

Vincent van Gogh

With an introduction and notes selected from the
letters of the artist, edited by Alfred H. Barr, Jr.

The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Oil Paintings

Dutch Period

X 1. Scheveningen Fisherwoman 31164

35.931

Oil on canvas, 20¾ x 13½ inches

Painted at The Hague, August, 1882

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 6 (*Femme de pêcheur sur la plage*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

... I have painted a few studies of the figure ... I send you two sketches.

The painting of the figure appeals to me very much, but it must ripen—I must learn to know the technique better—that which is sometimes called “la cuisine de l’art”. In the beginning I shall have to do much scraping, and often to begin anew, but I feel that I learned from it and that gives me a new fresh view on the things.

(Letter 226)

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Dutch Period

+ 35.925 *11167* **2. Weaver**

Oil on canvas, 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 36 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches

Painted at Nuenen, July, 1884

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 37 (*Intérieur avec tisserand*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Written from The Hague, September 10, 1882, about two years before this painting:

I have asked her (his sister Wilhelmina) for some particulars about the weavers, who interest me very much. I saw them at the time when I was in the Pas de Calais — it was indescribably beautiful. However, I need not paint weavers as yet, though I certainly hope to do so sooner or later. (Letter 229)

Written from The Hague, 1883:

Do you know what I long for sometimes? To make a trip to Brabant. I should love to draw the old churchyard at Nuenen, and the weavers.

To make, for instance, during a month, studies of Brabant, and to come back with a lot of them, for a large drawing of a peasant funeral for instance. (Letter 295)

Written from Nuenen, January, 1884:

I am busy *painting* every day studies of the weavers here, which I think are technically better than the painted studies from Drenthe, which I sent you. (Letter 355)

Those looms will cost me still a lot of hard work, but they are in reality such splendid things, all that old oakwood against a greyish wall, that I certainly believe it is a good thing to have them painted. But we must try to get them so that they will harmonize in colour and tone with other Dutch pictures. Soon I hope to start another two of weavers, where the figure comes in quite differently, that is to say, the weaver does not sit behind it, but is arranging the threads of the cloth. I have seen them weaving in the evening by lamplight, which gives very Rembrandtesque effects.

Nowadays, they use a kind of suspension lamp, but I got from a weaver a little lamp, as, for instance, the one in "La Veillée" by Millet. They used to work by them formerly.

The other day, I also saw coloured pieces of cloth, woven by evening. . . . When I saw it, they were also just arranging the threads, so dark, bent figures against the light, standing out against the colour of the cloth, cast big shadows of the laths and beams of the loom on the white walls. (Letter 367)

Dutch Period

+ *M* 3. Ox Cart 1133

35.898

Oil on canvas, 23¼ x 31 inches
Painted at Nuenen, July, 1884
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 39 (*Charrette de boeuf*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Illustrated opposite

The last things I made are two rather large studies of ox-wagons, a black ox and a red one. (Letter 373)

+ *M* 4. Potato Diggers 1146

35.930

Oil on canvas, 26 x 58⅝ inches
Painted at Nuenen, August, 1884
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 41 (*Plantage des pommes de terre*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Illustrated on following page

The Hague, January, 1882:

I have about twelve figures of diggers and men who are working in a potato field, and I wonder if I could not make something of it, you have still a few, for instance, a man who fills a bag with potatoes. Well, I do not know for sure, but sooner or later I shall accomplish that, for I looked at it so attentively this summer, and here in the dunes I could make a good study of the earth and the sky, and then boldly put in the figures. (Letter 169)

The Hague, Summer, 1883:

Just while making these studies, the plan for a still larger drawing begins to take root, namely, that of digging potatoes, and I have it so in my mind that I think you will find something in it, perhaps.

I should want the landscape to be a level ground with a little row of dunes. The figures about a foot high, the composition in the breadth 1 by 2.

Right in front, in a corner, as a set-off, kneeling figures of women who gather the potatoes. On the second plane, a row of diggers, men and women.

Well, except the kneeling women figures, I could show you all the other figures already in large studies.

Yes, I should like to start that drawing one of these days. I have the grounds pretty well in my mind and will choose at my ease a fine potato field and make studies of it for the lines of the landscape.

Toward the autumn, when they dig the potatoes, the drawing ought to be finished, at least an elaborate sketch of it, and I should only have to put in the finishing touches.

Last year I saw it here, the year before last I saw it in Brabant, where it was splendid, and
(Continued on following page)

Dutch Period

the year before that in the Borinage, where it was done by miners. So I have it full right in my mind.

The figures ought to be so that it would be true everywhere, rather than a study of costume.

I hope I shall succeed in having the skeleton of the potato-drawing ready, about the time of your coming. (Letter 293)

The Hague, Summer, 1883:

As to the painting of those potato diggers . . . I can well imagine beforehand what will be the difficulties to overcome for the final picture.

If I can just in the least afford it I will make a few studies for it in the dunes before you come, viz. I will go with my model to those fields behind Loosduinen early in the morning, or in the evening twilight. I think I can make something of it.

The composition of the drawing might be a little altered . . . I think the figures must stand out strongly, and all the rest in a violetish haze.

In the drawing I find the division of dark and lighted planes not simple enough, the figures being partly light and partly dark, and the ground likewise. Either the ground and the figures must be brought more in harmony and form a dark silhouette against a light sky,—or sky and ground must form together a grey vapourous whole, against which the tony planes of the figures stand out. (Letter 308)

Nuenen, August, 1884:

Last week, I was every day in the fields during the harvest, of which I made a composition.

I made this for somebody in Eindhoven who wants to decorate a dining room. He intended to do this with compositions of diverse *saints*. I begged him to consider whether the appetite of the worthy people who would have to sit down at that table would not be more stimulated by six illustrations from peasant life of the Meierij—at the same time symbolizing the four seasons, than by the mystical personages above mentioned. And after a visit to the studio, the man became quite enthusiastic about it. . . . I gave him preliminary sketches of a sower, plougher, shepherd, harvest, potato gathering, ox-wagon in the snow. . . . He is pleased with this first panel, as well as with my sketches for the other subjects. (Letter 374)

5. Water Mill

Oil on cardboard, 29½ x 39¾ inches

Painted at Nuenen, November, 1884

de la Faille Catalogue, No. 47 (*Le moulin à eau*)

Collection Durand-Ruel, Inc., New York

Illustrated opposite

Though it has been freezing pretty hard here for the last few days, I am still at work out-of-doors, on a rather large study (more than one metre) of an old water-mill at Gennepe, on the other side of Eindhoven.

(Continued on following page)

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Dutch Period

I want to finish it quite out-of-doors, but it will certainly be the last I shall paint out-of-doors this year. (Letter 385)

Yesterday I just brought home that study of the water-mill at Gennep, which I painted with pleasure, and which has procured me a new friend in Eindhoven, who wants to learn to paint by all means, and to whom I paid a visit, when we set to work at once. (Letter 386)

X

100 6. Still Life with Straw Hat

35.933

81128

Oil on canvas, 14½ x 21 inches

Painted at Nuenen, November-December, 1884

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 62 (*Nature morte*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Last week I painted still-life day after day, with the people who paint at Eindhoven.

(Letter 387)

Speaking of my work, I had already written to you that I have been very busy painting still-life lately, and I like it immensely. I shall send you some.

I know, they are hard to sell, but it is deuced useful, and I shall continue to paint them this winter. (Letter 425)

The still-lives which I am sending are studies for colour, I intend to make more of them; do not think this is useless. (Letter 426)

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Dutch Period

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7. Peasant Woman with White Cap (Study for the Potato Eaters)

35.937

Oil on canvas, 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 14 inches

Painted at Nuenen, 1884

de la Faille Catalogue, No. 85 (*La paysanne au bonnet blanc*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

8. Head of Peasant (Study for the Potato Eaters)

35.936

Oil on canvas, 16 x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Painted at Nuenen, 1884

de la Faille Catalogue, No. 86 (*Tête de paysanne*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

... for my study I must paint 50 heads, just because I have got the knack of them. As soon as possible and one after the other. (Letter 384)

... whether people approve or do not approve of what I do, and how I do it, I, for my part, know no other way than to wrestle so long with nature till she tells me her secret.

All the time I am working at various heads and hands. (Letter 393)

I am very busy painting those heads. I paint in the daytime and draw in the evening. In this way I have painted at least some thirty already and drawn as many.

With this result, that I see a chance of doing it better still ere long I hope. (Letter 394)

Some of the heads I promised you are finished, but they are not quite dry yet. As I wrote you already, they were painted in a dark cottage, and they are studies in the real sense of the word. . . .

I work hard, and suppose that only one of ten or twenty studies which I make, is worth seeing, those few, either more or less in number, though they may be of no value now, they may be so later on, perhaps. (Letter 396)

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Dutch Period

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9. Potato Eaters

35.887

81093

Oil on canvas, 32 x 44 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Painted at Nuenen, May, 1885
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 82 (*Les mangeurs de pommes de terre*)
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam. *Illustrated opposite*

This week I intend to start that composition of those peasants around a dish of potatoes in the evening . . . I am going to begin the studies for the different figures. (*Letter 398*)

I am working again at those peasants around the dish of potatoes. I just came home from this cottage and have been working at it by lamplight, though I began it by daylight this time. . . .

I painted it on a rather large canvas, and as the sketch is now, I think there is some life in it.

But yet I am sure C. M., for instance, would find fault with the drawing. . . . (*Letter 399*)

I want to tell you that I am working at the potato-eaters, and I have painted new studies of the heads, especially the hands are greatly altered.

What I try most is to bring *life* into it.

I will not send the potato-eaters unless *I know for sure* there is *something* in it.

But I am getting on with it, and I think there are quite other things in it than you ever can have seen in my work. At least so distinctly.

I mean especially the life. I paint this *from memory on the picture itself*. But you know yourself how many times I have painted the heads!

And then I run over every night to hit off some details on the spot.

But in the picture I give free scope to my own head in the sense of *thought* or imagination, which is not so much the case in *studies* where no creative process is allowed, but where one finds food for one's imagination in reality, in order to make it exact. . . .

But the most difficult things—the heads, the hands, and the ensemble—are finished. Perhaps you will now find in it what you wrote some time ago, that though it is personal, yet it will remind you of other painters—with a certain family likeness. (*Letter 403*)

. . . I should have liked to send you the picture of the potato-eaters on [your birthday], but though it is getting on well, it is not quite finished yet.

Though the final picture will have been painted in a relatively short time, and for the greater part from memory, yet it has taken a whole winter of painting study-heads and hands.

And as to those few days in which I have painted it now, it has been a regular battle, but one for which I feel great animation. Though every moment I was afraid I should never get out of it. But painting is also "agir-cr  er." . . .

