

Throughout his career, Vincent van Gogh attempted the paradoxical task of representing night through color and tonality. His procedure followed the trend set by the Impressionists of "translating" visual light effects with various color combinations, yet this goal was grafted onto his desire to interweave the visual and the metaphorical in order to produce fresh and original works of art.

Starry Night Vincent van Gogh The night sky depicted by van Gogh in the Starry Night painting is brimming with whirling clouds, shining stars, and a bright crescent moon. These internal elements ensure fluidity and such contours were important for the artist even though they were becoming less significant for other Impressionists. The artist was aware that his Starry Night composition was somewhat surreal and stylized and in a letter to his brother he even referred to "exaggerations in terms of composition. In Starry Night contoured forms are a means of expression and they are used to convey emotion. The village is painted with dark colors but the brightly lit windows create a sense of comfort. The village is peaceful in comparison to the dramatic night sky and the silence of the night can almost be felt in Starry Night. The steeple dominates the village and symbolizes unity in the town. In terms of composition, the church steeple gives an impression of size and isolation. In the left foreground is a curvy cypress tree which is typically associated with mourning. It is painted in the same way as the sky with fluid lines which enhances the flow of the Starry Night painting well as its easiness on the eye. Some believe van Gogh may have been suffering from lead poisoning or a type of brain disease and that this explains his strange use of color in later paintings. Vertical lines such as the cypress tree and church tower softly break up the composition without retracting from the powerful night sky depicted in Starry Night. The buildings in the centre of the painting are small blocks of yellows, oranges, and greens with a dash of red to the left of the church. The dominance of blue in Starry Night is balanced by the orange of the night sky elements. Van Gogh paints the rich colors of the night and this corresponds with the true character of this Starry Night, whereby colors are used to suggest emotion. It seems that van Gogh is contrasting life and death with luminous stars and a gloomy, peaceful village. The main light sources are the bright stars and crescent moon. It seems that van Gogh was showing that even with a dark night such as this it is still possible to see light in the windows of the houses. Furthermore, with shining stars filling the sky, there is always light to guide you. It seems that van Gogh was finally being cured of his illness and had essentially found his heaven. He also knew that in death he would be at peace and further portrays this by using bold colors in the Starry Night painting. In a letter to his brother, Theo, van Gogh comments: Such fleeting mentions of religion echoed van Goghs feelings towards the subject at this time; he could neither forget it nor totally accept it. Starry Night shows the vast power of nature and the church spire and cypress tree - representing man and nature - both point to the heavens. However, there is a consistency to his technique that adds even more depth as well as a rich texture to this work of art.

Chapter 2 : Van Gogh at MOMA | The New Criterion

Throughout his career, Vincent van Gogh (Dutch,) attempted the paradoxical task of representing night by light. His procedure followed the trend set by the Impressionists of "translating" visual light effects with various color combinations.

Interpretations[edit] Despite the large number of letters Van Gogh wrote, he said very little about The Starry Night. But that was delusion, dear friend, and one soon comes up against a brick wall. And yet, once again I allowed myself to be led astray into reaching for stars that are too bigâ€”another failureâ€”and I have had my fill of that. The Starry Night belongs to this latter series, [34] as well as to a small series of nocturnes he initiated in Arles. He voiced this ambivalence in a letter to Theo after having painted Starry Night Over the Rhone, confessing to a "tremendous need for, shall I say the wordâ€”for religionâ€”so I go outside at night to paint the stars. Originally held at Kunsthalle Bremen , today part of the disputed Baldin Collection. He says it is merely a crescent moon, which, he writes, also had symbolic meaning for Van Gogh, representing "consolation. Boime interprets the swirling figure in the central portion of the sky in The Starry Night to represent either a spiral galaxy or a comet, photographs of which had also been published in popular media. Whitney conducted his own astronomical study of The Starry Night contemporaneously with but independent of Boime who spent almost his entire career at U. Cypress trees have long been associated with death in European culture, though the question of whether Van Gogh intended for them to have such a symbolic meaning in The Starry Night is the subject of an open debate. In an April , letter to Bernard, Van Gogh referred to "funereal cypresses," [68] though this is possibly similar to saying "stately oaks" or "weeping willows. I should like to make something of them like the canvases of the sunflowers, because it astonishes me that they have not yet been done as I see them. Schapiro refers to the cypress in the painting as a "vague symbol of a human striving. Loevgren reminds the reader that "the cypress is the tree of death in the Mediterranean countries. Such a compression of depth serves to enhance the brightness of planet. What the three pictures do have in common is exaggerated color and brushwork of the type that Theo referred to when he criticized Van Gogh for his "search for style [that] takes away the real sentiment of things" in The Starry Night. On two other occasions around this time, Van Gogh used the word "arrangement" to refer to color, similar to the way James Abbott McNeill Whistler used the term. In a letter to Gauguin in January , he wrote, "As an arrangement of colours: And to Bernard in late November Jo then bought the painting back from Schuffenecker before selling it to the Oldenzeel Gallery in Rotterdam in From to it was owned by Georgette P. It was through Rosenberg that the Museum of Modern Art acquired the painting in

