

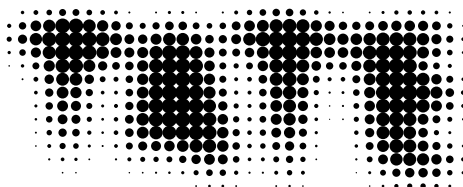
THE EY EXHIBITION VAN GOGH AND BRITAIN

27 March 2019 – 11 August 2019

LARGE PRINT GUIDE



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The young Vincent van Gogh spent nearly three years in England between 1873 and 1876. His love of British culture lasted his whole life and contributed to the style and subject matter of his art. Born in the Netherlands in 1853, Van Gogh tried careers in the art trade and as a teacher and then a preacher before becoming an artist in 1880, at the age of twenty-seven. He died ten years later.

This exhibition is in two parts. The first looks at Van Gogh's experience in London, the art and literature that caught his attention and its role in his journey as an artist. The second explores the impact of Van Gogh's art and life on British artists up to the 1950s. The exhibition provides the opportunity to view artworks by Van Gogh afresh, to see British culture through his eyes and to see him through the eyes of the British artists he inspired.

ROOM 1

FOREWORD

Vincent van Gogh knew four languages, including English, which he spoke and read well. English books were an inspiration and pleasure to him all his life. Van Gogh admired Victorian novels for their 'reality more real than reality'. He was devoted to Charles Dickens, and wrote, 'My whole life is aimed at making the things from everyday life that Dickens describes.'



Anticlockwise from wall text

Vitrine:

Charles Dickens 1812–1870

Contes de Noël (Christmas Books)

1872

Harriet Beecher Stowe 1811–1896

La Case de L'Oncle Tom (Uncle Tom's Cabin)

1862

Tate. Purchased 2019. Z74283, Z74137

Van Gogh had read Dickens's **A Christmas Carol** nearly every year 'since he was a boy' and discovered **Uncle Tom's Cabin** in his twenties. In 1889 he bought French editions, like the ones on display in the showcase.

Van Gogh wrote to his sister Wil, 'I have reread **Uncle Tom's Cabin** by Beecher Stowe with extreme attention, precisely because it's a woman's book, written, she says, while making soup for her children – and then, also with extreme attention, Charles Dickens's **Christmas Books**'.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

The Arlésienne

Saint-Rémy, January–February 1890

Oil paint on canvas

Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand. Gift,
Evaristo Fernandes, Alfredo Ferreira,
Walther Moreira Salles, Fúlvio Morganti, Ricardo Jafet, Carlos
Rochas Faria, J. Silvério de Souza Guise,
Assis Chateaubriand, Angelina Boeris Audrá, Louis La Saigne,
Rui de Almeida, Henryk Spitzman Jordan,
Mário Audra, Centro do Comércio de Café do Rio de Janeiro,
Um espanhol, Moinho Fluminense S.A.,
Moinho Inglês S.A., Companhia América Fabril S.A., 1952.
X68486

In France in the last year of his life, Van Gogh made five portraits of his friend Marie Ginoux. She ran the train station café in Arles. On the table are French translations of two books he loved: Charles Dickens's **Christmas Books**, and American author Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel **Uncle Tom's Cabin**.

Clockwise from wall text

Selection of books 1872–1878

18 loans from Charles Dickens Museum, London

X73417-20, X73422-29, X73431-32, X73434-37

29 purchased by Tate 2019

Z74173, Z74186, Z74189, Z74194, Z74196, Z74198-Z74200,
Z74215-16, Z74219, Z74221, Z74224-26, Z74228, Z74238-39,
Z74241-47, Z74250, Z74292, Z74319, Z74381-2

1 Tate Library Z74167

Wall text:

Van Gogh's letters to his friends and family mentioned many books. These included over a hundred written in English. He wrote to his brother Theo, 'reading books is like looking at paintings ... one must find beautiful that which is beautiful.'

On this bookshelf are English books we know Van Gogh read. Although these are not Van Gogh's books, they are similar editions to the ones he had. Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Christina Rossetti and William Shakespeare were among his favourite authors.

ROOM 2

FIGURE ON THE ROAD: VAN GOGH IN ENGLAND

Van Gogh arrived in London in May 1873 at the age of twenty. He worked for two years at the Covent Garden offices of art dealers Goupil and lived in lodgings in Stockwell and Oval in south London. Van Gogh travelled along the river by boat and on the underground railway and he loved to walk through the city.

Radical ideas thrived in Britain and encouraged Van Gogh's interest in popular religion and concern for the hardship of working people. When he was dismissed from his job, he tried teaching and preaching as careers, in Ramsgate, Kent and Isleworth, west London. In December 1876 he left Britain for good.



Clockwise from wall text

Wall graphics credit line:

Enlargement of Gustave Doré 'The London Underground'
1872 Photo © Tate (Oliver Cowling)

Quote above:

How I love London.

Vincent van Gogh, 1875

Vitrine:

Gustave Doré 1832–1883

William Blanchard Jerrold 1826–1884

London: A Pilgrimage 1872

Grant & Co, London

Private collection

X73450

This account of Victorian London contains 180 engravings by Gustave Doré. Van Gogh arrived in the capital a year after it was published and viewed it in dealers near Goupil. He could never afford to own the book, but in later life he collected copies of the 17 illustrations that are on display here.

On the wall:

Gustave Doré 1832–1883

From **London: A Pilgrimage** 1872

Engravings

Clockwise from top left:

The Derby – Tattenham Corner

A Sale at Tattersall's

The Race

A Ball at the Mansion House

The Great Tree – Kensington Gardens

Tate. X73402, X73400, X73403, X73401, X73399

Van Gogh lived in the south London suburbs and enjoyed leisure pursuits such as rowing on the Thames and strolling in Kensington Gardens. He wrote to friends, 'I haven't yet been to the Crystal Palace and the Tower, nor to Tussaud's ... For the time being I have enough with the museums, parks, etc.'

Gustave Doré 1832–1883

From **London: A Pilgrimage** 1872

Engravings

Clockwise from above:

Lambeth Gas Works

Houndsditch

Coffee Stall – Early Morning

St Katherine's Dock

The Houses of Parliament by Night

The Tide of Business in the City

Hayboats on the Thames

Tate. X73404, X73409, X73408, X73406, X73414, X73412,
X73407

Industrialisation, capitalism and imperialism made London the largest, most modern city in the world. The streets were crowded and the Thames teemed with trade from around the globe. Each day, Van Gogh walked across Westminster Bridge and through the city to Goupil near Covent Garden, wearing his top hat.

Gustave Doré 1832–1883
From **London: A Pilgrimage** 1872

Engravings

Anticlockwise from above:

The Bull's-Eye

Refuge – Applying for Admittance

Newgate – Exercise Yard

Over London – By Rail

Opium Smoking – The Lascar's

Room in 'Edwin Drood'

Tate. X73410, X73413, X73415, X73405, X73411

Modern life brought prosperity for some, but many people lived in great poverty. Van Gogh soon rejected business and hoped to train as an urban missionary in 'a different world from the firm of Messrs Goupil'.

Wall graphics credit line:

Enlargement of Vincent van Gogh, 'Tree-lined avenue',
page 2 in sketchbook with letter and sketches 7 July
1874 Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van
Gogh Foundation)

Vitrine:

**Sketch by Vincent van Gogh, 'Austin Friars Church, London',
enclosed in letter to Anna Cornelia van Gogh
July 1873 – May 1874**

Facsimile

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (gift of H. Nieweg)
Letter RM01. Z08940

Sketch by Vincent van Gogh, 'Small Churches at Petersham and Turnham Green', in letter to Theo van Gogh (recto)
25 November 1876

Facsimile

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation) Letter 099. Z08941

Sketch by Vincent van Gogh, 'Tree-lined avenue', page 2 in sketchbook with letter and sketches to Betsy Tersteeg
7 July 1874

Facsimile

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation) Letter 024. Z08942

**Letter from Vincent van Gogh to Willem van Stockum and
Caroline van Stockum-Haanebeek, sheet 2 (recto)**

7 August 1873

Facsimile

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh
Foundation) Letter 012. Z08943

**Sketch by Vincent van Gogh, 'View of Royal Road, Ramsgate',
enclosed in a letter to Theo van Gogh**

31 May 1876

Facsimile

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh
Foundation) Letter 083. Z74070.

In London, Van Gogh worked in the art trade but was not an artist himself. However, some of the 50 letters that survive from his years in England contain small drawings. Van Gogh's letters are too fragile to leave their home at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. The museum has kindly provided facsimiles for this exhibition, on display in the showcase here.

Vitrine in the centre of the room:

Dulwich Picture Gallery Visitor Book

open to 4 August 1873

Signed by Vincent van Gogh. His signature can be seen on the fifth line of the third column in this book.

Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

X73496

Van Gogh often visited London Galleries. He went to the National Gallery near his office and also visited the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A), the Wallace Collection and Hampton Court. He signed his name in the visitors' books of the British Museum and Dulwich Picture Gallery.'

Wall text:

In London, Van Gogh immersed himself in culture. He saw paintings in museums, galleries and art dealer's rooms that he would remember all his life.

Van Gogh was happy at first, but as he learned more of the world and the disappointments of love, his letters home referred to feelings of 'melancholy'. They talked about life as a difficult journey. Perhaps because of this, he was drawn to images of figures on a road.

Anticlockwise from wall text

Meindert Hobbema 1638–1709

The Avenue at Middelharnis

1689

Oil paint on canvas

The National Gallery, London. Bought 1871

X68234

Van Gogh praised this perspective of trees by Dutch artist, Meindert Hobbema. It had been bought by the National Gallery two years before he saw it there and was already one of the gallery's best-known works. Van Gogh used the motif of an avenue of trees leading into the distance in his letters and pictures.

George Henry Boughton 1833–1905

God speed! Pilgrims Setting out for Canterbury

1874

Oil paint on canvas

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

X68347

Van Gogh saw modern pictures in London sale rooms, dealers and exhibitions. His employer, Goupil, was George Boughton's dealer and Van Gogh viewed this picture exhibited at the Royal Academy.

Van Gogh wrote to Theo 'truly, it is not a picture but an inspiration'. Boughton's paintings of travellers reminded him of a beloved book, English writer John Bunyan's **Pilgrim's Progress** 1678, and Christina Rossetti's poem, **Up-Hill** 1861. Both define life as like a road. Van Gogh described a picture like this in his first sermon, at the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Richmond in 1876.

