

This course is an eclectic wander through art history. It consists of twenty two-hour talks starting in September 2018 and the topics are largely taken from exhibitions held in London during 2018. The aim is not to provide a guide to the exhibition but to use it as a starting point to discuss the topics raised and to show the major art works. An exhibition often contains 100 to 200 art works but in each two-hour talk I will focus on the 20 to 30 major works and I will often add works not shown in the exhibition to illustrate a point.

References and Copyright

- The talks are given to a small group of people and all the proceeds, after the cost of the hall is deducted, are given to charity.
- The notes are based on information found on the public websites of Wikipedia, Tate, National Gallery, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Khan Academy and the Art Story.
- If a talk uses information from specific books, websites or articles these are referenced at the beginning of each talk and in the 'References' section of the relevant page. The talks that are based on an exhibition use the booklets and book associated with the exhibition.
- Where possible images and information are taken from Wikipedia under

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- If I have forgotten to reference your work then please let me know and I will add a reference or delete the information.



Art History Revealed – Wednesday 26 September, half-term 31 October – 5 December, Wednesday 9 January – 13 March (no half-term)

Exhibitions in Start Date Order

1. Impressionism in London, Tate Britain, 2 November 2017 – 7 May 2018
2. Modigliani, Tate Modern, 23 November 2017 – 2 April 2018
3. Charles I: King and Collector, Royal Academy, 27 January – 15 April 2018
4. All Too Human Bacon, Freud and a century of painting life, Tate Britain, 28 February – 27 August 2018
5. Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography, National Portrait Gallery, 1 March – 20 May 2018
6. Picasso 1932 - Love, Fame, Tragedy, Tate Modern, March 8 to September 9, 2018
7. Monet & Architecture, National Gallery, 9 April – 29 July 2018
8. Rodin and the Art of Ancient Greece, British Museum, 26 April – 29 July 2018
9. Aftermath Art in the Wake of World War One, Tate Britain, 5 June – 16 September 2018
10. The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, 12 June 2018 – 19 August 2018
11. Mantegna and Bellini, National Gallery 1 October 2018 – 27 January 2019

12. Burne-Jones, Tate Britain, 24 October 2018 – 24 February 2019
13. Klimt/Schiele, Drawings from the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Royal Academy, 4 November 2018 – 3 February 2019
14. Lorenzo Lotto Portraits, 5 November 2018 – 10 February 2019
15. Gainsborough's Family Album, National Portrait Gallery, 22 November 2018 - 3 February 2019
- 16. Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Tate Britain, 27 March 2019 to 11 August 2019.**
Van Gogh and Britain will be the first exhibition to take a new look at the artist through his **relationship with Britain**. It will explore how Van Gogh was inspired by British art, literature and culture throughout his career and how he in turn inspired British artists, from Walter Sickert to Francis Bacon.

Ideas

Gothic Revival, based on an Andrew Graham Dixon TV programme but without the references to the literature of the period

Etruscan Art – based on book

The Painting War: Michelangelo versus Leonardo – buy the novel *Oil and Marble*, not released until 5 July, 2018, and *The Lost Battles: Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Artistic Duel That Defined the Renaissance*

The Turner Prize – already done

London Galleries

Wallace

British Museum

Hayward

National Gallery

National Portrait Gallery

White Cube

Serpentine

Tate Britain

Tate Modern

Royal Academy

Estorics



Week 19: based on 'Van Gogh and Britain, Tate Britain, March 2019'

- Vincent Willem van Gogh (30 March 1853 – 29 July 1890) was a Dutch Post-Impressionist painter who is among the most famous and influential figures in the history of Western art. In just over a decade he created about 2,100 artworks, including around 860 oil paintings, most of them in the last two years of his life. They include landscapes, still lifes, portraits and self-portraits, and are characterised by bold colours and dramatic, impulsive and expressive brushwork that contributed to the foundations of modern art. However, he was not commercially successful, and his suicide at 37 followed years of mental illness and poverty.
- Tate's last Van Gogh exhibition was in 1947. This major exhibition brings together **40 works** by Vincent van Gogh's to show how he was **inspired by Britain** and how he **inspired British artists**.
- There are more than **600 letters from Vincent to Theo** and around 40 from Theo to Vincent. There are 22 to his sister Wil, 58 to the painter Anthon van Rappard, 22 to Émile Bernard as well as individual letters to Paul Signac, Paul Gauguin and the critic Albert Aurier.
- Van Gogh first came to Britain to work for **Goupil**, the art print seller, **in 1873**

when he was 20 and returned from **his final visit** as a teacher in **1876 when he was 23**. He did not **begin to study drawing seriously until 1880 when he was 27** although he studied many works of art while working for Goupils.

Bio:Van Gogh pronounced van GOFF or, closer to the Dutch, van GOKH (-v as in vet, -g as in get, -kh as in Scottish loch)

Vincent van Gogh, TV documentary, Sky Arts

- Why does he appeal so much? He was not an isolated genius but worked in the context of other artists. Illness and suicide are part of the man and the artist.
- His brother **Theo was an art dealer in Paris who owned 450 paintings when Vincent died**, 500 drawings and his letters. They were later donated to the van Gogh Museum which opened in 1973.
- When Theo died his **wife Joanna Gezina 'Jo' van Gogh-Bonger (1862-1925) read his letters and realised they were huge value to artists** his last letter was written only eight days before his death the letters are very well written in Dutch, English and French depending on who he was writing to.
- The family **donated 200 paintings to form a van Gogh museum** including twelve self-portraits which are displayed in the entrance to the museum. Van Gogh wrote that "it is not easy to paint oneself".
- He always signed his **paintings 'Vincent' not 'Van Gogh' in the same way that Rembrandt** used his first name. "van" is a very common prefix in Dutch language surnames, where it is known as a *tussenvoegsel*. "Van Gogh" means "from/of Goch", a town on the border of the Netherlands in the Kleve District of Germany. It is an uncommon surname (792 people in the Netherlands in 2007), and most people are, like the painter, descendant of Gerrit van Goch (1605-1648) who lived in The Hague.
- **Vincent Willem van Gogh** (30 March 1853 – 29 July 1890) was born in **1853 in Groot-Zundert** near the Belgium border and Antwerp. He was the eldest of six and his **father was a Protestant preacher** called Theodorus and known as 'Dorus' to his family. Vincent was given the name of his **grandfather** and of a **brother stillborn exactly a year before his birth**.
- Vincent attended **boarding school and took long walks** in the countryside and he **loved to read**. His uncle Cent (short for 'Vincent') **got Vincent and Theo jobs in Goupil, a big art dealer**. From a child Vincent was **moody and strongly opinionated** but could also be a **soft, easy-going gentleman**.
- He walked a lot, loved nature and collected birds' eggs and beetles. He later took up the pipe and regarded smoking as an old friend. After completing his training in **1873**, he was transferred to Goupil's London branch at Southampton Street, and took lodgings at **87 Hackford Road, Stockwell** (now dilapidated although it has a blue plaque). It was a happy time for Vincent, he was successful at work and, at 20, earned more than his father. However, he became **disillusioned with city life**. He

read a lot of **religious texts** and was dissatisfied with what he was doing. In **1875 he went back to Paris** but was dissatisfied with the way **Goupil commodified art and so he left** (or more likely was sacked). **He went back to England in 1876 to teach** as an unpaid supply teacher in a small boarding school in **Ramsgate** and then he moved with the proprietor to teach in **Isleworth**. He was **reading Dickens, Shakespeare and Hugo** and **prayed to God every day** and spent his time thinking about **how to help the poor**.

- He returned home for Christmas 1876, but his **parents stopped him from returning to England because of his ill health**. He tried to **train to become a minister but failed** the entrance exam, so he **trained to become an evangelist preacher** and was sent to a mining area in the South of Belgium called **Petit-Wasmes in the Borinage**. A sober place with prematurely old people and women who were sallow and withered through poverty and work.
- **His earliest serious drawing is from this time (1879) before he decided to become an artist** although he drew while growing up as a part of his general education.
- He **empathised too much with the poor so lost his job** and moved to Cuesmes. He stopped writing letters for a year and when he started writing to Theo again the letters were **full of despair and wretchedness**.
- **Theo suggested he become an artist** and Vincent started drawing and was very happy and started to recover his peace of mind. Although he had failed at everything including his attempts at marriage, he was **convinced** from the beginning that he was a **great artist**.
- The **protestant work ethic drove him to do the best job possible to be recognised by God**. He didn't want to go to the academy but as he couldn't draw well, he sought to train himself in drawing. He was not a typical romantic genius **he simply worked hard** and did not want fame.
- He **started as an artist in 1880 aged 27** and lived in the Netherlands in various locations including The Hague. He later attended the Antwerp Academy of Art briefly and taught himself by looking at established artists. He was also taught by an artist who was in the family and he used handbooks and looked at other artists work.
- Vincent was quite **an old-fashioned artist** who started first with drawing. His first ambition was to become an illustrator. He needed to learn a lot, but he had expressiveness. He had a **problem with perspective** but used a 'perspective frame' which provided a window onto the scene with horizontal, vertical and diagonal cross hairs.
- He found it **hard finding models** and **met Clasina Maria "Sien" (pronounced 'seen') Hoornik (1850-1904)** who had two children. Could he love? He loved his brother but was obsessed with painting. When his relationship with Sien was discovered by his family **he was forced to leave her**. He went North then back to his family home in Nuenen.

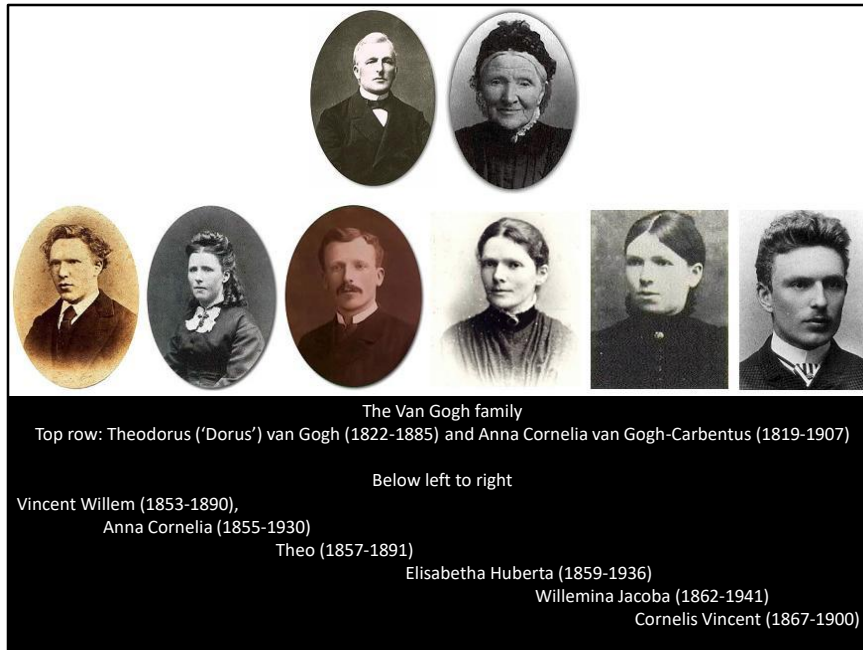
- Back home he was considered **strange, a loner and an eccentric** as he had been since childhood. At first, he **resisted his expressiveness in drawing but learnt later it was his strength** and used it. He also tried modelling in paint. The **School of Barbizon inspired him**, and he regarded himself as a 'peasant artist'. He admired **Daubigny and Millet**.
- He found ***The Tree* by Jules Dupre** (Mesday Collection) the **most beautiful thing he'd seen**, and he saw it as a portrait of a tree. He said peasant painting should smell of bacon. He studied peasant heads then produced ***The Potato Eaters***. The play between light and dark makes it a modern peasant painters work. Anthon van Rappard became a good friend and fellow painter. **Vincent thought *Potato Eaters* was his greatest work** but Theo and van Rappard criticized it. Vincent left for Antwerp for training and discovered Rubens and became interested in technique. He enrolled at the Academy, but he did not impress them. He headed for Paris which was then the centre for modern art, especially in Montmartre. Vincent move there and attended classes at **Fernand Cormon** where he met **Emile Bernard** and **Toulouse-Lautrec**.
- All the artist's in Paris wanted to be radical. Vincent felt his training in nature put him ahead of the others, but he **was weak in painting the nude**. His health was poor and his constitution weak. He moved to 54 rue Lepic. Montmartre was rural with windmills. Vincent painted self-portraits. Pissarro encouraged him to extend his palette as we was using the earth pigments that were typical of Dutch art.
- ***In the Garden with Courting Couples*** is an important work. Pointillist but with freer complementary colouring. Painting courting couples was a modern idea. Vincent chose to exhibited it in 1888. Vincent was finding his own style and his colours became bright and pure.
- ***In the Café: Agostina Segatori Sitting in the Café du Tambourin***. Agostina was the owner of a bar in Montmartre and she was the last woman that he had a relationship with other than prostitutes. The woman at the table in a cafe was a very modern subject.
- At this time Vincent discovered **Japanese prints** through the colourman **Pere Tanguy**. He liked **the cropped look, the bright flat colours and the stark perspective**. They were not seen in Japan as high art but as street art and were used to wrap objects set to Europe.
- He needed to leave Paris for warmth and quiet and **went to Arles to find utopia and set up a colony** of artists in the south of France. He said, **'it's impossible to work in Paris'**. In Arles he went out early every morning with his painting gear. He drew a subject from different angles.
- ***Fishing Boats* 1888**
- ***The Pink Peach Tree* 1888** blossom started in March he worked quickly to capture the blossom thinking that it would be saleable.
- ***The Sower* 1888**. Orange sunsets make the fields look blue.
- ***The Zouave* 1888**. He wanted to be a painter of portraits, so he asked ordinary

people in Arles to sit for him.

- **The Yellow House** 1888. Van Gogh was difficult to get on with and would argue with anyone. It had lost his brother Theo friends who refused to visit because of Vincent. Theo believed in him and convinced Gauguin to visit as he owed Theo a favour for selling his work. Vincent rented two rooms for 15 francs a month. He wrote to Theo, '**perhaps Gauguin will live in this house**'. He wanted to build an artist community. He painted canvases of sunflowers and his bedroom to decorate the walls before Gauguin arrived and they lived and worked together for two months using the same techniques and materials. Their relationship ended **badly with a huge argument** and Vincent cutting off part of his ear which hospitalised him.
- **Sunflowers, 1888-89.** The **sunflowers were important to him** and other artists, including Gauguin, who recognised their importance.
- **He cut his own pens from local reeds** and made ink drawings of the sanatorium. He was very experimental and went to extremes. He used very dilute paint one month then a month later thick impasto. He did not like varnish as he preferred a mat look.
- **He suffered from seizures and bouts of illness and he wanted to enter a mental institution.** He didn't want to live alone so he decided to get out of Arles and went to an asylum in Saint-Rémy.
- Painting is exhausting mentally and physically.
- In Saint-Rémy he created a lot of his best work. For example *Irises* (1890), *Almond Blossom* (1890). He asked Theo to send him Millet, Rembrandt and Delacroix prints which he copied and coloured. Art was therapy.
- After a year on and off in the asylum he wanted to move North. **Theo had just married Johanna and had a child called Vincent, but Paris was too much for van Gogh's delicate state of mind. Theo found Dr Paul Gachet a doctor and art collector.** Vincent stayed there for 70 days and during that time painted 80 paintings. He worked like a madman to avoid thinking.
- **Illness and despair.** In July 1890 it is believed he disappeared into the countryside and shot himself in the chest. He died on the 29th of July in his brother's arms. The priest refused to bury him as he had committed suicide and his friends placed his coffin on a table in a cafe surrounded by his work.
- **Wheatfield with Crows** 1890 is often called his last picture, but it was probably *Tree Roots*.
- **Theo tried to elevate Vincent's reputation after he died but he suffered paralysing fits brought on by syphilis and he died a few months later.** Vincent only sold a handful of paintings in his lifetime and a few drawings but his peers, other artists, thought he was one of the most important artists of the time. He was trying to provide answers to all the most fundamental questions of life.
- He said, '**art is long and life is short**'.
- There have been many theories about **Vincent's illness**, but the main theories are

bipolar disorder, acute intermittent porphyria and temporal lobe epilepsy. Any illness would have been exacerbated by malnutrition, overwork, insomnia and alcohol. In their biography Naifeh and Smith favour epilepsy, "Not the kind," they write, "known since antiquity, that caused the limbs to jerk and the body to collapse ('the falling sickness', as it was sometimes called), but a *mental epilepsy*—a seizing up of the mind: a collapse of thought, perception, reason, and emotion that manifested itself entirely in the brain and often prompted bizarre, dramatic behaviour."