Chapter 3 : Van Gogh's Night Visions | Arts & Culture | Smithsonian

Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night is a series of essays about Van Gogh's works as they relate to his interest in depicting scenes, both rural and urban, that take place at dusk, twilight, and nighttime.

Acquired through the Lillie P. But as I was so to begin with, I only enjoy it. The problem of painting night scenes and effects on the spot and actually by night interests me enormously. His Sunflowers, says critic Robert Hughes, "remains much the most popular still life in the history of art, the botanical answer to the Mona Lisa. Despite all the mental anguish and depression he experienced, van Gogh never ceased to enjoy an astonishingly clear self-awareness and consciousness of what he was doing. He was inspired, he said, by imagery in the poems by Walt Whitman he was reading: In , less than two months before he ended his life with a pistol shot, he wrote to a Paris newspaper critic who had praised his work, "It is absolutely certain that I shall never do important things. In his last letter to Theo, found on the artist at his death, he had written: He was born in in the Netherlands; his father was a minister, his uncles, successful art dealers. He was dismissed while working as a missionary in southwest Belgium for being too zealous and failed as an art salesman by being too honest. When he took up drawing and painting, his originality offended his teachers. One student later described the scene at the Antwerp Academy where van Gogh enrolled: Van Gogh started painting feverishly, furiously, with a rapidity that stupefied his fellow students. He laid on his paint so thickly that his colors literally dripped from his canvas on to the floor. He copied and recopied lessons from a standard academic treatise on drawing until he could draw like the old masters, before letting his own vision loose in paint. Although he knew he needed the utmost technical skill, he confessed to an artist friend that he aimed to paint with such "expressive force" that people would say, "I have no technique. In the spring of after receiving a shipment of paintings that included the now-famous Sunflowers, the younger brother tried to reassure the elder: Growing up in the Brabant, the southern region of the Netherlands, Vincent had absorbed the dark palette of great Dutch painters such as Frans Hals and Rembrandt. In March , he went to join Theo in Paris. There, having encountered young painters like Toulouse-Lautrec, Gauguin and Signac, as well as older artists such as Pissarro, Degas and Monet, he adopted the brighter colors of modern art. His skies became yellow, pink and green, with violet stripes. He painted feverishly, "quick as lightning," he boasted. And then, just as he achieved a new mastery over brush and pigment, he lost control of his life. In a fit of hallucinations and anguish in December , he severed part of his ear and delivered it to a prostitute at a local brothel. Gauguin, who had come to Arles to paint with him, fled to Paris, and van Gogh, after his neighbors petitioned the police, was locked up in a hospital. Especially in my case, in which a more violent attack may forever destroy my power to paint. Paul Gachet, a local physician and friend to many painters, agreed to care for him. Van Gogh shot himself soon after painting it and died two days later. He was buried in a graveyard next to the field. Six months later he, too, died out of his mind and incoherent in a clinic in Holland, where he had been taken by his wife because of his increasingly violent outbursts. One theory holds that both Theo and Vincent, and probably their sister Wil, all suffered from an inherited metabolic disorder that caused their similar physical and mental symptoms. He now lies buried next to his brother in Auvers. For it was to the night sky, and to the stars, that van Gogh often looked for solace. The problems of painting night scenes on the spot held more than a technical interest and challenge for him. When he looked at the night sky, he wrote to Theo in August , he saw "the mysterious brightness of a pale star in the infinite. And all the same to feel the stars and the infinite high and clear above you. Then life is almost enchanted after all. And he linked this with the changing of the seasons. Straight lines became wavy, colors intensified, thick paint became thicker, sometimes squeezed straight onto the canvas from the tube. Some of these changes were later taken as a sign of his madness, and even van Gogh feared that "some of my pictures certainly show traces of having been painted by a sick man. In a letter to Wil, he explained that "the bizarre lines, purposely selected and multiplied, meandering all through the picture, may fail to give the garden a vulgar resemblance, but may present it to our minds as seen in a dream, depicting its character, and at the same time stranger than it is in reality. Just as we take the train to get to Tarascon or Rouen, we take death to reach a star. It was during the night hours that his