I have tried to make it clear how those people, eating their potatoes under the lamp-light, have dug the earth with those very hands they put in the dish, and so it speaks of manual labour, and how they have honestly earned their food.

(Continued on following page)



I have wanted to give the impression of quite a different way of living than that of us civilized people. Therefore I am not at all anxious for everyone to like it or to admire it at once.

In the same way it would be wrong, I think, to give a peasant picture a certain conventional smoothness. If a peasant picture smells of bacon, smoke, potato-steam, all right, that's not unhealthy, if a stable smells of dung, all right, that belongs to a stable; if the field has an odour of ripe corn or potatoes or of guano or manure, that's healthy, especially for people from the city.

Such pictures may *teach* them something. But to be perfumed is not what a peasant picture needs. . . .

To paint peasant-life is a serious thing, and I should reproach myself if I did not try to make pictures which raise serious thoughts in those who think seriously about art and about life. . . .

One must paint the peasants as being one of them, as feeling, thinking like they do. . . .

I think the potato-eaters will get finished after all; the last days are almost dangerous for a picture, as you know, because when it is not quite dry, one cannot work in it with a large brush without the great chance of spoiling it. And the alterations must be made quietly

(Continued on following page)

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Dutch Period

and calmly with a small brush. Therefore I have simply taken it to my friend and told him to take care that I should not spoil it in that way and that I should come to his house to give those finishing touches. You will see, it has originality. (Letter 404)

... it is very dark, and in the white, for instance, hardly any white has been used, but simply the neutral colour, which is made by mixing red, blue, yellow, for instance, vermillion, Paris blue and yellow of Naples.

That colour in itself is therefore a pretty dark grey, but in the picture it seems white. I will tell you why I do so. Here the subject is a grey interior lit up by a little lamp.

The dirty linen table-cloth, the smoky wall, the dirty caps in which the women have worked in the field, all this *when seen through the eyelashes* in the light of the lamp, proves to be *very dark* grey, and the lamp, though a yellow reddish blaze, is lighter still — even much so, than the white in question.

As to the flesh-colours — I know quite well that considered superficially, viz. without thinking about it, they seem what is called flesh-colour.

But at first in the picture I have tried to paint them so, with yellow ochre, red ochre and white, for instance.

But that was ever so much *too light* and was decidedly wrong.

What was to be done! All the heads were finished, and even finished with great care, but I repainted them straightway, unmercifully, and the colour in which they are painted now is like the colour of a good dusty potato unpeeled, of course.

While doing so, I thought how perfectly exact is that saying about the peasants of Millet: "Ses paysans semblent peints avec la terre qu'ils ensemencent." (Letter 405)

... it will perhaps disappoint you.

If this might be the case, take your time to look at it. ...

In the way of criticism I myself could point out things which probably will escape most of the critics.

But the reason why I send it with a certain confidence is that, in contrast to many other pictures, there is rusticity, and a certain animation in it. And so, though painted in a different style, in another century than the old Dutch masters, Ostade, for instance, yet it comes also from the heart of the peasant's life, and is original. ...

In the Salon so many pictures ... bore me terribly, because they give me neither food for the heart nor the mind, because they are apparently made without a certain passion. And there is some passion in what I send you.

I have loved to make it, and I have worked at it with a certain animation.

It has not bored me, perhaps for that reason it will not bore others. Because I believe this, I send it you. (Letter 406)

10. Still Life with Apples and Pumpkins 21139

35,924

Oil on canvas, 23½ x 33½ inches. Painted at Nuenen, September, 1885
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 106 (*Nature morte de fruits*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. Illustrated opposite

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Dutch Period

11. Bird Nests

35,935

81154

Oil on canvas, 13 x 17 inches

Painted at Nuenen, October, 1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 112 (*Nids d'oiseaux*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

[I made] a long expedition in company of a peasant boy, in order to find a wren's nest. We found six of them. . . . And they were all nests from which the young birds had flown out, so one could take them without too much scruple. (Letter 411)

I am now busy painting still-lives of my birds' nests, four of which are finished; I think some people who are good observers of nature, might like them, because of the colours of the moss, the dry leaves and the grasses. (Letter 425)

The birds' nests have also been painted on purpose against a black background, because I openly want to express in these studies, that the objects do not appear in their natural surroundings, but against a conventional background. A *living* nest in nature is quite different, one hardly sees the nest itself, one sees the birds.

But when one wants to paint nests from one's *collection of nests*, one cannot express strongly enough the fact that the background and the surroundings in nature are quite different, I straightway painted the background black. But it is a fact that in a still-life a coloured background can be beautiful. (Letter 428)

✓
Paris Period

34 12. **Montmartre**
35,877 81108

Oil on canvas, 15 x 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 266 (*La butte Montmartre*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

X
34 13. **Reclining Nude**
35,938 81160

Oil on canvas, 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 329 (*Femme nue couchée*)

Collection S. van Deventer, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

34 14. **Bouquet of Flowers**
35,990 81117

Oil on canvas, 21 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 236 (*Bouquet de fleurs*)

Collection James W. Barney, New York

Not illustrated

Reproduced in the catalog: *Museum of Modern Art, First Loan Exhibition*, plate 93

34 15. **Poppies**
35,975 81143

Oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 280 (*Fleurs des champs*)

Private Collection, New York

Not illustrated

Reproduced in the catalog: *Museum of Modern Art, First Loan Exhibition*, plate 92

From a letter from Theo to his mother, Paris, Summer, 1886:

... he has friends who send him every week a lot of beautiful flowers which he uses for still-life, he paints chiefly flowers, especially to make the colours of his next pictures brighter and clearer.

(*Vol. I, p. xlvii*)

✓
Paris Period

34/ 16. Self Portrait
35.939

Oil on cardboard, 7½ x 5½ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *our fame; came upr.* Catalogue, No. 296 (*Portrait de lui-même*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Not illustrated

34/ 17. Bridge of Asnières
35.976

Oil on canvas, 21⅝ x 18⅝ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *81132.* Catalogue, No. 303 (*Pont d'Asnières*)

Collection Dr. F. H. Hirschland, New York

Illustrated opposite

I've been worried by the sunset with figures and a bridge that I spoke of to Bernard. The bad weather prevented me working on the spot and I've completely ruined it trying to finish it at home. However I began again at once, the same subject on another canvas, but as the weather was quite different, in grey tones and without figures. (Letter 471)

34/ 18. Cornfield
35.888

Oil on canvas, 21¼ x 25⅜ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *81147* *down in blue fame* Catalogue, No. 310 (*Champs de blé*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Not illustrated

✓

Paris Period

34 19. Restaurant Interior

35.903

51124

Oil on canvas, 18 x 22¼ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 342 (*Intérieur de restaurant*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

34 upro. Rembrandt "Great Lazarus" +
letter fr. van S. W. study after Rembrandt's
"Great Lazarus"
Coll Engineer van S.

✓
Paris Period

34 20. Self Portrait
35,958 81162

Oil on cardboard, 16 x 12¾ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 345 (*Portrait de l'artiste*)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Winterbotham, Burlington, Vermont

Illustrated opposite

✓
Paris Period

34 21. Père Tanguy 81121

35.991

Oil on canvas, 25 x 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 364 (*Le père Tanguy*)

Collection Wildenstein and Company, New York and Paris

Illustrated opposite

Xantippe, Mother Tanguy, and some other good ladies, have by some queer freak of Nature heads of silex or flint. Certainly these ladies are a good deal more dangerous in the civilized world they go about in than the poor souls bitten by mad dogs who live in the Pasteur Institute. And old Tanguy would be right a hundred times over to kill his lady—but he won't do it, any more than Socrates.

And for this reason. Old Tanguy has more in common—in resignation and long suffering anyhow—with the ancient Christians, martyrs and slaves, than with the present day rotters of Paris. (Letter 506)

✓

Paris Period

3.4 22. Still Life with Lemons and Wine Bottle

55.891

1151

Oil on canvas, 20 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Painted 1886-1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 384 (*Nature morte, citrons*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

X

✓
Arles Period

34
✓ 35.883 21166
23. Bridge at Arles

X
Oil on canvas, 21½ x 25½ inches
Painted March-April, 1888 *our frame*
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 397 (*Le pont de l'Anglais*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Illustrated opposite

As for the work, I brought back a canvas of 15 today. It is a drawbridge with a little cart going over it, outlined against a blue sky—the river blue as well, the banks orange coloured with green grass and a group of washerwomen in smocks and many coloured caps.

(Letter 469)

[Tersteeg] shall have a picture of mine in his own collection. I have been turning it over these days and I have thought of an odd odd thing, not like what I generally do. It is the drawbridge with the little yellow cart and the group of women washing, a study in which the ground is bright orange, the grass bright green and the sky and water blue.

It only needs a frame specially designed for it in royal blue and gold, the mount blue, the outside moulding gold, if necessary the frame could be in blue plush, but it would be better painted. I think I can assure you that the work I'm doing here is better than in the Asnières country last spring.

(Letter 473)

After dinner I set to work on the same picture that Tersteeg is to have (the "Pont de l'Anglais") for you.

(Letter 476)

The Pont de l'Anglais is getting on well for you and will be better than the study, I think.

(Letter 477)

Basen
35.902
stom
X
24. Still Life with Oranges 21158

Oil on canvas, 17¼ x 21¼ inches
Painted March-April, 1888
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 395 (*Nature morte*)
Collection S. van Deventer, Wassenaar
Not illustrated

I have just finished a study like the one Lucien Pissarro has of mine, but this time it is oranges.

(Letter 467)

✓
Arles Period

2/ 25. Vegetable Gardens 81137
35/916

Oil on canvas, 29 x 36¼ inches

Painted June, 1888

over frame
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 412 (*Jardins de maraîchers*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

✓
Arles Period

32/ 26. Boats at Saintes-Maries 1149
35914

Oil on canvas, 26 x 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Painted at Saintes-Maries, June, 1888

de la Faille *Celine frame* Catalogue, No. 413 (*Barques sur la plage*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

I am writing to you from Stes. Maries on the shore of the Mediterranean at last. The Mediterranean has the colours of mackerel, changeable I mean. You don't always know if it is green or violet, you can't even say it's blue, because the next moment the changing light has taken on a tinge of rose colour or grey. (Letter 499)

Just when I was going to start in the morning, very early, I made the drawing of the boats, and I have the picture from it in hand, a canvas of 30 with more sea and sky on the right.

It was before the boats cleared off, I had watched it all the other mornings, but as they leave very early I hadn't time to do it. (Letter 500)

At last I have seen the Mediterranean. . . . I passed a week at Saintes-Maries.

