VINCENT VAN GOGH

Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille,

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DICKINSON

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With inscriptions by J.H. de Bois, verso lower right *aquarelle de Vincent van Gogh provenant de la collection de son frère, Theo van Gogh, et garantie aussi par nous. La Haye Dec. 1912, Artz de Bois* and verso upper right, in pencil *Cat 7/711;* inscription by Johanna van Gogh Bonger, verso upper left *no 5*; and inscription in an unidentified hand, verso lower left *A19/2224*.
Reed pen and watercolour on wove paper, with traces of underdrawing in pencil
30.2 x 49 cm. (11 4/5 x 19 ¼ in.)

PROVENANCE

Theo van Gogh, Paris, 1890-91, and thence to
Johanna van Gogh Bonger (1891 – 1912), Paris and Amsterdam.
Erich Schall, Berlin, acquired from the above in Dec. 1912 (for 2000 Guilders).
Dr Heinrich Stinnes (1867 – 1932), Cologne-Lindenthal.
Private Collection, Germany.
Anon. sale; Galerie Wolfgang Ketterer, Munich, 29 Nov. 1976, lot 1034 (as dated September 1888).
Dr Peter Nathan (1925 – 2001), Zurich, acquired at the above sale.
Hazlitt, Gooden & Fox, London.
Private Collection, acquired from the above.

LITERATURE

List written by Johanna van Gogh Bonger with 52 drawings sent to Ambroise Vollard, including 12 watercolours from the French period, 1896, no. 52 ("paysage 5").
List written by Johanna van Gogh-Bonger with 30 drawings consigned to Lucien Moline at Galerie Laffitte in Paris, 1902, no. 30 ("paysage (aquarelle) 5").
List written by Johanna van Gogh-Bonger with drawings consigned to Artz & de Bois, 1912, no. 7 ("aquarel 711 ~~1800~~ Mont Major 2000").

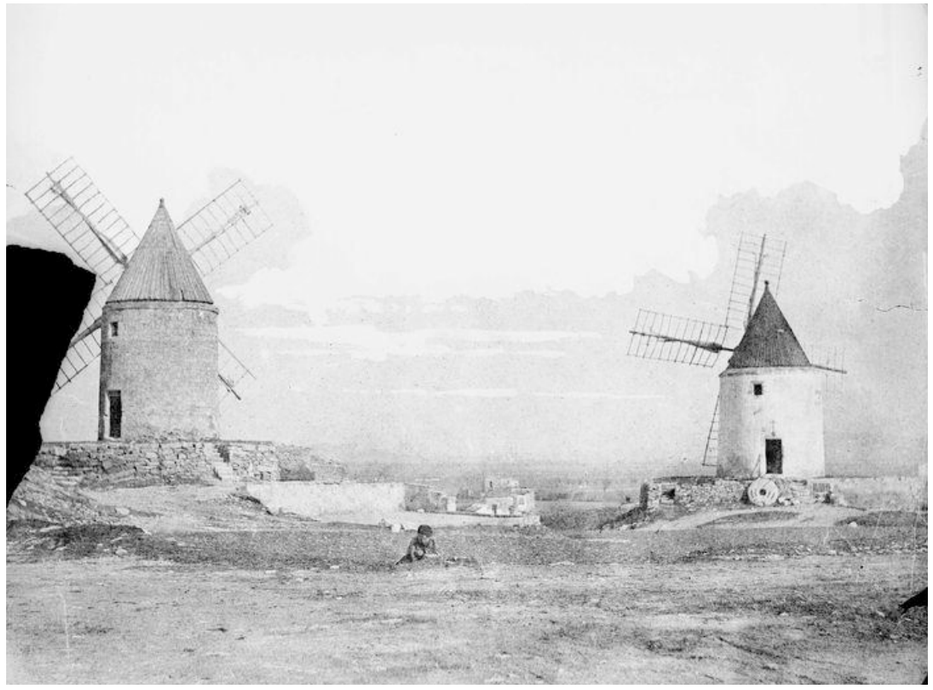
J. Meier-Graefe, *Vincent*, Munich, 1922, vol. II, p. 21, no. 38, as "Montmajour" (illus. p. 38).
J.B. de la Faille, *L'Oeuvre de Vincent van Gogh, catalogue raisonné: dessins, aquarelles, lithographies*, Brussels, 1928, vol. III, p. 141, no. 1464; vol. IV, no. 1464, as "Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille", dated Sept. 1888 (illus. pl. CLXII).
J.B. de la Faille, *The Works of Vincent van Gogh: His paintings and drawings*, Amsterdam, 1970, p. 510, no. F1464, dated Sept. 1888 (illus. p. 511).
J. Hulsker, *The Complete Van Gogh: Paintings, Drawings, Sketches*, Oxford, 1980, no. 1497 (illus.)
W. Feichenfeldt & H. Veenenbos, *Vincent van Gogh & Paul Cassirer, Berlin: The Reception of Van Gogh in Germany from 1901 to 1914*, Zwolle, 1989, p. 133.
F. Erpel, *Vincent van Gogh: Les dessins au Roseau*, Schirmer/Mosel, 1990, p. 164, no. 53, dated summer 1888 (illus. p. 165, erroneously numbered F1564).
J. van der Wolk, R. Pickvance and E.B.F. Pey, *Vincent van Gogh: Drawings*, Otterlo, 1990, pp. 228, 234.
J.B. de la Faille, *Vincent van Gogh: The Complete Works on Paper*, *catalogue raisonné*, San Francisco, 1992, vol. I, p. 381, no. 1464, dated Sept. 1888; vol. II (illus. pl. CLXII).
M. Vellekoop and R. Zwikker, *Vincent van Gogh drawings: Vol. IV, Arles, Saint-Remy & Auvers-sur-Oise, 1888 – 1890*, Amsterdam, 2007, p. 36, note 16; p. 66, note 18.