experiments with imagination and memory went the farthest. He wrote Wil that he had painted it "at night under a gas jet. And yet, once again I let myself go reaching for stars that are too big" a new failure and I have had enough of it. He wrote Vincent that "the expression of your thoughts on nature and living creatures shows how strongly you are attached to them. But how your brain must have labored, and how you have risked everything

New Mexico-based painter and printmaker Paul Trachtman wrote about new figurative painters in the October issue.

Chapter 4 : The Night Café | Van Gogh Gallery

A new exhibit opening September 21st at MoMA explores the masterful colors of van Gogh and his love for painting the colors of the night. Throughout his career, Vincent van Gogh (Dutch,) attempted the paradoxical task of representing night by light.

Vincent van Gogh Dutch, “ depicted and reflected upon the night throughout his career. Painting in the dark was a challenge in the late nineteenth century, particularly for an artist who relied merely on his powers of observation; Van Gogh refused to be bound by this alternative to work strictly from observation, or from imagination. Instead, he relied on both. Thus, he was also an artist for whom the real was intertwined with the symbolic, and who set out to capture the spiritual qualities he sensed in the world around him. It was during the night hours that his experiments with imagination, memory, and observation, altogether went the farthest. Some show the strong relationship that he perceived between the cycles of nature and those of rural labor. Others evoke poetic associations of the evening with either the vagaries of life in modern times or with profound metaphysical questions. Early Landscapes Van Gogh did not pursue a career as an artist until , when he was 27 years old. Many of his earliest paintings portray the effects of aerial light, particularly around sunset, on the landscape of Brabant, the region in the southern Netherlands where he was born. In these works, including Lane of Poplars at Sunset and Evening Landscape , the artist aligned himself with the centuries-old traditions of night scenes and Dutch landscape painting, typified by seventeenth century masters such as Rembrandt and Jacob van Ruisdael, respectively. Peasant Life Van Gogh believed that rural laborers stood closer to nature than other people, and were more strongly linked to the cycles of life. Between and , while living with his parents in Brabant, he made a series of paintings and drawings describing the humble life of the peasants there. One of these was The Potato Eaters which depicts a family gathered around their evening meal. His first significant interior night scene, it is also widely accepted as his first major canvas. To make it he returned regularly to the home of a local family and sketched them at dinner. In , he included a sketch of the scene in a letter to his brother Theo. Before starting the final composition, Van Gogh made one large study, from which he printed a lithograph, also on view, and a series of studies of figures and heads. Here he adopted a more vibrant palette, moving away from closely representational painting toward a more poetic, associative approach. He was fascinated by the effects of the southern light at different times of day, and in several paintings he combined scenes of peasants sowing or harvesting wheat with the cool tones of twilight, or with the ambers and golds of a large sun nearing the horizon, like in the various versions of The Sower. For Van Gogh, the endless flow of the days and the cycle of sowing and harvesting functioned symbolically as metaphors for the eternal cycle of life and death. It was in working through this theme that he began to come closer to his mature style, honing his use of complementary colors, such as violet and yellow, and embracing the stylistic elements of Japanese woodblock prints, which he had viewed with enthusiasm in Paris over the previous two years. Poetry of the Night The Town: Despite their obvious differences, he connected this work to his earlier painting The Potato Eaters , an equally ambitious rendering of a complex figure arrangement in a nocturnal interior. Among these was The Starry Night, the culmination of his intense effort to conquer the problems of using color to depict darkness, as well as to register the spiritual and symbolic meanings that he saw in the nighttime hours. It shows a fantastical sky above a town and hills lit only by the stars and moon—which, however, are vibrant and alive.

Chapter 5 : Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night - exhibition at the MOMA

Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night - Museum of Modern Art.