On the flat, sandy beach little green, red, blue boats, so beautiful in shape and colour that they made you think of flowers. (To Bernard, 1888. Letter 6)

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Arles Period

27. Haystacks in Provence

Oil on canvas, 29 x 37 inches

Painted June, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 425 (*Les meules en Provence*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

X
I am working on a landscape with cornfields. . . . And I have another subject, a farm and some ricks, which will probably be a companion picture. (Letter 497)

Arles Period

2 28. The Postman Roulin

35.956

826✓

Oil on canvas, 31½ x 25 inches

Painted August, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 432 (*Le facteur Roulin*)

Collection Robert Treat Paine, 2nd, Boston

Illustrated opposite

I am now at work with another model, a postman in a blue uniform, trimmed with gold, a big bearded face, very like Socrates. A violent Republican like Tanguy. A man more interesting than most. (Letter 516)

I could not pay my rent on the 1st, as I had had the model all week. I have two portraits of the same model in hand, which are more important to me than anything else. . . .

So I have now two figures in hand, one the head, and one a half-length with the hands, of an old postman in a dark blue uniform. He has a head like Socrates, interesting to paint.

There is no better or shorter way of improving your work than doing figures. And I always feel confident when I am doing portraits, knowing that that work has much more depth—it isn't the right word perhaps, but it is what lets me cultivate whatever is best and deepest in me. (Letter 517)

Last week I did not one only but two portraits of my postman, a half-length with the hands, and a head, life size. The good fellow, as he would not accept money, *cost more* eating and drinking with me, and I gave him besides the *Lantern* of Rochefort. But that is a trifling evil, considering that he posed very well, and that I expect to paint his baby very shortly, for his wife has just been brought to bed. (Letter 518)

I do not know if I can paint the postman *as I feel him*, this man is like old Tanguy in so far as he is revolutionary, he is probably thought a good republican because he wholeheartedly detests the republic which we now enjoy, and because in the end he begins to doubt, to be a little disillusioned, as to the actual republican principle itself.

But I watched him sing the *Marseillaise*, and I thought I was watching '89, not next year, but that of 99 years ago. It was a Delacroix, a Daumier, straight from the old Dutch. (Letter 520)

My friend the postman, for instance, lives a great deal in cafés, and is certainly more or less of a drinker, and has been so all his life. But he is so much the reverse of a sot, he is so natural, so intelligent in excitement, and he argues with such sweep in the style of Garibaldi, that I gladly reduce the legend of Monticelli the drunkard on absinthe, to exactly the same proportions as my postman. (Letter 550)

What a Government—and what times we live in! As for me, I have rarely seen a man of Roulin's temper, there is something in him tremendously like Socrates, ugly as a satyr, as Michelet called him, "until on the last day a god appeared in him that illumined the Parthenon." (Letter 572)

(Continued on following page)

Arles Period

Roulin left yesterday. . . . It was touching to see him with his children this last day, especially with the quite tiny one when he made her laugh and jump on his knee, and sang for her.

His voice has a strangely pure and touching quality in which there was for my ear at once a sweet and mournful cradle-song, and a kind of far away echo of the trumpet of revolutionary France. He was not sad however. On the contrary he had put on his brand new uniform which he had received that very day, and every one was making much of him.

(Letter 573)

I know already that several people here would ask me for portraits if they dared. Roulin, quite a poor fellow, and small employé though he is, is much respected, and it is known that I have done all his family.

(Letter 575)

By the way—only yesterday our friend Roulin came to see me. . . . But for me, who am perpetually learning from him, what a lesson for the future it is when one gathers from his talk that life does not grow any easier as one gets on in life. . . .

It seems to me that there was a good article in the *Figaro* on Monet; Roulin had read it and been struck by it, he said. . . .

Roulin, though he is not quite old enough to be like a father to me, has all the same a silent gravity and tenderness for me like what an old soldier might have for a young one. All the time—but without a word—a something which seems to say, we do not know what will happen to us tomorrow, but whatever it may be, think of me. And it does one good when it comes from a man who is neither embittered, nor sad, nor perfect, nor happy, nor always irreproachably right. But such a good soul and so wise and so full of feeling and so trustful.

(Letter 583)

3 29. Shoes

35.901

81152

Oil on canvas, 18 x 21½ inches

Painted August, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 461 (*Les souliers*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

. . . I have also a bunch of flowers on hand, and a still-life of an old pair of shoes.

(Letter 529)

Arles Period

2 30. Sunflowers

35.885

1113

Oil on canvas, 24 x 39½ inches

Painted August, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 452 (*Fleurs de tournesols*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

I am hard at it, painting with the enthusiasm of a Marseillais eating bouillabaisse, which won't surprise you when you know that what I'm at is the painting of some great sunflowers.

I have three canvases on hand—1st, three huge flowers in a green vase, with a light background, a canvas of 15; 2nd, three flowers, one gone to seed, one in flower, and the third a bud against a royal blue background, canvas of 25; 3rd, twelve flowers and buds in a yellow vase (canvas of 30). The last is therefore light on light, and I hope will be the best. I probably shall not stop at that. Now that I hope to live with Gauguin in a studio of our own, I want to make decorations for the studio. Nothing but big flowers. . .

If I carry out this idea there will be a dozen panels. So the whole thing will be a symphony in blue and yellow. I am working at it every morning from sunrise, for the flowers fade so soon, and the thing is to do the whole at a flash. (Letter 526)

I'm thinking of decorating my studio with half a dozen pictures of *Sunflowers*, a decoration in which the crude or broken chrome yellows will burst forth from backgrounds of different blues ranging from the palest *Veronese* to *royal blue*, framed with narrow strips painted *orange*. (To Bernard, letter 19)

✓

Arles Period

2/30 31. Sunflowers

35.964

81161

Oil on canvas, 36 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Painted August, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 455 (*Les tournesols*)

Collection Carroll S. Tyson, Jr., Philadelphia

Illustrated opposite

But if you like you can exhibit the two pictures of sunflowers.

Gauguin would be glad to have one, and I should very much like to give Gauguin a real pleasure. So if he wants one of the two canvases, all right, I will do one of them over again, whichever he likes.

You will see that these canvases catch the eye. But I would advise you to keep them for yourself, just for your own private pleasure, you and your wife.

It is a kind of painting that changes rather to the eye, and takes on a richness the longer you look at it.

Besides you know Gauguin liked them extraordinarily. He said to me among other things — "That . . . it's . . . the flower."

You know that the peony is Jeannin's, the hollyhock belongs to Quost, but the sunflower is mine in a way. (Letter 573)

cents 32. Sunflowers

35.886

81112

Oil on canvas, 38 x 29 inches

Painted August, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 458 (*Fleurs soleils*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Not illustrated

Other paintings of sunflowers are in the museums of Munich, London and Tokio

I am now at the fourth picture of sunflowers. This fourth is a bunch of 14 flowers, against a yellow background, like a still-life of quinces and lemons that I did some time ago.

Only as it is much bigger, it gives a rather strong effect, and I think that this one is painted with more simplicity than the quinces and lemons. (Letter 527)

I have good and ill luck in my turn out, but not ill luck only. For instance, if our Monticelli bunch of flowers is worth 500 francs to a collector, and it is, then I dare swear to you that my sunflowers are worth 500 francs too to one of these Scotch or Americans.

Now to get up heat enough to melt that gold, those flower-tones, it isn't the first comer who can do it, it needs the force and concentration of a single individual whole and entire. . . . (Letter 573)

wall label for #31:

"I'm thinking of decorating my study with half a dozen pictures of Sunflowers in which the crude or broken colors will burst forth from the grounds of different blues ranging from palest Veronese to royal blue, framed by narrow strips painted orange."

(Letter to Bernard no. 527)

✓

Arles Period

2 33. Van Gogh's House at Arles

35.915

Oil on canvas, 28½ x 36¼ inches

Painted September, 1888

de la Faille Catalogue, No. 464 (*La maison de Vincent à Arles*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

You shall have a picture some day or other of the little house itself in bright sunshine, or else with the window lit up, and a starry sky. (Letter 534)

... a stretch of a canvas of 30 representing the house and its surroundings in sulphur-coloured sunshine, under a sky of pure cobalt. The subject is frightfully difficult; but that is just why I want to conquer it. It's terrific, these houses, yellow in the sun, and the incomparable freshness of the blue. And all the ground is yellow too. I shall send you a better drawing than this rough sketch out of my head later on. The house on the left is pink with violet shutters, I mean the one in the shadow of the tree.

That is the restaurant where I go for dinner every day. My friend the postman lives at the end of the road to the left between the two railway bridges. The night café I painted is not in the picture, it is to the left of the restaurant.

Milliet thinks this horrible, but I need not tell you, that when he says he cannot understand anyone amusing himself doing such a dull grocer's shop, and stark, stiff houses with no grace whatever, I think to myself that Zola did a certain boulevard at the beginning of *L'Assommoir*, and Flaubert a corner of the Quai de la Villette in the midst of the dog days at the beginning of *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, and neither of them are junk yet.

And it does me good to do difficult things. That does not prevent me having a terrible need of—shall I say the word—of religion. Then I go out at night to paint the stars, and I dream always of a picture like this with a group of living figures of our own crowd.

(Letter 543)

✓
Arles Period

28 34. Night Café

35.992
Oil on canvas, 29 x 35 inches

Painted September, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 463 (*Le café de nuit* [café de l'Alcazar, Place Lamartine])

Private Collection, New York

Illustrated opposite

Today I am probably going to begin the interior of the Café where I eat, by gas light, in the evening.

It is what they call here a *Café de Nuit* (they are fairly frequent here) staying open all night. Night prowlers can take refuge there when they have no money to pay for a lodging, or are too tight to be taken to one. (Letter 518)

... Just because I am always bowed down under this difficulty of paying my landlord, I made up my mind to take it gaily. I swore at the said landlord, who after all isn't a bad fellow, and told him that to revenge myself for paying him so much money for nothing, I would paint the whole of his rotten shanty so as to repay myself. Then to the great joy of the landlord, of the postman whom I had already painted, of the visiting night prowlers, and of myself, for three nights running I sat up to paint and went to bed during the day. I often think that the night is more alive and more richly coloured than the day. Now, as for getting back the money I have paid to the landlord by my painting, I do not dwell on that, for the picture is one of the ugliest I have done.

I have tried to express the terrible passions of humanity by means of red and green.

The room is blood red and dark yellow with a green billiard table in the middle; there are four lemon yellow lamps with a glow of orange and green. Everywhere there is a clash and contrast of the most alien reds and greens in the figures of the little sleeping hooligans, in the empty dreary room, in violet and blue. The blood red and the yellow green of the billiard table for instance contrast with the soft tender Louis XV green of the counter on which there is a nosegay in rose colour. The white coat of the patron, on vigil in a corner of this furnace, turns lemon yellow, or pale luminous green.

