

Van Gogh: PRE-VISIT

CONTEXT & BACKGROUND



Vincent van Gogh (Dutch, b.1853, d.1890); *Undergrowth with Two Figures*; 1890; oil on canvas; Bequest of Mary E. Johnston; 1967.1430

Vincent Van Gogh was part of a group of French artists in the late 1800s working to paint in new and creative ways. They did not follow the old rules and art styles. Instead, they experimented with bold colors, strong textures and surprising contrasts.

TIMELINE

1853 born in Zundert in the Netherlands

1877 moved to Amsterdam

1880 moved to Brussels and began studying art making

1885 completed *The Potato Eaters*, his first major painting

1888 painted *Starry Night*

1890 painted *Undergrowth with Two Figures*

1890 died in France at age 37

Many of these artists used symbolism as another way to communicate. Instead of using art to show the outside world, these Post-Impressionist artists used art to display their inner thoughts and feelings.

Van Gogh was inspired by the style and creativity of Japanese artists and as well as other European artists who painted nature scenes.

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Visit [Google Art Project](https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/undergrowth-with-two-figures/PgGaehoXTiERQQ) for a public domain, high-resolution image of *Undergrowth with Two Figures*: <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/asset/undergrowth-with-two-figures/PgGaehoXTiERQQ>

Elements of Art

Color: visible light spectrum; includes warmth, coolness, saturation, and hue

Color Theory: Primary, Secondary, Complementary, Analogous

ASK *What colors do you see? How do the colors interact with each other?*

Texture: tactile quality on an object (real or perceived)

ASK *What textures do you see? On which objects? Are they real or implied?*

Principles of Design

Movement: Direction of your eyes around a composition

ASK *Is there movement in this work? Describe what you see.*

Style

Post-Impressionism: stressed importance of color and emotions

ASK *How does this painting make you feel? Why?*

Composition

Sous-bois: the forest interior

ASK *What is left out of these paintings that is often visible in other landscapes?*