The small collection of paintings, drawings, and letters was divided into five themes: The Town, and Poetry of the Night: However, Van Gogh introduced his innovative brushwork and the bright colors of the Impressionists to his twilight scenes. It is a delightful scene of nature, peaceful and simple, high above Montmartre. The intrusion of humanity is merely hinted at by the snow fence and the tendrils of smoke rising in the distance. The section on peasant life celebrates the humble lives of the peasantry. Van Gogh sympathized with the hard-working poor and he wanted to depict the dignity of their struggle for existence. The third section is marked by an explosion of color. The sky is green with wispy pink clouds and an enormous yellow sun. The field where the sower labors is violet. The fantastical colors express a subjective reality that is at once familiar and surreal. Instead of merely copying reality, Van Gogh has revealed its essence. Here he depicts dance halls and cafes. The perspective of the painting is distorted so that the floor almost seems to slope violently to the left, creating a nightmarish sense of unreality. I prefer scenes where people are just a part of the landscape rather than scenes where they predominate. The strolling couple take up only a small fraction of the canvas. The rest is given over to a magnificent blue-green sky full of twinkling stars, all of which is reflected in the river below. The human figures are tiny and indistinct, so that it is the charm of the sidewalk cafe with its little bistro tables and chairs that takes center stage. The cosmic phenomena from the earlier painting are magnified in size and intensity. It is a purely imaginary scene, alive with spiritual significance: Blazing yellow stars swirl madly across the heavens, flame-like cypress trees reach upward in the foreground, and a quiet little town slumbers below. In the center of the town, a church steeple can be seen, though it is dwarfed by the dark cypresses and the magnificent violence raging across the night sky. This was a small but dramatic exhibit and it was a rare treat to see these paintings, many borrowed from museums in The Netherlands, assembled together in one intimate gallery. I walked away from this exhibit with a renewed appreciation of the poetic soul and artistic vision of the tortured genius, Vincent Van Gogh. I can only thank them for saving me hundreds of hours I would otherwise have to spend on research alone. Within the book a lot of painters Rembrandt, Millet and Delacroix The book and the internet resources provided by the publishers work really well together. The array of topics covers practically everything; from subject matter to aesthetics and to technique with which it was painted. There is only one chapter that is missing and that would be a bit more medical one. I know it is almost a stereotype to think of Van Gogh as a lunatic with a brush and a canvas, and I applaud the authors for not bringing this up like most authors do , but instead being focused on Vincent as an artist who worked during his healthier periods. But in this particular case, I think, it would really offer an illuminating point of view on his work. There is only one passage that specifically mentions this relationship page It is a medical fact that bodily mechanisms work in different ways at night than during the day and many patients who suffer mental illness experience their "night-phases" completely differently. In some cases evenings and nights are the time when the symptoms cease their grip and leave the poor soul at rest. My suspicion is that his attacks were rather down so he could work and think more clearly. Probably that is why he was so much more susceptible for the night scenes, their serenity and their charms, which move healthy people too. Night casts its spells on all of us but just imagine how strong a victim to those spells must such a sensitive man as Van Gogh was be. His most famous work, The Starry Night, one of my favorite art pieces ever, graces the front cover. Although I am much more of an art "enjoyer" than a student or fanatic, I did enjoy reading about how these paintings came to life, the techniques he used, the inspiration he found, and some of his own words, gleaned primarily from letters to his brother Theo and sister Wil. The color printing is exceptionally good. This is a must-have book for van Gogh fans.

Chapter 6 : Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night by Sjaar van Heugten

Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night features essays by Joachim Pissarro, Sjaar van Heugten, Chris Stolwijk Geeta Bruin, Jennifer Field, and Maite van Dijk. Van Gogh Museum / The Museum of Modern Art, pages, illustrations.