Christina Rossetti **Up-Hill** 1861

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?
From morn to night, my friend.

John Constable 1776–1837

The Valley Farm

1835

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by Robert Vernon 1847

N00327

Van Gogh saw this painting in the South Kensington Museum and remembered it fondly. Ten years after leaving London, he wrote to his brother, 'I ... always keep thinking about some English paintings – for instance, **Chill October** by Millais ... the Hobbema in the National Gallery, a couple of very fine Constables', referring to **The Cornfield** and **The Valley Farm**.

John Everett Millais 1829–1896

Chill October

1870

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X13508

Van Gogh admired the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of artists. He never forgot meeting John Everett Millais in the street and seeing **Chill October** (probably at auction house Christie's), mentioning it often in his letters.

Van Gogh felt that nature was 'more serious and intimate' in autumn and it struck him that 'the moderns have such a particular preference for it'. He copied out John Keats's poem 'To Autumn', telling friends, that he was 'the favourite of the painters here, and that's how I came to be reading him'.



Wall text:

After Van Gogh left Britain, he tried to pursue a life of religious service. When these hopes failed his brother Theo suggested he take up art.

Van Gogh turned to favourite artists and writers for insights, including those he had encountered in London. 'Studying them more than repays the effort', he wrote, 'it's a different way of feeling, conceiving, expressing ... for they are great artists, the English'.

Sometimes, Van Gogh took up themes he had written about in England. He often painted figures on a road through an autumnal landscape. Examples from each part of his artistic career – in the Netherlands and in France – are displayed here.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Autumn Landscape at Dusk

Nuenen, October – November 1885

Oil paint on canvas on panel

On loan from Centraal Museum, Utrecht

X68377

Van Gogh wrote about John Everett Millais's **Chill October** several times in his first years as an artist. The evening gleam over the marsh in **Autumn Landscape at Dusk** created a mood similar to the 'personally intimate' effect that he admired in Millais's painting.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Road in Etten

Etten, October 1881

Chalk, graphite, pastel, watercolour and ink on paper

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.774).

X68470

This early watercolour was Van Gogh's first important experiment with a figure on an autumn road. The ditch beyond the trees, distant red roofs and a couple in conversation are similar to Meindert Hobbema's **Avenue at Middelharnis** (on display nearby). The deep perspective highlights the isolation of the man sweeping up leaves.

Quote above:

I keep thinking about some English paintings.

Vincent van Gogh, 1884

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890
Avenue of Poplars in Autumn
Nuenen, October 1884

Oil paint on canvas on panel

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (purchased with support from the Vincent van Gogh Foundation and the Rembrandt Association)
X69583

Van Gogh painted these pictures two months after he told his brother Theo to see Hobbema's **The Avenue at Middelharnis** in London. The autumnal season and the woman in mourning dress add an air of sadness. 'How perfectly simply death and burial happen,' he later wrote, 'coolly as the falling of an autumn leaf'.



Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Alley Bordered by Trees

1884

Graphite, ink and chalk on paper

Private collection, Greenwich CT

X73231

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

The Stone Bench in the Asylum at Saint-Rémy

Saint-Rémy, autumn 1889

Oil paint on canvas

Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand.

Purchased 1954

X68487

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Path in the garden of the asylum

Saint-Rémy, November 1889

Oil paint on canvas

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68359

Van Gogh moved to Arles in the south of France in February 1888, where he painted in a new bright, dynamic style inspired by Japanese prints.

At the end of the year he experienced severe mental illness which returned every few months for the final 18 months of his life. He spent his last autumn in the hospital of Saint-Paul where he painted the 'leaf fall' for the final time. Van Gogh loved the garden, but the empty bench and the small figure of a patient seated away from the path hint at his sense of being separated from the outside world.



Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

The Bois de Boulogne with People Walking

Paris, autumn 1886

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection, Switzerland

X69584

Van Gogh moved to Paris in 1886. He was inspired by impressionist painters and adopted their bright colours, brisk brushwork and way of seeing modern life. Here, the low sun shining through the trees continues Van Gogh's love of autumn scenes set at the end of the day, but his working figures are replaced with leisure-seekers and lovers.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Autumn Landscape

Nuenen, October 1885

Oil paint on canvas

The Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge. Bought from the Executors of Lady Epstein, with a special allocation to the University Purchase Fund with a contribution from the Gow Fund and the Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Grant Fund.

X68333

In this work, Van Gogh presented the avenue side-on to explore the landscape against the sky. Painted in the last autumn he lived in the Netherlands, the contrasting blues and oranges of this daylight scene reflect books Van Gogh had been reading about colour.

ROOM 3

BLACK AND WHITE: BECOMING A PAINTER OF THE PEOPLE

Working in London at art dealer Goupil, Van Gogh was part of the expanding trade in prints and art reproductions and learned about British 'black and whites', as they were called. When Van Gogh became an artist four years later, he collected over 2,000 prints.

British illustrators and print-makers were skilled at portraying modern subjects as dramas of light and shade. Although Van Gogh had little formal art training, studying prints helped him find novel compositions and develop his original drawing and painting style.

In this room we see how Van Gogh was thinking about prints throughout his career.



Anticlockwise from wall text

Richard Parkes Bonington 1802–1828

A Distant View of St-Omer

c.1824

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Bequeathed by George Salting 1910

N02664

Vitrine:

after Richard Parkes Bonington 1802–1828

A Distant View of St-Omer

1851

Facsimile from scrapbook of 42 prints collected by
Vincent van Gogh

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

Z74181

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Bleachery at Scheveningen (recto)

The Hague, July 1882

Watercolour and gouache on paper

The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles

X68552

Van Gogh liked the briskly brushed 'stormy skies' for which British artist Richard Bonington was well known. He acquired a reproduction of **Distant View of St-Omer** before he left Goupil. Van Gogh or Theo pasted it into a scrapbook (now in the Van Gogh Museum – a facsimile is in the showcase).

Van Gogh was moved by the suggestion of a human story in Bonington's road through a landscape. He wrote to Theo about it several times, including on the night before he painted **Bleachery at Scheveningen**.

Giuseppe de Nittis 1846–1884
The Victoria Embankment, London
1875

Oil paint on panel

Private collection
X69582

De Nittis sold his work through Goupil, and Van Gogh saw this painting in the Paris branch when he was there for a short time. He wrote to Theo with a small sketch of the painting:

‘A couple of days ago we got a painting by De Nittis, a view of London on a rainy day, Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament. I crossed Westminster Bridge every morning and evening and know what it looks like when the sun’s setting behind Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, and what it’s like early in the morning, and in the winter with snow and fog. When I saw this painting, I felt how much I love London.’

Vitrine:

**Sketch by Vincent van Gogh, 'Westminster Bridge', with
letter to Theo van Gogh (recto)**

Paris, 24 July 1875

Fascimile

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

Letter 039. Z08944

Quote above:

**When I was in London, how often I would stand on the
Thames Embankment and draw as I made my way
home from Southampton Street in the evening.**

Vincent van Gogh, 1883

Van Gogh's personal copy
after Gustave Doré 1832–1883
Evening on the Thames
From **London: A Pilgrimage**, 1876

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)
X73438

Gustave Doré captured several famous views of the Thames, including the magical effect of the lights of the Embankment and Houses of Parliament, seen through fog and pollution at night, and reflected in the river. Van Gogh acquired this print in 1882.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Starry Night

Arles, August 1888

Oil paint on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Donation of M. et Mme Robert KahnSriber, souvenir of M. et Mme Fernand Moch, 1975
X73130

After he moved to Provence in 1888, Van Gogh made three night scenes, including this view of Arles across the River Rhône. Van Gogh described it as 'the town under gaslight and reflected in the blue river with the starry sky above'.

The rhythmic reflections of the modern street lighting along the embankment recall views of the Thames that had interested Van Gogh in London. However, the strong mistral wind in Arles blew away fog and pollution and **Starry Night** contrasts artificial lights with constellations of stars.



James Abbott McNeill Whistler 1834–1903

Old Hungerford Bridge

c.1859

Drypoint on paper

National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London

X73224

James Abbott McNeill Whistler 1834–1903

Nocturne: Grey and Gold Westminster

Bridge c.1871–1872

Oil paint on canvas

Lent by Glasgow Life (Glasgow Museums) on behalf of
Glasgow City Council: from the Burrell Collection with the
approval of the Burrell Trustees.

X73131

Van Gogh mentioned Whistler many times in his letters. He praised Whistler's etchings of the river, **The Thames Set**, published in 1871, which were on view in shops and exhibitions when Van Gogh was in London.

Whistler's Nocturnes, his foggy night-views of the Thames, caused a stir at the time and Van Gogh followed the controversy around them. The nocturnes were shown in two exhibitions while Van Gogh was in London and a large Whistler show in Paris after he moved there in 1887.

Quote above:

I often felt low in England ... but the Black and White and Dickens, are things that make up for it all.

Vincent van Gogh, 1883

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Carpenter's yard and laundry

The Hague, late May 1882

Graphite, chalk, ink and watercolour on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68355

This cityscape was commissioned by Van Gogh's uncle. Its ordinary subject – washing hanging out on lines in a laundry, a carpenter's workshop and a train depot – similar to Doré's **Over London by Rail**, was not to his uncle's taste.

Van Gogh used pencil, chalk, ink, watercolour and scratching (in the tree) to get an effect of lines and light and shade like an engraving. He said of this work, 'the sun shines because the lights stand out more strongly'.

Van Gogh's personal copy
after Gustave Doré 1832–1883

Over London by Rail

From **Katholieke Illustratie** 1872-1890

Originally in London: **A Pilgrimage**

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation).

X76676

At the beginning of his career, Van Gogh used British engravings to suggest new subjects and compositions. This striking view of back yards is one of the 17 Doré illustrations for **London a Pilgrimage** that Van Gogh bought in The Hague and mounted to keep in his studio.

Van Gogh's uncle, art dealer Cornelis van Gogh, gave him his first commission, requesting twelve views of The Hague. Van Gogh did not provide the picturesque views his uncle was probably expecting. Instead, he turned to what he called the 'resolute honesty' of Doré.