- Although his death is generally regarded as suicide an **alternative theory** put forward in 2019 by Naifeh and Smith is that he was accidentally shot in a barn by a rowdy teenager named **René Secrétan**, who liked to dress up in a cowboy costume he'd bought after seeing Buffalo Bill's Wild West show. Secrétan was probably the source of the gun which had been sold or lent to him by the local innkeeper. Secrétan and his friends used to bully the eccentric van Gogh, and the theory is that that there was some sort of encounter between the painter and the boys on the day of the shooting. The evidence is the angle of the shot, the disappearance of the gun, how van Gogh managed the long walk home from the fields with such a serious injury and his lifelong disavowal of suicide as 'moral cowardice'. It can be speculated that van Gogh either welcomed death as an escape or was unwilling to sentence a fellow human being to death or prison for murder or manslaughter. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/21/books/van-gogh-the-life-by-steven-naifeh-and-gregory-white-smith.html> and <http://vangoghbiography.com/mission>.



- 1850 Vincent ('Cent') van Gogh married Cornelia Carbentus.
- 1851 Theodorus van Gogh (pastor) married Anna Cornelia Carbentus.
- 1852 March 30: Their first son Vincent was stillborn.
- **1853** March 30: Vincent Willem van Gogh was **born in Zundert**.
- **1864** age 11, Vincent **sent away** to boarding school.
- 1866 Vincent enters secondary school as a boarder.
- **1869** Vincent starts apprenticeship with **Goupil & Cie**, The Hague.
- 1872 Uncle Cent retires from Goupil due to illness after 11 years as a shareholder and partner.
- **1873** Theo starts apprenticeship at Goupil age 15, Vincent bought out of the army by his father and he leaves for Goupil, Paris. He only stays a week and is sent to London where he probably lived in Greenwich. In August he moved to the house of Ursula Loyer and her daughter Eugenie in Brixton, 87 Hackford Road.
- 1874 he moved to Ivy Cottage, 395 Kennington Road and in November is briefly transferred to Paris.
- 1875 Vincent returns to London for five months and then Paris again.
- **1876 January 4, Vincent resigns or is fired from Goupil**. In April he returns to England to **teach in Ramsgate** where he lives at 11 Spencer Square. The owner of the school William Stokes transfers to Islington and Vincent moves to another

school and lives at Holme Court, 158 Twickenham Road, **Isleworth**. In October Vincent gives his **first sermon** at Richmond Methodist Church.

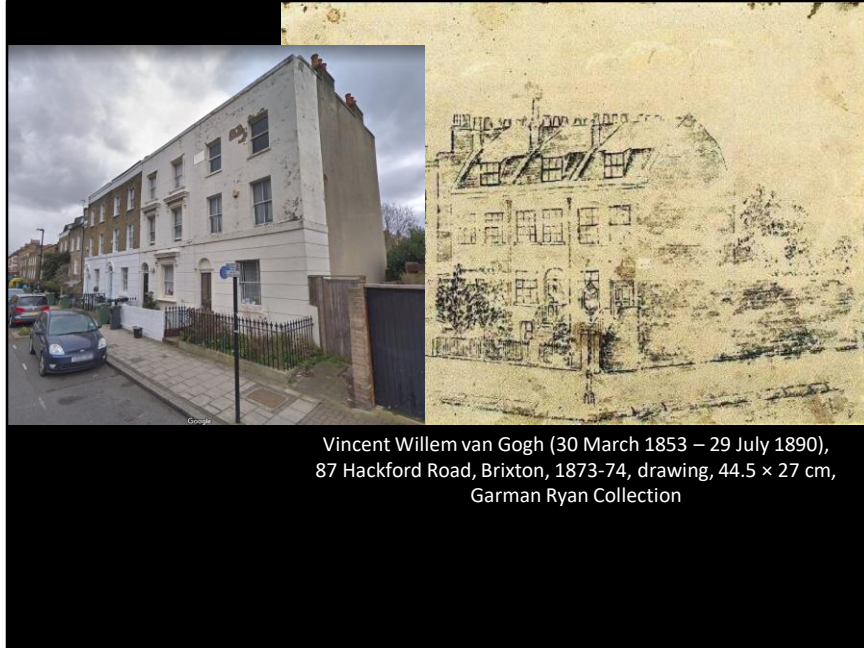
- 1877 Vincent works as a bookseller's assistant in Dordrecht and in May moves to Amsterdam to study for university entrance.
- **1878 Vincent abandons his studies** and returns home in Etten. His father introduces him to an Evangelical College and, although he fails the exam, he asks to be accepted for a post in the Borinage, a very poor mining area.
- 1879 he is given a six-month trial in the **Borinage** but at the end he is asked to find another job. He cannot find work and goes back to his parents.
- **1880** his father tries to put him in an **asylum**, but he escapes and tries to find work. In July his **brother sends him money** and in October he **enrols on a beginners' art course aged 27**.
- 1881 moves back to his parents' home again and draws. He falls in love with Kee Vos Stricker who is staying with his parents. He travels around still out of work and short of money. In December he returns home and confesses that he recently—evidently for the first time in his life—visited a prostitute. He quarrels with his father on Christmas day and leaves for The Hague.
- 1882 he sets up a small studio and meets Clasina Maria Hoornik ("**Sien**") and six months later he is admitted to the local hospital to be treated for gonorrhoea. He moves in to a larger studio and Sien gives birth to a **baby boy called Willem**. With money from Theo he starts **painting in oils**.
- 1883 leaves Sien and travels around Holland.
- 1884 Vincent looks after his mother who broke her leg. **Theo starts buying and selling Impressionist** painting beginning with Pissarro.
- **1885 Vincent's father dies**. He travels to The Hague where his work is displayed publicly for the first time in the window of an art dealer. He visits Amsterdam and Antwerp.
- **1886 Vincent enrols in the Antwerp Academy of Art**. Goes to Paris and moves in with Theo and studies in a studio. Theo goes home to discuss opening an art gallery and Vincent falls ill.
- **1887 Vincent signs his first portrait of "Père" Tanguy**, and later this year portraits of "Mère" Tanguy and one of their friends. Theo and Vincent argue and then make peace. Vincent paints in Asnières and Theo meets Paul Gauguin and sells his first painting. Vincent arranges an exhibition with others and fails to sell but exchanges work with Gauguin.
- **1888 Vincent leaves Paris for Arles** and leases the **Yellow House**. Gauguin arrives six months later. Two months later on December 23 Vincent cuts off part of his ear. On Christmas Day Theo arrives to visit him in hospital and evening he returns to Paris with Gauguin.
- **1889** in February Vincent is taken to hospital for ten days after a **second mental breakdown** but nine days later he is confined to hospital on police orders following a citizens' petition. Paul Signac visits Vincent in hospital on Theo's request. In April

Theo marries Johanna ('Jo') Bonger. In May Vincent admits himself to the **asylum at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence** to avoid being sent to another asylum. Vincent takes up work again four months later. He is invited to participate in **Les XX** in February 1890.

- **1890** Vincent contributes six paintings to Les XX and ***The Red Vineyard is bought by the artist Anna Boch***. The artist **Henry de Groux insults Vincent's paintings** and Toulouse-Lautrec challenges him to a duel and Signac declares he will continue to defend Vincent if Lautrec is killed. Theo's son Vincent is born. Vincent falls ill again from February to April although in March he contributes 10 paintings to the 6th exhibition of the Artistes Indépendants. In May Vincent is discharged and travels to Paris and stays with Theo a few days before he goes to Auvers-sur-Oise. July 23 Vincent writes his last letter to Theo and on July 27 he injures himself with a gun. The next day Theo arrives, and Vincent dies at 1.30 on **July 29 age 37**. Among his last words he said, 'I wanted it to end like this'. The next day his funeral is attended by Theo, Gachet, Tanguy, Bernard, Laval, Lucien Pissarro, Lauzet and others. On October 9 Theo collapses mentally and physically and he dies on January 25, 1891. In 1914, his body was exhumed and buried with Vincent at Auvers-sur-Oise.

Notes

- Les XX ('Les Vingt') was a group of twenty Belgian artists who were unhappy with the conservative policy of the Salon and set up their own annual exhibition. Over the years they invited Camille Pissarro (1887, 1889, 1891), Claude Monet (1886, 1889), Georges Seurat (1887, 1889, 1891, 1892), Paul Gauguin (1889, 1891), Paul Cézanne (1890), and Vincent van Gogh (1890, 1891) to participate.



Vincent Willem van Gogh (30 March 1853 – 29 July 1890), 87 Hackford Road, Brixton, 1873-74, drawing, 44.5 × 27 cm, Garman Ryan Collection

Photograph from Google Maps dated March 2018, currently valued by Zoopla at £871,000, last sold in April 2012 for £306,000 (rental value £4,000 a month) although the BBC reported it sold for £565,000 and *The Guardian* £575,000. It is a grade II listed building and was opened to the public briefly in 2014.

- After completing his training **in 1873**, he was transferred to **Goupil's London branch at Southampton Street**. At first, he lived in east London, possibly Greenwich and in August he took lodgings **at 87 Hackford Road, Stockwell** (now dilapidated although it has a blue plaque). The house was owned by Ursula Loyer and her daughter Eugenie and Vincent was very happy in the house and fell in love for the first time with Eugenie. She did not reciprocate and married an engineer, the house's previous lodger. Vincent seemed happy and was successful at work and, at 20, earned more than his father. However, he became **disillusioned with city life**. He read a lot of **religious texts** and was dissatisfied with what he was doing. He arranged for his sister Anna to come to England to get a job as a governess. Vincent's tenancy ended in mysterious circumstances and his sister said that if people fail to live up to his illusions, he **'throws them away like a bouquet**

of wilted flowers’.

- In **1875 he went back to Paris** but was dissatisfied with the way **Goupil commodified art and so he left** (or more likely was sacked) in January 1876. **He was completely devastated by losing his career and decided to go back to England to teach** as an unpaid supply teacher in a small boarding school in **Ramsgate** and then he moved with the proprietor to teach in **Isleworth**. He was **reading Dickens, Shakespeare and Hugo** and **prayed to God every day** and spent his time thinking about **how to help the poor**.
- He did not start practising to become an artist until 1880 when he was 27 although he drew when he was young and when he was in London. As he worked for a famous art dealer he was interested in and learned a great deal about art and artists. He **created a portfolio of at least 1,400 woodcut prints**, possibly over 2,000, from old issues of *The London Illustrated News* and *The Graphic* and sorted them by subject matter.
- *Van Gogh and Britain* presents the largest collection of Van Gogh’s paintings on show in the UK for nearly a decade. Some of his most famous works will be brought together from around the world – including ***Shoes, Starry Night on the Rhône, L’Arlésienne*** (pronounced ‘lar-lay-zyen’), and two works he made while a patient at the Saint-Paul Asylum, ***At Eternity’s Gate*** and ***Prisoners Exercising***. They will be joined by the very rarely lent ***Sunflowers*** from London’s National Gallery.

VAN GOGH AND BRITAIN

Inspired by

- Gainsborough
- Turner
- Constable
- Millais
- Boughton
- Tissot
- Gustave Doré
- Hubert von Herkomer

Works in Exhibition

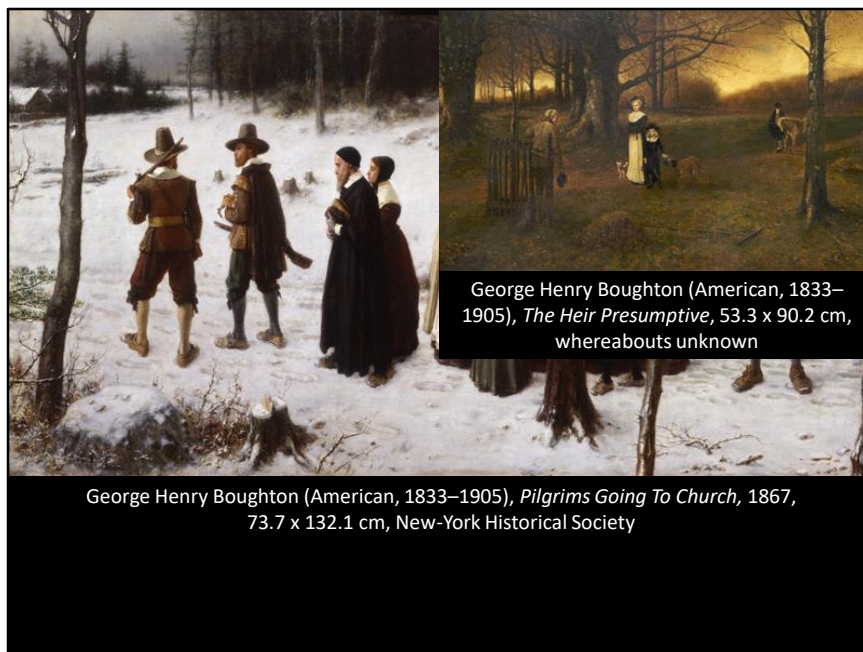
- *Shoes*
- *Starry Night*
- *L'Arlésienne*
- *At Eternity's Gate*
- *Prisoners' Exercising*
- *Sunflowers*

Inspired

- Camden Town Group
- Walter Sickert
- Charles Ginner
- Harold Gilman
- David Bomberg
- Francis Bacon

- Van Gogh and Britain, Tate Britain, March 2019
- Van Gogh lived in England as a young man for several crucial years. He walked the streets alone, dreaming of the future. He fell in love with British culture, especially the novels of **Charles Dickens** and **George Eliot**. And he was inspired by the art he saw here, including paintings by **Constable** and **Millais** which are featured in the exhibition. They affected his paintings throughout his career.
- **In 1873 when he first came to London**, he liked the type of subject that was at the heart of Goupil's sales. He did not like the new social-realist works of the poor but preferred works such as *The Honeymoon* and *The Baptism*, which he said showed 'modern life as it really is'.
- He attended the Summer Exhibition and **mocked several works** dismissing English art as '**very bad and uninteresting**'.
- At the National Gallery he commented only on the **Dutch landscapes**.
- In the Dulwich picture gallery he saw **some 'splendid' Constables** on display which reminded him of his Barbizon favourites from The Hague.
- He later remembered and used the **Leonardos and Raphaels at the National Gallery**, the **Gainsboroughs and Van Dykes at Dulwich** and the **Turners at South Kensington** (now the V&A).

- In 1873 the one painting that seized his imagination was ***The Heir by Boughton***.
- **Van Gogh collected Japanese prints and 17 folios of 1,400 black and white woodblock prints by English artists published in newspapers such as the *Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic*. It is believed van Gogh collected 2,000 or more English illustrations.** He kept them in folios filed under workers, farmers, people employed in factories and so on and so may have been a reference work for his own work. He probably started collecting the prints in the early 1880s but, after 1884, there are no further references in his letters to him acquiring anything new and it was no coincidence this happened at the time he became more confident as an artist and no longer needed the prints. Van Gogh said that the really great artists were the English black and white illustrators. (see 'Van Gogh the collector' by Geoff Maslen, 9 January 2011)
- The exhibition also looks at the British artists who were inspired by Van Gogh, including **Francis Bacon, Walter Sickert, David Bomberg**, and the young **Camden Town painters**. It shows how his vision set British artists on the road to modern art.
- Van Gogh, *Self-Portrait*, September 1889, Musée d'Orsay, Paris and Francis Bacon, *Study for a Portrait*, 1952, Tate
- Walter Sickert, find a landscape Clarence Gardens, Camden Town?
- David Bomberg, *The River Tajo and the Road up to the City, Toledo*, 1929
- Camden Town Group, 16 men Walter Bayes, Robert Bevan, Malcolm Drummond, Harold Gilman (*Canal Bridge, Flekkefjord*, c. 1913), Charles Ginner, Spencer Frederick Gore, Duncan Grant, James Dickson Innes, Augustus John, Henry Lamb, Wyndham Lewis, Maxwell Gordon Lightfoot, J. B. Manson, Lucien Pissarro (April, Epping, 1894, Tate), William Ratcliffe, Walter Sickert (*The Camden Town Murder or What Shall we do for the Rent?* and the *Potato Eaters*) , John Doman Turner
- <http://www.francis-bacon.com/>



George Henry Boughton (American, 1833–1905), *The Heir Presumptive*, 53.3 x 90.2 cm, whereabouts unknown

George Henry Boughton (American, 1833–1905), *Pilgrims Going To Church*, 1867, 73.7 x 132.1 cm, New-York Historical Society

- “Though he **generally took a dim view of English painting**, he admitted to having seen **‘very beautiful works’ by Boughton as early as 1873**. He had admired his painting *The Heir Presumptive* at the Royal Academy and even made a sketch of it for a friend in Holland. In October of that same year Van Gogh called the artist **‘one of the best painters here’** and, in a frequently quoted letter of January 1874, listed dozens of his favourite artists, including Boughton. Indeed he placed the Anglo-American artist on a par with **Corot, Millet, Breton and Israëls**, all of whom strove for **‘the truly simple.’**” (Van Gogh Museum Journal, 1995).
- “**Then Boughton, of whom you know the ‘Puritans going to church’ in our Galerie photographique. I’ve seen very beautiful things by him.**” (Letter to Theo van Gogh. London, Sunday, 20 July 1873).
- Van Gogh wrote, ‘Many Dutch painters would understand nothing, absolutely nothing, of the beautiful work of **Boughton, Marks, Millais, Pinwell, Du Maurier, Herkomer, Walker**, to name but a few artists who are true masters as

‘draughtsmen’, over and above their qualities in other directions.’ (Letter to Theo van Gogh. Brussels, Saturday, 2 April 1881)

- In another letter he wrote, ‘The drawings by **Herkomer, Frank Holl, Walker**, and others. I bought them from Blok, the Jewish bookseller, and chose the best from an enormous pile of Graphics and London News for five guilders. Some of them are superb, including the **Houseless and homeless by Fildes** (poor people waiting outside a night shelter) and two large Herkomers and many small ones, and the Irish emigrants by Frank Holl and the ‘Old gate’ by Walker. And especially a girls’ school **by Frank Holl** and also that large Herkomer, the invalids.