EXHIBITED

Paris, Galerie Vollard, *Vincent van Gogh*, Dec. 1896 – Feb. 1897.
Paris, Galerie Laffitte, 1902 (on loan, to show a client).
The Hague , Artz & de Bois Gallery, 1912.
Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, *Vincent van Gogh*, July – Aug. 1905, no. 361 (as "Gezicht te Arles").
Berlin, Ausstellungshaus am Kurfürstendamm, *13th Secession*, 1907, no. 112 (as "Landschaft bei Arles").
Munich, Moderne Kunsthandlung, *Vincent van Gogh*, April 1908, no. 78 (as "Landschaft bei Arles").
Dresden, Emil Richter, *Vincent van Gogh/Paul Cézanne*, April – May 1908, no. 82 (as "Landschaft bei Arles").
Frankfurt, Kunsteverein, *Vincent van Gogh,* 14 – 28 June 1908, no. 89 (as "Landschaft bei Arles").
Cologne, Kunstverein, January 1910, no. 8 (as "Gezicht te Arles aquarel").
Frankfurt, Moderne Kunsthandlung Marie Held, Feb. 1910 (as "Gezicht te Arles aquarel").
Berlin, Paul Cassirer Gallery, *Vincent van Gogh*, 25 Oct. – 25 Nov. 1910, no. 67 (as "Mühle, Aquarell").

LES MOULINS DE FONTVIEILLE
black and white photograph
Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Amsterdam

MILLS IN THE EAST OF ARLES
black and white photograph
Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Amsterdam

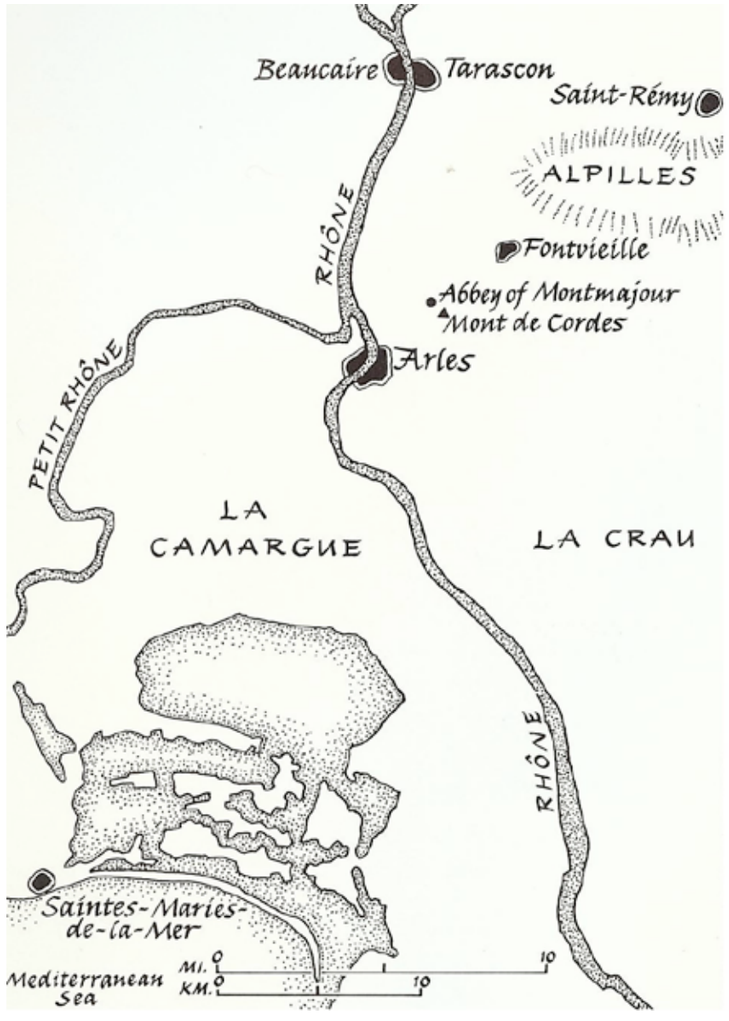


Vincent van Gogh arrived in Arles, in the South of France, on 20 February 1888. Having spent two years living and working in the metropolitan bustle of Paris, he was exhausted and battling illness; in fact he had begun talking about travelling south as early as autumn 1886. It is not entirely clear why he chose Arles from among the many picturesque cities in the region. Paul Cézanne was at work in nearby Aix-en-Provence. But Van Gogh would have heard about Arles from his friend Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec in Paris, and either he or Edgar Degas might have told Van Gogh of Albi, also located in the South. In any event, Van Gogh wrote to his sister Willemien a few days after his arrival: "You see that I've gone somewhat further to the South – I've seen only too clearly that I cannot prosper with either my work or my health in the winter – moreover, nowadays people are demanding colour contrasts and highly intense and variegated colours in paintings rather than a subdued grey colour. So I thought for one reason and another than I wouldn't do anyone any harm if I just went to what attracted me" (letter no. 579, 24 Feb. 1888). He was immediately struck by the brilliant colours of the landscape that surrounded him: "Water forms patches of a beautiful emerald or a rich blue in the landscape, just as we see it in the crépons. The sunsets have a pale orange colour which makes the fields appear blue. The sun a splendid yellow. And all this though I have not seen the country yet in its usual summer splendour" (letter no. 587, to Émile Bernard, 18 March 1888). Most significantly, it was in Arles that Van Gogh grew as a draughtsman, ultimately producing some of his most exquisite works on paper.

Van Gogh was not alone in Provence, and rather than living as a recluse as he is sometimes described, he enjoyed the company of other artists working in the area. The first one mentioned in his letters is the Danish painter Christian Mourier-Petersen, whom he met sometime around 10 March. About a month later, on 15 April, he encountered the American watercolourist Dodge MacKnight, who was staying in Fontvieille, a small village about 9 km northeast of Arles. Van Gogh and MacKnight were already acquainted, having been introduced by the artist John Peter Russell in Paris in March of 1886. This was shortly before MacKnight left Paris for the South of France, after which he continued on to North Africa. Russell and Van Gogh continued to meet frequently in Paris, and Russell painted a portrait of Van Gogh which the Dutchman held in high regard (Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam).

"MY GOD, IF I HAD ONLY KNOWN THIS COUNTRY AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-FIVE…"

(LETTER 628, TO ÉMILE BERNARD, C. 19 JUNE 1888)



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF ARLES

MacKnight was travelling when Van Gogh arrived in Provence, and when he returned he wrote to a Belgian artist friend Eugène Boch that he had "unearthed a couple of artists at Arles – a Dane [Christian Mourier-Petersen]…and Vincent who, I had already met at Russell's – a stark, staring crank, but a good fellow"(17 April 1888). Van Gogh, in his turn, wrote to Russell: "Last Sunday, I have met MacKnight and a Danish painter, and I intend to go see him at Fonvielle [sic] next Monday" (letter no. 598, 19 April 1888). On 3 May, Van Gogh paid a visit to MacKnight in Fontvieille. Van Gogh and Boch were eventually introduced in June.