Vitrine:

after George Henry Boughton 1833–1905

'Christmas Morning in New England',

Pilgrims Going to Church

The Graphic, 25 December 1869

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74057

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Miners in the snow

Cuesmes, September 1880

Graphite, chalk and watercolour on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X69589

When Van Gogh first took up art late in 1880, he studied manuals and reproductions of artworks to help him. His first known drawing from this time depicted men and women miners in the Belgian mining region, where he had lived and preached for a year.

Van Gogh mentioned George Boughton in a letter about this drawing, and the row of dark figures on the road against a snowy background adapts Boughton's Christmas scene (on display in the showcase). It would have been familiar to Van Gogh as an engraving and as a reproduction in Goupil's series of photographic prints, **Galérie Photographique**.

Entering the second section, anticlockwise

Van Gogh wanted to find ways the artist could contribute to society. He admired the community of artists at the British social reforming newspaper *The Graphic*. He called them 'the great portrayers of the people.' Their wood engravings of modern urban life assisted Van Gogh's search for subjects in his surroundings.

Van Gogh's personal copy

William Small 1843–1929

The British Rough

From the series 'Heads of the People Drawn

From Life', **The Graphic**, June 1875

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X73443

Van Gogh's personal copy
after Hubert von Herkomer 1849–1914
The Agricultural Labourer - Sunday
From the series 'Heads of the People Drawn
from Life II', **The Graphic**, October 1875

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)
X73441

Van Gogh collected 'Heads of the People Drawn from Life', a series of prints by different artists from **The Graphic**, and studied the 'strengths of black and white.' He wrote, 'What I have been working at especially of late is heads – heads of the people.' Van Gogh hoped to create a portfolio of such drawings to show potential employers in London and elsewhere.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Paul Ferdinand Gachet

Auvers-sur-Oise, June 1890

Etching on paper

Wellcome Collection, London

X68330

Van Gogh learned to strengthen the appearance of his sitters from the 'Heads of the People' series. Light and dark shading and parallel lines emphasised the shape and movement of the figure. This linear technique enlivened Van Gogh's later painted portraits and this etching of his doctor, made in Auvers a month before he died.

Van Gogh's personal copy

Edward Gurden Dalziel 1849–1888

**Sunday Afternoon, 1P.M., Waiting for the Public House
to Open**

From 'London Sketches', **The Graphic**, 1874

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X73448

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Old man with umbrella and watch

The Hague, September – December
1882

Graphite on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands
X68370

Van Gogh wrote, 'I want to make figures from the people for the people'. While he was in The Hague, he aimed to draw 'types one comes across on the street', similar to those in The Graphic. Adrianus Zuyderland, a war veteran, modelled for Van Gogh using props to portray different characters.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Old man drinking coffee

The Hague, November 1882

Graphite and lithographic crayon on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands
X68371

Quote above:

**Having my own studio is too wonderful for words ...
I got some splendid woodcuts from the 'Graphic' ...
Just what I've been wanting for years.
Vincent van Gogh, 1882**

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

In church

The Hague, late September – early October 1882

Graphite, ink and watercolour on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68374

Hubert von Herkomer was the leading illustrator of **The Graphic**, and Van Gogh collected most of his contributions. When he was in London, Van Gogh saw Herkomer's well-known painting of a war veteran discovering that his friend has died during a church service. Van Gogh collected engravings of it (on display in the showcase) as well as other church scenes.

He assembled some of his 'heads' into his own view of a congregation. His model, war veteran Adrianus Zuyderland, can be seen on the right.

Vitrine:

Hubert Von Herkomer 1849–1914

Sunday at Chelsea Hospital

The Graphic, 18 February 1871

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74062

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Entrance to Voyer d'Argenson Park at Asnières

Paris, spring 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Bequest of Ignace Hellenberg, Paris, to the State of Israel, in memory of his parents Sigmund and Betty Hellenberg.

On permanent loan to The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, from the Administrator General of the State of Israel. X68526

Vitrine:

Frederick Walker 1840–1875

The Old Gate

The Graphic, 29 January 1876

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74060

Frederick Walker 1840–1875

The Old Gate

1874-5

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by R.H. Prance 1920

N03525

Van Gogh admired Frederick Walker's ability to lend everyday scenes a 'modern distinct sentiment'. He saw Walker's paintings and prints in London and collected engravings reproduced in **The Graphic**, including **The Old Gate** (on display in the showcase).

Five year's later in Paris, Van Gogh's **Entrance to Voyer d'Argenson Park at Asnières** recalled Walker's dramatic composition. The gate looming over the two figures on its threshold lends shape and significance to the casual leisure scene.

Quote above:

I met a pregnant woman ... who roamed the streets in winter – who had to earn her bread, you can imagine how. I took that woman as a model and worked with her the whole winter.

Vincent van Gogh, 1882

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Mourning woman seated on a basket

The Hague, February – March 1883

Lithographic crayon and watercolour on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68365

This portrait of Hoornik in dark mourning dress relates to the despairing pose of the foreground woman with the girl and baby in Van Gogh's print of Edward Dalziel's **Sunday Afternoon, 1P.M., Waiting for the Public House to Open** (on display opposite).

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Seated mother with child

The Hague, autumn 1882

Graphite on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68363

Van Gogh made a number of artworks of Sien Hoornik. His drawing benefited from their relationship. Van Gogh appreciated her professional patience with his demands for poses and his passion for work. He told Theo, 'This is by my model **and** me'. Nearby, a more spontaneous sketch shows Hoornik and her new baby, Willem.



Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Woman seated

The Hague, April – May 1882

Graphite and ink on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68375

Vitrine:

Frank Holl 1845–1888

Gone – Euston station, departure of Emigrants,

9.15 pm train for Liverpool

The Graphic, 19 February 1876

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74061

Frank Holl 1845–1888

Want: Her Poverty, but not her will, consents

Art Journal vol. 15

1876

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74059

Van Gogh was familiar with the stereotypes of his time that described women like Sien Hoornik, who had children and were not married, as 'fallen'. He found views more sympathetic to his own in **The Graphic**. In a letter discussing their relationship, Van Gogh likened Hoornik to the 'abandoned' mother in Holl's image, **Gone**. Another described Holl's **Want** (on display in the showcase), adding 'I believe that, like me, you don't condemn fallen women'.

Van Gogh's personal copy

Frank Holl 1845–1888

A Flower Girl

From the series 'Sketches in London',

The Graphic, June 1872

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X73447

While living in The Hague Van Gogh collected five prints by **The Graphic** artist Frank Holl, including 'Sketches in London – Flower Girl'. The scene of a poor flower seller reminded him of England, when he told his brother 'In the streets of London they're selling sweet violets everywhere'.

Vitrine:

Luke Fildes 1843–1927

Homeless and Hungry

The Graphic, 4 December 1869

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74063

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

The Public Soup Kitchen

The Hague, March 1883

Graphite, chalk and watercolour on paper

Collection Rijksmuseum Twenthe, Enschede. (NL).

Loan private collection

X68378

Although Van Gogh gained moral and practical support from the prints he collected, they were secondary to first-hand experience. When he lived in The Hague he used the local soup kitchen and asked people he met there to be his models. Sien Hoornik was one of his models. She moved into Van Gogh's lodgings with her young daughter. She was pregnant and gave birth soon after.

Van Gogh collected prints of refuges and soup kitchens, which informed several works. In this painting, Hoornik stands with her daughter and a boy, holding her baby to her cheek. The grouping is similar to the one on the left of Van Gogh's print **Homeless and Hungry** (on display in the showcase).

Van Gogh's personal copy
after Gustave Doré 1832–1883
At the Door of a House of Refuge, London
From **L'Univers illustré**, December 1875
Originally in **London: A Pilgrimage**

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)
X73439

Vitrine:

Edwin Buckman 1841–1930
A London Dustyard
Illustrated London News, 1 March 1873

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019
Z74064

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

The Dustman

The Hague, 1883

Graphite on paper

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Anonymous gift in memory of Dr. Walter S. Heil
X73237

British prints changed the way Van Gogh saw his surroundings. In The Hague, he wrote 'Today I paid a visit to the place where the dustmen bring the rubbish etc. By Jove, how splendid that was – for Buckman'.

Dustmen found their way into the literature and illustrations of the 19th century. Van Gogh's English title, written on the drawing, links it to Dickens's novel **Our Mutual Friend** and to Buckman's print (on display in the showcase), which he had acquired at the time he visited the rubbish dump.

Entering the third section, clockwise

Wall text:

British printed books inspired ideas and images that were important to Van Gogh. He was interested in the relationship between art and life. The books he loved affected the way he saw himself and his purpose.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Man reading at the fireside

October – November 1881

Black chalk, charcoal, grey wash, opaque watercolour,
on laid paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68372

At the beginning of his career in Etten, Van Gogh painted Cornelis Schuitemaker, a war veteran dependent on poor relief. The image of a thoughtful figure by a fire, facing the end of the year, and the end of their life, had a long history in British and European art.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Worn Out

Etten, September – October 1881

Watercolour on paper

P. & N. de Boer Foundation, Amsterdam

X73098

For his second version of a figure by a fire, Van Gogh brought in modern sources. The English title, 'Worn out', was taken from a print of this name by Scottish artist, Thomas Faed, which he had seen in London. The motif was common in literature, and features in Dickens's **Hard Times** (in the showcase). Van Gogh wrote that he was also thinking of a scene in Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel, **Uncle Tom's Cabin**.

Perhaps the most wonderful passage in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' is the one where the poor slave, sitting by his fire for the last time and knowing that he must die, remembers the words

Let cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall,
May I but safely reach my home,
My God, my Heaven, my All.

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.

Vincent van Gogh, 1882

Vitrine:

Charles Stanley Reinhart 1844–1896

Sorrowing 1876

In Charles Dickens, **Hard Times**

Harper & Brothers: New York

Engraving on paper

Charles Dickens Museum, London

X73421

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

At Eternity's Gate

The Hague, November 1882

Lithograph on paper

Bibliothèque de l'INHA, collections Jacques Doucet,

EM VAN GOGH

X72844

Van Gogh returned to the image of a man with his head in his hands when he moved to The Hague. He made drawings and lithographs of another war veteran, Adrianus Zuyderland. He wrote that this was 'to express the special mood of Christmas and New Year. At that time, in both the Netherlands and in England, there's still always a religious element'.