Notes

- **George Henry Boughton** RA (December 4, 1833 – January 19, 1905)
- The ‘draughtsman’ by the name of Marks to whom Van Gogh refers cannot be identified with certainty, but **Henry Stacy Marks**, a draughtsman on wood and etcher and painter of animals seems the most likely candidate. His work appeared in The Illustrated London News (1876-1879) and The Graphic; and he illustrated Dickens’s *Child’s history of England*, which Van Gogh knew.
- **Sir John Everett Millais, 1st Baronet**, PRA (8 June 1829 – 13 August 1896)
- **George John Pinwell** RWS (London 26 December 1842 – 8 September 1875 London), was a British illustrator and watercolourist.
- **George Louis Palmella Busson du Maurier** (6 March 1834 – 8 October 1896) was a Franco-British cartoonist and writer, known for his drawings in *Punch* and for his novel *Trilby*.
- **Sir Hubert von Herkomer** CVO RA (born as Hubert Herkomer; 26 May 1849 – 31 March 1914) was a German-born British painter, and also a pioneering film-director and composer. Though a very successful portraitist, especially of men, he is mainly remembered for his earlier works that took a realistic approach to the conditions of life of the poor. *Hard Times* (1885; Manchester Art Gallery) showing the distraught family of a travelling day-labourer at the side of a road, is probably one of his best-known works.
- **Frederick Walker** ARA RWS (London 26 May 1840 – 4 June 1875 St Fillans) was a British social realist painter and illustrator described by Sir John Everett Millais as “**the greatest artist of the century**”.
- **Francis Montague Holl** RA (London 4 July 1845 – 31 July 1888 London) was an English painter and royal portraitist.
- **Sir Samuel Luke Fildes** KCVO RA (3 October 1843 or 1844 – 28 February 1927) was an English painter and illustrator born in Liverpool and trained at the South Kensington and Royal Academy schools.



Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), *Giovanna Baccelli*, exhibited 1782, 226.7 x 148.6 cm, purchased 1975

- Van Gogh and his family were prolific letter writers and many of the letters have survived so we know more about his thoughts than many other artists.
- He came to London in 1873 as a trainee art dealer at a firm called Goupil. He was sent to London largely because his personality was not suitable for a sales role and in Paris as he often needed to meet clients and present works positively rather than say what he thought. In London, the bulk of the business was selling prints through dealers and it was thought he might be successful in this part of the business because of his prodigious memory of prints and his ability to study and work hard.
- He wrote, '**English art didn't appeal to me much at first, one has to get used to it.** There are some good painters here, though, including **Millais, who made 'The Huguenot', Ophelia, &c.**, engravings of which you probably know, they're very beautiful. Then **Boughton**, of whom you know the 'Puritans going to church' in our Galerie photographique. I've seen very beautiful things by him. Moreover, among the old painters, **Constable, a landscape painter** who lived around 30 years ago,

whose work is splendid, something like Diaz and Daubigny. And **Reynolds and Gainsborough**, who **mostly painted very, very beautiful portraits of women**, and then **Turner**, after whom you'll probably have seen engravings. Several good French painters live here, including Tissot' (Letter to Theo van Gogh. London, Sunday, 20 July 1873).

- Tate website: 'The Italian dancer **Giovanna** Francesca Antonio Giuseppe Zanerini (1753-1801) was born in Venice and took her **mother's name, Baccelli, as her stage name**. She was a **principal ballerina** in London at the **King's Theatre, Haymarket**, where she first appeared in 1774. She reached the peak of her acclaimed career during the **1780-1 season** when she appeared with Gaetan Vestris and his son Auguste in several important ballets devised by Noverre. As one reviewer (quoted in Whitley, p.188) noted, she appears in this portrait in the costume, make-up and pose from a ballet she danced that season, *Les Amans Surpris*: 'the artist was not only obliged to vivify and embellish; but, if he would be thought to copy the original, to lay on his colouring thickly. In this he has succeeded, for the face of this admirable dancer is evidently paint-painted'. Baccelli also **danced** with great success in **Venice** in 1783-4, and at the **Paris Opéra** as late as 1788. Gainsborough was well-acquainted with many theatre people, including Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the famous dramatist and part-owner of the King's Theatre.
- Baccelli was equally known as the last and most enduring **mistress of John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset** (1745-99). When Baccelli's portrait was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1782, **Gainsborough's portrait of the Duke** (collection Lord Sackville) **was withdrawn**, presumably for reasons of **decorum**. The **Duke patronised** Gainsborough's great rival **Joshua Reynolds**, who painted Baccelli in 1783 (collection Lord Sackville). The Duke, a handsome, extravagant man with a string of famous mistresses, had set up **Baccelli in a suite of rooms at Knole** by October 1779. Baccelli accompanied him to Paris in 1783 when he was appointed Ambassador to France. They entertained lavishly, patronising the Paris Opéra, and were admitted to the friendship of **Queen Marie-Antoinette**. Horace Walpole records that when the Duke was awarded the Order of the Garter in 1788, **Baccelli danced** at the Opéra **wearing the blue Garter ribbon** around her head. As the events of the French Revolution unfolded, the pair returned to Knole, where Baccelli remained until their **amicable parting in 1789**. She left a son behind. She **subsequently** developed close friendships with Henry Herbert, 10th **Earl of Pembroke**, and Mr James Carey, with whom she remained until her death in 1801.
- This lively portrait, which **was at Knole** until 1890, is an excellent example of **Gainsborough's mature style**, which is distinguished by **small, quick, light brushstrokes**. Most striking is the artist's successful rendering of movement. Baccelli was by accounts more charming than beautiful, and Gainsborough's portrait captures this aspect of her character perfectly. A contemporary newspaper

critic said the portrait was 'as the Original, light airy and elegant' (quoted in Einberg, p.14). A receipt from Gainsborough is still preserved at Knole: 'Recd. of His Grace the Duke of Dorset one hundred guineas in full for the two 3/4 Portraits of his Grace, one full length of Madlle Baccelli, two Landskips and one sketch of *Begger Boy and Girl* 63105. June 15 1784/ Tho. Gainsborough'.

- A small finished oil sketch for this painting is at Russborough. It has no tambourine in the lower left corner and there are other slight compositional variations. Baccelli was also painted by Ozias Humphrey (exhibited 1780, untraced), John Graham (exhibited 1784, untraced), and Gainsborough Dupont (c.1795, Royal Collection); there is a **nude sculpture of Baccelli by Locatelli at the bottom of the stairs at Knole.**

Notes

- See *Thomas Gainsborough and the Modern Woman*, an exhibition in Cincinnati, the 'demirep' was a less-than-respectable woman who rejected the accepted notions of femininity, made their own money, gambled, left their husbands and wore French fashions. This painting makes it clear they also managed their image like any modern pop star.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gainsborough-giovanna-baccelli-t02000>



Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), *The Watering Place*, 1777, 147.3 x 180.3 cm National Gallery,
presented by Charles Long MP, later Lord Farnborough, 1827

- When know this work was owned by the National Gallery when van Gogh visited but we don't know what impact it might have had. Van Gogh loved to walk in the countryside and when he was young he collected bird's eggs and beetles.
- Constable, who also loved the countryside, was deeply moved by Gainsborough. He wrote, '**The landscape of Gainsborough is soothing, tender, and affecting. ... On looking at them, we have tears in our eyes, and know not what brings them.**'
- In the painting a group of cattle and goats have been driven to drink in a stream or pool. Two country girls, a child and a man are posed behind them on the left.
- Gainsborough made this composition sometime after his return from Bath to London in 1774. It is based on a drawing he made, and also echoes a painting by Rubens owned by the Duke of Montagu, which Gainsborough saw in London in 1768 (now in the Collection). But where Rubens' work is energetic and a morning scene, Gainsborough's, glimpsed in fading light, is tranquil and contemplative.
- This work is almost certainly the landscape exhibited by Gainsborough at the Royal Academy in 1777 and warmly praised by several contemporary critics, including

Horace Walpole.



John Constable (1776-1837), *The Mill Stream. Verso: Night Scene with Bridge*, c.1810, 21 x 29.2 cm

- “**This study** shows the view from the **forecourt of Flatford Mill** across a side stream of the river Stour in Suffolk, which had been diverted under the mill to work the water-wheel. The water churned up by the water-wheel left the mill through an archway below the forecourt, which explains the turbulence seen in the foreground of the sketch. The house is Willy Lott’s House, named after the tenant farmer who lived there for over 80 years. It appears in several of Constable’s finished paintings, the most famous of which is *The Haywain* 1821 (now in the National Gallery).” (Tate)
- The Constable family owned two corn-grinding watermills on the river Stour, at Flatford and at Dedham. This depicts the mill stream at Flatford, seen from the forecourt of the mill. The tail water left the mill through an archway below the forecourt at this point, hence the turbulence shown in the foreground. In the distance the junction of the mill stream with the main course of the Stour can be seen. A short way down the right-hand side of the mill stream there was also a smaller channel through to the Stour, which was used by a ferry plying between the left bank of the mill stream and the fields on the far side of the river. The

building at the left is Willy Lott's house, a recurrent motif in Constable's art, appearing first around 1802 and finally in 1835 ('The Valley Farm').

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/constable-the-mill-stream-verso-night-scene-with-bridge-n01816>



John Constable (1776–1837), *Sketch for 'Hadleigh Castle'*, c.1828–9, 122.6 x 167.3 cm
 John Constable (1776–1837), *Hadleigh Castle, The Mouth of the Thames-Morning after a Stormy Night*, 1829, 121.9 x 164.5 cm, Yale Center for British Art

- 'Constable made full-size sketches like this for many of his six-foot paintings. They allowed him to explore his ideas before committing them to the final canvas. The finished picture in this case was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1829. The composition originated in a minute drawing Constable made on a visit to the ruins of Hadleigh Castle in Essex in 1814, but this painting was not developed until around the time of his wife's death in 1828. The resulting image of loneliness and decay is now often seen as exemplifying his desolate state of mind at the time.' (Tate display caption)
- After the birth of their seventh child in January 1828, **Maria fell ill and died of tuberculosis at the age of 41**. Intensely saddened, Constable wrote to his brother Golding, "**hourly do I feel the loss of my departed Angel**—God only knows how my children will be brought up...the face of the World is totally changed to me". After that, he dressed in black and was, according to Leslie, '**a prey to melancholy and anxious thoughts**'. He cared for his seven children alone for the rest of his life. Shortly before Maria died, her father had also died, **leaving her £20,000**.

Constable speculated disastrously with the money, paying for the engraving of several mezzotints of some of his landscapes in preparation for a publication. He was hesitant and indecisive, nearly fell out with his engraver, and when the folios were published, could not interest enough subscribers.

Notes

- This is a full-size oil sketch for the painting now in the Paul Mellon Collection at the Yale Center for British Art. Constable submitted the finished work to the Royal Academy exhibition in 1829, the year in which he was elected an Academician. He began painting six-foot canvases in 1818, in emulation of the works of the past masters of landscape such as Claude, Poussin and Rubens. He saw these **large pictures as a means to gain further recognition** as an artist, and **to elevate** what many considered the mundane subject matter of rural scenery. Unable to paint from nature on this scale, he turned increasingly to invention, and these large studio sketches enabled him to work out the compositional problems he was encountering in the preparation of his exhibition pieces. The oil sketch would be made either prior to, or simultaneously with, the finished picture.
- Constable made a small pencil sketch of **Hadleigh Castle** near Southend in Essex in 1814, on his only visit to the area, when he wrote to his future wife Maria: 'At Hadleigh there is a ruin of a castle which from its situation is a really fine place - it commands a view of the Kent hills, the Nore and North Foreland & looking many miles to sea' (letter of 3 July 1814; in R.B. Beckett, ed., John Constable's Correspondence, II, Ipswich 1964, p.127). **He returned** to the pencil sketch **fifteen years later**, to develop the six-foot painting. He made a small preparatory **oil sketch**, probably in 1828 (Paul Mellon Collection, Upperville, Virginia), based on the drawing, but with the addition of a shepherd and his flock at the bottom left. In a pen and ink drawing made at around the same time (collection David Thomson), the composition has become decidedly more horizontal, having been extended on the right to include the distant Kent shore. A dog has replaced the shepherd's flock, and a tree has been added beside the castle's left-hand tower. The **Tate's large oil sketch** introduces cows in the middle-distance and gulls flying above the sea.
- Constable's wife Maria died in November 1828, and the **sombre, desolate tone** of the work is generally assumed to **reflect his mood** at this time. In a letter of 19 December of that year, he wrote to his brother Golding: '**I shall never feel again as I have felt, the face of the World is totally changed to me**' (in C.R. Leslie, ed. Hon. Andrew Shirley, *Memoirs of the Life of John Constable*, R.A., London 1937, p.234).

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/constable-sketch-for-hadleigh-castle-n04810>



John Constable (1776 - 1837), *Landscape with Windmills near Haarlem, after Jacob van Ruisdael*, 1830, 31.6 x 34 cm, Dulwich Picture Gallery

- We know from van Gogh's letters that he admired the Constable at Dulwich Picture Gallery and this is the only Constable they own. However it was not given to the gallery until 2006.
- According to the Dulwich Picture Gallery website the provenance is 'Constable posthumous sale, Foster's, 15 May 1838, lot 47 ('The Windmill, from the original picture, by Jacob Ruysdael, in the Dulwich Gallery'), bt. White; R.K. Haselden, whose father had owned it for many years; Miss Forn by 1947-48; her sister Mrs Jack; Christie's, 5 May 1967, lot 173, bt. Barclay 1966-67; T.A> Gore Browne before 1970; his son James Gore Browne, from whom bt. through Johnny Van Haeften and anonymously given to the Gallery in memory of Bill and Anita Greenoff, 2006.'



John Constable (1776-1837), *The Cornfield*, 1826, 143 x 122 cm, National Gallery
 Presented by subscribers, including Wordsworth, Faraday and Sir William Beechey,
 1837

- Van Gogh was a sensitive, introverted young man but honest and hard working. He needed love but came from a family where it was in short supply.
- He wrote 'I, for my part, always keep thinking about some English paintings — for instance, *Chill October* by Millais — for instance, the drawings by Fred Walker and Pinwell. Look out for the Hobbema in the National Gallery — you certainly won't forget to look at a couple of very fine Constables there (*Cornfield*) and also in South Kensington (where that farm is, *Valley farm*).' (Letter to Theo van Gogh. Nuenen, on or about Monday, 4 August 1884).
- John Constable, *The Valley Farm: Willy Lott's house*, 1835 (London, Tate). This painting was exhibited from 1859 to 1876 in the South Kensington Museum in West London.
- "So what was Van Gogh's London? It was the Victoria Embankment, just a few years old when it impressed him enough to draw there; a humble room at **87 Hackford Road in Brixton**, where he may have fallen in love with his landlady's

daughter; it was Austin Friars church before that became a casualty of the war; it was the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition; Dulwich Picture Gallery and Hampton Court Palace where he admired Mantegna's *Triumph of Caesar*. Above all, Van Gogh pilgrims here should be gluttons for punishment on their feet; he was a **formidable walker**, and explicitly said that he enjoyed suffering hours of it, even **walking from London to Brighton.**" (Florence Waters, *The Telegraph*, 13 September 2013)

- The title of this painting seems first to have been used by the subscribers who presented the picture to the National Gallery. Constable referred to it familiarly as *The Drinking Boy*. It probably shows a lane leading from East Bergholt towards Dedham; the distant church could be an invention.
- The painting was exhibited several times during Constable's lifetime, first at the Royal Academy in 1826. Van Gogh wrote to Theo '**you certainly won't forget to look at a couple of very fine Constables there (Cornfield) and also in South Kensington (where that farm is, Valley farm).**'

References

- <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/john-constable-the-cornfield> includes an audio discussion



John Constable (1776-1837), *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, exhibited 1831, 153.7 x 192 cm, Tate

John Constable (1776-1837), *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, exhibited 1831, 153.7 x 192 cm, Tate

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<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/constable-salisbury-cathedral-from-the-meadows-t13896>

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John Constable (1776-1837), *The Valley Farm*, 1835, 147.3 x 125.1 cm.