LE MOULIN D'ALPHONSE DAUDET À FONTVIEILLE

The exact location of this landscape watercolour is not known, although it is clearly somewhere close to Arles, somewhere to the east, where so many working and converted mills were located. This is also near where Van Gogh executed the three other, similar watercolours in June (F1425, F1483 and F1484). The watercolour is believed to represent one of the four mills in Fontvieille, a suggestion first made by de la Faille in 1928, before which time it was called either *Vue d'Arles*, *Montmajour* (where Van Gogh sketched the ruined Benedictine monastery), or, simply, *paysage*. (The existence of numerous titles is indicative of the difficulty scholars had have in securely identifying the topography of Van Gogh's landscapes.) The horizon is high and dominated by a single windmill, its wings broken, and a small dome on its roof. Along the horizon line, the landscape is dotted with rustic, red-roofed wooden sheds. At the right are buildings that resemble *mas*, the traditional Provençal farmhouses, and to the far left is what appears to be the spire or steeple of a church or convent. The majority of the view is taken up by the rows of vivid green grapevines, with leaves that appear fresh and new, indicative of an early summer day. The sky above is washed in with rapid, swirling washes of cobalt blue. There are no figures to animate the scene, and no farmers at work in the fields, so Van Gogh must have been alone with his subject.

Van Gogh's choice of subject, and indeed of his Provençal destination, might in part have been prompted by the writing of Alphonse Daudet (1840 – 1897), the author best known for *Lettres de mon Moulin* (1869). This collection of nostalgic tales about life in Provence was written while Daudet was staying in Fontvieille. The title of the book refers not to a specific windmill but rather was inspired by the four windmills in the area. Today, one of these restored windmills, originally called the Ribet or St-Pierre windmill, is known as the *Moulin de Daudet* in honour of the author. That mill has a conical roof and its wings are complete whereas the windmill depicted in Van Gogh's painting has broken wings; however, this is a 20th century designation, made on the grounds that the Ribet was in the best condition and was perhaps best suited to Daudet's written descriptions. This mill appears in a drawing entitled *Paysage avec le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet* (F1496; Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam). At other times, various other mills have been nominated the *Moulin de Daudet* – including one that looks very much like Van Gogh's model, with its broken wings and domed top. Van Gogh never mentions *Lettres de mon Moulin*, strangely enough, and never made a connection between Fontvieille and Daudet, but he did read Daudet's *Aventures prodigieuses de Tartarin de Tarascon* shortly after his arrival, and followed that with *Tartarin sur les Alpes*. Altogether, Van Gogh's letters after 1882 mention no fewer than eleven books by Daudet.

"As for landscapes, I'm beginning to find that some, done more quickly than ever, are among the best things I do" (letter no. 635, to Theo, 1 July 1888).

ALPHONSE DAUDET, 1891
black and white photograph

"I MUST DRAW A GREAT DEAL….THINGS HERE HAVE SO MUCH LINE. AND I WANT TO GET MY DRAWING MORE SPONTANEOUS, MORE EXAGGERATED."

(LETTER NO. 617, TO THEO, 30 MAY 1888).

VAN GOGH
La Récolte en Provence, Montmajour à la gauche, June 1888, F1483
reed pen and watercolour on wove paper
48 x 60 cm. (19 x 23¾ in.)
Private Collection.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN DRAWING

The combination of media employed in this drawing, which includes graphite, reed pen and ink, and watercolour, is responsible for some of the virtuoso effects. *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille*, is an apparently-spontaneous sketch, fluidly drawn, with a marvellous sense of light and atmosphere in the different layers of the receding landscape. Van Gogh's newly discovered facility with the reed pen was prompted in part by the quality of materials available in Arles.

There are a number of reasons why Van Gogh turned to these media in the South of France. Although he had made earlier experiments in sketching with reed pen and ink in the Netherlands, he quickly abandoned them, blaming the poor quality of the Dutch reed pens for his clumsy work. In Arles, however, he immediately recognised the quality of the local reeds, which he cut himself in nearby canals, for drawing. He may have recalled that the reed pens from the South of France earned high praise from Armand-Théophile Cassagne (1823 – 1907), author of some of Van Gogh's favourite drawing manuals. And we know from his letters to Theo that he also predicted drawings would be easier to sell than paintings, and that he found them simpler to deal with than canvases during the early months of his stay, when he was battling the chilly *mistral*, the Provençal wind that blows most strongly in winter and early spring.

In any case, we know he was working in reed pen by March thanks to a *Paysage avec un chemin et des saules têtards* inscribed "Arles Mars 1888" (F1499; Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam). By spring, he had seemingly mastered the medium, and the drawings produced over the course of that summer are among his very finest achievements on paper. He covered his paper with rapid, darting strokes and dashes of the pen, later retouching the drawings' finer details with a quill. His lines are supple, versatile and varied, betraying the work of a confident hand. There is usually some evidence of underdrawing in graphite, and Van Gogh employed a range of different inks, some more fugitive than others; happily, the ink in this drawing is strong and very well preserved. Van Gogh grasped the importance of drawing constantly in order to improve, and wrote to Theo on 28 May: "What's always urgent is to draw, and whether it's done directly with a brush, or with something else, such as a pen, you never do enough. I'm trying now to exaggerate the essential, and deliberately leave vague what's

"ESSENTIALLY THE COLOUR IS EXQUISITE HERE. WHEN THE GREEN LEAVES ARE FRESH, IT IS A RICH GREEN, THE LIKE OF WHICH WE SELDOM SEE IN THE NORTH.

(LETTER NO. 626, TO WILLEMIEN VAN GOGH, C. 16 JUNE 1888)

commonplace" (letter no. 615). He briefly experimented with coloured chalks, carried to Arles from Paris, but he found that they combined poorly with his preferred reed pens and soon abandoned these in favour of another coloured medium: watercolour.

Van Gogh's use of watercolour is relatively rare amongst all of the drawings he did in the South of France, but his work in the medium is exquisite and seemingly reserved for those compositions he felt were the most important. His working method was fairly consistent: first he sketched in the fundamentals of the view in pencil before strengthening the contours with a reed pen. Some traces of pencil are still visible in this drawing, mainly in the small shed cropped at the right margin. It is likely that much of the preparatory drawing was erased after the ink had dried and before the localised washes of colour were applied. All told, Van Gogh executed eleven watercolour drawings in Arles: five were copies of paintings, one was a copy of a drawing, one a figure, and just four were independent landscapes: the present work; *Meules de foin près d'une ferme* (F1425; present location unknown) and two versions of *La Récolte* (F1483; private collection, and F1484; Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA).