Quote above:

**You may not always be able to say what it is that confines
and yet you feel I know not what bars ... and then you ask
yourself, Dear God, is this for long, is this for ever, is this
for eternity?**

Vincent van Gogh, 1880

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Sorrowing old man ('At Eternity's Gate')

Saint-Rémy, May 1890

Oil paint on canvas

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68358

Van Gogh made this painting with its English title while at the Saint-Paul hospital, based on his lithograph made eight years earlier. When he was not well enough to go out and work from nature he made 'translations' from prints.

Van Gogh's doctor observed that when he was unwell, 'he usually sits with his head in his hands, and if someone speaks to him, it is as though it hurts him, and he gestures for them to leave him alone.'



Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

The Prison Courtyard

Saint-Rémy, February 1890

Oil paint on canvas

The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

X68468

Van Gogh wrote of a 'prison' of poverty and social prejudice that prevented him from being the artist he wanted to be. Later, in the Saint-Paul hospital he made a 'translation' of Doré's print of Newgate. His description of his life at the hospital echoed his painting, 'The prison was crushing me, and père Peyron [his doctor] didn't pay the slightest attention to it.'



Van Gogh's personal copy
after Gustave Doré 1832–1883
Excercise yard at Newgate Prison 1872
From **Katholieke Illustratie**, 1872-1890
Originally in **London: A Pilgrimage**

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)
X73440

Van Gogh knew London's grim prisons from his walks through the city, as well as Dickens's searing account 'A Visit to Newgate' and the prison's presence in four of his novels. Van Gogh later collected over 30 prints of prisons and prisoners, including two of Gustave Doré's illustration of Newgate from the book **London: A Pilgrimage**.

Luke Fildes 1843–1927

The Empty Chair

1870

Engraving on paper

Charles Dickens Museum, London

X73416

Van Gogh prized his copy of this illustration published in **The Graphic** in 1870. It depicted the empty chair in Charles Dickens's study and marked Dickens's death.

Van Gogh told his brother how the artist Millais had shown Dickens the print by Luke Fildes, 'Homeless and Hungry' printed in **The Graphic** (on display elsewhere in this room). One of the writer's last acts was to ask Fildes to illustrate his book, **The Mystery of Edwin Drood**.

For Van Gogh, the empty chair stood for the end of an association of artists.

Vitrine:

Van Gogh rented the Yellow House in Arles in 1888 and attempted to launch his own Pre-Raphaelite or **The Graphic** style collective which he called the 'studio of the south'. He invited the artist Paul Gauguin to join him and hoped others would follow. He made chair portraits of himself and Gauguin, but after the end of their association he called them Gauguin's 'empty armchair' and 'my own empty chair'.

The single candle on Gauguin's chair alluded to Fildes's collaboration with Dickens on the writer's unfinished novel, in which a candle on a chair illuminates the last illustration.

Luke Fildes 1843–1927

Sleeping it off 1876

Illustration in Charles Dickens

The Mystery of Edwin Drood c.1879

Chapman and Hall: London

Charles Dickens Museum, London

X73430

+ 2 images: Van Gogh's Chair December 1888 and **Gauguin's Chair** November 1888

Weavers feature in two of Van Gogh's favourite books, Charles Dickens's **Hard Times** and George Eliot's **Silas Marner**. He identified with Eliot's stubborn, working heroes and solitary artisans.

Van Gogh made a series of drawings and paintings of weavers when he moved to the village of Nuenen after he left The Hague. He described his own work as like a 'weaver who must control and interweave many threads ... so absorbed in his work that he doesn't think but acts'.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Loom with weaver

Nuenen, April – May 1884

Oil paint on canvas

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68361

Van Gogh's personal copy
Helen Allingham 1848–1926
Thomas Carlyle
The Graphic, July 1876

Engraving on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)
X73446

The Scottish writer and philosopher Thomas Carlyle heroised work and working people. When Van Gogh set up his studio in a poor area of The Hague, he wrote, “Blessed is he who has found his work”, says Carlyle, and that’s absolutely true ... I want to make figures from the people for the people.’ Van Gogh read all Carlyle’s major works and owned two portrait prints.

Van Gogh's personal copy

Theodore Blake Wirgman 1848–1925

Some Graphic Artists

From an engraving originally in

Harper's Magazine, The Graphic, 1881

Stereotype print on paper

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam |

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X73445

When Van Gogh was working alone in The Hague, the socially engaged artists who started **The Graphic** became a kind of imaginary 'brotherhood' to him. This illustration to Hubert Herkomer's essay about **The Graphic** made him nostalgic for their collective: 'I'm now looking at that group of great artists and thinking of foggy London and the scurrying about in that small set-up.'

The print dates from the later years of the magazine, when Van Gogh thought it had become too commercial. He drew lines only to the pioneer contributors, writing sadly in a letter, 'sooner or later instead of Herkomer, Luke Fildes, Frank Holl, William Small & co. There will only be Empty chairs.'

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Sorrow

The Hague, November 1882

Graphite and ink on paper

The New Art Gallery Walsall, Garman Ryan Collection

X73247

This Etten seamstress looks content, but Van Gogh's model in The Hague, Sien Hoornik, was a seamstress who lived in more desperate circumstances. Van Gogh wrote she had 'one foot in the grave when I met her.'

Van Gogh presented Hoornik's 'sorrow' in the style of the English Pre-Raphaelite artists, writing, 'I'm extremely fond of those English drawings that are done in this style'. Hoornik also sat for a little letter sketch, **The Great Lady**, based on another Thomas Hood poem, 'The Lady's Dream' (a facsimile is on display in the showcase).

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Woman sewing and cat

Etten, October – November 1881

Chalk, wash and watercolour on paper

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68373

Van Gogh liked the popular poem 'Song of the Shirt' by English poet Thomas Hood, about the poor conditions of a seamstress. The poem inspired many British prints and paintings, such as Doré's illustrations (on display in the showcase) and **The Graphic** artist Frank Holl's **The Song of the Shirt**. Van Gogh referred to Hood's poem when he took up the subject of sewing in one of his first artworks, painted in his home town of Etten.

Vitrine:

Sketch by Vincent Van Gogh, 'Nude Woman (The Great Lady)', enclosed in letter to Theo van Gogh
c.6 April 1882

Facsimile

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)
Letter 215. Z08945

Gustave Doré 1832–1883
The Song of the Shirt
In The Favourite Poems of Thomas Hood
1870

Engraving on paper

Tate. Purchased 2019
Z74058

Frank Holl 1845–1888

The Song of the Shirt

1874

Oil paint on canvas

Loaned by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art
Gallery, Exeter

X73270

ROOM 4

COSMOPOLITANS: VAN GOGH AND BRITISH FRIENDS IN FRANCE

At the age of thirty-two Van Gogh left the Netherlands and joined his brother Theo in Paris. Theo was an art dealer, and Van Gogh met a network of artists, which included English-speaking friends represented in this room.

In France Van Gogh developed his distinct mature style. He spent two years in Paris before moving to Arles in the south to set up an artists' community. After only ten months, these plans were ended by serious mental illness which began to come back every few months. Van Gogh admitted himself to the Saint-Paul de Mausole hospital, in Saint-Rémy, where he continued to paint.

In spring 1890 Van Gogh moved to the village of Auvers-sur-Oise, near Paris and closer to Theo, where he created a picture nearly every day. On 27 July of that year he shot himself in the chest and died of his wounds two days later.



Anticlockwise from wall text

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Self-Portrait with Felt Hat

December 1886 – January 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X68547

In Paris, Van Gogh began a series of self-portraits. In total he made 35 over his life. They incorporated some of the principles of his British-inspired 'Heads of the People', representing himself as modern, working man with dignity and psychological depth.

Clockwise from wall text

Lucien Pissarro 1863–1944

La Maison de la Sourde, Éragny

1886

Oil paint on canvas

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Pissarro Family Gift, 1952

X72842

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Path in the Woods

Paris, May – July 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X68344

Lucien Pissarro was part of a circle of neo-impressionist artists experimenting with a technique of painting in dots and dabs of contrasting colours. He settled in Britain in 1890.

Van Gogh saw Pissarro's painting **La Maison de la Sourde, Éragny** when it was exhibited at the Salon des Indépendants annual art exhibition. **Path in the Woods** was one of a series of paintings Van Gogh made while he was exploring neo-impressionism and painting with Pissarro's circle in the Paris suburb of Asnières.

Lucien Pissarro 1863–1944

The Garden Gate, Epping

1894

Oil paint on canvas

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Presented by the Pissarro Family, 1951

X68599

Following his move to Provence in the south of France, Van Gogh explored stronger colour and brushstrokes. He sent most of his pictures to Theo in Paris, where they were seen by many artists. These included 14 paintings of orchards.

Shortly after attending Van Gogh's funeral in 1890, Lucien Pissarro moved to Britain. **The Garden Gate, Epping**, a scene in Essex, reflects the influence of Van Gogh's orchard paintings. Pissarro shared his first-hand knowledge of Van Gogh with British artists.

Roderic O'Connor 1860–1940

Yellow Landscape

1892

Oil paint on canvas

Presented by Mr and Mrs Barnett Shine through the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1977

T02113

The Irish painter Roderic O'Connor never met Van Gogh, but his work was exhibited alongside the artist's and he knew painters and dealers in Van Gogh's circle. He saw a memorial exhibition in Theo's apartment two months after Van Gogh died.

O'Connor was one of the earliest painters to respond to Van Gogh's forceful colour, geometric compositions and directional strokes of paint.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Wheatfield

Arles, June 1888

Oil paint on canvas

P. & N. de Boer Foundation, Amsterdam

X73099



Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Portrait of Alexander Reid

Paris, winter c.1887

Oil paint on canvas

Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, The University of Oklahoma,
Norman; Aaron M. and Clara Weitzenhoffer Bequest, 2000
X68474

The Scottish art dealer Alexander Reid was friends with Theo and Vincent van Gogh, and stayed with them in Paris. Van Gogh painted this portrait of Reid in conversation in their apartment, surrounded by pictures. He gave it to Reid who brought it back to Scotland. Reid became an important support to British artists and collectors who were interested in Van Gogh.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Still Life, Basket of Apples

Paris, autumn 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Saint Louis Art Museum, Gift of Sydney M. Shoenberg Sr.