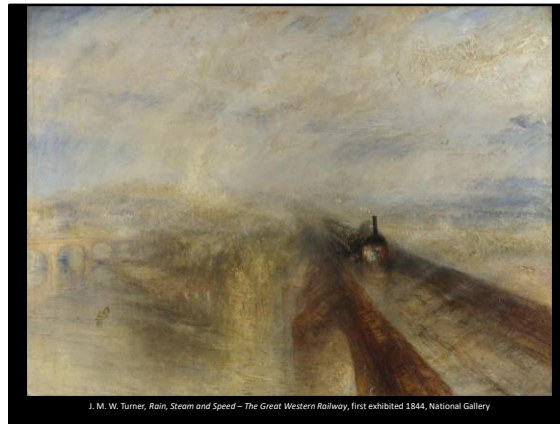
- Van Gogh wrote 'I, for my part, always keep thinking about some English paintings — for instance, *Chill October* by Millais — for instance, the drawings by Fred Walker and Pinwell. Look out for the Hobbema in the National Gallery — **you certainly won't forget to look at a couple of very fine Constables there (*Cornfield*) and also in South Kensington (where that farm is, *Valley Farm*)**.' (Letter to Theo van Gogh. Nuenen, on or about Monday, 4 August 1884).
- This was painted two years before his death and shows Willy Lot's cottage from the other side. It came to represent the 'natural' way of life of the Suffolk countryside.
- Tate: "Constable devoted a large amount of time to reworking *The Valley Farm*, and there is, in this painting, a sense of the aging artist attempting to revive old images and past emotions. Constable himself was extremely enthusiastic about the results, but when the picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1835 it was not well received and one critic wrote, 'He ought to be whipped for thus maiming a real genius for Landscape' (quoted in Parris and Fleming-Williams 1991, p.378). Nevertheless Constable sold the picture in the same year to the notable

collector Robert Vernon (1774-1849) for his new house at 50 Pall Mall. Vernon paid him £300, the largest price Constable had ever received for a picture. It was later included in Vernon's gift to the National Gallery, London, in 1847."

References

For more information see <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/constable-the-valley-farm-n00327/text-summary>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/constable-the-valley-farm-n00327/text-summary>



J. M. W. Turner, *Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway*, first exhibited 1844, National Gallery

Acquired Turner Bequest 1856

Also on display Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851), *The Fighting Temeraire tugged to her last berth to be broken up*, 1838, 1839, 90.7 x 121.6 cm

Acquired Turner Bequest, 1856

- This is an example of one of Turner's late landscapes. It is not clear whether some of his late landscapes are finished works that were intended to be displayed but this is clearly the case with *Rain, Steam and Speed*.
- Turner redefined landscape painting by pushing the boundaries of how we appreciate colour and light. In this painting, a **conventional** interpretation is that it is a celebration of **power and progress** and the new scientific age. It shows Maidenhead Railway Bridge, across the River Thames between Taplow and Maidenhead and the view is looking east towards London.
- The **bridge** was designed by **Isambard Kingdom Brunel** (1806-1859, died aged 53 of a stroke) and completed in **1838**. The Great Western Railway was one of a number of private British railway companies created to develop the new means of transport.

- A **tiny hare** appears in the bottom right corner of the painting. Some have interpreted this as a **positive statement** about technology as the train is able to **outrun** what was the fastest animal before the steam train. Others see the hare **running in fear** of the new machinery and Turner warning us of the **danger** of man's **new technology** destroying the beauty of nature. My view is that this is a masterpiece precisely because it contains both contradictory interpretations.
- The other interesting element of the picture is the **boat** on the river. It looks possible that this is an artist on the river with a parasol to keep off the sun and sketching a group of wild, **bacchanalian dancers** on the shore. Is this this Turner saying he prefers a **bucolic** scene of dancers to the new technology **or** are they **celebrating** the wonders of the new form transport that was changing the face of Britain? Again it is up to you to decide.



James Tissot (1836-1902), *The Ball on Shipboard*, c.1874, 84.1 x 129.5 cm

- Van Gogh wrote, '**There are beautiful things at the Royal Academy this year; among others Tissot has 3 paintings.**' (letter to Theo van Gogh. London, Tuesday, 16 June 1874). Three works by James Tissot were on display that year: *London Visitors*, c. 1874 (Toledo, Toledo Museum of Art), *Waiting* (present whereabouts unknown), described in 'The Royal Academy', *The Art Journal* (July 1874), no. 151, p. 200 as: 'autumn leaves overhanging the figure of a young lady waiting in a boat'; and ***The Ball on Shipboard***, 1874 (London, Tate, presented by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest 1937).
- 'Tissot's paintings of **fashionable Victorian social scenes** were **extremely popular** and brought him celebrity and financial success. However some critics complained that their **lack of clear narrative** and moral purpose cut across the grain of British art. **John Ruskin** described them as '**unhappy mere colour photographs of vulgar society.**' Tissot certainly delighted in fashion and the mores of high society as can be seen in this scene which shows men and women relaxing at an event thought to be the annual regatta at Cowes on the Isle of Wight.' (Tate caption)
- Sir Sacheverell Sitwell has suggested that it represents a dance given on board the **Royal yacht during Cowes week in 1873**, and that the young woman standing by

the companion-way, wearing a sailor straw hat tilted up upon her forehead, may represent **Queen Alexandra, then Princess of Wales**, and that the **old gentleman** next to her may be either the **Czar Alexander II or Lord Londonderry**. However, the picture is discussed at length in various reviews of the Royal Academy exhibition of 1874 and, contrary to what one would expect, **there is no reference to any specific individuals** or occasion.

- *The Times* comments on 'the grace of the girls, the taste of their toilettes, and the capital characterisation of the gentlemen, young and old, yachtsmen and man-of-war officers, **cannot be praised too highly.**'

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/tissot-the-ball-on-shipboard-n04892>



John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Autumn Leaves*, 1856, Manchester Art Gallery

Autumn Leaves

- *Autumn Leaves* was painted when Millais lived in **Perth**, where he moved following his **marriage to Effie Gray** in order to escape the bitterness and gossip surrounding the annulment of her marriage to Ruskin. Despite their personal animosity Ruskin described it as the best representation of twilight he had seen.
- It was painted after *The Blind Girl*.
- Millais believed that '*The only head you could paint to be considered beautiful by everybody would be the face of a little girl about eight years old.*'
- Perhaps to **distance himself from the aesthetics of tight observation** so closely associated with Ruskin, he experimented with paintings in which specific detail and narrative are suppressed in the interests of a **general mood**. This painting is generally seen to convey the bittersweet mood of a long-lost childhood when everything seems possible, but death in the form of a faint figure with a scythe is glimpsed in the fading twilight among the dead leaves. The painting had some **poor reviews**; for example, the *Art Journal* commented that it contained '**a significant vulgarism**,' because '**the principal figure looks out of the picture at the spectator**', but it was **generally well received** and is said to have **influenced**

Whistler.

- The painting is set in the evening and shows four children standing around a pile of smouldering leaves. The sun is below the horizon and is reflected from the clouds, and mist rises from the woods in the background. In the middle ground, there is an indistinct figure holding what looks like a scythe. The other figures are standing on a lawn from which the leaves may have been gathered. A simple feeling of nostalgia is disrupted by the unfamiliar and particular arrangement of the figures, particularly those on the right who are distracted. The overall feeling is one of melancholy but this is contradicted by the inclusion of four girls whom Millais knew, suggesting it could be a **group portrait**. The two girls on the left were modelled on Millais's sisters-in-law **Alice and Sophie Gray** and the two on the right were local **working-class** children called **Matilda Proudfoot** (helpful, quiet, shy, found at a local School of Industry, also the older girl in *The Blind Girl*) and **Isabella Nicol** (old-fashioned and thoughtful, younger girl in *The Blind Girl*, daughter of a local cleaner who worked in exchange for reading lessons for Isabella). The sisters-in-law on their own might suggest the painting was a portrait but the local girls refuse to be involved and they provide a counterpoint that rejects classification. The two central girls stare out at us, as if their work had suddenly been interrupted so that they could interact with us but the girls on the right are tied up in a world of their own. This may be a class distinction, the middle class girls are not afraid to exert their personality, the working class girls on the right look down avoiding confronting the artist. The youngest girl is not involved in the tidying of the leaves and is singled out by the brilliant red of her scarf while she stares distractedly holding a half-eaten apple. The central figure actively offers a handful of dead leaves, dutifully gathered by her companion, to the altar of nature while her acolytes look on distractedly.

Art for Art's Sake

- Millais described the painting as recreated from his memory of similar evenings and intended to invoke '**the deepest religious reflection**'. The fallen leaves remind us of death and the mood of the painting is one of nostalgia but the precise narrative details take us away from Millais's intention, which he said was to paint '**a picture full of beauty and without subject**'. Millais's scene of the setting sun, a figure with a scythe and the beautiful young girls burning leaves suggests death and renewal; the old must be disposed of and replaced by the new.
- Was Millais aware of the French 'art for art's sake' writers? He did once say 'I have never read a book in my life'.
- **Autotelic** paintings, i.e. complete in itself, containing its own meaning. An autotelic person is one that is internally driven and exhibits a sense of purpose and curiosity. An autotelic person is one that knows that he or she has chosen a goal, makes choices without fuss and those choices define a system of action and the required skills. An autotelic person becomes deeply involved with whatever he or she is

doing. The key skill is concentration which leads to involvement.

- **Théophile Gautier** (1811–1872), who was the **first** to adopt the **phrase ‘art for art’s sake’ as a slogan**. Gautier was not, however, the first to write those words: they appear in the works of Victor Cousin, Benjamin Constant, and Edgar Allan Poe.
- It was in defiance of John **Ruskin** and later socialist realism painters who thought the value of art was to **serve a moral or didactic purpose**.
- Whistler wrote, *Art should be independent of all claptrap —should stand alone [...] and appeal to the artistic sense of eye or ear, without confounding this with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism and the like.*
- It is distanced from sentimentalism and Romanticism only remains in terms of the sensibility of the painter.
- It first appeared in two works of 1868 - Pater's review of William Morris's poetry in the *Westminster Review* and in *William Blake* by Algernon Charles Swinburne.
- George Sand in 1872 thought *L’art pour l’art* was an empty phrase as the artist had a duty to find a message and convey it to as many people as possible.
- Walter Benjamin discusses the slogan in his seminal 1936 essay "*The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*" and describes it as part of the ‘theology of art’. The final realisation of ‘art for art’s sake’ he thinks is the gratification of the sense of perception changed by technology and he uses the link with fascism and Futurism (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti) as an example.

References

See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autumn_Leaves_\(painting\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autumn_Leaves_(painting))

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>



John Everett Millais, *The North-West Passage*, 1874, 176.5 x 222.2 cm, Tate

John Everett Millais, *The North-West Passage*, 1874, 176.5 x 222.2 cm, Tate

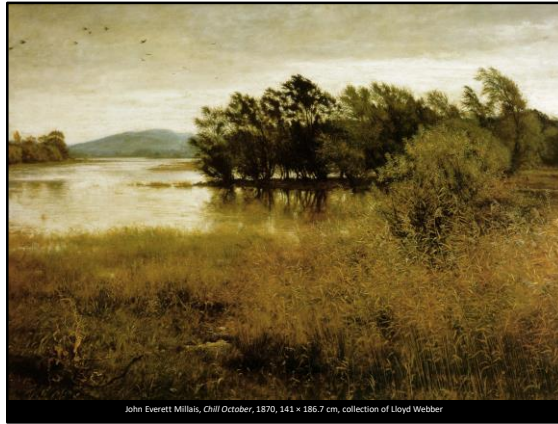
- The painting was **hugely successful** at the time and was very widely circulated in reproductions. Millais' son says he once saw a reproduction in "the hut of a Hottentot shepherd" in South Africa. Along with Millais' earlier painting *The Boyhood of Raleigh* it came to symbolise Britain's self-image as a nation of heroic explorers and empire-builders. However, at face value it is a story of failure, albeit heroic failure.
- It was a painting that provoked patriotism, the subtitle was '**It might be done, and England should do it**'. The painting was hugely popular. The leader of the 1875 Arctic Expedition to the North Pole acknowledged that Millais's painting had swayed public opinion in favour of the voyage. The search for the North-West Passage was one of legend, a warm ocean, dangerous whirlpools, the frozen sea lifting ships, alleged sightings of a fish like a lion, strange voices, a sea unicorn and an Inuit woman alleged to be a witch.
- The models were Edward John Trelawny and Mrs Ellis, a professional model. There were originally two children looking at a globe on the right, but Millais painted them and replaced them by a screen covered with British naval flags because he thought they distracted from the main figures. Trelawny, who was teetotal,

complained he had been handed down to posterity with a glass of grog (rum and water).

- The painting is not currently on display but has appeared in various exhibitions and is a well-known work by Millais.
- It was exhibited in 1874 and bought by Henry Bolckow for **£4,930**. Henry Tate bought it from his estate for 4,000 guineas and subsequently bequeathed it to the National Gallery of British Art.
- Tate website “The north-west passage was the unnavigable sea route round North America which was thought to provide a passage to the East. In time, it became synonymous with failure, adversity and death, with men and ships battling against hopeless odds in a frozen wilderness. Millais painted this picture in 1874 when another English expedition was setting off. Previous representations had shown the desolate beauty of the terrain with details such as wrecked ships to underline the futility of man’s ambition. Millais encapsulates the risks of such a voyage primarily through the old seaman, with his grim, distant look and clenched fist.”
- Van Gogh wrote, **“So it comes about that instead of saying what was written beneath a painting by Millais, ‘IT MIGHT BE DONE AND IF SO WE SHOULD DO IT’”** (Letter to Theo van Gogh. The Hague, Friday, 1 December 1882).

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-the-north-west-passage-n01509>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_North-West_Passage

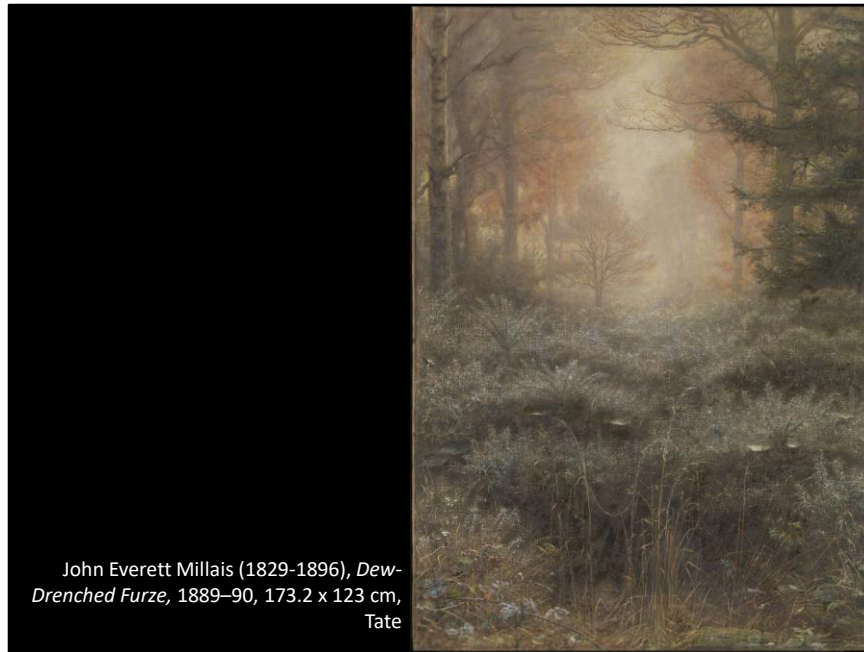


John Everett Millais, *Chill October*, 1870, 141 × 186.7 cm, collection of Lloyd Webber

Key point: Convincing as landscape but monotone quality and dying light are emotional, painted after the death of his son.

