly letter from Gauguin to which I replied without delay. When Roulin came I had just finished the repetition of my sunflowers, and I showed him the two examples of the Berceuse between these four bouquets."

30 January



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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## How much did the Van Gogh Museum pay for Van Gogh's paintings?

In 1962 the Vincent van Gogh Stichting, (founded by Vincent van Gogh's nephew) received 15 million guilders (7,66 mln euro) from the Dutch government for 200 paintings by Van Gogh (and Gauguin), 400 drawings and all of his letters. 11 years later the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam opened.

You may also like to read:

- [For whom did Vincent paint the Blossoming Almond Tree?](#)

### ***Blossoming Almond Tree***

***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890***

***Oil on canvas***

***73,3 x 92,4 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

## *On 31 January 1890,*

Vincent Willem van Gogh (the painter's nephew) was born.

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"The child is already beginning to cry lustily. How happy I'd be if in a while, when Jo's well again, you'll be able to come and see her and see our little one! As we told you, we'll name him after you, and I'm making the wish that he may be as determined and as courageous as you."

Vincent painted the Blossoming Almond Tree as a gift to Theo and Jo.

*31 January*

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who painted the first oil portrait of Vincent van Gogh?

John Peter Russell (16 June 1858 – 30 April 1930), an Australian impressionist painter, painted the first oil portrait of Van Gogh.

When he was 18, Russell moved from Australia to England. In 1886 he took art lessons in Paris from Fernand Cormon, where he met Vincent van Gogh.

They became friends, Russell painted Van Gogh and they wrote letters to each other when Van Gogh moved to the South of France.

## On 1 February 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to John Peter Russell from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"How it pleases me to write to you after a long silence. Do you remember the time when, almost simultaneously, you I think first and I afterwards, met our friend Gauguin? He's still struggling on – and alone, or almost alone, like the good fellow he is. Am sure, though, that you don't forget him. He and I are still friends, I can assure you, but perhaps you're not unaware that I myself am ill, and have more than once had serious nervous crises and delirium. This was why, having had to go into an asylum for the insane, he and I separated. But prior to that, how many times we talked about you together! Gauguin is currently still with one of my fellow-countrymen called De Haan, and De Haan praises him a great deal and doesn't find it at all bad to be with him."

1 February



**Portrait of Vincent van Gogh**  
**John Peter Russell, Paris, 1886**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**60,1 x 45,6 cm**  
**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh ever return to Arles?

Yes Vincent van Gogh visited his good friends Joseph Ginoux and his wife Marie on 18 or 19 January 1890.

Mrs Ginoux was suffering from nervous attacks and menopausal complaints. And Vincent wanted to make another trip to them from the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence 30 km South to Arles.

## On 2 February 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Joseph Ginoux from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

“My dear Mr Ginoux, Certainly I would prefer to come in person to ask you how your patient is, just as I had also hoped to come back to see you around now. But having been indisposed myself this last week, I must ask you for news of her by letter. Please don't fail to let me know how she is – for would be worried if I didn't have news from you by return of post. Nevertheless I have good intentions enough to come next week, however.”



**Portrait of Joseph-Michel Ginoux  
Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas  
65,3 x 54,4 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Why was Mrs Ginoux a special friend for Van Gogh?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Van Gogh show La Mousmé on the Independents exhibition in 1889?

Nearly! Vincent thought of sending his portrait of this Provençal girl, inspired by Pierre Loti's novel *Madame Chrysanthème*, to the exhibition in Paris. But he decided to show just two of his paintings: [Starry Night over the Rhone](#) and [Irises](#).



### On 3 February 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"For the Independents, it seems to me that six paintings is too many by half. To my taste the harvest and the white orchard are enough, with the little Provençal girl or the sower if you want. But it's all the same to me. I just really want one day to give you a more consolatory impression in our trade of painting in which we work, by means of a collection of around 30 more serious studies. In any case, that will prove to our real friends like Gauguin, Guillaumin, Bernard &c. that we're engaged in the work of production."

***La Mousmé (with a branch of oleander)***  
**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73,3 × 60,3 cm**

**National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.**

You may also like to read:

- [What was special about the women from Arles?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh join drawing clubs in Antwerp?

To save money on models, Vincent van Gogh decided to become a member of two drawing clubs in Antwerp. By paying a modest subscription fee, club members had the opportunity to attend evening sessions and draw from both nude and clothed models.

These informal drawing clubs, often referred to as sketching clubs, were typically organized by advanced students from the senior classes at the Antwerp Academy.

## *On 4 February 1886,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

“What we have to do and what is largely lacking — is this. Paying the models ourselves is too much; as long as one doesn't have enough money, one must take advantage of the opportunities at the studios, like Verlat, like Cormon. And one must be in the artists' world and work at clubs where one shares the cost of the models.”



***Standing Female Nude Seen from the Front Antwerp, 1886***

***Charcoal, chalk, lithographic crayon, paper  
50,4 x 39,2 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [What did Charles Verlat think of Vincent van Gogh?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh like ugly faces?

In the Potato Eaters Van Gogh wanted to show respect for honest hard working peasants without painting them more attractive than they were. And two years earlier Van Gogh appreciated the expression of an old man with an eye patch, following two other masters who were not afraid of showing ugliness.

*On 5 February 1883,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"I thought of Heyerdahl's words — I don't like a figure to be too degenerate — when I was drawing not the woman but the old man with a bandage over his eye, and I found they were not true. There are ruins, absolute ruins, of physiognomies, which nonetheless have something that I see fully expressed in, for example, the Hille Bobbe by Frans Hals or some heads by Rembrandt."



**Old man in his Sunday best with an eye patch**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Pencil, lithographic chalk, washed, heightened with black and white**

**46,5 x 27,5 cm**

**Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge (MA)**

You may also like to read:

- [How many lithographs did Van Gogh make?](#)

*5 February*

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Vincent van Gogh vain?



Van Gogh wasn't particularly vain. He was aware that he was 'starting to look worse and worse' when his teeth were breaking off one after another in 1886. The dental problems causing him pain and eating problems were a bigger worry to him than his looks though.

Van Gogh's self-portraits are not a sign of vanity either. He painted these to save money on models.

## On 6 February 1886,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

"I also still have two more teeth to be filled, then my upper jaw, which was most affected, will be all right again. ...Some years of those 10 years that I appear to have spent in prison will disappear as a result. Because bad teeth, which one so seldom sees any more as it's so easy to get them put right, since bad teeth give a physiognomy a sort of sunken look."

***Self-Portrait with Pipe***

***Paris, 1886***

***Oil on canvas***

***46 x 38 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh smoke pipe?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When was Van Gogh's father born?

*On 8 February 1822,*

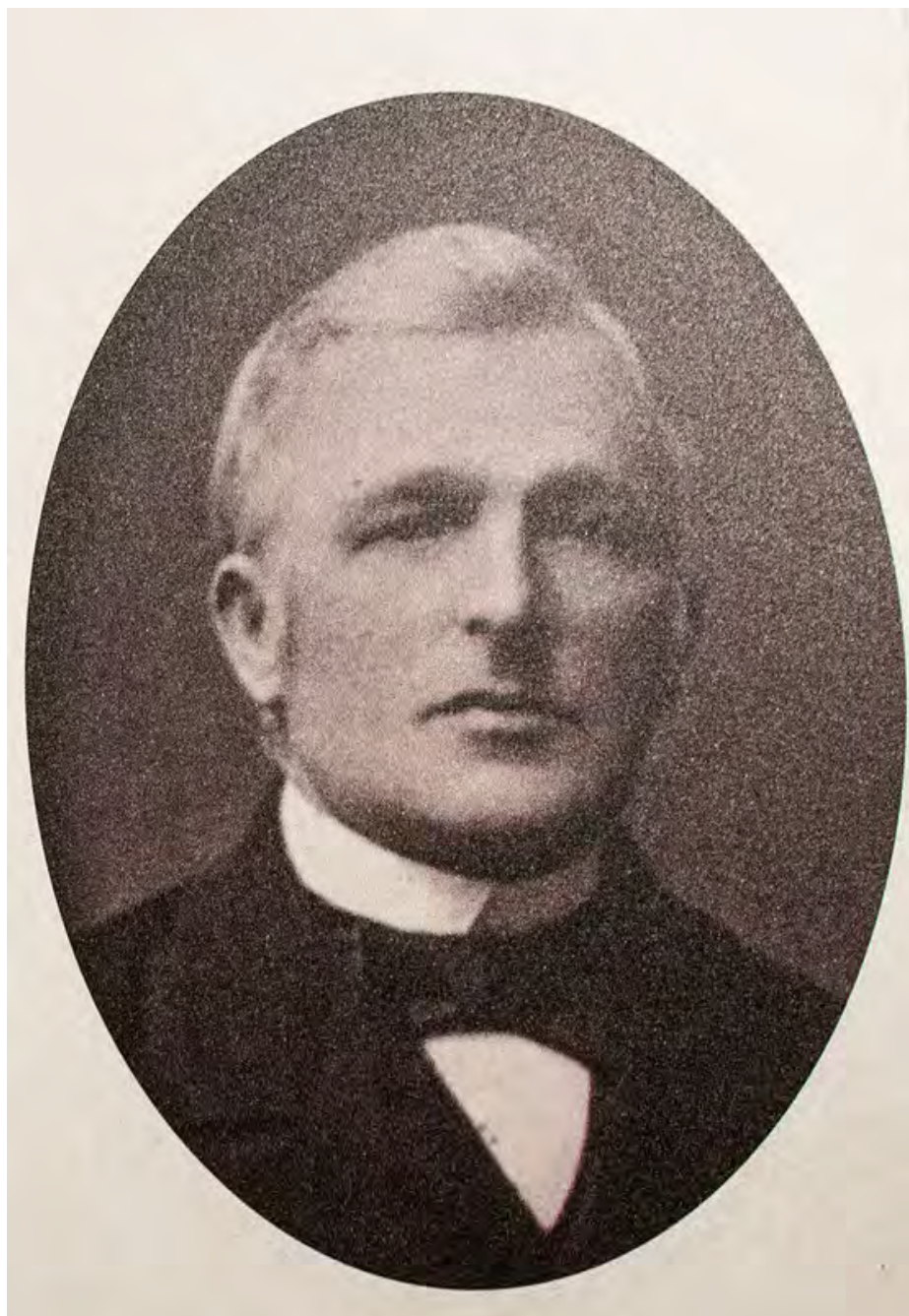
Theodorus van Gogh (Vincent's father) was born in Benschop, The Netherlands. He died on 26 March 1885 in Nuenen.

Theodorus ("Dorus") van Gogh was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Zundert, Helvoirt, Etten and Nuenen.

*On 8 February 1822,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother from Paris:

"My dear Theo, My hearty congratulations to you on the occasion of Pa's birthday. It's a beautiful text, the one for 8 February: Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it. What that it will be for our Father and for us we do not know, but in a sense we can leave that to Him whose name is 'Our Father' and 'I am that I am'."



You may also like to read:

- [How was Van Gogh's relationship with his father?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who resembled Vincent Willem van Gogh as a baby?

Before Vincent van Gogh's nephew Vincent Willem was born, he painted a portrait of Postman Joseph Roulin's baby: Marcelle Roulin. As Vincent and his brother Theo were always discussing color in paintings it is not surprising Theo noticed resemblance in the blue of both babies' eyes.



**Portrait of Marcelle Roulin**  
**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**35,2 x 24,6 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [For whom did Van Gogh paint the Blossoming Almond Tree?](#)

*On 9 February 1890,*

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"Things are going well at home with us, Jo is nursing the baby and has no lack of milk, and the little one sometimes lies down with his eyes wide open and his fists against his face. Then he has the look of being completely well. He has blue eyes like the baby you painted, and fat cheeks."

Two months before, Van Gogh painted:

*9 February*



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Who bought Van Gogh's *The Red Vineyard*?

*On 10 February 1848,*

Anna Boch was born.

Anna was the sister of Eugène Boch, another impressionist painter and a friend of Van Gogh. They were born into the fifth generation of the Boch family, a wealthy dynasty of manufacturers of fine china and ceramics, still active today under the firm of Villeroy & Boch.

### ***The Red Vineyard***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on Canvas***

***75 cm × 93 cm***

***Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow***

The *Red Vineyard*, purchased by Anna Boch, was long believed to be the only painting Van Gogh sold during his lifetime. The Anna Boch collection was sold after her death. In her will, she donated the money to pay for the retirement of poor artist friends.

You may also like to read:

- [Was \*The Red Vineyard\* really the only painting Van Gogh ever sold?](#)

10 February

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many paintings did Van Gogh exhibit in 1890?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh may have sold just one painting during his lifetime. That doesn't mean he didn't get recognition. In 1890 Van Gogh exhibited no less than ten paintings at the sixth exhibition of the Société des Artistes Indépendants in Paris.

*On 12 February 1890,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"For the Impressionists' exhibition in March I hope to send you a few more canvases which are drying at the moment. If they didn't arrive in time you would have to make a choice from those that are at père Tanguy's."

One of the exhibited paintings was:

## Cypresses

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**93,4 × 74 cm**

**Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York**

You may also like to read:

- [Which paintings did Van Gogh show at the Independents exhibition in Paris in 1889?](#)

12 February

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which Van Gogh painting did Leo Gausson receive?



It is not known which work by Van Gogh Leo Gausson received. But after Vincent van Gogh died a painting of each of both artists was exchanged. Gausson was a big fan of Vincent van Gogh. On the Indépendants exhibition in Paris in 1888 their paintings were shown next to each other.

## On 14 February 1860,

Léo Gausson (1860 - 1944) was born.

In June 1890, Gausson was mentioned in a letter from Theo van Gogh to his brother Vincent in connection with a proposed exchange of paintings which was completed after Vincent's death.

Theo wrote from Paris to Vincent on 5 June 1890:

"Gausson wants to do an exchange with you, anything you want of his in exchange for what you want to give him. I told him to come one day with me to see you at your place."

**Leo Gausson, Self-Portrait  
ca 1900**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh give his paintings away?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where in Nuenen did Van Gogh paint?

Vincent van Gogh painted [cottages](#), [peasants](#) and [weavers](#) and [churches](#). But Vincent didn't need to travel much to find beauty. Just like when he painted the garden of the asylum in Saint-Rémy, the parsonage garden in Nuenen was sufficient artistic inspiration to Van Gogh. The laundry room was turned into a studio in the back of the house.

***The parsonage garden in the snow  
Nuenen, 1885***

***Oil on canvas on panel***

***53 x 78 cm***

***Armand Hammer Museum of Art  
Los Angeles***

## On 16 February 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

“I painted a few more studies of our garden when there was snow on it.”

One of the two paintings of the parsonage garden in the snow is:

You may also like to read:

- [Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in Nuenen](#)

16 February

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Was Van Gogh a gambler?

No, Vincent van Gogh was 'not in the least bit interested in the lottery' despite often being broke. Perhaps Theo's financial support never made Vincent even consider stepping in line for a lottery ticket.

'The curiosity and delusion about the lottery seem more or less childish to us, but it becomes serious when one thinks about the other side: misery and forlorn attempts by these poor souls to be saved, so they think, by buying a lottery ticket, paid for with pennies saved by going without food.'

Van Gogh painted people in line for the drawing of the national lottery:

**The Poor and Money**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Chalk, watercolour, pen and ink, on paper  
37,9 x 56,6 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

### On 18 February 1886,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

"My dear Theo, It's at the moment when my money has entirely gone — entirely — that I write to you again. If you can send anything, even if it were five francs, don't neglect to do it; there are still 10 days in the month and how am I to get through them? For I have absolutely nothing left."

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh poor?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What was so special about the women from Arles?

The 'Arlésiennes' were known as the most beautiful women in the world and a popular topic in nineteenth-century art, literature and theatre. Vincent van Gogh was also impressed.

Women from Arles had a highly sophisticated dress style with jewel-coloured satin fabric, a delicate lace bodice, shawl and a white parasol. It was traditional but without the folk like relationship to peasants.

Their hair was a complex double chignon wrapped around a tiny headdress of ribbon or lace.

## On 19 February 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"I have a portrait of an Arlésienne on the go in which I'm seeking an expression different from that of Parisian women."



**Marie Ginoux, *The Arlésienne*  
Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**65 x 54 cm**  
**São Paulo Museum of Art**

You may also like to read:

- [Why was Mrs Ginoux a special friend for Van Gogh?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

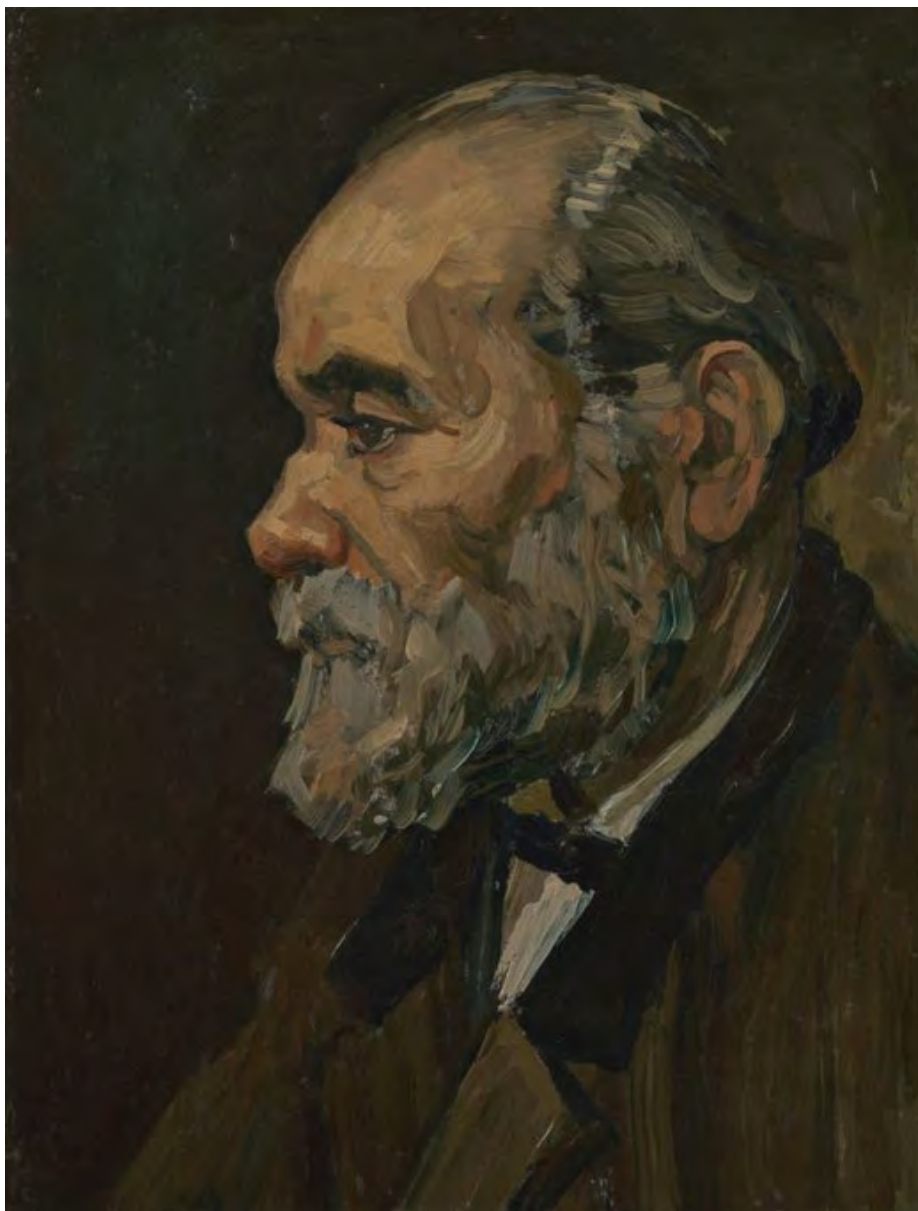
"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Charles Verlat think of Vincent van Gogh?



Charles Verlat was Vincent van Gogh's teacher at the academy in Antwerp in 1886. The two clashed about Van Gogh's unconventional style. Verlat did like Van Gogh's 'Portrait of an old man' though!

*On 22 February 1886,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

"While I've been here — all this time — I've had a comrade, an old Frenchman. I've painted his portrait, which Verlat liked and which you will see. The winter was even harder for him than for me, and the poor devil is in a much worse state than I am, since his age makes it very critical."

**Portrait of an old man**

**Antwerp, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**44,4 x 33,7 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Victor Hugo inspire Van Gogh?](#)

22 February

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh monogamous?

Vincent van Gogh believed in monogamy. In 1883 both Vincent and Theo had girlfriends with a troubled past: Sien (Hoornik) and Marie. When their women were ill at the same time Vincent encouraged Theo to care for his patient and stay loyal to her.

"When one is faced by a patient who is ill in both body and soul.. the very best and most effective medicine is still love and a home."

*On 23 February 1883,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"There are many loves in one love.. if you want variety you should remain faithful. And if you want to see many women you should confine yourself to one and the same."

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh want to get married?](#)



**Sien Peeling Potatoes**

**The Hague, 1883**

**Black chalk**

**61,3 x 39,4 cm**

**Kunstmuseum The Hague**

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh think of the Musée Réattu in Arles?



Vincent van Gogh wasn't quite impressed by the Musée Réattu in Arles. It had a small collection of paintings, many of them copies. It is named after the Arles-born painter Jacques Réattu.

These days the Réattu Museum owns 800 paintings and drawings by Jacques Réattu. In 1971, Pablo Picasso donated 57 of his recent drawings to the museum.

## On 24 February 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"The studies I have are an old woman of Arles, a landscape with snow, a view of a stretch of pavement with a butcher's shop. The women really are beautiful here, it's no joke— on the other hand, the Arles museum is dreadful and a joke.."

***An old woman of Arles***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas***

***58 x 42 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [What was special about the women from Arles?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which Berceuse portrait by Van Gogh did Augustine Roulin choose?



Augustine Roulin chose Van Gogh's portrait of her that now resides in the The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Van Gogh painted 5 slightly different versions and described them as "our lullaby or the woman rocking the cradle."

*On 25 February 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"Yesterday and today I began to work. When Mrs Roulin also left, to go and live with her mother in the country for the time being, she took away the Berceuse. I had the sketch of it and two repetitions. She had a good eye and took the best one, only I'm currently redoing it. And I don't want this one to be inferior."

The Roulins had chosen:

**Augustine Roulin 'La berceuse'**

**Oil on canvas**

**Arles, 1889**

**93 x 73 cm**

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
New York**

You may also like to read:

- [Why was Van Gogh so happy with his portrait of Augustine Roulin?](#)

25 February

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many times did Van Gogh paint the old church tower in Nuenen?

Vincent van Gogh painted and drew the old church tower no less than 35 times. The 12th-century church was to be demolished and Van Gogh painted it at several stages of the process. The foundation of the church still exists and can be visited.

## On 26 February 1884,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard from Nuenen:

"I've mostly been painting these last few weeks — the weavers — toiled away at it quite a bit. And in these recent mild days painted outside in the fields, a little peasant cemetery."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

***The old church tower at Nuenen with a ploughman***

***Nuenen, 1884***

***Oil on canvas***

***36 x 44,3 cm***

***Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo***

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh get along well with the people in Nuenen?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Why did Van Gogh want to go to Marseille?

Vincent van Gogh not only traveled to the South of France in search for warm light and bright colors. He also wanted to organise an exhibition in Marseille showing the world the impressionists and his own generation of post-impressionists.

You may also like to read:

- [Why is Van Gogh a post-impressionist?](#)

***Impression, Sunrise by Claude Monet***

***Le Havre, 1872***

***Oil on canvas***

***48 × 63 cm***

***Musée Marmottan Monet, Paris***

## On 27 February 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"Tersteeg and the London manager would organize the permanent exhibition of the Impressionists in London — you would have the one in Paris and I would start it up in Marseille."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where did Van Gogh live in Paris?

Short of money Vincent van Gogh left Antwerp without paying his bills there. He moved in with his brother at Rue Victor Masse 25 in Paris. And in June 1886 they moved to Rue Lepic 54.

*On 28 February 1886,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Paris,

"My dear Theo, Don't be cross with me that I've come all of a sudden. I've thought about it so much and I think we'll save time this way. Will be at the Louvre from midday, or earlier if you like. A reply, please, to let me know when you could come to the Salle Carrée."

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh move to Paris?](#)



**View from Theo's Apartment at Rue Lepic 54  
Paris, 1887**

**Oil on canvas**

**45,9 x 38,1 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh



## Your daily dose of Van Gogh Did Van Gogh find what he was looking for in Arles?

Vincent van Gogh traveled to the South of France to find warm light and bright colors. And he certainly found what he was looking for in Arles. There was a major exhibition in Paris coming up, but he didn't care so much which earlier work to show. He expected to make interesting paintings in Arles. And he was right! Two weeks after his arrival..

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh believe he understood colors?](#)

***Vegetable gardens in Montmartre***  
***Paris, 1887***

***Oil on canvas***

***96 x 120 cm***

***Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam***

## *On 2 March 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

"About the Independents' exhibition, do whatever you see fit. What would you say to showing the two large landscapes of the Butte Montmartre there? It's all much the same to me, I'm inclined to place slightly more hopes in this year's work."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Van Gogh find interesting models in The Hague?

Vincent van Gogh made about 900 paintings and 1100 drawings in 10 years. That is an average of less than one art work in 2 days. Especially at the end Van Gogh was able to complete a painting in less than a day. Sometimes he spread the work out over a few days. 'Autumn landscape' for example took him 4 days.

## On 3 March 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"Yesterday evening something happened to me that I'll tell you as precisely as I can. You know the pollard oaks at the end of the garden at home — I slogged away at them for the 4th time. I'd sat in front of them for three days with a canvas the size of that cottage, say, and the peasant cemetery you have."



**Old woman with a shawl and a walking-stick  
The Hague, 1882**

**Pencil, pen and brown ink, opaque light green  
watercolour**

**57,4 x 32 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Where in The Hague did Van Gogh live?](#)

3 March

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh make chalk drawings?

Yes, thanks to his mother who once gave him large pieces of chalk Vincent van Gogh made beautiful chalk drawings. He was impressed by the beauty of its color.

Vincent van Gogh, known for his use of bright colors in heavily impasted oil paintings in the South of France loved the blackness of chalk in his drawings just a few years before in The Hague. He followed his dreams and experienced a transformation.

## On 5 March 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard from The Hague:

"Now another thing — do you know natural chalk? Last year I was given a few large pieces by my brother, this size, no less. I worked with it but didn't pay it much attention and forgot about it. Now lately I found a piece again and I was struck by how beautiful its colour was, its blackness. Yesterday I did a drawing with it, women and children at a hatch at the public kitchen where soup is sold. And I must tell you that this experiment pleased me very much indeed."

5 March



***Soup distribution in a public soup kitchen***

***The Hague, 1883***

***Natural black chalk, brush and black paint, opaque white watercolour, scratched, traces of squaring***

***56,5 x 44,4 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [How many drawings did Van Gogh do?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh like poetry?

Vincent van Gogh was an avid reader of English and French literature. He enjoyed poetry by Jules Adolphe Aimé Louis Breton (1 May 1827 – 5 July 1906), a French naturalist painter and shared Breton's poems with his friend Anthon van Rappard.

*Weaver and a spinning wheel*

**Nuenen, 1884**

**Oil on canvas**

**62,5 x 84,4 cm**

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

*On 8 March 1884,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard from Nuenen:

"My dear friend Rappard, Here, too, are some of the poems by Jules Breton, if you don't have them I'm sure they'll really touch you. Today, or rather in the last few days, I've painted a study of the loom of which you have the drawing."

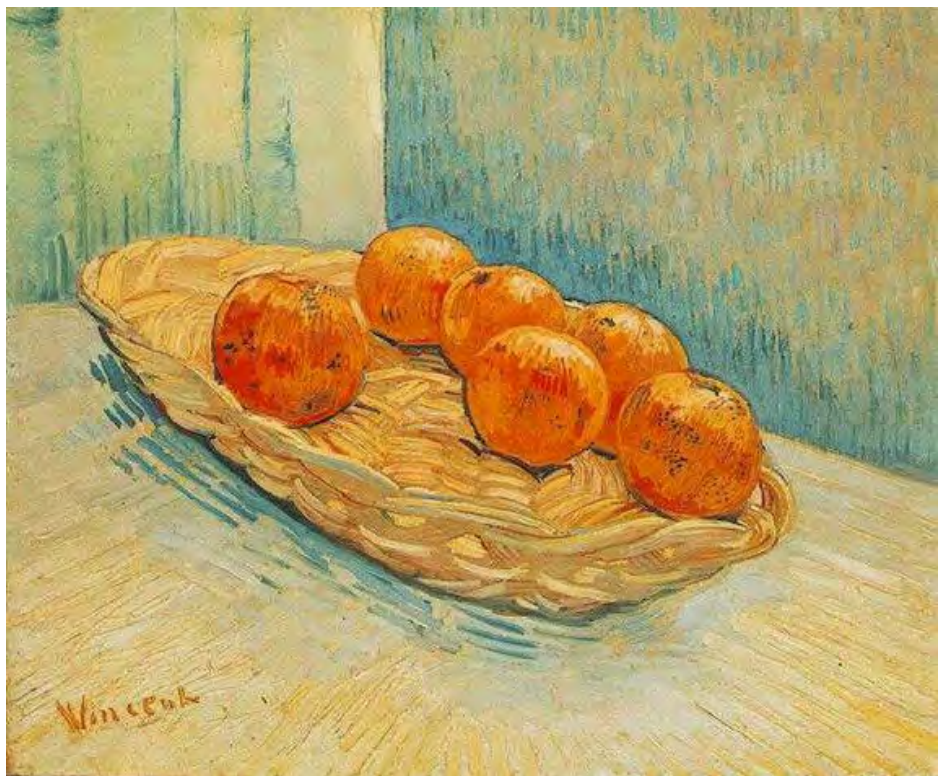
You may also like to read:

- [Who inspired Van Gogh to paint weavers?](#)

**8 March**

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh receive from Lucien Pissarro in exchange for his painting?



**Basket of oranges**  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**45,0 x 54,0 cm**  
**Private collection**

In Paris Vincent van Gogh had exchanged his Basket of apples for several wood engravings by Lucien Pissarro, son of Impressionist painter Camille Pissarro.

Wood engravings were similar to the Japanese woodblock prints that Van Gogh collected. But with wood engravings the line is incised into the woodblock, rather than the background being cut away to leave a line in relief. Both ways were popular printmaking methods in the 19th century.

## On 9 March 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"Now I've just finished a study like the one of mine Lucien Pissarro has, but this time it's of oranges. That makes eight studies I have up to now. But that doesn't count, as I haven't yet been able to work in comfort and in the warm."

You may also like to read:

- [Which Van Gogh painting did Leo Gausson receive?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh a perfectionist?

Vincent van Gogh often took the time he needed before sending a batch of paintings to his brother, self-critical like a real perfectionist. The fact that he was able to finish a painting in a day sometimes doesn't mean it was done hastily. It was just his artistic style that required a certain pace of painting.

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh self-critical?](#)

**The Gleize Bridge**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**46,8 × 51,3 cm**

**Pola Museum of Art, Hakone, Japan**

## On 10 March 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I have two more studies of landscapes, I hope the work will continue steadily and that in a month I'll get a first consignment to you — I say in a month because I want to send you nothing but the best, and because I want it to be dry, and because I want to send at least a dozen or so all at once because of the cost of transport."

10 March

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What happened to the rest of Van Gogh's painting of Two Lovers?

The fragment *Walking couple / Two Lovers* is all that has survived of a study van Gogh painted. A letter shows a sketch of the whole painting, including The Langlois bridge. Van Gogh later wrote that he had ruined the study.

*On 18 March 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:

"At the top of this letter I'm sending you a little croquis of a study that's preoccupying me as to how to make something of it — sailors coming back with their sweethearts towards the town, which projects the strange silhouette of its drawbridge against a huge yellow sun."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

**Walking couple / Two lovers**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**32,7 x 22,8 cm**

**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh jealous of Milliet?](#)

18 March

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How much did Van Gogh's The Red Vineyard sell for?



## ***The Red Vineyard***

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**75 × 93 cm**

**Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow**

Vincent van Gogh's painting *The Red Vineyard* sold at the exhibition of the Salon of Les XX in Brussels to Anna Boch for 400 francs. This could have been the only painting sold by Van Gogh during his lifetime.

You may also like to read:

- [Does Van Gogh's The Red Vineyard still exist?](#)

## *On 19 March 1890,*

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"I've received the money for your painting from Brussels, and Maus writes to me: 'When you have an opportunity please tell your brother that I was very happy that he participated in the Salon of Les Vingt where, in the melée of discussions, he found lively artistic sympathies'. Do you want me to send you the money? I'm holding it for you for whenever you want it."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Gauguin like Van Gogh's paintings?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://vangoghstudio.com)

## **The Ravine**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 91,7 cm**

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts**

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh and Gauguin clash?](#)

## *On 20 March 1890,*

Paul Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"I've talked about it with your brother, and there's one that I would like to exchange with you for a thing of your choice. The one I'm talking about is a mountain landscape. Two tiny travellers seem to be climbing up there in search of the unknown. It contains an emotion à la Delacroix, with a very evocative colour. Here and there red notes like lights, the whole in a violet note. It's beautiful and imposing."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh think he was mad?

Vincent van Gogh wrote about his mental problems several times. He didn't know exactly what was going on. Neither did the doctors then and even now we can only speculate what was going by what he wrote and what his doctors said back then.

Most likely it was a combination of things that caused his problems and behavior.

Underlying vulnerabilities were probably (bipolar) mood disorder and borderline. Alcohol and unhealthy eating habits could have worsened this. Then stopping with drinking alcohol and epilepsy could have made his depressions worse.

Around these episodes of attacks Van Gogh painted. A lot. Like a madman ;) He produced hundreds of paintings that much later turned out to be masterpieces. He wanted to paint and felt he needed it. It calmed him down and he believed it would improve his health. If only he could get to the medical knowledge and medicines we have today.

Thanks to Van Gogh's creativity and perseverance in following his dreams he still inspires millions of people around the world every day. Thank you Vincent.

## On 22 March 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"As far as I can judge I'm not mad, strictly speaking. You'll see that the canvases I've done in the intervals are calm and not inferior to others. I miss work rather than it tires me."



### **Gauguin's chair**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**90,5 x 72,7 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh expect his paintings to grow in value over time?

Although Vincent van Gogh realized his paintings were not worth anything when he painted them, he knew they were part of an oeuvre and expected them to be appreciated better in the future.

*On 23 March 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"I work hard and — suppose that only 1 in 10 or 20 of the studies that I make have something that makes them worth the trouble of looking at them — those few, be it more, be it fewer in number — although they're worth nothing now, may well be later. Not so much in themselves as in conjunction with other studies. Be this as it may — I want to try it again, and so as soon as they're completely dry and I can varnish them, I'll send you a few heads and also a little sketch of a yarn-winder."



**Woman Winding Yarn**

**Nuenen, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**40,5 x 31,7 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Vincent van Gogh poor?](#)

23 March



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Why didn't the police in Arles like Van Gogh's painting of red herrings?

A herring was slang for a gendarme. Vincent van Gogh painted them with this in mind after he had been in trouble with the police. They locked up Vincent's house when he was in hospital in Arles after the ear accident. And they didn't feel like giving Theo and Signac entrance to Vincent's house to check out some of his paintings.

You may also like to read:

- [Did van Gogh mean to paint life's struggle?](#)

**Still life with red herrings**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**33 x 41 cm**

**Private collection**

## On 24 March 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"My dear Theo, I'm writing to tell you that I've seen Signac, which did me a lot of good.. As a keepsake I gave him a still life which had exasperated the good gendarmes of the town of Arles because it depicted two smoked herrings, which are called gendarmes, as you know."

24 March

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Van Gogh's father die?

Theodorus van Gogh, Vincent's father, died of a stroke in the evening of 26 March 1885. He had visited a town near Nuenen and walked back home in the cold and snow. He collapsed when he arrived home and died immediately after.



**Theodorus van Gogh**  
8 February 1822 - 26 March 1885

*On 27 March 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh sent a telegram to his brother Theo from Eindhoven:

"sudden death, come, van gogh."

His sister Willemien wrote to her friend Line Kruysse a year later:

"Pa went out in the morning healthy and in the evening he came home and as he came in the door he collapsed without giving any further sign of life. It was terrible. I shall never forget that night. It happened at half-past seven in the evening. Cor was in Helmond and didn't get home until half-past one in the morning; oh, it was so dreadful. I hope that you will be preserved from ever experiencing something like that."

You may also like to read:

- [How was Van Gogh's relationship with his father?](#)

27 March

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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-Vincent van Gogh

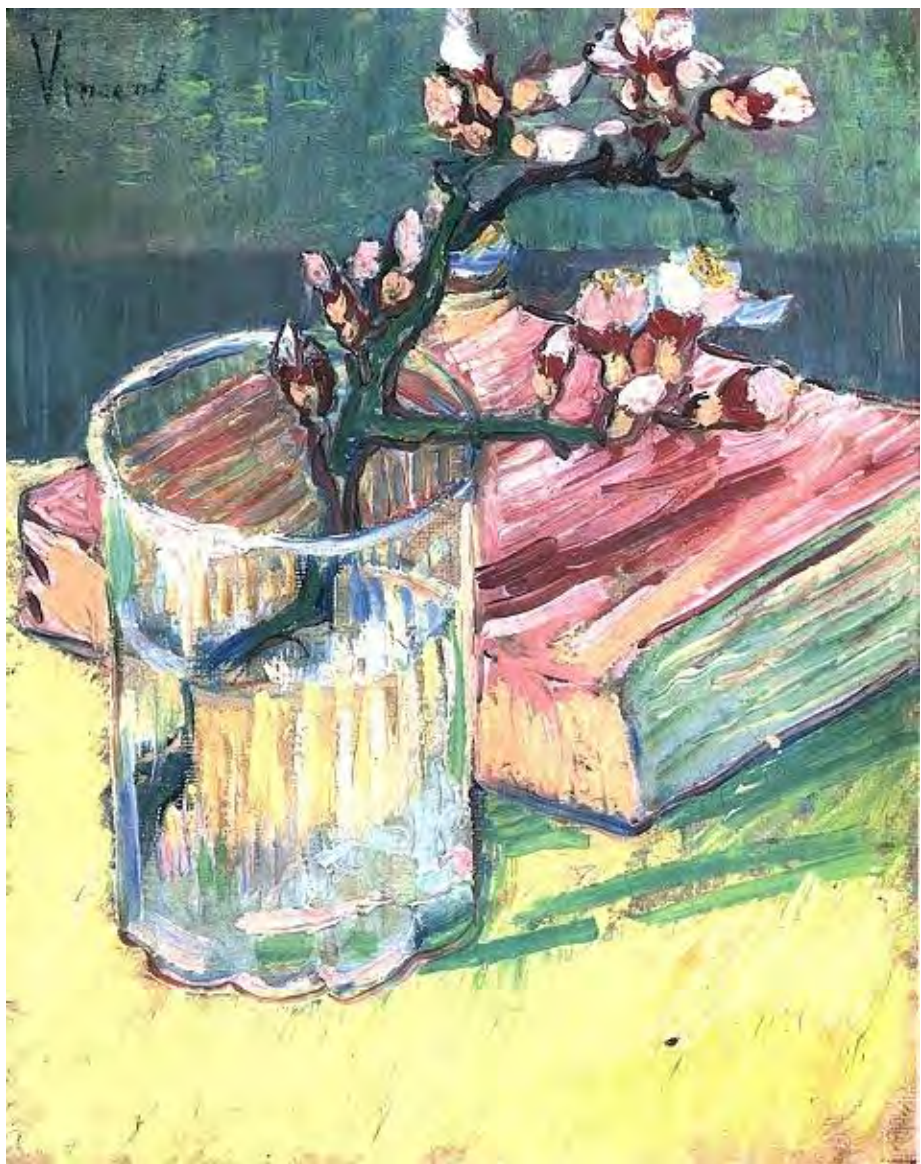
Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh write on his 35th birthday?