X68473

Van Gogh was struck by the beauty of these apples while on a walk with Alexander Reid. Reid bought them for Van Gogh who rushed home and painted two versions. Van Gogh gave this picture to Reid and the other to Lucien Pissarro, both of whom took them home to Britain. They were among the first works by Van Gogh to come to this country.



Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

La Mousmé

Arles, July – August 1888

Ink sketch

Collection Miles, Sebastian and Hugh Gibson

X75824

In Paris, Van Gogh was part of a network of English-speaking friends – British, American and Australian. Bonds were strengthened by painting portraits of each other and trading works.

The network kept in touch with letters written in English (on display in the showcase). This portrait is one of twelve drawings of recent paintings that Van Gogh sent to the Australian artist, John Russell, so that he might choose one of his works as a gift.

Vitrine:

Letter from Vincent van Gogh to John Peter Russell

Arles, 19 April 1888

Facsimile

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Thannhauser Collection, Gift, Justin K. Thannhauser, 1978

78.2514.18

Z74139

Vitrine:

Archibald Standish Hartrick 1864–1950

Vincent van Gogh

Frontispiece of **A Painter's Pilgrimage through 50 Years**
1939

Tate. Purchased 2018
Z74065

Many years after their time together in Paris, Archibald Standish Hartrick wrote a memoir of Van Gogh and Paul Gauguin, and sketched a portrait of Van Gogh from memory. Like Pissarro, Hartrick showed Van Gogh talking. He said the artist's words and thoughts blended different languages, 'pouring out sentences in Dutch, English and French'.

Archibald Standish Hartrick 1864–1950

Nude Study

1886

Chalk on paper

London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Local Studies
and Archives

X73488

One of Van Gogh's friends, the Scottish painter Archibald Hartrick, studied at the studio of Fernand Cormon a few months after Van Gogh, and used the same charcoal, paper and probably the same model. The students' study of casts of classical statues was meant to help them to idealise the human body, but Van Gogh and Hartrick celebrated the real appearance of the working model.

+ image: 'Standing Female Nude'

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Plaster Cast of a Woman's Torso

Paris, February – March 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X68342

Van Gogh went to study in the studio of the established French artist Fernand Cormon, to improve his understanding of the figure. His task was to draw nude models and casts of classical statues. Van Gogh became impatient with conventional study and left, but he continued to practice from casts, including this one of the **Torso of Venus**, which he owned. He had seen the original statue in the British Museum.

Vitrine in the centre of the room:

Lucien Pissarro 1863–1944

Vincent van Gogh in conversation

1888

Chalk on paper

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Pissarro Family Gift, 1952
X68331

Van Gogh and Lucien Pissarro had much in common. The artists had both lived in England before meeting in France where they shared social ideals and enthusiasm for modern art and print-making.

Pissarro's informal sketch shows Van Gogh talking energetically. His top-hatted companion is probably Theo, who managed an art gallery in Paris. This is the only known image of the brothers together.

ROOM 5

VAN GOGH, POST-IMPRESSIONIST

This room looks at the exhibition **Manet and the Post-Impressionists**, which introduced British audiences to Van Gogh's art, twenty years after he died. The title created the term 'post-impressionist' to describe the artists in the exhibition.

The paintings shocked people unfamiliar with modern styles, but the exhibition attracted over 25,000 visitors and was a turning point in British culture. Author Virginia Woolf wrote, 'on or about December 1910, human character changed'.



Projection

Wall text:

Vincent van Gogh artworks in

Manet and the Post-Impressionists:

Self-Portrait as a Painter 1887–1888

Factories at Clichy 1887

Bridges across the Seine at Asnières 1887

The Pink Orchard 1888

Field With Irises near Arles 1888

The Harvest 1888

Sunflowers 1888

Woman Rocking a Cradle (Augustine Roulin) 1889

The Postman (Joseph Etienne Roulin) 1888 –1889

Sunflowers 1889

Rain 1889

The Road Menders 1889

Cypresses and Two Women 1890

Pietà (after Delacroix) 1889

The Raising of Lazarus (After Rembrandt) 1890

Irises 1890

Portrait of Dr Gachet 1890

Daubigny's Garden 1890

Young Man with Cornflower 1890

Wheat fields after the Rain (The Plain of Auvers) 1890

Wheatfield with Crows 1890

Label text:

Over 250 works were shown in the exhibition **Manet and the Post-Impressionists**, at London's Grafton Galleries, 8 November 1910 – 11 January 1911. Works by Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin and Van Gogh dominated the exhibition, with others by Edouard Manet, Georges Seurat, Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso. More than 20 paintings were by Van Gogh. Many, such as **Sunflowers** and **Wheatfield with Crows**, later became his most famous works.

Clockwise from wall text

Wall text:

Criticism of Van Gogh's paintings focused on his personal history and reflected prejudice and misunderstandings around mental health at the time. Those who praised his work also connected his artistic talent to his illness. A typical comment, by the writer C. Lewis Hind described him as 'a madman and genius'. These responses have affected how the art of Van Gogh is seen, even today.

Wall graphics credit line:

Cartoons ©Illustrated London.
News/Mary Evan Picture Library

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Augustine Roulin (Rocking a Cradle)

Arles, March 1889

Oil paint on canvas

Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, gift of ir. V.W. van Gogh,
Laren (NL)

X68376

Even Van Gogh thought the bright colour and bold pattern of his portrait of his friend Augustine Roulin was extreme. He imagined this painting cheering the cabin of a sailor far from home and likened it to a popular print 'from a penny bazaar'.

Van Gogh painted five versions of this picture. This is his 'repetition' of the one exhibited at **Manet and the Post Impressionists** (which now remains permanently in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York). Van Gogh considered it the best of the series, but it became a focus of criticism of the exhibition.



Quote above:

It's a woman dressed in green ... Her hair is entirely orange and in plaits. The complexion worked up in chrome yellow. ... This wallpaper is blue-green with pink dahlias and dotted with orange and with ultramarine. ... Whether I've actually sung a lullaby with colour I leave to the critics.

Vincent van Gogh, 1889

Vanessa Bell 1879–1961

Roger Fry

1912

Oil paint on panel

National Portrait Gallery, London

X68238

Vanessa Bell was one of the first British artists to take inspiration from Van Gogh and the other post-impressionist painters. Her portrait of her friend, art critic and painter Roger Fry, co-organiser of **Manet and the Post-Impressionists**, was made the year after the exhibition. It captures Fry's enthusiasm, with a yellow face similar to Van Gogh's painting **Augustine Roulin (Rocking a Cradle)**, and Van Gogh-like directional dashes and dabs.

ROOM 6

Vitrine in the centre of the room, top to bottom

Anthony Mario Ludovici 1882-1971

**The Letters of a Post Impressionist, Being the Familiar
Correspondence of Vincent van Gogh**

1912

Open at a reproduction of Vincent van Gogh

Landscape with a Tree in the Foreground 1888

Tate Library and Archive

Z74142

'Van Gogh Mappe' portfolio cover

Published by R Piper & Co, Munich 1904

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74180

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1893

Trunk of an old Yew Tree 1888

Reproduced in 'Van Gogh Mappe' portfolio

Published by R Piper & Co, Munich 1904

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74179

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1893

The Night Café 1888

Reproduced in 'Van Gogh Mappe' portfolio

Published by R Piper & Co, Munich 1904

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74379

'A TOI, VAN GOGH!' VAN GOGH AND BRITISH ARTISTS

In the early years of the twentieth century Van Gogh's work was viewed most thoughtfully through the eyes of artists. Some British painters embraced the decorative power of post-impressionism. Many were familiar with Van Gogh's work from exhibitions in Paris, and reproductions in books and prints were becoming available.

Artists such as Harold Gilman, Spencer Gore and Matthew Smith, led by Walter Sickert, were part of new exhibiting societies, including the Camden Town Group. They adapted Van Gogh's brilliant colours, distinct brush strokes and angled compositions to British versions of his subjects. Gilman kept a print of a Van Gogh's self-portrait on the wall of his studio. Before he began to paint, he would wave his brush towards the picture, declaring, 'A toi, Van Gogh!' ('Cheers, Van Gogh!').



Clockwise from wall text

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

The Plaster Cast

1913

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X69598

Mathew Smith spent much of his life in France and saw Van Gogh's work there. His first paintings to respond to Van Gogh's style were subjects associated with the artist: a Provençal landscape, a yellow house, an empty chair, sunflowers and a plaster cast.

This picture adopts the decorative colour of Van Gogh's **Still life with plaster statuette**, especially the triangle of blue, but views his still life from eye-level without Van Gogh's dramatic diagonals.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890
Still life with plaster statuette
Paris, late 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Kröller Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands
X68356

Van Gogh made this still life of a plaster cast of Venus, flower and French realist novels in Paris. The high viewpoint creates angled interlocking shapes. The white and yellow fabric against a blue background echo the colours of the cast and the yellow and blue books.

British artists had the opportunity to see **Still life with plaster statuette** when it was in the hands of art dealer Ambroise Vollard.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Horse Chestnut Tree in Blossom

Paris, May 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X68343

This picture was painted in Paris when Van Gogh was working alongside neo-impressionist artists such as Lucien Pissarro. Dabs of contrasting colour lend light and movement to the flowers and leaves. The central placement of the tree gives it extra presence.



Harold Gilman 1876–1919

In Gloucestershire

1916

Oil paint on canvas

Leeds Art Fund (Leeds Art Gallery)

X68502

Gilman saw Van Gogh's **Horse Chestnut Tree in Blossom** in a Paris exhibition and had a black and white picture of **Trunk of an Old Yew Tree**. In later life he spent a summer in Gloucestershire drawing and painting 'nothing but trees', several of which adapt Van Gogh's powerful brushwork and composition.

Harold Gilman 1876–1919

Tree

1916

Ink on paper

Private collection

X73236

Gilman admired Van Gogh's drawings made with a reed pen, and their distinctive bold strokes and short dabs of sepia-coloured ink. Some were reproduced in **The Letters of a Post-Impressionist** (on display in the showcase).