- In the Edinburgh Review of 1872 the painting is thought to epitomise the change in landscape painting over the previous few years. Instead of the artist creating a particular beautiful scene the artist takes an ordinary aspect of the material world. The critic compares it with the difference between Elizabeth Gaskell's (1810-1865) 'Cranford' (1853) with its semi-comic, semi-serious characters, and George Eliot's (1819-1880, born Mary Ann Evans) 'Middlemarch' (1871-2) with its ordinary, everyday people, 'whom we might have met any day'.
- For *Chill October* (1839) by John Everett Millais. Van Gogh could have seen the painting on 24 April 1875 at the Samuel Mendel sale at Christie's in London. He wrote '**not the least beautiful of his work is an autumn landscape, *Chill October***'.
- In 1882 he wrote, 'It's a pity that the artists here know so little about the English.'

Mauve, for example, was enthusiastic when he saw that landscape by Millais, *Chill October*,¹³ but they don't believe in English art, and judge it too superficially in my view.' (Letter to Anthon van Rappard. The Hague, Sunday, 28 May 1882).



John Everett Millais (1829-1896), *Dew-Drenched Furze*, 1889–90, 173.2 x 123 cm, Tate

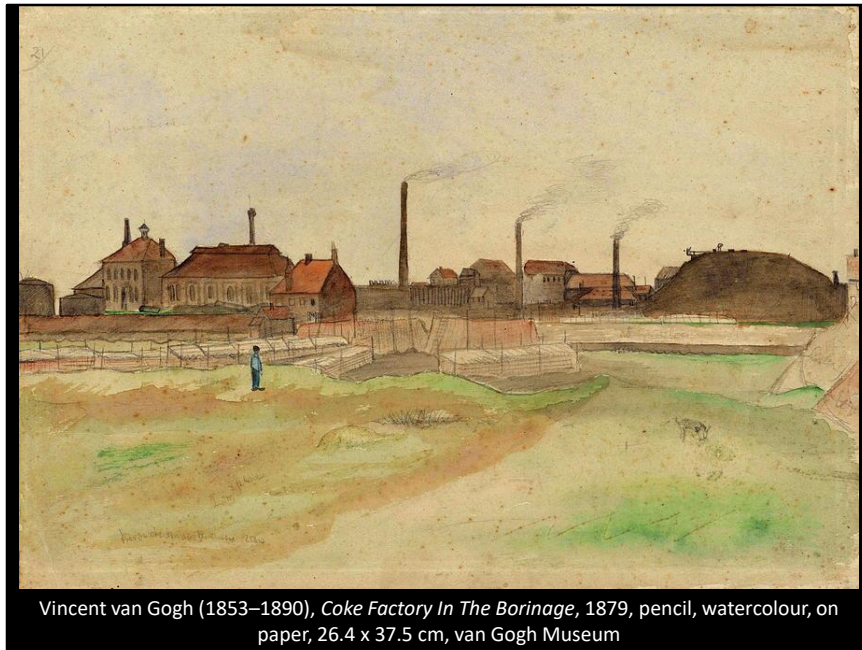
- This would not have been seen by van Gogh as he left London for the second and final time at Christmas 1876. However, it is interesting to compare this with the painting by van Gogh in 1890, the final year of his life.
- “*Dew-Drenched Furze* is widely regarded as one of the great achievements of Millais’s later art and is also uncharacteristically abstract for the artist. It was painted on site in Perthshire in a wood on the Murthly estate near Birnam Hall which the Millais family had rented for recreational purposes from 1881. According to the artist’s son and biographer, Millais’s objective was to capture the morning sun streaming through a clearing of gorse illuminated by droplets of dew, a subject ‘probably never painted before’, and one that as he began, he feared ‘**might be unpaintable.**’ ” (Tate website)





Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *barn and Farmhouse*, 1864, pencil on paper, 20 x 27.1 cm

He drew sketches but he was such a poor draftsman he destroyed them and later dismissed them as '**little scratches**'. He added, '**It is really and truly not until later that the artistic sensibility develops and ripens.**'



Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *Coke Factory In The Borinage*, 1879, pencil, watercolour, on paper, 26.4 x 37.5 cm, van Gogh Museum

- One of the earliest works he produced just before deciding to become an artist is this one.
- At the end of 1879 he returned home for Christmas, but his **parents stopped him from returning to England because of his ill health**. He tried to **train to become a minister but failed** the entrance exam, so he **trained to become an evangelist preacher** and was sent to a mining area in the South of Belgium called **Petit-Wasmes**. A sober place with prematurely old people and women who were sallow and withered.
- **His earliest drawing is from this time (1879) before he decided to become an artist.**
- He **started as an artist in 1880 aged 27** and lived in the Netherlands in various locations including The Hague.
- ‘The former coal-mining site of La Cagagne in Flénu, not far from Cuesmes, inspired Van Gogh in a lead pencil drawing he produced in the summer of 1879. Van gogh completed the painting with watercolor upon returning home. Indeed,

here and there, one can see a few faded pencil annotations specifying the colors to be used : “red, greenish yellow, pink”.

The watercolor set had been given to him by Tersteeg, his former supervisor back when he worked as a clerk for the art dealer Goupil & Cie. By the Summer of 1879, Van Gogh was no longer working as an evangelist in Wasmès, as his contract had not been extended. Very little is known about what he did during that time but **drawing seems to have taken up a large proportion of his days**. He would find inspiration in the people around him or in the surroundings, as can be seen on this picture. The site has since then been levelled and is currently closed.’ (Visit Mons website)

- The Borinage is an area in the Walloon province of Hainaut in Belgium. The provincial capital Mons is located in the east of the Borinage. From the 18th century to 1850, the economy of thirty municipalities in the Borinage was founded on coal mining. In his mid-twenties, Dutch painter Vincent van Gogh spent several years living in the Borinage, ca. 1878–1880. He initially preached to and lived among the coal miners, later suffering a breakdown and deciding to become an artist. His first masterpiece, *The Potato Eaters* (1885), of Dutch peasants, although not painted there, was indirectly inspired by the bad conditions of the miners and their families in the Borinage.

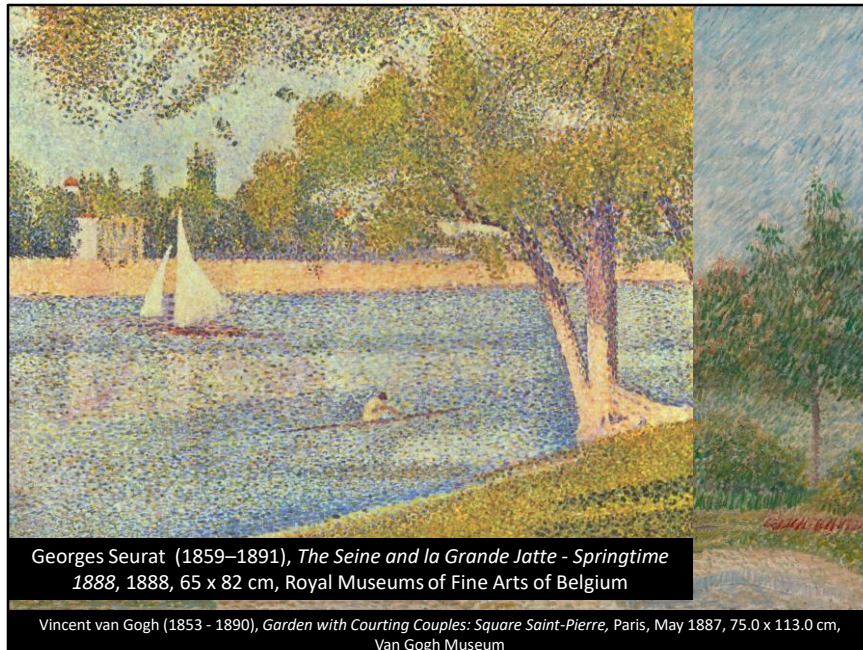


Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *The Potato Eaters*, Nuenen, April 1885, 1885, 82 × 114 cm, Van Gogh Museum

Jozef Israëls (1824 - 1911), *Peasant Family at the Table*, 1882, 71 x 105 cm, Van Gogh Museum

- Van Gogh wished to help the poor and felt a solidarity with their circumstances. He found their daily common meal a subject that brought out their humanity and moral beauty. A close community based on work sharing the fruits of their work. The dark earth colours remind us of the potatoes that nourish them and the family's hard struggle with the earth and the weather that brings them together and shows us a purity based on the lack of any external influence of thought.
- Van Gogh wrote, **'You see, I really have wanted to make it so that people get the idea that these folk, who are eating their potatoes by the light of their little lamp, have tilled the earth themselves with these hands they are putting in the dish, and so it speaks of manual labor and — that they have thus honestly earned their food. I wanted it to give the idea of a wholly different way of life from ours — civilized people. So I certainly don't want everyone just to admire it or approve of it without knowing why.'**

- Before Vincent painted *The Potato Eaters* **Israëls had already treated the same subject in his *A Peasant Family at the Table*** and judging from a comment in a letter to Theo 11 March 1882, Vincent had seen this (or at least a variation of it) and had been inspired by it to produce his own version of it. Compositionally the two are very similar: in both paintings the composition of the painting is centered by a figure whose back is turned to the viewer.
- Van Gogh spent the whole winter practicing drawing heads and hands before painting this final version. He was dissatisfied with the flesh tones and repainted them the colour of 'a really dusty potato'. There is a loneliness in the eyes. Van Gogh wrote '**I like so much better to paint the eyes of people than to paint cathedrals**'.
- "Van Gogh saw the Potato Eaters as a showpiece, for which he deliberately chose a difficult composition to prove he was on his way to becoming a good figure painter. The painting had to depict the harsh reality of country life, so he gave the peasants coarse faces and bony, working hands. He wanted to show in this way that they 'have tilled the earth themselves with these hands they are putting in the dish ... that they have thus honestly earned their food'. He painted the five figures in earth colours – 'something like the colour of a really dusty potato, unpeeled of course'. The message of the painting was more important to Van Gogh than correct anatomy or technical perfection. He was very pleased with the result: yet his painting drew considerable criticism because its colours were so dark and the figures full of mistakes. Nowadays, the Potato Eaters is one of Van Gogh's most famous works." (van Gogh Museum)
- Van Gogh considered this work to be his best work to date and he thought his later masterpiece *The Starry Night* a failure.
- He printed a lithograph of the work which he sent to his brother Theo in Paris.
- The family are the de Groots, a Netherlands farming family he knew.



Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890), *Garden with Courting Couples: Square Saint-Pierre, Paris, May 1887*, 75.0 x 113.0 cm, Van Gogh Museum

Georges Seurat (1859–1891), *The Seine and la Grande Jatte - Springtime 1888*, 1888, 65 x 82 cm, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium

- Van Gogh called this sunny park scene '**the painting of the garden with lovers**'. Couples in love are strolling under the young chestnut trees and sitting along the winding paths.
- He used a **free variation on the technique of the Pointillists**. They built up their compositions from dots of paint. Van Gogh instead applied small brushstrokes of varying length in different directions. This helped him to create the effect of a radiant spring day, which fit the sense of intimacy and togetherness he wished to express. He too longed for a wife and a family, but he had 'the most impossible love affairs'. He eventually resigned himself to the situation; he was devoted to his art.

Note

- Pointillism is a technique of painting in which small, distinct dots of colour are applied in patterns to form an image. Georges Seurat and Paul Signac developed

the technique in 1886, branching from Impressionism. Traditionally artists blended colours on the palette to create the hue and tone they wanted. The Pointillists but dashes and dots of pure pigment on the canvas so that at a distance the eye would blend them together. The scientific justification was that this would create brighter colours with more impact. The French chemist, **Michel Eugène**

Chevreul wrote *Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours* based on his work in a Parisian tapestry factory that wished to improve the strength of its colours, he discovered that the issue wasn't the dyes being used but the way different hues were being combined.

- **Georges-Pierre Seurat** (1859-1891) – whose life was cut short by diphtheria, aged 31 – created two of the undoubted masterpieces of the movement: *Un Dimanche Après-Midi À L'île De La Grande Jatte* (1884-86, now in the Art Institute of Chicago) and *Une Baignade, Asnières* (1884, in the National Gallery in London).
- The movement's name derives from a review of Seurat's work by the French art critic, **Félix Fénéon**, who used the expression *peinture au point* ("painting by dots"). Seurat actually preferred the label "**Divisionism**".
- Vincent **van Gogh**, who knew Seurat and Signac from his time living in Paris from 1886 to 1888, had a brief association with Pointillism. Some of his paintings from that period – such as the one on this page show its influence. Following a visit to Seurat's studio, he claimed to have experienced a '**revelation of colour**'. The meticulous, slow technique however did not suit van Gogh's style.
- With its strident colour combinations, Pointillism was a clear influence on Fauvism, among other movements: Henri **Matisse's** *Luxe, Calme et Volupté* (1904, now in the Musée d'Orsay) is often cited as an important work of transition between the two.



Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *In the café: Agostina Segatori in Le Tambourin*, 1887-88, 55.5 x 46.5 cm, Van Gogh Museum

- **Agostina Segatori** was the **owner of the Café du Tambourin**. She was the **last woman that he had a relationship with** other than prostitutes. Painting a woman at a table in a café was a very modern subject.
- There is a glass of beer on the table, and Agostina holds a lit cigarette. The saucers under the glass on the table betray the fact that she is on her second beer. Drinking and smoking in a café was **not appropriate for respectable ladies**. That way of life was associated with artistic types and prostitutes.
- Van Gogh had organized **an exhibition at the café** to sell **his collection of Japanese prints**. Japanese prints can be seen in the background of this portrait. He may have painted Agostina during the exhibition.
- The Café du Tambourin was a meeting place for Parisian artists. Van Gogh was **unable to pay for his meals and so exchanged paintings** for food and drink. His connection with Agostina and the café came to a sad end when **she went bankrupt** and van Gogh's paintings were confiscated by creditors who sold them as **waste canvas in bundles of 10 for 50 centimes** to one franc a bundle.
- While van Gogh had been influenced by great Dutch masters, coming to Paris

meant **that he was influenced by Impressionists, Symbolists, Pointillists, and Japanese prints.** His circle of friends **included Camille Pissarro, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Gauguin, Émile Bernard and others.** The works of Japanese artists **Hiroshige and Hokusai** greatly influenced van Gogh, both for the beautiful subject matter and the style of flat patterns of colours without shadow. Van Gogh explored the various influences and moulded them into a style that was uniquely his own. In the years 1886 to 1888, van Gogh emerged as a sophisticated, thoughtful and provoking artist. This painting show him on the brink of a new artistic style.



Vincent van Gogh, *Shoes*, Paris, September-November 1886, 38.1 cm x 45.3 cm, Van Gogh Museum

Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890), *Shoes*, Paris, September-November 1886, 38.1 cm x 45.3 cm, Van Gogh Museum

- 'Worn-out shoes were an **unusual choice of subject** for a painting. An acquaintance of Van Gogh's in Paris described how **he bought old work shoes at a flea market**. Then he **walked through the mud in them until they were filthy**. Only then did he feel they were interesting enough to paint. Van Gogh made a **number of still lifes** of this subject. He painted *Shoes* over another picture: a view from his brother Theo's apartment. Van Gogh used the same canvas more than once on other occasions too. It was a way of saving money.' (Van Gogh Museum)
- This painting of a pair of down-at-heel shoes prompts speculation on a variety of psychological questions. They have been seen as symbolizing Van Gogh's difficult passage through life. To him, as to several of his contemporaries, they may have been symbolic of the hard yet picturesque life of the labourer.



Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *Sunflowers*, 1888, 92.1 x 73 cm, National Gallery

- Visitors come to the National Gallery, London to see *Sunflowers*. It was **purchased in the early 1920s** using a donation from Samuel Courtauld. It was decided that van Gogh had to be part of any collection of modern art so his fame had already spread around the world. The trustees decided the highest statement of his art was these sunflower paintings and the gallery **swapped another work they had purchased earlier for this *Sunflowers***.
- There are **two series of *Sunflowers*** (original titled *Tournesols*), the first was executed in **Paris in 1887** and depicts the flowers lying on the ground, while the **second set, executed a year later in Arles, shows a bouquet of sunflowers in a vase**. There are **four initial versions of the second series** painted in August 1888 and in the National Gallery, London, private collection, Neue Pinakothek, Munich and one that was destroyed by fire in Japan in 1945. In January 1889 van Gogh **painted another three** that are now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam and the Sompō Japan Museum of Art, Tokyo.
- The sunflowers in the centre are called **teddy bear sunflowers** and are a **mutant form** that scientists have been trying to trace which genes are involved and when

they developed. Asteraceae or aster or the sunflower family is the largest and most successful flowering plant family on Earth with 32,913 accepted species names.