On his own 35th birthday, Vincent van Gogh wrote a letter to his sister and congratulated her with her birthday! And he gave her a beautiful painting he made of a sprig of almond blossom in a glass.



## **Sprig of almond blossom in a glass**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**24 x 19 cm**

**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh write his mother when he lived in France?](#)

## *On 30 March 1853,*

Vincent van Gogh was born.

"My dear sister, So as not to let your letter go unanswered I'm writing immediately upon receipt of your letter and Ma's and the good wishes from you both...

...For my part I must also wish you a happy birthday (Willemien turned 26 on 16 March 1888) — since I'd like to give you something of my work that you'll like I'll set aside a little study of a book and a flower for you — in a large format with a whole mass of books with pink, yellow, green covers and fiery red — my painting Parisian novels was the same subject."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh admire Jean Richepin?

Yes Vincent van Gogh especially enjoyed the book *Miarka* by the French poet, novelist and dramatist Jean Richepin. So much actually that he wrote Theo the opening and closing lines of the song that *Miarka*, the central character sings, in memory of Mauve.

You may also like to read:

- [Who taught Van Gogh to paint?](#)

***Orchard with apricot trees in blossom***

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**55 x 65 cm**

**Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland**

## On 1 April 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"It seemed to me that in memory of Mauve we needed something that was both tender and very cheerful and not a study in a more serious key than that.

'Don't believe that the dead are dead.  
While there are people still alive  
The dead will live, the dead will live'.

That's how I feel the thing, no sadder than that. In addition to that I now have another 4 or 5 studies of orchards and I'm going to start a no. 30 canvas of the same subject."

1 April

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who were the painters of the Petit Boulevard?



Vincent van Gogh was part of a rising group of young painters in Paris. The painters of the Petit Boulevard separated themselves from successful impressionists like Monet, Degas, and Renoir. Other painters of the Petit Boulevard were Pissarro, Seurat, Signac, Gauguin, Laval, Bernard, Anquetin, and Toulouse-Lautrec.

## On 3 April 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I'm in the uncomfortable position of convincing Tersteeg I really am an Impressionist of the Petit Boulevard and that I expect to retain that position. Ah well, he'll have one of my paintings in his own collection — I've been thinking about it these past few days and I've found a funny thing of a kind I'm not going to do every day. It's the drawbridge with a little yellow carriage and group of washerwomen, a study in which the fields are a bright orange, the grass very green, the sky and the water blue."

**Bridge at Arles (Pont de Langlois)**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**54 × 64 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo  
The Netherlands**

You may also like to read:

- [What happened to the rest of Van Gogh's painting of Two Lovers?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh sad?

In quite a few letters Vincent van Gogh mentioned his sadness. His famous quote "The sadness will last forever." was written in a letter from Theo van Gogh to their sister Elizabeth though. They may have been Vincent's last words before he died.

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh's illness have impact on his paintings?](#)

**La Crau with peach trees in blossom**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**65,5 x 81,5 cm**

**London, The Courtauld Gallery**

**On 4 April 1889,**

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I'm well these days, apart from a certain vague background sadness that's hard to define — but anyway — I've gained physical powers rather than lose them, and I'm working. Just now I have on the easel an orchard of peach trees beside a road with the Alpilles in the background."

**4 April**

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh order his canvas in Paris?



When Vincent van Gogh lived in the South of France he had his canvas sent in by train from Paris. He just couldn't get the right quality in Arles or Saint-Rémy much to his frustration.

*On 5 April 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"And — as soon as possible — the final price, to me, of absorbent canvas, 10 metres, please. The colourman here made absorbent canvas for me, but he's so lazy about doing it that I've decided to have everything sent from Paris or Marseille, and give up — having lost all patience — the idea of getting him to do it. (While waiting for a no. 30 absorbent canvas I painted two on non-absorbent canvas.)"

Van Gogh painted Paul Gauguin (Man in a Red Beret) on burlap instead of canvas:

**Paul Gauguin (Man in a Red Beret)**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on burlap**

**37 x 33 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Where did Van Gogh order his canvas?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh paint on rainy days?

Rainy days didn't stop Vincent van Gogh from painting. Although he came to the South of France to find warm light and bright colors, typical greys and lilacs on bad days inspired him as well. According to Météo-France it rained in Arles in 1889 from 5 to 9 April.

You may also like to read:

- [How dependent on the weather was Vincent van Gogh to paint?](#)

***Orchards in Blossom, View of Arles***

***Arles, 1889***

***Oil on canvas***

***53,5 x 65,5 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

## *On 10 April 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh to Paul Signac from Arles:

"The other landscape is almost all green with a little lilac and grey – on a rainy day. Very pleased to hear you say that you've settled down, and will very much wish to have more news of you. How is work going, what is the character of those parts?"

*10 April*

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did flowering trees mean to Van Gogh?



## ***The white orchard***

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**60 x 81 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

To Vincent van Gogh flowering trees represented awakening and hope. In Arles Vincent painted no less than 14 paintings of orchards in blossom. He arrived in Arles on 20 February 1888 when it snowed and not much later he witnessed rebirth of nature in spring.

Van Gogh himself was very optimistic and full of energy and hope at that time to develop his painting style, inspired by his new surroundings.

## ***On 11 April 1888,***

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

“Today has been a good day too. This morning I worked on an orchard of plum trees in blossom — suddenly a tremendous wind began to blow, an effect I'd only ever seen here — and came back again at intervals. In the intervals, sunshine that made all the little white flowers sparkle. It was so beautiful!”

You may also like to read:

- [Which was Theo van Gogh's favorite olive tree painting?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Has Van Gogh ever painted a pear tree?

Yes, in Arles Vincent van Gogh painted a beautiful pear tree in blossom. This portrait sized painting was surrounded by two landscape sized paintings of orchards with apricot trees in blossom.

*On 13 April 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

“I now also have a small pear tree, vertical, also flanked by two other horizontal canvases. That will make 6 canvases of orchards in blossom.”

You may also like to read:

- [To whom did Van Gogh give his Pink Peach Tree?](#)



***Small pear tree in blossom***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas***

***73 x 46 cm***

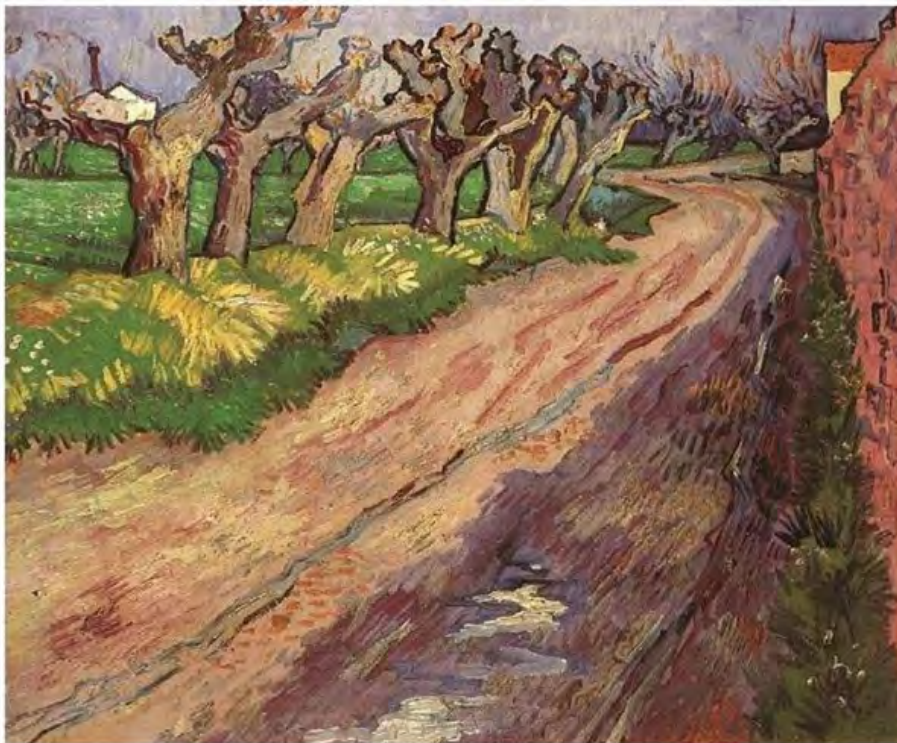
***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which paint colors did Van Gogh use?



Vincent van Gogh liked to paint with colors like yellow ochre, chrome yellow, cadmium yellow, chrome orange, vermilion, Prussian blue, ultramarine, lead white, zinc white, emerald green, red lake, red ochre, raw sienna.

Check out some extra colors he ordered during spring. They were urgent as the appearance of flowering trees wouldn't last long.

## On 15 April 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"In the meantime I've been obliged to ask Tasset for 10 metres of canvas and a few tubes. Also I still need

12 zinc white large tubes  
1 Emerald large tubes  
2 Cobalt large tubes  
2 Ultramarine large tubes  
1 Vermilion large tubes  
4 Veronese Green large tubes  
3 Chrome I large tubes  
1 Chrom II large tubes  
2 Geranium lake medium tubes

I have 6 spring studies, including two large orchards. It's very urgent, because these effects are so fleeting."

**Road with pollard willows**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**55 x 65 cm**

**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [What were the original colors of Van Gogh's paintings?](#)

15 April

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh like to paint peasant life?



***Landscape with sunset***

***Nuenen, 1885***

***Oil on canvas on cardboard***

***35 x 43 cm***

***Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid***

Vincent van Gogh not only painted peasants as an homage to hard working laborers. He also enjoyed the subject as it gave him "peace, in the sense of peace of mind, even when one has a great struggle in material things."

Vincent seemed to love the creative part of the painting process as much as the actual application of paint onto the canvas of peasant paintings. Did it make him feel one with nature and connect with the people around him?

## *On 21 April 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"I hope that the painting of those potato eaters will progress a bit. Besides that, am also working on a red sunset. To paint peasant life one has to be master of such an enormous number of things."

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh not paint Roman remnants?](#)

21 April

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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## Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh convinced about his drawing skills?

Vincent van Gogh was very self-critical in general. Being a perfectionist wasn't easy, but it pushed him to develop his painting style drastically within his 10 year painting career that started in 1880. Van Gogh seemed to be very confident in his drawing skills when he lived in The Hague in 1882 though.

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh self-critical?](#)

***Torn-up Noordstraat with diggers***

***The Hague, 1882***

***Pencil, pen, heightened with white and colors***

***43 x 63 cm***

***Staatliche Museen, Berlin***

## On 23 April 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

“It's precisely because I have a draughtsman's fist that I can't keep myself from drawing and, I ask you, have I ever doubted or hesitated or wavered since the day I began to draw? I think you know very well that I've hacked my way through and am obviously ever more keen to do battle.”

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh paint during his stay in hospital in Arles?



**Ward in the hospital**  
**Arles, 1889**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**74 x 92 cm**  
**Sammlung Oskar Reinhart,**  
**Winterthur, Switzerland**

When Vincent van Gogh stayed in hospital in Arles after his ear accident he simply wasn't able to paint. He was discharged from hospital after two weeks but Van Gogh had to go back a few times as he suffered from attacks.

While Van Gogh was in hospital in Arles again and also later in the Saint-Paul hospital in Saint-Rémy (the asylum) he was very productive. Vincent believed painting was good for his health.

## On 28 April 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien from Arles:

"And I still feel incapable of taking a studio again. I'm working though, and have just done two paintings of the hospital. One is a ward, a very long ward with the rows of beds with white curtains where a few figures of patients are moving."

You may also like to read:

- [Did Vincent van Gogh have a drinking problem?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh grateful to his brother?

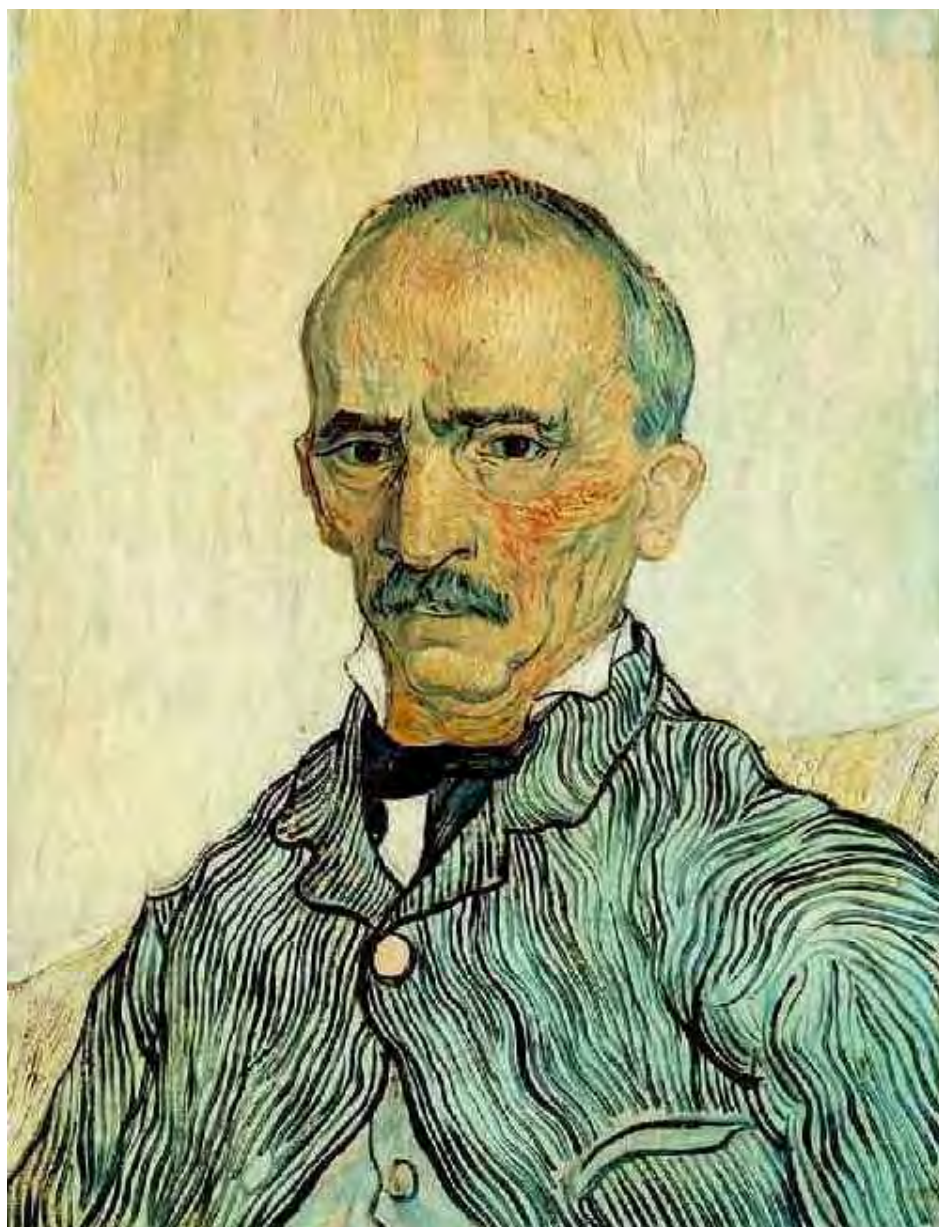
Vincent van Gogh was very grateful to his brother. It wasn't just Theo's financial support that Vincent appreciated. In many letters Vincent expressed he would be unhappy without the mental support and friendship of his brother. Also on Theo's birthday in 1890 when his younger brother turned 33.

*On 29 April 1890,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"My dear Theo, I haven't been able to write to you until now, but as I'm feeling a little better these days I didn't want to delay wishing a happy year to you, your wife and your child, since it's your birthday. At the same time, please accept the various paintings I'm sending you with my thanks for all the kindnesses you've shown me, for without you I would be most unhappy."

One of the paintings he sent was:



**Charles-Elzéard Trabuc**  
(the chief orderly of the asylum)  
Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889

**Oil on canvas**

**61 x 46 cm**

**Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Switzerland**

You may also like to read:

- [Who was Van Gogh's best friend?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh advise how to frame his paintings?

Van Gogh realized the importance of a frame to bring out the best of his paintings. For his 'Cypresses with two figures' he wrote in detail to art critic Albert Aurier which kind of frame would probably work:

"I have noticed that a very simple flat frame, bright orange lead, creates the desired effect with the blues of the background and the dark greens of the trees. Without this there would perhaps not be enough red in the canvas, and the upper part would appear a little cold."

## On 3 May 1890,

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"The Aurier canvas is one of the finest you've yet done, it has the richness of a peacock's tail. I'll take it to him directly, I'd had the frame made that you described, for I certainly owe him that, and he isn't rich."



### **Cypresses with two figures**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889-1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**91,6 x 72,4 cm**

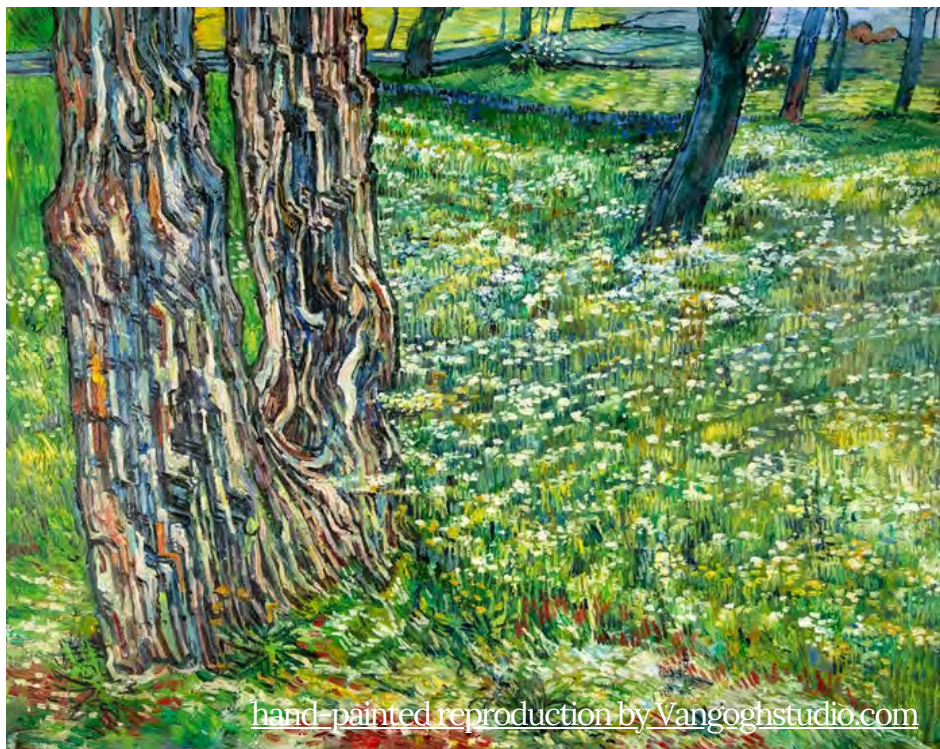
**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh use impasto?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh want to leave the asylum?



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Yes after a year Vincent van Gogh wanted his freedom back and had been waiting patiently for his release.

"I've tried to be patient up to this point, I haven't done any harm to anyone, is it fair to have me accompanied like a dangerous animal? No thank you, I protest. If a crisis occurs, they know what to do in every station, and then I'd let them do it."

## On 4 May 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"As for me, my patience is at an end, at an end, my dear brother, I can't go on, I must move, even if as a stopgap. However, there really is a chance that the change will do me good – work is going well, I've done 2 canvases of the fresh grass in the park, one of which is extremely simple. The trunk of a pine tree violet pink, and then grass with white flowers and dandelions, a little rose bush and other tree-trunks in the background, in the uppermost part of the canvas."

### **Tree trunks in the grass**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**72,5 × 91,5 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh have a hard time in the asylum?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Van Gogh paint at home?

Vincent van Gogh either painted and finished a painting outside, or he started the painting outside and finished it at home, or he did the whole painting at home. His brushstrokes were usually longer and more organic when the painting was done outside.

You may also like to read:

- [Did the mistral wind bother Van Gogh?](#)

***Landscape with a path and pollard willows***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas***

***31 x 38.5 cm***

***Private collection***

***On 7 May 1888,***

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"There's a small landscape with a tumbledown house in white, red, green and a cypress beside it — you have the drawing of it and I painted it entirely at home. That should prove to you that if it suited you, I could make little paintings like Japanese prints out of all these drawings."

---

7 May

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Theo van Gogh hang Vincent's paintings on his wall?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

## **The Harvest (at La Crau)**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73,4 x 91,8 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

Vincent van Gogh sent many paintings from the South of France to his brother in Paris. Sometimes Theo framed them and hung them on his walls. Like a music composition he carefully chose their place on the wall and redecorated regularly.

## On 8 May 1889,

Jo van Gogh-Bonger wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"There's also one of your paintings hanging above the piano in our drawing room (we got one from Aunt Cornelia) — a large one which I like very much — it's a landscape near Arles. The dining room is full too, but Theo's not happy with the arrangement yet, and every Sunday morning is spent rehangng and arranging everything."

You may also like to read:

- [Did Vincent van Gogh advise how to frame his paintings?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh absent-minded?



Vincent van Gogh was not only very creative but also very sensitive and intense. Painting and the thoughts needed to create his paintings absorbed him so much that he would often be preoccupied. Vincent was aware of this but focussed on painting anyway. Also when he had just arrived at the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence.

## On 9 May 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo and Jo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"I have two others on the go — violet irises and a lilac bush. Two subjects taken from the garden. The idea of my duty to work comes back to me a lot, and I believe that all my faculties for work will come back to me quite quickly. It's just that work often absorbs me so much that I think I'll always be absent-minded and awkward in getting by for the rest of life too."

### **Lilac Bush**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 92 cm**

**State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg**

You may also like to read:

- [What were the original colors of Van Gogh's paintings?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How were Van Gogh's colors in the Irises complementary?

Ok there are red, yellow and blue as primary colors. The opposites are complementary: red + green, yellow + purple and blue + orange.

But why would Van Gogh think his blue irises against a yellow background are complementary? The irises would have to be purple to be 'an effect of terribly disparate complementaries'. And they were! The red paint Van Gogh used wasn't very stable so the purple irises turned blue over time.

## On 11 May 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"On the contrary, the other violet bouquet (ranging up to pure carmine and Prussian blue) standing out against a striking lemon yellow background with other yellow tones in the vase and the base on which it rests is an effect of terribly disparate complementaries that reinforce each other by their opposition."



### **Irises in a vase**

**(against a yellow background)**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**92 x 74 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did the red paint in Van Gogh's works fade?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh's friend postman Roulin move out of Arles?



Joseph Roulin was in charge of loading and unloading the postbags at the railway station in Arles but he was transferred to Marseille. Vincent and Joseph would be good friend forever and Joseph sent a letter to Vincent in Arles. He did not know Vincent had moved to Saint-Rémy though and his letter was forwarded.

*On 13 May 1889,*

Joseph Roulin ends his letter to Vincent van Gogh from Marseille with:

"My dear Mr Vincent, accept the regards of he who declares himself to be your entirely devoted friend. Roulin, Railway Postman"

## **Portrait of the Postman Joseph Roulin**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**66,2 x 55 cm**

**Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia**

You may also like to read:

- [Why was Van Gogh so happy with his friend Postman Joseph Roulin?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh smoke pipe?



Vincent van Gogh was addicted to smoking tobacco, but his pipe was more to him than that. He described it as 'an old, trusty friend', a source of consolation. It would be good to smoke pipe 'when you're out of spirits' or 'in order to do good work.'

Van Gogh portrayed himself with his pipe several times. His pipe is prominent in his painting 'Vincent's Chair' that can somehow be viewed as a self-portrait as well. The pipe was part of Vincent van Gogh and even on his bed back at the Inn after he had shot himself he asked Dr Gachet for his pipe.

## On 17 May 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"I'm going to lie in the sand in front of the roots of an old tree and draw them. Wearing a linen smock and smoking my pipe and looking at the deep blue sky... or at the moss or the grass. That calms me down."

### ***Study of a Tree***

***The Hague 1882***

***Pencil, black chalk, brush and ink, brown and grey wash, opaque watercolour***

***51,5 x 70,7 cm***

***Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo***

You may also like to read:

- [Did Vincent van Gogh have a drinking problem?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Van Gogh play with colors?

To express his emotions Vincent van Gogh looked for contrast by using complementary colors; they intensify each other. Another way to play with colors was to paint different shades of color next to each other.

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh believe he understood colors?](#)

**Still life with coffee pot**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**65 x 81 cm**

**Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation, Athens**

**On 19 May 1888,**

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"A blue enameled tin coffee-pot, a royal blue and gold cup (on the left), a pale blue and white chequered milk jug, a cup — on the right — white, with blue and orange designs, on a yellow grey earthenware plate, a blue barbotine or majolica jug with red, green, brown designs, and lastly 2 oranges and 3 lemons; the table is covered with a blue cloth, the background is yellow green, making 6 different blues and 4 or 5 yellows and oranges."

19 May

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh happy before he died?



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh's life didn't end well with the revolver shot in his stomach. Obviously his life was a struggle. But many times he wrote in his letters that he painted with joy and that he was happy to be in nature. Would he lie about this to make his family feel better? That would go against his honesty about his fight against mental problems.

Van Gogh was simply happy quite often and appreciated his life chasing his dreams to be a recognized artist. Also during the last months of his life in Auver-sûr-Oise.

## On 20 May 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien from Auvers-sur-Oise:

"In the last few days at St-Rémy I worked in a frenzy. Big bouquets of flowers, violet irises, big bouquets of roses. Landscapes."

**Couple walking among olive trees in a mountainous landscape with crescent moon**  
**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**49,5 x 45,5 cm**

**São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), Brazil**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Vincent van Gogh kill himself?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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-Vincent van Gogh



## Your daily dose of Van Gogh Why are Van Gogh's irises not purple?

The red paint Vincent van Gogh used was often not stable. When the red color disappeared out of purple irises over time blue came up. The same happened with the purple walls of Van Gogh's bedroom in Arles.

Also the yellow colors changed towards a darker brownish yellow.

You may also like to read:

- [Why did the red paint in Van Gogh's works fade?](#)

### View of Arles with irises in the foreground

Arles, 1888

Oil on canvas

54 x 65 cm

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

## On 22 May 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:

"They cut the grass while I was painting, so it's only a study and not a finished painting, which I intended to make of it. But what a subject — eh — that sea of yellow flowers with a line of purple irises, and in the background the neat little town of pretty women."

22 May

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What kind of frames did Van Gogh like?

These days many of Vincent van Gogh's paintings in museums are beautifully framed with antique ornate golden frames. They match Van Gogh's era, give body to the painting, carefully chosen to make the colors and detail of the painting stand out.

Van Gogh himself didn't have the money for those frames. Besides he also liked simple frames for his paintings, consisting of just some plain strips of wood.

## On 23 May 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"You see that this framing of simple laths does quite well, and a frame like that costs only very little. It would be perhaps good to frame the green and red vineyards, the sower and the furrows and the interior of the bedroom with them too."

The furrows refers to:



***Ploughed field with a tree-trunk  
(Trunk of an old yew tree)***

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**91 x 71 cm**

**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [How many of Van Gogh's original frames have survived?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh make many paintings before he died?



***Thatched Cottages and Houses***  
***Auvers-sur-Oise, 1890***  
***Oil on canvas***  
***60 × 73 cm***  
***State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg***

Vincent van Gogh always worked hard, even when tortured by mental problems. In 10 years time he made about 900 paintings and 1100 drawings. Van Gogh was also productive in Auvers-sûr-Oise, where he spent the last months of his life.

## *On 24 May 1890,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo and Jo from Auvers-sur-Oise:

"I've been very well the past few days, I'm working hard and have four painted studies and two drawings."

One of these paintings is:

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh happy before he died?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What is the meaning of Van Gogh's colors?

The best way to understand Vincent van Gogh is probably by reading his letters. After all that's where he wrote extensively how he felt. Unless he didn't always write how he actually felt. Van Gogh seems very honest when he wrote to his sister Willemien:



"We need good cheer and happiness, hope and love. The uglier, older, meaner, iller, poorer I get, the more I wish to take my revenge by doing brilliant colour, well arranged, resplendent".

Was Van Gogh not sincere half a year later when he wrote to his brother from the asylum showing a painting with bright colors? Or had the meaning of Van Gogh's colors changed?

## On 31 May 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"When you receive the canvases I've done in the garden you'll see that I'm not too melancholy here."

One of these paintings is:

**The garden of the asylum**  
**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**91,5 x 72 cm**  
**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh want to leave the Asylum?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

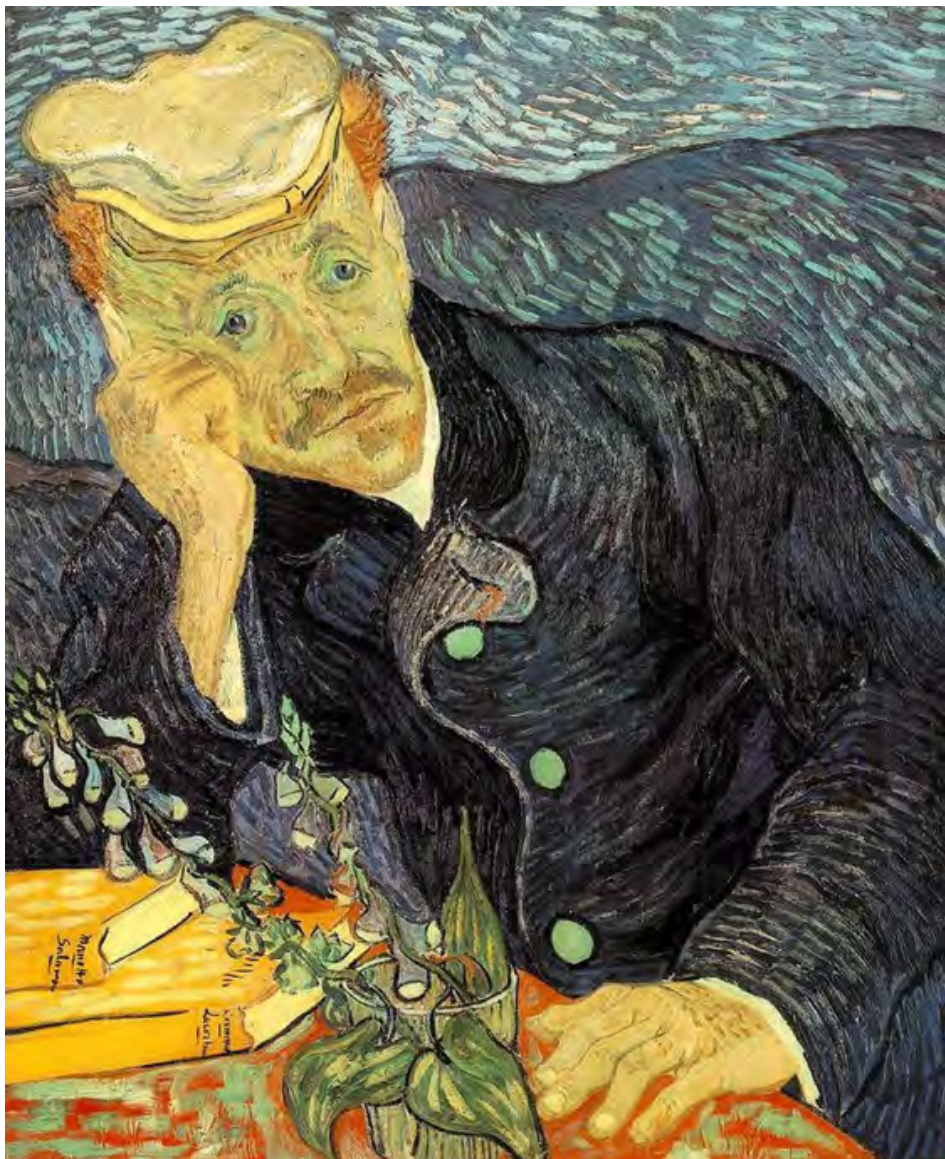
"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which plant is in Van Gogh's portrait of Dr Gachet?



The yellow flower in Vincent van Gogh's portrait of Dr Gachet is Foxglove. Van Gogh may have been treated for epilepsy with an extract of foxglove, called digitalis. These days we know digitalis doesn't treat epilepsy, but it does have positive effects on certain heart conditions.

*On 3 June 1890,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Auvers-sur-Oise:

"I'm working on his portrait. The head with a white cap, very fair, very light, the hands also in light carnation, a blue frock coat and a cobalt blue background, leaning on a red table on which are a yellow book and a foxglove plant with purple flowers."

**Portrait of Doctor Gachet**  
**Auvers-sur-Oise, 1890**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**66 x 57 cm**  
**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [What is the most expensive Van Gogh watercolor painting?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many paintings did Van Gogh make in Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Although Vincent van Gogh spent just 5 days in Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer he made six oil paintings, one watercolor and nine drawings.

Van Gogh left Arles by stagecoach to travel to the little town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to recover there from his health. Painting would help him to feel fit again.

## On 4 June 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Les-Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer:

"I've brought three canvases and I've covered them — two seascapes — a view of the village — and some drawings which I'll send you by post when I get back to Arles tomorrow."

A view of the village is:

**View of Saintes-Maries**  
**Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**64,2 x 53 cm**  
**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in the South of France.](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Why was Van Gogh in hospital in The Hague in 1882?

Vincent van Gogh was suffering from 'a dose of the clap' or Gonorrhoea, a sexually transmitted disease. He stayed in the hospital for 3 weeks. Symptoms as described by van Gogh were 'sleeplessness and chronic fever, and pain on passing water.' Van Gogh wasn't too worried about it but realized it should not be neglected.

You may also like to read:

- [How long did Van Gogh stay in the hospital in Arles?](#)

***Fish-drying barn***

***The Hague, 1882***

***Pen, pencil, heightened with white***

***28,5 x 45 cm***

***Private collection***

### *On 8 June 1882,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"I resisted as long as I could and carried on working, but in the end I realized I needed to see a doctor urgently. But he told me just this morning that I would soon be rid of it. Did you get the two little drawings?"

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which paintings did Van Gogh paint from his bedroom?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh painted his famous *Starry Night* inspired on the view from his bedroom in the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. Several other paintings were also based on his bedroom view, like *Mountain Landscape behind the Saint-Paul Hospital* (*Wheat Field after a storm*).

Vincent's bedroom, of which he made 3 versions, was not his bedroom in Saint-Rémy, but in the Yellow House in Arles where he lived before he moved to the asylum.

## On 9 June 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"One is the countryside that I glimpse from the window of my bedroom. In the foreground a field of wheat, ravaged and knocked to the ground after a storm. A boundary wall and beyond, grey foliage of a few olive trees, huts and hills. Finally, at the top of the painting a large white and grey cloud swamped by the azure."

**Wheatfield after a storm**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**70,5 x 88,5 cm**

**Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek,  
Kopenhagen, Denmark**

You may also like to read:

- [What did Van Gogh's Bedroom mean to Vincent?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh visit his brother in Paris?



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh visited Theo and Jo in Paris once when he lived in Auvers-sûr-Oise; on 6 July 1890. This was not the first time he visited them. Vincent stopped by for a few days when he moved from the South of France to Auvers. This was the first time he met Theo's wife Jo and his nephew Vincent Willem.

From 1886 to 1888 Vincent lived with his brother Theo in Montmartre in Paris, where Theo was an art dealer. Van Gogh's search for warm light and bright colors made him travel to Arles after that.

## On 10 June 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo and his wife Jo from Auvers-sur-Oise:

"Dear brother and sister, Sunday has left me a very pleasant memory. In this way we really feel that we're not so far from one another, and I hope that we'll see each other again often. Since Sunday I've done two studies of houses in the greenery; a whole colony of Americans has installed itself beside the house where I am. They paint, but I haven't yet seen what they do."

### ***Thatched Cottages at Cordeville Auvers-sur-Oise, 1890***

***Oil on canvas***

***72 x 91 cm***

***Musée d'Orsay, Paris***

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh move to Paris?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## What is the most expensive Van Gogh water color?

Vincent van Gogh's water color *Wheat Stacks* was sold at Christie's in New York in 2021 for a record of 35,85 million USD. Van Gogh's *Portrait of Dr Gachet* is the most expensive Van Gogh oil painting ever sold at auction for 83 million USD in 1990.

You may also like to read:

- [Which plant is in Van Gogh's Portrait of Dr Gachet?](#)

***Wheat Stacks***  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Pen, watercolour**  
**50 x 62 cm**  
**Private collection**

## On 16 June 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I've sent you 3 drawings by post today. The one with the wheat stacks in a farmyard will seem too bizarre to you, but it was done in great haste as a project for a painting, and it's to show you what it's like."

The drawing *Wheat Stacks* served as a study for the watercolor painting.

16 June

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh easily distracted?

Like most people who changed the world in their field Vincent van Gogh was hyper-focused.

Not only did he make about 900 paintings, 1100 drawings and write 1000 letters in 10 years time. His thoughts were always about art. All day and every day.

Within his focus on painting Van Gogh could easily be distracted. It made him a multitasker who could be working on a painting and a drawing at the same time, whilst writing a letter.

## On 17 June 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to John Peter Russell from Arles:

"Well, instead of continuing the letter I began to draw on the very paper the head of a dirty little girl I saw this afternoon whilst I was painting a view of the river with a greenish yellow sky."

The view of the river he refers to is the painting:



***The Trinquetaille bridge***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas***

***65 x 81 cm***

***Private collection***

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh absent-minded?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh send paintings to his sister?

Vincent van Gogh promised to send the study Spring of almond blossom in a glass with a book for Willemien's birthday. She also once owned the painting: Orchard bordered by cypresses.

## On 20 June 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien from Arles:

"A long time ago I meant you to have a painted study, and you shall get it. I'm afraid that by post, even if I pay the postage, they'll make you pay excess postage, like the flowers from Menton, and this is even bigger — but Theo will certainly send you one, if I don't think about it, ask him for it."



***Orchard bordered by cypresses***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas***

***32 x 40 cm***

***Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven***

You may also like to read:

- [What did Van Gogh buy for his mother's birthday?](#)

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How intensely did Vincent van Gogh paint?



**Sunset, Wheat Fields Near Arles**

**Arles, June, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73,5 x 92 cm**

**Kunstmuseum Winterthur,  
Switzerland**

Van Gogh worked hard. Very hard. Carrying around his easel, paint and canvas in hot and windy conditions. But also painting itself was hard work. Painting fast with thick brushstrokes naturally came with the intensity of his creative process.

*On 27 June 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:

“I’ve sometimes worked excessively fast; is that a fault? I can’t help it. For example I’ve painted a no. 30 canvas — the summer evening — at a single sitting. It’s not possible to rework it; to destroy it — why, because I deliberately went outside to make it, out in the mistral. Isn’t it rather intensity of thought than calmness of touch that we’re looking for — and in the given circumstances of impulsive work on the spot and from life, is a calm and controlled touch always possible? Well — it seems to me — no more than fencing moves during an attack.”