Here, Gilman uses a reed pen to create dots, dashes and directional lines which suggest texture and movement.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Trunk of an Old Yew Tree

Arles, October 1888

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X72815

Van Gogh painted this old oak tree in autumn in Arles, Provence. It is a traditional image in art, used to suggest survival and resilience, but he used a simple arrangement in the style of Japanese prints, which he knew well. Van Gogh's colours and brushwork bring the tree close to the viewer.

Vitrine:

Anthony Mario Ludovici 1882-1971

**The Letters of a Post-Impressionist, Being the Familiar
Correspondence of Vincent van Gogh**

1912

Open at a reproduction of Vincent van Gogh

The Yellow House September 1888

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74140

Spencer Gore 1878–1914

Harold Gilman's House at Letchworth, Hertfordshire

1912

Oil paint on canvas

New Walk Museum & Art Gallery.

Leicester Arts & Museums Service

X68602

Gilman and Gore shared Van Gogh's ideals of an artist's community and read about his plans for the 'Yellow House' in Arles in books such as **The Letters of a Post-Impressionist** (in the showcase). Gore stayed with Gilman, and his interest in Van Gogh was encouraged by Gilman's books and reproductions. He painted Gilman's house like Van Gogh's painting **Yellow House**, illuminated with yellow sunlight against a bright blue sky.



Spencer Gore 1878–1914

The Fig Tree

c.1912

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Bequeathed by J.W. Freshfield 1955

T00028

Spencer Gore probably saw Van Gogh's **Hospital at Saint-Rémy** when it was exhibited in Paris in 1908 and 1909. This painting of a fig tree in a garden near his London apartment uses a similar lively pattern of foliage. Contrasting colours dominate the small figure and buildings.

Gore was typical of British artists at this time in being more interested in the decorative than the expressive possibilities of Van Gogh's style.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Hospital at Saint-Rémy

1889

Oil paint on canvas

The Armand Hammer Collection, Gift of the Armand Hammer Foundation. Hammer Museum, Los Angeles

X73116

Van Gogh painted this view of the Saint-Paul hospital garden after he was confined by illness for several weeks. The contrasting red earth and green leaves and the trees swirling high above the hospital buildings express the energy he found in nature, 'the proud, unchanging nature of the pines and the cedar bushes against the blue'.



Harold Gilman 1876–1919

Eating House

1914

Oil paint on canvas

Museums Sheffield

X20546

Harold Gilman painted **Eating House**, a place where working people ate, in the yellow and contrasting red and green that Van Gogh described using in **The Night Café**. Gilman had seen the work in Paris and owned a black and white reproduction.

Harold Gilman 1876–1919

Mrs Mounter at the Breakfast Table

1916–17

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Purchased 1942

N05317

Harold Gilman knew Van Gogh's **Augustine Roulin (Rocking a Cradle)** from **Manet and the Post-Impressionists** and an early colour plate in Ambroise Vollard's **Lettres de Vincent van Gogh à Emile Bernard** (on display in the showcase).

Gilman portrayed Ann Mounter, a cleaner and fellow lodger, with similar dignity, rich colour and brushwork. He even added patterned wallpaper.



Vitrine:

Ambroise Vollard 1867–1939

Lettres de Vincent van Gogh à Emile Bernard

1911

Open at a reproduction of Vincent van Gogh

Augustine Roulin (Rocking a Cradle) 1889

Tate Library

X774305

Harold Gilman 1876–1919

Self-Portrait

date unknown

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X75823

For Harold Gilman and Spencer Gore, Van Gogh's self-portraits represented his idea of the painter as a working man. Harold Gilman owned large reproductions of two self-portraits (on display in the showcase). Gore's and Gilman's self-portraits nod to these, and to Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait as a Painter*, which they had seen in **Manet and the Post-Impressionists**.

Spencer Gore 1878–1914

Spencer Frederick Gore

1914

Oil paint on canvas

National Portrait Gallery, London

X20491

Walter Richard Sickert 1860–1942

The Juvenile Lead (Self-Portrait)

1908

Oil paint on canvas

Southampton City Art Gallery

X07007

The painter and critic Walter Sickert was an important British voice supporting Van Gogh. He claimed to have ‘appraised’ him in the artist’s lifetime. Sickert had close ties with the Paris art world and his work was exhibited with Van Gogh’s on several occasions. This self-portrait was shown in 1907 in the Paris exhibition **Portraits of Men**, alongside four portraits painted by Van Gogh.

Vitrine:

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1891

Self-Portrait Dedicated to Paul Gauguin 1888

Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe 1889

Reproduced in 'Van Gogh Mappe' portfolio

Published by R Piper & Co, Munich 1904

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74177, Z74178

ROOM 7

SUNFLOWERS:

VAN GOGH AND BRITISH FLOWER PAINTING

Van Gogh painted pictures of sunflowers in 1888 to decorate his house in Arles in the South of France. They were exhibited in major exhibitions in London in 1910 and 1923 and **Sunflowers** was acquired for the nation by the National Gallery, Millbank (now Tate) in 1924. The painting was transferred to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square in 1961. It returns to Tate Britain for the first time since then.

Van Gogh's flower still lifes contributed to a revival of flower painting among modern artists in Britain. Still lifes painted in conversation with Van Gogh's **Sunflowers** are on display in this room.



Anticlockwise from wall text

Vitrine:

Johanna van Gogh-Bonger 1862–1925

Letter to the director of the National Gallery relinquishing the 'Sunflowers'

24 January 1924

Tate Public Records TG 17/4/3/2

Z74067

Van Gogh's sister-in-law, Johanna van Gogh-Bonger, was an English teacher who had lived in London and kept close contacts with Britain. When her husband Theo died six months after Vincent, she inherited Van Gogh's paintings and spent the rest of her life working hard to promote his reputation. When she sold **Sunflowers** to the National Gallery, Millbank (now Tate) in 1924, she said, '...he himself, le 'Peintre des Tournesoles' [the 'Painter of Sunflowers'], would have liked it to be there ... It is a sacrifice for the sake of Vincent's glory.'

Clockwise from wall text

Adolphe Monticelli 1824–1886

Vase with Flowers

c.1875

Oil paint on panel

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

X68348

Scottish dealer Alexander Reid gave Van Gogh this still life by French artist Adolphe Monticelli. Monticelli's rich colour and thick paint greatly influenced Van Gogh's style and encouraged him to paint flowers.

Van Gogh hoped his own flower paintings might be as commercial in Britain and America as Monticelli's were, writing to his brother: 'If our Monticelli bouquet is worth 500 francs to an art lover ... then I dare assure you that my sunflowers are also worth 500 francs to one of those Scots or Americans.'

Frank Brangwyn 1867–1956

Sunflowers

early 20th century

Oil paint on board

Royal Academy of Arts, London

X68491

Anglo-Welsh artist Frank Brangwyn worked in Paris during the 1890s and knew artists and dealers from Van Gogh's world. Brangwyn's picture of five spiky sunflowers was probably painted in response to Van Gogh's **Vase with Six Sunflowers** on a deep blue background. He had the opportunity to see it around the time it was exhibited in Paris in 1895. Van Gogh's work was destroyed in the bombing of Hiroshima in World War Two.

Quote above:

Modern European art has always mistreated flowers, dealing with them at best as aids to sentimentality until Van Gogh saw ... the arrogant spirit that inhabits the sunflower.

Art critic Roger Fry, 1910

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

Flowers in a Vase

1913–1914

Oil paint on canvas

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

X73104

Inspired by the decorative aspects of post-impressionist artists, Matthew Smith became a consummate flower painter. Smith trained with Henri Matisse and his variation on **Sunflowers** here combines Matisse's colours with Van Gogh's bright yellow, the blue outline around the vase, and the pattern of directional brushstrokes.



Samuel John Peploe 1871–1935

Tulips in a Pottery Vase

c.1912

Oil paint on canvas

Hunterian Museum, Glasgow.

Bequeathed by George Smith, 1997

X73117

The Scottish painter Samuel Peploe visited Paris regularly. He adopted Van Gogh's expressive brushwork and colour after seeing a large exhibition of his work in 1909. The yellow background, thick paint, directional brushing and twisting stems of the flowers in this painting were recognised by critics as 'à la Van Gogh.'

Samuel John Peploe 1871–1935

Yellow Tulips and Statuette

c.1912–1927

Oil paint on canvas

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, Laing art Gallery,

Newcastle Upon Tyne

X68504

Samuel Peploe took aspects of the decorative style of post-impressionist art and became one of the Scottish Colourists promoted by art dealer Alexander Reid. This painting of yellow flowers includes objects seen in Van Gogh's and Matthew Smith's still lifes of a plaster cast with books and flowers (on display in the previous room). Peploe had opportunities to see both paintings. Peploe's version is more smoothly painted than Van Gogh's and Smith's, with a formal arrangement that owes as much to Cézanne and Matisse.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Sunflowers

Arles, August 1888

Oil paint on canvas

The National Gallery, London. Bought, Courtauld Fund, 1924

X68233



Jacob Epstein 1880–1959

Sunflowers

1933

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Mr and Mrs D. King, UK

X73272

Sculptor Jacob Epstein was close to Matthew Smith and admired Van Gogh from the time he first saw his work in 1903. He took up landscape and flower-painting later in life and made at least ten images of sunflowers between 1933 and 1936. He was less concerned with beauty than earlier British artists and more interested in the energy of Van Gogh's brushwork and colour. Like Van Gogh, he explores the cycles of growth and decay through variations of colour from yellow to brown.

William Nicholson 1872–1949

Sunflowers

c.1933

Oil paint on panel

Private collection, courtesy of the Richard Green Gallery,
London X73233

William Nicholson was a very successful still life painter. He made at least two sunflower still lifes late in his career, when **Sunflowers** was on permanent display at the Tate Gallery. This still life is smaller and more intimate than Van Gogh's, but painted in unusually thick, energetic strokes of brilliant yellow.

Winifred Nicholson 1893–1981

Honeysuckle and Sweetpeas

1945–1946

Oil paint on board

Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums

X76344

Van Gogh's flower paintings made an impact on a younger generation of artists. Winifred Nicholson wrote that she admired Van Gogh's understanding of arranging contrasting colours, 'red against green, blue against yellow.' She developed her own successful and individual style but her lively, informal flower still lifes earned her the nick-name the 'female Van Gogh'.

