

*Painted with Words: Vincent van Gogh's Letters to Émile Bernard*  
September 28, 2007, through January 6, 2008

Timeline

- 1869** Van Gogh, a preacher's son from the southern Netherlands, starts his career in the art world as an art dealer's apprentice at Goupil & Cie in The Hague. He is transferred to their office in London in 1873, working for short periods in Paris as well. His daily contact with art kindles his appreciation of paintings and drawings.
- 1876** Van Gogh is dismissed from Goupil & Cie and decides to become a clergyman. He is offered a position as a teacher at a boarding school in Isleworth, England, and becomes an assistant preacher.
- 1878** After van Gogh's parents convince him to return to the Netherlands, he moves to Amsterdam and tries to enroll in theology school. In December he gives up his studies to work as a lay preacher in the Borinage, a coal-mining district in southern Belgium.
- 1880** Deciding to become an artist, van Gogh returns to the Netherlands. He starts his career in The Hague, where he concentrates on drawing. After taking lessons in painting with the Dutch artist Anton Mauve, he devotes himself to painting in rural Brabant.
- 1884** The sixteen-year-old Bernard decides to become an artist and enrolls in the Atelier Fernand Cormon in Paris.
- 1886** Bernard is expelled from the atelier. Shortly thereafter, van Gogh arrives in Paris and briefly joins the Atelier Cormon. Van Gogh meets Bernard at the paint shop of Julien "Père" Tanguy, and they become friends.
- 1886–87** Bernard and van Gogh paint together on occasion at Bernard's parents' home in Asnières.
- 1887** Bernard and van Gogh exhibit their paintings together with those of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Louis Anquetin at the Grand Restaurant-Bouillon in the Boulevard de Clichy in Paris.  
Van Gogh writes his first letter to Bernard.
- 1888** In February van Gogh leaves Paris for the south of France, settling in Arles. He first rents a room at a boardinghouse, then at the "Yellow House" on the Place Lamartine. His correspondence with Bernard begins in earnest.  
Bernard spends the summer in Pont-Aven and with Gauguin develops the cloissonist style.

(over)

- 1889** Bernard exhibits his Breton works alongside those of Gauguin at the famed Exposition Universelle at the Café Volpini.
- In October Gauguin visits van Gogh in Arles; they quarrel; van Gogh severs his earlobe; and Gauguin leaves.
- Van Gogh enters the sanatorium at Saint-Rémy in May.
- Correspondence from van Gogh ceases after he sends an angry letter criticizing Bernard's paintings of religious subjects.
- 1889** While in Brittany Bernard writes a brief article about van Gogh in which he claims that his "good friend [ . . . ] should be talked about a little, in the sense that he is truly an artist who ought to be spoken of in our times." He shows the letters and sends the article to Albert Aurier, editor of a journal that soon ceases publication. Bernard's article does not appear, but Aurier publishes his own article on van Gogh the following year.
- 1890** Van Gogh leaves the sanatorium and travels north of Paris to Auvers-sur-Oise. In July van Gogh dies in the arms of his brother Theo after a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the chest. Bernard arrives too late to see the body but in time for the funeral.
- 1892** Bernard organizes one of the first retrospective exhibitions of twelve of van Gogh's works at the Galerie Barc de Boutteville in Paris.
- 1893** Bernard publishes a selection of van Gogh's letters to him in the monthly arts periodical *Mercure de France*.