

A DAY IN THE ARTS

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Vincent van Gogh, "Sunflowers" (oil on canvas, 36-1/2x28-3/4 inches), National Gallery, London.

LOVE THE SUNFLOWERS

By Emily Ally

Between August 1887 and January 1889 Dutch artist Vincent Van Gogh produced eleven pictures of sunflowers. Four were completed in Paris and seven in Arles, located in the South of France.

The specific decorative purposes and iconographic connotations Van Gogh associated with these striking and oddly statuesque blooms remains a popular topic for scholarly debate. That being said, we do know that for him, sunflowers were emblematic of the French *midi*.

His dedication to the subject of sunflowers was partly derived from a desire to breath life into what he considered to be his lackluster Dutch palette. Painting flowers of any kind, he believed, allowed him to enliven and free his palette of dull monotonous grays.

Here the ailing flowers, gathered together in an earthen-

ware jug, are built up with a thick and brilliant impasto to the point that their tough texture is not only visible but also palpable. This thickness of paint lends to the image a realistic quality that is ultimately countered by the shockingly bright yellow background that renders the image more decorative than representational.

It is in this way that Van Gogh's depiction of sunflowers astutely puts on view the artist's dueling fascinations with the reality of his subjects as well as his desire to create boldly decorative juxtapositions of colors.

Also of interest with respect to his sunflowers was the involvement of Paul Gauguin in their production and collection. This particular work was intended to decorate Gauguin's bedroom.

Between October and December of 1888 Van Gogh and Gauguin worked together in Arles.

While their friendship ended rather tragically, the two did indeed positively influence one and other's oeuvre during the heyday of their stint as neighbors and painting-partners.

Gauguin in fact owned many of Van Gogh's Sunflowers until he was forced to relinquish the paintings in order to finance his South Seas voyage. Gauguin did, however, continue to stand by the proclamation of their significance for contemporary art and in 1888 immortalized his friend in the act of painting sunflowers in a work now installed at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. 🐘

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5 IMPORTANT REASONS TO BUY A BEAUTIFUL WORK OF ART

By Rita Acuna

Express Yourself

What a great way to express yourself and show what your interests are. Whether you are a sophisticated world traveler, futurist, fun-loving homebody, animal lover, or a sports fan, there are works of art to compliment you and your interests. For example, Chagall, Picasso, Klimt, Renoir, Kahlo, Bouguereau, Rembrandt, Watteau, or Max, or whatever artist of your choice who speaks to you and captivates your admiration and expresses your fervor for life. Express yourself with a vibrant work of art. My personal favorite is "La Gioconda" (The Mona Lisa). I am completely enthralled by her beauty and mystery and the secret held captive with her smile.

Art Is A Great Décor Booster

It's time to get creative. Give your entrance hall or living room a fresh look or a seasonal ambiance! Think about complimenting the seasons with just the right painting in your home or office space. For summer, what about Raoul Dufy's "Interior with Open Windows," or for the winter months, what about Claude Monet's "The Magpie," or Willard Metcalf's "The Veil." And for the spring, why not add Albert Bierstadt's "Yosemite Valley." And for the fall, Melchior D' Hondecoeter's "Cocks Hens and Chicks." Revitalize the look of your favorite room, with the added charm and color of a fabulous work of art.

Compliment Your Personal Style

Which school of art best compliments your lifestyle? The lavish Baroque period, or the Pre-Raphaelites? The Northern Renaissance or Italian Renaissance Masters? Modernists, Photo Realists, Dadaists, Abstractionists, Surrealists, or is it the nostalgia of pure Romanticism? Choose from centuries of the greatest art in the world to compliment your unique per-

sonal style.

Art Makes A Great Investment

Whether you are a serious collector, or buy art as an investment with the intention of selling your work of art at some future date, or just getting your feet wet and starting to collect art, one rule stands firm, "Buy what you like." Art will always reward you with its beauty, integrity and new sense of discovery every time you look at it. Bottom line, whether you buy an original work of art as an investment for thousands of dollars, or a reproduction for considerably less money, art is dynamic. It will pass on from one generation to the next and each generation will add its own legacy and imprint with that particular work of art and keep adding to its history.

Feel Like A Million Dollars

Surround yourself with the good feelings which beautiful and vibrant art can impart to you and your environment. Treat yourself well and imagine Van Gogh's radiant "Sunflowers" boosting your mood the first thing in the morning, or the quietude of Jan Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring," or the calming effect of Georges Seurat's "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte," in your home or office. Whether you decide to purchase an original work of art, lithograph, serigraph, iris giclee print, or hand-painted oil on canvas reproduction, art will bring joy into your life. Fine art reproductions are affordable, so you don't have to spend a million dollars to feel like a million dollars. Unless of course you would like to spend a million dollars. 🐘

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