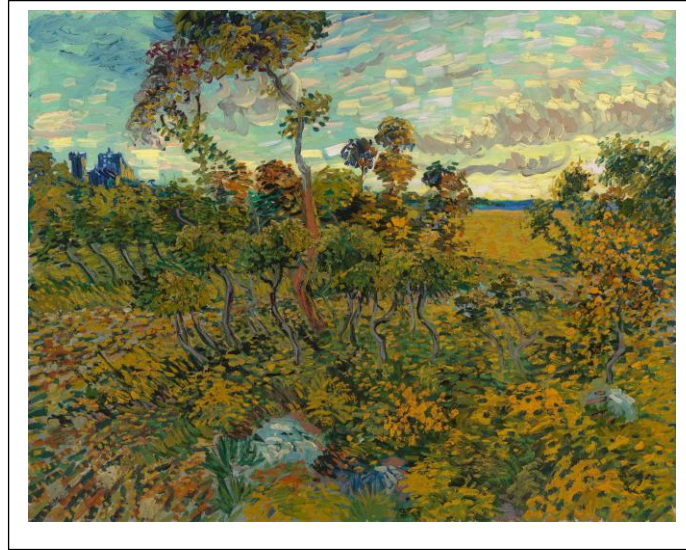


## Check Your Attic!



Van Gogh's, *Sunset at Montmajour*

Hello:

I hope this finds you well.

It pays to get a second opinion. (And check your attic.) As I've been researching clues for my current novel-in-progress: "Saving Van Gogh," I've learned that the previous owner of Van Gogh's, *Sunset at Montmajour* was told that his painting was a fake because it wasn't signed, so he put it in the attic.

Like other painters of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Van Gogh purchased canvas by the roll. The looms from this period created unique patterns. (Like fingerprints, no two patterns are alike.) Modern computer algorithms can map the number of individual threads per centimeter and create color-coded weave maps that identify these unique patterns. The traditional documentation for *Sunset at Montmajour* was lost, but the one-of-a-kind canvas helped prove authenticity.

Besides, Vincent Van Gogh didn't sign all his paintings. When he did, he used his first name, only, because French-speakers had so much trouble pronouncing his last name.



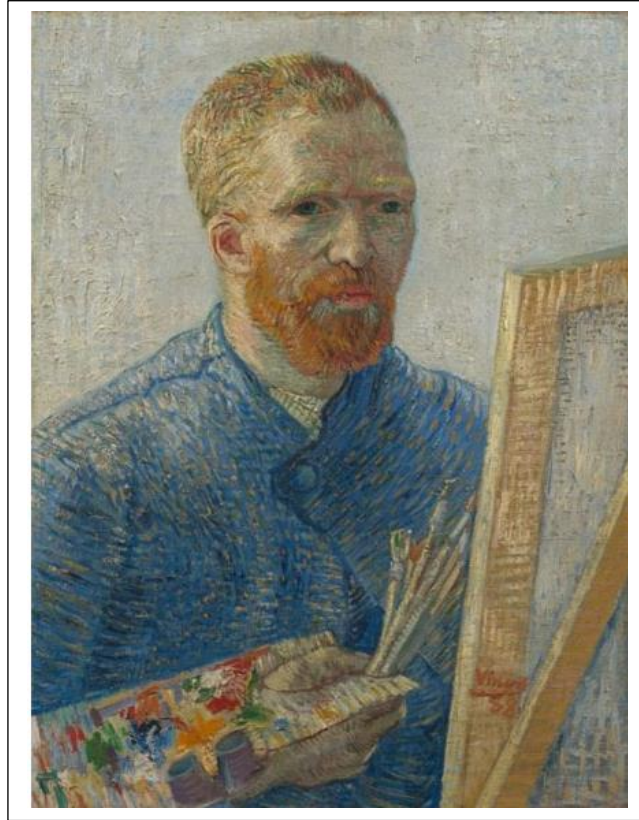
Sometimes he signed the canvas on the left side of the painting.



*Impasse des Deux Frères* (Paris, 1887)

Sometimes he signed the canvas on top of an object in the painting, which is unusual for a painter.



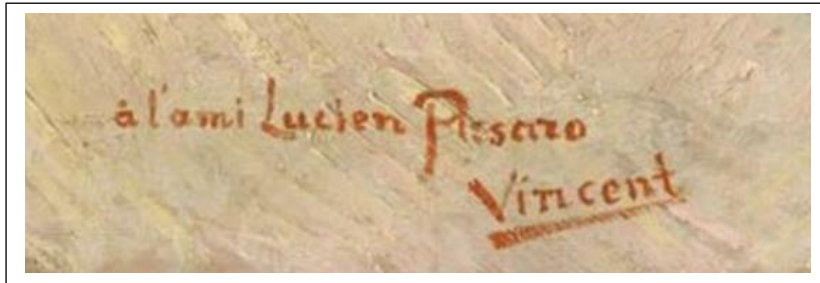


*Self-Portrait as a Painter* (December 1887 – January 1888)

### **From “Stealing” to “Saving”**

You may have noticed a slight variation in the progression of book titles. Moving from *Stealing Renoir* and *Stealing Picasso* to *Saving Van Gogh* as the working title for my current novel-in-progress reflects a shift toward the complex matter of reparations when millions of dollars are at stake. With an estimated 30,000 masterpiece paintings still unaccounted for from World War II, there continue to be some startling discoveries upon closer examination of prized collections, especially the collections in the Hermitage and Pushkin Museums in Russia, where much of *Saving Van Gogh* takes place.

*Hidden Treasures Revealed*, by Albert Kistenevich, is a wonderful book that looks at some of the masterpiece paintings that were taken to Russia from Germany during World War II. Many of these paintings originally belonged to private Jewish citizens before the Nazis embarked on the largest art theft in history. The photos are spectacular and the research is fascinating.



. . . And sometimes, Van Gogh signed his name without adding a date.

WHILE WE'RE ON THE SUBJECT OF DATES:

I'll be busy in April with the following book talks.

\*\*\*

\*\*\*

Saturday, April 8, 2023, 1pm

I'll be talking about "Let The Earth Breathe" and giving a plant walk at the Jeffersontown Library

10635 Watterson Trail

Louisville, KY 40299

\*\*\*

Thursday, April 20th, 6:30pm

I'll be talking about "Let The Earth Breathe" and giving a plant walk at the Boone County Public Library - Main Library

1786 Burlington Pike, Burlington, KY 41005

\*\*\*

Friday, April 21st, 3:30pm

I'll be talking about, "Let The Earth Breathe," and giving a plant walk at the Hardin County Library

100 Jim Owen Drive

Elizabethtown, KY 42701

\*\*\*

Saturday, April 22, 3:00 pm

Anne and I will be celebrating Earth Day, Saturday, April 22 with a presentation of “Let The Earth Breathe.”

Middletown Library, 12556 Shelbyville Road,  
Louisville, KY 40243

\*\*\*

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.

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 available as a speaker to talk about “[Stealing Renoir](#),” and how World War II was the largest art theft in history.

Or, if Kentucky history is appropriate for audiences, the Speakers Bureau will subsidize my appearance to discuss the findings from my research grant that inspired “[A Promise Moon](#)” and how it relates to the Underground Railroad in Kentucky. I'm also available to talk about 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](#).

Happy reading.

Stephen Allten Brown

[www.singingrockpublishing.com](http://www.singingrockpublishing.com)