SUMMER IN PROVENCE, 1888

When, exactly, would he have executed this work? We do not know for certain, but we can speculate, knowing for instance that in a letter to Theo dated 12 June 1888 he wrote: "I have two or three new drawings and also two or three new painted studies" (letter no. 623). And in the catalogue to the 1990 exhibition, the authors propose a chronological sequence for the fourteen "Independent Drawings", that is, drawings that are not directly related to paintings but rather represent a unique interpretation of a given scene, as: F1439, F1478 (June 1888), F1425, F1484, F1483, F1464, F1443 (June 1888), F1455, F1456 (July), F1457 (July), F1462 (Aug.), F1519 (Sept.), F1468 (May 1889), F1467 (May) (*op. cit.*, p. 234). Based on these reference points, and the fact that the vines look fresh and young rather than ready for the harvest, scholars now seem to agree that this watercolour must have been painted sometime in June 1888. Furthermore, the technique is similar to that seen in the three watercolours known to have been executed in June, especially F1483.

Ultimately, the use of colour must have been prompted by the marvellously vivid palette of the South. At around the time he executed this drawing, Van Gogh wrote to Willemien: "Essentially the colour is exquisite here. When the green leaves are fresh, it is a rich green, the like of which we seldom see in the North. When it gets scorched and dusty, it does not lose its beauty, for then the landscape gets tones of gold of various tints, green-gold, pink-gold, and in the same way bronze-copper, in short starting from citron yellow all the way to a dull dark yellow colour like a heap of threshed corn, for instance. And this combined with the blue – from the deepest royal blue of the water to the blue of the forget-me-nots, cobalt, particularly clear, bright blue – green-blue and violet-blue. Of course this calls up orange – a sunburned face gives the impression of orange. Furthermore, on account of the many yellow hues, violet gets a quick emphasis; a cane fence or a gray thatched roof or a dug-up field makes a much more violet impression than at home" (letter no. 626, c. 16 June 1888). Often, Van Gogh's watercolours were followed by oil paintings, yet the watercolours were not preparatory studies. Rather, they were autonomous works and of equal importance, often signed and dated.

COLOUR ON PAPER

The paper support of this composition measures 30.2 x 49 cm., half the size of a full sheet employed for a work like *La Récolte*, which is likewise on wove paper (F1483; private collection). The top edge is ragged, indicating that the sheet was torn in half prior to Van Gogh beginning work on it. There is no visible watermark, possibly because it was on the other half of the full sheet of paper. Van Gogh mentioned his use of Whatman paper, one type of wove paper, in a letter to Arnold Koning written 29 or 30 May 1888: "Perhaps you'll get a chance to see this drawing [*Vue d'Arles depuis une colline*, F1414; National Museum, Oslo] I did it with very thick reed pens on thin Whatman, and used a quill pen for the finer lines in the distance. I can recommend that to you because the lines with a quill pen are more in the nature of those with a reed" (letter no. 618).

Although Van Gogh is often depicted as a great talent whose art was driven by emotion and impulse rather than reason, a 1994 investigation into his use of paper by Liesbeth Heenk revealed that in fact he made very deliberate choices about his materials. His preference, for instance, for certain types of paper over others is apparent from his letters, where it is mentioned frequently. As Heenk observes, rather than "drawing impulsively on any piece of paper that was at hand", Van Gogh was "amazingly consistent in his use of specific papers and drawing materials for a specific type of drawing within a given period" (L. Heenk, "Revealing Van Gogh: An Examination of his papers", in *The Paper Conservator*, vol. 18, 1994, pp. 30-39). Van Gogh intended his drawings to be viewed, and even sold, in specific groups, and within these he was consistent in size, medium and paper support. Heenk further notes that there was a direct correlation between the quality and size of the paper Van Gogh used and the level of importance he attached to the work. It is clear that he considered *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille* a very fine and significant composition, as it was executed on wove paper.

"IN SPRING – OR EVEN SOONER – I MIGHT TRAVEL TO THE SOUTH OF FRANCE, THE LAND OF THE BLUE TONES AND GAY COLOURS."

(LETTER 569, TO HORACE MANN LIVENS, SEPT OR OCT 1886)

VAN GOGH
Paysage avec le Moulin de'Alphonse Daudet (Fontvieille), May 1888, F1496
pencil, pen, reed pen and ink (now red-brown), on wove paper
25.8 x 34.7 cm. (10 $^{1}/_{6}$ x 13 $^{2}/_{3}$ in.)
Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Amsterdam

"I HAVE BEEN CONSUMED WITH MY WORK ON THE VINEYARDS…."

(LETTER 694, TO THEO VAN GOGH, WED 3 OCT 1888)

VAN GOGH
Le Vignoble Vert, Oct. 1888, F475
oil on canvas
72 x 92 cm. ($28^{1}/_{3}$ x $36^{1}/_{4}$ in.)
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo.

VAN GOGH
Le Vignoble Rouge, 1888, F495
oil on canvas
75 x 93 cm. ($29^{1}/_{2}$ x $36^{5}/_{8}$ in.)
Pushkin Museum, Moscow.

VAN GOGH
Champ de blé, 1888, F411
oil on canvas
54 x 65 cm. ($21^{1}/_{4}$ x $25^{1}/_{2}$ in.)
Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Amsterdam

CHARACTERISTIC THEMES

Within the scope of this watercolour, Van Gogh touches on a number of his most characteristic and beloved themes, including windmills, vines, cypresses and wheat sheaves. The composition, in which a mill is situated at the top of a hill, dominating the view, is reminiscent of works that Van Gogh made in Paris in 1887 featuring the windmills on the hill of Montmartre. Cypresses – which we see in iconic paintings such as *Le Pont Langlois* (F570; Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne) – are here just visible along the crest of the hill, towards the right. The vines in the foreground are not unlike Van Gogh's representations of wheat sheaves, painted somewhat later in the summer and early autumn during the harvest. Presumably the state of the local vineyards was of interest to Van Gogh, as well as to the local farmers, in the wake of the recent phylloxera epidemic. Peasant farmers in French wine country suffered a great threat to their livelihood in the 1870s and 1880s when a combination of frost and phylloxera destroyed olive groves and vines. Phylloxera, an insect from the aphid family, attacks the roots of the vines, ultimately leading to the death of the plant. A solution was ultimately discovered in the 1880s, and enterprising vintners grafted phylloxera-resistent American vine root stock onto the threatened European vines. What we see here are presumably young vines, newly planted. On several occasions in his letters, Van Gogh refers to the region known as La Crau, writing to Theo for example: "Today I again sent you some drawings, and I am adding another two. These are views taken from a rocky hill-slope, from which you see the country toward Crau (very good wine comes from there), the town of Arles and the country toward Fontvieille" (letter no. 613, 26 May 1888). Again, in June, around the time he executed this drawing, he had wine on his mind, observing: "The sun in these parts, *that* is something different, and also if over a period of time one drinks wine, which – at least partly – is pressed from real grapes…" (letter no. 626, c. 16 June 1888)