Later, in 1890 in Auvers-sur-Oise, Van Gogh reached the amazing average of 1 painting a day.

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh worn out himself?

Vincent van Gogh's famous drawing (1882) and painting (1890) '[At Eternity's Gate](#)' also called '[Worn Out](#)' depicting a sorrowful figure struggling through life resonated with Vincent during his life.

His money problems and mental problems exhausted him, but also the sun in the South of France could tire him so much that he wasn't able to tell the quality of his paintings anymore.

**Wheatfield with sheaves**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**53 x 64 cm**

**Honolulu Academy of Arts**

*On 27 June 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:

"The thing is, it's tiring, the sun down here. I'm also utterly incapable of judging my own work. I can't see whether the studies are good or bad. I have seven studies of wheatfields, unfortunately all of them nothing but landscapes, much against my will."

You may also like to read:

- [Did van Gogh mean to paint life's struggle?](#)

*27 June*

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh feel he was part of history?



Vincent van Gogh was aware of his contribution to art in general. Paintings were necessary to help art history go forward, whether created by himself or by other artists.

Not only by discussing art with his fellow artists but also by copying art in his own style Van Gogh would help future artists to stand on his shoulders in their turn.

## On 28 June 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"Yesterday and today I worked on the sower, which has been completely reworked. The sky is yellow and green, the earth purple and orange. There's definitely a painting like that to be made of this splendid subject, and I hope it will be done one day, either by someone else or by me."

### **Sower with setting sun**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**64,2 x 80,5 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh an individualist?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How long did it take Van Gogh to paint Harvest at la Crau?



## **The Harvest**

**Arles, 1888**

**Pen, watercolour**

**48 x 60 cm**

**Private collection**

Vincent van Gogh was very satisfied with his painting of the Harvest at La Crau near Arles.

He painted it in one day, except for some adjusting and perfecting afterwards, back in The yellow House. Van Gogh was well prepared to get it done in one go as he made two studies of it with pen and watercolor first.

## *On 29 June 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"It's like that with the one of which I sent you the drawing, the harvest and the wheat stacks too — it's true I have to retouch everything to adjust the workmanship a little, to harmonize the brushstrokes, but all the essential work was done in a single long session, and I'll spare it as much as possible when I go back to it."

One of the drawings that Vincent sent was:

29 June

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How often are new Van Gogh paintings discovered?

New Van Gogh paintings are not discovered often. In 2013 *Sunset at Montmajour* was authenticated as a genuine Van Gogh.

This was the first time since 1928 that a full size Van Gogh painting was discovered. And it wasn't actually a discovery. The painting had been dismissed as a real Van Gogh in the 1990s.

## On 5 July 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"Yesterday, at sunset, I was on a stony heath where very small, twisted oaks grow, in the background a ruin on the hill, and wheatfields in the valley. It was romantic, it couldn't be more so, à la Monticelli, the sun was pouring its very yellow rays over the bushes and the ground, absolutely a shower of gold."



### **Sunset at Montmajour**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73,3 cm × 93,3 cm**

**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [Does Van Gogh's Red Vineyard near Arles still exist?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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# Who owns Van Gogh's Red Vineyard?



The Red Vineyard may be the only painting Vincent van Gogh ever sold. Anna Boch bought it in 1890 for 400 francs. In 1909 it was sold to Ivan Morozov, a Russian businessman and member of the rich Morozov dynasty.

Morozov's art collection was nationalized after the Bolshevik Revolution and a part of it went to the Pushkin Museum in Moscow where the The Red Vineyard still resides.

## On 8 July 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his mother from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"But what are beautiful in the south are the vineyards, where they're on the flat land or the hillsides. I've seen it, and come to that sent Theo a painting of it, where a vineyard is all purple, crimson and yellow and green and violet like the Virginia creeper in Holland. I like to see a vineyard as much as a wheatfield."

### **The Red Vineyard**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**75 x 93 cm**

**Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow**

You may also like to read:

- [Which wine did Van Gogh drink?](#)



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh feel lonely in a crowd?

Vincent van Gogh visited his brother Theo and his wife Jo in Paris on 6 July 1890. He also met art critic Aurier there who had just written a very positive article on Van Gogh's paintings. Toulouse-Lautrec joined for lunch and the French impressionist Armand Guillaumin was coming to meet Vincent. But it was too much for him.

Wasn't Van Gogh able to connect with the people that surrounded him? Was Vincent in fear not to be accepted? It was in this state of emotional isolation that he went back to Auvers-sûr-Oise and painted [Wheatfield under thunderclouds](#), expressing extreme loneliness.

## **Wheatfield under thunderclouds**

**Auvers-sur-Oise, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**50.4 cm x 101.3 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

## On 9 July 1890,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo and Jo from Auvers-sur-Oise:

"There – once back here I set to work again – the brush however almost falling from my hands and – knowing clearly what I wanted I've painted another three large canvases since then. They're immense stretches of wheatfields under turbulent skies, and I made a point of trying to express sadness, extreme loneliness."

You may also like to read:

- [Why was Mrs Ginoux a special friend for Van Gogh?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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# How many bird's nests did Van Gogh paint?



Vincent van Gogh painted 5 bird's nests after each other, obsessed by their colorful beauty. Vincent's fascination for bird's nests went so far that he started seeing peasant's cottages as bird's nests.

"I now really must go bird's nesting with a number of variations of these 'people's nests', which remind me so much of the nests of wrens — that's to say, paint them."

## On 14 July 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"I've never seen the little house where Millet lived — but I imagine that these 4 little human nests are of the same kind. One of them is the residence of a gentleman who's popularly known here as 'the peasant of Rauwveld'."

***Cottage with a man coming home***

***Nuenen, 1885***

***Oil on canvas***

***64 x 76 cm***

***Soumaya Museum, Mexico City***

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh like to paint peasant life?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh excited to become an uncle?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh was going through tough times after his ear accident. He moved from Arles to the asylum in Saint-Rémy. Instead of organizing his Studio of the South for fellow artists he was now locked up with other patients with mental problems.

Van Gogh was very excited about the news of him becoming an uncle though. Theo's wife Jo was pregnant! Vincent didn't have much else to do than to paint, which served as perfect distraction for his excitement. And he painted many of his now famous masterpieces. Was he able to put a little extra love into his paintings with a nephew or niece to be born?

"Anyway, there's enough to bring back the taste for life a little when I think that I myself am going to be promoted uncle of this boy planned by your wife."

## On 15 July 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"Anyway, in the meantime I can do nothing but fiddle with my paintings a little. I have one on the go of a moonrise over the same field as the croquis in the Gauguin letter, but in which stacks replace the wheat. It's dull ochre-yellow and violet. Anyway, you'll see in a while from now."

### **Landscape with Wheat Sheaves and Rising Moon**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 cm × 92 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [For whom did Vincent van Gogh paint the Blossoming Almond Tree?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

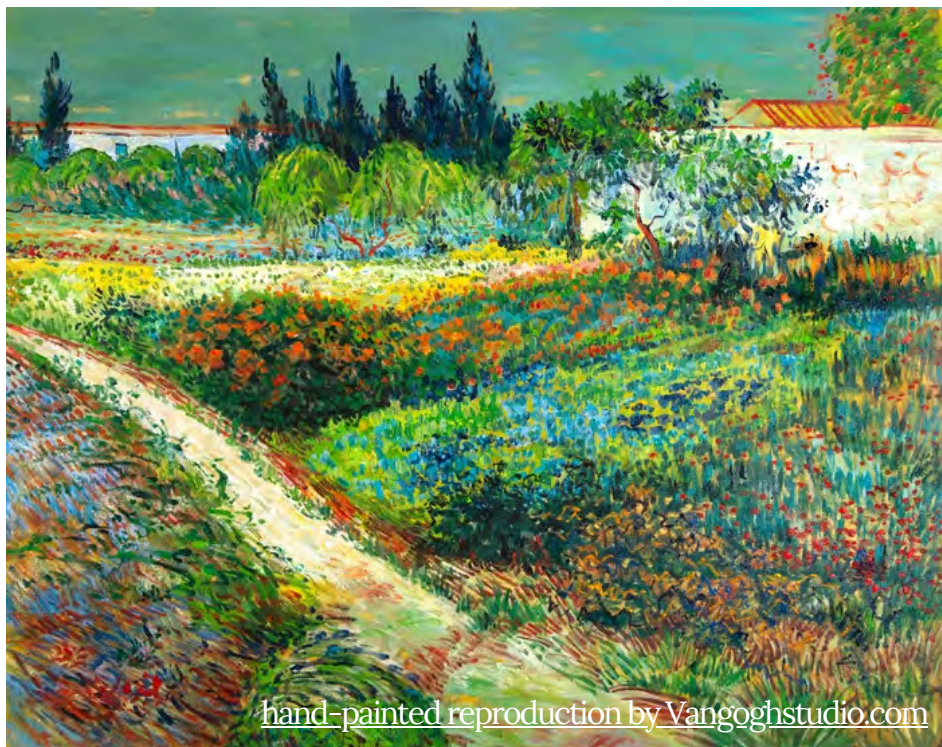
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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# How many letters did Van Gogh receive from his brother?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://vangoghstudio.com)

## **Garden with flowers**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 x 91 cm**

**Gemeentemuseum, The Hague**

You may also like to read:

- [How much are Van Gogh's letters worth?](#)

39 letters from Theo van Gogh to Vincent survived, but Theo must have written many more letters to his brother. Vincent lost many of them. Theo kept every scratch from Vincent though, leading to 663 surviving letters from Vincent to Theo.

In total 903 letters from or to Vincent survived. Thanks to these letters we have a good idea what Vincent felt, how he lived, and how his painting style developed. Vincent also wrote to his sister, his parents, and to fellow artists.

## ***On 18 July 1888,***

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

“My dear Theo. Many thanks for your letter, which gave me great pleasure, coming just at the moment when I was still dazed by the sun and the strain of handling a rather large canvas. I have a new drawing of a garden full of flowers; I also have two painted studies of it.”

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who inspired Van Gogh to paint Cart with red and white ox?

Vincent van Gogh hardly ever painted animals as main subject of his paintings. His 'Cart with red and white ox' was probably inspired on Anton Mauve's 'Carter on a Country Road'. Anton Mauve was his painting teacher in The Hague.

When Mauve died in 1888 Van Gogh painted 'Pink peach Trees' as an homage to his cousin and former teacher Mauve.

## On 20 July 1884,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Nuenen:

"I'm again looking forward very much to your arrival and to finding out what you'll think of the work that I've done since. The last things I did are a couple of rather large studies of ox-carts, a black ox and a red and white one."



**Carter on a Country Road**  
**Anton Mauve**



**Cart with red and white ox**  
**Nuenen, 1884**  
**Oil on canvas on panel**  
**56,7 x 82,5 cm**  
**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Who taught Van Gogh to paint?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## What was Van Gogh's mood a few days before he died?

Vincent van Gogh seems to have been full of energy and devotion.

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh happy before he died?](#)

### Plain near Auvers

**Auvers-sur-Oise, July 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**73.5 x 92 cm**

**Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany.**

## On 23 July 1890,

Vincent wrote to his brother Theo from Auvers-sur-Oise:

“I'm applying myself to my canvases with all my attention, I'm trying to do as well as certain painters whom I've liked and admired a great deal.”

Shortly before he completed 'Plain near Auvers'. And only 4 days later Van Gogh got shot / shot himself and died two days later on 29 July 1890.

23 July

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did John Peter Russell not buy Van Gogh's paintings?

Australian impressionistic painter John Peter Russell (16 juni 1858 - 22 april 1930) inherited his father's fortune and would be able to buy Vincent's art. Van Gogh and Russell met in Paris and became friends. In 1886 Russell painted Van Gogh's portrait that may show best what Van Gogh really looked like of all existing (self-)portraits.

Did Russell not buy Van Gogh's paintings as he didn't sell many of his own paintings either? Vincent asked his brother Theo, director of an art dealer's branch in Paris, to check if Russell was interested.

## On 24 July 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I'd very much like it if Russell were to do something — however, he has a wife, children, a studio, a house under construction, and I can very well imagine that even a rich man may not always be able to spend 100 francs — were it only that — on paintings."

Two years before John Peter Russell painted:



**Portrait of Vincent van Gogh**

**Paris, 1886**

**Oil on canvas**

**60,1 cm x 45,6 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Who painted the first oil portrait of Vincent van Gogh?](#)

24 July

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh move to Paris?



At the end of February 1886 Vincent van Gogh moved from Antwerp to Paris where his brother Theo worked as an art dealer. Vincent didn't have any money and moved in with his brother (without prior notice and without paying his bills in Antwerp).

Vincent lived in Paris for two years before moving to Arles and of course during this period there are not many letters from Vincent to Theo. Vincent only wrote to Theo from Paris at arrival and when Theo was in The Netherlands for a week in 1887.

## On 26 July 1887,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Paris:

"I saw Tanguy yesterday and he put a canvas I had just done in his window, I've done four since you left, and I have a big one on the go."

**Montmartre: Behind the Moulin de la Galette  
Paris, 1887**

**Oil on canvas**

**81 cm x 100 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh visit his brother in Paris?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Theo van Gogh see Vincent before he died?

Yes after Vincent van Gogh had shot himself he asked Dr Gachet to tell his brother Theo to come to Auvers-sûr-Oise. Theo was there with him when Vincent van Gogh died.

You may also like to read:

- [Did Vincent van Gogh kill himself?](#)

### **Wheat Field with Crows**

**Auvers-sûr-Oise, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**50,5 cm x 103 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

## On 27 July 1890,

Dr. Gachet wrote to Theo from Auvers-sûr-Oise:

“Today, Sunday, at nine o'clock in the evening I was sent for by your brother Vincent, who wanted to see me at once. I went there and found him very ill. He has wounded himself . . . it is your duty to come.”

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## What is the exact location of Van Gogh's 'Tree Roots' in Auvers?

In July 2020 the exact location of Van Gogh's 'Tree Roots' was discovered in Auvers-sûr-Oise on 46 Rue Daubigny, 95430 Auvers-sur-Oise, France

### Tree Roots

**Auvers-sûr-Oise, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**50,3 x 100,1 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

## On 29 July 1890,

Vincent van Gogh died.

His last (unfinished) painting was probably 'Tree Roots', painted on the day that he got shot / shot himself.

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh mean to paint life's struggle?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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## Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Vincent van Gogh support his brother Theo?

Vincent was financially and emotionally supported by his young brother Theo. But at the same time Theo needed their strong brotherhood as much as Vincent. Vincent's letters meant a lot to Theo.

## On 4 August 1889,

Theo van Gogh wrote from Paris to his brother Vincent in the Asylum in Saint-Rémy:

"In your last letter you wrote that we are brothers for more than one reason. I feel that too, and even if my heart isn't as sensitive as yours, I can sometimes imagine the distress that you feel because of so many thoughts that aren't resolved. Don't lose heart, and remember that I need you so much. Jo sends her best wishes for your recovery. I hope that you'll soon be able to send good reports."

***Vincent and Theo van Gogh buried next to each other in Auvers-sûr-Oise.***

Without doubt Vincent van Gogh's younger brother Theo was his best friend. Theo supported him financially and in many of the 663 letters that Vincent wrote to his brother, Vincent showed his appreciation for Theo's support and their friendship.

You may also like to read:

- [Who was Van Gogh's best friend?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why was Van Gogh so happy with his friend Postman Joseph Roulin?

Vincent and Joseph Roulin were not only good drinking friends. Roulin worked at the railway station where Van Gogh sent his paintings to his brother in Paris. And on top of that, Roulin turned out to be a topmodel!

## On 5 August 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his friend Emile Bernard:

"I've just made a portrait of a postman — or rather, two portraits even — Socratic type, no less Socratic for being something of an alcoholic, and with a high colour as a result. His wife had just given birth, the good fellow was glowing with satisfaction. He's a fierce republican, like père Tanguy. Goddamn, what a subject to paint à la Daumier, eh? He was getting too stiff while posing, and that's why I painted him twice, the second time at a single sitting, on white canvas, background blue, almost white, in the face all the broken tones: yellow, green, purples, pinks, reds, the uniform Prussian blue trimmed with yellow."



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**Portrait of Postman Roulin**

**Arles, August 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**64,1 x 47,9 cm**

**Detroit Institute of Arts**

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh and Roulin both live in Arles?](#)

5 August

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How important were colors to Vincent van Gogh?

Van Gogh was hoping to find warm and bright light in the South of France as in the Japanese prints that he collected in Paris. And he was extremely happy to see it was actually true.

## On 8 August 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

"This vertical small farmhouse garden is superbly coloured in reality. The dahlias are a rich and dark purple, the double row of flowers is pink and green on one side and orange almost without greenery on the other. In the middle a low, white dahlia and a little pomegranate tree, with flowers of the most brilliant orange red, yellow-green fruit, the ground grey, the tall reeds — 'canes' — of a blue green, the fig trees emerald, the sky blue, the houses white with green windows, red roofs. In full sun in the morning, in the evening entirely bathed in shadow cast by the fig trees and reeds."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

### **Flowering Garden**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**92 x 73 cm**

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did the red paint in Van Goghs work fade?](#)

8 August

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How dependent on the weather was Van Gogh?



**Garden at Arles**  
**Arles, July 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**82,8 x 102,0 cm**  
**Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague**

As Vincent van Gogh preferred to paint outside he had to deal with rain and snow, but also with wind. The strong Mistral wind in the South of France would often make it very hard for Vincent to paint.

## On 9 August 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote from Arles to his brother:

"I think it's likely that we're going to have great heat now, with no wind, the wind having blown for 6 weeks. In that case, it's excellent that I have colours and canvases in stock, because I can already spot half a dozen subjects, especially this little farmhouse garden of which I sent you the drawing yesterday."

You may also like to read:

- [Did the mistral wind bother Van Gogh?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Vincent van Gogh find drawing important?



**The Dune**  
**The Hague, 1882**  
**Oil on panel**  
**36,8 x 59,7 cm**  
**Private collection**

Van Gogh believed drawing would benefit his painting skills. Drawing was cheap compared with painting. And when the mistral wind was too fierce to put up his easel, drawing on paper tacked on board was no problem.

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh convinced about his drawing skills?](#)

## On 11 August 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother from The Hague. This was at the beginning of his painting career:

"Now I would like quietly to amass a good number of painted studies to hang in my studio without referring to this as a change. And should anyone express surprise at seeing painted work by me, to say: Well, did you think I had no feeling for that or couldn't do it? But I've put a lot of work into drawing and will continue to do so, because it's the backbone of painting, the skeleton supporting everything else."

And one day later:

"When I'd written this letter, I realized that it lacked something. I thought — I must ensure that I can write to him that I've tackled a piece of sand, sea and sky like we saw together at Scheveningen. Then I kept my letter back and marched off to the beach this morning, and have just got back with a fairly large painted study of sand, sea and sky."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Vincent van Gogh and Django Reinhardt inspire each other?

Gypsy jazz legend Django Reinhardt (1910 - 1953) wasn't born yet when Van Gogh painted "Encampment of Gypsies with Caravans". A creative soul like Vincent would probably have liked Django's improvisations though.

Not many people know that guitarist and composer Django Reinhardt also was a good painter, inspired by... Vincent van Gogh. And how many people know that Van Gogh... took piano lessons!

## On 12 August 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"At the moment we have a very glorious, powerful heat here, with no wind, which suits me very well. Sunshine, a light which, for want of a better word I can only call yellow — pale sulphur yellow, pale lemon, gold. How beautiful yellow is!"

"And a little study of a halting-place of fairground people, red and green caravans.."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

### **Encampment of Gypsies with Caravans**

**Arles, August 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**45 × 51 cm**

**Musée d'Orsay, Paris**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh inspired by music?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Vincent van Gogh inspired by Eugène Delacroix?

Van Gogh was not only inspired by Delacroix, he even copied his 'Pieta'. In his own way..

Van Gogh's letters to his good friend and fellow artist Émile Bernard often show his astonishing knowledge of art. Vincent's admiration for Rembrandt, Delacroix, Millet and many others inspired both him and Bernard. Vincent and Émile were aware of their part in a historic chain of artists developing art in general.

## On 15 August 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard from Nuenen:

"Have you heard much about Eugène Delacroix? I've read a splendid article about him by Silvestre.... ..Delacroix writes to a friend: 'the chapel where I painted my Pietà was so dark that at first I didn't know how to paint so as to make my painting speak. So I was forced to paint the shadows in Christ's dead body with Prussian blue, the lights with pure chrome yellow'. Here the writer adds, 'one has to be Delacroix to dare do that'."

And in 1889 Van Gogh copied Delacroix' "Pieta" in his own style.



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

### **Pieta**

**Saint-Rémy, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 60 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh an individualist?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# For whom did Vincent van Gogh paint the Blossoming Almond Tree?



***Blossoming Almond Tree***  
***Saint-Rémy de Provence, 1890***  
***Oil on canvas***  
***73,5 x 92 cm***  
***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

In 1890 Van Gogh painted “Blossoming Almond Tree” for his newly born nephew, and namesake, Vincent Willem van Gogh. His brother Theo deciding to name his son after Van Gogh shows again how deeply his love and respect ran.

## *On 16 August 1889,*

Jo van Gogh-Bonger (Theo’s pregnant wife) wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

“You don’t know how often you are thought about and spoken of. Ma wrote, too, that she was longing for another letter from you — do you know what Cor brought me from her this morning? — a pair of the sweetest little socks for our little boy (for I still insist that it will be a little boy — even if you mock me for it!).”

You may also like to read:

- [Thank you Jo van Gogh-Bonger](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Would Vincent van Gogh have been a bitcoiner?



Van Gogh was well aware of the tulip bubble that took place 216 years before he was born. Would he compare bitcoin with a bubble? If Vincent had known about the [stock-to-flow model](#) that explains scarcity (S2F = existing stock / flow of yearly production), he would have understood bitcoin is nothing like the tulip mania.

With its fixed supply (there will only be a maximum of 21 million bitcoin, ever) and its halving of production speed (mining) every four years, Van Gogh would have figured out bitcoin's deflationary nature. Try that with tulips. So yes Vincent and his brother Theo would probably have been bitcoiners!

## On 17 August 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Nuenen:

"And I wish you were, or would become, a painter. I put it bluntly, more strongly than before, because I believe so firmly that the large-scale art trade is, in many respects, too much like tulip mania."

Years before on 6 December 1883, Vincent already referred to the rapid buying and selling of tulip bulbs in 1636-1637, not for the sake of the goods but solely for profit.

### **Bulb Fields**

**The Hague, 1883**

**Oil on canvas on wood**

**48,9 cm × 66 cm**

**National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.**

You may also like to read:

- [PlanB explains Stock-to-Flow](#)
- [Andreas Antonopoulos introduction to bitcoin](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Vincent van Gogh dream about stars?

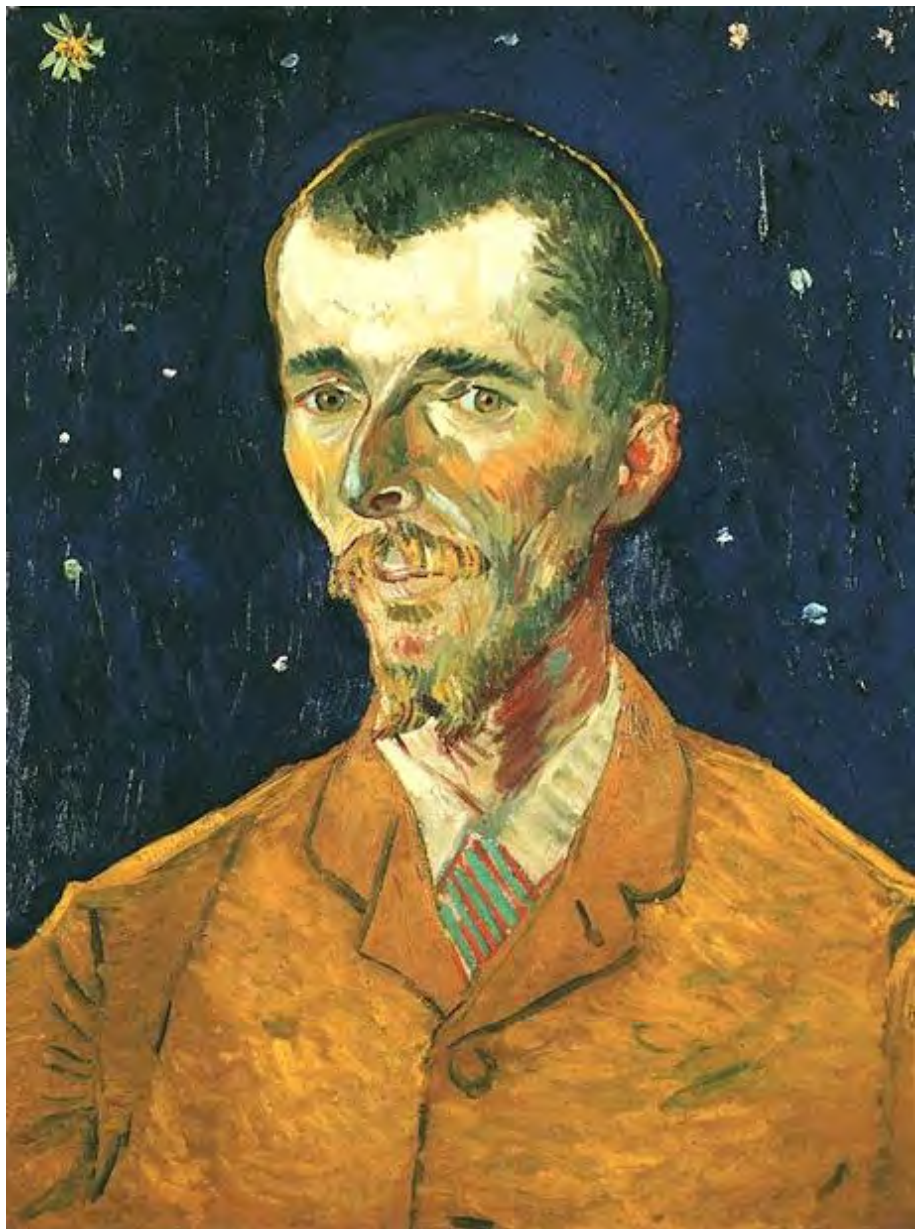
Not only Van Gogh quotes like: "For my part I know nothing with any certainty, but the sight of the stars makes me dream." show his fascination with stars.

Van Gogh's 'Starry Night', 'Starry Night over the Rhône' and 'Cafe Terrace at Night' have become world famous paintings with stars. Van Gogh even decorated his 'Portrait of Eugène Boch' with mysterious stars!

## On 18 August 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo from Arles:

"I exaggerate the blond of the hair, I come to orange tones, chromes, pale lemon. Behind the head — instead of painting the dull wall of the mean room, I paint the infinite. I make a simple background of the richest, most intense blue that I can prepare, and with this simple combination, the brightly lit blond head, against this rich blue background achieves a mysterious effect, like a star in the deep azure."



**Portrait of Eugène Boch**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**60 x 45 cm**

**Musée d'Orsay, Paris**

You may also like to read:

- [Who bought Van Gogh's The Red Vineyard?](#)

18 August

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How do children look at a Van Gogh painting?

The '[Van Gogh Museum Eye-Tracking Project](#)' found out that kids focus on the brightest colors and the most obvious items, whereas adults initially see the more understated features of the painting. Children's instinctive way of looking disappears when they know more about the background of the painting.

Toddlers lack any knowledge of art. Wouldn't it be nice to know the stories they make up when they see a Van Gogh painting? We will probably never find out how they perceive *Starry Night*. At least we can notice them enjoying art.

## On 19 August 1889,

postman Joseph Roulin wrote to his good friend Vincent van Gogh from Marseille:

"Marcelle is ever more beautiful, she is walking all on her own, she talks like a little Parrot. I can tell you that I spent a pleasant fortnight with them. A little one who isn't unsociable, who gets on with everyone. If you had seen her admiring paintings, as soon as she saw a painting in houses, in the street, she talked to it."



***Augustine and Marcelle Roulin***

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on Canvas**

**63,5 × 20,3 cm**

**Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York**

You may also like to read:

- [Who resembled Vincent Willem Van Gogh as a baby?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Vincent van Gogh poor?



Vincent was financially supported by his younger brother Theo during his painting career. Theo sent him a lot more money than most people earned and Vincent had no children to take care of. Yet he often ran out of money as he spent a lot of money on canvas, paint and brushes to be able to produce nearly 900 paintings in 10 years time.

## **The Red Vineyard**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**75 x 93 cm**

**Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow**

You may also like to read:

- [Which wine did Van Gogh drink?](#)

## *On 20 August 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

“To be carefree, to hope that one of these days I'll be freed from pennilessness: pure illusion. I'll count myself well content to work for an allowance that's just enough and my peace and quiet in my studio for the rest of my life.”

Van Gogh probably sold just one painting during his life..

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many Sunflowers did Vincent van Gogh paint?

## **Three Sunflowers**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 58 cm**

**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [What did Van Gogh mean to express with sunflowers?](#)

## **4 paintings with cut sunflowers, all in Paris in 1887:**

Four Cut Sunflowers (Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo)

Two Cut Sunflowers (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam)

Two Cut Sunflowers (Kunstmuseum Bern)

Two Cut Sunflowers (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

+

## **7 paintings with sunflowers in a vase, in Arles:**

Still Life: Vase with 5 Sunflowers, 1888 (Destroyed by fire in the Second World War)

Still Life: Vase with 15 Sunflowers, 1888 (National Gallery, London)

Still Life: Vase with 12 Sunflowers, 1888 (Neue Pinakothek, Munich)

Three Sunflowers in a Vase, 1888 (Private collection, USA)

Still Life: Vase with 15 Sunflowers, 1889 (Sompo Japan Museum of Art, Tokyo)

Still Life: Vase with 15 Sunflowers, 1889 (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam)

Still Life: Vase with 12 Sunflowers, 1889 (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

**So Van Gogh painted 11 sunflower paintings with  $10 + 77 = 87$  sunflowers in total.**

## *On 21 August 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

"I'm painting with the gusto of a Marseillais eating bouillabaisse, which won't surprise you when it's a question of painting large Sunflowers. I have 3 canvases on the go, 1) 3 large flowers in a green vase, light background (no. 15 canvas), 2) 3 flowers, one flower that's gone to seed and lost its petals and a bud on a royal blue background (no. 25 canvas), 3) twelve flowers and buds in a yellow vase (no. 30 canvas). So the last one is light on light, and will be the best, I hope. I'll probably not stop there. In the hope of living in a studio of our own with Gauguin, I'd like to do a decoration for the studio. Nothing but large Sunflowers."

21 August

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which books did Vincent van Gogh read?



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Van Gogh was an avid reader. His favorite author was probably Charles Dickens, but he also read Michelet, Carlyle, Daudet, Flaubert, Balzac, Maupassant, Zola, Keats, Eliot, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Hans Christian Andersen, and many others.

"I'd wish that everyone had what I'm gradually beginning to acquire, the ability to read a book easily and quickly and to retain a strong impression of it. Reading books is like looking at paintings: without doubting, without hesitating, with self-assurance, one must find beautiful that which is beautiful."

## On 22 August 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"Whilst not liking Rod's book excessively, I've nevertheless done a canvas of that passage in which he speaks of the darkish mountains and huts."

Van Gogh is referring to the passage in which French-Swiss novelist Edouard Rod (1857 - 1910) describes the huts of the mountain dwellers in his book 'Le Sens de la Vie':

"their wooden huts are small and dark, meagre shelters against the terrible cold of their winters, heated by enormous, stiflingly hot stoves made of stone, pierced only by narrow windows through which barely pass thin rays of light and faint breaths of air"

**Mountains at Saint-Rémy with Dark Cottage**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**71,8 x 90,8 cm**

**Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh advise to get rid of books?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Were Vincent van Gogh and his brother Theo best friends?



Without doubt Vincent's brother Theo was his best friend. But even the best friendships have their dips.

*On 23 August 1884,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"Please don't think that I don't want to remain good friends — but here it's in the nature of the thing that it's not possible; even if one were to try it, it still wouldn't work. Anyway, it's a situation that no one could do much about. I believe that your character has now set in a permanent mould — mine too — and the directions do not run parallel."

Their father Theodorus van Gogh tried to reassure Theo somewhat, and wrote the day before:

"You will probably also receive a letter from V. I pray you don't attach too much to it. He is evidently not well and I should think feverish and consequently too easily excited. I would ask you to keep calm, in the face of what could disrupt calm! He is very touchy or overwrought."

**Vincent or Theo van Gogh**

**Paris, 1887**

**Oil on panel**

**19 x 14 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

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23 August

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which of Van Gogh's sunflowers is the fourth version?

**Vase with 15 Sunflowers**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**92,1 x 73 cm**

**National Gallery of London**

You may also like to read:

- [What did Van Gogh mean to express with the sunflowers?](#)

**In August 1888 Vincent van Gogh painted 4 versions of his sunflowers series:**

- First version: [Three Sunflowers in a Vase](#), private collection
- Second version: [Vase with 5 Sunflowers](#), destroyed
- Third version: [Vase with 12 Sunflowers](#), Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany
- Fourth version: [Vase with 15 Sunflowers](#), National Gallery, London

**And in January 1889 Van Gogh copied the fourth version 3 times:**

- First copy: [Vase with 12 Sunflowers](#), Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Second copy: [Vase with 15 Sunflowers](#), Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
- Third copy: [Vase with 15 Sunflowers](#), Sompo Japan Museum of Art, Tokyo

## On 24 August 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I'm now on the fourth painting of sunflowers. This fourth one is a bouquet of 14 flowers and is on a yellow background.."

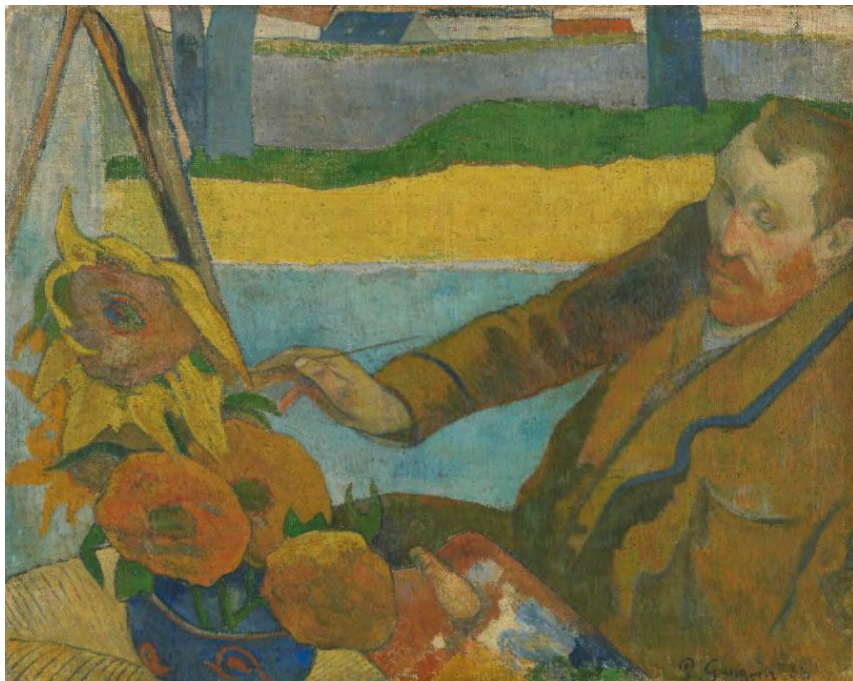
Van Gogh probably added the small flower at the bottom left later – this explains why he refers here to '14 flowers'.

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Would a Van Gogh painting look good in your home?



According to Vincent van Gogh a painting in a certain style should match the style of the house. Little did he know that especially his colorful paintings that he painted in France would be such a good match with many interiors 100 years after he died.

You may also like to read:

- [Did Theo van Gogh hang Vincent's paintings on his wall?](#)

## *On 26 August 1666,*

Dutch artist Frans Hals died (1582 - 26 August 1666).

Van Gogh was an admirer of his paintings and spent a lot of time researching his technique when he visited the Rijksmuseum in October 1885.

On 9 June 1889 Vincent wrote to Theo van Gogh from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"When I see a painting that intrigues me, I can never help asking myself, 'in what house, room, corner of the room, in whose home would it do well, would it be in its rightful place'. Thus the paintings of Hals, Rembrandt, Vermeer are only at home in the old Dutch house."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh buy for his mother's birthday?

In 1877 Vincent van Gogh lived in Amsterdam. He hadn't started his career as a painter yet, but was preparing for theology studies at the university. Van Gogh had already been working for the art dealers Goupil & Cie in London. To give his mother a painting would be too expensive. Read below what he could afford.

*On 27 August 1877,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote from Amsterdam:

"My dear Theo, It's nearing Ma's birthday, so I'm sending you herewith a money order for 1.23 1/2 guilders, because I'd very much like to give something together with you. It isn't much, but it's all I have; if you add the same amount to it then we can nonetheless get a good photograph."



**Portrait of Van Gogh's Mother  
Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**40.5 × 32.5 cm**

**Norton Simon Museum of Art,  
Pasadena, California**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh write his mother when he lived in France?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What kind of women was Vincent van Gogh attracted to?



## *The Brothel*

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**33 x 41 cm**

***Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia***

Van Gogh was attracted to intelligent women who had endured difficult lives. This extended to people looked down upon, including prostitutes, like Sien Hoornik.

## *On 28 August 1883,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague about Sien Hoornik:

"I feel more compassion for the woman than ever before because I see that she's very unsettled. I believe that at the moment she has no better friend than me, who would sincerely help her more if she allowed me to. But she doesn't seek my trust, and makes me absolutely powerless by giving her trust to those who are in fact her enemies. I truly believe that she doesn't understand that there is evil in what she does — or doesn't want to understand it, I sometimes think."

You may also like to read:

- [What was special about the women from Arles?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What kind of models did Vincent van Gogh like to paint?



Van Gogh preferred to paint characteristic types, who were often peasants and laborers such as farmers, weavers, and fishermen.

**Portrait of Patience Escalier / The Peasant**  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**69 x 56 cm**  
**Private collection**

*On 29 August 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles about Patience Escalier ('The peasant'):

"I have two models this week, an Arlésienne and the old peasant, whom I'm doing this time against a bright orange background, which, although it doesn't pretend to represent a red sunset in trompe l'oeil, is perhaps a suggestion of it, all the same."

And one week later on 3 September 1888 he wrote:

"I'd like to paint men or women with that je ne sais quoi of the eternal, of which the halo used to be the symbol, and which we try to achieve through the radiance itself, through the vibrancy of our colorations."

29 August

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which vineyards did Vincent van Gogh paint?



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

## **The Green Vineyard**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 x 92 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

Van Gogh painted The Green Vineyard on 3 October 1888 and The Red Vineyard on 3 November 1888.

## *On 30 August 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo from Arles:

"We've had two or three glorious days here, very hot, with no wind. The grapes are beginning to ripen, but you hear people saying they won't be good."

One month later Van Gogh painted 'The Green Vineyard' and two months later the famous 'The Red Vineyard', which may be the only painting he ever sold.

You may also like to read:

- [Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in the South of France.](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where did Van Gogh and Eugene Boch first meet?