- The large yellow tops consist of hundreds or thousands of florets of two types. Round the edge are **ray florets** that don't develop seeds and in the centre are **disc florets that grow seeds**. Some sunflowers only grow one type of floret, some only the other. An in-between type is the teddy bear floret that is a mixture of the two. Scientists recently found that two different gene mutations can give rise to the teddy bear florets. However, they could not find the exact genetic mutation that gave rise to the green-centred double-flowered teddy bear sunflowers painted by van Gogh. Researchers believe the teddy bear trait is transient and may depend on the type of pollinator.
- The mutation changes the area of 'seeds' compared with 'petals' and the exact mutation determines the size of the area.
- **95% of the painting is shades of yellow** with small touches of green, dark brown and blue. **Blue is the complementary colour** and so creates a vibrancy. Van Gogh uses it along the **edge of the table**, part of the pot to attract the eye and for his signature. The table edge **is purposefully slanted** to break the monotony and the **vase is slightly nearer the right edge**. The edge of the table **is intentionally painted crudely on the right** with a double line to add vibrancy. The **pot itself is intentionally not symmetrical** but bulges on the left. **Van Gogh only signed one sixth** of his paintings and he did so to signify that he was pleased with the result.
- The petals of the **remaining flowers are curled** and look like metallic spikes. Yellow is an energetic colour that represents **happiness** although it is also associated with **sickness**. Flowers are a common 17th century Dutch Protestant symbol of death, **memento mori**, a reminder of mortality. However, the seeds suggest it is a cycle of life painting as they have the potential to give birth to the next generation.
- Van Gogh set up the '**Studio of the South**' at Arles to attract other artists, **particularly Paul Gauguin**. It is thought that he painted these **sunflowers to decorate the bedroom** he had set up for Gauguin's visit. He had found a new way to paint them, in the case of the London picture in various shades of yellow. Van Gogh and Gauguin worked together for several months but they **did not work well together** as Gauguin wanted to paint '**abstractions**' (pictures from his imagination) and van Gogh from life. As a result **Gauguin left in December 1888** and van Gogh had a breakdown and **cut off part of his ear**. The sunflowers of January 1889 were replicas painted after Gauguin had left.
- **Gauguin never meets van Gogh again** and the only version of the story of the ear we have is from Gauguin who claimed that van Gogh attacked him with a razor and Gauguin fled. We know **Gauguin was not a nice person** and so there is no doubt more to the incident than we will ever know.

- “This is one of four paintings of sunflowers dating from August and September 1888. Van Gogh intended to decorate Gauguin's room with these paintings in the so-called Yellow House that he rented in Arles in the South of France. He and Gauguin worked there together between October and December 1888.
- Van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo in August 1888, 'I am hard at it, painting with the enthusiasm of a Marseillais eating bouillabaisse, which won't surprise you when you know that what I'm at is the painting of some sunflowers. If I carry out this idea there will be a dozen panels. So the whole thing will be a symphony in blue and yellow. I am working at it every morning from sunrise on, for the flowers fade so quickly. I am now on the fourth picture of sunflowers. This fourth one is a bunch of 14 flowers ... it gives a singular effect.'
- The dying flowers are built up with thick brushstrokes (impasto). The impasto evokes the texture of the seed-heads. Van Gogh produced a replica of this painting in January 1889, and perhaps another one later in the year. The various versions and replicas remain much debated among Van Gogh scholars.” (National Gallery website)

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- Martin Baily, *The Sunflowers Are Mine: The Story of Van Gogh's Masterpiece*
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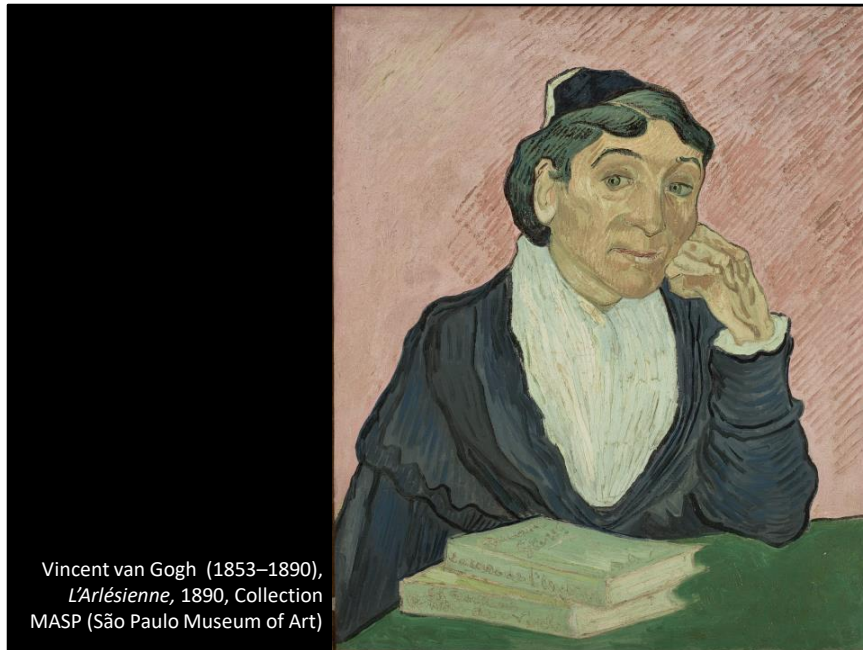
Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *The Starry Night*, 1889, 73.7 × 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *The Starry Night*, 1889, 73.7 × 92.1 cm, Museum of Modern Art, New York City

- *The Starry Night* is one of **the most recognized paintings in the history of Western culture**. Painted in June 1889, it depicts the view from the **east-facing window of his asylum room at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence**, just **before sunrise**, with the addition of an **idealized village**.
- “In the aftermath of the 23 December 1888 breakdown that resulted in the self-mutilation of his left ear Van Gogh voluntarily admitted himself to the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole lunatic asylum on 8 May 1889. Housed in a former monastery, Saint-Paul-de-Mausole catered to the wealthy and was less than half full when Van Gogh arrived, allowing him to occupy not only a second-story bedroom but also a ground-floor room for use as a painting studio. During the year Van Gogh stayed at the asylum, the prolific output of paintings he had begun in Arles continued. **During this period, he produced some of the best-known works of his career**, including the *Iris* from May 1889, now in the J. Paul Getty Museum, and the blue self-portrait from September, 1889, in the Musée d'Orsay. *The Starry Night* was painted mid-June by around 18 June, the date he wrote to his brother Theo to say

he had a new study of a starry sky.” (Wikipedia)

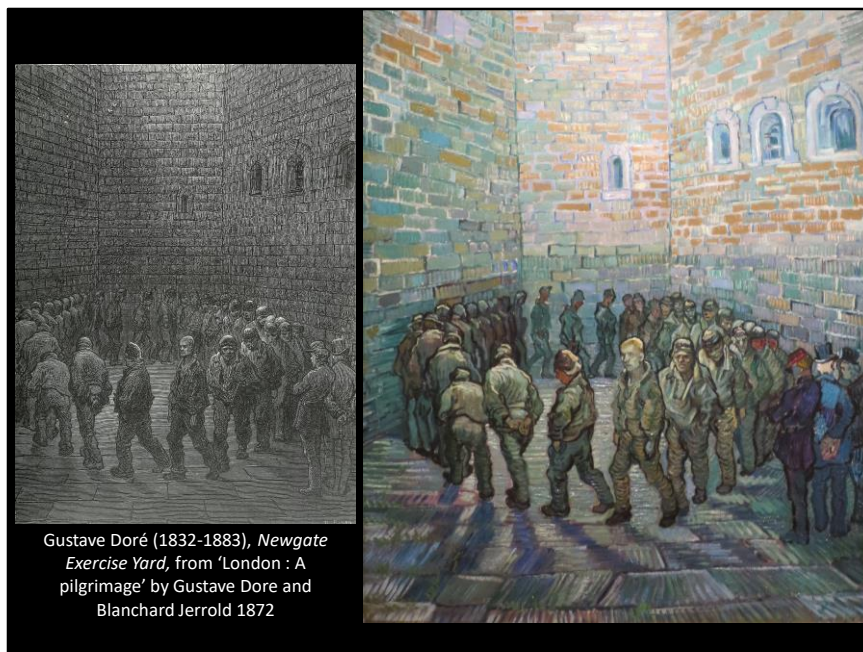
- Van Gogh painted the view **twenty-one times** at different times of the day. Cypresses are visible in fifteen of these and in six he brought them much closer to the picture plane. Like Claude Monet who he had met in Paris he liked painting in series.
- Van Gogh wrote, “This morning I saw the countryside from my window a long time before sunrise with nothing but the morning star, which looked very big”. Research shows that **Venus, the morning star, was visible at dawn in Provence and was at its brightest**. The moon is shown as waxing gibbous (more than half of the surface bright on the right, dark on the left) just before full moon but it was actually waning gibbous (more than half of the surface bright on the left, dark on the right) just after full moon. The village was not present but was added from sketches made from a nearby hillside.
- Van Gogh referred to the painting as a ‘failure’. When Gauguin stayed with him he tried to convince Van Gogh to paint what he called ‘abstractions’, that is from his imagination. Van Gogh wrote, “When Gauguin was in Arles, I once or twice allowed myself to be led astray into abstraction, as you know. . . . But that was delusion, dear friend, and one soon comes up against a brick wall. . . . And yet, **once again I allowed myself to be led astray into reaching for stars that are too big—another failure**—and I have had my fill of that.”
- Van Gogh was disillusioned by religion by this stage of his life but wrote of his **“tremendous need for, shall I say the word—for religion—so I go outside at night to paint the stars”**. He speculated that after death we might live in another dimension that he equated with the night sky.



Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *L'Arlésienne*, 1890, Collection MASP (São Paulo Museum of Art)

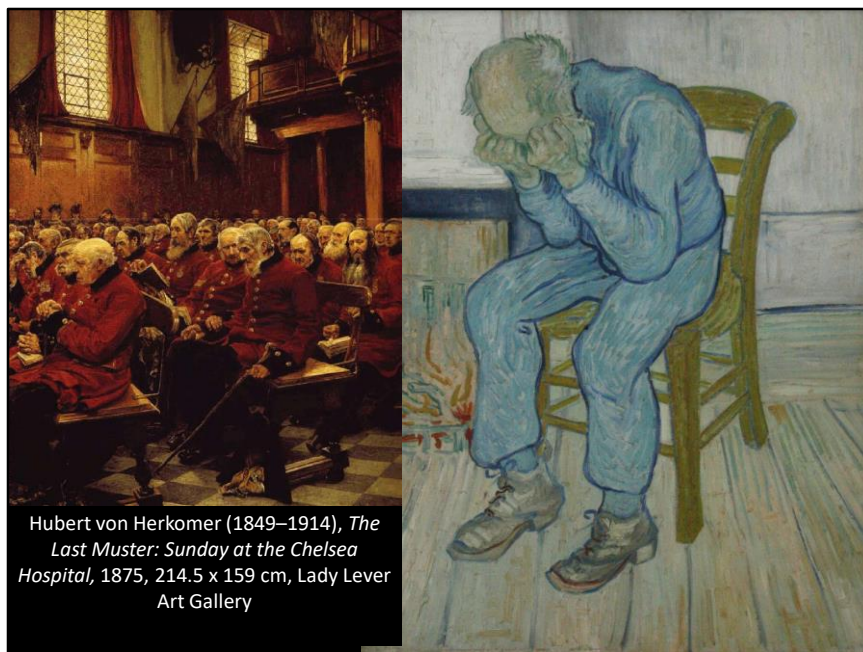
- *L'Arlésienne*, *L'Arlésienne: Madame Ginoux*, or *Portrait of Madame Ginoux* is the title given to a group of **six similar paintings** by Vincent van Gogh, painted in Arles, November 1888 (or later), and in Saint-Rémy, February 1890. ***L'Arlésienne* is pronounced 'lar lay zyen'; it means literally "the woman from Arles".**
- The subject, Marie Jullian (or Julien), was born in Arles June 8, 1848 and died there August 2, 1911. She married Joseph-Michel Ginoux in 1866 and together they ran the Café de la Gare, 30 Place Lamartine, where van Gogh lodged from May to mid-September 1888. He had the Yellow House in Arles furnished to settle there.
- Van Gogh wrote, **'I should like to do portraits which will appear as revelations to people in a hundred years' time. In other words I am not trying to achieve this by photographic likeness but by rendering our impassioned expressions, by using our modern knowledge and appreciation of colour as a means of rendering and exalting character.'**
- The first version is in Musée d'Orsay, Paris; the second in Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and another five were painted in the asylum at Saint-Rémy including one in the São Paulo Museum of Art another in the Kröller-Müller

Museum another in the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Rome and one in private collection.



Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *Prisoners' Exercising*, also known as *Prisoners' Round*, (After Gustave Doré), 1890, 80 x 64 cm, The Pushkin Museum of Fine Art
 Gustave Doré (1832-1883), *Newgate Exercise Yard*, from 'London : A pilgrimage' by Gustave Dore and Blanchard Jerrold, 1872

- 'There is little doubt to the significance of this pointing that was done in **February 1890**, at a particularly troubled time in Van Gogh's life. He was **severely depressed** and desperate to leave the stultifying environs of the asylum at **Saint-Remy**, but it had been decided that he would not be fit to cope alone until the spring. His feelings of being **physically trapped**, and mentally caught in a perpetual **cycle of mental illness** beyond his control are clearly evident.
- **Prisoners Exercising** was actually made after a print of Newgate Prison in London by **Dore**, whose work **Van Gogh had admired for some years**. Van Gogh had begun to collect graphic illustrations from magazines in the early 1880s, and added prints of Doumieri, Paul Gavami (1804-66) and Dore to his collection. He then referred to these works in later years (as well as multiple prints of Millet's paintings), often making several copies of a single image. The prints were in block and white, so Van Gogh improvised with the colour, and gave the paintings his own visual interpretation,' (www.vincentvangogh.org)



Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *Sorrowing Old Man ("At Eternity's Gate")*, Saint-Rémy, May 1890, 81 x 65 cm, Kröller-Müller Museum

Hubert von Herkomer (1849–1914), *The Last Muster: Sunday at the Chelsea Hospital*, 1875, 214.5 x 159 cm, Lady Lever Art Gallery

- ***Sorrowing Old Man (At Eternity's Gate)* is an oil painting by van Gogh that he made in 1890 in Saint-Rémy de Provence based on an early lithograph. The painting was completed in early May at a time when he was convalescing from a severe relapse in his health some two months before his death. The inspiration for *Worn Out* was Hubert von Herkomer's *Sunday at the Chelsea Hospital*, an immensely popular print depicting an old war veteran slumped dead that went on to become an acclaimed painting at the Royal Academy, *The Last Muster*, that van Gogh had seen in 1875 when in England.**
- The painting has been interpreted as van Gogh clinging onto a faith in God and eternity although he wrote, **"This is far from all theology — simply the fact that the poorest woodcutter, heath farmer or miner can have moments of emotion and mood that give him a sense of an eternal home that he is close to."**
- On February 22, 1890, Van Gogh suffered his **most severe relapse**, an episode Jan Hulsker called **the longest and saddest of his life**, and one which lasted some nine

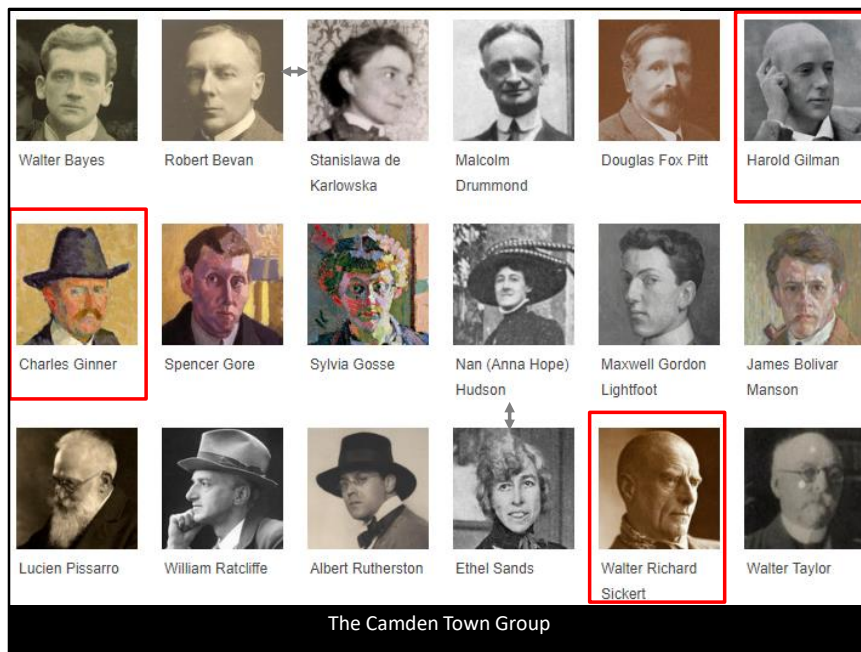
weeks through to late April. During this time, he was only able to write his brother Theo once, in March 1890, and then only briefly to say he was **totally stupefied** (totalement abruti) and unable to write. He did not write Theo again until late April, but that letter makes it clear that he had been able to paint and draw a little during this time, despite his sadness and melancholy: "What can I tell you of these two last months, things aren't going well at all, I'm more sad and bored than I could tell you, and I no longer know what point I'm at ... While I was ill I nevertheless still did a few small canvases from memory which you'll see later, memories from the north [souvenirs du nord] ... so melancholy do I feel."