STYLISTIC INFLUENCES

Van Gogh had first seen Japanese prints in Antwerp in 1885, and after he and Theo moved to Paris in 1886 they began collecting Japanese prints in earnest. In addition to woodcuts he probably also had a chance to study Japanese drawings first-hand while he was in Paris. His decision to move to Arles was motivated in part by a desire to discover a landscape which could serve as his own version of "Japan": on route, he later told Gauguin, he had watched out the window to see "if it was like Japan yet" (letter no. 706, 17 Oct. 1888). Van Gogh was not disappointed, and found Arles as beautiful as he imagined Japan to be "because of the limpidity of the atmosphere and the gay colour effects" (letter no. 587, to Émile Bernard, 18 March 1888). In Provence, Van Gogh explained, "you see with a more Japanese eye, you feel colour differently" (letter no. 620, c. 5 June 1888). As early as April, he wrote to Theo: "I have an *enormous* amount of drawings to do because I'd like to make drawings in the style of Japanese prints" (594, 9 April 1888). In order to achieve this visual effect, he attempted to imitate using a reed pen the qualities Japanese artists achieved either with a brush or in a woodcut. It was his interest in Japanese prints that also prompted him to experiment with watercolour in his drawings. Van Gogh brought watercolours with him from Paris, but by the end of May he found himself in need of new supplies. He wrote to Theo in

Paris asking for more, explaining "the reason I asked for some watercolour paints is because I'd like to do some pen drawings, but coloured in flat tints like Japanese prints" (letter no. 614, 27 May 1888). These watercolours were used to paint several works in June, in addition to *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille* (including F1425; F1429; F1483 and F1484).

The artistic heritage of his native Holland was never far from Van Gogh's mind. In a letter dated 12 June, he described one watercolour as "…fields green and yellow as far as the eye can reach…It is exactly like Salomon Konnink [sic] – you know, the pupil of Rembrandt, who painted vast level plains" (letter no. 623, to Theo). And again, slightly later the same month, he observed: "here, except for an intenser colouring, it reminds one of Holland; everything is flat, only one thinks rather of the Holland of Ruisdael or Hobbema or Ostade than of Holland as it is" (letter no. 630, to Theo, 23 June 1888) The parallels between his own work and the landscapes of the 17th century Dutch masters presumably served both as a reassurance and as an artistic stimulus.

Van Gogh often had the work of fellow artists, or his artistic forerunners, in mind when he thought about painting. In Provence, he recalled Jean-François Millet, known for his scenes of rural peasant life: "I must tell you that I made some very interesting rounds of the farms with someone who knows the country. But you know in the real Provence there is more poor peasantry à la Millet than anything else" (letter no. 657, to Theo, 8 August 1888) He thought also of Cézanne, at one point expressing to Emile Bernard a newly-felt empathy for the trials of painting during the mistral: "From time to time I couldn't help thinking of Cézanne, particularly when I realised that his touch is so clumsy in certain studied – disregard that word clumsy – seeing that he probably executed those studies when the mistral was blowing. Having to deal with the same difficulty half the time, I can explain why Cézanne's touch is sometimes so sure and sometimes seems awkward. It's his easel that's wobbling" (letter no. 633, 27 June 1888). Some of Van Gogh's more panoramic views, particularly those adopting an elevated vantage point, recall Cézanne's expansive views of Aix.

UTAGAWA HIROSHIGE
Mitsuke: Ferries Crossing the River Tenryu, 1855
woodblock print.

"THE REASON I ASKED FOR SOME WATERCOLOUR PAINTS IS BECAUSE I'D LIKE TO DO SOME PEN DRAWINGS, BUT COLOURED IN FLAT TINTS LIKE JAPANESE PRINTS"

(LETTER NO. 614, TO THEO, 27 MAY 1888).

PAUL CÉZANNE
Montagne Sainte Victoire, 1905-06
watercolour on paper
36.2 x 54.9 cm. ($14^{1}/_{4}$ x 21 $^{5}/_{8}$ in.)
Tate Gallery, London.

"WHAT'S ALWAYS URGENT IS TO DRAW, AND WHETHER IT'S DONE DIRECTLY WITH A BRUSH, OR WITH SOMETHING ELSE, SUCH AS A PEN, YOU NEVER DO ENOUGH. I'M TRYING NOW TO EXAGGERATE THE ESSENTIAL, AND DELIBERATELY LEAVE VAGUE WHAT'S COMMONPLACE"

(LETTER NO. 615, TO THEO, 28 MAY 1888)

THE INDEPENDENT DRAWINGS

Pickvance describes the manner in which drawings or watercolours from this period form "mysterious liaisons" with paintings of the same subject. He writes: "These mysterious liaisons take on several guises. The crux of the matter is the phenomenon of alternative recordings or 'takes' of a motif. Often, on discovering or deciding, after long contemplation on a motif, van Gogh would both draw and paint it" (R. Pickvance, *Van Gogh in Arles*, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1984, pp. 4-5). Drawings were rarely done as preparatory studies for paintings – sometimes Van Gogh would focus for a time on one or the other medium to the exclusion of the other, but views captured in several media were always independent interpretations of a scene rather than "studies" per se.

Over the course of the late spring and summer of 1888, Van Gogh directed his energy for the most part away from painting and towards drawing. This was in part prompted by financial considerations, as he explained to Theo, but it is equally clear that Van Gogh was excited by his many successes in drawing: "I believe that at this moment I'm doing the right thing by working chiefly on drawings, and seeing to it that I have colours and canvas in reserve for the time when Gauguin comes. I very much wish we could rein ourselves in as little with paint as with pen and paper. Because I'm afraid of wasting paint, I often spoil a painted study. With paper – if it's not a letter I'm writing but a drawing I'm doing – it hardly ever goes wrong: so many sheets of Whatman, so many drawings." (letter no. 638, 9 or 10 July 1888).

