

April 2024 Newsletter

VAN GOGH'S JOURNEY INTO COLOR

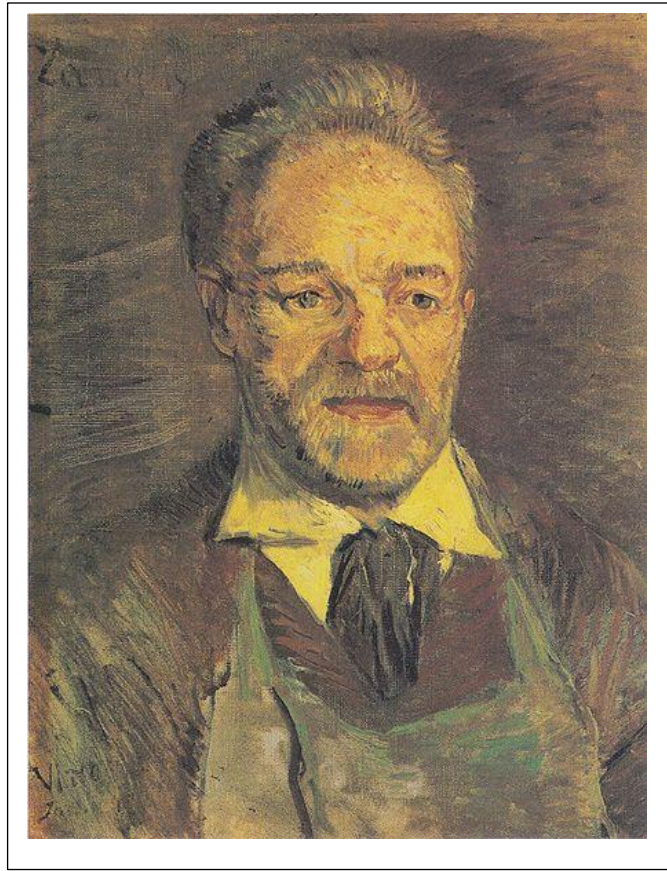


Hello:

I hope this finds you well and reading a good book. A fellow reader recommended *Demon Copperhead* by Barbara Kingsolver. If you've read a good book, let me know and I'll mention it in my next newsletter.

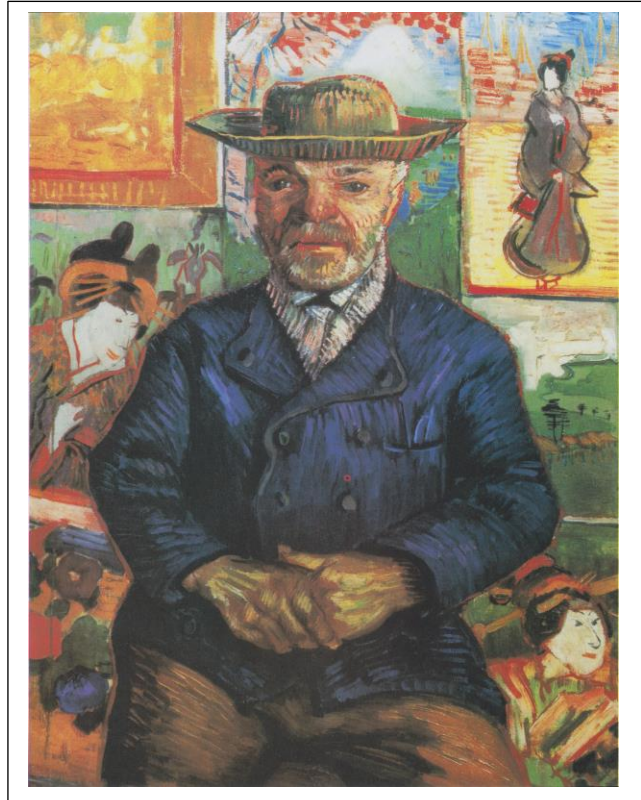
As I discussed in a previous newsletter, ([June 2023](#)) Vincent Van Gogh often painted three versions of the same subject. I'm incorporating this quirk into a plot point in my current novel-in-progress: *Saving Van Gogh*.

Van Gogh and the other Impressionists were heavily influenced by Japanese woodblock prints because of their vibrant colors, achieved by using water-based paints instead of the more common oil-based paints. This Japanese influence is especially prominent in Van Gogh's three portraits of Julien Tanguy. Julien-François Tanguy (1825-94) ran a small paint supplies shop in Paris, and because he was willing to trade art supplies for finished works, grateful artists nicknamed him, *Père* (Father) Tanguy. Van Gogh's first portrait of Tanguy is pictured below, painted in late 1886 /early 1887