I am making a drawing of it with the tones in watercolour, to send to you tomorrow to give you some idea of it. . . .

It is colour not locally true from the point of view of the stereoscopic realist, but colour to suggest any emotion of an ardent temperament. (Letter 533)

In my picture of the "Night Café" I have tried to express the idea that the café is a place where one can ruin one's self, run mad, or commit a crime. So I have tried to express as it were the powers of darkness in a low drink shop, by soft Louis XV green and malachite, contrasting with yellow green and hard blue greens, and all this in an atmosphere like a devil's furnace, of pale sulphur.

(Continued on following page)

Arles Period

And all this under an appearance of Japanese gaiety, and the good nature of Tartarin. But what would Monsieur Tersteeg say about this picture when he said before a Sisley—Sisley the most discreet and gentle of the impressionists—"I cannot help thinking that the artist who painted that was a bit tipsy." If he saw my picture he would say that it was delirium tremens in full career. (Letter 534)

Exaggerated studies like the "Sower," and like this "Night Café," seem to me usually atrociously ugly and bad, but when I am moved by something, as now by this little article on Dostoevsky, then these are the only ones which appear to have any deep meaning. (Letter 535)

35. Outdoor Café at Night

Oil on canvas, 32¼ x 26 inches

Painted September, 1888

de la Faille Catalogue, No. 467 (*Le café, le soir*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

The second represents the outside of a café, with the terrace lit up by a big gas lamp in the blue night, and a corner of starry blue sky. . . .

The problem of painting night scenes and effects on the spot and actually by night interests me enormously. (Letter 537)

✓
Arles Period

2 36. **Van Gogh's Bedroom at Arles**

35.917

Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches ⁸¹¹¹⁸
Painted October, 1888 *our frame*
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 482 (*Chambre à coucher*)
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

Another version of the *Bedroom* is in the Art Institute of Chicago, Birch-Bartlett collection

I had a new idea in my head and here is the sketch of it. Another canvas of 30. This time it's just simply my bedroom, only here colour is to do everything, and giving by its simplification a grander style to things, is to be suggestive here of *rest* or of sleep in general. In a word, to look at the picture ought to rest the brain or rather the imagination.

The walls are pale violet. The ground is of red tiles.

The wood of the bed and chairs is the yellow of fresh butter, the sheets and pillows very light greenish lemon.

The coverlet scarlet. The window green.

The toilet table orange, the basin blue. The doors lilac.

And that is all—there is nothing in this room with closed shutters.

The broad lines of the furniture again must express inviolable rest. Portraits on the walls, and a mirror and a towel and some clothes.

The frame—as there is no white in the picture—will be white.

This by way of revenge for the enforced rest I was obliged to take.

cost I shall work at it again all day, but you see how simple the conception is. The shadows ^{shading} and the shadows thrown are suppressed, it is painted in free flat washes like the Japanese prints. It is going to be a contrast with, for instance, the Tarascon diligence and the night café. . . .

Tomorrow very early I am going to begin in the cool morning light, so as to finish my canvas. (Letter 554)

I am adding a line to tell you that this afternoon I finished the canvas representing the bedroom. . . .

No stippling, no hatching, nothing, only flat colours in harmony. (Letter 555)

When I saw my canvases again after my illness the one that seemed the best to me was the bedroom. (Letter 573)

2 36A. **Original letter to Theo** ⁸¹¹⁷⁶

35.940

No. 554, with a sketch of the *Bedroom*
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam
Not illustrated

✓
Arles Period

2 37. Avenue with Tombs

35,881

81110

Oil on canvas, 28¾ x 36½ inches

Painted November, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 486 (*Les Aliscamps*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Les Aliscamps (Elysian Fields, from Latin *Elysii Campi*) was a Gallo-Roman cemetery at Arles which rose to great size and importance in the Middle Ages and was ransacked during the Renaissance. A few tombs remain.

I have done two canvases of autumn, which Gauguin liked I think. . . .

I think you will like the fall of the leaf that I have done.

It is some poplar trunks in lilac cut by the frame where the leaves begin. These tree-trunks are lined like pillars along an avenue where right and left there are rows of old Roman tombs of a blue lilac. And then the soil is covered, as with a carpet, by a thick layer of yellow and orange fallen leaves. And they are still falling like flakes of snow.

And in the avenue little black figures of lovers. The upper part of the picture is a bright green meadow, and no sky or almost none.

The second canvas is the same avenue but with an old fellow and a woman as fat and round as a ball.

(Letter 559)

Arles Period

2/2 38. Self Portrait

35.889

11127

Oil on canvas, 25¾ x 19½ inches

Painted, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 522 (*Portrait de lui-même*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

2/2 39. L'Arlésienne (Madame Ginoux)

35.726

1314

Oil on canvas, 36 x 29 inches

Painted November, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 488 (*L'Arlésienne*)

The Adolph Lewisohn Collection, New York

See frontispiece for illustration

Then I have an Arlésienne at last, a figure (30 canvas) slashed on in an hour, background pale lemon, the face grey, the clothes black, black, black, with perfectly raw Prussian blue. She is leaning on a green table and seated in an armchair of orange wood. (Letter 559)

Did you during your hasty visit see the portrait of Mme. Ginoux in black and yellow? That portrait was painted in three-quarters of an hour. (Letter 573)

He [Isaäcson] and de Haan seem very faithful, and that is rare enough in these days for one to appreciate it. And I am pleased too to hear that someone else has turned up who actually saw something in the woman's figure, in black and yellow. That does not surprise me, though I think that the merit is in the model and not in my painting.

I despair of ever finding models. Ah, if I had now and then someone like that or like the woman who posed for the "Woman Rocking," I should do something very different.

(Letter 595)

✓

Arles Period

240. **Woman Rocking a Cradle (Madame Roulin)**

35.920

Oil on canvas, 36 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Painted January-February, 1889

de la Faille Catalogue, No. 504 (*La Berceuse* [Mme. Roulin])

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Another version is in the Art Institute of Chicago, Birch-Bartlett collection

I have in hand the portrait of Roulin's wife, which I was working on before I was ill.

In it I have ranged the reds from rose to orange, which rises through the yellows to lemon, with light and sombre greens. If I could finish it, I should be very glad, but I am afraid she will not want to pose with her husband away. (Letter 573)

I think I have already told you that . . . I have a canvas of the "Woman Rocking a Cradle," the very one I was working on when my illness interrupted me. I have two copies now of that as well.

I have just been saying to Gauguin about this picture that when he and I were talking about the Icelandic fishermen and of their mournful isolation, exposed to all dangers, alone on the sad sea, I have just been saying to Gauguin that following those intimate talks of ours, the idea came to me to paint such a picture, that sailors, who are at once children and martyrs, seeing it in the cabin of their boat should feel the old sense of cradling come over them and remember their own lullabys.

Now, if you please, it's like a chromolithograph from a cheap shop. A woman in green with orange hair stands out against a background of green with pink flowers. Now these discordant sharps of crude pink, crude orange, and crude green are softened by flats of red and green.

I picture to myself these same canvases between those of the sunflowers, which would thus form lamp brackets or candelabra beside them, the same size. . . . (Letter 574)

When Roulin came I had just finished the duplicate of my sunflowers, and I showed him the two copies of the "Woman Rocking a Cradle" between the four bunches of flowers . . . which pleased him well.

I have in hand today a third "Woman Rocking a Cradle." I know very well that it is neither drawn nor painted as correctly as a Bouguereau, and I am rather sorry, because I have an earnest desire to be correct. But though it is doomed alas to be neither a Cabanel nor a Bouguereau, I yet hope that it will be French. (Letter 575)

I have done the "Woman Rocking the Cradle" three times, and as Mme. Roulin was the model and I only the painter, I let her choose between the three, her and her husband, but on condition that I should make another duplicate for myself of the one she chose, and I have this in hand now. . . .

(Continued on following page)

Arles Period

In its words the language native to this place is extraordinarily musical in the mouth of an Arlésienne.

Perhaps in the "Woman Rocking" there's an attempt to get all the *music* of the colour here. It is badly painted and the chromos in the little shops are infinitely better painted technically, but all the same. (Letter 576)

... So far I am sleeping and eating at the hospital. Yesterday and today I began to work. When Mme. Roulin left too to go and live temporarily with her mother in the country, she took the "Woman Rocking" with her. I had a sketch of it and two duplicates. She had a good eye and took the best, only I am doing it again at the moment and I do not want it to be inferior.

In reply to Mourier's letter, which gave me pleasure, if Gauguin likes to exchange with you for a copy of the "Woman Rocking" he can send it to his wife in Denmark, and in this way I would willingly see a canvas of mine going there. But as I have told you already this canvas may be unintelligible. (Letter 578)

What you say about the "Woman Rocking" pleases me; it is very true that the common people, who are content with chromos and melt when they hear a barrel organ, are in some vague way right, perhaps more sincere than certain men about town who go to the Salon.

Gauguin, if he will accept it, give him the copy of the "Woman Rocking" which was not mounted on a stretcher, and another to Bernard as a token of friendship.

You must realize that if you arrange them this way, say the "Woman Rocking" in the middle and the two canvases of sunflowers to right and left, it makes a sort of triptych.

And then the yellow and orange tones of the head will gain more brilliance by the proximity of the yellow wings.

And then you will understand what I wrote you, that my idea had been to make a decoration as it might be for instance for the end of a cabin in a ship. Then, as the size increases, the summary workmanship is justified. The frame for the center is the red one. And the two sunflowers which go with it, are the ones framed in narrow strips. (Letter 592)

2 41. Portrait of an Actor 81131

35.899

Oil on canvas, 26 x 21½ inches *on frame*

Perhaps painted 1888-1889. Possibly of the Paris period
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 533 (*Portrait d'acteur*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Arles Period

3M 42. Head of Boy

35,954

830V

Oil on canvas, 17 x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Painted 1888-1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 537 (*Tête de garçon*)

Collection Josef Stransky. Courtesy Worcester Art Museum

Illustrated opposite

3lf 43. Grass

35,932

81125

Oil on canvas, 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 16 inches

our frame

Perhaps painted 1888-1889. Possibly of the Paris period
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 583 (*Coin de Prairie*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

✓
Arles Period

2 44. **L'Arlésienne (after a drawing by Paul Gauguin)**

35.979

Oil on canvas, 26 x 21½ inches

129✓

Painted 1888-1889. Possibly Saint-Rémy, 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 543 (*L'Arlésienne* [d'après un dessin de Paul Gauguin])

Collection Dr. and Mrs. Harry Bakwin, New York. Illustrated opposite

by Paul Gauguin

2 44A. **L'Arlésienne**

35.978

Drawn at Arles, 1888

Crayon and chalk, 22 x 19 inches

Collection Dr. F. H. Hirschland, New York



I have seen here figures quite as beautiful as those of Goya or Velasquez. They will pin you a touch of rose on a black frock, or devise a garment of white, yellow and rose, or else green and rose, or else *blue and yellow*, in which there is nothing to be altered from the artistic point of view. (Letter 481)

Saint-Rémy, May, 1890:

I should still have at my disposal the model who posed for the "Woman Rocking the Cradle," and the other whose portrait after Gauguin's drawing you have just received, and I shall certainly try to carry it out in large size, this canvas, as the personalities are the characters of my dreams. (Letter 632)

(Continued on following page)

Arles Period

Auvers, June, 1890:

What did Gauguin say of the last portrait of the *Arlésienne*, which is done after his drawing? You will see in the end, I think, that this is one of the least bad things I have done. (Letter 638)

Written to Gauguin from Auvers, June, 1890:

... And it gives me enormous pleasure when you say the *Arlésienne's* portrait which was founded strictly on your drawing is to your liking.