Van Gogh, *Wheatfield with Crows*, 1890, 50.2 x 103 cm, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

- Van Gogh, *Wheatfield with Crows*, 1890, 50.2 x 103 cm, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (one of Van Gogh's last paintings)
- This is one of the last paintings van Gogh painted. Many people, particularly fellow artists, in France and Belgium recognised his genius in his lifetime. One of these was Emile Bernard who rushed to his funeral with Theo and wrote describing how all of van Gogh's last painting were placed around his coffin.
- Although he only sold one painting in his lifetime after his death his fame quickly spread first in Paris and then internationally.





Illustrated London News 137 (26th November 1910), p.825., includes *Dr Gachet* and *The Postman* (Joseph-Étienne Roulin), 1889 as well as Édouard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*, 1882 and *Young woman in a round hat*, 1877; and Maurice de Vlaminck, *La Voile*

Photograph of members of The Camden Town Group

Manet and the Post-Impressionists (1910-11)

- In Britain, in 1910, **Roger Fry** organised '**Manet and the Post-Impressionists**' (Nov 1910-Jan 1911), a turning point for British art. The exhibition occupied 4-5 rooms. It was the turning point in the appreciation of French art in Britain. The impact was recognised at the time and was talked up afterwards. Virginia Wolfe said in 1924, "**On or about December 1910 human character changed**". Although the works exhibited were controversial and received a great deal of bad press it established the **long-term reputations of van Gogh, Gauguin, Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso**.
- The exhibition was held at a time of dissent and fear of invasion. Edward VI had just died, and Irish Home Rule was being discussed. The Suffragettes had started their hunger strikes. There was a pervading fear of invasion by France or Germany. So the artists had a resonance and their work was seen by many as a violent assault on British society.

- The impact of the exhibition is indicated by a warning received by Oliver Brown, an art dealer, who was told by a friend of his father, **"Don't go in there young man, it will do you harm. The pictures are evil."** Even influential teachers such as Henry Tonks who had previously supported the new turned on the Post-Impressionists and at the 1912 exhibition **begged his students not to go and see it to avoid contamination.**
- The exhibition catalogue listed **twenty-five work by van Gogh** including *View of Arles, Iris, Cypresses, the Postman, Sunflowers, Orchard under Rain, Factories, Dr. Gachet* and *Cornfield with Crows*.
- **Commercially it was a success**, the publicity brought it to the public's attention and **25,000 ultimately saw the show, and most of the works were sold to American and private British individuals.**

The Camden Town Group (active 1911-1913)

- "Much attention has been devoted to the impact of Roger Fry's two exhibitions, ***Manet and the Post-Impressionists of 1910–11*** and the *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* staged in late 1912. The **shock value** of these impressively large scale displays of European modernism was **widely debated** at the time and many, including painters from the once **overtly francophile**, impressionist-oriented **New English Art Club** (established in 1886) found works they contained – by **van Gogh and Cézanne in particular** – to be **excessively crude and unnaturalistic**. They were also unimpressed by Roger Fry's and his associate Clive Bell's insistence on the significance of these painters' expressive distortions and simplifications of form. ... **It was Sickert's deep comprehension of the genesis of the more recent developments in the art of his day that made him so important for the younger generation within the Camden Town Group**, even if they would soon reject the example of his particular practice and take new directions in their own. This would apply as equally to Lewis, who by 1912 was evolving in his own works towards the abstract, angular and faceted forms of the cubists, as it would to **Gilman and to Ginner in their more overt engagements with the example of van Gogh** at the time of Ginner's Neo-Realist article in the *New Age* in 1914." (Tate Research, 'Introducing The Camden Town Group in Context', Helena Bonett, Ysanne Holt and Jennifer Mundy, May 2012)
- The Camden Town Group excluded women, but the women shown above quickly joined its successor **the London Group** in 1914.

Notes

Manet and the Post-Impressionists (1910-11)

- There were few works by Manet but, nevertheless, his name was put in the title to add credibility as by this time his work was known and respected. There were 20-21 works by Cézanne, two by Seurat, 40 by Gauguin, **some by van Gogh which were supplied by Theo's widow**, two by Picasso, three by Matisse. In fact, nearly

all the paintings were from the 1880s and 90s and so were up to 30 years out of date.

- Critics wrote "**the output of a lunatic asylum**", "**the visualized ravings of a maniac**", "**a widespread plot to destroy the whole fabric of European art.**"
- There was a Bateman cartoon 'Post Impressions of the Post-Impressionists' in *the Bystander* of 1910. It included Bateman's impression of van Gogh's *Portrait of the Postman* (1888).
- It was originally entitled the 'Expressionists' exhibition, but his friends convinced him to change it. He **pulled the term Post-Impressionists out of thin air**.
- Benedict Nicolson identified ten of the twenty-five works by Van Gogh listed in the first version of the catalogue, seven of which were accepted by the 1970 catalogue raisonné, including *Les Usines, or Factories at Clichy* 1887, *Pieta (after Delacroix)* (1889, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam); *Resurrection of Lazarus* (after Rembrandt etching) (Van Gogh Museum); ***Dr Gachet (1890)***; *Garden of Daubigny in Auvers-sur-Oise* (1890, Van Gogh Museum); and *Jeune fille au bluet (the mad girl in Zola's Germinal)* which was listed as *The man with the cornflower* (1890) ... *La Berceuse* (1889).

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/introducing-the-camden-town-group-in-context-r1106438>



Walter Richard Sickert (1860–1942), *Jacques-Émile Blanche*, c.1910, 61 x 50.8 cm, Tate, purchased (Clarke Fund) 1938

- I selected a work painted by Sickert at about the same time as **Manet and the Post-Impressionists (1910-11) opened**. In an article in *Fortnightly Review* (see link below) Sickert starts by mentioning ‘**M. Blanche, in a letter to the *Morning Post* , thinks it is important to emphasize the theory that Van Gogh was a Jew**’ and goes on to say ‘**I have always disliked Van Gogh's execution most cordially**’ although he adds ‘But he said what he had to say **with fury and sincerity, and he was a colourist**. *Les Alyscamps* is undeniably a great picture, and the landscape of rain does really rain with *furia*.” However, his analysis of the exhibition convinced artists of the Camden Town Group to take a new direction. Although he was one of the most modern of British artists, he decried the move towards abstraction as throughout his live he remained a figurative painter.
- **Walter Sickert was most influenced by Edgar Degas**. When young he was an actor but later, he went to France and met Blanche who became a lifelong friend and Edgar Degas. when he returns to London he sat for night after night in the music halls. London is the city of reinvention and Sickert above all else is the painter of reinvention. He left after losing a court case to Whistler or Parnell. Sickert had

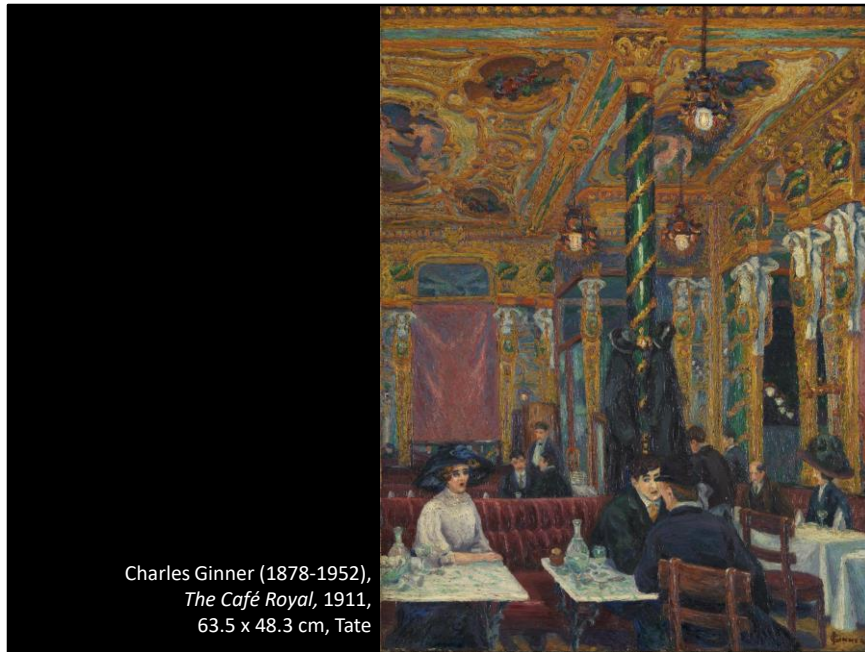
many affairs in Venice and his marriage was over by 1895. By 1903 he had painted every inch of Venice he called it Kilburn by the sea. He returned in 1905 and painted his Camden Town nudes. To see how original Sickert was compare his nudes of Mornington Crescent with Alma Tadama's classical scenes also painted in 1909.

- 'In 1885 Walter Sickert met the **French painter Jacques-Émile Blanche, whose patronage and social influence contributed to his early successes**. Rendered in a pointillist manner, Blanche's facial features contrast with the depiction of the smooth, dark fabric of his overcoat. The back of a stretched canvas is visible leaning against a wall in the background, which, together with his slightly tipped hat, evokes a bohemian unconventionality.' (Tate website, 'The Camden Town Group in Context')

References

<http://fortnightlyreview.co.uk/2017/10/post-impressionists/> an article by Walter Sickert on the Manet and Post-Impressionism exhibition where he appears to criticize van Gogh.

<http://fortnightlyreview.co.uk/2017/10/fry-sickert-post-impressionism/>



Charles Ginner (1878-1952), *The Café Royal*, 1911, 63.5 x 48.3 cm, Tate

Bio:Ginner

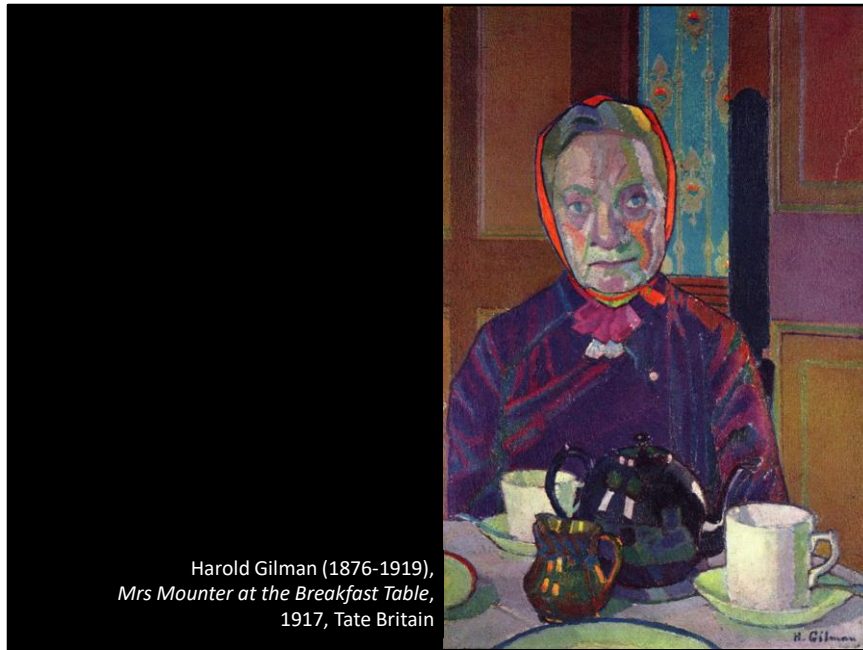
- **Charles Ginner (1878-1952) was born in Cannes** in the south of France on 4 March 1878. He was the third of four children of Isaac Benjamin Ginner (died 1895), from Hastings in Sussex, and Lydia Adeline Wightman, who had lived in London and was of Scottish descent.
- **Ginner was an influential member of the Camden Town Group. Born in France and having lived in Paris for almost a decade before moving to London, he appeared an authority on continental modern art to his British colleagues.** Ginner lived in England for the rest of his life but retained a French accent for many years, humorously caricatured in a 1914 letter to the secretary of the London Group.
- In the autumn of 1910, Ginner accompanied Gilman to Roger Fry's seminal exhibition, *Manet and the Post-Impressionists*. With Rutter the two also visited Paris, where at the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune they saw 'a room **entirely decorated with the works of Van Gogh, a sight unsurpassed in beauty and intensity**'. **Van Gogh was a great inspiration to Ginner throughout his career, influencing his use of bright colours, thick paint and occasionally a more expressive style, as seen**

in *Victoria Embankment Gardens* 1912 (Tate). The critic of the *Art News* wrote of the brightness of Ginner's works on display in the first Camden Town Group exhibition:

- For sheer glory of colour it is difficult indeed to surpass Mr. C. Ginner. One hesitates to use the phrase 'crushed jewels,' which has been so often applied to Monticelli, but 'The Sunlit Wall' really glows like jewels themselves. It is quite Bacchic in its voluptuous beauty.
- **Ginner assimilated van Gogh's realist creed**, and a photograph of him from the late 1940s shows him reading the 1918 edition of the Dutch artist's letters.
- He felt, however, that **some of his contemporaries were producing work that simply imitated** the innovations of the great realists **Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin and van Gogh**:
 - *The Academic painters **merely adopt the visions** which the creative artists drew from the source of nature itself. They **adopt these mannerisms**, which is all they are capable of seeing in the work of the creative artist, and **make formulas out of them.***

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/ginner-the-cafe-royal-n05050>



Harold Gilman (1876-1919), *Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table*, 1917, Tate Britain
 There is a larger version in the Walker Art Gallery with a William Morris chair on the right.

- Mrs Mounter is **not glamourized**. Gilman admired van Gogh's directness in portraiture as well as that of Cézanne and Gauguin. **Mrs Mounter** was the subject of a number of portraits by **Gilman**. She lodged at the same address as Gilman at 47 Maple Street, off Tottenham Court Road and may have been his **housekeeper**. The house was near Fitzroy Street where the Camden Town Group showed their work.
- By the time he painted this he and Sickert had become **alienated** as **Gilman's pure colours and bright palette** were **not to Sickert's taste**. Gilman was influenced by the **colour palette** of Pissarro.
- 'In this painting her **direct gaze and time-worn features**, highlighted in warm tones and haloed tightly by an orange kerchief, draws the viewer in. The ordinary crockery on the table indicates the unceremonious **sharing of breakfast across social classes** and despite wartime shortages.' (Tate website)

Notes

Harold Gilman

- Harold Gilman's father was a Rector in the Romney Marshes and he was educated in Kent, Berkshire, Rochester and Tonbridge and for one year at Brasenose College, Oxford University which he had to leave because of ill health. He studied at the Hastings School of Art and transferred to the Slade School in London where he met Spencer Gore. He met Walter Sickert in 1907 and became a founding member of the **Fitzroy Group** (1907) and then the **Camden Town Group** (1911). His interest in Post-Impressionism took him further and further away from Sickert. He **died in 1919 aged 43** of the Spanish Flu.
- **Tate:**
 - "Gilman uses a psychologically sophisticated composition to draw us into Mrs Mounter's space. The foreground consists only of the tea table, cutting the nearest plate in half, and it is as if we are sitting opposite her. Placed against the wooden doors, the lack of background recession further reinforces this personal proximity ... Gilman's sympathy with ordinary people found expression in socialist beliefs, which reputedly irritated Sickert on occasion. His move to Letchworth Garden City was partly an expression of his political outlook, as it was a model community which attracted a mixed bag of idealists, fresh-air fanatics and vegetarians.
 - This meeting of artist and sitter is, as the art historian Andrew Causey has written, '**a confrontation that dignifies without flattering and is not limited by any class condescension**'."
- **Liverpool Museums:**
 - "Harold Gilman was born in Somerset to the Reverend John Gilman, a Rector of Snargate with Snave in Kent. After studying at Oxford for a year in 1894 he decided to become an artist. In 1897 he went to study at the **Slade School of Art** alongside Frederick **Spencer Gore** (who became his lifelong friend) under the instruction of Tonks, Wood, and Steer. The strong foundation in **draughtsmanship** encouraged at the Slade is evident throughout Gilman's artistic career.
 - Gore introduced Gilman to **W.R. Sickert** and his circle at Fitzroy Street in 1907 and it was here that the **colour of Lucien Pissarro** began to filter through into Gilman's painting. In 1910 Gilman travelled with Charles Ginner - another member of the Fitzroy Street Group - to Paris where he became familiar with the recent advances in French art made by **Signac, Gauguin, Matisse and Van Gogh**. In particular, he began to admire the work of the Post-Impressionist **Cézanne**. However it was not until **Roger Fry's infamous 1910 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' exhibition** and later **1912 'Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition' held at the Grafton Galleries** in London that Gilman really began to **admire the art of Van Gogh**, who **became his idol**. Wyndam Lewis said of Gilman: "he was proud

- to be a man who could sometimes hang his pictures in the neighbourhood of a picture postcard of ...Van Gogh”.
- After **grievances with** their main exhibiting society, the **New English Art Club**, the informal **group of Fitzroy Street artists formed** themselves into the more progressive **Camden Town Group**. Gilman was a founding member of the group when it began in 1911. His paintings took on **Sickert's motifs of working-class cluttered interiors**, informal portraits, nudes, shop fronts and eating-places. He began to combine this subject matter with a **brighter palette** and **thickly-applied paint** inspired by **Van Gogh**. However, it was as **president of the London Group**, formed in **1914** when the **Camden Town Group was fragmenting**, that Gilman's confident and argumentative character really came to the fore. This was apparent both in his presiding over of the group, and through his more adventurous use of **vivid colour**. As he **grew apart from Sickert**, his style became more open to the influence of Ginner and his decorative use of thick flat paint and patterning inspired by Post-Impressionist and **Fauve styles** rather than that of Sickert, whose work retained a duller, more dauby Impressionist palette. Gilman **rejected the Impressionist** concept of **painting being like a sketch** in favour of permanence which he achieved using a firm base and strong framing element with thick layers of paint **working slowly from pen and ink sketches**, not from life.
 - Gilman developed a **very individual style** that had gone largely **unnoticed** when he **died suddenly during the Spanish influenza epidemic of 1919**. He **sold very few works during his lifetime** and it was not until the **1955 Arts Council exhibition** of his work that he began to **receive recognition** for his short-lived but significant contribution to British modernism.”