Van Gogh and Eugène Boch both painted in Paris, but they were introduced to each other later in Arles in 1888, by American post-impressionist Dodge MacKnight.

## On 1 September 1855,

Eugene Boch (1 September 1855 - 3 January 1941) was born.

Vincent van Gogh wrote to him only once, from Arles on 2 October 1888:

"And lastly, a study of the Rhône, of the town under gaslight and reflected in the blue river. With the starry sky above — with the Great Bear — with a pink and green sparkle on the cobalt blue field of the night sky, while the light of the town and its harsh reflections are of a red gold and a green tinged with bronze. Painted at night."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

**Starry Night over the Rhône**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72,5 x 92 cm**

**Musée d'Orsay, Paris**

You may also like to read:

- [Who bought Van Van Gogh's The Red Vineyard?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh paint when he was ill?



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

When Vincent Van Gogh was suffering from severe mental illness in Arles, he was in hospital and could not paint at all. Later though, when he was recovering in the asylum in Saint-Rémy, work actually helped him to feel better.

## On 2 September 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"Yesterday I started working again a little – a thing I see from my window – a field of yellow stubble which is being ploughed, the opposition of the purplish ploughed earth with the strips of yellow stubble, background of hills. Work distracts me infinitely better than anything else, and if I could once really throw myself into it with all my energy that might possibly be the best remedy."

**Enclosed Field with Ploughman**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**54 x 65,4 cm**

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh's illness have impact on his paintings?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which instrument did Van Gogh play?

Vincent van Gogh played the piano in 1883-1885, when he lived in Nuenen. In 1890 he painted Marguerite Gachet at the Piano. It is possible that Vincent played piano for her then. Perhaps some Wagner?

*On 3 September 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

“In a painting I'd like to say something consoling, like a piece of music. I'd like to paint men or women with that je ne sais quoi of the eternal, of which the halo used to be the symbol, and which we try to achieve through the radiance itself, through the vibrancy of our colorations.”

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh like music?](#)



**Marguerite Gachet at the Piano**

**(Dr Gachet's daughter)**

**Auvers-sûr-Oise, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**102,5 x 50 cm**

**Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland**

3 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Vincent van Gogh live in The Yellow House in Arles?



From 1 May 1888 Van Gogh rented 4 rooms of the The Yellow House to use as studio. From 1 September 1888 - March 1889 he lived in The Yellow House, except for when he was in hospital in December 1888 and again in January 1888. In March 1889, the police closed his house after a petition by 30 townspeople, who called him "fou roux" (the redheaded madman). On 8 May, Vincent left Arles for Saint-Rémy.

Gauguin stayed with Van Gogh in the yellow House from 23 October - 25 December 1888.

## On 4 September 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo:

"How I'd like to set myself up so that I could have a home of my own! I never stop telling myself that if at the start we'd spent even 500 francs on furnishing, we would already have recouped all of it, and I would have furniture and I would be free of lodging-house keepers by now. I'm not pressing the point, but what we're doing now isn't wise. There will always be artists passing through here, wishing to escape the harshness of the north. And I feel myself that I'll always be among that number."

**The Yellow House**  
**(2 Place Lamartine in Arles)**  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**76 x 94 cm**  
**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was van Gogh recognized in his lifetime?

Although Van Gogh (1853 -1890) probably sold just one painting while alive, in January 1890 art critic Albert Aurier described him as "a genius".

And in the same year Van Gogh exhibited 10 paintings on Artistes Indépendants in Paris, Claude Monet said that his work was the best in the show.

## On 5 September 1889,

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"Now I must also tell you that the Independents' exhibition is open and that in it there are your two paintings, 'The Irises' and the Starry night (over the Rhône, VGS). The latter is badly placed, for one can't position oneself far enough away, as the room is very narrow, but the other one looks extremely well. They've placed it on the narrow side of the room and it strikes you from a long way off."



### **Irises**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**71 x 93 cm**

**Photo credits: Getty Center, LA.**

You may also like to read:

- [How many paintings did Van Gogh exhibit in 1890?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where did Van Gogh store his paintings?

Vincent van Gogh sent his paintings to his brother Theo who stored them in his house. From 1889 many of them were also kept at Père Tanguy's place in Paris.

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris in July 1889:

"I've rented a small room in père Tanguy's house where I've put quite a few of them... Père Tanguy has already given me a lot of help, and it's going to be very easy to let him continually have new things to show." Vincent replied,

## On 6 September 1889,

"My dear brother,

Although I've already written to you, there are still many things you have told me and to which I haven't yet replied. First that you've rented a room in Tanguy's house and that my canvases are there, that's most interesting – provided you're not paying a lot for it – the expenses still continuing and the canvases still taking their time to bring anything back in, that often frightens me."



***Père Tanguy***

**Paris, 1887**

**Oil on canvas**

**92 x 75 cm**

**Musée Rodin, Paris**

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)

6 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh start copying Millet?

Vincent was a big fan of Millet's work before he was an artist himself. Right at the beginning of his painting career, he already copied Millet (1814 - 1875).

Later in his career van Gogh painted no less than 21 copies Van Gogh made of Millet's work. Vincent had no idea he would become one of the most famous artists in the world himself one day.

*On 7 September 1880,*

"Dear Theo,

As for the sheets, etchings &c. that you sent me some time ago, I received them safely and I thank you very much for them. You did me a great service by sending them. I'll tell you, then, that I've sketched the 10 sheets of Millet's Labours of the fields (in approximately the dimensions of a sheet of the Bague Cours de dessin) and that I've completely finished one of them, namely The woodcutter."



## **The Woodcutter**

**Jean-François Millet (1814 - 1875)**

**1853-54**

**Conté crayon with stumping on beige laid paper  
29,8 x 38.1cm**

**The Metropolitan Museum, New York**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh actually copy Millet?](#)



## Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Gauguin live in The Yellow House?

Paul Gauguin lived with Vincent van Gogh in The Yellow House in Arles from 23 October to 25 December 1888 in what they called 'The Studio of the South'.

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh and Gauguin clash?](#)

**Vincent van Gogh Painting Sunflowers**  
**(by Paul Gauguin)**  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**73 cm x 91 cm**  
**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

## On 8 September 1888,

Paul Gauguin wrote from Pont-Aven:

"My dear Vincent, ...Yes, you're right to wish for painting with a coloration suggesting poetic ideas, and in that sense I'm in agreement with you, with one difference. I don't know any poetic ideas, it's probably a sense that I lack. I find EVERYTHING poetic, and it's in the corners of my heart which are sometimes mysterious that I catch a glimpse of poetry."

8 September



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Was Van Gogh convinced he would succeed?

Life was a bumpy road for Vincent van Gogh. But he kept faith, developed his style, focussed on his work and was convinced he would create a lot of beautiful paintings in the future.

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)

***A Girl in a Wood***

***The Hague, 1882***

***Oil on canvas***

***39 × 59 cm***

***Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo***

### *On 9 September 1882,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother from The Hague:

“Here’s another scratch from the woods. I’ve made a large study of it. I feel the power to produce so strongly within myself, I’m aware that there will come a time when I’ll finish something good, so to speak, daily, and do so regularly.”

Years later Van Gogh managed to finish a painting in one day.

---

9 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When was Van Gogh's mother born?

Today 202 years ago in Leiden,

*on 10 September 1819,*

Van Gogh's mother Anna Cornelia Carbentus (1819 - 1907) was born.

When van Gogh lived in Arles in 1888, far away from his mother, he received a photo from his sister Willemien in black and white and that annoyed him. He wrote to Theo:

"I'm writing to you in haste; I'm working on a portrait. That's to say, I'm doing a portrait of our mother for myself. I can't look at the colourless photograph, and I'm trying to do one with harmonious colour, as I see her in my memory."

Anna Cornelia Carbentus died on 29 april 1907. In her life she lost 4 sons. In 1852 she lost her first son Vincent in giving birth. She lost the the now famous painter Vincent van Gogh in 1890. Theo died half a year in 1891. And Cor died in 1900.



***The photo of Van Gogh's mother that he received in France and painted in color.***

You may also like to read:

- [What did Van Gogh buy for his mother's birthday?](#)



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Van Gogh exchange his paintings?

Vincent van Gogh has probably sold only one painting during his life. But he also exchanged his work, for example with Paul Gauguin and Emile Bernard.

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh give his paintings away?](#)

### **Quay with Sand Barges**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil in canvas**

**55.1 x 66.2 cm**

**Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany**

## On 11 September 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"My letter to Gauguin has gone off; I asked them for an exchange if they wish; I would so much like to have here Gauguin's portrait of Bernard and Bernard's of Gauguin."

Gauguin and Bernard complied with Van Gogh's request in early October, but instead of painting each other's portrait they opted to paint a self-portrait with the other's portrait in the background. In exchange Paul Gauguin got Self-portrait and Emile Bernard Quay with sand barges.

11 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Has Van Gogh ever copied a painting by Rembrandt?



Vincent van Gogh painted "Van Gogh Half Figure of an Angel after Rembrandt" and "The Raising of Lazarus (after Rembrandt)"

*On 12 September 1875,*

5 years before Van Gogh started his painting career, he wrote to Theo from Paris:

"You know the etching by Rembrandt, Burgomaster Six standing in front of the window, reading. I know that Uncle Vincent and Cor like it very much, and I sometimes think that they must have looked like that when they were younger. You also know the portrait of Six when he was older, I believe there's an engraving of it in your shop. That life of his must have been a fine and serious life."

In 1890, shortly before Van Gogh moved from the South of France to Auvers-sûr-Oise in the North he received etches by Rembrandt from Theo and painted:

***The Raising of Lazarus  
(after Rembrandt)  
Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890  
Oil on canvas  
35,5 x 49,5 cm  
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh inspired by Rembrandt?](#)



## Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh start painting?

In December 1881 Vincent van Gogh painted one of his first works: "Still Life With Cabbage and Clogs". In the next ten years his style changed completely.

## On 13 September 1873

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from London:

"Yesterday I saw an exhibition of Belgian paintings, which included various old acquaintances from the last Brussels Exhibition. There were various beautiful things by A. and Julien de Vriendt, Cluysenaar, Wouters, Coosemans, Gabriël, De Schampheleer, &c."

This was years before Vincent started painting himself. After spending a few years working for the art dealers Goupil & Cie in The Hague, Vincent van Gogh was transferred to their London branch in May 1873. In October 1874, Vincent moved to the Paris branch of Goupil & Cie. And in January 1875 he returned to London, where Goupil was opening a new location owing to its takeover of the art dealers Holloway & Sons. Vincent was finally definitively transferred to Paris in the spring of 1875.

### **Still Life With Cabbage and Clogs**

**Etten, 1881**

**Oil on paper on panel**

**34,5 × 55 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Why was Van Gogh in hospital in The Hague in 1882?](#)



**Sudden Shower over Shin-Ōhashi bridge and Atake (1857)**  
**Utagawa Hiroshige (1797 - 1858)**  
 Tokyo (Edo) 1857  
 Woodblock print: ink and color on paper

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Van Gogh get inspiration from Japan?

Vincent van Gogh was not only a big fan of Japanese woodblock prints by Hiroshige, but he also liked the Japanese lifestyle and view on the world very much.

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh influenced by Japanese artists?](#)



**Bridge in the Rain**  
**Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890)**  
 Paris, October–November 1887  
 Oil on canvas  
 73.3 cm x 53.8 cm  
 Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

On 14 September 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien van Gogh from Arles:

"You know that the Japanese instinctively look for contrasts, and eat sweetened peppers, salty sweets, and fried ices and frozen fried dishes. So, too, following the same system you should probably only put very small paintings in a large room, but in a very small room you'll put a lot of big ones."

14 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# At what time of the day did Van Gogh paint Cafe Terrace at Night?

Vincent van Gogh loved painting in nature, away from people. But in Arles, he actually painted the Cafe Terrace at Night on the spot at night, which he enjoyed very much as we can read in his letter.

*On 14 September 1888,*

Vincent wrote to his sister Willemien:

"Now there's a painting of night without black. With nothing but beautiful blue, violet and green, and in these surroundings the lighted square is coloured pale sulphur, lemon green.

I enormously enjoy painting on the spot at night. In the past they used to draw, and paint the picture from the drawing in the daytime. But I find that it suits me to paint the thing straightaway.

It's quite true that I may take a blue for a green in the dark, a blue lilac for a pink lilac, since you can't make out the nature of the tone clearly. But it's the only way of getting away from the conventional black night with a poor, pallid and whitish light, while in fact a mere candle by itself gives us the richest yellows and oranges."



**Cafe Terrace au Place du Forum**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**81 x 65,5 cm**

**Kröller-Muller Museum, Otterlo**



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Was Van Gogh fascinated by cottages?

Absolutely. In May 1885 Vincent van Gogh painted *The Cottage*. And in France he kept painting cottages, but in a different style with brighter colors, like *Thatched Cottages at Cordeville* and *Thatched Cottages in the Sunshine*.

You may also like to read:

- How many bird's nests did Van Gogh paint?

### *The Cottage*

**Nuenen, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**65,7 x 79,3 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam**

## On 15 September 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Hoogeveen in The Netherlands:

"Well, it's very beautiful inside these huts, dark as a cave. Drawings by certain English artists who have worked on the moors in Ireland most realistically convey what I observe. A. Neuhuys does the same with somewhat more poetry than strikes one at first, but he makes nothing that isn't also fundamentally true."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How long did it take Van Gogh's oil paintings to dry?



## **The Poet's Garden**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 92,1 cm**

**Art Institute of Chicago**

You may also like to read:

- [Who inspired Van Gogh to use impasto?](#)

Vincent van Gogh's oil paintings needed weeks to be dry enough to send them to his brother Theo. They shipped by train in piles and the paint would still be crushed (impacted impasto). And thick oil paint can actually still not be completely dry after 18 months.

## *On 16 September 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"...there'll be paintings that I really don't want to send you before they're as dry as a bone. In this last category is a no. 30 square canvas of a corner of a garden with a weeping tree, grass, round-trimmed cedar bushes, an oleander bush. Therefore the same corner of a garden of which you already have a study in the last consignment. But as it's larger, there's a lemon-coloured sky above it all, and then the colours have the richness and intensities of autumn. Then it's done in much heavier impasto, plain and thick."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh ahead of his time?



At the end of his career Vincent van Gogh was recognized by artists and art critics contrary to the years before. It would take a very long time though until his paintings became valuable.

If only he knew..

## On 17 September 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard from The Hague:

"I've often worked on the beach recently, either drawing or painting. And the sea attracts me more and more.

I don't know what your experience of getting on with artists here has been like — I've found more than once that people began to rail viciously against what they called 'the illustrative' in a manner that to me very clearly proved they had no understanding of the matter at all, were completely unaware of what's going on in that sphere.

And were also not to be persuaded, or rather chose not to even take the trouble to look at a few things. Or if they did look, it was in their head for a short time and then straight out again."

**Beach at Scheveningen in Stormy Weather**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Oil on canvas**

**34,5 × 51,0 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [How many paintings did Van Gogh exhibit in 1890?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who helped Vincent van Gogh develop his style?



**Path in the Park**  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**72,3 x 93 cm**  
**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

Vincent van Gogh's younger brother Theo not only advised Vincent to become an artist, he also supported him financially and mentally. Theo was his best friend and helped him develop his style that made him the famous artist he is now.

You may also like to read:

- [Who was Van Gogh's best friend?](#)

## On 18 September 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo from Arles:

"At present I don't yet find my paintings good enough for the benefits I've had from you. But once they're good enough, I assure you that you will have created them just as much as I, and the fact is that we make them together."

and

"At the moment I have another no. 30 square canvas on the go, a garden again, or rather a walk under plane trees, with green turf and black clumps of pines."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many paintings did Van Gogh make in the asylum?

Vincent van Gogh was recovering from severe mental illness in the asylum in Saint-Rémy, but he was very productive there. He painted nearly 150 paintings in a year, including *Starry Night*, *Irises* and *Blossoming Almond Tree*.

*On 19 September 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his mother from the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"These last few weeks I've been perfectly well as far as my health goes, and I work almost without stopping from morning till night, day after day, and I lock myself up in the studio to have no distractions. So it continues to be a great comfort to me that the work is progressing rather than going backwards, and I do it with perfect calm, and my thoughts in this respect are entirely clear and self-assured. And so compared with others here, who can't do anything, I certainly have no reason to complain."

At that time Vincent was working on a self-portrait that he wanted to send his mother for her birthday:



***Self-portrait with clean-shaven face***

***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889***

***Oil on canvas***

***65 cm × 54 cm***

***Private collection***

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)

*19 September*

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh copy other artists?

Vincent van Gogh copied work from Utagawa Hiroshige, Jean-François Millet, Rembrandt, Emile Bernard, Virginie Demont Breton, Honoré Daumier, Eugène Delacroix, Gustave Doré, Keisai Eisen and Jacob Jordaens.

## On 20 September 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"Although copying may be the old system, that absolutely doesn't bother me at all...

What I'm seeking in it, and why it seems good to me to copy them, I'm going to try to tell you. We painters are always asked to compose ourselves and to be nothing but composers. Very well – but in music it isn't so – and if such a person plays some Beethoven he'll add his personal interpretation to it – in music, and then above all for singing – a composer's interpretation is something, and it isn't a hard and fast rule that only the composer plays his own compositions."



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***Noon - Rest from Work (after Millet)***

***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890***

***Oil on canvas***

***73 x 91 cm***

***Musée d'Orsay, Paris***

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh actually copy Millet?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who was Van Gogh's role model?

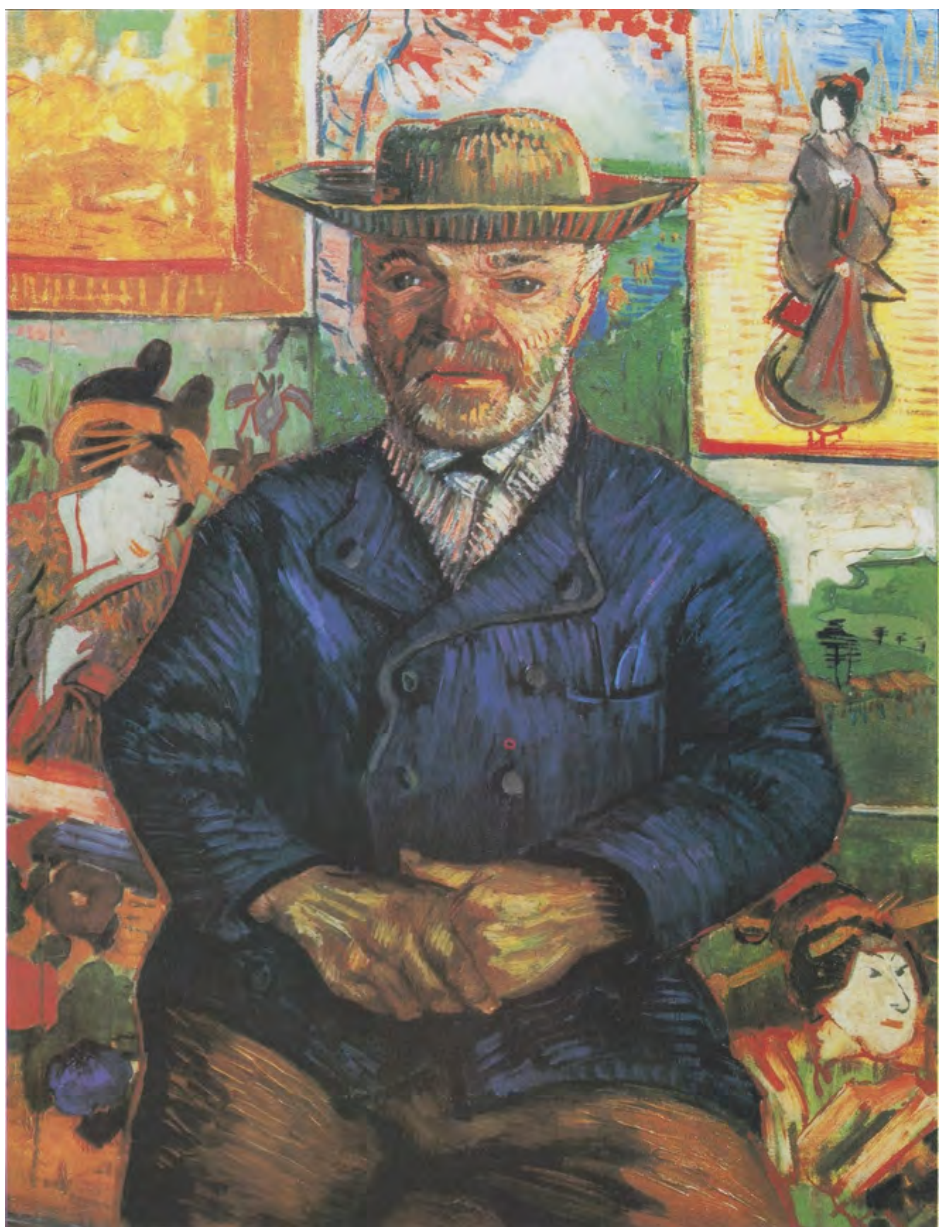
The paint grinder Julien (Père) Tanguy in Paris was not only a father figure and good friend of Vincent van Gogh. Père Tanguy was also a role model for Van Gogh in the way he approached life.

*On 21 September 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"We feel that the art in which we're working has a long future yet to come, and so we have to be established like those who are tranquil, and not live like the decadents. Here I'll have more and more the existence of a Japanese painter, living close to nature like a petit bourgeois. So you can easily tell that it's less gloomy than the decadents. If I manage to live to quite an old age I'll be something like Père Tanguy."

Van Gogh painted Père Tanguy three times. This is one of the three portraits:



**Portrait of Pere Tanguy**

**Paris, 1887**

**Oil on canvas**

**65 cm × 51 cm**

**Stavros S. Niachos collection**

You may also like to read:

- [Where did Van Gogh store his paintings?](#)

21 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many drawings did Van Gogh do?



**Farmhouse at Night**  
**Hoogeveen, 1883**  
**Pen and black ink, faded into brown parts, grey wash**  
**22,1 x 28,8 cm**  
**Kröller-Muller Museum, Otterlo**

Vincent van Gogh's drawings are not as famous as his paintings, but he created no less than 1100 drawings. Van Gogh saw the importance of drawings for his painting skills and under some circumstances like strong wind drawing was an excellent alternative to painting.

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh find drawing important?](#)

## On 22 September 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Hoogeveen:

"And I've also started pen drawings again, specifically with a view to painting, because one can go into such details with the pen as painted studies cannot do, and one does well to make two studies, one entirely drawn for the way things are put together, and one painted for the colour. If this can be done, that is, and the occasion permits, this is a way of working up the painted study later."

It is not possible to determine exactly which pen-and-ink drawings are meant here. It could be 'Farmhouse at Night'.

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh need friends?

Vincent van Gogh had good friends like the Postman Joseph Roulin, the paint grinder Père Tanguy and fellow artists Paul Gauguin and Emile Bernard. Yet he was fine being on his own at home, he was not dependent on their company.



*On 23 September 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"A weaver, a basket-maker, often spends entire seasons alone, or almost alone, with his work as his only pastime. But what makes those people stay where they are is precisely the feeling of the house, the reassuring, familiar look of things. Of course I'd like company, but if I don't have it I won't be unhappy on that account, and then, above all, the time will come when I'll have someone. I have little doubt about that. Now in your home too, I believe that if one is willing to put people up one can find plenty among artists, for whom the matter of somewhere to stay is a very serious problem."

Paul Gauguin lived in The Yellow House for nine weeks from late October 1888.

**self-portrait dedicated  
to Gauguin**  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**61,5 x 50,3 cm**  
**Fogg Art Museum,  
Harvard University**

You may also like to read:

- [Who was Van Gogh's best friend?](#)

23 September



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Van Gogh use varnish?

Vincent van Gogh preferred a matt finish and not use varnish. He did recommend Theo to use varnish in a particular situation though.

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh's paintings to dry?](#)

**Cottages**

**Nieuw Amsterdam, 1883**

**Oil on canvas**

**35,4 x 55,7 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

### On 24 September 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Hoogeveen:

“Today I'm sending a package of 3 studies which I hope are dry enough. However, if they stick to the sheet of paper I laid on them as a precaution, soak them off with lukewarm water. The smallest one, in particular, has sunk in a lot, go over it with the white of an egg in about a week, or some varnish in a month's time, to lift them. I'm sending them to let you take a look, and better after this — really.”

Quite possible “Cottages” was part of this shipment.

24 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh jealous of Milliet?

Vincent van Gogh admired lieutenant Paul Eugène Milliet ('The lover') for his way with women. He confesses to Theo:

"Milliet's lucky, he has all the Arlésiennes he wants, but there you are, he can't paint them, and if he was a painter he wouldn't have any."

In this portrait he depicts him as the prototype of a lover.

## On 25 September 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"As long as autumn lasts I won't have enough hands, canvas or colours to paint the beautiful things that I see. I'm also working on the portrait of Milliet, but he poses badly, or else it's my fault, which I don't believe, however, because I badly need some studies of him because he's good-looking, very jaunty, very easy-going in his appearance, and he'd suit me down to the ground for a painting of lovers. I've already promised him a study for his trouble, but there you are, he can't keep still."



**Paul Eugène Milliet ('The lover')**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**60,3 x 49,5 cm**

**Kröller-Muller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [What kind of women was Van Gogh attracted to?](#)



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## Did Van Gogh and Gauguin work together?

Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin were roommates, exchanged paintings, painted together, painted each other, wrote each other letters, discussed art and worked together by painting the same topic: Breton Women.

Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, Emile Bernard and Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret each painted their version of Breton women.

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh an individualist?](#)

***Breton Women and Children***

***Arles, 1888***

***Watercolour painting***

***60 cm x 73.7 cm***

***Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milano, Italy***

## On 26 September 1888,

Paul Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Pont-Aven:

"I've just done a religious painting, very badly done, but which was interesting to do, and which I like. I wanted to give it to the church at Pont-Aven. They don't want it, of course. Breton women, grouped together, are praying; costumes very intense black. The yellow-white bonnets very luminous."

26 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh a food lover?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh preferred to spend his brother's financial support on canvas and paint rather than expensive restaurants. He did like a nice restaurant though and an empty stomach wouldn't lead to beautiful paintings.

## On 27 September 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:

"I'm beginning to believe more and more that food has something to do with our power to think and to make paintings; as for me, it doesn't contribute to the success of my work if my stomach's bothering me."

Earlier that year:

"I've found a better restaurant where I eat for 1 franc."

This was Restaurant Vénissac on place Lamartine, where Van Gogh ate every day (at least in August and September). It was next door to the Café de la Gare, where he was staying. The owner was the widow Marguerite Vénissac-Canin.

The Yellow House was on 2 Place Lamartine. And the Night Cafe was on 30 Place Lamartine.

**The Night Cafe**  
**Arles, september 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**72,4 x 92,1 cm**  
**Yale University Art Gallery**

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)

27 September

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many versions of Wheat Field with Cypresses did Van Gogh paint?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh painted 3 versions of Wheat Field with Cypresses. One resides in [The Met in NY](#), one in the [National Gallery in London](#). And there is a third, smaller one, in private collection.

## On 28 September 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"Yesterday evening something happened to me that I'll tell you as precisely as I can. You know the pollard oaks at the end of the garden at home — I slogged away at them for the 4th time. I'd sat in front of them for three days with a canvas the size of that cottage, say, and the peasant cemetery you have."

**Wheat Field with Cypresses**  
**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**72,1 × 90,9 cm**  
**National Gallery, London**

You may also like to read:

- [What kind of trees did Van Gogh paint?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh like music?



**Ploughed fields ('The furrows')**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**65 cm x 81 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

Vincent van Gogh liked Wagner's music and he even took piano lessons in Eindhoven. Sometimes he compared his paintings with music. Would he have painted [Starry Night over the Rhone](#) with Wagner's opera on his mind?

*On 29 September 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

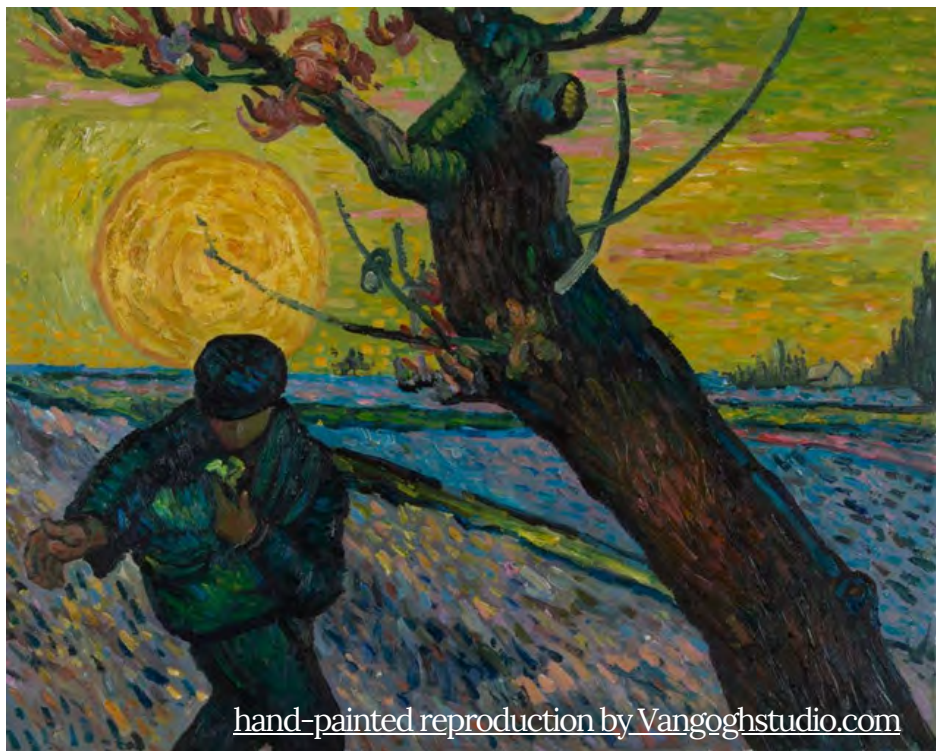
"I wouldn't be surprised if you liked the starry night (over the Rhône, VGS) and the ploughed fields — they're calmer than some other canvases. If the work always went like that I'd have fewer worries about money, because people would come to it more easily if the technique continued to be more harmonious. But this bloody mistral is a real nuisance for doing brushstrokes that hold together and intertwine well, with feeling, like a piece of music played with emotion."

You may also like to read:

- [Who was Van Gogh's favorite composer](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many sowers did Van Gogh paint?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

## **The Sower**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**32,5 x 40,3 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh feel he was part of history?](#)

## *On 30 September 1884,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"My dear Theo, I send you herewith two photographs — you'll get another two of weavers later. I was planning to have 12 photographs taken, a series of Brabant scenes, including the 6 that I'm making for Hermans."

Van Gogh sent photographs of a woman spinning and a sower. The paintings themselves are not known, we only know of them thanks to these two small photographs.

4 years later Van Gogh painted The Sower:



Your daily dose of Van Gogh

## What were Van Gogh's good work habits?

Vincent van Gogh met the young artist Émile Bernard (1868 - 1941) in Paris at age 33. Bernard was only 18 years old at the time and Vincent advised him how to live in order to work successfully.

**Photo: Émile Bernard and Vincent van Gogh (his back to the camera) along the Seine in Asnières.**

**On 1 October 1888,**

Van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:

"But in order to do good work you have to eat well, be well housed, have a screw from time to time, smoke your pipe and drink your coffee in peace. I'm not saying that the rest counts for nothing, and leave everyone free to do as he sees fit, but I do say that this system seems preferable to many others to me."

1 October

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many self-portraits did Van Gogh paint?



Vincent van Gogh painted 35 self-portraits. It was not easy for him to find models. Using a mirror he was able to paint himself, which he did no less than 25 times when he lived in Paris.

## On 2 October 1881,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Etten in The Netherlands:

"I want to tell you what I've done since I last wrote to you. First of all, two large drawings (chalk and some sepia) of Pollard willows.. Then I had a model a couple of times, digger and basket-maker... I count myself very lucky to be able to get models, I'm also searching around for a horse and donkey."

### **Digger**

**Etten, October 1881**

**Charcoal, chalk, watercolour, on paper**

**62,2 x 46,8 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Who painted the first oil portrait of Van Gogh?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Vincent van Gogh travel?



Van Gogh was born in 1853 and died in 1890. He traveled a lot. Not only within The Netherlands, but also to England, Belgium and France. There were no cars and no planes, so he took the boat to England, a train from Paris to Arles, went in a coach from Arles to paint the Mediterranean in Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. And traveled on a barge in Drenthe, enjoying the view of the heath.

## On 3 October 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote from Nieuw-Amsterdam (countryside not Amsterdam):

"My dear Theo, This time I'm writing to you from the very back of beyond in Drenthe, where I arrived after an endless trip through the heath on the barge. I see no way of describing the countryside to you as it should be done, because words fail me. But imagine the banks of the canal as miles and miles of Michels or T. Rousseaus, say, Van Goyens or P. de Koninck."

**Two women on the heath**  
**October 1883, Nieuw-Amsterdam**  
**Drenthe, The Netherlands**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**27,8 x 36,5 cm**  
**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

**And:**

**Heath**  
**Laren, The Netherlands**  
**22 August 2021**  
**Van Gogh Studio**

You may also like to read:

- [Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in the South of France](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh a hard worker?



Vincent van Gogh was not only able to make 2000 paintings and drawings in 10 years, but the thoughts and preparation that went into a painting were immense as well. Endless discussions with fellow artists and his brother made his work develop to colorful masterpieces in his own authentic style.

Carrying around his easel through the French countryside made it also physically hard work.

## On 3 October 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"Ah — my study of the vineyards — I sweated blood and tears over it — but I have it — another square no. 30 canvas — once again for the decoration of the house."

And one month later Van Gogh painted [The Red Vineyard](#). It became world famous, known as the only known painting to be sold by Van Gogh.

### **The Green Vineyard**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 x 92 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Which wine did Van Gogh drink?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What do Van Gogh and Rembrandt have in common?



Of course Vincent van Gogh and Rembrandt van Rijn are both world famous Dutch painters. What few people know is that Rembrandt's work was painted quickly, like Van Gogh's paintings.

*On 5 October 1885,*

Van Gogh visited the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. A week later he wrote to Theo:

"What particularly struck me when I saw the old Dutch paintings again is that they were usually painted quickly. That these great masters like Hals, Rembrandt, Ruisdael — so many others — as far as possible just put it straight down — and didn't come back to it so very much."

In the Rijksmuseum Van Gogh was able to study Rembrandt's 'Nightwatch' and 'The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp'

Four years after he visited the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam Van Gogh painted "Van Gogh Half Figure of an Angel after Rembrandt" in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in 1889. Theo van Gogh had sent a copy of an etching based Rembrandt's painting 'The Archangel Raphael'. Its location is unfortunately unknown. Yes, a missing angel indeed.

***Half Figure of an Angel after Rembrandt  
Saint-Rémy, 1889***

***Oil on canvas***

***54 cm x 64 cm***

***location unknown***

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh inspired by Rembrandt?](#)



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Vincent van Gogh's brother Theo successful?

Vincent's younger brother Theo van Gogh became world famous as he supported the now world famous painter mentally and financially. Vincent's success can be considered brotherly team work in that sense. Theo's successful career as an art dealer made this possible.

In 1880, at age 23, when his brother Vincent started painting at age 27, Theo became director of Goupil & Cie in Paris. 5 years before, it was actually Vincent who supported Theo.

You may also like to read:

- [When did Theo Van Gogh get married?](#)

## **Landscape at Auvers in the Rain**

**Auvers-sur-Oise, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**50 x 100 cm**

**National Museum of Wales, Cardiff**

## On 6 October 1875,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Paris:

"My dear Theo, Even though I wrote to you only recently, I want to do so again anyway, because I know how difficult life can sometimes be. Keep your chin up, old boy, after rain comes sunshine, just keep hoping for that. Rain and sunshine alternate on 'the road that goes uphill all the way, yes to the very end', and from time to time one also rests on 'the journey that takes the whole day long, from morn till night'. So think now and often after this, that 'this also will pass away'."

Van Gogh painted a few works depicting rain. This is one of them, painted 15 years after his letter.

6 October

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh paint Amsterdam?

When Vincent van Gogh lived in Nuenen in 1885 he took a train from Eindhoven to Amsterdam where he painted two small works: '[View of Amsterdam from Central Station](#)' and '[De Ruyterkade in Amsterdam](#)'.

## On 7 October 1885,

Van Gogh was in Amsterdam to visit the Rijksmuseum. A few days later, back in Nuenen, he wrote to Theo:

"The two little panels I painted in Amsterdam were done in a tearing hurry, one of them, mark you, in the station

waiting room when I was a bit early for the train, the other one in the morning, before I went to the museum at about 10 o'clock. Even so, I'm sending them to you, in the manner of tiles on which one has dashed something off with a few strokes."

The 'two souvenirs of Amsterdam' are the small panels [View in Amsterdam](#) and [De Ruyterkade in Amsterdam](#), painted on 7 and 8 October.



**[View in Amsterdam from Central Station](#)**  
**Amsterdam, 1885**

**Oil on panel**

**19,0 x 25,5 cm**

**P. and N. de Boer Foundation, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [What did Van Gogh think of Museum Reattu in Arles?](#)

7 October

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh's illness have impact on his paintings?



**Enclosed Field with Peasant**  
**Saint-Rémy, 1889**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**74 cm × 92.1 cm**  
**Indianapolis Museum of Art**

Vincent van Gogh was not able to paint at all when he was in hospital due to severe mental illness. Perhaps his mood swings sparked creativity at some stages. But one year after his breakdown Van Gogh was happy with the quality of his paintings, thanks to regained stability of his health.

## On 8 October 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Saint-Rémy:

"I had more control over myself in these latest studies, because my state of health had firmed up. So there's also a no. 30 canvas with broken lilac ploughed fields and a background of mountains that go all the way up the canvas; so nothing but rough ground and rocks, with a thistle and dry grass in a corner, and a little violet and yellow man. That will prove, I hope, that I haven't yet gone soft."

You may also like to read:

- Why did Van Gogh cut off his ear

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who inspired Van Gogh to paint weavers?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

It was Millet who portrayed peasants and laborers as heroes. It inspired Vincent van Gogh to depict farmers and weavers, dealing with the cycles of nature. Van Gogh also stood up for weavers as upcoming beet-sugar factories, railways and agricultural developments of the heath changed the landscape that he loved.

## On 9 October 1884,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

“My dear Theo,

Here are the two photographs of the weavers. Next week I hope to send you two subjects from the decorations for Hermans.”

Two photographs of weavers have survived as ‘cartes de visite’: they are Weaver and Weaver standing in front of his loom, which he also painted.

**Weaver (seen from the Front)**

**Nuenen, 1884**

**Oil on canvas**

**70 x 85 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [How many copies did Van Gogh make of Millet's work?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh visit museums?

Vincent van Gogh was a big fan of Rembrandt and Frans Hals, whose paintings he studied in the Rijksmuseum in 1885. In 1889 he visited the Musée Fabre in Montpellier with Gauguin. And before he was a painter he frequently visited the Trippenhuis in Amsterdam, the precursor to the Rijksmuseum.

## On 10 October 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"My dear Theo, I've been to Amsterdam this week — I hardly had time to see anything but the museum. I was there 3 days; went Tuesday, back Thursday. Result is that I'm very glad I went, whatever the cost, and that I don't propose going for so long again without seeing paintings."