I tried to be religiously faithful to your drawing while nevertheless taking the liberty of interpreting by the medium of colour the sober character and the style of the drawing in question. It is a synthesis of the *Arlésiennes* if you like; as syntheses of the *Arlésiennes* are rare, take this as a work belonging to you and me as a summary of our months of work together. For the doing of it I have paid for my part with another month of illness, but I also know that it is a canvas which will be understood by you, and very few others, as we would wish it to be understood. My friend Dr. Gachet here has taken to it altogether after two or three hesitations, and says "How difficult it is to be simple." Very well—I want to underline the thing again by engraving it as an etching, then let it be. Anyone who likes can have it. (Letter 643)

32/ 35/ 959 45. Restaurant at Arles 1165

Oil on canvas, 21¼ x 25¾ inches

Painted 1888-1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 549 (*Restaurant Carrel à Arles [rue de la Cavalerie]*)

Collection Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, Providence

Illustrated opposite

Arles Period

34 46. The House on the Crau 153
35.974

Oil on canvas, 25 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Painted 1888-1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 550 (*Le maison de la Crau*)

Private Collection, New York

Illustrated opposite

✓
Arles Period

34 47. **Bouquet**

35,986

A 25 V

Oil on canvas, 25¼ x 21 inches

Painted 1888-1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 558 (*Le bouquet*)

Collection Marie Harriman Gallery, New York

Illustrated opposite

Saint-Rémy Period

2/2 48. **Cornfield with a Reaper** 81144

35.926

Oil on canvas, 29 x 36½ inches

Painted June, 1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 617 (*Champ de blé*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

So that you should have some idea of what I have in hand, I am sending you a dozen drawings today, all from canvases in hand.

The latest begun is the "Cornfield", in which there is a little reaper and a big sun. The canvas is all yellow except for the wall and the background of violet tinted hills.

... The cornfield in the sun, which represents the extreme heat, [is] very thick. ...

The canvas of the "Mower" is going to be something like the "Sower" of last year.

(Letter 597)

I am struggling with a canvas begun some days before my indisposition, a "Mower," the study is all yellow, terribly thickly painted, but the subject was fine and simple. For I see in this mower—a vague figure fighting like a devil in the midst of the heat to get to the end of his task—I see the image of death, in the sense that humanity might be the corn he is reaping. So it is—if you like—the opposite to that sower I tried to do before. But there's nothing sad in this death, it goes its way in broad daylight with a sun flooding everything with a light of pure gold. ...

There! The "Reaper" is finished, I think it will be one of those you keep at home—it is an image of death as the great book of nature speaks of it—but what I have tried for is the "almost smiling." It is all yellow, except a line of violet hills, a pale fair yellow. I find it queer that I saw it like this between the iron bars of a cell.

Well, do you know what I hope, as soon as I let myself begin to hope? It is that a family will be for you what nature, the clods of earth, the grass, the yellow corn, the peasant, are for me, that is to say that you may find in your love for people something not only to work for, but to console and restore you when there is need.

(Letter 604)

✓
Saint-Rémy Period

2/2 49. Cypresses 35.892 1153

Oil on canvas, 36¾ x 29 inches

Painted June, 1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 620 (*Les cyprès*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

X
... Ideas I have none, except to think that a field of corn or a cypress is well worth the trouble of looking at close to. ...

The cypresses are always occupying my thoughts, I would like to make something of them like the canvases of the sunflowers, because it astonishes me that they have not yet been done as I see them.

It is as beautiful in line and proportion as an Egyptian obelisk. And the green has a quality of such distinction.

It is a splash of black in a sunny landscape, but it is one of the most interesting of the black notes, and the most difficult to strike exactly, that I can imagine.

But then you must see them against the blue, in the blue rather.

(Letter 596)

I have a canvas of cypresses with some ears of corn, some poppies, a blue sky like a piece of Scotch plaid ... painted with a thick *pâte* like the Monticellis. ...

(Letter 597)

... Landscapes with cypresses! Ah, it would not be easy. Aurier feels it too, when he says that even black is a colour, and as for their appearance of flame—I think about it, but don't dare to go further, and I say with the cautious Isaäcson—I do not feel yet that we have got to that. You need a certain dash of inspiration, a ray from on high, that is not in ourselves, in order to do beautiful things. When I had done those sunflowers, I looked for the opposite and yet the equivalent and I said—it is the cypress.

(Letter 625)

3/2 50. Cypresses 35.943 1122

Oil on canvas, 17½ x 10¾

Painted June, 1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 621 (*Les cyprès*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Not illustrated

our flame; came up.

Saint-Rémy Period

2 51. Pine Trees

35,928

81134

Oil on canvas, 36½ x 29 inches

Painted November, 1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 652 (*Forêt de sapins au déclin du jour*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

... An evening effect with some big pines.

... You will see that in a big landscape with some pines, trunks of red ochre defined by a black stroke, there is already more character than in the previous ones. (Letter 613)

Saint-Rémy Period

2/2 52. Rain

35.965

81138

Oil on canvas, 29 x 36 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Painted November, 1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 650 (*Effet de pluie*)

Collection Paul Rosenberg, Paris

Illustrated opposite

... I have a rain effect in hand. ...

(Letter 613)

Written at The Hague, August, 1882, about seven years before this painting:

How beautiful it is outside when everything is wet from the rain—before—in—and after the rain. I ought not to let one single shower pass.

(Letter 227)

3/2 53. Field of Poppies

35.921

81142

Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Painted October, 1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 636 (*Champ de pavots*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

... There are three studies missing in the parcel of canvases you already have ... they are leaving today with other canvases. ... Poppies—Night effect—Moonrise. (Letter 608)

Saint-Rémy Period

54. The Good Samaritan (after Delacroix)

Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Painted October, 1889–May, 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 633 (*Le bon Samaritain* [d'après E. Delacroix])

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

I can assure you that it interests me enormously to make copies. . . .

It is a kind of study that I need, for I want to learn. Although copying may be the *old* system, that makes absolutely no difference to me. I am going to copy the "Good Samaritan" by Delacroix. . . .

What I am seeking in it and why it seems good to me to copy. . . . I am going to try to tell you. We painters are always asked to *compose* of ourselves and *not to be only compositors*.

So be it—but in music it is not like that—and if some person or other plays Beethoven he adds his personal interpretation—in music and more especially in singing—the *interpretation* of a composer is something, and it is not a hard and fast rule that only the composer should play his own composition.

Very good—and I, mostly because I am at present ill, I am trying to do something to console myself, for my own pleasure.

I pose the black and white of Delacroix or Millet or something taken from them before me as a subject.

And then I improvise colour on it, not, you understand, altogether as myself, but searching for memories of *their* pictures—but the memory, "the vague consonance of colours which are right in feeling at least"—that is my own interpretation.

Heaps of people do not copy, heaps of others copy—I started it by chance and I find that it teaches me things and above all it sometimes gives me consolation. And then my brush goes between my fingers as a bow would on the violin and absolutely for my pleasure.

54 A. by Jules Laurens, after Eugène Delacroix
THE GOOD SAMARITAN
lithograph, 8 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 7 inches
Coll. The Metropolitan Mus. of Art NY
not illustrated

2 ✓
Saint-Rémy Period

2fr 55. Ravine
35.927 1112 6

Oil on canvas, 28¾ x 36¼ inches

Painted December, 1889

de la Faille *Colum frame* Catalogue, No. 661 (*Le ravin*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

X
I have a sterner study than the previous one of the mountains. A very wild ravine where a small stream winds its way along its bed of rocks.

It is all violet. I could certainly do a whole series of these Alps, for having seen them now for a long time I am more up to it. (Letter 610)

For the moment I am working at a picture of a path between the mountains and a little brook, thrusting on between the stones. The rocks are of a plain violet-grey or pink, with here and there palm bushes and a kind of broom, which through the autumn has all kinds of colours, green, yellow, red, brown. And the brook in the foreground, white and foaming like soap-suds and further on reflecting the blue of the sky.

(Letter 619, written to his Mother)

The Ravine—it is the study done on a day of mistral—I had stacked up my easel with big stones, the picture of this is not dry, it has a closer drawing and there is more controlled passion and more colour.

That can go with another study of mountains, summer effect with a road in the foreground and a black cottage. (Letter 621)

To give an idea of Provence I must do some more canvases of cypresses and mountains. The "Ravine" and another canvas of mountains, with a road in the foreground are typical of it.

And the "Ravine" especially, which I still have here because it is not dry. (Letter 622)

I am working on a large canvas of a ravine; the motif is quite like your sketch with the yellow tree which I still have; two masses of very heavy rocks between which a rivulet flows, a third mountain closes the ravine. These motifs have a beautiful melancholy, and besides it's fun to work in very wild places where I have nearly to bury my easel in the stones to prevent the wind from blowing everything away. (To Bernard, letter 20)

✓
Saint-Rémy Period

- 34/ 35.96/ **56. Men Drinking (after Daumier)** 81119
Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Painted February, 1890
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 667 (*Les buveurs* [d'après Honoré Daumier])
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Winterbotham, Burlington, Vermont
Illustrated opposite

I do not hesitate to make copies. I would so like, if I had time to travel, to copy the work of Giotto, that painter who would be as modern as Delacroix, if he was not primitive, and who is so different from the other primitives. I have not however seen much of him. . . .
So what I am thinking of doing in painting is the "Men Drinking" by Daumier. . . .