Christopher Wood 1901–1930

Yellow Chrysanthemums

1925

Oil paint on canvas

Mr Benny Higgins and Mrs Sharon Higgins

X73175

Like Van Gogh, Christopher Wood was largely self-taught, and Van Gogh's paintings and letters were an important inspiration. Wood developed his style with a series of flower paintings.

Winifred Nicholson and Wood sought a simplicity of painting. Here Wood narrows the **Sunflowers**' array of yellows, 'I mean to paint my things in compositions of not more than three, often only two colours. I still admire Van Gogh tremendously'.

ROOM 8

DRAMA OF A MAN: VAN GOGH IN BRITAIN BETWEEN THE WARS

By the 1920s Van Gogh's pictures were exhibited regularly in Britain and collected by British individuals and public galleries. He became known to the wider public and established as a modern master.

The English publication of two biographies and Van Gogh's letters led to his life becoming as famous as his art, and the two became strongly connected. Many British artists walked in his footsteps and interpreted their lives and surroundings in similar ways.



Anticlockwise from wall text

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Pollard willows at sunset

Arles, March 1888

Oil paint on canvas on cardboard

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68357

Van Gogh's **Shoes** was shown to British audiences in his first solo exhibition in Britain in 1923 at the Leicester Galleries, and quickly became famous for its associations with the artist's poor, hard-working life.

Quote above:

The drama of the man was predicted in his pictures... We race along with him, breathless – whither? No matter, for we follow a man, a hero, perhaps the last!

Julius Meier-Graefe in Vincent van Gogh, 1922

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Self-Portrait

Paris, autumn 1887

Oil paint on canvas

Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Donation de Jacques Laroche, 1947

X68488

The smartly-dressed self-portrait was painted during his last months in Paris. The brushstrokes radiating from the face emphasise the eyes and shows Van Gogh's confidence in combining colours.

The portrait featured in the first solo exhibition of Van Gogh's art in Britain at the Leicester Galleries, London in 1923, and was the frontispiece of the catalogue (on display in the showcase in the centre of this room). The Tate tried (unsuccessfully) to buy it for the national collection.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Thatched Roofs

1884

Ink, graphite and gouache on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by C. Frank Stoop 1933

N04715

Between the First and Second World Wars, Van Gogh's artworks became more widely collected, and public galleries started acquiring them. His 'crouching cottages', as Roger Fry called Van Gogh's cottage scenes, appealed to British taste.

This early drawing, bought by the London collector Frank Stoop before the war, was bequeathed to Tate (then part of the National Gallery) with two others and a late painting, **Farms Near Auvers** (on display in the next room).

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

**Cottage with Trees at Nuenen, transcribed from Vincent
van Gogh 'The Cottage' 1885**

date unknown

Pastel on paper

Estate of the artist

X73230

Matthew Smith purchased Van Gogh's painting **The Cottage** and hung it on the wall next to his bed so he could see it when his head was on the pillow.

Smith followed Van Gogh's habit of making 'translations' of other artist's work when he was too ill to paint from nature. Smith made this copy from Van Gogh's picture when he was unwell. Van Gogh's original painting has not been seen in public since it was sold after Smith's death.

George Leslie Hunter 1879–1959

Fife Pastoral

date unknown

Oil paint on board

Culzean Castle, Garden & Country Park,

The National Trust for Scotland

X73364

Many British artists interpreted their surroundings through Van Gogh's landscapes. Van Gogh's brushstrokes and understanding of colour influenced George Leslie Hunter, a member of the Scottish Colourists group. The low cottages of Fife inspired his closest dialogue with the artist.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Pollard willows at sunset

Arles, March 1888

Oil paint on canvas on cardboard

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

X68357

Jacob Epstein 1880–1959

Epping Forest

c.1933

Watercolour and gouache on paper

Tate. Presented through the Friends of the Tate Gallery,
Helena and Kenneth Levy Bequest 1990

T05760

Jacob Epstein saw Van Gogh's striking depiction of willows at sunset when it was exhibited in Paris in 1907. Epstein's paintings of Epping Forest used the same dramatically shaped trees in dark blues against contrasting reds, yellows and greens.

Augustus John 1878–1961

Almond and Olive Trees, Provence

after 1927

Oil paint on canvas

Private collection

X73234

Van Gogh wrote of where he lived in Provence, 'the stronger light, the blue sky ... teaches one to see' and hoped other artists would paint there. After the First World War, the south of France became a popular destination for British artists. Augustus John first visited Provence in 1910, and spent many winters there, even renting a house in the 1920s near the Saint-Paul hospital, where Van Gogh had stayed. He painted almond and olive groves with the rusty earth and agitated profiles of Van Gogh's twisted trees.

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

Winter in Provence

c.1937

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented anonymously through the Friends of the Tate Gallery 1982

T03351

Matthew Smith first painted in Provence in 1914 and lived there for most of the 1930s. A series of 'experimental' landscapes responded to the paintings Van Gogh made in the region. The swirling strokes of **Winter in Provence** recall Van Gogh's work and the vivid descriptions in his letters of the strong 'mistral' wind that made landscape painting difficult at that time of year.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Olive Trees

Saint-Rémy, June 1889

Oil paint on canvas

National Galleries of Scotland. Purchased 1934

X68339

This was one of a number of paintings of olive trees Van Gogh made while staying at the Saint-Paul hospital. The steep slope and swirling foliage appear to capture the energy of the local 'mistral' wind. The work was shown at Van Gogh's first solo exhibition in Britain in 1923. It was bought by Michael Sadler, one of the leading British collectors of modern art, before being acquired by the National Galleries of Scotland in 1934.



Vanessa Bell 1879–1961

The Vineyard

c.1930

Oil paint on board

The Atkinson, Southport

X68553

In 1927 Vanessa Bell bought **La Bergère**, a house surrounded by olive groves, in the fishing village of Cassis in Provence. She stayed there for part of each year. Bell had mental health problems and, like Van Gogh, found consolation through painting the Provençal countryside. The curved brushstrokes, receding lines of vines and lively twists of the trees in Bell's **The Vineyard** recall Van Gogh's **Olive Trees**, but her colours are lighter and more harmonious.



Roger Fry 1866–1934
Carpentras, Provence
1930

Oil paint on cardboard on aluminium

The Courtauld Gallery, London
X68236

British artists interpreted the tree-lined avenues in towns and villages in Provence that Van Gogh wrote about in his letters: the 'gigantic tree-trunks ... and here and there glimpses of a house-front and little figures'.

Ten years after organising **Manet** and the **Post-Impressionists**, artist and writer Roger Fry painted a similar view to **The Road Menders** while staying in Cassis in Provence. He included plane trees with glimpses of buildings and small figures and used directional brushstrokes to describe each shape.

+image: 'Road Menders Saint-Remy'

Samuel John Peploe 1871–1935

Trees at Cassis

c.1928

Oil paint on board

Fleming Wyfold Art Foundation

X73226

Many of the Scottish Colourist group painted in the south of France where they worked in the tradition of Cézanne, Matisse and Van Gogh. For his view of the village on a visit to Cassis, Samuel Peploe borrowed the arrangement and strong contours of Van Gogh's *The Road Menders*, which he had seen in **Manet and the Post-Impressionists**.

Christopher Wood 1901–1930

Cassis, France

1927

Oil paint on canvas

Middlesbrough Collection at Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. Purchased with assistance from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund 1977/78
X73225

Provence was the region Christopher Wood considered 'most connected with the modern painters whom I most admire'. In 1927 he wanted 'to spend a week in Arles where Van Gogh, my Van Gogh, painted his best pictures'. Instead, he visited Cassis, where other British artists stayed. Here he painted the village square in the manner of Van Gogh's well-known **The Road Menders**.

Christopher Wood 1901–1930

Nude Boy in a Bedroom

1930

Oil paint on hardboard on plywood

National Galleries of Scotland.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh.

Purchased 1978

X64434

Van Gogh's **The Bedroom** was shown with **Sunflowers** and **The Yellow House** in his first solo exhibition in Britain in 1923 and in a display at the Tate Gallery the following year. It became one of his most well-known works. Many artists adapted it.

Christopher Wood identified with Van Gogh after reading his letters. His version of his bedroom has a similar chair, shutters, washstand and bed at an angle. Van Gogh's portraits of a lover and an artist on the wall are replaced by the real presence of Wood's partner, artist Francis Rose.

+image: 'The Bedroom', October 1888



William Nicholson 1872–1949
Miss Jekyll's Gardening Boots
1920

Oil paint on wood

Tate. Presented by Lady Emily Lutyens 1944
N05548

In 1920, William Nicholson was commissioned to paint a portrait of the garden designer and writer Gertrude Jekyll. When she refused to interrupt her work to sit for him, Nicholson borrowed the idea of Van Gogh's **Shoes**.

Vitrine in the centre of the room, left to right:

Irving Stone 1903–1989
Lust for Life
1937

Heritage Reprints: New York

Tate Library
Z74147

Matthew Smith's personal copies of
'The Letters of Vincent van Gogh'
1927

2 volumes

Estate of the artist
X73519

Two biographies and the first English edition of Van Gogh's letters published by Jo van Gogh-Bonger in the 1920s deepened knowledge and interest in the artist's life.

Van Gogh-Bonger wrote in her preface to the letters, 'What I so fervently hoped for the first edition has come to pass: they have found their way into people's hearts ... And thus will this second edition ... make new friends too.'

Julius Meier-Graefe 1867–1935
Vincent van Gogh: A Biographical Study 1922

Volume 1, open at frontispiece
Volume 2

Tate Library Z74143, Z74144

'Vincent van Gogh', Leicester Galleries, London
1923

Exhibition catalogue

Tate. Purchased 2018
Z74071

Entering the second section, clockwise

Wall text:

In 1929, eighteen of Van Gogh's artworks filled the final room of a large survey of Dutch art at the Royal Academy in London. Paintings in the exhibition included **Self-Portrait** and **Farms near Auvers**, both on display in this room.

The catalogue summed up Van Gogh as 'the brilliant and unhappy genius'. Stories about Van Gogh's mental illness, self-harm and death affected the way people looked at his art. The later self-portraits and his last paintings took on extra significance.

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Self-Portrait

Saint-Rémy, autumn 1889

Oil paint on canvas

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of
Mr and Mrs John Hay Whitney 1998.74.5
X73132

Van Gogh's letters describe how he painted this self-portrait in the Saint-Paul hospital after a recurrence of his mental illness in the summer of 1889. He said he 'began the first day I got up, I was thin, pale as a devil'.