By 'the museum' Van Gogh means the Rijksmuseum, which had opened in July 1885.

While in Amsterdam he painted 'De Ruyterkade in Amsterdam' on 8 October 1885.



***De Ruyterkade in Amsterdam***  
***Amsterdam, 1885***

***Oil on canvas***

***20,3 x 27 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh inspired by Rembrandt?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How important was nature to Van Gogh?



***The public garden with a couple strolling Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas***

***73 x 92 cm***

***Private Collection***

You may also like to read:

- [How many copies did Van Gogh make of Millet's work?](#)

*On 11 October 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

“The one I've just done is another garden.”

This view of the park was Entrance to the public garden. Earlier Van Gogh wrote that he had two paintings of this 'other garden' (to distinguish it from the '[poet's garden](#)'); the second painting was The public garden with a couple strolling ('The poet's garden').

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh love Japan?

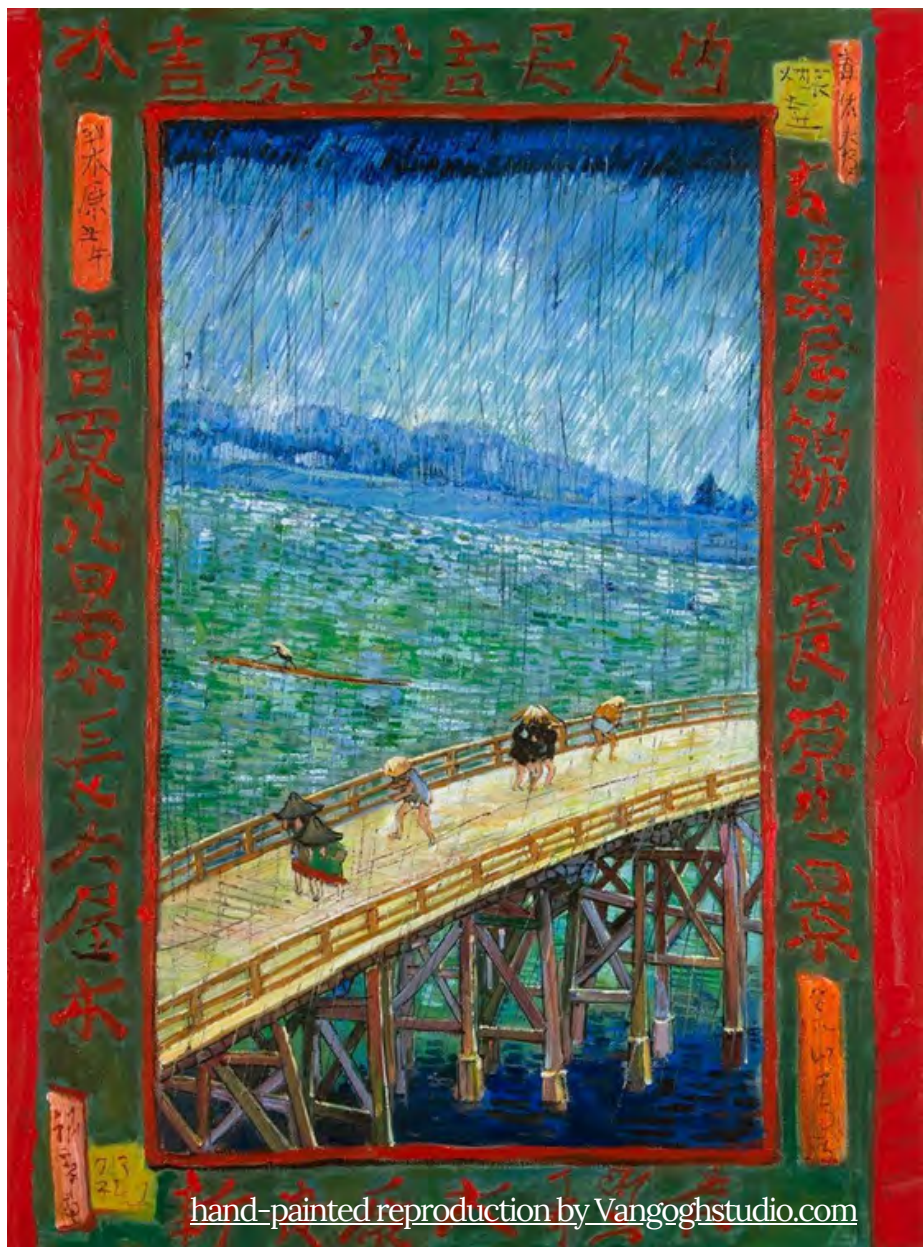
Vincent van Gogh was highly influenced in his artistic creations by Japanese artists like Hiroshige. But he also loved the way the Japanese lived in harmony with nature.

*On 12 October 1858,*

Japanese artist Hiroshige (1797 - 1858) died.

Van Gogh was influenced by Millet, Monet, Gauguin and many others, but most of all perhaps by Hiroshige.

"Isn't it almost a new religion that these Japanese teach us, who are so simple and live in nature as if they themselves were flowers? And we wouldn't be able to study Japanese art, it seems to me, without becoming much happier and more cheerful, and it makes us return to nature, despite our education and our work in a world of convention."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

**Bridge in the Rain - after Hiroshige**

**Paris, 1887**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 54 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum**

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh influenced by Japanese artists?](#)

12 October

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh like the South of France?



Vincent van Gogh loved the bright light and colors in the South of France that inspired him to develop his painting style.

Besides he enjoyed being in the beautiful countryside as described by Alphonse Daudet in *Tartarin de Tarascon* and *Tartarin sur les Alpes*.

## On 13 October 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"Have you re-read the *Tartarins* yet? Ah, don't forget to! Do you remember in *Tartarin* the lament of the old Tarascon diligence — that wonderful page? Well, I've just painted that red and green carriage in the yard of the inn. You'll see."

Van Gogh read Alphonse Daudet's *Tartarin de Tarascon* (1872) and *Tartarin sur les Alpes* (1885). Van Gogh's comment relates to the chapter titled 'Les diligences déportées' in *Tartarin de Tarascon*.

***The Tarascon diligence / Tarascon Stagecoach***  
**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**71,4 x 92,5 cm**

**Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey**

You may also like to read:

- [Which books did Van Gogh read?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh advise to get rid of books?

Getting rid of most of his books gave Vincent van Gogh peace. His resolution to dispose of nearly all his books shows striking similarities to the decision of Maggie Tulliver in George Eliot's novel 'The mill on the Floss'.

*On 14 October 1875,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Paris:

"I advised you to get rid of your books, and I still advise you to do so, certainly, just do it; it will give you peace. But while you're doing it, take care not to become narrow-minded and to shy away from reading what is well written; on the contrary, that is a comfort in our lives."

Vincent was an avid reader though. His favorite author was probably Charles Dickens, but he also read Michelet, Carlyle, Daudet, Flaubert, Balzac, Maupassant, Zola, Keats, Eliot, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Hans Christian Andersen, and many others.



## **Gauguin's chair**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**90,3 x 72,5 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Which books did Van Gogh read?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh exchange his artwork?

Vincent van Gogh not only exchanged his artwork for food and painting supplies, but he also exchanged art with other artists like Gauguin and Bernard.

*On 15 October 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

"Gauguin has my portrait, and Bernard says that he'd like to have one like it, although he already has one of me, which I exchanged with him at the time for the portrait of his Grandmother."

Emile Bernard most probably had Van Gogh's "Self-portrait with a straw hat".



***Self-portrait with a Straw Hat***

***Paris, 1887***

***Oil on cardboard mounted on panel***

***34,9 x 26,7 cm***

***Detroit Institute of Arts, USA***

You may also like to read:

- [Which Van Gogh painting did Leo Gausson receive?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh's Bedroom mean to Vincent?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

## **Vincent van Gogh's Bedroom in Arles**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 × 90 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

Vincent van Gogh mentioned The Bedroom in many letters, happy with the result and he made three versions. Life was good for Van Gogh at that moment. Preparing for Gauguin to share The Yellow House with him, enthusiastic about starting the Studio of the South.

In retrospect this was the calm before the storm. Arguments with Gauguin, drinking and mental health issues would change his life for the worse. Where his bedroom in Arles was meant to rest the mind.

## On 16 October 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo from Arles:

"My eyes are still tired, but anyway I had a new idea in mind, and here's the croquis of it. No. 30 canvas once again. This time it's simply my bedroom, but the colour has to do the job here, and through its being simplified by giving a grander style to things, to be suggestive here of rest or of sleep in general. In short, looking at the painting should rest the mind, or rather, the imagination."

You may also like to read:

- [What were the original colors of Van Gogh's paintings?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Which painting did Van Gogh's Bedroom remind him of?



## ***Piles of French Novels***

***Paris, 1887***

***Oil on canvas***

***53 x 73,2 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

Have you ever seen the painting [Vincent's Bedroom](#) in the Van Gogh Museum? Did you want to know Van Gogh's thoughts about it? We are so fortunate to have his letters. Especially about the Bedroom he wrote a lot to his brother. How else would we know this painting reminded him of a painting he did a year before in Paris: 'Piles of French Novels'?

## *On 17 October 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"This bedroom is something like that still life of French novels with yellow, pink, green covers, you'll recall. But I believe that the execution is simpler and more virile. No stippling, no hatching, nothing; the tints flat, but in harmony. I don't know what I'll undertake afterwards, because my sight's still tired."

You may also like to read:

- [What made Van Gogh such a good writer?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How were Vincent van Gogh and Anton Mauve related?

Vincent van Gogh was Anton Mauve's cousin-in-law. Mauve was married to Van Gogh's cousin Ariëtte (Jet) Sophia Jeannette Carpentus. Her father Arie Carpentus was Vincent van Gogh's mother Anna Cornelia Carpentus.

## On 18 October 1881,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Etten:

"My dear Theo, Since Pa and Ma are writing, I'll enclose a few words, but hope to write to you soon in more detail, namely after Mauve's visit, who's going to Princenhage soon and will also come here."



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

### **Pink Peach Trees / Souvenir de Mauve**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 60 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

7 years later Van Gogh painted Pink Peach Trees. In the evening of the day on which Van Gogh makes this painting, he finds a letter from his sister, who writes to tell him that Anton Mauve has died. This painter was not only his cousin by marriage; he also taught him to paint in oils and watercolour. Van Gogh decides to dedicate the work to him.

You may also like to read:

- [To whom did Van Gogh give his Pink Peach Tree?](#)

18 October

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh do one painting on burlap?

It was Paul Gauguin who introduced Vincent van Gogh to painting on jute burlap in The Yellow House in Arles. Some artists used burlap as cheap alternative when canvas was not available. Van Gogh didn't like the coarse texture of it so much and only painted his 'Portrait of Gauguin' on burlap.

## On 19 October 1888,

Theo van Gogh wrote to his brother Vincent from Paris:

“So Gauguin's coming; that will make a big change in your life. I hope that your efforts will succeed in making your house a place where artists will feel at home.”

Not much later Vincent van Gogh painted Paul Gauguin while he was painting 'a big still life of an orange pumpkin and some apples and white linen on a yellow background and foreground'.



**Portrait of Gauguin / (Man in a Red Beret)**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on burlap on panel,**

**38,2 x 33,8 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh and Gauguin clash?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh experiment with complementary colors?



***Basket of Apples***  
***Nuenen, 1885***  
***Oil on canvas***  
***45,0 x 60,4 cm***  
***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

Vincent van Gogh made his most famous paintings in the South of France, known for their bright colors. To intensify the effect of color he used complementary colors by combining yellow and purple, blue and orange, red and green. But already in his dark period in Nuenen he experimented with color combinations.

## *On 20 October 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"Just to say how that study was painted - quite simply this. Green and red are complementary. Well there's a particular - red in the apples, very coarse in itself - and greenish things as well.

Now there are one or two apples in a different colour too - which make the whole thing right - in a particular pink. That pink - is the broken colour, created by mixing the aforementioned red and the aforementioned greenish.

There you have the reason why there's an association between the colours. Added to this is a second contrast - the background forms a contrast to the foreground. The one is a neutral colour, obtained by breaking blue with orange, the other the same neutral colour, only altered by the addition of some yellow."

You may also like to read:

- [What were the original colors of Van Gogh's colors?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh have a hard time in the asylum?

Although Vincent van Gogh was very productive while in the asylum in Saint-Rémy, he had a few mental collapses. Also being around 18 other mentally troubled patients was very difficult for him at times, but he got used to it.

*On 21 October 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his mother Anna van Gogh-Carventus from the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

“..at the moment I’m working on a portrait of one of the patients here. It’s strange that when one is with them for some time and is used to them, one no longer thinks about their being mad.”



**Portrait of a One-Eyed Man**  
**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**56.5 x 36.6 cm**  
**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh paint the asylum in Saint-Rémy?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What was Theo's influence on Van Gogh's style of painting?



***Undergrowth / Trees with Ivy in the Garden of the Asylum***

***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889***

***Oil on canvas***

***73 x 92,3 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

It was Theo van Gogh who suggested *The Potato Eaters* was too dark and Vincent should consider brighter colors. As director of art dealer Goupil & Cie in Paris Theo knew a lot about modern art and he shared his thoughts about Vincent's development towards the style of his now world famous masterpieces.

I clearly sense what preoccupies you in the new canvases like the village in the moonlight or the mountains, but I feel that the search for style takes away the real sentiment of things."

You may also like to read:

- [Who was Van Gogh's best friend?](#)

## *On 22 October 1889,*

Theo van Gogh wrote to his brother Vincent from Paris:

"I consider that you're strongest when you're doing real things, like that (*Irises VGS*), or like the *Tarascon diligence*, or the child's head, or the upright undergrowth with the ivy. The form is so well defined and the whole is full of colour.

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh good with money?



Vincent's brother Theo was director of art dealer Goupil & Cie in Paris and he was able to send Vincent a lot more money than most people made. With this financial support Vincent could buy painting supplies and have a decent living. But it frustrated Theo that Vincent was often still short of money.

In Arles Vincent spent a lot of money to prepare The Yellow House as Studio of the South to welcome Gauguin and other fellow artists.

*On 23 October 1888,*

Theo van Gogh wrote to his brother Vincent from Paris:

"What a financier you are! What distresses me is that even so, you're still in poverty, because you can't stop yourself doing things for others. I'd be very glad to see you more selfish until you're on an even keel."

***The Public Garden / Autumn Garden***  
**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 x 93 cm**

**Private collection**

Vincent had just finished "The Public Garden" then.

"I have another no. 30 canvas, autumn garden, two bottle-green and bottle-shaped cypresses, three little chestnut trees with tobacco-coloured and orange foliage. A small yew with pale lemon foliage, with purple trunk. Two small bushes with blood-red and scarlet purple foliage. A little sand, a little lawn, a little blue sky."

You may also like to read:

- [Was Vincent van Gogh poor?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh and Roulin both live in Arles?

On 20 February 1888 Van Gogh moved from Paris to Arles, where Joseph Roulin worked at the railroad station. They become good friends. On 21 January 1889 Roulin moved to Marseille. And Van Gogh would move to Saint-Rémy a few months later. Roulin wrote 4 letters to Vincent after their ways separated, worried about his good friend's health.

## On 24 October 1889,

Joseph Roulin wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Marseille:

"My wife was very happy to discover your kind letter on arrival, to learn from it that you are in good health. In your letter you tell me that you have worked a lot, that you have twelve canvases prepared, I hope that you will finish them in good health and that these unfortunate crises will not recur any more; I am pleased that you are in correspondence with your brother and that your return to Paris is almost decided, I am charmed by it."



**Postman Joseph Roulin**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**81,3 x 65,4 cm**

**Museum of Fine Arts, Boston**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did postman Joseph Roulin move out of Arles?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh mean to Picasso?

It was Paul Cezanne who inspired Picasso in his early years to develop his style towards abstract art. Picasso would call him “the father of us all”. But it was Vincent van Gogh whom Picasso considered to be his main inspiration at a later stage of his career.

*On 25 October 1881,*

Pablo Picasso was born.

Picasso's biographer, John Richardson, has written that Van Gogh meant more to Picasso than any other artist in his later years. He even got a copy of the newspaper report of Van Gogh's ear-mutilation episode so he could frame it. gences déportées' in Tartarin de Tarascon.



**Self-portrait with bandaged ear and pipe**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**51 × 45 cm**

**Private collection Stavros Niarcos,**

**On loan at Kunsthaus Zürich, Switzerland**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh cut off his ear?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh not like bankers?



From 1883 to 1888 there was an economic recession with poverty and a high unemployment rate. After their civil war the US government was taking money out of circulation to return to the gold standard. This resulted in less money available to facilitate trade. Vincent van Gogh blamed the bankers.

## On 26 October 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his parents from Nieuw-Amsterdam:

"Dear Parents, I received your letters and I thank you for them. The death of Cousin Anna Tak touched me too; yes, it could have happened at any time. I sometimes thought that she wasn't entirely happy, or rather, for my part I don't doubt it for a moment. I think it must be difficult to be happy with a banker, less than ever nowadays. You will say that it isn't so — but I just happen to have certain ideas about it in regard to the way of all businesses."

### **Bulb Fields**

**The Hague, 1883**

**Oil on canvas on wood**

**48,9 cm × 66 cm**

**National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.**

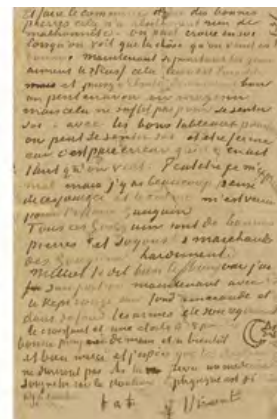
Although the collapse of the Tulip Mania 250 years earlier (1637) was spectacular, this financial event had no critical influence on the prosperity of the Dutch Republic.

You may also like to read:

- [Would Vincent van Gogh have been a bitcoiner?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# At which restaurant in Arles did Van Gogh eat?



## The Yellow House

Arles, 1888

pen and ink

13 x 20,5 cm

**Present owner; sale, Christies's, New York,  
5 November 2013, lot 16, \$5,485,000**

"I've found a better restaurant where I eat for 1 franc." This was Restaurant Vénissac on place Lamartine, where Van Gogh ate every day (at least in August and September). It was next door to the Café de la Gare, where he was staying. The owner was the widow Marguerite Vénissac-Canin.

Although Theo sent him sufficient money to buy expensive painting supplies, Vincent was often still short of money.

## On 27 October 1888,

Theo van Gogh wrote to his brother Vincent from Paris:

"Why don't you try to obtain credit with the owner of a restaurant for occasions when, as just recently, I'm not there, or am unable to send you money immediately?"

The Yellow house was on 2 Place Lamartine. And the Night Cafe was on 30 Place Lamartine.

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Honoré Daumier inspire Van Gogh?

Daumier's art with 'modern' gas light instead of oil lamps created interesting light effects. Vincent van Gogh liked how their yellow and orange tones made the blue colors stronger and created expressive portraits.

*On 28 October 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"In the evening especially, with the gaslight, I like the look of the studio very much. If you ever find any more Daumiers, don't forget to get your hands on them. And I believe that in the evening we'll bring neighbours and friends here, and that in the evening we'll work as in the daytime, chatting as we do so. Portraits of people lit by gaslight — that always seems to me a thing to do. I shake your hand firmly, and write to us soon. Ever yours, Vincent"



***Cafe Terrace au Place du Forum***

***Arles, 1888***

***Oil on canvas***

***81 × 65,5 cm***

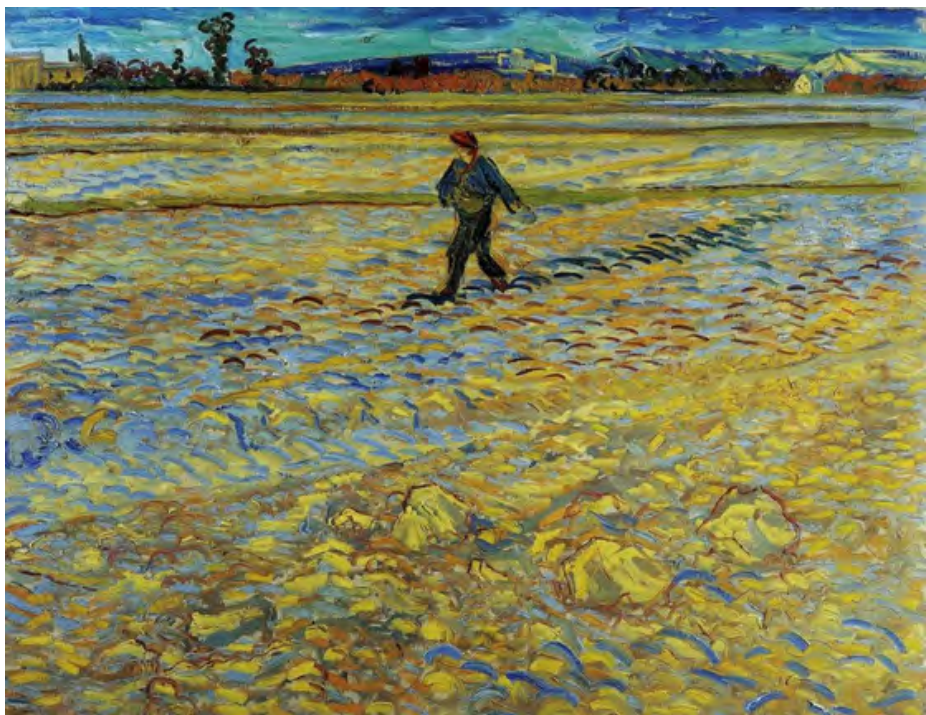
***Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands***

You may also like to read:

- [Was Van Gogh a food lover?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What do Van Gogh's sowers symbolize?



Vincent van Gogh's paintings and drawings of sowers symbolize the eternal cycle of nature and of agricultural life. As a sower of God's word they also have a religious meaning.

## **The Sower**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 x 91 cm**

**Hahnloser/Jäggli Stiftung, Villa Flora, Winterthur**

*On 29 October 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I don't yet know what Gauguin thinks about my decoration in general; I only know that there are some studies that he really does like, namely, the Sower, the Sunflowers, the Bedroom."

and:

"I dare believe that you'll like the new Sower. I'm writing in haste, we have heaps of work. He and I plan to go to the brothels a lot, but only to study them." ences déportées' in Tartarin de Tarascon.

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh finish Millet's work?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How was Van Gogh's relationship with his father?



Vincent van Gogh wanted to make his father Theodorus van Gogh proud of him. But Vincent felt he disappointed his father, a pastor, by giving up his ambition to become a preacher. Vincent hoped to become a respected artist instead, but his father died in 1885 and never saw his son exhibited at major art expositions from 1888 onwards. If only his father knew..

## ***The Angelus (after Millet)***

**Brussels, 1880**

***Pencil, white and red chalk, and heightened with white on (originally) grey-blue laid paper***

**46,8 x 61,9 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh actually copy Millet?](#)

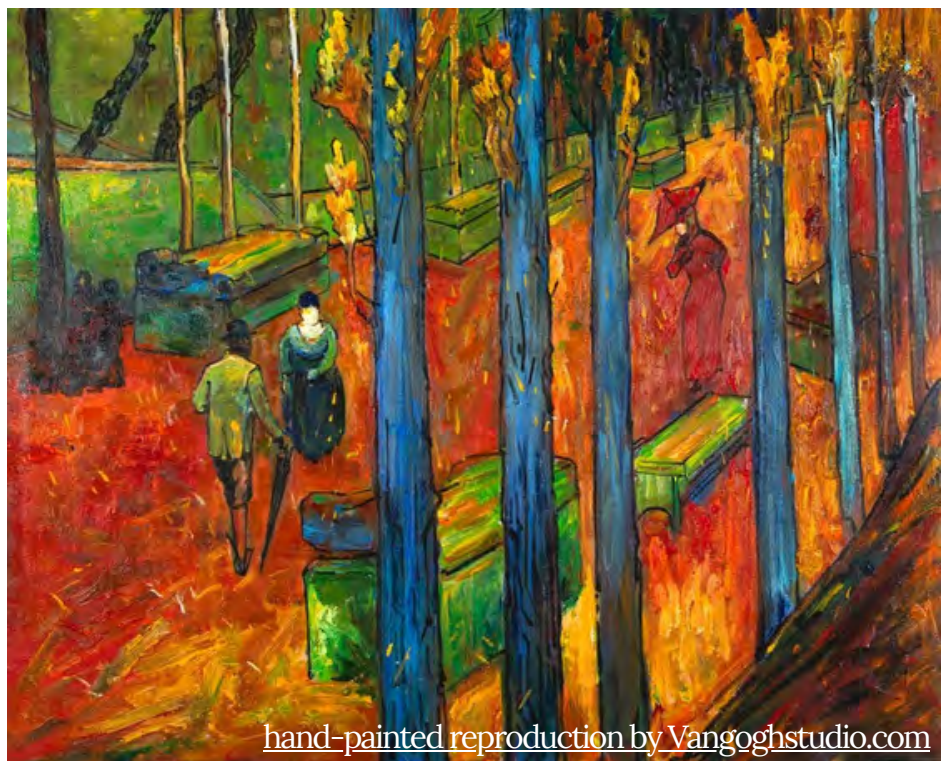
## *On 1 November 1880,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Brussels:

"Drew The diggers by Millet after a photo by Braun that I found at Schmidt's and which he lent me with that of The evening angelus. I sent both those drawings to Pa so that he could see that I'm doing something."

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Have Van Gogh and Gauguin ever written a letter together?



## ***Falling leaves (Les Alyscamps)***

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**72,8 x 91,9 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

Yes, the only letter Vincent van Gogh has ever written together with another artist is the one he wrote with Paul Gauguin in Arles in 1888. Van Gogh started this letter to their mutual friend and fellow artist Emile Bernard. And Gauguin finished it. In 2020 this letter was bought by the Van Gogh Museum at an auction.

You may also like to read:

- [How much are Van Gogh's letters worth?](#)

## *On 2 November 1888,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard:

"I've made two studies of falling leaves in an avenue of poplars, and a third study of the whole of this avenue, entirely yellow."

Paul Gauguin continued the same letter:

"Vincent has done two studies of falling leaves in an avenue, which are in my room and which you would like very much. On very coarse, but very good sacking."

2 November

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Does Van Gogh's Red Vineyard near Arles still exist?

The red vineyard does not exist anymore. Now it's probably a wheat field. Thanks to one of our customers from Arles the exact spot could be located.

"Coming from Montmajour towards Arles, the road makes a slight curve on the right. You can still see some trees left along the road as they were in the painting. From this spot you can see the dwelling in the painting along the road and in the horizon the top of the Arles church building in the sunset. That's the bearings I took to find out the location, on the right side of the road."

## On 3 November 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I've done two canvases of a leaf-fall, which Gauguin liked I think, and am now working on a vineyard, all purple and yellow."



### **The Red Vineyard**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**75 x 93 cm**

**Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow**

You may also like to read:

- [Where exactly is Van Gogh's Red Vineyard located?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What is Van Gogh's color theory?



***Avenue of poplars***

***Nuenen, 1885***

***Oil on canvas***

***78 x 98 cm***

***Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [Why did the red color in Van Gogh's work fade?](#)

Vincent van Gogh's color theory was based on three laws of color.

1. The law of simultaneous contrast where complementary colors intensify each other, like red and green.
2. Tonal contrast achieved by a broken tone next to a whole tone, like red and reddish.
3. The relativity of color, like brown and an even darker color next to it.

## *On 4 November 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"You'll shortly receive two studies of the autumn leaves, one in yellow (poplars) — and the other in orange (oaks). I'm utterly preoccupied with the laws of colour. If only we'd been taught them in our youth!"

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many watercolor paintings has Van Gogh made?



***Women carrying sacks of coal in the snow***  
***The Hague, 1882***  
***Chalk, brush in ink, and opaque and transparent watercolour on wove paper 32,1 x 50,1 cm***  
***Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands***

Vincent van Gogh has made nearly 150 watercolor paintings throughout his 10 year career as a painter. He often made them as studies for an oil painting. They are not as famous as many of his oil paintings, but in 2021 his watercolor painting 'Haystacks near a Farm' was sold at an auction for record amount of 35.85 million USD.

## *On 5 November 1882,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"Have been working again on women miners carrying sacks of coal in the snow — watercolour. But above all I've drawn or so studies of figures for it, and 3 heads, and I'm not yet finished. I've got the effect in the watercolour, I believe, but it isn't yet strong enough in character for my taste."

You may also like to read:

- [How many drawings did Van Gogh do?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh complete a painting in one day?



***Autumn landscape***

***Nuenen, 1885***

***Oil on canvas***

***69 x 87,8 cm***

***Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands***

Vincent van Gogh made about 900 paintings and 1100 drawings in 10 years. That is an average of less than one art work in 2 days. Especially at the end Van Gogh was able to complete a painting in less than a day. Sometimes he spread the work out over a few days. 'Autumn landscape' for example took him 4 days.

## *On 6 November 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"Yesterday evening something happened to me that I'll tell you as precisely as I can. You know the pollard oaks at the end of the garden at home — I slogged away at them for the 4th time. I'd sat in front of them for three days with a canvas the size of that cottage, say, and the peasant cemetery you have."

You may also like to read:

- [How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many lithographs did Van Gogh make?

Between 1882 and 1885 Vincent van Gogh made 9 lithographs. He made 8 of them in The Hague, among them are Old Man with his Head in his Hands ("At Eternity's Gate") and Sorrow.

In Nuenen he made the lithograph 'The Potato Eaters' depicting the peasants of his famous 'The Potato Eaters' oil painting in the Van Gogh Museum.

## On 7 November 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"My dear Theo, While waiting for further information about the process, I've made a lithograph with the help of Smulders's printer, and I have the pleasure of sending you the very first impression herewith."



### **Old Man with a Stick**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Transfer lithography, printed in black ink, black lithograph crayon, scraped**

**48,1 x 25,2 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [How many drawings did Van Gogh do?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh believe he understood colors?



It was in Nuenen in 1885 when Vincent van Gogh believed he figured out how combinations of color would help him make beautiful paintings. He had thoroughly studied Eugène Delacroix's color theories.

In history many others have attributed to grasp the effect of colors. Michel Eugène Chevreul, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, Pythagoras and Aristoteles indirectly assisted Van Gogh to solve his color puzzle.

## On 9 November 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

“Well now, never before have I felt such a conviction that I’ll make things that work, that I’ll succeed in calculating my colours such that I have it in my power to create an effect.”

Vincent had sent Theo the paintings The cottage and:

### **The old church tower at Nuenen**

**Nuenen, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**65 x 88 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [What were the original colors of Van Gogh's paintings?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh do with his ear?



After Vincent van Gogh had cut off his ear in Arles on 23 December 1888, he brought it to a prostitute in a brothel. This is probably the brothel that Van Gogh and Gauguin regularly visited, also to paint there.

The next day Van Gogh was brought to the hospital after the police found him wounded at home in the Yellow House.

## On 10 November 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Arles:

"I've done a rough sketch of a brothel, and I'm in fact planning to do a brothel painting."

And a week before:

"Now something that will interest you - we've made some excursions in the brothels, and it's likely that we'll eventually go there often to work. At the moment Gauguin has a canvas in progress of the same night café that I also painted, but with figures seen in the brothels. It promises to become a beautiful thing."

### **The Brothel**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**33 x 41 cm**

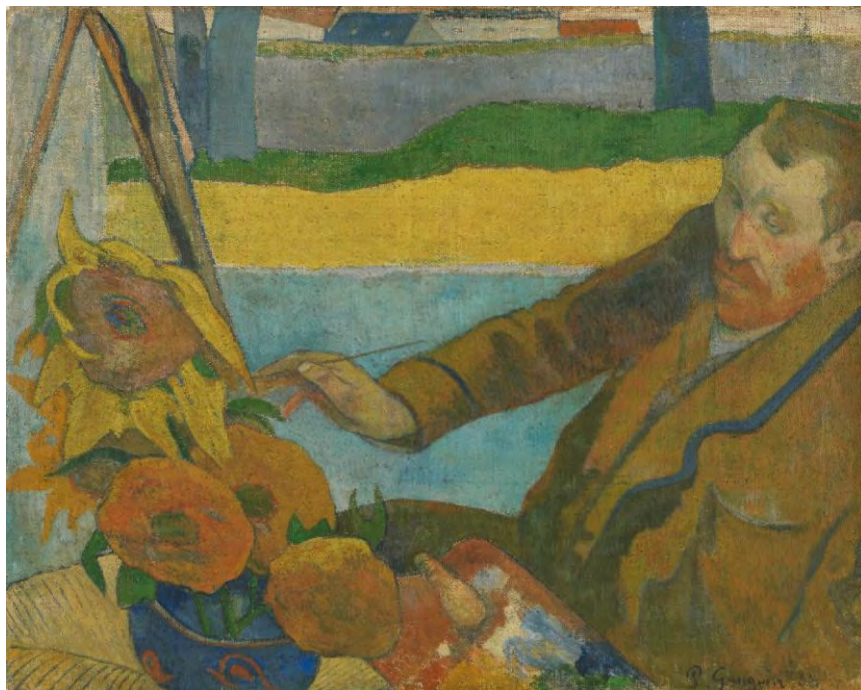
**Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia**

You may also like to read:

- [When did Van Gogh cut off his ear?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Gauguin visit Van Gogh in hospital?



Vincent van Gogh cut off his ear in Arles on 23 December 1888 and slept in the Yellow House that he shared with Paul Gauguin. Gauguin did not return home but slept in a hotel. He declared Van Gogh had threatened him like an aggressive madman.

Van Gogh was brought to a hospital the day after and asked Gauguin to visit him, but instead Gauguin took the train to Paris and they never saw each other again. They have written each other several letters afterwards.

## *On 11 November 1889,*

Paul Gauguin wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Le Pouldu,

"My dear Vincent, I received your letter the other day and I'm pleased to see that you're recovered (if it's not forever) at least for a long time: a time during which you're going to be able to work. No, I wasn't able to see your latest canvases, having been in Brittany for a long time, but De Haan, the Dutchman who is with me, received a letter from a friend telling him that your new canvases were really something very artistic and more imaginative than the others."

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh paint during his stay in hospital in Arles?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What made Van Gogh such a good writer?

Vincent van Gogh's letters are enjoyed by many people and are often recognized as a form of art. Van Gogh's creative mind gives insight into his intense and sensitive nature. His raw talent to write things down beautifully combined with his endless reading of literature developed his writing style that makes it so attractive to discover his life, his passion and his worries.

'The Novel Reader' showing a yellow book is Vincent's homage to modern French literature; paperbacks had yellow covers.

## On 12 November 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien from Arles:

"I've now also painted a woman reading a novel. Abundant very black hair, a green bodice, sleeves the colour of wine lees, the skirt black, the background completely yellow, library shelves with books. She's holding a yellow book in her hand."



**The Novel Reader**  
**Arles, 1888**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**73 x 92 cm**  
**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh advise to get rid of books?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh self-critical?



Vincent van Gogh could be very content with his own paintings, for example with *The Potato Eaters* and *The Bedroom*. On his path to creating masterpieces Van Gogh was often artistically very self-critical though. His paintings would not be suitable for selling and looking back in 1883 he found his early years as a painter 'rubbish'.

Even at the end of his career in 1889, after he had been successful on highly respected expositions, he regarded his now world famous *Starry Night* a failure.

Was it this self-criticism that made him a perfectionist? Did it give him the drive to make more than 900 paintings, 1100 drawings and write over 2000 letters? Vincent was always trying to improve and hopeful to one day succeed as an artist. If only he knew..

## On 13 November 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nieuw-Amsterdam:

***Two Women working in the Peat  
Nieuw-Amsterdam, 1883***

***Oil on canvas***

***27,8 x 36,5 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

"Well, brother, you know I'd promised Wisselingh that I'd show him a few studies from Drenthe before the winter. I'm sending 6 studies off today; would you be so good as to show them to him when you get a chance, by way of a small sign of life? Though of course I don't think that they'd be suitable for selling."

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh feel lonely in a crowd?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why is Van Gogh a post-impressionist?



Vincent van Gogh's paintings changed from dark to colorful in Paris in 1886. At exhibitions Van Gogh admired paintings by impressionists and they had a big influence on his style.

Like the impressionists Van Gogh used bright colors, applied thick paint (impasto) and painted real-life subjects. Yet Van Gogh is regarded a post-impressionist as he:

- changed natural forms
- used unnatural colors
- expressed his emotions instead of creating an impression of a landscape.

## *On 14 November 1840,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles: Oscar-Claude Monet (1840 - 1926) was born.

### **Oscar-Claude Monet (1840 - 1926)**

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles: Oscar-Claude Monet (1840 - 1926) was born.

In September or October 1886 Vincent van Gogh wrote to Horace Mann Livens from Paris:

"In Antwerp I did not even know what the Impressionists were, now I have seen them and though not being one of the club, yet I have much admired certain Impressionist pictures – degas, nude figure – Claude Monet, landscape."

You may also like to read:

- [Who were the painters of the Petit Boulevard?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Was Van Gogh successful in his lifetime?



Vincent van Gogh's paintings were often considered worthless when he was alive. But at the end of his career he was exposed at Exposition de la Société des Artistes Indépendants in Paris and Les XX in Brussels. This shows that Van Gogh was recognized by the top of the modern art world of that moment.

Vincent sent 6 paintings to the exhibition of Les XX in Brussels in January 1890. And.. he sold one: The Red Vineyard!

## On 15 November 1889,

Octave Maus wrote an invitation to Vincent van Gogh from Brussels:

“Sir. The Association of Les Vingt, founded in 1883 with the goal of organizing an international exhibition in Brussels each year, comprising the works of its members and of twenty Belgian and foreign artists chosen from among those most sympathetic to the artistic principles it represents, requests that you do it the honour of participating in its seventh annual Salon by sending one or more of your works.”

### **Wheat Field at Sunrise**

**Saint-Rémy, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**71 x 90,5 cm**

**Private collection (Sammlung R. Oppenheimer)**

Wheat Field at Sunrise (Enclosed Field with Rising Sun) was one of the 6 paintings van Gogh exhibited at Les XX in Brussels in January 1890.

You may also like to read:

- [Was The Red Vineyard really the only painting Van Gogh ever sold?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Has Van Gogh ever painted poplars?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh has made paintings of poplars in several styles. He painted [Avenue of Poplars in Autumn](#) in 1884 and [Poplars near Nuenen](#) in 1885 still in his typical dark and more realistic way. [Two Poplars in the Alpilles near Saint-Rémy](#) in 1889 shows his development as an artist. Van Gogh's use of color and brushstrokes had changed completely.

[Orchard in blossom with a view of Arles](#), painted in 1889, also shows poplars. This was one of the 6 paintings that he sent to the exposition Les XX in Brussels in 1890.

## On 16 November 1889,

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"There's one at Tanguy's at the moment, in the shop window, a view over the countryside in springtime with grey poplars crossing the canvas in such a way that you can't see either the bottom or the top of the tree. I like it enormously. That truly is nature."

**Orchard in blossom with a view of Arles**  
**Saint-Rémy, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**72 x 92 cm**

**Neue Pinakothek, Munich**

You may also like to read:

- [Has Van Gogh ever painted a pear tree?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Rappard's criticism motivate Van Gogh?