(Letter 623)



- 34/ 35.856 **56A. by Honoré Daumier Men Drinking** *Drinkers of the Water at Saint-Rémy*
Wood engraving after a drawing. Collection Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Winterbotham.
81090

- 34/ 35.940 **57. The Reaper (after Millet)** *our fame; came unf.*
Oil on canvas, 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Painted 1889-1890 11130
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 687 (*Le moissonneur* [d'après Millet])
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam. *Illustrated opposite*

I now have seven copies out of ten of Millet's "Work in the Fields."
I can assure you that it interests me enormously to make copies and having for the moment no models, it means that nevertheless I shall not lose sight of the figure.
Besides, this will make a studio decoration for me or someone else. (Letter 607)

Saint-Rémy Period

2/2 58. White Roses 828V
35.987

Oil on canvas, 28 x 35½ inches

Painted May, 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 681 (*Nature morte: roses*)

Collection Mr. and Mrs. William Averell Harriman, New York

Illustrated opposite

I have a canvas of roses on hand with a light green background. . . .

(*Letter 633*)

✓

Saint-Rémy Period

2/ 35.919 81148

59. Road with Cypresses

Oil on canvas, 36 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 29 inches

Painted May, 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 683 (*La route aux cyprès*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

X

I have still from down there a cypress with a star, a last attempt—a night sky with a moon without radiance, the slender crescent barely emerging from the opaque shadow cast by the earth—a star with exaggerated brilliance, if you like, a soft brilliance of rose and green in the ultramarine sky across which are hurrying some clouds. Below a road bordered with tall yellow canes, behind these the blue *Basses Alpes*, an old inn with yellow lighted windows, and a very tall cypress, very upright, very sombre.

On the road a yellow cart with a white horse in harness, and two late wayfarers. Very romantic, if you like, but Provence also I think. I shall probably engrave this as an etching. . . .

(Letter 643)

✓
Saint-Rémy Period

2/ 35.929 81157
60. Olive Trees and Mountains

X
Oil on canvas, 28¾ x 36 inches

Painted 1889-1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 712 (*Les oliviers*)

Collection S. van Deventer, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

The "Olives" with white cloud and background of mountains . . . are exaggerations from the point of view of arrangement, their lines are distorted as in ancient woods. The olives are more in character, as in the other study, and I tried to express the time of day when you see the green cetonias and the cicadas flying about in the heat. . . .

They will tell me that mountains are not like that and that there are black outlines of a finger's width. (Letter 607)

3. 35.934 81123
61. Ivy

X
Oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches

Painted 1889-1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 747 (*Sous-bois*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

Referring to a similar composition, de la Faille Catalogue No. 609:

Here is a new canvas of 30, once again as ordinary as a chromo in the little shops, which represents the eternal nests of greenery for lovers.

Some thick tree trunks covered with ivy, the ground also covered with ivy and periwinkle, a stone bench and a bush of roses pale in the cold shadow. In the foreground some plants with a white calix. It is green, violet and rose.

The problem—which unfortunately is lacking in the chromos of the little shops and the barrel organs—is to get some distinction into it. (Letter 592)

✓
Auvers Period

3 hall 62. **Portrait of Mademoiselle Ravoux**
35.989

Oil on canvas, 25½ x 20¼ inches

Painted June, 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 769 (*Portrait de mademoiselle Ravoux*)

Collection Mr. J. R. Oppenheimer, New York

Illustrated opposite

Last week I did a portrait of a girl of 16 or nearly, in blue against a blue background, the daughter of the people where I am staying. I have given her this portrait, but I made a variation of it for you, a canvas of 15. (Letter 644)

Auvers Period

3 hell 63. **Portrait of Mademoiselle Ravoux**
35.993

Oil on canvas, 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches

Painted 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 786 (*Portrait de mademoiselle Ravoux*)

Collection Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, New York

Illustrated opposite

✓
Auvers Period

3 hall 64. Houses at Auvers

35.957

Δ1145

Oil on canvas, 28½ x 23½ inches

Painted 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 805 (*Maisons à Auvers*)

Collection John T. Spaulding, Boston

Illustrated opposite

Auvers Period

3 hall 65. Three Trees

35.923

1156

Oil on canvas, 25½ x 31 inches

Painted 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 815 (*Trois arbres*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Auvers Period

- 3 hell 66. **Cornfield with Black Birds** 81129 *paint cracked*
35.918 Oil on canvas, 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 40 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Painted July, 1890 *our frame*
de la Faille Catalogue, No. 779 (*Champs de blé aux corbeaux*)
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam
Illustrated opposite

There—once back here I set to work again—though the brush almost slipped from my fingers, and knowing exactly what I wanted, I have since painted three more big canvases.

They are vast stretches of corn under troubled skies, and I did not need to go out of my way to try to express sadness and the extreme of loneliness. I hope you will see them soon—for I hope to bring them to you in Paris as soon as possible, since I almost think that these canvases will tell you, what I cannot say in words, the health and strengthening that I see in the country. (Letter 649)

by J. P. Russell

- 4 ff 67. **Portrait of Vincent van Gogh** 81120
35.908 Oil on canvas, 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches *shown in our frame*
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam
Illustrated on page 16

by Paul Gauguin

- 4 ff 68. **Van Gogh, Painter of Sunflowers** 81101
35.884 Oil on canvas, 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 35 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Painted at Arles, 1888 *our frame*
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam
Not illustrated

Have you seen that portrait that he made of me, painting the sunflowers? My face has after all brightened up a lot since, but it was very like me, very tired and charged with electricity as I was then.

✓ Drawings, watercolors and prints

Belgian Period

ent 35.971 69. Miner with Shovel

21195

19 x 10 ³/₄

X Ink, crayon and black lead touched with wash, 9 ³/₄ x 5 ¹/₂ inches

Cuesmes and Brussels period, July-August, 1879

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 827 (*Mineur la pelle sur l'épaule*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Lately I have been at a studio again, namely at the Rev. Pietersen's, who paints in the manner of Schelfhout or Hoppenbrouwers, and has good ideas about art.

He asked me for one of my sketches, a miner type. Often I am drawing until late in the night, to keep some souvenirs, and to strengthen the thoughts raised involuntarily by the aspect of things here. (Letter 131)

ent 35.872 70. Miners

21100

X Black lead touched with color, 17 ³/₄ x 21 ¹/₄ inches

Cuesmes and Brussels period, August, 1880

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 831 (*Les sclôneurs et les sclôneuses*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

I have sketched a drawing representing miners, men and women, going to the shaft in the morning through the snow, by a path along a hedge of thorns; shadows that pass, dimly visible in the twilight. In the background the large constructions of the mine, and the heaps of clinkers, stand out vaguely against the sky.

I send you a hasty sketch, so that you can see what it is like. But I feel the need of studying the drawing of figure from masters like Millet, Breton, Brion, or Boughton, or others. What do you think of the sketch, do you think the idea good? (Letter 134)

Belgian and Dutch Periods

ent **71. Dead Woman** *Δ1095*
35.875

Black crayon and watercolor, 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Cuesmes and Brussels period, 1879-1880

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 841 (*Femme sur son lit de mort*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Illustrated opposite*

Written from Amsterdam, May, 1877, about two years before this drawing was made:

When I was standing beside the corpse of Aerssen the calmness and dignity and solemn silence of death contrasted with us living people to such an extent, that we all felt the truth of what his daughter said in her simplicity: "He is freed from the burden of life, which we have to carry on still."
(Letter 98)

ent **72. Carpenter**
35.973

Black crayon, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Drawn at Etten, 1881 *Δ1198*

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 878 (*Le charpentier*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

ent **73. Mills Near Dordrecht**
35.912

Watercolor, 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 23 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches

Drawn at Etten, August, 1881 *Δ1197*

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 850 (*Les moulins près Dordrecht*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

I stayed at The Hague until Thursday morning, then I went to Dordt, because from the train I had seen a spot I wanted to draw, namely, a row of mills. Though it was raining I managed to finish it, and so I have brought at least a souvenir from my little trip.

(Letter 149)

ent **74. Woman Churning**
35.911

Black crayon and watercolor, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Drawn at Etten, 1881 *Δ1178*

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 892 (*Paysanne barattant*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

✓
Dutch Period

auth 75. Peasant Reading by the Hearth
35.874

X
Black crayon and watercolor, 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 inches
Drawn at Etten, 1881 81098
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 897 (*Paysan lisant près de lâtre*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Illustrated opposite

auth 76. Gate-keeper's House
35.895

X
Black crayon, 17 x 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches
Drawn at Etten, 1881 81173
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 900 (*Maison de garde-barrière*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Not illustrated

auth 77. Canal at The Hague
35.967

X
Black lead and ink, touched with white, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches
Drawn at The Hague, March, 1882 81191
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 921 (*Route derrière la gare du chemin de fer à la Haye*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Not illustrated

Theo, it is almost miraculous!!!

First comes your registered letter, secondly C. M. asks me to make for him 12 small pen drawings, views from The Hague, à propos of some that were ready. (The Paddemoes,—de Geest,—de Vleersteeg, were finished.) At fr. 2.50 a piece, price fixed by me, with the promise that if they suit him, he will take 12 more at his own price, which will be higher than mine.
(Letter 180)

I am again busy with the drawings for C. M. But will they please him? Perhaps not. I can conceive such drawings only as studies in perspective and I make them especially for practice in that exercise.
(Letter 200)

Dutch Period

entr **78. Roots**

35,913

Crayon touched with white, 19 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches
Drawn at The Hague, April, 1882 *81177*
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 933 (*Etude d'arbre*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Now I have finished two larger drawings: First, "Sorrow" . . . The other: "The Roots," represents some tree roots on a sandy ground. Now I tried to put in the landscape the same sentiment as in the figure: The clinging convulsively and passionately to the earth, and yet being half torn up by the storm. In that pale slender woman's figure as well as in the black gnarled and knotty roots, I wanted to express something of the struggle for life. Or rather because I tried to be faithful to nature, as I saw it before me, without philosophizing about it, involuntarily, in both cases something of that great struggle is shown. At least it seemed to me there was some sentiment in them, but I may be mistaken, well you must judge for yourself.

If you like them, they will perhaps be fit for your new home, and then I have made them for your birthday, for which I send you my best wishes. . . . Though "The Roots" is only a pencil drawing, I have brushed in it with pencil, and scraped it off again, as if I were painting. (Letter 195)

. . . Relatively few people know why an artist acts in this way or that. . . . A peasant who sees me draw an old tree-trunk, and sees me sitting there for an hour, thinks that I have gone mad, and of course laughs at me. (Letter 142)

entr **79. Carpenter's Workshop and a Laundry**

35,876

Crayon touched with white, 11 x 18 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches
Drawn at The Hague, June, 1882 *81109*
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 939 (*Derrière le Schenkweg*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

Written from The Hague, December, 1881:

. . . And so I have rented a studio here, that is a room and an alcove that can be arranged for that purpose, cheap enough, on the outskirts of the town, on the Schenkweg, ten minutes from Mauve. (Letter 166)

Today I send to you those two drawings: "Fish Drying Barn" in the dunes at Scheveningen, and "Carpenter's Workshop and a Laundry" (seen from my studio window). . . . I have tried to draw the things as naïvely as possible, exactly as I saw them before me.