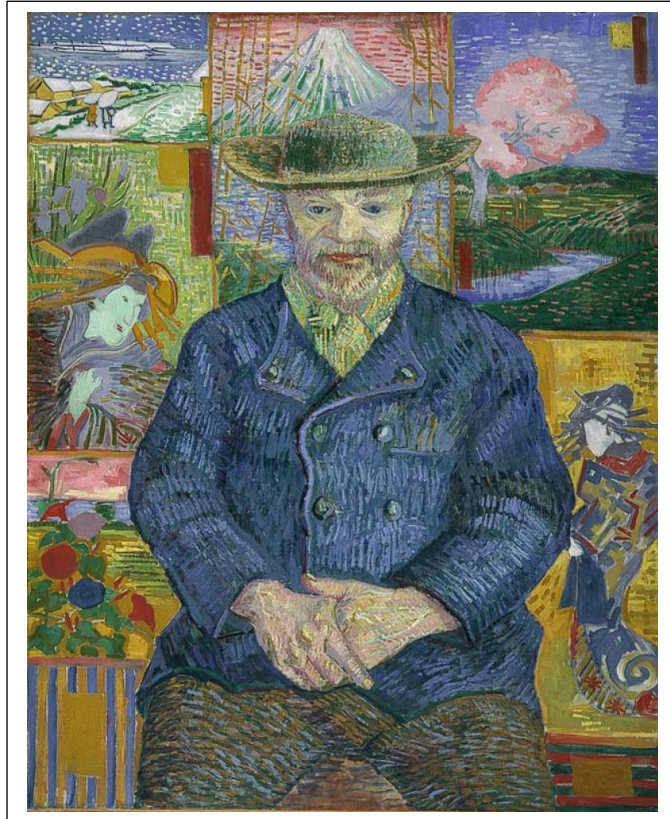
Vincent Van Gogh (late 1886 / early 1887) *Portrait of Père Tanguy*

Beginning in 1885, Van Gogh switched from collecting magazine illustrations to Japanese woodblocks as he pursued his artistic development. In 1887, Van Gogh began to experiment with brighter colors like those featured in Japanese woodblock prints. The second portrait of Julien-François Tanguy, pictured below, reflects the next stage in Van Gogh's development. Van Gogh selected a few prints from his own collection to use as a wallpaper background in the second portrait in the series. Pictured below:



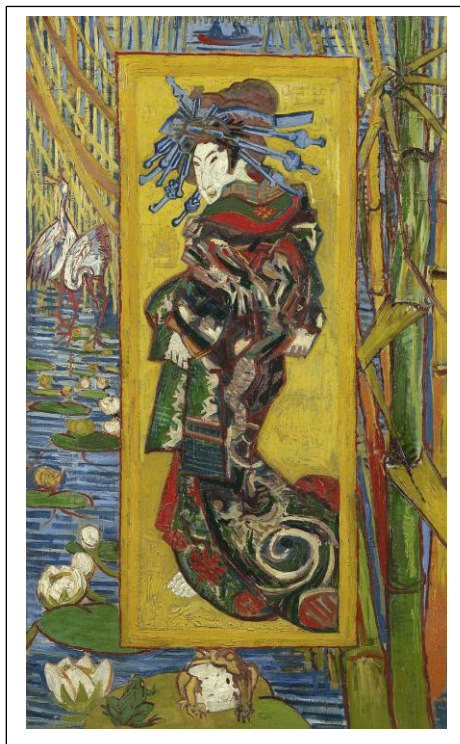
Vincent Van Gogh (1887) *Portrait of Père Tanguy*

The third and final portrait of Julien-François Tanguy is part of sculptor August Rodin's collection. Rodin owned three of Van Gogh's paintings and had this to say about the artist: "If we love these painters, despite their obvious clumsiness, it is because they looked at nature with absolutely new eyes whose vision no school rule, no conventional ideal, no learned form had yet adulterated. This is the same merit that we find in Van Gogh. He neglects all academic recipes, he ignores the way of making a painting like a dish or a sauce following the instructions in a cookbook."



Vincent Van Gogh (1887) *Portrait of Père Tanguy*

Taking a closer look at the lower, right-side of the painting, we can glimpse a preview of another Van Gogh painting: *The Courtesan* (after Eisen), also painted in 1887. Pictured below:



Vincent Van Gogh (1887) *The Courtesan (after Eisen)*

I'll explore the symbolism of the cranes and the frog in my next newsletter. There is always something interesting in the background of Van Gogh's paintings.

Please mark your calendars:



This speaking engagement comes with breakfast! Saturday, May 18th, 10am, I will be reading excerpts from my book, "[A Promise Moon](#)," and discussing the Underground Railroad in Kentucky at the Jack Jouett House Historic Site, 255 Craigs Creek Rd. Versailles, KY 40383. The [Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau](#) is sponsoring this talk.

Thursday, June 6 at 6:30 pm, I will be speaking about "Let The Earth Breathe" at the Erlanger Branch, Kenton County Public Library, 401 Kenton Lands Road, Erlanger, Kentucky 41018. The [Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau](#) is also sponsoring this talk.

Monday, June 10 at 5:30 pm, I will be speaking about "Let The Earth Breathe" at the Marion County Public Library, 201 E. Main St., Lebanon, KY 40033. The [Kentucky Humanities Speakers Bureau](#) is also sponsoring this talk.

Tuesday, November 12 at 11:00 am, I will be visiting the Owl Creek Garden Club to speak about "Let The Earth Breathe." We are meeting at City Hall in Anchorage, KY, 1306 Evergreen Rd, 40223

I hope you've enjoyed this edition of my newsletter. 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 to my latest book, "[Stealing Picasso](#)."

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 into the Underground Railroad in Kentucky.

The Speakers Bureau will also subsidize my appearance to talk about gardening with native plants and how this led to the publication of "[Let The Earth Breathe](#)." If you or anyone you know would like to schedule a talk, here's the [link](#).

I am now on the Indiana Historical Society's Speakers Bureau. Contact Jeannette Rooney @ jrooney@indianahistory.org to arrange a talk.

[Here is a link to my previous newsletters.](#)

Happy reading.

Stephen Allten Brown

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