After Van Rappard's criticism of Van Gogh's lithograph 'The Potato Eaters' in 1885 Vincent had enough of it. He ended their friendship that started in 1880.

Both Van Rappard and Van Gogh liked to paint laborers with dignity, but where Van Rappard technically followed the conventional rules of the academy, Van Gogh's mind was more free and explored emotional expression. They showed interest in each other's work, Van Rappard often being a mentor for Van Gogh. Vincent learned from Van Rappard's criticism; it motivated him to improve his technique, but he finally chose to follow his artistic heart.

## On 17 November 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard from The Hague:

"I have little time for writing, but nevertheless want to say first that I believe your comments about drawing mistakes in that lithograph are correct, and now I noticed them too."



**Sorrow**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Lithograph on paper**

**49,9 cm x 38,8 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [How many lithographs did Van Gogh make?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Van Gogh paint poor people?

Vincent van Gogh painted poor people to show his affinity and solidarity with these poor people. Although Vincent's family was not poor, he was often short of money himself.

The peasants in Van Gogh's famous painting 'The Potato Eaters' as well as his 'Almsman' were poor people. Almsmen received money from the diaconate of the Dutch Reformed congregation.

## On 18 November 1881,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Etten:

"Now, old chap, if you send me some 'travelling money' you'll soon receive 3 drawings, 'Mealtime', 'the fire-lighter' and 'an almsman'."

By the 'almsman' Van Gogh must mean 'Man sitting by the fireplace'. Almsmen received poor relief from the diaconate of the Dutch Reformed congregation.



**Man sitting by the fireplace**

**Etten, 1881,**

**Black and red chalk, grey and reddish brown wash, and opaque watercolour on laid paper**

**55,8 x 44,5 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh like ugly faces?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What did Van Gogh mean to express with the sunflowers?

Vincent van Gogh was very happy that Gauguin would come to live with him in The Yellow House in Arles. The Sunflowers that he had painted to decorate Gauguin's room expressed his happiness and Van Gogh was very proud of them.

A deeper meaning of the Sunflowers is the cycle of life and death, shown by the various stages of life of the sunflowers.

## On 19 November 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"As for the Vingtistes, here's what I'd like to exhibit:

- 1 and 2 - the two pendants of sunflowers
- 3 - The ivy, upright
- 4 - Orchard in blossom (the one Tanguy's exhibiting at the moment, with poplars crossing the canvas)
- 5 - The red vineyard
- 6 - Wheatfield, rising sun, which I'm working on at the moment."



### **Sunflowers in a vase**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**91 × 72 cm**

**Neue Pinakothek, Munich, Germany**

The Sunflowers in a vase shown on this page is one of the paintings Vincent sent to the "Les XX" exhibitions.

You may also like to read:

- [Which of Van Gogh's sunflowers is the fourth version?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Theo van Gogh sell Gauguin's paintings?



**Sower with setting sun**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on burlap on canvas**

**73,5 x 93 cm**

**The Emil Bührle Collection, Zürich**

Yes, while Gauguin was living with Vincent van Gogh in the Yellow House in Arles, Theo sold Gauguin's paintings as art dealer in Paris.

Vincent was struggling to make a sale himself but he was happy for Gauguin and it motivated him to improve his colors with help from Gauguin.

## On 21 November 1888,

Vincent van Gogh to Theo from Arles:

"Am very happy that Gauguin's success as regards selling continues. If in a year's time he could have made enough to carry out his plan of going and setting himself up in Martinique, I'd think that his fortune would be made."

In the same letter:

"Here's a croquis of the latest canvas I'm working on, another sower. Immense lemon yellow disc for the sun. Green-yellow sky with pink clouds. The field is violet, the sower and the tree Prussian Blue. No. 30 canvas."

You may also like to read:

- [Was Theo van Gogh successful?](#)

21 November

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How important was Theo's opinion to Vincent van Gogh?

Vincent and Theo's 'Uncle Cent' became partner at art dealer Goupil and Cie in 1861. Vincent started to work for Goupil in 1869 and Theo in 1873. Theo later became director of their branch in Paris.

When Vincent decided to become an artist his brother's expertise was more than welcome and his opinion was very important to him. Apart from Theo's financial and mental support, Vincent's fame after he died can be viewed as a team effort.

## On 22 November 1882,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"My dear Theo, Together with this letter you're receiving the first proofs of one lithograph, Digger, and one lithograph, Coffee drinker. I'd very much like to know as soon as possible what impression they make on you. I still plan to retouch them on the stone, and would like to have your opinion for that."



**Old Man drinking Coffee**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Transfer lithography, printed in black ink, black crayon, scraped 42,8 x 27 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Theo send the bedroom painting back to Vincent?](#)

22 November

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many Van Gogh works are lost?



**Watermill at Gennepe**

**Nuenen, 1884**

**Watercolor**

**30,5 x 47 cm**

**Present whereabouts unknown / destroyed**

It is hard to answer how many art works by Vincent van Gogh are lost. Vincent made more than 2000 works and thanks to his letters we have an idea of how many of them are lost. 85 lost works is an estimate, of which many are drawings.

Another 6 works have been destroyed and are lost forever. Vase with Five Sunflowers being the most famous one that was destroyed by fire in Japan in the Second World War.

## On 23 November 1884,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

“It's getting better for me — although my expenses aren't getting any smaller — but we're definitely making progress just by working very hard now.... ..I'm also working on a watercolour of the water mill. Regards, with a handshake.”

You may also like to read:

- [Van Gogh's missing paintings](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many olive tree paintings did Van Gogh make?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://vangoghstudio.com)

## **Women Picking Olives**

**Saint-Rémy, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**72,7 x 91,4 cm**

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York**

Vincent van Gogh made 15 paintings of olive trees in total. At first he was struggling to capture the characteristics of the olive tree; he found them intimate and nearly too beautiful to paint. But he didn't stop trying. Van Gogh even made 3 versions of 'Women Picking Olives'.

## On 25 November 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:

"So at present am working in the olive trees, seeking the different effects of a grey sky against yellow earth, with dark green note of the foliage; another time the earth and foliage all purplish against yellow sky, then red ochre earth and pink and green sky. See, that interests me more than the so-called abstractions."

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh not dare to paint the olive tree?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh paint the asylum in Saint-Rémy?

When Vincent van Gogh was a patient at the Saint-Paul asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, most of the time he wasn't allowed to leave the premises to paint. So Van Gogh painted views of the surrounding wheat fields, a series of pine trees in the hospital garden, the undergrowth, flowers like irises, roses, poppies, several still lifes and also butterflies and a moth.

In winter he made copies of Rembrandt and Millet. His 12 month stay in the asylum turned out to be very productive as he made no less than 150 new paintings.

## On 26 November 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard from Arles:



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

**The garden of the asylum**

**Saint-Rémy, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**71,5 x 90,5 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

"Here's description of a canvas that I have in front of me at the moment. A view of the garden of the asylum where I am, on the right a grey terrace, a section of house, some rosebushes that have lost their flowers; on the left, the earth of the garden — red ochre — earth burnt by the sun, covered in fallen pine twigs. This edge of the garden is planted with large pines with red ochre trunks and branches, with green foliage saddened by a mixture of black. These tall trees stand out against an evening sky streaked with violet against a yellow background."

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh have a hard time in the asylum?](#)

26 November

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How many versions did Van Gogh make of *At Eternity's Gate*?

Vincent Van Gogh made four versions of *At Eternity's Gate*: a study, a drawing and a lithograph in 1882. And then many years later in 1890 Van Gogh painted this 'Sorrowing old man' or 'Worn Out' again. Van Gogh died a few months later.

The artworks portray the elderly Adrianus Zuyderland (1810-1897) who lived in the Old Men's and Women's Home in The Hague, which was supported by the poor board of the Dutch Reformed Congregation.

*On 27 November 1882,*

"..this morning I had to go to the printer's with my old man. Now I've followed everything: the transfer to the stone, the preparation of the stone, the actual printing. And I have a better understanding of what I can change by retouching. Herewith the first impression, not counting one that went wrong."



## ***At Eternity's Gate***

**The Hague, 1882**

**Transfer lithography, printed in black ink, crayon, brush and autographic ink 49,7 x 34 cm  
Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam**

Seven impressions of the lithograph 'At eternity's gate' are known. Two were in Theo's estate; it is not known which one was enclosed with this letter.

You may also like to read:

- [How many lithographs did Van Gogh make?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Van Gogh try to sell his paintings?



Vincent van Gogh's painting 'The Red Vineyard' was sold at the exhibition Les XX in Brussels in 1890. This may be the only one he ever sold. He did try to sell his art though. For example in Antwerp where he went to art dealers to promote a few of his paintings that he had taken with him from Nuenen.

## On 28 November 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

"See that you send your letter off on the first, because I've got enough bread in until then, but after that I'd be in a real stew. My little room isn't bad at all, and it definitely doesn't look dreary. Now that I have the 3 studies I brought with me here, I'll set about going to the picture dealers, who mostly seem to live in private houses, though, no shop windows on the street."

The three paintings Van Gogh took with him from Nuenen are: an unknown 'mill', Avenue of poplars and Still life with Bible.

**Still life with Bible**

**Nuenen, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**65,7 cm x 78,5 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Was The Red Vineyard really the only painting Van Gogh ever sold?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why was Van Gogh so happy with the Roulin family?

It was not easy for Vincent to find models to paint. Postman Joseph Roulin was one of Vincent van Gogh's best friends in his life.

Thanks to his friendship with Joseph Roulin he could not only paint him, but also his wife Augustine, their sons Armand and Camille and their baby girl Marcelle. Van Gogh painted all of them at least three times.

## On 30 November 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"I've done the portraits of an entire family, the family of the postman whose head I did before – the man, his wife, the baby, the young boy and the 16-year-old son, all characters and very French, although they have a Russian look."



**Portrait of Armand Roulin**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**65 x 54,1 cm**

**Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh's friend Joseph Roulin move out of Arles?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh want to become a magazine illustrator?

Yes, Vincent van Gogh seriously had the ambition to be a magazine illustrator for some time. Lithography was invented in 1796 Germany, mainly to easily reproduce maps and sheet music.

From the 1820s lithography was adopted by British artists who inspired Van Gogh. He collected magazines for their beautiful illustrations. Becoming an illustrator would also generate income so Vincent would be less dependent on his brother's financial support.

*On 1 December 1882,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"Of course there are costs involved in the drawing, the stone, the printing, the paper. These are relatively low. Prints like the last one I sent you, say, like a new one that I finished yesterday evening and is now ready, would I believe be suitable for a popular edition, for instance, which is so desperately, desperately needed here in Holland, more than elsewhere."



**Workman sitting on a basket, cutting bread**

**The Hague, 1882**

**Transfer lithography, crayon and autographic ink 49 x 31,5 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [How ambitious was Van Gogh?](#)

1 December

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who taught Van Gogh to paint?



Vincent van Gogh had already made drawings and watercolors when it was his cousin-in-law Anton Mauve in The Hague in 1881 who taught Van Gogh to paint with oils.

His first painting of his 10 year career was 'Still Life with Cabbage and Clogs'. When Mauve died in 1888, Vincent painted [Pink Peach Trees](#), signed with Souvenir de Mauve.

## On 2 December 1881,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"I spoke to Mauve and said, would you approve if I were to come and trouble you for a good month or so – then when that time is up I'll be past the first petty vexations of painting and will go back to Het Heike. Well, Mauve immediately installed me in front of a still life consisting of a couple of old clogs and other objects, and so I could set to work."

***Still Life with Cabbage and Clogs***

***The Hague 1881***

***Oil on paper on panel***

***34 x 55 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

You may also like to read:

- [How were Van Gogh and Mauve related?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh paint the wharf in Amsterdam twice?



***De Ruyterkade in Amsterdam***

***Amsterdam, 1885***

***Oil on panel***

***20,3 x 27 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

Vincent van Gogh painted the wharf at 'De Ruyterkade in Amsterdam' on 6, 7 or 8 October 1885 when he was in Amsterdam to visit the Rijksmuseum. But two months later he wrote to his brother about his intention to paint the wharf.

If he painted the wharf in Amsterdam again, this painting is missing. Perhaps lost forever, or some day will be someone's lucky day..

Or did Van Gogh intend to paint the wharf of Antwerp and never came to it?

## *On 6 December 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Antwerp:

"At a fourth I can exhibit a view of the wharf as soon as the weather allows me to paint it.."

You may also like to read:

- [How many Van Gogh works are lost?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What kind of trees did Van Gogh paint?



hand-painted reproduction by [Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh loved trees. He painted the cypress, willow, peach tree, almond tree, pine tree, poplar, plane tree, plum tree, pollard, birch, blue fir, oak and mulberry tree. Did we miss any? Please let us know.

## On 7 December 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo van Gogh from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

“Among the studies you’ll find the following, which are for our mother and sister. Olive trees – Bedroom – Reaper – Working with plough – Wheatfield with cypresses – Orchard in blossom – Portrait. The remainder is above all autumn studies and I think the best one is the yellow mulberry tree against a very blue sky.”

### **The Mulberry Tree**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**54 x 65 cm**

**Norton Simon Art Foundation, Pasadena, USA**

You may also like to read:

- [Has Van Gogh ever painted poplars?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Van Gogh frame his paintings?

Vincent van Gogh sent his paintings mostly unframed by train from the South of France to his brother in Paris. Quite regularly Vincent had suggestions, or rather directions for framing to Theo.

He had done some framing himself as well, for example for the paintings in Gauguin's room in The Yellow House, like The Sunflowers, The Green Vineyard, Ploughed Fields and the Unknown version of Poet's Garden.

## On 8 December 1889,

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent from Paris:

"Lately Tanguy has been exhibiting a lot of your canvases, he told me that he hopes to sell the Bench with the ivy. It's a fine choice you've made for Brussels. I've ordered frames. For the Sunflowers I'm leaving the little wooden edge that's around it, and a white frame around that. For the others, white or natural wood frames."

Van Gogh had framed these works himself with strips of wood.



### **Sunflowers in a Vase**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**93 x 73 cm**

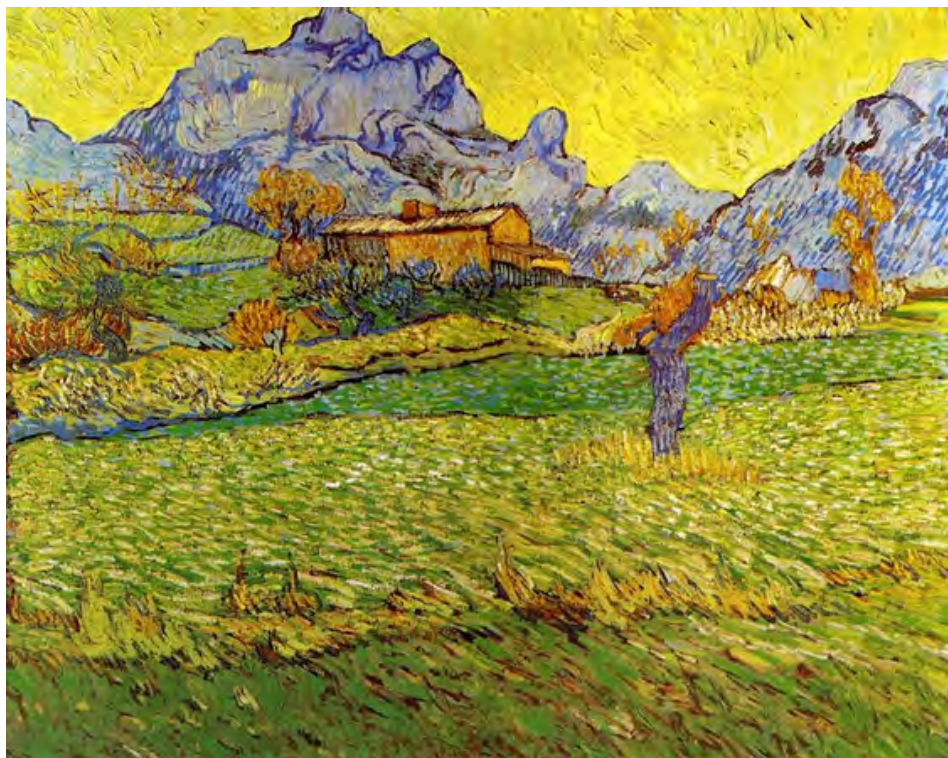
**National Gallery, London**

You may also like to read:

- [Why are Van Gogh paintings framed behind museum glass?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Where did Van Gogh order his canvas?



When Vincent van Gogh lived in Arles and Saint-Rémy he ordered rolls of canvas at Tasset et L'Hôte in Paris. They were size 2 x 5 meters and 2 x 10 meters and Vincent cut the rolls to French sizes. His famous masterpieces of Vases with Sunflowers were size 30, which he would call large size, around 92 x 73 cm.

By examining weaving patterns of the canvas of existing paintings, the Van Gogh Museum can determine which paintings came from a certain roll of canvas. In combination with information in Van Gogh's letters this could lead to the dates of creation of the paintings. And.. perhaps of missing paintings from the same roll.

## On 9 December 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

“I have 12 large canvases on the go, above all olive groves, one with an entirely pink sky, another with a green and orange sky, a third with a big yellow sun.”

Another work that might have been included is:

### **A Meadow in the Mountains**

**Saint-Rémy, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 x 91.5 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh order his canvas in Paris?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How did Theo van Gogh die in 1891?

Vincent van Gogh's younger brother Theo is often regarded as the Vincent's strong and successful brother who supported the troubled artist. It was actually Vincent who was often worried about Theo's health. Jo Bonger, Theo's wife, met Vincent once, in Paris a few months before he died and she was surprised that Vincent came across much stronger than Theo.

Theo died half a year after Vincent of dementia paralytica, a disease of the brain, supposedly caused by "heredity, chronic disease, overwork, sadness".

## On 10 December 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"You will receive soon, I think, the canvases I promised you. What I find very unfortunate is that you write that Jo says that Theo's still coughing the whole time – blast – that doesn't please me – however, I still hope that when he's a father it'll get better. I'd like him to have my health, in this sense that I myself always have lots of life in the fresh air, and he's always always at his desk with so many troubles on his mind."



### **View of the Alpilles**

**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**33 x 28.5 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

View of the Alpilles was among the promised paintings.

You may also like to read:

- [How did Van Gogh's father die?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh and Gauguin clash?

It was already before the ear accident on 23 December 1888 that Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin clashed. Gauguin came to Arles on 23 October 1888 and moved into The Yellow House that Van Gogh had set up as Studio of The South.

Gauguin left on 25 December, but two weeks before he had already made up his mind. The two characters clashed and Gauguin was determined to leave Arles and move back to Paris. It wouldn't get much better between the two artists after that.

## On 11 December 1888,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

"My dear Theo, ...I myself think that Gauguin had become a little disheartened by the good town of Arles, by the little yellow house where we work, and above all by me. Indeed, there are bound to be grave difficulties still to overcome here, for him as well as for me. But these difficulties are rather within ourselves than elsewhere."

You may also like to read:

- [Did Gauguin visit Van Gogh in hospital?](#)



**Paul Gauguin (self-portrait)**

**1889**

**Oil on wood**

**79 × 51 cm**

**National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.**

Paul Gauguin wrote to Theo:

"Taking everything into account I am obliged to return to Paris; Vincent and I can absolutely not live side by side without trouble, as a result of incompatibility of temperament, and both he and I need tranquillity for our work. He is a man of remarkable intelligence, whom I greatly respect and whom I leave with regret, but I repeat, it is necessary."

11 December

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did Victor Hugo inspire Van Gogh?

Victor-Marie Hugo (1802 - 1885) was a French romantic poet, novelist, essayist and playwright. Vincent van Gogh was a big fan and he mentioned Victor Hugo many times in his letters to Theo.

Maybe Victor Hugo's famous novel 'Les Misérables' on social injustice inspired Van Gogh to paint the coarse life of peasants in 'The Potato eaters'. Maybe it motivated Van Gogh to convey emotions through his art unlike the impressionists. It must have been special for Vincent to paint a portrait of an old man that resembled Victor Hugo, his literary hero.

## On 14 December 1885,

Vincent van Gogh to Theo from Antwerp:

"My dear Theo, Just wanted to write and tell you that I've pressed ahead with models. I've made two fairly large heads by way of a trial for a portrait. Firstly that old man I already wrote to you about — a type of head in the style of V. Hugo's — then I also have a study of a woman."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

### **Portrait of an old man**

**Antwerp, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**44,4 cm x 33,7 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Which books did Van Gogh read?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How was it for Van Gogh to move back in with his parents in Nuenen?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

## **The Vicarage at Nuenen**

**Nuenen, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**33,2 cm x 43 cm**

**Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam**

You may also like to read:

- [Where in Nuenen did Van Gogh paint?](#)

Vincent van Gogh and his father had an argument over Christmas in Etten in 1881. Vincent left for The Hague to Anton Mauve and he didn't see his parents for two years. In the meantime his parents moved into the vicarage in Nuenen and only in December 1883 Vincent moved from Drenthe to live with his parents in Nuenen.

Living with his parents didn't feel particularly pleasant..

## *On 15 December 1883,*

Vincent van Gogh to Theo from Nuenen:

“Dear brother, I feel what Pa and Ma instinctively think about me (I don't say reasonably). There's a similar reluctance about taking me into the house as there would be about having a large, shaggy dog in the house. He'll come into the room with wet paws — and then, he's so shaggy. He'll get in everyone's way. And he barks so loudly. In short — it's a dirty animal. Very well — but the animal has a human history and, although it's a dog, a human soul, and one with finer feelings at that, able to feel what people think about him, which an ordinary dog can't do. And I, admitting that I am a sort of dog, accept them as they are.”

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# To whom did Van Gogh give his Pink Peach Tree?

Vincent van Gogh signed his painting 'Pink Peach Tree in Blossom' with *Souvenir de Mauve*. In The Hague in 1881 his cousin Anton Mauve taught Vincent to paint with oils.

When Mauve died 7 years later Van Gogh dedicated his colorful Pink Peach Trees to Mauve and sent the painting to Mauve's widow Jet.

## On 16 December 1883,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Nuenen:

"My dear Theo, Mauve said to me at the time, 'you'll find yourself if you keep on working at art, if you go into it more deeply than you have done so far'. He said that 2 years ago. I think a lot about those words of his these days."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

**Pink Peach Tree in Blossom**

**Arles, 1888**

**Oil on canvas**

**73 × 59.5 cm**

**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [Where in The Hague did Van Gogh live?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Is Het Steen another missing Van Gogh painting?



***View of Het Steen***

***Antwerp, 1885***

***Pen and ink, chalk, pencil, on paper***

***13,1 x 21,1 cm***

***Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam***

Two drawings of Het Steen Castle on the Scheldt in Antwerp have survived. But Vincent van Gogh clearly wrote to his brother Theo that he had painted The Steen. It must be a finished painting as Vincent showed it to art dealers.

Where is it? Missing and gone forever? Or will it pop up one day? Hopefully it ends up exhibited in a museum in that case.

## *On 17 December 1885,*

Vincent van Gogh to Theo from Antwerp:

"My dear Theo, Today, for the first time, I feel rather dejected — I'd made a painting of Het Steen and took it round the dealers. Two of them were out, and one didn't like it, and one lamented in a dreadful manner that literally no one had set foot in his shop in a fortnight. This isn't very cheering, particularly when the weather's cold and bleak, and one has already broken into one's last 5 franc piece and is faced with a fortnight in which one sees no way ahead."

You may also like to read:

- [Van Gogh's missing paintings](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who inspired Van Gogh to paint cows?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

Vincent van Gogh painted 'Cows' in 1890 based on a 1873 Paul van Ryssel etching that Gachet owned of Jacob Jordaens's 'Study of Five Cows'. 1,5 years before Van Gogh saw the 1648 painting 'Cows in the pasture' by Paulus Potter in the Musée Fabre in Montpellier.

## On 18 December 1888,

Vincent van Gogh to Theo from Arles:

"My dear Theo, Yesterday Gauguin and I went to Montpellier to see the museum there, and especially the Bruyas room — there are many portraits of Bruyas, by Delacroix, by Ricard, by Courbet, by Cabanel, by Couture, by Verdier, by Tassaert, by others too. After that there are paintings by Delacroix, Courbet, Giotto, Paul Potter, Botticelli, T. Rousseau, very fine."

### Cows

**Auvers-sur-Oise, 1890**

**Oil on canvas**

**55 cm × 65 cm**

**Palais des Beaux-Arts de Lille**

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh visit museums?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Do Van Gogh's thick brush-strokes illustrate his stress?



***Olive Grove: Orange Sky***  
***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889***  
***Oil on canvas***  
***93 x 74 cm***  
***Göteborgs Museum of Art, Göteborg, Sweden***

Vincent van Gogh's thick brushstrokes (impasto) was one of his painting techniques to express his emotions. At stressful times he was inclined to use heavier impasto. His restless mind could even make him squeeze the paint from the tube directly to his canvas.

*On 19 December 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"I'll probably do 2 or three repetitions of it, for in fact it's the result of a half-dozen studies of olive trees. I think it likely that I'll do hardly any more things in impasto, it's the result of the calm life of seclusion I'm leading, and I feel I'm better for it. Fundamentally I'm not as violent as that, anyway I feel more myself in calmness."

These 'half-dozen' studies consisted of olive tree paintings. One of them was:

You may also like to read:

- [Did Van Gogh use impasto?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Did the mistral wind bother Van Gogh?

The strong and cold Mistral wind bothered Vincent van Gogh a lot when he lived in the Provence. The Mistral made it impossible to paint most of the time, despite Van Gogh trying to attach his easel to the ground.

Vincent often decided to just wait or to make a drawing instead. Until the moment the sun was to set. The Mistral would die down and the colors became magical. Just what Vincent needed to create a masterpiece.

## On 20 December 1889,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"I shake your hand warmly in thought, I'm going to work some more outside, the mistral's blowing. It usually dies down by the time the sun's about to set, then there are superb effects of pale citron skies, and desolate pines cast their silhouettes into relief against it with effects of exquisite black lace. At other times the sky is red, at other times a tone that's extremely delicate, neutral, still pale lemon but neutralized by delicate lilac. I have an evening effect of a pine again against pink and green-yellow."



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

***Pine Trees at sunset***  
**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**92 x 73 cm**  
**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

You may also like to read:

- [What kind of trees did Van Gogh paint?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who was Van Gogh's favorite model in The Hague?

Vincent van Gogh made many drawings of Adrianus Jacobus Zuyderland when he lived in The Hague. Vincent's model was a pensioner and war veteran with emotional expressions that interested Van Gogh. Van Gogh's famous *Worn Out / At Eternity's Gate* also portrayed Mr Zuyderland.



*On 21 December 1882,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

“So I'm now occupied with two large heads of an orphan man, with his white beard and old-fashioned, old top hat. This chap has the sort of old, lively face that one would wish for beside a cosy Christmas fire.”

***Orphan man with top hat  
The Hague, 1882***

***Charcoal and crayon on cream wove paper  
40 x 24.5 cm***

***Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts***

You may also like to read:

- [How many versions did Van Gogh make of \*At Eternity's Gate\*?](#)

21 December

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Why did Theo Van Gogh send the Bedroom painting back to Vincent?



[hand-painted reproduction by Vangoghstudio.com](http://Vangoghstudio.com)

***Bedroom in Arles, Second version***  
***Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889***  
***Oil on canvas***  
***72 x 90 cm***  
***Art Institute of Chicago***

Vincent van Gogh was actually very happy with the painting of his bedroom in Arles. After the ear accident Van Gogh was in the hospital in Arles and therefore he could not stop the flooding river Rhône from damaging the painting. Gauguin had already left The Yellow House then and moved from Arles to Paris.

Vincent sent the painting to Theo in Paris anyway, but Theo sent it back asking Vincent to copy it because of the damage. Vincent's copy, the second version of the Bedroom, pleased Theo even more. In summer Van Gogh made a third version.

## On 22 December 1889,

Theo van Gogh wrote to Vincent van Gogh from Paris:

"My dear Vincent, I've safely received your consignment of the Wheatfield and the two Bedrooms. Above all I like the last one, which in terms of colour is like a bouquet of flowers. It has a very great intensity of colour."

22 December

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# When did Van Gogh cut off his ear?

On the evening of 23 December 1888,

Van Gogh had an acute mental breakdown. As a result he cut off his left ear and took it to a prostitute in a local brothel. The police found him at home the next morning and had him admitted to hospital. On 24 December Gauguin sent a telegram to Theo, who immediately took the night train to Arles.

*10 days later, on  
2 January 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Arles:

“My dear Theo, In order to reassure you completely on my account I’m writing you these few words in the office of Mr Rey, the house physician, whom you saw yourself. I’ll stay here at the hospital for another few days — then I dare plan to return home very calmly. Now I ask just one thing of you, not to worry, for that would cause me one worry too many.”



**Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear**

**Arles, 1889**

**Oil on canvas**

**60 × 49 cm**

**Courtauld Gallery, London**

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh cut off his ear?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# What made it difficult for Van Gogh to paint the Alpilles?



***The Ravine, (Les Peiroulets)***  
**Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, 1889**  
**Oil on canvas**  
**73,2 x 93,3 cm**  
**Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo**

The Mistral wind made it very difficult to paint the The Chaîne des Alpilles: a small range of low mountains in Provence. "...it's enjoyable to work in really wild sites where you have to bury your easel in the stones so that the wind doesn't send everything flying to the ground."

You may also like to read:

- [Did the mistral wind bother Van Gogh?](#)

## *On 24 December 1889,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his mother from Saint-Rémy-de-Provence:

"At the moment I'm working on a painting of a path between the mountains and a small stream that works its way between the stones. The rocks are solid lilac grey or pink, with bushes here and there: box and a sort of broom, that have all sorts of colours, green, yellow, red, brown, because of the autumn. And the stream in the foreground white and foaming like soapsuds, and further up reflecting the blue of the sky.

Now I wish you a happy Christmas and a good New Year. Embraced in thought by Your loving, Vincent"

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
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Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# Who was Van Gogh's Woman with Red Ribbon?

The Woman with Red Ribbon or Lady with Red Hair Band worked in a cafe chantant in Antwerp. She could be a prostitute. Vincent van Gogh wondered why these cafes didn't want portraits of women on their walls since people went there to see women dancing and singing.

Van Gogh gave the painting to Emile Bernard who he met in Paris in 1886. It was auctioned in at Christie's in London in 2019 and is now part of a private collection.

## On 28 December 1885,

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from Antwerp:

"When the model came to me, she'd evidently had a few busy nights — she said something that was entirely typical — for my part, champagne doesn't cheer me up, it makes me very sad. Then I knew what to do, and I tried to get something voluptuous and sad at the same time. I've now started a second study of the same one, in profile."



**Portrait of a Lady with Red Hair Band /  
Portrait of a Woman with Red Ribbon  
Antwerp, 1885**

**Oil on canvas**

**60 x 50 cm**

**Private collection**

You may also like to read:

- [What kind of models did Vincent van Gogh like to paint?](#)

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

"Great things are done by a series of  
small things together."  
-Vincent van Gogh

Your daily dose of Van Gogh

# How ambitious was Van Gogh?



Vincent van Gogh gave everything he had to succeed. Van Gogh's ambition in combination with his creative talent, his intense and sensitive mind made him focus to produce about 900 paintings, 1100 drawings and 9 lithographs in just 10 years. And he probably sold just one painting. That came with a price. He wrote: "I have lost my soul into my work, and I have lost my mind in the process."

In December 1882 Van Gogh created a lithograph of a man with a pipe and bandaged eye. If only he knew that 6 years later he would paint himself resembling that poor man. auctioned in at Christie's in London in 2019 and is now part of a private collection.

## *On 31 December 1882,*

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo from The Hague:

"My dear Theo, It's New Year's Eve and I feel so much like having another word with you. When I wrote my last letter I spoke to you about large heads that I was working on. I was carrying out an experiment at the time, the first results of which I can now report to you, since the day before yesterday, yesterday and today I've had models for two drawings."

***Head of a man with a pipe and bandaged eye  
The Hague, 1882***

***Pencil, black lithographic crayon, grey wash,  
pen and black ink (faded to brown), traces of  
squaring***

***45 x 27,6 cm***

***Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo***

You may also like to read:

- [Why did Van Gogh cut off his ear?](#)

Bonus Blog

# Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in Nuenen

## *The Vicarage at Nuenen*

After an argument with his father, a pastor of the Dutch reformed church, Vincent van Gogh didn't see his parents for two years. He moved back in with them at the vicarage in 1883. That wasn't particularly easy but Vincent got along well with the peasants and weavers in Nuenen and even gave art lessons to locals Willem van de Wakker, Anton Kerssemakers and Antoon Hermans.

The vicarage at Berg 26 is in the centre of Nuenen, opposite the information centre / museum Vincentre at Berg 29. A great start of the tour.

The garden of the vicarage is open to public only a few times a year. It is possible to walk past the garden though and peep through the hedge. You can see where Van Gogh made a drawing from his beautiful backyard.

The Vicarage at Nuenen is part of the permanent collection of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

Vincent van Gogh started painting at age 27. After 5 years he painted the Potato Eaters, a dark painting depicting the De Groot family; peasants from Nuenen in The Netherlands. Van Gogh's most famous paintings like his colorful Starry Night and the bright Sunflowers series were painted only 3 years later in the South of France.

Visiting some of the actual locations that he painted in and around Nuenen helps to understand Van Gogh's incredible artistic development. To see where Van Gogh came from shows his power to create, to reinvent himself and to chase his dreams.



# Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen

Just a few 100 meters down the street and around the corner at Papenvoort 2 you'll find the church that Van Gogh painted for his mother as she broke her leg and couldn't attend church services.

This painting was stolen from the Van Gogh Museum in 2007 and was safely returned in 2017 after it had been found in Naples, Italy. Criminals are usually not the biggest fans of Van Gogh or art in general. They buy stolen masterpieces so they have leverage they can use to negotiate less time in prison.

The church is open for public from April to October on every second Wednesday and last Sunday of the month from 13.30 to 17.00 o'clock.

## Old Church Tower at Nuenen

1,5 km from there, in the middle of a residential area at Tomakker 2, are the remains of the 12th-century Church and the small cemetery where Vincent's father Theodorus van Gogh is buried. The cemetery is fenced but you can get the key at museum Vincentre at Berg 29.

1,5 km from there, in the middle of a residential area at Tomakker 2, are the remains of the 12th-century Church and the small cemetery where Vincent's father Theodorus van Gogh is buried. The cemetery is fenced but you can get the key at museum Vincentre at Berg 29.

Van Gogh made no less than 35 paintings and drawings of this church that was visible from the garden of the vicarage. While Van Gogh lived in Nuenen the church was being demolished after it had collapsed. The church had a special meaning to him:

"I wanted to say how this ruin shows that for centuries the peasants have been laid to rest there in the very fields that they grubbed up in life — I wanted to say how perfectly simply death and burial happen, coolly as the falling of an autumn leaf — no more than a bit of earth turned over — a little wooden cross."



# The Cottage (of The Potato Eaters)

The cottage where the De Groot family posed for Van Gogh is gone unfortunately. There is another house now but unfortunately not authentic. In case you want to see it anyway for art historic value; the address is Gerwenseweg 4.

The Potato Eaters and The Cottage are both part of the permanent collection of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

# Water Mill at Opwetten

Opwetten is now part of Nuenen and just 2,6 km away from the centre of Nuenen (museum Vincentre). Why not be like the the Dutch and do the tour by bike?

For just 10 euro a day you can rent a bike at <https://deconcurrentnuenen.nl/fiets-verhuur-nuenen/>.

Van Gogh's painting 'Water Mill at Opwetten' made in 1884 is part of a private collection but the actual water mill can still be visited. A restaurant is now established at the largest mill wheel in the Netherlands and a break on a sunny afternoon on this terrace may be Noord-Brabant (the Dutch province) at its best.

Vincent van Gogh painted the Water mill at Opwetten with his friend Anthon van Rappard. One year later Van Rappard criticized Van Gogh's Potato Eaters from a technical point of view and that was the end of their friendship. Van Gogh preferred emotional expression to technical perfection and the world found out what he was capable of.



# Collse Water Mill

Another 2,2 km to Collseweg 5, Eindhoven brings you to the Collse Water Mill.

In case you don't have many days in The Netherlands, you could start the morning with a visit to the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Then drive 91,4 km to the Noordbrabants Museum in Den Bosch where Van Gogh's painting of the Collse Water Mill resides. Another 38,7 km to Nuenen to see the locations on this page by bike. That would just fit into one big Van Gogh experience day.

While painting the mill, Van Gogh wrote to Anthon van Rappard:

"It's the same sort of thing as the two other water mills that we visited together, but with two red roofs, and which one views square on from the front — with poplars around it. Will be magnificent in the autumn."

# Gennep Water Mill

From the Collse Water Mill to the Gennep water mill at Gennepweg 143, Eindhoven is another 6,7 km. In 1884 Van Gogh made three oil paintings and a watercolor. The one shown above is the oil painting you can see in the Noordbrabants Museum.

And this one resides in Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid.

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo:

"Yesterday I brought home that study of the water mill at Gennep, which I painted with pleasure, and which has procured me a new friend in Eindhoven [Anton Kerssemakers], who passionately wants to learn to paint, and to whom I paid a visit, after which we set to work at once."



Bonus Blog

# Did Vincent van Gogh have a drinking problem?



Between December 1888 and May 1889 Vincent van Gogh was hospitalized in Arles three times with severe mental problems. Last week researchers from the UMCG (University Medical Center Groningen) in The Netherlands suggested that Van Gogh's deliriums were linked to alcohol withdrawal.

Van Gogh to Paul Gauguin on 21 January 1889:

"In my mental or nervous fever or madness, I don't know quite what to say or how to name it, my thoughts sailed over many seas."

It is hard to draw conclusions about Van Gogh's medical state at that time without being able to speak to him. Fortunately the researchers had access to hundreds of Van Gogh's letters and information from the doctors who treated him, like Dr Rey.

## *Van Gogh's struggle with alcohol*

Van Gogh's letters are not only a great source for researchers to find symptoms of possible diseases. The letters also show us how Van Gogh struggled with alcohol.

On 22 July 1888 Vincent wrote to his brother Theo:

"..if the storm within roars too loudly, I drink a glass too many to stun myself. It's being crazy, compared with what one ought to be."

This shows us that before he was treated in hospital, he was well aware that his drinking behavior was not good for him. And this was confirmed by his doctor according to his letter to Theo on Sunday, 24 March 1889:

"Mr Rey says that instead of eating enough and regularly I have been particularly sustaining myself with coffee and alcohol. I admit all that, but it will still be true that I had to key myself up a bit to reach the high yellow note I reached this summer."

## A slippery slope?

Not much later on 21 April 1889:

"The frightful superstition of certain people on the subject of alcohol, so that they prevail upon themselves never to drink or smoke. We're already advised not to lie or steal and not to commit other great or small crimes, and it becomes too complicated if it was absolutely indispensable not to possess anything but virtues in a society in which we're very indubitably rooted, be it good or bad."

Do we see Van Gogh getting trapped here into the logical fallacy of the slippery slope? Reasoning like 'If they forbid this, then the next thing we know..' rarely leads to wisdom. And when Van Gogh mentions 'the frightful superstition of certain people', does this reveal behavior as we see with some conspiracy theorists who find it simply too hard to refrain from what's bad for them?