31 75 arracheuse de carottes
32 238 arracheuse de pommes de terre 100
33 154 café 100
34 200 paysage
35 217 lierre 50
36 207 paysage 50
37 204 étoiles tournantes 100
38 199 ruine 50
39 271 rue d'arles
40 170 jardin
41 150 Glaieuls et soleil 200
42 1 fortifications
43 2 boulevard extérieur
44 3 rue à vol d'oiseau
45 212 village
46 46 ophalbrug
47 5 petit jardin de tournesol
48 24 Spitters
49 4 moulon en Provence
50 7 jardin
51 213 paysage
52 5 paysage
53 9 jardin
54 8 Jardin

en cen lithografie Sorrow 2

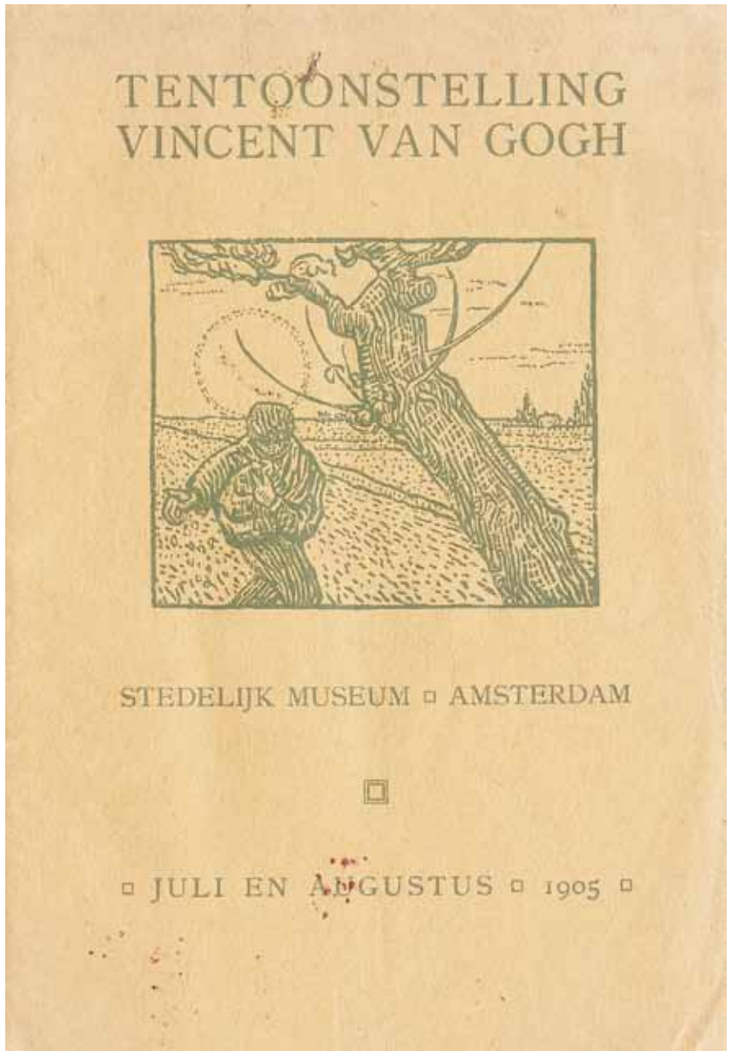
AMBROISE VOLLARD AT 28, RUE MARTIGNAC, C. 1932
black and white photograph
Musée d'Orsay, Paris.

LIST WRITTEN BY JOHANNA VAN GOGH BONGER WITH 52 DRAWINGS SENT TO AMBROISE VOLLARD, INCLUDING 12 WATERCOLOURS FROM THE FRENCH PERIOD, 1896
no. 52 ("paysage 5")

EARLY PROVENANCE AND EXHIBITION HISTORY

This watercolour is fresh to the market, having not been publically exhibited in over a century. Following Vincent's death, it belonged to his brother Theo, and then to Johanna van Gogh Bonger (1862 – 1925), who became Vincent's sister-in-law when she married Theo van Gogh on 17 April 1889. Johanna was widowed on 25 January 1891, scarcely six months after Vincent's death from self-inflicted injuries on 29 July 1890; Theo had suffered a complete collapse in October of 1890 and never recovered. As heir and executor of the estates of both brothers, Johanna suddenly found herself responsible for Theo's Paris flat, which was crammed full of paintings, and for a cupboard full of letters from Vincent, with which Theo had entrusted her. Her brother, Andries Bonger, who was originally responsible for introducing her to Theo, made an inventory of all of the paintings now in Johanna's possession. A short time later, Johanna left Paris for her native Holland, along with her infant son (named Vincent, after his uncle) and almost the entirety of Vincent's painted and graphic *oeuvre*. Unfortunately, no inventory of all of the works on paper has survived, but she did number the drawings when they were sent to exhibitions. Many of them, including *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille*, retain these handwritten numbers on the reverse, and they indicate that Johanna did maintain some sort of reference system for the works on paper.

Johanna van Gogh was a canny businesswoman, and she was determined to bring Vincent's paintings to the attention of the critics and connoisseurs. Among the artist's earliest champions was the dealer Ambroise Vollard, who began enthusiastically buying any pictures he could get his hands on. Vollard first contacted Johanna in 1895, and though she was initially hesitant to cooperate with the powerful dealer, they began corresponding with increasing frequency. In early 1896, Johanna organised two dedicated exhibitions in Holland: one in Groningen in February, where 101 works were shown, and a second in Rotterdam in March, where 52 paintings were on view. In December of that year, Vollard was finally permitted to exhibit 56 paintings, 54 drawings and one lithograph by Van Gogh at his new premises at 6 rue Lafitte in Paris. *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille* was included in the list of works Johanna drew up for that show, as no. 52, followed by the number "5" from her inventory system and the title *paysage*.



