



VAN GOGH



Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890)

Outskirts of Paris, 1886,

46 by 55 cm, 18-1/8 by 21-5/8 inches, Oil/canvas

Exhibited:

Vincent van Gogh, Leicester Galleries, London, 1926, no 3.

Vincent van Gogh, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1930, no 9

Selections from the Nathan Cummings Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1970, no. 19.

Summer Loan, 1971, Paintings from New York Collections, Nathan Cummings Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 67.

Van Gogh and Britain, Pioneer Collectors, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, July 7th through September 24, 2006, no 25.

L.S. Lowry and the Painting of Modern Life, Tate Britain, June 26th through October 30, 2013

Santa Barbara Art Museum, California, 2014

This painting dates to autumn 1886 when Vincent van Gogh, then a recent arrival to Paris, as he commenced his exploration of Asniers, west of the city and the better known hill of Montmartre, north of the river, one dotted with windmills, relics of an earlier era. Seen here as a looming mass in the distance, atop Montmartre was the windmill Moulin de la Galette, and in summer it became a popular outdoors café setting where one could enjoy a drink, entertainment and fresh air in the otherwise sultry conditions of Paris. Van Gogh's experience of Paris in 1886 came in the footsteps of artists Henri Toulouse Lautrec and Pierre Auguste Renoir, both of whom painted their most famous works in that location.





CORRESPONDENCE

FROM THE VAN GOGH MUSEUM

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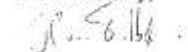
Amsterdam, 15 December 2002

Duly observing the conditions stipulated in the agreement dated 15 February 2003 and the conditions stipulated in my letter dated 25 November 2002, I inform you of the following.

We have studied the material carefully and investigated the work in Amsterdam.

It is our opinion that the work *Outskirts of Paris* (F 264 JH 1179; 46.0 x 54.9 cm.) is indeed by Van Gogh, as style, technique and colour show. The topography is difficult to make out at the moment, but the spot could be near the ramparts of Paris. The work is probably painted in late summer, perhaps early autumn 1886, when his colours increased in brightness and intensity due to the influence of Monticelli. The quality of the canvas closely resembles the type used in other Paris works. The work belonged to the family collection up to 1926, when it was sold by the Leicester Galleries in London to the Earl of Sandwich.

Yours sincerely,


Louis van Tilborgh
Curator of Paintings

The Outskirts of Paris, oil on canvas, 46 x 55 cm, 1886
(Paris), private collection, Santa Barbara, California

Theo van Gogh, Paris, 1886
Johanna van Gogh-Bonger, Amsterdam, 1891
V.W. van Gogh, Laren, 1925
Leicester Galleries, London, 1926
Earl of Sandwich, Huntingdon, 1926
Wildenstein Gallery, New York, 1956
Norman B. Woolworth, Monmouth, Maine, 1958
Parke-Bernet (auction), 31 October 1962, lot 21 (unsold)
Mrs Norman B. Woolworth, Monmouth, Maine
Christie's, London, 21 December 1967, lot 42
Nathan Cummings, New York
Christie's, New York, 10 November 1987, lot 16
Private collection, Santa Barbara, California

The Earl of Sandwich (1874-1962) acquired two Van Goghs at the Leicester Galleries exhibition in 1926: this painting and a drawing (F1247). The Leicester Galleries had acquired "The outskirts of Paris" for 4000 florins (£363), and sold it for £400. The Earl of Sandwich later had been encouraged to buy Post-Impressionist works by his artist friend Paul Maze. The Van Gogh painting hung at the family house in Hinchingsbrooke, Huntingdon. It was sold in 1956, six years before the Earl's death.

F 229, 10mm
F 230, 12mm
F 316, 10mm (in the foreground rather than the sky)
F 346, 10mm
F 347, 15-18mm.

Condition of paint layers

The painting shows several old damages and restorations. Most obvious in the x-ray is a large branched tear in the lower left quadrant (see tracing by Travers), with a gap measuring 2cm across in the middle part. The fact that the tear has opened as much as 3mm under the influence of moisture, might suggest that the painting was lined only some time after the tear formed.¹⁰ It is also possible that the canvas was aqueous lined without fixing the tear beforehand, causing the canvas to shrink and the tear to open during lining. Comparison of the painting as it looks now with old reproductions (see illustration of the painting on David Brook's website for example) shows that the restoration of the missing area has led to significant changes in the configuration of the fence. Paint loss has also been caused by abrasive cleaning in the past. For example, examination of the light stretch of path to the left of the policeman under the stereo-microscope, showed remains of orange and yellow paint strokes that would originally have provided more detailed nuances of colour. Old retouches are scattered across the painting, the scope of which is clearly revealed by ultraviolet light examination.