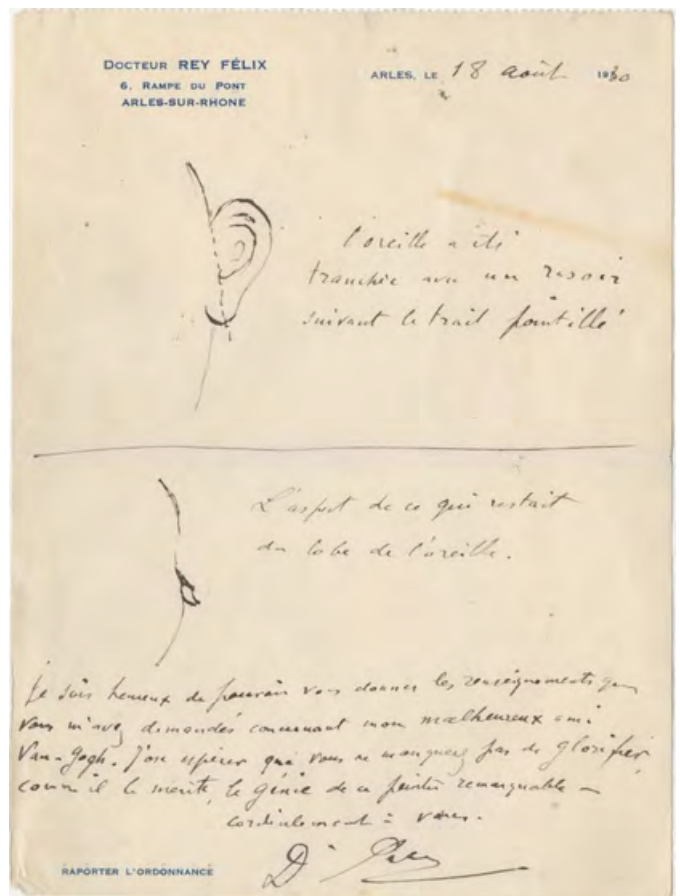
## But Dickens said..

A month later Van Gogh liked to quote English writer Charles Dickens in a letter to his sister Willemien:

"Every day I take the remedy that the incomparable Dickens prescribes against suicide. It consists of a glass of wine, a piece of bread and cheese and a pipe of tobacco."

A healthier approach could have been Oscar Wilde's take on the addictive nature of alcohol:

"Work is the curse of the drinking classes."



So Van Gogh had a drinking problem. And in a letter to Willemien from the asylum in Saint-Rémy on 21 October 1889 he acknowledges the bad influence of alcohol:

"The doctor from here has been to Paris and went to see Theo, he told him that he does not consider me a lunatic but that the crises I have are of an epileptic nature. So it isn't alcohol either that was the cause, although of course it doesn't do one any good."

*We will never know exactly.*

The recent research was published in the International Journal of Bipolar Disorders. The researchers were aware that Van Gogh's letters were written to his family and friends. He may have downplayed the situation to reassure them. We will probably never know what his life was like exactly, but Van Gogh's letters are a very valuable source to learn about his paintings. And to admire his enormous willpower, resilience and perseverance.





Bonus Blog

# Van Gogh's missing paintings

## *Half Figure of an Angel (after Rembrandt)*

The whereabouts of this famous painting is no longer known. It is Van Gogh's painting using Rembrandt as the main inspiration. It is not known if it is copied or inspired by a particular work or is just more about the spirit and tone of Rembrandt.

It has multiple tones of blue and depicts a haloed angel deep in contemplation.

## *Still Life: Vase with Five Sunflowers*

This has always been the greatest of losses for Van Gogh academics and fans alike. One of the iconic sunflower series, its demise is still somewhat of a mystery.

It is a beautifully striking painting, the strong blue background contrasts with the vibrant yellow, especially when in the frame that Van Gogh designed for it, a brownish yellow, instead of the very plain white ones of the time.

It helps to give the painting even more life. The report believed to be most believable is that the painting had been brought to Japan by a collector, but was lost when his house was burnt to the ground from American bombing.

The heavy frame, the one that Van Gogh had designed, is said to be one of the reasons it wasn't able to be saved.

Van Gogh produced some 2000 paintings and sketches. Unfortunately not all these works have made it to the present day. There are 85 works in total today missing or in unknown locations.

It is possible some of them still exist, but their whereabouts are not known, and they have not been seen in public for over fifty years. Six paintings have been confirmed destroyed in fires, five of those were related to the Second World War.

It's a great shame the world has lost these works. Van Gogh Studio has chosen a few of their favourites to detail here:





Bonus Blog

# Van Gogh after Millet

## *Peasant life*

Van Gogh was a big fan of Jean-François Millet (1814 - 1875). Both artists portrayed peasants and painting them showed that they were proud of being from the countryside. The paintings were an homage to hard working farmers who were close to nature. Many art lovers found this inappropriate though. Farmers should not be turned into heroes is what they thought.

Fortunately that didn't stop Vincent. His letter to his sister Willemien on 20 January 1890 shows..:

"..what a master Millet is. That fellow, so wise, so moved, does the countryside in such a way that even in town one continues to feel it."

And a month later on 19 February 1890, also to Willemien:

"Millet! Millet! How that fellow painted humanity and the 'something on high', familiar and yet solemn."

Van Gogh loved painting nature, but in the winter of 1889 - 1890 it was often too cold to go outside. At that time Van Gogh lived in the asylum in Saint-Rémy where he had an extra room to use as a studio. It was there and then when he copied many artworks of painters he admired like Rembrandt, Delacroix and Millet. No less than 21 copies Van Gogh made of Millet's work, although copying may not be the best way to describe his work.

He explained in letter to his brother Theo on or about Monday, 13 January 1890

"The more I think about it the more I find that there's justification for trying to reproduce things by Millet that he didn't have the time to paint in oils. So working either on his drawings or the wood engravings, it's not copying pure and simple that one would be doing. It is rather translating into another language, the one of colours, the impressions of chiaroscuro and white and black."



# The finest thing you've done

Van Gogh's copies, painted in his own style, form an important part of his oeuvre of nearly 900 masterpieces. Vincent's brother Theo realized this importance and wrote to Vincent on 3 May 1890:

"The Millet copies are perhaps the finest things you've done, and make me believe that big surprises still await us the day you set yourself to doing figure compositions."



Bonus Blog

# Was Van Gogh an individualist?

Van Gogh's letters to his good friend and fellow artist Émile Bernard often show his astonishing knowledge of art. Vincent's admiration for Rembrandt, Delacroix, Millet and many others inspired both him and Bernard. Vincent and Émile were aware of their part in a historic chain of artists developing art in general.

On 7 June 1888 Van Gogh wrote to Bernard:

"More and more it seems to me that the paintings that ought to be made, the paintings that are necessary, indispensable for painting today to be fully itself and to rise to a level equivalent to the serene peaks achieved by the Greek sculptors, the German musicians, the French writers of novels, exceed the power of an isolated individual, and will therefore probably be created by groups of men combining to carry out a shared idea."

## Cooperating artists in an ideal world

Isn't it beautiful to read how Van Gogh felt like he was part of history, working together with other artists, creating these 'necessary, indispensable paintings'. In Vincent's ideal world, instead of working together on one painting, several painters could work on one idea. Van Gogh's watercolor painting 'Breton Women and Children' is a good example of this. Vincent's idea was not to just copy a painting, or be inspired by an artist to paint a similar scene in his own style. He liked the idea of artists cooperating to tackle a topic and to take a step together into the future of art.



**Breton Women at a Pardon, Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret, 1887**



**Vision after the Sermon, Paul Gauguin, 1888**



**Breton Women in the Meadow, Émile Bernard, August 1888**

Bonus Blog

# Tackling Breton Women

Van Gogh's enthusiasm for Émile Bernard's 'Breton Women in the Meadow' is clear in his letter on 26 November 1889 that shows involvement of Gauguin as well.

“...I would long to see things of yours again, like the painting of yours that Gauguin has, those Breton women walking in a meadow, the arrangement of which is so beautiful, the colour so naively distinguished.”

4 different artists and their individual approach to capture Breton Women. 4 paintings that belong together and complement each other:

- Breton Women at a Pardon, Pascal Dagnan-Bouveret, 1887
- Vision after the Sermon, Paul Gauguin, 1888
- Breton Women in the Meadow, Émile Bernard, August 1888
- Breton Women and Children, Vincent Van Gogh, November 1888

## Combined forces

Although Van Gogh painted on his own most of the time, often in nature away from people, he had many artist friends with whom he discussed art. They met at Père Tanguy's shop and in cafés. They wrote letters to each other., they swapped paintings and Gauguin even lived with Van Gogh in the Yellow House in Arles. They influenced each other and worked together. Van Gogh's masterpieces seem a perfect example of combined forces and he sure has taken his rightful place between the most famous artists in history. His paintings, created on the shoulders of giants, still loved and admired by many all over the world.



**Breton Women in the Meadow, Émile Bernard, August 1888**

Bonus Blog

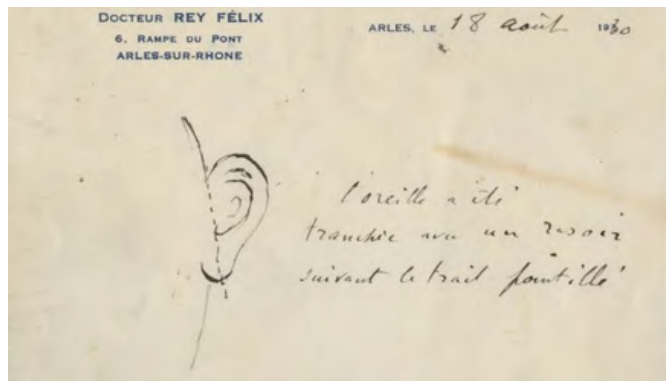
# Why Did Van Gogh Cut Off His Ear?

## 10 Questions about Van Gogh's ear answered

Vincent Van Gogh was one of the most well-known painters in Western Art. Van Gogh was born on 30th March 1853, and killed himself at the age of 37. He's done almost 860 oil paintings and 2100 artworks over a decade. His artwork included portraits, self-portraits, and landscapes that laid the foundation for modern impressionist art. The most widely debated fact about Van Gogh is his ear.

## Why did Van Gogh cut off his ear?

This is the first question that comes to mind when Van Gogh is mentioned. There are theories that seem as valid for why he cut off his ear. Some say that he was afraid of losing attention after learning that his brother Theo was going to marry a woman called Jo. German scholars suggested that Van Gogh sliced his ear after getting into a fight with his friend, Paul Gauguin. There are other theories that suggest that he cut his ear to present it to a prostitute named Rachel.



**Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe**

## When did he cut his ear?

Based on police reports and hospital records, Van Gogh cut his ear shortly before Christmas on the 23rd of December, 1888.

## How did he cut off his ear?

Van Gogh cut off his ear using a razor blade. Some researchers say that he took the razor and slit his ear instantly.

Bonus Blog

## *Did he cut off his entire ear?*

According to the drawing by Van Gogh's doctor Felix Rey, his ear entire ear was cut off!

And there is more evidence Van Gogh cut off his entire ear, shown in this great documentary by the BBC: *The Mystery of Van Gogh's Ear*.

## *What did he do with it?*

As soon as he cut it off, he bled profusely. Van Gogh wrapped it in a cloth and walked into a nearby brothel. He presented the ear to a worker at the brothel named Rachel and fainted immediately. Later, he woke up, went home, and slept in his bed. The next morning, police found him after being alerted by Rachel.

## *What happened after the police found him?*

As soon as the police found him, they rushed him to a nearby hospital to get him treated. After recovery, Van Gogh was discharged from the hospital and immediately started working on his "Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear". He created the portrait because he strongly felt that this was an important event in his life.

## *What did Paul Gauguin do when he learned about this incident?*

Paul Gauguin sent a telegram to Van Gogh's brother, Theo, asking him to come immediately. After that, he left for Paris and never returned.

## *Why does Van Gogh have a bandage on his right ear?*

Van Gogh always used a mirror for his self-portraits. That's why many people make a mistake thinking that he sliced a part of his right ear, instead of his left.

## *Did his friend have something to do with it?*

German scholars suggest that Van Gogh's friend, Paul Gauguin, sliced Van Gogh's ear with a sword. The theory states that they got into a fight and Gauguin sliced his ear. They decided not to tell the truth to hide Van Gogh's shame and Gauguin's guilt.

## *What letter did Van Gogh send to Paul Gauguin after this incident?*

In the first letter, he wrote: "I will keep quiet about this and so will you.". But after a few years, Paul Gauguin wrote about Van Gogh to another friend saying "A man with sealed lips, I cannot complain."

After this incident, Van Gogh got himself admitted into a mental institution in Saint-Remy. It was there he created most of his well-known pieces of art.

Bonus Blog

# Why did Van Gogh not dare to paint the olive tree?

*The courage to paint the olive tree.*

Van Gogh moved into the asylum to recover from severe mental illness. This led to a very productive period where he also found the courage to paint the beautiful but difficult olive tree.

To Theo on 28 September 1889:

"...the olive trees are very characteristic, and I'm struggling to capture that. It's silver, sometimes more blue, sometimes greenish, bronzed, whitening on ground that is yellow, pink, purplish or orangeish to dull red ochre. But very difficult, very difficult. But that suits me and attracts me to work fully in gold or silver. And one day perhaps I'll do a personal impression of it, the way the sunflowers are for yellows."

When Vincent van Gogh lived in the South of France the trees made a big impression on him. With full focus and passion he 'attacked' the cypress and mulberry tree, trying to capture their expression in oil on canvas. It took time before Van Gogh actually dared to start on the olive tree.

In Arles in April 1889, just before he moved to the asylum in Saint-Remy he wrote to his brother Theo:

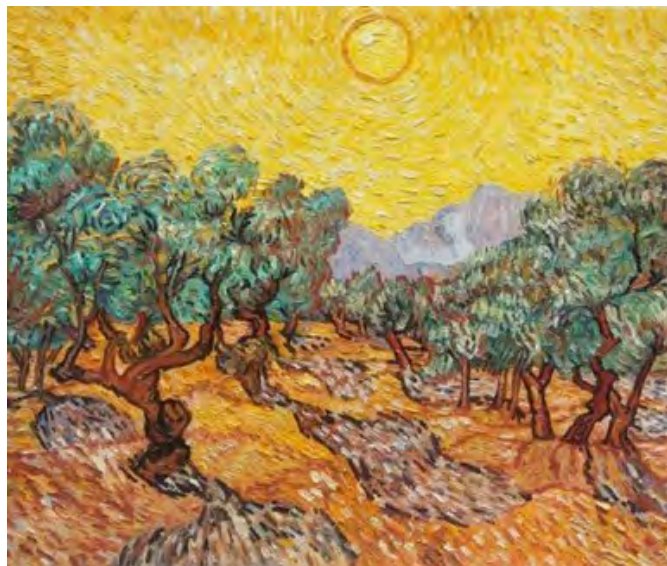
"Ah, my dear Theo, if you could see the olive trees at this time of year... The old-silver and silver foliage greening up against the blue. And the orangeish ploughed soil. It's something very different from what one thinks of it in the north – it's a thing of such delicacy – so refined. It's like the lopped willows of our Dutch meadows or the oak bushes of our dunes, that's to say the murmur of an olive grove has something very intimate, immensely old about it. It's too beautiful for me to dare paint it or be able to form an idea of it."



**Our hand-painted reproduction of Van Gogh's Olive Grove.**

Two months later Van Gogh wrote his friend and fellow artist Emile Bernard on 26 November 1889, while he was deep into the process of discovering his own way to paint the olive tree.

"So at present am working in the olive trees, seeking the different effects of a grey sky against yellow earth, with dark green note of the foliage; another time the earth and foliage all purplish against yellow sky, then red ochre earth and pink and green sky."



## Van Gogh's Olive Trees

***Our hand-painted reproduction of 'Olive Trees with Yellow Sky and Sun'.***

Van Gogh did 15 paintings of olive trees. He observed them, was moved by them, studied them, overcame his fear and finally managed to paint them in his own typical style. Van Gogh's olive trees are not as famous as his sunflowers, but they have definitely become his olive trees.

Bonus Blog

# Thank you Jo van Gogh - Bonger

## *Worthless paintings? Jo didn't think so.*

Van Gogh's paintings were considered worthless at that time and Jo was advised to get rid of them. Instead Jo decided to show the genius of Vincent to the world:

- In 1892 Jo already organised a small exhibition in Amsterdam.
- In 1905 Jo organised a large exhibition in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Berlin and London followed.
- She sold probably more than 200 of Van Gogh's paintings, while keeping the best ones in the family.
- She put Vincent's letters in chronological order and translated 526 of them into English.
- She published the letters in three volumes in 1914.

Jo died in 1925. In 1924 she sold one of Vincent's sunflower paintings to the National Gallery of London, although she knew this was a very important work. "It's a sacrifice for the sake of Vincent's glory". Jo considered this museum a valuable home for this masterpiece.

Vincent van Gogh was financially supported by his brother Theo, who was also his best friend. Without his brother we would probably never have been able to admire Vincent's now world famous paintings. But there is another person we can be very grateful to: Theo's wife Johanna (Jo) van Gogh - Bonger (1862-1925).

The first time Vincent and Jo met was in Paris in May 1890. Vincent stayed with Theo and Jo for 3 days before moving to Auvers-sûr-Oise. Only 2,5 months later Vincent died. Theo became very depressed and Theo and Jo moved back from Paris to The Netherlands.

Theo to Jo on August 1st, 1890: "I miss him so; everything seems to remind me of him."



Bonus Blog

# *Vincent Willem continued to make his uncle's dream come true.*

Jo's son Vincent Willem (Vincent's nephew) inherited all unsold paintings and all of his letters and founded the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam in 1973.

Vincent had a dream. And thanks to his brother, his sister in law and his nephew his dream came true.

“If I am worth anything later, I am worth something now. For wheat is wheat, even if people think it is a grass in the beginning” - Vincent Van Gogh

Bonus Blog

# Where Are Van Gogh's Sunflowers?

## *The Sunflower Series*

The Sunflower series of Van Gogh is one of the perfect examples of this. Many scholars suggest that Van Gogh became well known around the world, not because of his other paintings, but because of his sunflower series.

One can make a mental connection with the artist once one starts to observe the painting carefully. Van Gogh's Sunflower series has been duplicated by numerous artists around the world.

However talented the artists may be, the originality and the subtlety of Van Gogh's techniques were never achieved. We've put together some of the most asked questions about Van Gogh's sunflower paintings.

## *When did Van Gogh paint the Sunflower Series?*

Van Gogh painted the Sunflower series between the years of 1887 to 1889.

## *When did Van Gogh paint the Sunflower Series?*

There are a total 11 paintings in this series.

## *Where did he paint them?*

Van Gogh painted four of the paintings in Paris, and he painted the remaining seven in Arles.

There are numerous paintings that have been drifting from one gallery to another and each of them is synonymous with Vincent Van Gogh's name and techniques. The artist is one of the most famous post-impressionist painters of the 19th century.

Even though he lived a very troubled life, his artworks later rose to popularity and wide critical acclaim for his ideas and techniques.



***Our hand-painted reproduction of 'Three Sunflowers in a Vase'.***

## What is the current location of the Paris sunflowers?

All the Paris paintings were created during August to September 1887. The Four Cut Sunflowers are in Otterlo, at the Kroller-Muller Museum. The Two Cut Sunflowers are in Amsterdam, at the Van Gogh Museum. The other Two Cut Sunflowers is in Bern, at the Kunstmuseum and another Two Cut Sunflowers is at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art.

## What is the current location of the Arles sunflowers?

One Vase With Fifteen Sunflowers is located in the Sompō Japan Museum of Art in Tokyo, another Vase With Fifteen Sunflowers at the National Gallery of London and another Vase With Fifteen Sunflowers the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

One Vase with Twelve Sunflowers is located in Munich, in the Neue Pinakothek and another Vase with Twelve Sunflowers in the Philadelphia Museum of Art respectively.

Vase With Three Sunflowers is currently in a private collection in the United States. And unfortunately, Vase With Five Sunflowers was destroyed in a fire.

## What is the current location of the Arles sunflowers?

Well, did you know that in among 2000 of Van Gogh's works, only 6 of them are known to be destroyed?

In 1945, one of Van Gogh's Arles painting Vase with Five Sunflowers was destroyed by a fire. This happened during the American air attack on Japan during the second World War. It was a part of the private collection of Koyata Yamamoto. Also, it was said that since the painting had a very large frame, it was difficult to take it from the wall during the bombing.

The Sunflower Paintings are indeed one of Van Gogh's most famous works. Although one of the paintings was unfortunately destroyed, the other Sunflower paintings are indeed well-guarded, in secure places around the world.



**Our hand-painted reproduction of 'Vase with Five Sunflowers'**

Bonus Blog

# Was 'The Red Vineyard' really the only painting van Gogh ever sold?



***Our hand-painted replica of Van Gogh's 'The Red Vineyard'***

Many people believe that 'The Red Vineyard' that Vincent Van Gogh painted near Arles, in November 1888, is the only painting that the artist managed to sell while he was alive. It was bought by Anna Boch for 400 francs.

The painting was later acquired by Sergei Shchukin, a Russian Collector, nationalized by the Bolsheviks and then passed on to the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow.

## *But.. Van Gogh writes about selling pen drawings in The Hague.*

This part of his letter to his brother in March 1882 is about his pen drawings, so Van Gogh seems to have some sales experience already 2 years after he started painting:

"Theo, it's almost miraculous!!! ....C.M. comes, orders 12 small pen drawings from me, views of The Hague, having seen a few that were finished for a rijksdaalder apiece, the price set by me. With the promise that if I make them to his liking he'll order 12 more, but for which he'll fix the price higher than I do. ...So, it's fine – it's going well – it'll get even better!

Would Van Gogh have sold only 1 painting in his 10 year career, after selling at least pen drawings only 2 years after he started painting? We doubt it..



## Bonus Blog

# How long did it take Van Gogh to finish a painting?

*Work hard, paint fast.*

Van Gogh's first, or one of his first paintings, was 'Still life with cabbage and Clogs' and not soon after he finished it, his drive to paint many paintings was clear in a letter to his brother Theo:

"I'm still going to Mauve's every day, during the day to paint, in the evenings to draw. Have now painted 5 studies and 2 watercolours, and naturally a few scratches."

From the beginning of his career Van Gogh wanted to paint fast. In his letter to Theo August 1882 he wrote:

"With considerable practice and with lengthy practice, it enables one to draw at lightning speed and, once the lines are fixed, to paint at lightning speed."

*Van Gogh's hard work made him a better painter.*

As with any skill, whether it's playing tennis or playing guitar; it takes endless practice to reach top level. In October 1883 Van Gogh seemed content that his hard work started to pay off, according to his letter to Theo:

"Painting is coming more easily to me; I feel an urge to tackle all sorts of things that I left undone until today."

Vincent van Gogh started painting in 1881 at age 27. In the 10 years that followed he painted about 900 paintings. His average of one painting every 4 days is even more impressive when you realize that he also made 1100 drawings and sketches.

Van Gogh also wrote 650 letters during that period. What about the time it took to choose the subjects? The studies he made in advance? The time it took to grab his easel and go into the fields? Van Gogh was a very hard worker.



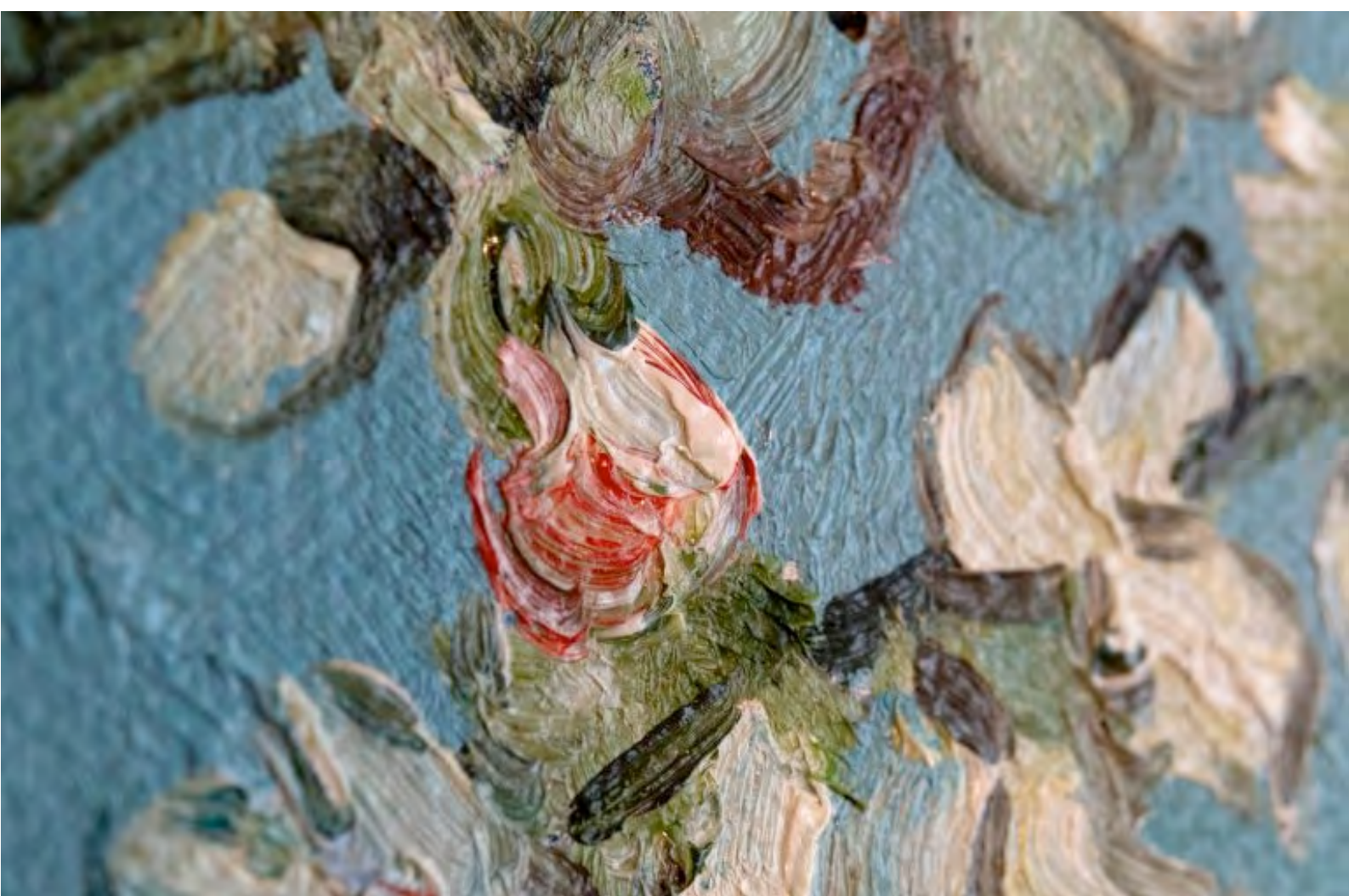
**Detail of our hand-painted reproduction of Van Gogh's 'Willows at Sunset'.**

As with any skill, whether it's playing tennis or playing guitar; it takes endless practice to reach top level. In October 1883 Van Gogh seemed content that his hard work started to pay off, according to his letter to Theo:

"Painting is coming more easily to me; I feel an urge to tackle all sorts of things that I left undone until today."

## *One painting a day.*

With his fast way of painting and his nature of a hard worker, Van Gogh managed to finish more paintings than ever. Even when he went into the asylum after he suffered mental problems and cut off his ear, he painted more than 130 paintings in a year. And in 1890 in Auvers-sur-Oise he reached the amazing average of 1 painting a day.



*Detail of our hand-painted reproduction of Van Gogh's 'Blossoming Almond Tree'.*

Bonus Blog

# Did van Gogh mean to paint life's struggle?

Van Gogh's painting 'Tree Roots' has been in the news a lot since the exact location of the original roots was discovered. 130 years went by in Auvers-sûr-Oise before someone found out the striking resemblance between some tree roots alongside Rue Daubigny and the painting from an old postcard.

In the morning of the day when Van Gogh was shot / shot himself Van Gogh probably painted his unfinished 'Tree Roots'. Andries Bonger, brother in law of Vincent's brother Theo, wrote:

"The morning before his death, he had painted a sous-bois [forest scene], full of sun and life."

If you ever visited Auvers-Sûr-Oise, you probably passed the exact spot of the tree roots. It's right in the centre of Auberge Ravoux where Van Gogh lived, and a few scenes that he painted like the church, the Wheat Fields and Daubigny's garden. All within a few minutes walking from one to the other. At this moment you'll find a wooden fence to protect the roots, although there are not many tourists in Auvers. Hopefully the wooden fence will soon be replaced by one from glass. The tree roots have suddenly become part of art history.

The fence shows 2 quotes from Van Gogh's letters:

To Theo van Gogh on or about Wednesday, 11 April 1888:

"Ah, it seems to me more and more that people are the root of everything."



**Van Gogh's Tree Roots discovered in an old postcard**



**Our hand-painted reproduction of Van Gogh's Tree Roots!**

and:

To Theo van Gogh and Jo van Gogh-Bonger on or about Thursday, 10 July 1890

"..my life, too, is attacked at the very root.."

## Life's struggle.

Going back further in time there is a letter from Vincent to Theo, dated 1 May 1882 that describes his 'Study of a Tree' and clearly shows how tree roots can represent life's struggle.

"Frantically and fervently rooting itself, as it were, in the earth, and yet being half torn up by the storm. I wanted to express something of life's struggle, both in that white, slender female figure and in those gnarled black roots with their knots. Or rather, because I tried without any philosophizing to be true to nature, which I had before me, something of that great struggle has come into both of them almost inadvertently. At least it seemed to me that there was some sentiment in it, though I may be mistaken, anyway, you'll have to see for yourself."



**'Van Gogh's' tree roots with fence on July 31st 2020.**



**Van Gogh's 'Study of a Tree' 1882.**

With the exact location of the Tree Roots in Auvès-sûr-Oise we not only have gained a new spot to follow in Van Gogh's footsteps. In combination with Vincent's words we are also one step closer to understand what Van Gogh went through at the very end of his life.

## Auvès-sûr-Oise

A trip to Auvès is highly recommended. It is not only a very charming French town, but it can also be a beautiful emotional experience to be in the exact spots where Van Gogh was. Oh.. and for excellent food and service, live jazz on thursdays in a corona proof garden to forget life's struggle: restaurant 'Sous le Porche' on 35 Rue du Pois. Bonne route!

Bonus Blog

# Did Van Gogh write his mother when he lived in France?



**Vincent's portrait of his mother.**

When Vincent van Gogh left to France in 1886 he did not realise he would never see his mother again. They didn't write each other much, but Vincent did miss her. In September 1888 he wrote to his sister Willemien:

"I'll be very happy to have the photograph of our mother that you mention, so don't forget to send it to me."

The photo Van Gogh received was in black and white and that annoyed him. In October 1888 he wrote to his brother Theo:

"I'm writing to you in haste; I'm working on a portrait. That's to say, I'm doing a portrait of our mother for myself. I can't look at the colourless photograph, and I'm trying to do one with harmonious colour, as I see her in my memory."

(on mobile scroll down to see a black and white photograph of his mother Anna Cornelia van Gogh (10 September 1819 - 1907) and the colorful portrait Vincent painted of her.)

When Van Gogh's health problems got worse in 1889 (he cut his ear off at the end of 1888) he moved into the asylum near Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in February 1889. In July of that year Vincent wrote very nicely to his mother:

"Dear Mother, if you say that you're a mother approaching 70 then it must be true, but one would certainly not tell it from your writing, for it struck me that it's exceptionally firm. What's more, Theo and Wil (his sister Willemien - VGS) wrote to me that you seem to be getting young again – and I think that's very good and is sometimes needed in life."

---

*Bonus Blog*

His mother was very happy with Vincent's letter and soon wrote the following to Theo about it:

"And now I must tell you that I indeed received such a nice letter from Vincent last week. Oh, how glad I was to get it, I had written to him, among other things: do you know I'll be turning 70 in September, and now he writes so nicely about that... I cannot tell you how grateful I am for that letter. May God grant that things will improve for him and that things will go well for Cor and you too, dear children"



***Anna Cornelia van Gogh (10 September 1819 - 1907), van Gogh's mother.***

Bonus Blog

# What were the original colors of Van Gogh's paintings?

In 1887 Vincent van Gogh moved to Paris. The influence of Japanese woodprints and the impressionists made Van Gogh paint in a brighter style. He used wool in different colors to test combinations and save money on expensive paint.

In a letter to his sister Willemien in June 1888:

“...there are colours that make each other shine, that make a couple, complete each other like man and wife. Explaining the whole theory to you would take quite a lot of writing, but still, it could be done.”

Complementary colors that Van Gogh liked so much were the combinations of:

- yellow (primary color) and purple (combination of primary colors blue and red)
- blue (primary color) and orange (combination of primary colors red and yellow)
- red (primary color) and green (combination of primary colors blue and yellow)

But the red paint was not stable at that time. So over the years some of Van Gogh's paintings have changed.

His purple colors turned blue, orange changed into yellow or less bright orange and red paint changed into less bright red or even green and brown.



**Van Gogh's Bedroom in today's colors. And on the right what its original colors may have been.**

# What were the original colors of Van Gogh's bedroom?

In October 1888 Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo:

"The walls are of a pale violet. The floor — is of red tiles." and "The doors lilac."

The blanket is an interesting detail here. Van Gogh: "The blanket scarlet red.". This color hasn't changed much. Did he use another type of red paint here?

On the left we see the painting of [Van Gogh's bedroom](#) that resides in the Art Institute of Chicago (Van Gogh painted three versions of his bedroom).

And on the right we see what the painting may have looked like according to Roy S. Berns and Brittany Cox from the Munsell Color Science Laboratory, Rochester Institute of Technology and Kelly Keegan from the Department of Conservation, the Art Institute of Chicago.

Bonus Blog

# Why did Van Gogh not paint Roman remnants?

*A huge Roman arch near the asylum!*

At a stone's throw from the asylum in Saint-Rémy is a huge Roman arch. You can't miss it. Why did he not even mention this amazing ancient construction in his letters?

*What did Van Gogh write about the Romans?*

Thanks to his letters we know what Van Gogh actually thought. He didn't write much about the Roman remnants. Did Vincent not like them? The way he wrote about the door of the Roman Catholic church of St Trophime in Arles leaves no doubt..

On 21 or 22 March 1888 Vincent van Gogh wrote to Theo:

"There is a Gothic portico here, [...] the porch of St Trophime. But it is so cruel, so monstrous, like a Chinese nightmare, that even this beautiful example of so grand a style seems to me to belong to another world, and I am as glad not to belong to it as to that other world, [...] of the Roman Nero"

In Arles and in Saint-Rémy the influence of the Romans is still around you. Everywhere. Impressive arenas, churches, arches, chapels.. Why did van Gogh not paint these beautiful Roman remains?



**Roman arch near the asylum in Saint Remy**



**The 'monstrous' Roman Catholic church of St.Trophime in Arles**



Bonus Blog

# Who was Van Gogh's best friend?

Vincent van Gogh may not have been the easiest person, but he definitely found his friendships very valuable.

In 1879 he wrote to his brother Theo:

"Like everyone else, I have need of relationships of friendship or affection or trusting companionship, and am not like a street pump or lamp-post, whether of stone or iron, so that I can't do without them without perceiving an emptiness and feeling their lack, like any other generally civilized and highly respectable man — and I tell you these things to let you know what a salutary effect your visit had on me."

## Who were Van Gogh's friends?

Considering Van Gogh lived in a world without cars or airplanes, Van Gogh was an adventurous traveler. And wherever he lived, Vincent made friends, like:

- The artist Anthon van Rappard in Brussels.
- The artists Émile Bernard, Paul Signac and Lucien Pissarro and art dealer Julien (père) Tanguy in Paris.
- Paul Gauguin and Postman Joseph Roulin in Arles.
- Dr Rey in Arles and Saint-Remy.
- Doctor Gachet in Auvers-sur-Oise.



**Vincent or Theo van Gogh**



**Postman Joseph Roulin in Arles**

Bonus Blog

# Who was Van Gogh's best friend?

Without doubt his brother Theo was his best friend. Theo supported him financially and in many of the 663 letters that Vincent wrote to his brother, Vincent showed his appreciation for Theo's support and their friendship:

To Theo in 1882:

"I gain everything, for without you I wouldn't have been able to carry on to where we are now; you gain nothing except for the feeling of giving a career to someone who would have had no career otherwise."

and:

"One thing — if I become too much of a burden on you — let the friendship remain, even if you can give less help financially."

And much later in 1887 to their sister Willemien Vincent wrote:

"If I didn't have Theo it wouldn't be possible for me to do justice to my work, but because I have him as a friend I believe that I'll make more progress and that things will run their course."

## Theo's support in difficult times

Theo traveled to the South of France to be there for Vincent when he was in hospital. And when Vincent died, his brother was at his side. Theo died half a year later and the brothers were buried next to each other in Auvers-sur-Oise.

## Thanks to Theo

Vincent van Gogh is world famous now as the creator of many masterpieces that are part of art history. His brother Theo made it possible. Thanks to two special brothers who were best friends many people over the world enjoy Vincent's paintings and get inspired by his letters to Theo.



**Vincent and Theo van Gogh's grave in Auvers**

Bonus Blog

# Did Van Gogh use impasto?

*Did van Gogh use impasto all over the canvas?*

This may surprise you, but many of his paintings from late in his career have spots with very thin paint or even unpainted canvas like the Pink Peach Tree (on mobile scroll down for a detail of the original painting).

Vincent van Gogh wrote to Emile Bernard in April 1888:

"I follow no system of brushwork at all; I hit the canvas with irregular strokes which I leave as they are, impastos, uncovered spots of canvas — corners here and there left inevitably unfinished — reworkings, roughnesses; well, I'm inclined to think that the result is sufficiently worrying and annoying not to please people with preconceived ideas about technique."

## Who inspired Van Gogh to use impasto?

In his letters Van Gogh refers to Adolphe Monticelli (1824 - 1886) multiple times, where he seems to not only be inspired but also strongly connected to him.

Vincent van Gogh to his brother Theo in September 1888:

"The present studies actually consist of a single flow of impasto. The brushstroke isn't greatly divided, and the tones are often broken. And in the end, without intending to, I'm forced to lay the paint on thickly, à la Monticelli. Sometimes I really believe I'm continuing that man's work, only I haven't yet done figures of lovers, like him."

Oh yes he did :) Impasto is known as the technique that creates those thick layers of paint on the canvas. Van Gogh is famous for his impasto style that added a lot of emotion and movement to his paintings. Van Gogh's letters show us how he experimented with impasto, who inspired him, the difficulties using impasto and what use of impasto tells us about his mood.



**Use of impasto, but also notice the spots with very thin paint or even unpainted canvas (photo from the original Van Gogh painting "Pink Peach Tree").**

## Did it take Van Gogh longer to paint with impasto?

Van Gogh has painted around 900 paintings and in the end he was able to finish a painting in one day. His pace of painting contributed to his style. Thick impasto, with colors mixed on the canvas, painted outside; Vincent was working hard and fast. But the impasto takes a long time to dry.



**Detail of Van Gogh's "The Langlois Bridge"**

About his painting 'Ploughed Fields' to Theo in September 1888:

"It's another of those that'll take a long time to dry; with impasto paintings you have to do the same as with the strongest wine, it has to ferment."