. . . Rappard was greatly pleased with a similar drawing which C. M. has, and also with all the others I drew for C. M., especially the large one of the little yard. (Letter 205)

Dutch Period

✓
1st 80. **Woman Meditating** 81099
35.871 Black lead and ink, 22¼ x 15¾ inches. Drawn at The Hague, April, 1882
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 935 (*Femme en méditation*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Illustrated opposite*

X
1st 81. **Woman with Kettle** 81189
35.968 Black lead, 9¾ x 4¾ inches. Drawn at The Hague, 1881-1883
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1051 (*Femme portant une chaudière*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

X
1st 82. **Woman Praying**
35.966 Black crayon touched with white, 9¾ x 6¾ inches
Drawn at The Hague, 1881-1883 81180
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1053 (*Femme priant*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

X
ent 83. **Peasant Woman Seated** 81094
35.873 Black crayon, 21¼ x 16¾ inches. Drawn at The Hague, 1881-1883
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1056 (*Paysanne assise*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

X
ent 84. **Kneeling Women** 81170
35.907 Black crayon and lead, 16¾ x 11½ inches. Drawn at The Hague, 1881-1883
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1058 (*Deux femmes agenouillées et en prière*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

X
1st 85. **Mother and Child** 81107
35.866 Watercolor, 15¾ x 9½ inches. Drawn at The Hague, 1881-1883
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1061 (*Soins maternels*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

X
ent 86. **Mother and Child**
35.970 Black lead, 10 x 5¾ inches. Drawn at The Hague, 1881-1883
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1063 (*Mère assise avec son enfant*) 81172
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

For my part I promise you to work as hard as I can, but with models for instance it often depends on the money I have or have not in my pocket, whether I can work *full speed, half speed, or not at all*. So now I am making arrangements with a mother and her baby, but I am afraid it will be too expensive.
(Letter 170)

Dutch Period

✓
121 87. In Church
35.867

81106
Water color, 10¼ x 14 inches

Drawn at The Hague, October, 1882

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 967 (*Dans l'église*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Illustrated opposite*

... Then I am also making one [a watercolor] of a church bench, which I saw in a little church on the Geest, where the people from the workhouse go (here they call them very expressively *orphan men* and *orphan women*).

Once again being engrossed in drawing, I sometimes think there is nothing so delightful as drawing. (Letter 235)

121 88. Old Man by the Stove
35.972

Black lead, 9¾ x 4¾ inches

Drawn at The Hague, October, 1882

81196
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 974 (*Vieil homme se chauffant*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

Speaking about orphan men, I was interrupted in writing this by the arrival of my model.

And I worked with him until dark. He wears a large old overcoat, which gives him a curious broad figure, I think you would like this collection of old men in their Sunday and in their every day clothes. . . .

He has a curious bald head, large deaf ears and white whiskers.

(Letter 235)

121 89. Old Man Drinking Coffee
35.969

Black lead, 9¾ x 5½ inches

Drawn at The Hague, October, 1882

81179
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 976 (*Homme buvant une tasse de café*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

I have made still more studies of the old men. . . .

(Letter 236)

In the drawing of the "Man Who Drinks Coffee," the black has been much more broken by the direction of the hachure. Unfortunately, it has become dull now, but that can perhaps be redressed.

(Letter 246)

Dutch Period

90. Old Man with Patch Eye

Black lead, ink and lithographic crayon, 18¾ x 11 inches

Drawn at The Hague, December, 1882

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1003 (*Vieillard de l'hospice à l'oeil blessé*)

The Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Collection Paul J. Sachs. *Illustrated opposite*

When I wrote my last letter, I spoke to you about some large heads I had on hand.

I was just then busy making an experiment of which I can tell you the first result, as I had models for two drawings, the day before yesterday, yesterday, and today.

When I made the lithographs it struck me that the lithographic chalk was a very pleasant material and I thought, I'll make drawings with it.

There is, however, one drawback which you will understand,—as it is greasy it cannot be erased in the usual way, working on paper with it one even loses the only thing with which one can erase on the stone itself, namely the *grattoir*—which cannot be used strongly enough on the paper because it cuts through it.

But, it occurred to me to make a drawing first with carpenter's pencil and then to work in it and over it with lithographic chalk, which (by reason of the greasiness of the material) fixes the pencil, what ordinary chalk does not do, or at least very badly. Having made a sketch in that way, one can, with a firm hand, work in the lithographic chalk where it is necessary without much hesitation or erasing. So I finished up my drawings pretty well in pencil, indeed as far as possible. Then I fixed them and tarnished them with milk. And then I worked over it again with lithographic chalk where the deepest tones were, retouched them here and there, with a brush or pen, with *noir de bougie* and worked in the lighter parts with white body colour.

In this way I made a drawing of an old man who sits reading, with the light falling on his bald head, on his hand and the book. And the second one, the bandaged head of a wounded man. The model that sat for this really had a wound in his head and a bandage over his left eye. Just a head, for instance, of a soldier of the old guard on the retreat from Russia. When I now compare these two heads with the others I have made, there is a great difference in the power of effect.

(Letter 256)

91. Head of Girl

Black crayon touched with white, 16½ x 9¼ inches

Drawn at The Hague, January, 1883

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1007 (*Tête de modèle*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Illustrated opposite*

... And the poor little girl, you see from the drawing that the former deep misery has not been wiped out, and I often feel anxious about her, but still she is quite different from last year, then it was very very bad, now she is looking more childlike already. (Letter 260)

Dutch Period

✓
111 92. **Old Man with Bowed Head** 111 52

35.893

Black crayon touched with white, 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches
Drawn at The Hague, November, 1882
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 998 (*Au seuil de l'éternité*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Illustrated opposite

Note: Used at Saint-Rémy as a study for a painting, *On the Threshold of Eternity*, now in the Kröller-Müller Collection

Today and yesterday I drew two figures of an old man who is sitting with his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands. Long ago Schuitemaker sat for me and I always kept the drawing, because I wanted to make a better one some day. Perhaps I will also make a lithograph of it. How beautiful is such an old workman, with his patched fustian clothes and his bald head. (Letter 247)

111 93. **Head of Woman**

35.865

Ink, 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches 111 03
Drawn at The Hague, 1881-1883
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1073 (*Tête de femme*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Not illustrated

111 94. **Church** 111 53

35.862

Ink and wash, 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
Drawn at The Hague, February, 1884
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1117 (*L'église*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Not illustrated

111 95. **Weaver** 111 86

35.908

Ink, 11 x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches
Drawn at Nuenen, May, 1884
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1134 (*Le tisserand*)
Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Not illustrated

Those people are very hard to draw, because in those small rooms one cannot take enough distance to draw the loom. I think that is the reason why so many drawings become failures. But I have found a room here where two looms are, and where it can be done. (Letter 351)

✓
Dutch Period

1st 96. Peasant Woman Spinning

35.864

Ink, 5 x 6½ inches 81104

Drawn at Nuenen, June, 1884

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1136 (*Paysanne filant*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

1st 97. Head of Peasant Woman 102

35.904

Ink, 5 x 4½ inches

Drawn at Nuenen, February-April, 1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1178 (*Tête de paysanne*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

1st 98. Head of Peasant Woman

35.863

Black crayon, 15¾ x 13 inches 81105

Drawn at Nuenen, February-April, 1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1182 (*Tête de paysanne*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

1st 99. Old Peasant Woman Sewing

35.870

Watercolor and black chalk, 24¼ x 18¼ inches 81096

Drawn at Nuenen, March, 1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1221 (*Vieille paysanne raccommodant une chemise d'homme*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

I am brooding over a couple of larger elaborate things, and if I should happen to get a clear idea of how to reproduce the effects I have in view, in that case, I should keep the studies in question here still, for then I should certainly need them for it—it is, for instance, something like this: Namely, figures against the light of a window.

I have studies of heads for it, against the light as well as towards the light, and I have worked several times already at the whole figure; winding thread, sewing, or peeling potatoes. Full face and in profile, it is a difficult effect.

But I think I have learnt a few things by it.

(Letter 396)

Dutch Period

100. Peasant Woman Binding a Sheaf

Black crayon, 16½ x 21¼ inches

Drawn at Nuenen, 1883-1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1262 (*Paysanne engerbant*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Illustrated opposite*

101. Peasant Digging

Lithograph, 20¾ x 14¾ inches

Drawn at The Hague, November, 1882

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1656 (*Paysan bêchant*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam. *Illustrated opposite*

Together with this letter, you will receive the first proofs of a lithograph, "A Digger," and of a lithograph of a "Man Who Drinks Coffee." I should like to hear as soon as possible what you think of them. I intend still to re-touch them on the stone, and for that I want your opinion about them. The drawings were better. I had worked hard on them, especially on the digger, now by transferring them on the stone and by printing, several things got lost. But what I think of these prints is that there is something rough and unconventional in them that I wanted there, and this partly reconciles me to the loss of things that were in the drawing. The drawing was not done only with lithographic chalk but was touched up with autographic ink. Now the stone has only partly caught that autographic ink, and we do not know to what reason it must be ascribed, probably to the water with which I diluted it. At all events I have seen from it that where the ink caught, it gives strong black tones with which I hope to get better results afterwards. Then when the printer has more time, we will make experiments by bringing a kind of wash over it during the printing, and we will try different kinds of paper and different kinds of printing ink. I hope these two stones will still improve by the re-touch from the two studies made directly from the model which I still have.

(Letter 246)

Now, such an enterprise as would be the drawing and printing of a series of, for instance, thirty pages of types of workmen, a sower, a digger, a wood-cutter, a ploughman, a wash-woman, then also a child's cradle or a man from the almshouse—well, the whole immeasurable field lies open, there are plenty of beautiful subjects—may one undertake it or not?—The question goes even deeper still, is it duty, and is it right or is it wrong? That's the question.

If I were a man of means I wouldn't hesitate to decide, I would say: "en avant et plus vite que ça."

(Letter 249)

What I wanted to say is this. The idea of drawing types of workmen from the people for the people, to spread them in a popular edition, taking the whole as an affair of love and charity. . . .

