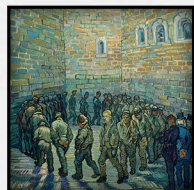
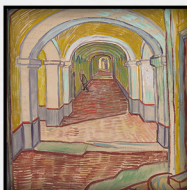


Despite his regular restaurant meals, Vincent was chronically malnourished, often choosing to spend his precious money on tobacco, coffee, wine, bi-monthly excursions to one of the local brothels or “knocking shops”, and absinthe rather than on food. His dependence on alcohol, along with too few calories and too little sleep helped create a perfect storm for his first psychotic break on December 23, 1888 when he sliced off his left ear in a manic frenzy, over an argument with Gauguin.



Fearing for his deteriorating mental health, Vincent admitted himself into the nearby mental institution, Saint-Paul de Mausole. Van Gogh's time in the asylum was arguably the most prolific of his career, creating some 150 paintings over the course of a year. His very first painting was of some bright purple irises in the walled garden. Though he initially felt calmed by the routine and quiet offered there, he was not sure he belonged among the mentally ill patients and it is thought that the single white iris in the painting represents Van Gogh alone among the madmen.



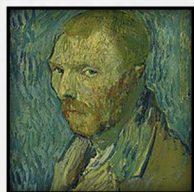
Theo paid for Vincent's stay in the asylum, where he lived for 13 months. Van Gogh experienced several more “attacks” where he suffered from hallucinations, nightmares, paranoia and self-harm, including during his self-imposed year of isolation. Despite being allowed a separate room for a studio and permission to paint outside the asylum walls, Vincent began to suffer such intense boredom and loneliness he painted a copy of an old engraving of London prisoners exercising, and put himself in the center of the painting, obviously referring to his time there as endless, monotonous and depressing.

After a year, Vincent checked himself out of the asylum and records indicate that he was officially declared “cured”, though he would only live another two months before dying of apparent suicide on July 29, 1890.



Vincent began experimenting with a style he called “exaggerations” while in the asylum. His painting, *Starry Night*, with its swirling sky and giant stars would become his most famous painting, though he came to dislike it for exactly those “exaggerations”. Ironically, his most well-known work is the result of deep psychological pain and turmoil. Yet *Starry Night* shows the power of Van Gogh's ability to connect to deeper meanings of both the observable world and himself.

Vincent painted at least 36 known self-portraits throughout his short ten year career. Not unlike our modern obsession with selfies, he recorded both the big and mundane moments of everyday life, capturing his different phases and many different moods.



Van Gogh painted himself as a Japanese monk, a hospital patient, an artist, a worldly gentleman and a humble peasant with a straw hat. He even attempted a painting of himself during one of his psychotic episodes, the only confirmed painting to be made during one of his many mental health crises. He wrote to Theo from the asylum “It is difficult to know oneself, but it isn't easy to paint oneself either.”



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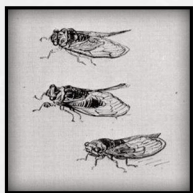
Immersive
van Gogh
Exhibit Charlotte

GOGH & KNOW AN “I SPY” FOR ADULTS

Immersive Van Gogh is a co-creation between Massimiliano Siccardi, Luca Longobardi and Vincent van Gogh where fine art, digital media and performance all intertwine!

Though it's a single art installation, it comprises over 70 projectors showing 90 million pixels along 300,000 cubic feet to create an explosive, dynamic and thoroughly new piece of theatrical art!

Siccardi and his team painstakingly took apart, animated and repurposed 100 Van Gogh images to create a moving collage of color, sound and light that celebrates the famed artist in a totally modern way.

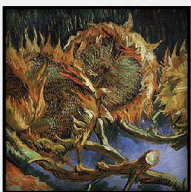


The cicadas at the beginning of the show are taken from Van Gogh's quick observational sketch in a letter to his brother Theo that was made during his yearlong stay in isolation at a mental institution in 1889. Vincent compared their sound to a chirping cricket in the kitchen hearth back home when they were children.

Van Gogh signed his paintings as simply Vincent, because his Dutch name was constantly mangled in travels through Belgium, England and France. He encouraged people to call him by his first name. The actual Dutch pronunciation of Van Gogh sounds a bit more like "von hawk".



It isn't likely that Vincent really wore candles on his straw hat to paint in the dark. In fact, he proudly spent a good bit of his brother Theo's money to install modern gas lighting in his house at Arles so he could paint well into the night. The myth originated from a biography of the artist published by a French journalist in 1922.



Vincent painted two series of his famous sunflowers – one dark and wilted, the other bright and yellow. His vibrant and alive sunflowers series was painted when he moved to the town of Arles for fresh air and light. Vincent considered sunflowers to be the unofficial symbol of the south of France.

The giant book Vincent painted in Still Life with Bible is actually the family Bible. This was a work to mark the occasion of his father's death in 1885.



The odd, and largely unknown Skull of a Skeleton with Burning Cigarette was actually painted as a joke for his fellow students while attending a very short stint in art school in 1882-- for which he managed to last all of four weeks! This painting serves as a reminder that for all of his intensity and seemingly antisocial behaviors, Vincent had a sense of humor and a desire to connect with people.

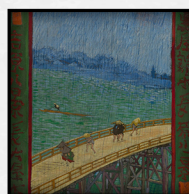


The floating peasant portraits are studies that helped Vincent create his very first large scale painting attempt, The Potato Eaters, in 1885. It depicted an impoverished family of miners with whom he lived as he tried unsuccessfully to make his way as a missionary serving the desperately poor villagers in rural Belgium. Fired from the church and his assignment, he decides to become an artist instead -- at the ripe age of 27.

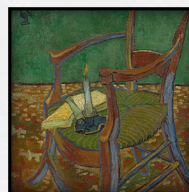
At 33, he moved out of his family's barn in the Netherlands to the very heart of the art world – Paris itself! Living with his younger brother Theo, an art dealer, Vincent began meeting other painters like Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Gauguin (who would later be the catalyst for Vincent's ear mutilation crisis) and Emile Bernard. They spent days and nights drinking, talking, sketching and painting at cafes with a new palette of bright and clear colors inspired by the Impressionists.



At Cafe du Tambourin, Vincent had a brief love affair with its manager, Ms. Agostina Segatori, an older woman known to model for Edgar Degas and other notable Impressionist artists of the day. This portrait of Segatori was likely painted by Vincent as payment for his large and chronically overdue bar tabs.



Vincent studied, collected and copied Japanese art and prints, which made their way to Europe through the World Fairs in London and Paris in the 1860s – as seen in The Bridge in the Rain, after famed Japanese artist and woodblock printmaker Utagawa Hiroshige. The unique perspective and cropping, flat colors and natural subject matter inspired him to paint his famed Almond Blossom as a gift for his young nephew..



Van Gogh is famous for his landscapes, portraits and floral still lifes, but some of his most intimate paintings are of everyday objects that represent their owners, as in his pair of paintings of chairs from 1888. He painted the chair of his artist friend and roommate, Paul Gauguin, with books and a candle to represent Gauguin's style of painting from his imagination, while he painted his own rustic peasant's chair with his pipe and tobacco to symbolize his own humble lifestyle and way of working.



The Red Vineyard near Arles is considered Vincent's only painting sold in his lifetime, though it is likely that he possibly sold one or two more portraits and several drawings before his death. The Red Vineyard near Arles was purchased for 400 francs, or about the cost of living for six weeks. The guilt of remaining dependent on his younger brother was likely a factor in his depression and suicide just a year later. But the general consensus among scholars is that Vincent was well on his way to becoming recognized and would have been quite successful had he continued to live and work.