Under the stereo-microscope at 60x magnification, the ochreish-orange brush strokes in the policeman's clothing, which contain a fine bright inorganic orange-red pigment, show numerous rounded exodus holes. Most of these are filled with varnish, but some contain a pearly white material with concentrations of the bright orange-red pigment. These observations suggest the possible conversion of red lead or *minium* into to lead soaps, a known form of degradation of the pigment. Current research indicates that moisture can play an important catalytic role in this process, as applied during aqueous lining for example.¹¹

The red lake paint used shows no obvious degradation, retaining a vivid colour where it occurs in pure form for the bright accent by the right brim of the policeman's hat for example. The main types of red lake that have been identified in Van Gogh's Paris paintings so far include; purpurin (probably synthetic) or madder, synthetic carmine or cochineal, and less often Brazilwood.¹² The red lake used in *Outskirts of Paris* does not show the characteristic orange fluorescence of purpurin in ultra-violet light, nor the marked degradation typical of Brazilwood. Therefore it is most likely to be carminic acid (synthetic carmine or cochineal), though this should be substantiated by analysis.

Ella Hendriks
12 May 2003

¹⁰ This was measured in the left part of the tear where the walls are still intact and hence mirror each other.

¹¹ Research into lead soap formation on paintings by Van Gogh is being conducted within the so-called De Mayerne research programme in The Netherlands.

¹² M. van Bommel, M. Geldof & E. Hendriks, "Microscopic examination and HPLC-PDA-Fluorescence analysis of organic red pigments in paintings by Van Gogh in the period 1885-1888", presentation DHA 21, Avignon 2002 and paper in preparation.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON DC

1970

Selections from the Nathan Cummings Collection



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SELECTIONS
FROM THE
NATHAN CUMMINGS
COLLECTION

FRICK ART REFERENCE
LIBRARY
NEW YORK

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON

June 28 - September 11, 1970

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

July 1 - September 7, 1971



19 VINCENT VAN GOGH (1853–1890). *The Outskirts of Paris*, 1887
17¼ × 21¼ in.

In 1886, after a few years in Antwerp, van Gogh arrived in Paris. His painting style was still that of his Dutch period, marked by thick paint and dark, somber colors. Paris was a revelation to him—the animated life of the city, the Louvre, and especially the painters who were revolutionizing painting—the Impressionists, Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, Seurat, and Gauguin. Under all these influences van Gogh's palette brightened, but the change is only beginning in this winter scene of the drab outskirts of Paris.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

SUMMER 1971

Summer Loan 1971
Paintings from
New York Collections
July 1-September 7

Nathan Cummings
Collection

second floor
Special Exhibition
Galleries

1. JEAN ARP (French, 1887-1966)
Evocation of a Human Form, Lunar Spectral, 1950
Marble
Height 36-5/8 in., depth 22 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

2. PIERRE BONNARD (French, 1867-1947)
Picking Apples, 1895-96
Oil on canvas
40-3/4 x 66-1/2 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

3. GEORGES BRAQUE (French, 1882-1963)
Antwerp, 1906
Oil on canvas
23-1/2 x 28-3/4 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

4. Woman at an Easel (Green Screen), 1936
Oil on canvas
35-3/4 x 28-1/2 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

5. MARY CASSATT (American, 1844-1926)
Young Lady in a Park, c.1880
Oil on canvas
28 x 35-1/2 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

6. MARC CHAGALL (Russian, 1889-)
Lovers of Vitebsk, 1924-25
Oil on canvas
35-1/2 x 28-1/2 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

66. CHAIM SOUTINE (Lithuanian, 1893-1943)
Young Girl at a Fence, c.1942
Oil on canvas
33 x 25-1/2 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

67. VINCENT VAN GOGH (Dutch, 1853-1890)
The Outskirts of Paris, 1887
Oil on canvas
17-1/4 x 21-1/4 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection

68. ÉDOUARD VUILLARD (French, 1868-1940)
Public Garden, 1918
Gouache on canvas
76 x 111-1/2 in.
Nathan Cummings Collection