The portrait became a very popular image of the artist and featured in the catalogue of the Royal Academy exhibition **Dutch Art** in 1929. Viewers associated the 'writhing' brushstrokes with suffering. However, the picture features a palette, and Van Gogh may have meant to reassure his family that he was well and working with energy.



Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

**A Corner of the Garden of St Paul's
Hospital at Saint-Rémy**

May 1889

Graphite and ink on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by C. Frank Stoop 1933. N04716

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

The Oise at Auvers

May 1890

Graphite and gouache on paper

Tate. Bequeathed by C. Frank Stoop 1933
N04714

Vincent van Gogh 1853–1890

Farms near Auvers

July 1890

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Bequeathed by C. Frank Stoop 1933

N04713

The three months Van Gogh spent in Auvers near Paris after he left the Saint-Paul hospital were his most prolific and he created paintings full of movement and colour.

After Van Gogh died, some people saw his late works as premonitions of his suicide. This unfinished work, **Farms near Auvers**, was exhibited only a year after his death, with a subtitle 'last sketch'. In the 20th century, Van Gogh's painting **Wheatfield with Crows** was popularly believed to be his last work, painted in the location in which he shot himself. Recent research at the Van Gogh Museum has established that **Farms near Auvers** was one of two paintings (with **Tree Roots**) he was working on when he died.



ROOM 9

PHANTOM OF THE ROAD: VAN GOGH TRAGIC HERO

During the Second World War, many of Van Gogh's artworks were hidden to keep them safe and his work was rarely seen. But after the war, he was celebrated in exhibitions, books and films. This included the last Van Gogh exhibition to take place at Tate, in 1947.

The war and its aftermath encouraged the idea of Van Gogh as a tragic and alienated artist whose art expressed the human condition. Some British artists admired this realism and explored the emotional power of his dynamic brushwork and vivid colour.

Today, we look beyond the idea of Van Gogh as a solitary artist. We appreciate his work in vivid and changing dialogue with the culture and ideas of his times and those that have followed.



Clockwise from wall text

Van Gogh: Tate Gallery 1947
1947

Exhibition poster

Tate Public Records TAP1776
Z74066

The Arts Council was founded in 1946 and staged the exhibition **Van Gogh** at the Tate Gallery in 1947. Nearly five thousand people visited a day and it was dubbed 'the Miracle on Millbank'. It was also extremely popular when it travelled to Birmingham and Glasgow.

Van Gogh's dazzling colours cheered the war-torn cities, and the idea of him as an artist of the people chimed with the post-war mood and ideals of art for all.

Vitrine:

Opening of the 'Van Gogh' exhibition,
Tate Gallery, 9 December 1947
1947

Photograph, silver gelatin print on paper

Tate Public Records TG 92/62/1
Z74068

**Letter from Tate Gallery administrator to Gabriel White,
Arts Council of Great Britain requesting reimbursement for
gallery floor refurbishment**
9 March 1948

Tate Public Records TG 92/62/1
Z74069

Still from The Third Man

1949

Directed by Carol Reed

London Film Productions

Tate. Purchased 2019

Z74175

Carol Reed's cold-war film *The Third Man*, imagined the **Sunflowers**, recovered from a Nazi hiding place and hanging in a British cultural club in Vienna. Van Gogh's picture as appropriate to the values of the club. The **Sunflowers** in the film is the version that is in the collection of the Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

TV screen caption:

Lust for Life

1956

Directed by Vincente Minnelli

Duration 1 min 35 sec

© Loew's Incorporated

Licensed by Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc

While painting his Van Gogh series, Francis Bacon saw the newly-released film of the artist's dramatic biography, **Lust for Life**. Shot on location in Provence and elsewhere, it recreated paintings such as **The Night Café** and **The Painter on the Road to Tarascon**.

Bacon denied that **Lust of Life** had any role in his work, but the sweeping space of **Van Gogh in a Landscape** recalled the expansive scene of the painter on the road to Tarascon in the film.

Francis Bacon 1909–1992

Van Gogh in a Landscape

1957

Oil paint on canvas

Centre Pompidou, Paris. Musée national d'art moderne /

Centre de création industrielle

X23100

Francis Bacon 1909–1992
Study for Portrait of Van Gogh VI
1957

Oil paint on canvas

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London
X16927

Francis Bacon said, 'Van Gogh is one of my great heroes ... [He] speaks of the need to make changes in reality ... This is the only possible way the painter can bring back the intensity of the reality.'

Bacon felt that this intensity could be found in the application and appearance of paint. His brushwork was influenced by Van Gogh as well as Matthew Smith and his expansive, directional strokes enliven the studies for a portrait of Van Gogh.

Francis Bacon 1909–1992
Study for Portrait of Van Gogh IV
1957

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1958
T00226

Francis Bacon read Van Gogh's letters and understood the importance to the artist of the figure on the road. For him, Van Gogh's **The Painter on the Road to Tarascon** (on display in the showcase) represented the artist as outsider and he described the work as a 'phantom of the road'. Bacon's series, based on a reproduction of the Van Gogh, made Van Gogh's shadow a sinister presence.

Bacon introduced other aspects of Van Gogh's paintings into his pictures. He turned the painter to face the viewer, like Van Gogh's late self-portraits, and painted the landscape with the clashing reds and greens and disturbed perspective lines of Van Gogh's famous **The Night Café**.



Quote on the wall:

**This artist did face the reality of existence, however
disconcerting, rather than close his eyes before the tragic
futility of inhuman life!**

**Oskar Kokoschka in Van Gogh's Influence on Modern
Painting, 1953**

Vitrine:

Vincent van Gogh **The Painter on His Way to Work** 1888

Reproduced in Wilhelm Uhde and Ludwig Goldscheider,

Vincent van Gogh 1936

Antonin Artaud, 'Van Gogh: the man suicided by society'

Published in **Horizon** vol.17, no.79 Jan – June 1948

Tate Library. Z74146, Z74145

Like Van Gogh, Francis Bacon used all kinds of printed images as inspiration. Van Gogh had written about his own use of prints by other artists, 'It's not copying ... It is rather translating into another language, the one of colours'. Bacon used this reproduction to create seven large studies for a portrait of Van Gogh.

Van Gogh's work **The Painter on His Way to Work** (also known as **The Painter on the Road to Tarascon**) was destroyed in 1945 by Allied bombing in Germany.

The French dramatist and artist Antonin Artaud spent time in a psychiatric hospital during the Second World War, and his passionate eulogy to Van Gogh was prompted by anger at a publication about Van Gogh's mental illness. Artaud's vision of Van Gogh and his expressive style influenced British artists when it was translated for the arts magazine, **Horizon** in 1948.

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

Landscape in Provence

c.1956

Oil paint on canvas

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

X73275

The Second World War kept artists away from their favourite landscapes. After it ended, some used Van Gogh's forceful colour and agitated brushwork to create a less consoling, insecure vision of nature, suited to the cold war atmosphere.

Matthew Smith's abridged, suggestive way of painting was celebrated by his younger friend, Francis Bacon, in the catalogue for Smith's 1953 retrospective at the Tate Gallery (on display in the showcase).

Vitrine:

Francis Bacon, 'Matthew Smith,
A Painter's Tribute'

In **Matthew Smith: Paintings from 1909–1952**

Exhibition catalogue

Tate Gallery 3 September – 18 October 1953

Private collection

Z74174

David Bomberg 1890–1957

Tregor and Tregoff, Cornwall

1947

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by Mrs Rosemary Peto 1967

T00910

David Bomberg 1890–1957

Flowers

1943

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by the artist's wife and family 1952

N06133

After the Second World War, Matthew Smith and David Bomberg interpreted Van Gogh's flower paintings in a new, violent, explosive style, which was very different from the beautiful flower paintings of previous decades. They looked at Van Gogh through the expressionist painter Chaïm Soutine, who had died in the war. Soutine adapted the artist's style to a darker, more unstable vision of nature.

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

Yellow Dahlias

1940s

Oil paint on canvas

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

X68241

Vitrine:

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

Sunflowers sketchbook

1947–1959

Ink on paper

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

X73105

Matthew Smith 1879–1959

Young Airman

c.1941

Oil paint on canvas

Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

X73396

Following the death of his sons, both in the Royal Air Force, during the Second World War, Matthew Smith became a recluse. He was sought out by another young airman, the future writer Roald Dahl. Dahl was an enthusiast for the work of both Smith and Van Gogh. Dahl and Smith became friends and Smith painted him with fierce brushwork in the green and reds of Van Gogh's military portrait, **The Zouave**.

David Bomberg 1890–1957

Self-Portrait (David)

1937

Oil paint on canvas

Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

X68244

David Bomberg was associated with Jacob Epstein and Matthew Smith. Bomberg never directly acknowledged the influence of Van Gogh, but his expressive method of painting using emphatic brushstrokes and bold colour appear indebted to the artist's work.

Working in poverty and unable to afford models, Bomberg painted nine introspective self-portraits in the format of Van Gogh's. This portrait interprets the clashing greens and reds that Van Gogh wrote 'express the terrible passions of humanity'.



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In the exhibition

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Clore Auditorium

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with novelist and filmmaker Xiaolu Guo
and writer Nikesh Shukla.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

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Clore Studio

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CREDITS

THE EY EXHIBITION: VAN GOGH AND BRITAIN

27 March – 11 August 2019

Lead Curator: Carol Jacobi, Curator of British Art 1850-1915;
Assistant Curator: Hattie Spires, Assistant Curator Modern
and Contemporary British Art; in consultation with
Van Gogh scholar Martin Bailey and Chris Stephens, Director
of Holburne Museum, Bath and supported by James Finch,
Assistant Curator 19th-century British Art.

The EY Exhibition: Van Gogh and Britain is part of The EY
Tate Arts Partnership



With additional support from the Van Gogh Exhibition
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THE SUNDAY TIMES

This exhibition has been made possible by the provision of insurance through the Government Indemnity Scheme. Tate would like to thank HM Government for providing Government Indemnity and the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England for arranging the indemnity.

Installation: Tate Art Handling

Graphic design: Soraya Chumroo

Interpretation: Kirsteen McSwein and Sam McGuire

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