

Van Gogh's, Portrait of Dr. Rey (January 1889)

Hello:

I hope this finds you well.

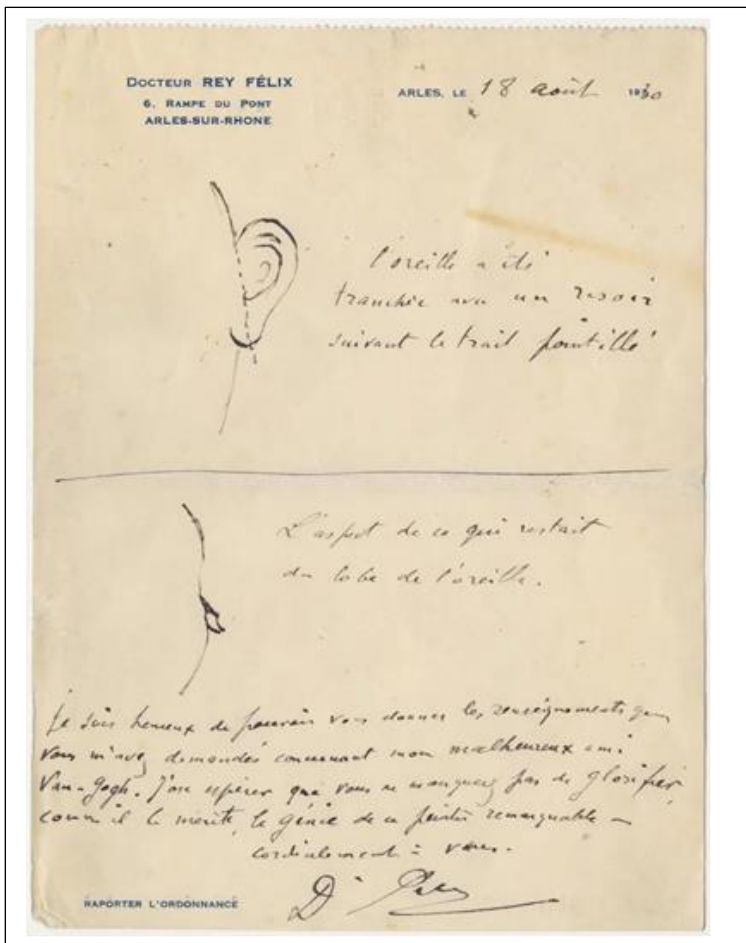
If you are reading a good book and would like to share it, let me know and I'll post it on Facebook and mention it in my next newsletter.

A Van Gogh masterpiece being used to repair a hole in a chicken coop? I'm discovering some interesting facts while doing background research for my current novel-in-progress, "Stealing Van Gogh." Dr Felix Rey tended to Van Gogh after he cut off his ear, so Van Gogh painted Dr. Rey's portrait and gave him the canvas in appreciation for his kindness and understanding. (See above.) Dr Rey didn't care for the painting and kept it in his attic. By 1900, the painting was being used to patch a hole in the henhouse in Dr. Rey's backyard. An artist friend of Henri Matisse, Charles Camoin, discovered the painting by accident and rescued it. The Canvas is now at the Pushkin Museum in Russia—another potential clue in, "Stealing Van Gogh."

The question whether Van Gogh cut off his whole ear or only part of it, remained unanswered for more than a century. However, due to a drawing by Dr. Rey that recently came to light, we now have a definitive answer. The doctor's notes are pictured below.

Theo, Vincent Van Gogh's brother, organized an exhibition of his selected works six weeks after his death on July 29, 1890. Sadly, Theo died six months later, and it was Theo's widow, Jo Van Gogh Bonger, who deserves the credit for keeping her brother-in-law's memory alive, publishing his letters, and ultimately, preserving the collection of paintings that forms the permanent collection of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Her picture and a photo of Theo are below.

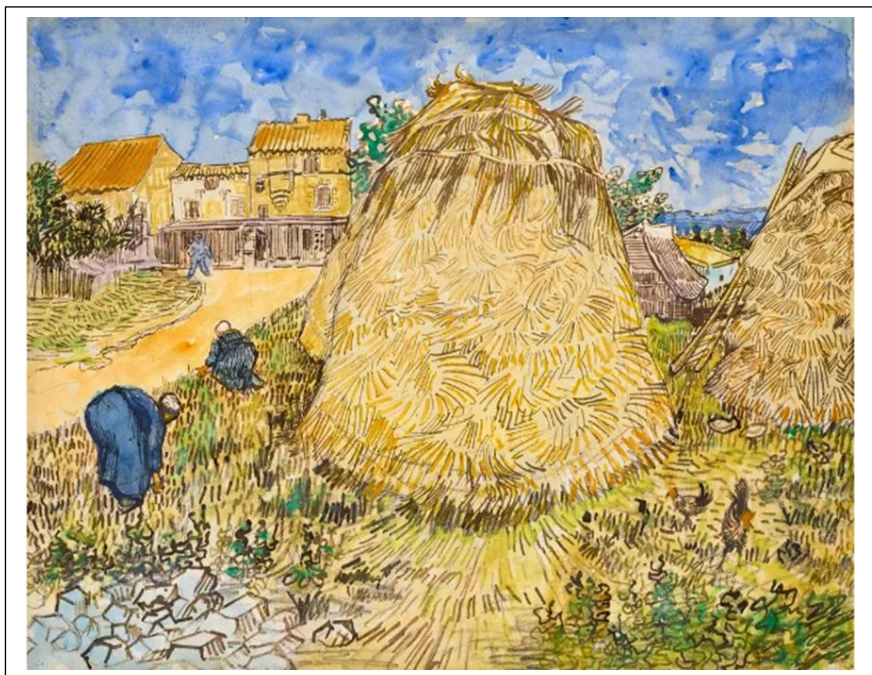
I mentioned the Russian Trophy Brigades in a previous newsletter. The Nazis destroyed 427 museums, approximately 4,000 libraries, and more than 115 million printed works during their Russian invasion. After the Yalta conference established occupation zones, Stalin created the Extraordinary State Commission to document the losses; war mentality fostered the Trophy Brigades: reciprocal looting, although the Russian euphemism was “resaving.” It’s estimated that the Nazis stole approximately 1.2 million works of art in their invasion. The current German government claims the Russians stole, re-stole, or re-saved approximately 2 million works of art, including approximately 200,000 paintings!



Dr Felix Rey’s notes about his treatment of Van Gogh.



Jo Van Gogh Bonger and Theo Van Gogh



Van Gogh painted nearly 150 watercolors! He painted *Mueles de Blē* (Wheatstacks) in 1888

If you know of anyone who is looking for a speaker, the Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau is great about helping to subsidize appearances. I'm also giving talks about "[A Promise Moon](#)" and how it relates to the Underground Railroad in Kentucky, as well as gardening with native plants and "[Let The Earth Breathe.](#)" If you or anyone you know would like to schedule a talk, here's the [link](#).

If you can't make it to a presentation in person, here is the link to my recent videos. They are short, 5-6 minutes. [Video link](#).

If you haven't already, please take a moment to leave a review on Amazon. It is really helpful with sales. [Here is the link](#). Thank you.

Happy reading.

Stephen Allten Brown

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