## What is impacted impasto?

Vincent shipped his paintings from the South of France to his brother in Paris by train. Many of these paintings kept unrolled until long after both brothers died. The crushed paint is called impacted impasto, clearly visible in some of the photos on this page.

## Does impasto have impact on the color over time?

Vincent shipped his paintings from the South of France to his brother in Paris by train. Many of these paintings kept unrolled until long after both brothers died. The crushed paint is called impacted impasto, clearly visible in some of the photos on this page.

## Does impasto have impact on the canvas?

Van Gogh's painting The Bedroom was damaged so he painted another version. Was impasto one of the reasons? Vincent wrote about it in September 1889:

"It was painted so quickly and dried in such a way that, as the thinner evaporated immediately, the painting doesn't adhere at all firmly to the canvas. This will also be the case with other studies of mine that were painted very quickly and with a thick impasto. Besides, this thin canvas perishes after a while and can't take a lot of impasto."



## Was Van Gogh's use of impasto related to his mood?

Vincent's stay in the asylum calmed him. Perhaps for a short period he used less impasto. Not for long though. His paintings at the end of his life, in Auvers-sûr-Oise, are done with very thick impasto. In September 1889:

"I think it likely that I'll do hardly any more things in impasto, it's the result of the calm life of seclusion I'm leading, and I feel I'm better for it. Fundamentally I'm not as violent as that, anyway I feel more myself in calmness."

Theo noticed this and wrote from Paris in January 1890:

"I very much like the women climbing on the rocks and the main road with the road-menders. I feel that there's more atmosphere in your latest works, more distance than in the preceding ones. Which comes perhaps from the fact that you don't use so much impasto everywhere."

## Which of Van Gogh's paintings has the thickest impasto?

One of his paintings with an incredible thick layer of paint all over can be seen in the Kröller-Müller Museum in The Netherlands. Vincent wrote about "Cypresses with Two Figures" in February 1890:

"I think you'll like the canvas for Mr Aurier (art critic VGS), it's in terribly thick impasto and worked like certain Monticellis, I've kept it for almost a year."

And perhaps he had overdone the use of impasto. In April 1890, not long before he moved to Auvers-sûr-Oise:

"Then the cypresses are for Mr Aurier. I would have liked to redo them with a little less impasto, but I don't have the time."



**"Cypresses with Two Figures" may have the thickest impasto of them all (photo from the original Van Gogh painting, not from our reproduction).**



Bonus Blog

# Why did the red paint in Van Gogh's works fade?

## *Red paint from the cochineal.*

One of the red paints that Van Gogh used came from a cochineal. Carminic acid is extracted from this insect to make the natural dye carmine. Van Gogh ordered his red paints from paint grinders like Père Tanguy in Paris. Unfortunately this natural red paint is sensitive to light and loses its bright red color.

## *What color did Van Gogh's irises originally have?*

Van Gogh in a letter to Emile Bernard in May 1888:

"...that sea of yellow flowers with a line of purple irises.."

Since purple is a combination of blue and red, and red fades.. we get blue irises!



**Cochineal insects can be found on prickly pear cacti.**



**Our hand-painted replica of Van Gogh's.. blue irises.**



Bonus Blog

# Did Van Gogh kill himself?

## What did Dr. Gachet say?

Dr. Gachet wrote to Theo on 27 July 1890:

"Today, Sunday, at nine o'clock in the evening I was sent for by your brother Vincent, who wanted to see me at once. I went there and found him very ill. He has wounded himself . . . it is your duty to come."

## What did his brother Theo say?

Theo wrote to his wife Jo three days later after he had spoken to Vincent before he died:

"One of his last words was: this is how I wanted to go and it took a few moments and then it was over and he found the peace he hadn't been able to find on earth."

## What did his friend Emile Bernard say?

Emile Bernard attended Vincent's funeral and spoke to Dr Gachet. On 31 July 1890 he wrote to Albert Aurier:

"Dr. Gachet told him that he still hoped to save his life, he said, "Then I'll have to do it over again."

and:

"He killed himself. On Sunday evening he went into the countryside around Auvers, placed his easel against a haystack and went behind the château and fired a revolver shot at himself." Vincent had "done it in complete lucidity", with a "wish to die"

Vincent Van Gogh died at age 37 on 29 July 1890 in Auvers-sur-Oise. What happened 2 days before we will never know exactly. Was it suicide? Was it murder? According to letters from Dr Gachet, his brother Theo and his friend Emile Bernard it was Vincent who shot himself.



***Our hand-painted reproduction of 'Wheat Field with Crows', one of Van Gogh's last paintings.***



***Our hand-painted reproduction of 'Wheat Field under Thunderclouds'.***

# *Did Van Gogh commit suicide or was it murder?*

If it was murder instead of suicide, why would Dr Gachet or Theo not write about this? Why would Vincent not have told them about his murderer before he died?

## *Or was it murder after all?*

In 'Van Gogh: The Life', a 960-page book published in 2011, the Pulitzer Prize-winning authors claim that Van Gogh had been shot, possibly accidentally, by a couple of boys and that the artist had decided to protect them by accepting the blame.

## *R.I.P. Vincent van Gogh*

Vincent wrote to Theo from Arles two years earlier in July 1888:

"Painters being dead and buried, speak to a following generation or to several following generations through their works. In the life of the painter, death may perhaps not be the most difficult thing."



Bonus Blog

# Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in the South of France.

In search for warm light and bright colors Van Gogh left Paris in 1888 and went to the South of France. Would you like to visit the locations Van Gogh painted and experience what Vincent saw in the Provence?

## *Cafe Terrace at Night - Arles*

The Cafe Terrace is a must see. To stand on the same spot in the Place du Forum where Van Gogh actually painted the cafe makes it easy to understand why he chose to paint this scene. Although Van Gogh preferred to paint nature he wrote to his sister Willemien on 14 September 1888:

"I definitely want to paint a starry sky now. It often seems to me that the night is even more richly coloured than the day, coloured in the most intense violets, blues and greens.. Now there's a painting of night without black. With nothing but beautiful blue, violet and green, and in these surroundings the lighted square is coloured pale sulphur, lemon green. I enormously enjoy painting on the spot at night."



# Starry Night over the Rhône - Arles

Another location that can best be visited after sunset is Starry Night over the Rhône. But no need to wait until the middle of the night though. Van Gogh must have painted this romantic (link <https://www.vangoghstudio.com/was-van-gogh-a-romantic-person/>) scene by the Rhône before it was completely dark. Vincent van Gogh wrote to fellow artist Eugene Boch on 2 October 1888:

"And lastly, a study of the Rhône, of the town under gaslight and reflected in the blue river. With the starry sky above — with the Great Bear — with a pink and green sparkle on the cobalt blue field of the night sky, while the light of the town and its harsh reflections are of a red gold and a green tinged with bronze. Painted at night."

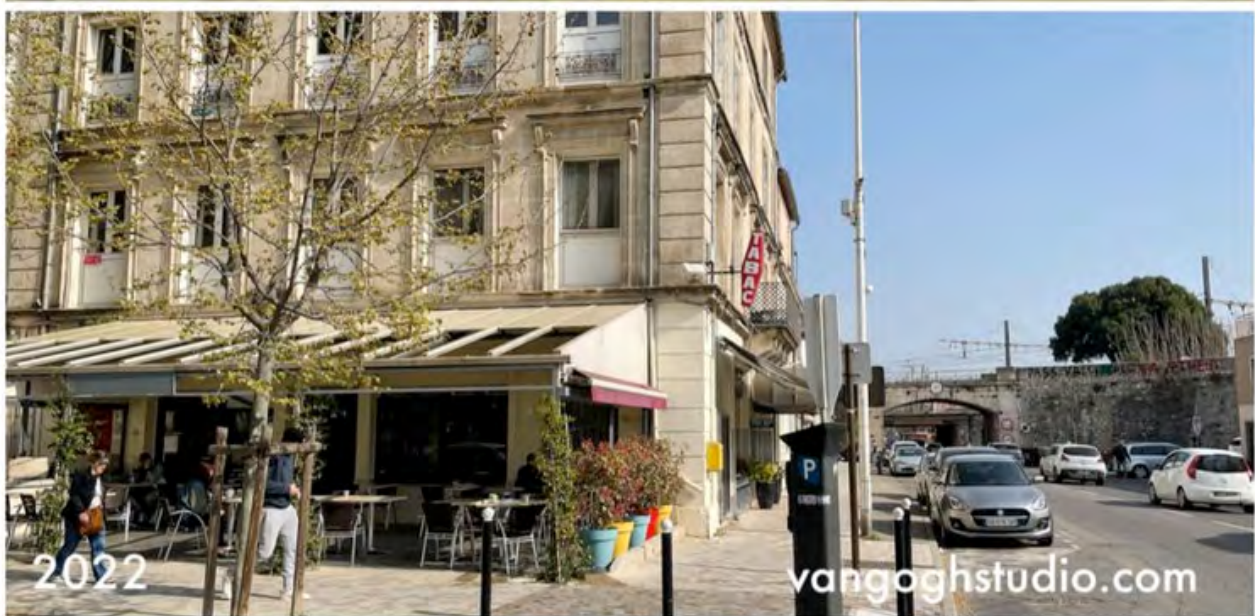
You can find the exact spot along the banks of the Rhône if you go from The Yellow House, just outside of the city centre, towards the river.



# The Yellow House - Arles

The Yellow House at the Place Lamartine doesn't exist anymore exactly as it was in 1888, but to have a French noisette (espresso with a drop or two of milk or cream) or a pastis on the terrace of the Yellow House creates a great moment to think about everything Vincent went through there.

It was Van Gogh's ambitions to start a community of artists in the yellow house as the Studio of the South. Van Gogh made many masterpieces in Arles, decorated a bedroom for Gauguin with his Sunflower paintings, but got mental health problems soon after Gauguin arrived. On the 23rd of December he cut off his left ear and when he got out of hospital he noticed the painting of his Bedroom was damaged as the nearby Rhône had flooded.



# The Courtyard of the Hospital - Arles

In the centre of Arles you'll find the hospital where Vincent van Gogh was treated by Dr Rey after he cut off his ear. He was allowed to go home a few weeks later, but due to mental breakdowns he was hospitalized twice more before he moved to the asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence.

In 2020 researchers in The Netherlands suggested that Van Gogh's deliriums were linked to alcohol withdrawal.



# The Trinquetaille Bridge - Arles

Walking along the banks of the Rhône you come across the bridge to Trinquetaille, a neighborhood of Arles on the other side of the river. The bridge in the painting looks rather modern, which you'd expect to be in Paris or another main city in France. This shows Arles once was an important port before railways took over most river transport.

Also note the little plane tree that Van Gogh painted there. Since plane trees can live for several hundred years... the big tree in the recent photo could very well be the same tree!



# Les Alyscamps - Arles

You'll find many Roman remnants in Arles; the arena is one that is hard to miss. Outside of the Arles city walls, at just a 10 minute walk, is one that you don't want to miss either: Les Alyscamps (compare Champs-Élysées in Paris; in English: Elysian Fields).

Les Alyscamps is an ancient Roman necropolis which is lined with poplars and stone sarcophagi. Van Gogh made a few paintings here. One of them is called 'Falling Autumn Leaves'.



# The Langlois Bridge - Arles

At a 40 minute walk from the center of Arles you can visit [the Langlois Bridge](#) (named after the bridge keeper). Vincent van Gogh painted this scene 4 times from different angles, also with women washing clothes.

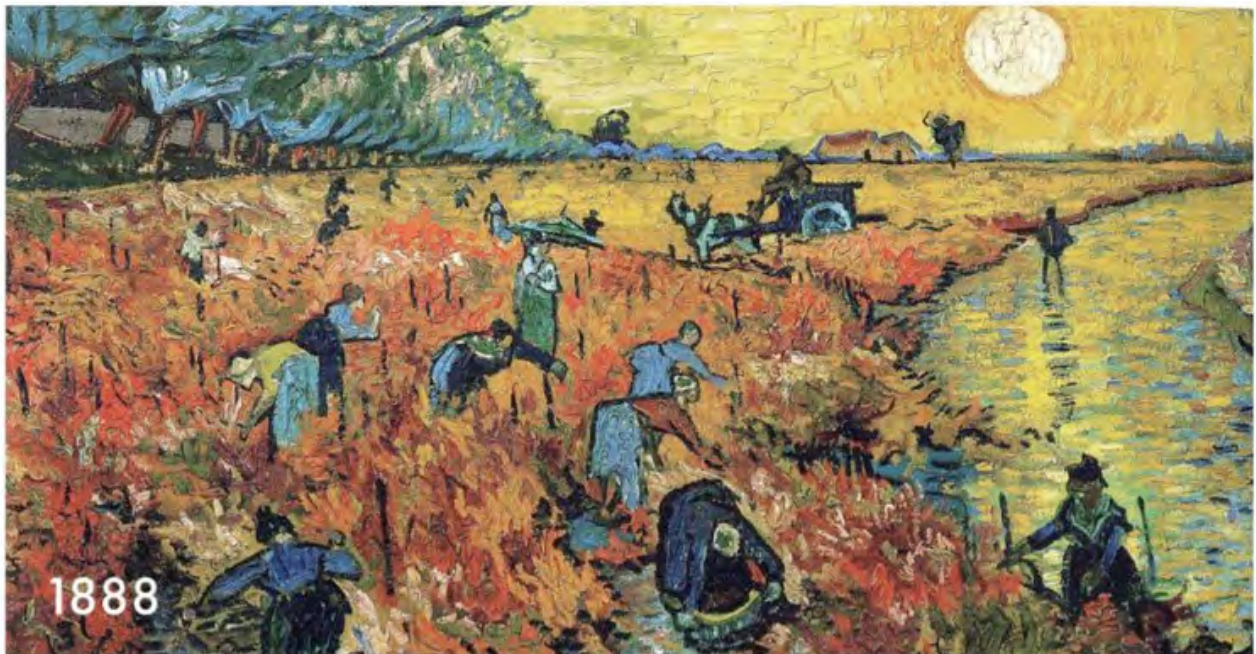
This drawbridge on a canal, reminded him of The Netherlands. Although the bridge has been reconstructed, the typical white house with orange roof tiles that you see in many of Van Gogh's paintings around Arles is still there!



# The Red Vineyard – Montmajour

The Red Vineyard was probably the only painting that Vincent van Gogh sold. The location is not easy to find as it is not a vineyard anymore. It can best be reached by car, going from Montmajour to Arles. After a minute drive from the 1000 year old abbey 'Montmajour' the road bends to the right and you can see the towers of Arles in the distance just like in the painting.

Van Gogh painted the harvest of grapes in [The Red Vineyard](#) on 3 November 1888, which would be very late to harvest grapes for wine nowadays. Did people back then prefer their wine sweeter? Find out what Dutch [Wine connoisseur Niek Beute](#) thinks about this.



# View of Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer

At the end of May 1888 Vincent van Gogh traveled by coach from Arles 40km South to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer. He made drawings and paintings there, his most famous one the Sea at Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer.

Around this magic town in the Camargue you can see flamingos and wild horses. Every year In May gypsies from all over Europe come to Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer and worship Black Sara, their Patron saint. The festival goes back to the Middle Ages and their ceremonies are still the same; the crowd sing and praise the Saint Marys and a procession takes Sara to the sea.



# Van Gogh locations in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

To be in Vincent's bedroom in the asylum may be even more inspiring than looking at his masterpieces in a museum. To experience the circumstances in which he kept following his dream can be humbling and empower you to never give up either.

## Irises

Due to his mental health problems Vincent van Gogh wasn't allowed outside of the walls of the garden of the asylum Saint-Rémy-de-Provence at first. That didn't stop him to produce many masterpieces. His first one was probably the now famous Irises. Note how the flowers are blue instead of purple. Find out [here](#) why the red color in purple lost its brightness over the years.



# Starry Night - Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

Starry Night was painted from Van Gogh's bedroom. He added the town to the painting that was clearly inspired on Saint-Rémy. At just a 5 minute walk from the asylum is the Ancient Roman city of Glanum. From there you can see Saint-Rémy-de-Provence pretty much like it appears in Starry Night.



# Olive Grove - Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

When Van Gogh was allowed to leave the premises of the asylum he painted at least 15 versions of his beloved olive tree that reminded him of the Dutch willow. There are many olive groves around the asylum that change in color during the day. Not surprising it was such a challenge to Vincent to capture this characteristic tree.



# Women picking Olives - Saint-Rémy

Vincent van Gogh painted three versions of women picking olives. The one that he described as 'the most resolved and stylized of the three' was for his mother and sister.

The paintings show Van Gogh's idea of close connection between people and nature. And it was nature and especially painting in nature that made him happy. To Van Gogh painting olive trees even felt like a remedy for his mental health issues.



# Mountainous Landscape with Olive Trees - Saint-Rémy

Did you know Van Gogh made a painting as the daylight complement to the famous nocturnal, The Starry Night? Just before you enter the asylum you'll see the low mountain range 'The Alpilles' on your right in the South. You can walk around and try to find the exact spot with the olive trees against the mountains where Van Gogh pitched his easel.

If only he knew that the paintings he created at that moment would one day be visited in the main museums all over the world.



# Pine Trees - Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

With the strong and cold mistral wind it was often not easy for Van Gogh to paint. It didn't stop him from painting these pine trees just outside of the asylum.

"I'm going to work some more outside, the mistral's blowing. It usually dies down by the time the sun's about to set, then there are superb effects of pale citron skies, and desolate pines cast their silhouettes into relief against it with effects of exquisite black lace. At other times the sky is red, at other times a tone that's extremely delicate, neutral, still pale lemon but neutralized by delicate lilac. I have an evening effect of a pine again against pink and green-yellow."



# Road Menders - Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

The asylum that cared for 18 patients in 1889 is at a 15 minute walk from Saint-Rémy. Vincent only visited this small town a couple of times. The beautiful boulevard around the centre still has impressive plane trees. The road work underneath autumn trees with yellow leaves was painted twice by Van Gogh.



Enjoy your trip in the Provence! The photos on this page were taken in March and April. I would love to see your photos of the locations taken at other times of the year.



Bonus Blog

# Which wine did Vincent van Gogh drink?

In April 1889 Vincent van Gogh wrote a letter to his sister Willemien from Arles:

"Every day I take the remedy that the incomparable Dickens prescribes against suicide. It consists of a glass of wine, a piece of bread and cheese and a pipe of tobacco." (VGS: English writer Charles Dickens (1812-1870).

Are you a wine lover yourself? You may wonder which wine Van Gogh was drinking back then. Was it a red wine or a white wine? Was the wine any different than they produce these days?

## The Red Vineyard

We asked [Niek Beute](#), a well known Dutch wine connoisseur and sommelier, to explore the wines around Arles. Niek found a wine that may come from the exact vineyards that produced wines for Vincent van Gogh. Van Gogh's famous painting '[The Red Vineyard](#)' gave some interesting ideas about the wine back then that Van Gogh enjoyed on a daily basis.

Vincent van Gogh to his brother Theo on or about Saturday, 3 November 1888:

"But if only you'd been with us on Sunday! We saw a red vineyard, completely red like red wine. In the distance it became yellow, and then a green sky with a sun, fields violet and sparkling yellow here and there after the rain in which the setting sun was reflected."



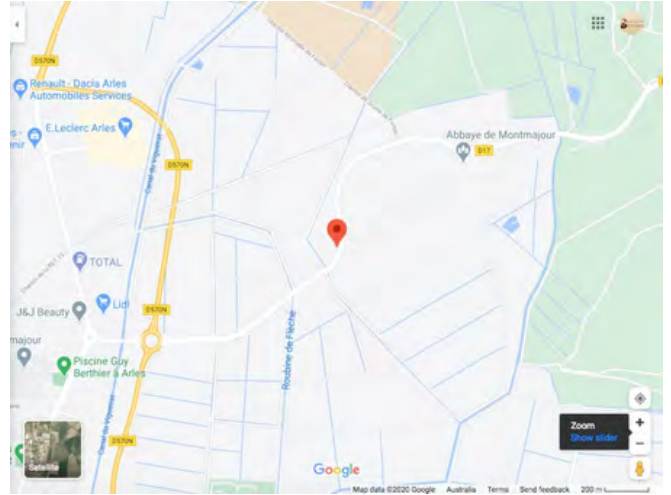
Our replica of Van Gogh's painting '[The Red Vineyard](#)'



[Follow in Van Gogh's footsteps in The South of France](#)

# Where exactly is Van Gogh's Red Vineyard located?

Shortly after the video was recorded we were lucky to receive very interesting info from a customer who ordered The Red Vineyard replica. They are now winemakers in Australia ([www.blackcreekfarm.com.au](http://www.blackcreekfarm.com.au)), but they are originally from Arles and wrote us:



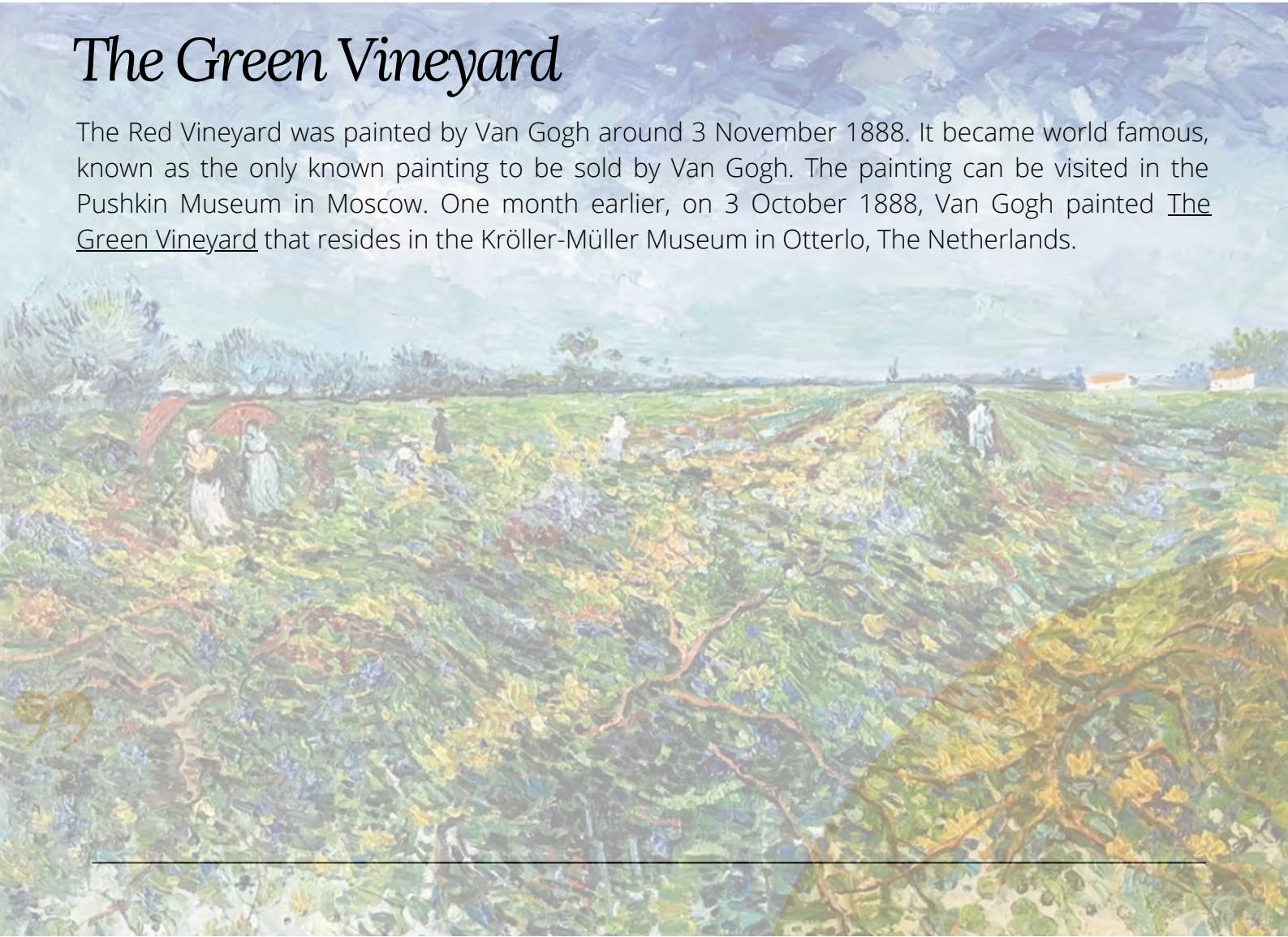
**The exact location of 'The Red Vineyard'**

“I found out the exact location in Arles where Van Gogh painted the scene, on the road towards Montmajour. (On mobile scroll down to see the map.)

Indeed it's close to Montmajour I know this road very well. Coming from Montmajour towards Arles, the road makes a slight curve on the right. You can still see some trees left along the road as they were in the painting. From this spot you can see the dwelling in the painting along the road and in the horizon the top of the Arles church building in the sunset. That's the bearings I took to find out the location, on the right side of the road. There is no more vineyard though. Now it's wheat or rice field.”

## The Green Vineyard

The Red Vineyard was painted by Van Gogh around 3 November 1888. It became world famous, known as the only known painting to be sold by Van Gogh. The painting can be visited in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. One month earlier, on 3 October 1888, Van Gogh painted The Green Vineyard that resides in the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, The Netherlands.



Bonus Blog

# How much are Van Gogh's letters worth?

*210.600 euro for one letter.*

The answer is yes. Meaning that yesterday [letter 716](#) was auctioned in Paris. The Vincent van Gogh Foundation bought the letter for 210.600 euro to be exhibited in the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. It was one of the few privately owned letters and will soon be shown to the public.

## *Van Gogh and Gauguin writing together.*

The auctioned letter is the only letter where Van Gogh leaves space for Paul Gauguin to write to their mutual friend Emile Bernard. Gauguin had just moved into Van Gogh's 'Yellow House' in Arles in October 1888. Their fellow artist Bernard was to come and live with them as well making the house the 'Studio of the South'.

## *The Brothels*

The letter, dated Thursday 1 or Friday 2 November 1888 refers to two of Van Gogh's paintings in this part:

"Now something that will interest you — we've made some excursions in the brothels, and it's likely that we'll eventually go there often to work. At the moment Gauguin has a canvas in progress of the same night café that I also painted, but with figures seen in the brothels. It promises to become a beautiful thing."

Van Gogh was not only an exceptional painter, but also a great writer of letters. His letters give us valuable insight in what Vincent actually thought about painting, nature, friendship, life. His letters show us how he struggled and what made him happy. Van Gogh's personal tone and lively language help us to better understand his now world famous artworks. Is it possible to put a price on his letters?



**Van Gogh's painting *'The Brothel'*.**



Bonus Blog

# Was Van Gogh inspired by music?

Short answer: yes! Did you know Van Gogh even took piano lessons in Eindhoven? This was in 1883-1885 during his career as a painter. According to Anton Kerssemakers his teacher Hein van der Zanden thought "he must be dealing with a madman and became so afraid of him that he stopped the lessons". But why?

Kerssemakers wrote in 1912:

"Van Gogh was always comparing painting with music, and so as to get a better understanding of the gradation of tones. He kept comparing the notes of the piano with Prussian blue and dark green or dark ochre to bright cadmium."

You may enjoy Van Gogh's creativity but it was too much for his piano teacher and he stopped the lessons. The intensity of a creative mind like Vincent's is not easily muted though. Van Gogh's associations between color and music were still very much alive in Arles a few years later.

To his brother Theo in September 1888:

"But I'm again the way I was in Nuenen, when I made a vain attempt to learn music - even then - so strongly did I feel the connections there are between our colour and Wagner's music."



**Van Gogh's 'Marguerite Gachet at the Piano' (Dr. Gachet's daughter)**

# Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and his influence on Van Gogh

German composer Wagner made operas for big orchestras. Van Gogh had been to performances of Wagner with his brother in Paris in 1887. Theo wrote to their sister Willemien about it:

"And before Vincent left I went to a couple of Wagner concerts with him and we both enjoyed them very much."

Wagner had gone through financial trouble in his life just like Van Gogh. Wagner persisted, kept following his dreams and died wealthy and famous. Wagner's life may have inspired Van Gogh to keep trying too. But in the first place it was the intimacy in Wagner's music that influenced Van Gogh.

To Willemien in March 1888:

"But today's palette is definitely colourful - sky blue, pink, orange, vermilion, brilliant yellow, bright green, bright wine red, violet. But by intensifying all the colours one again achieves calm and harmony. And something happens like with the Wagner music which, performed by a large orchestra, is no less intimate for that."

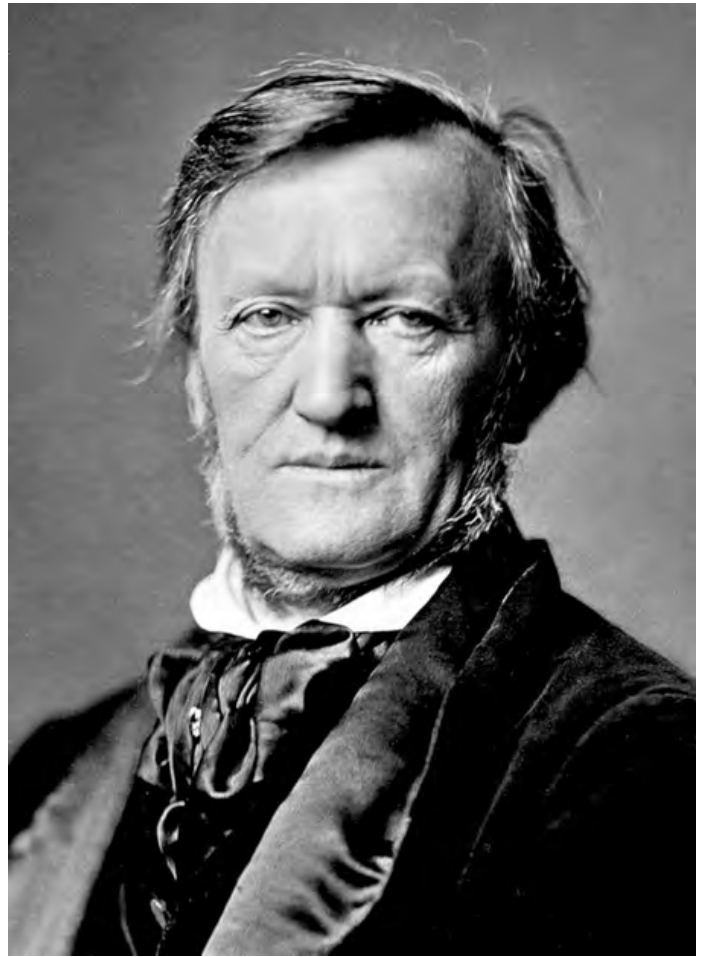
## Impressionism

Instead of depicting reality, painters in Van Gogh's era rather tried to convey emotion. Monet's painting "Impression, Sunrise" (hence the name impressionism) could have been the start of this movement. Van Gogh's letters show how he wanted his paintings to console, to give comfort. To be more like music:

- "Painting as it is now promises to become more subtle - more music and less sculpture - in fact, it promises colour." - August 1888
- "And in a painting I'd like to say something consoling, like a piece of music." - September 1888
- "...one can speak poetry just by arranging colours well, just as one can say comforting things in music." - November 1888

His friend Paul Gauguin must have understood what Van Gogh meant. Vincent wrote to him in 1889:

"Ah! my dear friend, to make of painting what the music of Berlioz and Wagner has been before us... a consolatory art for distressed hearts! There are as yet only a few who feel it as you and I do!!!"



**Vincent and Theo enjoyed Wagner's operas in Paris.**

Bonus Blog

# Was Van Gogh inspired by Rembrandt?

## *When did Van Gogh visit the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam?*

In the beginning of October 1885 Van Gogh was to visit the Rijksmuseum that had opened earlier that year. On 4 October 1885 he wrote from Nuenen to Theo:

"Longing most of all for Rembrandt and Frans Hals, one day this week I'm going to the museum in Amsterdam with a friend of mine in Eindhoven whose studies I once showed you. If I can acquire connections for my own work, I won't fail to do so — and I firmly believe that with perseverance I'll win."

## *Did Van Gogh learn from Rembrandt's technique?*

In his letter from 10 October 1885 Vincent tells his brother he studied Rembrandt's technique extensively:

"I've been to Amsterdam this week — I hardly had time to see anything but the museum. I was there 3 days; went Tuesday, back Thursday. Result is that I'm very glad I went, whatever the cost, and that I don't propose going for so long again without seeing paintings. I'd already put it off and put it off, that and so much else, because of the cost. But it's much better that I can no longer imagine that this is the thing to do. I get too much out of it — for my work, and when I look at the old paintings, which I can decipher as regards technique very differently from before — then perhaps I have precious little need for conversation anyway."

Yes, Rembrandt's work was a huge source of inspiration for Vincent. If you were lucky to visit the exposition '[Vincent meets Rembrandt](#)' in the Noorderkerk in Amsterdam, or in case you missed the exposition, you may like to read what Van Gogh wrote to his brother about Rembrandt.



**Rembrandt's 'The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp'**



**Our hand-painted reproduction in oil on canvas of Rembrandt's 'Nightwatch'.**

Bonus Blog

## Rembrandt the magician

"Still — one can speak about the paintings by Frans Hals, he always remains — on earth. Rembrandt goes so deep into the mysterious that he says things for which there are no words in any language. It is with justice that they call Rembrandt — magician— that's no easy occupation."

In 1885 Van Gogh painted the now world famous "The Potato Eaters" This painting was still very dark but his style of quickly applied brushstrokes was already evident. Later in his career Van Gogh was able to finish a painting in one day.



**Van Gogh's "Half Figure of an Angel after Rembrandt"**

## Did Rembrandt encourage Van Gogh to work fast?

On 13 October 1885 he wrote:

"What particularly struck me when I saw the old Dutch paintings again is that they were usually painted quickly. That these great masters like Hals, Rembrandt, Ruisdael — so many others — as far as possible just put it straight down — and didn't come back to it so very much."

## What did Van Gogh think of Rembrandt's use of color?

Van Gogh was highly impressed by the colors of Rembrandt's paintings like 'The Nightwatch' and 'The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp'. And looking closely at Van Gogh's paintings, you can often see many shades of blue in his skies. Perhaps he remembered Rembrandt's work in the Rijksmuseum.

On 20 October 1885:

"The fragment of Rembrandt's anatomy lesson, yes, I was astounded by it too. Do you remember those flesh colours? It's — OF THE EARTH, particularly the feet."

and:

"Rembrandt and Hals, didn't they use black? And Velázquez??? Not just one, but twenty-seven blacks, I assure you."

# *Which technique did Rembrandt and Van Gogh have in common?*

Have you ever looked at a Van Gogh painting in a museum at short distance? Isn't it amazing how those blobs of paint create a painting of great detail with light and depth when you take a few steps back? Doesn't this reveal the talent of the best artists like Rembrandt and van Gogh? How is it possible to see the result while painting at arm length from the canvas? Isn't that similar to a great composer like Mozart working on a violin solo note for note while hearing the full symphony at the same time?

On 7 November 1885 Vincent wrote:

"The best paintings — precisely the most perfect from a technical point of view — seen from close to are touches of colour next to one another, and create their effect at a certain distance. Rembrandt persisted in this despite all the trouble he had to suffer as a result (the worthy citizens thought Van der Helst much better for the reason that one can also see it close to)."

## *Has Van Gogh ever copied a painting by Rembrandt?*

Van Gogh painted "Half Figure of an Angel" and "The Raising of Lazarus" after Rembrandt in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence in 1889, four years after he visited the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Theo van Gogh had sent a copy of an etching based Rembrandt's painting 'The Archangel Raphael'. Its location is unfortunately unknown. Yes, a missing angel indeed.



**Van Gogh's 'The Raising of Lazarus (after Rembrandt)'**



Bonus Blog

# Was Van Gogh influenced by Japanese artists?

From his letter to his sister in 1888:

"You may understand the change in painting when you think for instance of the colorful Japanese pictures one sees everywhere. Theo and I possess hundreds of these Japanese prints."

To Theo in July 1888:

"All my work is based to some extent on Japanese art..."

And also to his brother, in September 1888:

"And we wouldn't be able to study Japanese art, it seems to me, without becoming much happier and more cheerful, and it makes us return to nature, despite our education and our work in a world of convention."

and:

"If we study Japanese art, then we see a man, undoubtedly wise and a philosopher and intelligent, who spends his time — on what? — studying the distance from the earth to the moon? — no; studying Bismarck's politics? — no, he studies a single blade of grass."

and:

"Isn't it almost a new religion that these Japanese teach us, who are so simple and live in nature as if they themselves were flowers? And we wouldn't be able to study Japanese art, it seems to me, without becoming much happier and more cheerful, and it makes us return to nature, despite our education and our work in a world of convention."

and:

"I envy the Japanese the extreme clarity that everything in their work has. It's never dull, and never appears to be done too hastily. Their work is as simple as breathing, and they do a figure with a few confident strokes with the same ease as if it was as simple as buttoning your waistcoat."



**'Bridge in the Rain', Van Gogh replica in oil on canvas**



Bonus Blog

# Why are Van Gogh paintings framed behind museum glass?

You may not even have noticed, but from certain angles you can see a little reflection when you look at a Van Gogh painting. In museums like the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam or the Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo paintings are protected with museum glass.



***With museum glass Van Gogh's Sunflowers might still have had this color.***

## *What does museum glass protect a Van Gogh painting from?*

Oil paintings on canvas are usually not framed behind glass. Oils are not very vulnerable to light or humidity, unlike watercolors or pencil drawings. And canvas gives sufficient structure, unlike art on paper. Very valuable art works in oil on canvas such as Van Gogh paintings deserve extra protection though, here's why:

1) Museum glass minimizes the effect of light on the painting. Van Gogh and other artists at the end of the 19th century used yellow paint with chrome. This particular paint is light sensitive which made Van Gogh's yellow colors turn into brown. His sunflowers indeed looked different when Van Gogh painted them! (on mobile scroll down to see)

2) The effect of touching art. The thick brush strokes Van Gogh is known for are quite inviting to touch. Like with bronze statues in public that are damaged and change color by touching them, the damage to Van Gogh's paintings would be even worse.

3) Dust and dirt. To preserve our cultural heritage for future generations, even dust is better to be kept away from original Van Gogh paintings.

***Bonus Blog***

4) Museum glass could protect a Van Gogh from vandalism.

In 1978 Van Gogh's 'Self-Portrait with Grey Felt Hat' in the Van Gogh Museum suffered a knife attack. The 33 year old man was declared not to be sane and sent to a mental institute.

Luitsen Kuiper, Rijksmuseum's chief conservator did an excellent job restoring the painting. Hardly any visitors notice the damage nowadays. The cross that was made by a knife cut through the canvas can best be seen when you kneel down and look up to the painting.

## *What is museum glass?*

The German company Schott produces glass for valuable art in museums. For protection of a painting against vandalism they have anti-reflective laminated glass MIROGARD Protect Ultra. A very light weighted laminated glass that also protects the painting against UV-light. You can find more information on their website.

## *Thank you.*

A special thanks to Schott for providing information about museum glass. And to the Kröller-Muller Museum for explaining why they frame their Van Gogh paintings behind museum glass. If you are ever in The Netherlands, it is worthwhile to travel to Otterlo and visit their museum. They have the largest collection of Van Gogh artworks after the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, like the Cafe Terrace at Night and Olive Grove.



***Van Gogh's Self-Portrait with Grey Felt Hat' damaged with a knife in 1978.***