STEDELIJK MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM, TENTOONSTELLING VINCENT VAN GOGH, JULY – AUG. 1905
exh. cat., frontispiece

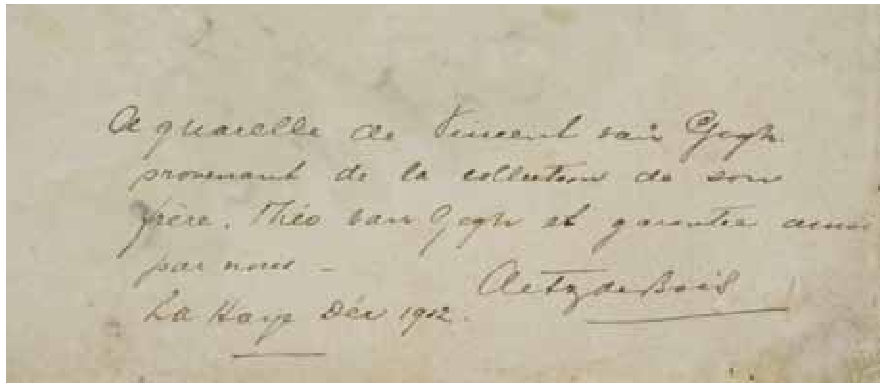
LE MOULIN D'ALPHONSE DAUDET À FONTVIEILLE
verso upper left, inscription in pencil by Johanna van Gogh Bonger: "no.5"

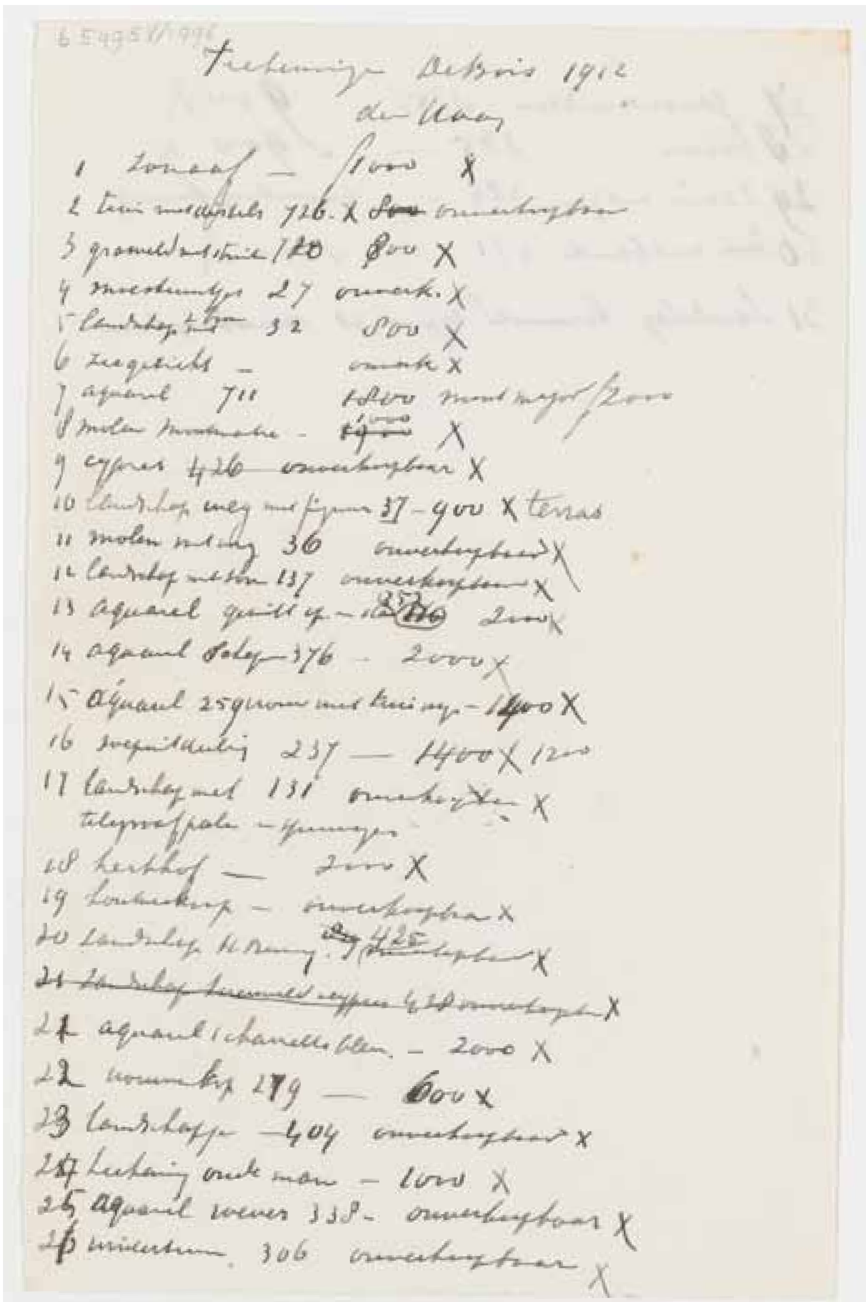
JOHANNA VAN GOGH BONGER, WIFE OF THEO VAN GOGH, C. 1890
Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Amsterdam.

This corresponds to the "no. 5", inscribed in Johanna's handwriting, on the upper left verso of this watercolour. Johanna allowed Vollard to purchase a few works, but she deliberately marked some of the best pictures (and those specifically referred to by Vincent in his letters) as "not for sale", in order to generate interest and curiosity among collectors. Johanna and Vollard disagreed on the high prices she put on the works, and by February Vollard had sold only two drawings.

Nevertheless, further exhibitions followed, and Johanna made a point of working with a number of different dealers, so as not to form a dependency on any individual or gallery. In 1902, she lent the watercolour to Lucien Moline, a young dealer whose gallery at 20 rue Laffitte had opened in 1893, as part of a group of works he wished to show a client. It did not sell and was returned to Johanna. In July and August of 1905, a major exhibition held at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam helped to cement Vincent's reputation as a vital force in Post-Impressionist painting. The show included 474 paintings and drawings in total, and was both organised and funded by Johanna herself. *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille* was included in that exhibition as no. 361, as *Gezicht te Arles* ("View of Arles"). Johanna also understood that the close relationship between Theo and Vincent was interesting and relevant, and undertook the monumental chore of translating all of the letters and organising their publication in 1914.