(Letter 251)

Dutch Period

102. **Harvesting Wheat**

35.909

81181

Black crayon, 9¼ x 13 inches

Drawn at Nuenen, 1883-1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1301 (*La récolte des blès*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Illustrated opposite

103. **Peasant Woman Binding a Sheaf**

35.892

Black crayon, 16¼ x 19⅝ inches

Drawn at Nuenen, 1883-1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1264 (*Paysanne engerbant*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

104. **Returning from the Fields**

35.869

Black crayon, 21⅞ x 13⅝ inches

Drawn at Nuenen, 1883-1885

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1268 (*Retour des champs*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar

Not illustrated

Arles Period

310 105. Haystacks

35.859

Ink, 9½ x 12⅞ inches

Drawn June, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1427 (*Les meules*)

Collection Pierre Matisse Gallery, New York. *Illustrated opposite*

Today I am sending you three drawings by post.

The one with the ricks in a farm-yard you will think too bizarre, but it was done in a great hurry as a suggestion for a picture and it is to show you the idea. (Letter 498)

311 106. Old Peasant

35.983

Ink and reed pen, 5½ x 5⅝ inches ~~81199~~ 81155

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1461 (*Paysan de la Camargue*)

Collection Mrs. Henry Goldman, New York. *Illustrated opposite*

Referring to the painting for which this drawing is a study:

You are shortly to make the acquaintance of Master Patience Escalier, a sort of "man with a hoe," formerly cowherd of the Camargue, now gardener at a house in the Crau. I do not think it would be an insult to the de Lautrec you have to put my peasant beside it, and I am even bold enough to hope that the de Lautrec would show still more distinguished in the simultaneous contrast, and that mine would gain by the odd juxtaposition, because that sun-steeped, sun-burnt quality, tanned with burning sun and swept with air will show up still more beside all that rice powder and elegance. (Letter 520)

312 107. View of Arles

35.962

India ink and reed pen, 17 x 21½ inches

Drawn May, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1416 (*Vue d'Arles*)

Collection Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, Providence. *Not illustrated*

Referring to the painting for which this drawing is a study:

A meadow full of very yellow buttercups, a ditch with irises, green leaves and purple flowers, the town in the background, some grey willows, and a strip of blue sky.

If the meadow is not cut, I should like to do this study again, for the idea was very beautiful, and I had difficulty to get the composition. A little town in the midst of a countryside all flowered over with yellow and purple: just—can't you see it—a Japanese dream. (Letter 487)

Arles Period

3rd 108. Rocks

35.897

Ink and reed pen, 19¼ x 24 inches

Drawn July, 1888 81174

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1447 (*Le rocher*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam. *Illustrated opposite*

3rd 109. View at Saintes-Maries

35.982

India ink, 9½ x 12½ inches

Drawn at Saintes-Maries, June, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1433 (*Vue à Saintes-Maries*)

Collection Jacques Seligmann and Company, New York. *Not illustrated*

Now that I have seen the sea here, I am absolutely convinced of the importance of staying in the Midi, and of absolutely piling on, exaggerating the colour—Africa not so far away. I am sending you by the same post the drawings of Stes. Maries. (Letter 500)

3rd 110. Cottages at Saintes-Maries 81092

35.858

Ink and reed pen, 9½ x 12¼ inches

Drawn at Saintes-Maries, June, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1435 (*Ruelle à Saintes-Maries*)

Private Collection, New York. *Not illustrated*

I have three . . . drawings of huts. . . . They are rather harsh, but I have some more careful ones of them. (Letter 500)

3rd 111. Cottages at Saintes-Maries 81190

35.977

Ink and reed pen, 11½ x 19¼ inches

Drawn at Saintes-Maries, June, 1888

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1436 (*Mas à Saintes-Maries*)

Collection Dr. F. H. Hirschland, New York. *Not illustrated*

3rd 112. Washerwomen

35.905

Ink and reed pen, 12¼ x 9½ inches 81187

Drawn June, 1888 *our frame*

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1444 (*Les lavandières*)

Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar. *Not illustrated*

X
Do you remember among the little drawing a wooden bridge with a washing place, and a view of the town in the distance? I have just painted that subject in a large size.

(Letter 504)

✓
Arles Period

3rd 113. **Boats Anchored**

35.994

India ink, 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Drawn August, 1888 S 1169

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1462 (*Vue de rivière avec deux bateaux*)

Private Collection, New York

Illustrated opposite

I am working just now on a study like this of boats seen from the quay above, the two boats are rose-colour tinged with violet, the water is bright green, no sky, a tricolour flag on the mast. A workman with a barrow is unloading sand. I have a drawing of it as well.
(Letter 524)

3rd 114. **Weeping Tree in Grass**

35.963

Reed pen and charcoal, 19 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 24 inches

Drawn May, 1889 S 1193

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1468 (*Coin de parc à Arles*)

Collection Mrs. Christine Veth, San Francisco

Not illustrated

The drawings: "Hospital at Arles," the "Weeping Tree in Grass," the "Fields," and the "Olives" make a series with those old ones of Montmajour. . . .
(Letter 595)

3rd 115. **Bridge at Arles**

35.985

Black crayon, 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Drawn 1888-1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1471 (*Le pont de l'Anglais*)

Collection Jacques Seligmann and Company, New York

Not illustrated

3rd 116. **The Harvest**

35.984

Ink, 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Drawn 1888-1889

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1490 (*La moisson*)

Collection Wildenstein and Company, New York

Not illustrated

117a

3rd

35.996

The Postman Roulin - India ink + reed pen +
Black pencil - Arles Aug 1888, Coll Jacques
Seligmann + Co, NY

Arles Period

3rd 117. **Corner of Orchard**

35,860

India ink, black lead and violet ink, $21\frac{1}{8} \times 15\frac{5}{8}$ inches
Drawn 1888-1889
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1516 (*Coin de verger [le foin]*)
Collection Mrs. Cornelius J. Sullivan, New York
Not illustrated

Saint-Rémy Period

3rd 118. **Grove of Cypresses**

35,953

India ink, $24\frac{3}{8} \times 18\frac{1}{8}$ inches
Drawn June, 1889
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1524 (*Le bosquet de cyprès*)
Collection The Art Institute of Chicago, Robert Allerton Collection
Illustrated opposite

117a. **THE POSTMAN ROULIN**

India ink + reed pen, $20\frac{1}{8} \times 15\frac{1}{4}$ inches
Drawn August, 1888
de la Faille *Catalogue*, no. 1459 (*Le postier*)
Collection Jacques Seligmann and Company, New York
Not illustrated

Saint-Rémy Period3M 119. **Cypresses**

35.955

Ink and reed pen, 24 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
 Drawn June, 1889
 de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1525 (*Les cyprès*)
 Collection M. Knoedler and Company, New York
Illustrated opposite

3M 120. **Hospital Corridor at Saint-Rémy**

35.995

Gouache and watercolor, 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
 Painted 1889-1890
 de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1529 (*Couloir de l'hospice Saint-Pol à Saint-Rémy*)
 Private Collection, New York [redacted]
Illustrated opposite

3M 121. **Corner of Garden**

35.894

Watercolor, 22 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
 Drawn 1889-1890
 de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1527 (*Coin de jardin*)
 Collection The Kröller-Müller Foundation, Wassenaar
Not illustrated

64

H. III

1. On the Threshold of Eternity
 H. III. Collection

65

✓
Saint-Rémy Period

3M 122. **Fountain in the Hospital Garden**

35.878

India ink, 20¼ x 18½ inches

Drawn 1889-1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1531 (*La fontaine dans le jardin de l'hôpital*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

3M 123. **Cornfield**

35.861

India ink and reed pen, 18½ x 24 inches

Drawn 1889-1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1548 (*Le champ de blé*)

Collection James W. Barney, New York

Not illustrated

✓
Saint-Rémy Period

51188
35.906 **124. Cottage and Cypresses**

Black crayon, 12 x 9¼ inches

Drawn 1889-1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1593 (*Paysage à Saint-Rémy*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

3.rr 124a ^{35.942} repr. Rembrandt "Great Lazarus"

letter fr. van G. W. study after Rem-
brandt's "Great Lazarus"
35.941 Coll. ~~Eng.~~ V W van Gogh

124a. Original letter to Theo
Tw. 632, with a sketch of the painting, The Raising of
Lazarus (de la Faille *Catalogue*, no. 677), made
at Saint-Rémy, May, 1890, after one portion
of the etching by Rembrandt.
Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam
not illustrated

Auvers Period

312 125. Landscape with Cottages

35.879

Blue distemper and charcoal, 17¼ x 21½ inches 21194

Drawn 1890

over frame
de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1640 (*Paysage boisé*)

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Amsterdam

Illustrated opposite

312 126. Landscape

35.981

Watercolor, 13 x 16½ inches

Drawn 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1625 (*Paysage*)

Collection The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Not illustrated

Auvers Period

312 127. Portrait of Dr. Gachet

35.857

21091

Etching, 7½ x 5¼ inches

Auvers, May, 1890

de la Faille *Catalogue*, No. 1664 (*Portrait du docteur Gachet*)

Private Collection, New York

Illustrated opposite

I have seen Dr. Gachet, who gives me the impression of being rather eccentric, but his experience as a doctor must keep him balanced enough to combat the nervous trouble from which he certainly seems to me to suffer at least as seriously as I do. . . . When he spoke of Belgium and the days of the old painters, his grief-hardened face grew smiling again, and I really think that I shall keep on being friends with him and that I shall do his portrait.

Then he said that I must work boldly on, and not think at all of what went wrong with me.

(Letter 635)

. . . He seems very sensible, but he is as discouraged about his job as a doctor as I am about my painting. Then I said to him, that I would gladly exchange job for job. Anyway I am ready to believe that I shall end by being friends with him.

(Letter 637)

He seems to me certainly as ill and distraught as you or me, and he is older and lost his wife several years ago, but he is very much the doctor and his profession and faith still hold him. We are great friends already. . . .

I am working at his portrait [the painted portrait], the head with a white cap, very fair, very light, the hands also light flesh tint, a blue frock coat and a cobalt blue background, leaning on a red table, on which are a yellow book and a foxglove plant with purple flowers. It has the same feeling as the portrait of myself, which I took when I left for this place.

M. Gachet is absolutely *fanatical* about this portrait and wants me to do one for him, if I can, exactly like it. I should like to, myself. He has now got the length of understanding the last portrait of the Arlésienne, of which you have one in rose; he always comes back to these two portraits when he comes to see the studies and he accepts them utterly, yes utterly, just as they are.

I hope to send a portrait of him soon

. . . Altogether old Gachet is very, yes very like you and me.

(Letter 638)

I hope he [Gauguin] does some etchings of southern subjects, say six, since I can print them without cost at M. Gachet's, who is kind enough to print them for nothing, if I do them.

(Letter 642)

From letter to Gauguin, referring to the painted portrait:

Meantime I have a portrait of Dr. Gachet with the heart-broken expression of our time.

(Letter 643)



Total collection 130 with addition
1 Daumer