

The Muse : Van Gogh

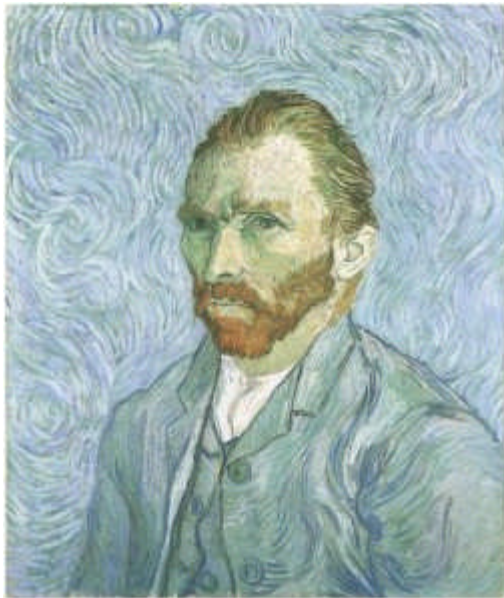
What is a “muse”? Ordinarily it is defined as a source for inspiration or creativity. I wonder if the muse can be something else. This is the “source” of my project, “Haunted Artists”, and the reason for asking for accounts, stories, and experiences from all creative people. For the sake of economy and knowledge, I ask you to consider some famous artists like Van Gogh, for instance. Do you really prefer to believe he was crazy, or was something else working on him? Consider his timeline and changing styles.



Van Gogh's was very enthusiastic and dedicated to first religion and then art. Coupled with the feverish pace of his art production, many believe that mania was a prominent condition in Van Gogh's life. Van Gogh also suffered from Hypergraphia, a condition causing one to need to write continuously; this disorder is commonly linked to mania and epilepsy. Van Gogh was born with a brain lesion that many doctors believe was aggravated by his prolonged use of absinthe causing his epileptic condition. Dr. Gachet, another of Van Gogh's physicians, was thought to have treated his epilepsy with digitalis. This prescription drug can cause one to see in yellow or see yellow spots. This may have been one of the reasons why Van Gogh loved this color

Vincent van Gogh, was the son of a pastor, brought up in a religious atmosphere, Vincent was highly emotional and lacked self-confidence. Between 1860 and 1880, when he finally decided to become an artist, van Gogh had had two unsuitable and unhappy romances and had worked unsuccessfully as a clerk in a bookstore, an art salesman, and a preacher in the Borinage, where he was dismissed for overzealousness. He remained in Belgium to study art, determined to give happiness by creating beauty. The works of his early Dutch period are somber-toned, sharply lit, genre paintings of which the most famous is “The Potato Eaters” (1885). In that year van Gogh went to Antwerp where he discovered the works of Rubens and purchased many Japanese prints.

Van Gogh’s inimitable fusion of form and content is powerful; dramatic, lyrically rhythmic, imaginative, and emotional, for the artist was completely absorbed in the effort to explain either his struggle against madness or his comprehension of the spiritual essence of man and nature.



Van Gogh quotes:

I can very well do without God both in my life and in my painting, but I cannot, suffering as I am, do without something which is greater than I am, which is my life, the power to create.

I dream of painting and then I paint my dream.

I often think that the night is more alive and more richly colored than the day.

I put my heart and my soul into my work, and have lost my mind in the process.

If you hear a voice within you say “you cannot paint,” then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.

Paintings have a life of their own that derives from the painter’s soul.

When I have a terrible need of – shall I say the word – religion. Then I go out and paint the stars.



Van Gogh on Facing a Blank Canvas: “Just slap anything on when you see a blank canvas staring you in the face like some imbecile. You don’t know how paralyzing that is, that stare of a blank canvas is, which says to the painter, ‘You can’t do a thing’. The canvas has an idiotic stare and mesmerizes some painters so much that they turn into idiots themselves. Many painters are afraid in front of the blank canvas, but the blank canvas is afraid of the real, passionate painter who dares and who has broken the spell of ‘you can’t’ once and for all.”

(Letter to Theo van Gogh, October 1884)