It is absolutely everywhere, too. It can be seen on coffee, mugs, t-shirts, towels, magnets, etc. It is a magnificent piece of art. That *Starry Night* resonates with so many people is a testament to how its beauty is timeless and universal. Van Gogh lived well in the hospital; he was allowed more freedoms than any of the other patients. If attended, he could leave the hospital grounds; he was allowed to paint, read, and withdraw into his own room. He was even given a studio. While he suffered from the occasional relapse into paranoia and fits - officially he had been diagnosed with epileptic fits - it seemed his mental health was recovering. He began to suffer hallucination and have thoughts of suicide as he plunged into depression. Accordingly, there was a tonal shift in his work. He returned to incorporating the darker colors from the beginning of his career and *Starry Night* is a wonderful example of that shift. Blue dominates the painting, blending hills into the sky. The little village lays at the base in the painting in browns, greys, and blues. Even though each building is clearly outlined in black, the yellow and white of the stars and the moon stand out against the sky, drawing the eyes to the sky. They are the big attention grabber of the painting. For the sky they swirl, each dab of color rolling with the clouds around the stars and moon. On the cypress tree they bend with the curve of the branches. The whole effect is ethereal and dreamlike. The hills easily roll down into the little village below. In contrast, the town is straight up and down, done with rigid lines that interrupt the flow of the brush strokes. Tiny little trees soften the inflexibility of the town. Bringing nature into the unnaturalness of buildings. None of the scenery matches the area surrounding Saint-Paul or the view from his window. The contrast in styles plays on the natural versus the unnatural, dreams versus reality. Nature could even be attributed to the divine in this work. Some people associate this quote to the painting. It could be that Van Gogh simply wanted to breathe in the higher power into his art, as he grew up in a religious household. Divide the painting into three parts. The sky is the divine. It is by far the most dreamlike, unreal part of the painting, beyond human comprehension and just out of reach. Go down one level to the cypress, the hills, and the other trees on the ground. They bend and swirl, still soft angles that match the soft swirls of the sky. The last part is the village. However, note the dots of trees rolled through the village, how the spire of the church stretches up to the sky. Van Gogh brings God to the village.

Chapter 7 : Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night (, Hardcover) | eBay

A fascinating exhibition at the MOMA shows Vincent van Gogh's interest for the colors of the night, featuring some of his most famous night landscapes and interior scenes The exhibition is divided in five parts.

Zinc yellow The zinc yellow must be the lemon yellow having used for the pictures. Zinc yellow and chrome yellow were often used combined. Chrome yellow and orange By far the most common type used by Van Gogh was the yellow lead chromate. The orange variety, chrome orange was used three times less. Vandyck brown it fades on exposure to strong light and develops a cold, grey tone. Used in mixtures with blues to get a kind of black color. Reds Red lakes Van Gogh was attracted to the translucent red lake pigments for their striking intensity and color saturation. In Paris he used only red lake pigments from natural sources. And also used by Georges Seurat. The syntetic lake of eosin known as geranium lake is employed from the Arles period. Vermillion Vermillion, opaque orangish pigment. Most vermilion comes from cinnabar mined in China. Cochineal lake Carmine Cochineal, crimson-coloured dye carmine, was the most common lake used by Van Gogh. The tin-based cochineal went on the most populair choice of Van Gogh. Madder lake Alizarin Cochineal and madder were the most important natural dyes used for red lake pigments in the 18th and 19th centuries. But it was very expensive. Tanguy sold it for four times the price of Prussian blue. Prussian blue Less expensive Prusian blue was chosen for background areas. A greenish undertone was a known feature and make it unsuitable for artists working with a palette based on bright colors. Van Gogh went on to favour French ultramarine. French ultramarine is a blue pigment and occurring in nature as a proximate component of lapis lazuli. Cerulean blue This color was noted as difficlut to work with, since it had a very dense body, yet in some works it was adjusted to thin, fluid consistency and using on the light grounds. Van Gogh mixed a similar blue color using cobalt blue and cadmium yellow. Viridean and emerald green were used combined. Chrome green was never used by Van Gogh. Blacks and Whites Blacks were banned by Impressionist painters. Lead and zinc white were used by Van Gogh in larger quantities. The colder zinc white was used for smooth purplish shading in the clouds, ending with highlights of yellowish impasto of lead white and cadmium yellow. Dark on bright blue: Darkened orange on light yellow: And the yellow of various mixtures of cadmium yellow, zinc yellow, chrome yellow and lead white. Darkened red on green: Orange red on light yellow:

Chapter 8 : Starry Night Analysis | www.nxgvision.com

Van Gogh's The Night CafÃ©, at MoMa. (Photo: Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art) I rage against Vincent van Gogh for needing to die at 37, after painting for only ten years.

Chapter 9 : Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night | MoMA

Van Gogh and the Colors of the Night, presenting paintings, drawings and letters by the artist pertaining to the night (above, a detail of "The Stevedores in Arles," from).