In 1912, when it was purchased, *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille* was consigned to the Dutch dealer Johannes Hendricus de Bois (1878 – 1946). Together with his partner, he set up the dealership Artz & de Bois, based in The Hague. The dealership sold the drawing on behalf of Johanna for 2000 Guilders, a considerable sum, probably directly to Erich Schall, the next recorded owner. Schall owned a second watercolour by Van Gogh, painted the same summer, *La Récolte à La Crau* (F1484; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University). The subsequent owner of the drawing was Dr Heinrich Stinnes, described by Lugt as having "une des meilleures et plus riches [collections] d'Allemagne". He was primarily a collector of books and prints – his collection comprised many of the finest examples of late 19th and early 20th century printmaking – but he also owned drawings, and his collector's stamp (Lugt 1376a) can be seen on many of the works that passed through his collection, although it is not visible on *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille*. Dr Stinnes seems to have had a fondness for Van Gogh's


Aquarelle de Vincent van Gogh provenant de la collection de son frère, Théo van Gogh et garantie aussi par nous – Artz de Bois
La Haye Déc 1912



windmill views, and owned, in addition to this drawing, the *Moulin de Blute-Fin* (F1396a; Phillips Collection, Washington), which he likewise acquired from de Bois. He further owned two impressions of Van Gogh's lithograph *Travail des Champs* (van Heugten & Pabst 8), again both purchased from de Bois. Dr. Peter Nathan, who owned *Le Moulin d'Alphonse Daudet à Fontvieille* in the 20th Century, was a prominent, Zurich-based dealer and collector.

CONCLUSION

One of fourteen "Independent Drawings" executed by Van Gogh during his first summer in Provence, this confidently sketched, vividly coloured landscape watercolour is fresh to the market, having not been publicly exhibited in over a century. The recent discovery of inscriptions by Johanna van Gogh Bonger and J.H. de Bois on the reverse constitutes an exciting addition to existing Van Gogh scholarship. With its iconic subject matter and masterful distillation of some of Van Gogh's most significant artistic influences, it is a beautifully crafted work by one of the greatest figures in Post-Impressionist painting.

J. H. DE BOIS, C. 1900
black and white photograph

LE MOULIN D'ALPHONSE DAUDET À FONTVIEILLE
verso lower right, inscription in ink by J. H. de Bois: "Aquarelle de Vincent van Gogh provenant de la collection de son frère, Theo van Gogh, et garantie aussi par nous. La Haye Déc. 1912, Artz de Bois"

LIST WRITTEN BY JOHANNA VAN GOGH BONGER WITH DRAWINGS CONSIGNED TO ARTZ & DE BOIS, 1912, NO. 7
("aquarel 711 1800 Mont Major 2000")
Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Amsterdam

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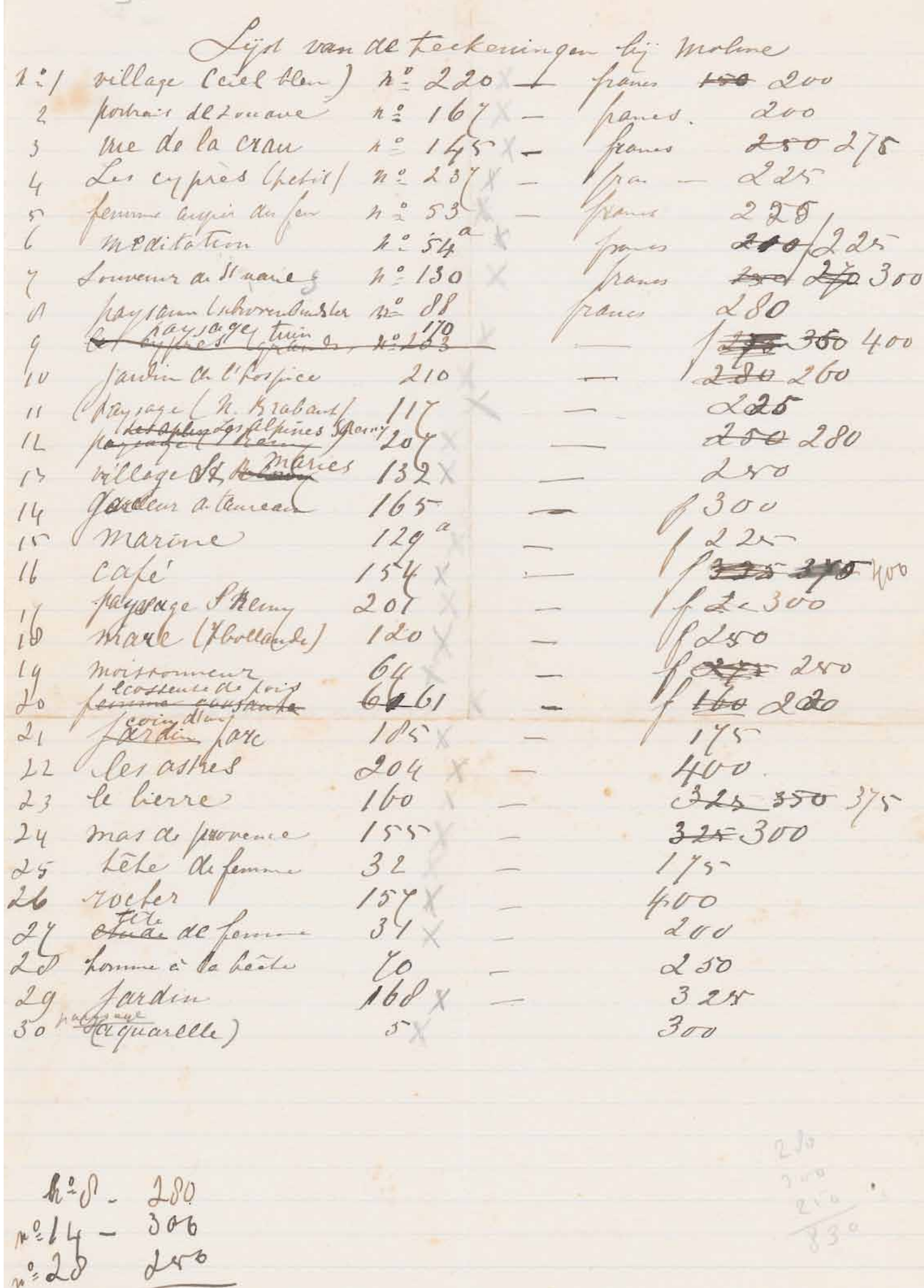
Research: Dr. Molly Dorkin

Design: Lara Pilkington

LIST WRITTEN BY JOHANNA VAN GOGH BONGER WITH 30 DRAWINGS CONSIGNED TO LUCIEN MOLINE AT GALERIE LAFFITTE, PARIS, 1902, NO. 30

("paysage (aquarelle) 5")

Van Gogh Museum (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), Amsterdam



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