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/harold-gilman-mrs-mounter-at-the-breakfast-table-r1133436>



Harold Gillman, *Canal Bridge, Flekkefjord*, c. 1913, 46.4 x 61.5 cm, Tate
 Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *The Langlois Bridge at Arles*, May 1888, 49.5 x 64.5 cm, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne

- This bridge is painted accurately, but it is **likely that Gilman chose the subject thinking of van Gogh's painting of a similar bridge in Provence**. Gilman at first rejected Van Gogh's style, but later he came to admire him deeply. His friend Wyndham Lewis recalled that he had a number of Van Gogh postcards on his walls, and when he painted a picture that particularly pleased him, he would hang it next to them.
- In 1910 he was stimulated by the first post-Impressionist exhibition at the Grafton Galleries, and **visited Paris with Ginner, he soon outpaced Sickert's understanding of post-Impressionism and moved out from under his shadow, using ever stronger colour, under the influence of Van Gogh, Gauguin and Signac.**

References

https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Harold_Gilman

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gilman-canal-bridge-flekkefjord-n03684>



David Bomberg (1890-1957), *Lilian*, 1929, 66 x 51.4 cm, Tate

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *Portrait of Dr. Gachet*, June 1890, 67 x 56 cm, private collection, Tokyo

This painting is the first version of this motif and it was painted in June 1890 at Auvers-sur-Oise, during the last months of van Gogh's life, before his suicide. He made **two versions of the painting**, which differ in colour. Both are oil-on-canvas and measure 67 by 56 cm (26" by 22") in size. The first (this picture) was sold to a private collector in 1990 for \$82.5 million; the second painting is currently on display at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, France. This is one of the most expensive paintings created by Vincent van Gogh.

- Bomberg attended Roger Fry's *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* of 1910–11 and **regarded it as a turning point in his art as it emboldened him to push his art towards abstraction**. Bomberg soon became one of **Britain's most celebrated and controversial modernist artists**. In the words of a friend, Bomberg was "very blasty... **He wanted to dynamite the whole of English painting.**"
- **Frank Auerbach**, who was **taught by Bomberg** described him as "**the most original, stubborn, radical intelligence that was to be found in art schools**".
- In 1958 there was an exhibition of Bomberg's work and in a BBC broadcast he was

compared with Van Gogh in terms of his unrecognised genius.

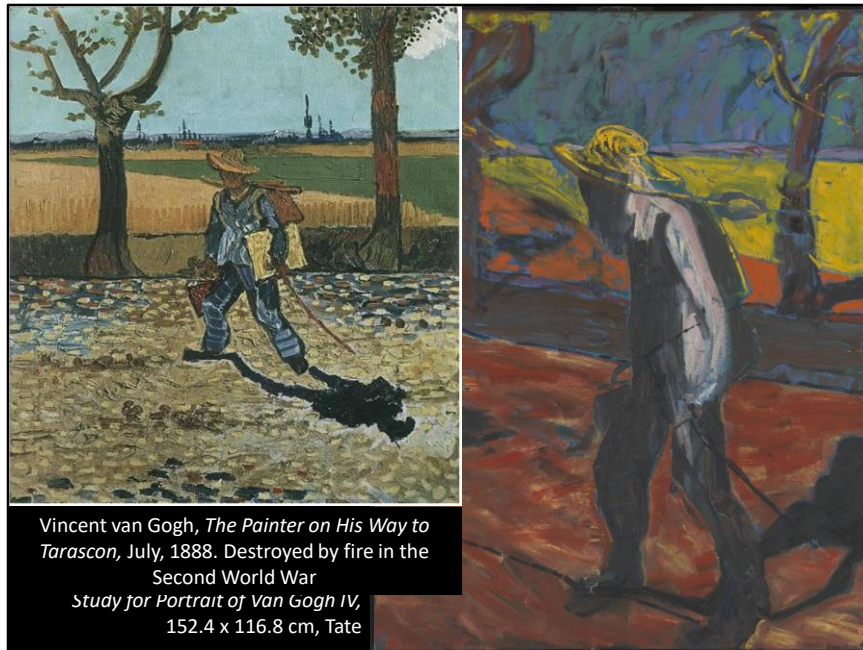
- “We tend to flatter ourselves that we, unlike our grandfathers and great grandfathers, don’t let genius go neglected. We fondly imagine that we are so open minded, so responsive to new ideas, that we couldn’t possibly let a Van Gogh or a Seurat live among us and die unsung and unknown. Well, most of us, and that includes myself, waited until Bomberg died before we woke up to his importance. The most shameful thing about it all is that Bomberg was not an unknown artist, but a forgotten artist.” (David Sylvester)

References

<https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/search/actor:bomberg-david-18901957/page/5>

120 works by David Bomberg

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bomberg-lilian-painting-david-painting-lilian-t03338>



Francis Bacon (1909–1992), *Study for Portrait of Van Gogh IV*, 152.4 x 116.8 cm, Tate
 Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *The Painter on His Way to Tarascon*, July, 1888.
 Destroyed by fire in the Second World War; formerly in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Magdeburg (Germany)

- In life, **Francis Bacon regarded Van Gogh as a kindred spirit** and would constantly **pay tribute to the genius** of the Dutch master.
- This is one of a series of **eight paintings by Bacon** loosely based on the Vincent Van Gogh painting '*The Painter on the Road to Tarascon*'. Destroyed in a fire in the Second World War, Bacon only saw reproduction of the original Van Gogh painting. Speaking to the art critic John Russell, Bacon said he had "always liked early Van Gogh best, but that haunted figure on the road seemed just right at the time—like a phantom in the road"

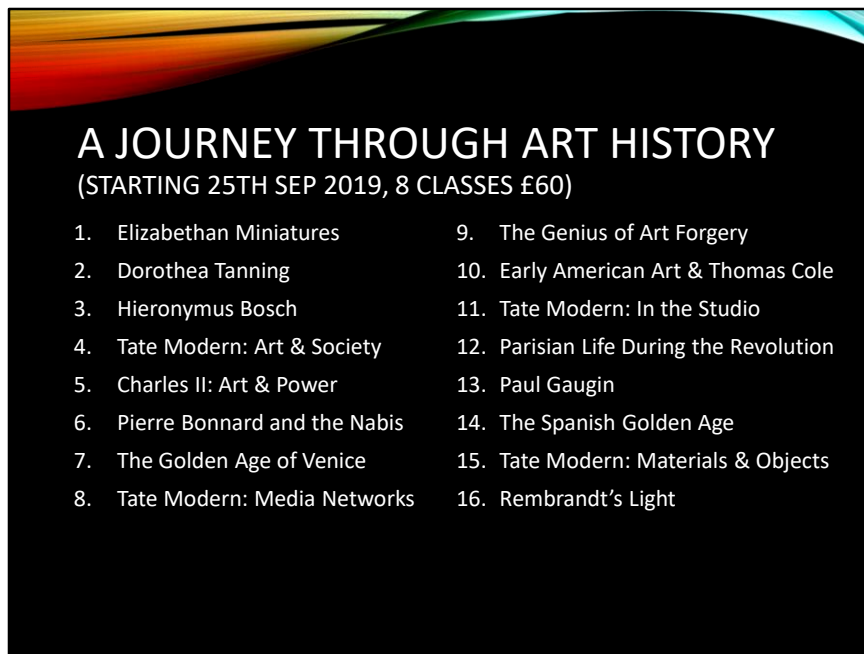
References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bacon-study-for-portrait-of-van-gogh-iv-t00226>
- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/7615712/Francis-Bacon-heirs-battle-Van-Gogh-foundation.html>



Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *Self-Portrait*, September 1889, 65 x 54 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Study for a Portrait*, 1952, Tate



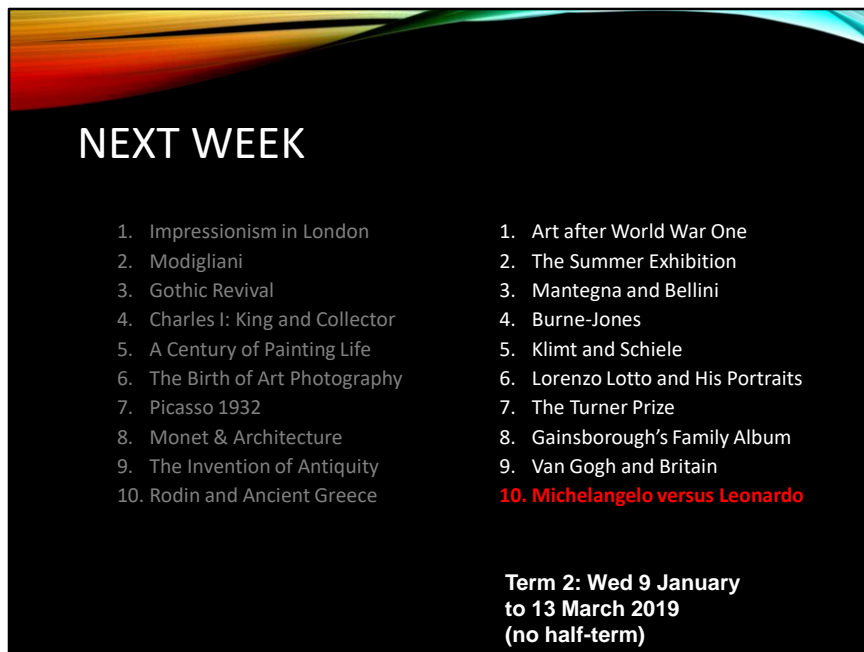
- Provisional title '**A Journey Through Art History**'.
- Most of the talks are based on exhibitions in 2018-2019 in London. Four are based on my guided tour of the four main galleries at Tate Modern expanded from 45 minutes to 105 minutes. One of the exhibitions is in Edinburgh and is based on a talk I have already given.
- **Reduce number of classes from 10 to 8 per term and fee from £70 to £60.**

Notes

- **Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver**, National Portrait Gallery, 21 February – 19 May 2019
- **Dorothea Tanning**
- **Hieronymus Bosch**
- **Tate Modern: Art & Society**, 25 works from Tate Modern
- **Charles II: Art & Power**, Royal Collection, Holyroodhouse, 23 Nov 2018 – 2 Jun 2019, was at Queen's Gallery, London, until 13 May 2018. See Guardian review <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2017/dec/10/charles-2-art-power-queens-gallery-buckingham-palace-review>
- **Pierre Bonnard** exhibition, Tate Modern, 23 Jan 2019 – 06 May 2019
- **The Golden Age of Venice** - 'Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance

Venice'

- **Tate Modern: Media Networks**
- **The Genius of Forgery**
- **Early American Art & Thomas Cole: Eden to Empire**, National Gallery, until 7 October 2018
- **Tate Modern: In the Studio**
- Louis-Léopold **Boilly** (1761-1845, pronounced 'LOO-ee LEO-po BOY-ee') Scenes of Parisian Life during the French revolution, 28 February to 19 May 2019, National Gallery (admission free). Focusing on 20 works from a British private collection never previously displayed or published.
- **Gauguin Portraits**, The National Gallery, 7 Oct 2019 – 26 Jan 2020
- **The Spanish Golden Age 1556-1659, El Greco, Diego Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo and José de Ribera**. Includes *Ribera: Art of Violence*, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 26 September 2018 – 27 January 2019. This is the first UK show of work by the Spanish Baroque painter, draughtsman and printmaker, **Jusepe de Ribera** (1591–1652), displaying his most sensational, shocking and masterfully composed works. Ribera is one of the titans of Spanish Baroque art. Born in Valencia, Spain, Ribera emigrated to Italy as a young artist in 1606. He spent most of his career in Naples, where he influenced many artists including Salvator Rosa and Luca Giordano. He is often regarded as the heir to Caravaggio for his dramatic use of light and shadow, and his practice of painting directly from the live model.
- **Tate Modern: Materials & Objects**
- **Rembrandt's Light**, Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2 Oct 2019 - 2 Feb 2020



Art History Revealed – Wednesday 26 September, half-term 31 October – 5 December, Wednesday 9 January – 13 March (no half-term)

Exhibitions in Start Date Order

1. Impressionism in London, Tate Britain, 2 November 2017 – 7 May 2018
2. Modigliani, Tate Modern, 23 November 2017 – 2 April 2018
3. Charles I: King and Collector, Royal Academy, 27 January – 15 April 2018
4. All Too Human Bacon, Freud and a century of painting life, Tate Britain, 28 February – 27 August 2018
5. Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography, National Portrait Gallery, 1 March – 20 May 2018
6. Picasso 1932 - Love, Fame, Tragedy, Tate Modern, March 8 to September 9, 2018
7. Monet & Architecture, National Gallery, 9 April – 29 July 2018
8. Rodin and the Art of Ancient Greece, British Museum, 26 April – 29 July 2018
9. Aftermath Art in the Wake of World War One, Tate Britain, 5 June – 16 September 2018
10. The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, 12 June 2018 – 19 August 2018
11. Mantegna and Bellini, National Gallery 1 October 2018 – 27 January 2019

12. Burne-Jones, Tate Britain, 24 October 2018 – 24 February 2019
13. Klimt/Schiele, Drawings from the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Royal Academy, 4 November 2018 – 3 February 2019
- 14. Lorenzo Lotto Portraits, 5 November 2018 – 10 February 2019**
15. Gainsborough's Family Album, National Portrait Gallery, 22 November 2018 - 3 February 2019
16. Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Tate Britain, March 2019. Van Gogh and Britain will be the first exhibition to take a new look at the artist through his relationship with Britain. It will explore how Van Gogh was inspired by British art, literature and culture throughout his career and how he in turn inspired British artists, from Walter Sickert to Francis Bacon.

Ideas

- Gothic Revival, based on an Andrew Graham Dixon TV programme but without the references to the literature of the period
- The Invention of Antiquity – refers to ideas in Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art from Greece to Rome*, Oxford History of Art Series, 2001, Nigel Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings*, 1997 and John Boardman, *Greek Art*, Thames & Hudson, 1996
- The Painting War: Michelangelo versus Leonardo – described in the novel *Oil and Marble*, released on 5 July, 2018, and *The Lost Battles: Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Artistic Duel That Defined the Renaissance*
- The Turner Prize

London Galleries

Wallace
 British Museum
 Hayward
 National Gallery
 National Portrait Gallery
 White Cube
 Serpentine
 Tate Britain
 Tate Modern
 Royal Academy
 Estorics