

## Dallas Museum of Art and Van Gogh Museum Co-Organize First Exhibition Dedicated to Van Gogh's Olive Grove Series

**Groundbreaking Exhibition Reunites Van Gogh's Expressive Paintings of Olive Trees  
For the First Time and Features New Discoveries  
From Collaborative Conservation and Scientific Research**



Dallas, TX / Amsterdam, Netherlands – Updated April 26, 2021 – In 2021 and 2022 the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) and the Van Gogh Museum (Amsterdam, Netherlands) host the first exhibition dedicated to Vincent van Gogh's important olive grove series, executed during his yearlong stay at the asylum of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. Co-organized by the two institutions, *Van Gogh and the Olive Groves* reunites for the first time the series of paintings devoted to the titular motif that the artist produced between June and December 1889. It additionally highlights new discoveries about the artist's techniques, materials, and palette that emerged from a collaborative conservation and scientific research project that included all 15 paintings in the series. Co-curated by Nicole R. Myers, the DMA's Barbara Thomas Lemmon Senior Curator of European Art, and Nienke Bakker, Senior Curator of Paintings at the Van Gogh Museum, the exhibition will premiere at the Dallas Museum of Art from October 17, 2021, to February 6, 2022, and will then travel to Amsterdam, where it will be presented from March 11 to June 12, 2022.

"This exciting partnership with the Van Gogh Museum leverages the joint strengths of our two institutions—in curating and research—to present a fresh look at a much-beloved artist," said Agustín Arteaga, the DMA's Eugene McDermott Director. "Through world-class exhibitions such as this one, as well as the scholarship behind them, the DMA continues to uncover new insights on even the most time-honored artists to share with our communities and the art world more broadly."

"The Van Gogh Museum is the leading authority in scholarly research into the life and work of Vincent van Gogh. This unique opportunity to study a complete series of paintings and dedicate a focused exhibition to it is immensely valuable for our knowledge on the artist's oeuvre, and we are delighted to collaborate with the DMA on this important project," said Emilie Gordenker, Director of the Van Gogh Museum.

With an impressive selection of the artist's paintings and drawings from both public and private collections, *Van Gogh and the Olive Groves* traces Van Gogh's evolving stylistic treatment and motivations for depicting the olive groves of Saint-Rémy over a six-month period during his stay as a self-admitted patient at the local asylum. This bold and experimental series, reunited for the first time in this exhibition, reveals Van Gogh's passionate investigation of the expressive powers of color, line, and form as well as his choice of the olive groves as an evocative subject.

*Van Gogh and the Olive Groves* follows the arc of Van Gogh's experimentation with the motif, starting with his earliest encounters with Saint-Rémy's olive trees in June 1889. As was typical for the artist when approaching a new subject, he began by making naturalistic studies, employing the Impressionists' short and flickering brushstrokes and high-keyed palette to capture the sensation of olive trees shimmering in the intense heat and light of Provence in the summertime. After a severe health crisis that began in July and left him largely incapacitated for six weeks, Van Gogh returned to the olive trees that September-October.

The paintings from this second phase of production are marked by a stylistic shift spurred by Van Gogh's correspondence with friends and fellow artists Émile Bernard and Paul Gauguin—who had recently produced their own renderings of the motif in their modern paintings of Christ in the Garden of Olives—and, subsequently, his renewed conviction of the importance of observing the subject from life. The fall olive groves demonstrate an occasional return to the ochre palette or brilliant Divisionist brushstrokes that defined earlier phases of his career, in addition to a new emphasis on the symbolic potential of color, brushstroke, and motif to convey feelings of hope and spiritual consolation. The last group of paintings in the series includes figures of harvesters picking olives in the lush groves—a testament to the artist's lifelong exploration of the cycles of life and his belief in the healing powers of art and nature.

The exhibition also contextualizes the olive grove series in Van Gogh's oeuvre by exploring the artist's tendency to produce works in series or decorative ensembles dedicated to specific subjects, taking a closer look at select examples from key periods of his production, as well as at the larger series of paintings dedicated to motifs he considered quintessential to Provence, to which the olive groves belong.

Additionally, *Van Gogh and the Olive Groves* highlights new discoveries on the artist's palette, techniques, and materials, as seen across the 15 paintings in the series. The product of a collaborative conservation and scientific research initiative launched by the organizing institutions in partnership with the various collections that hold the paintings, and helmed by Kathrin Pilz, Paintings Conservator at the Van Gogh Museum, these findings provide new insight into the chronological sequence of the paintings within the series, Van Gogh's application of paint in the studio versus *en plein air*, and his use of unstable pigments.

"These fascinating paintings clearly held an important place for Van Gogh within his oeuvre, making it that much more surprising they had not yet been the subject of a dedicated study or exhibition," said curators Nicole Myers and Nienke Bakker. "After years of research, we are thrilled to reunite the olive grove series for the first time for audiences in the United States and Europe and to present exciting new discoveries on the paintings and artist alike."

*Van Gogh and the Olive Groves* is co-organized by the Dallas Museum of Art and the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam. The Dallas Museum of Art is supported, in part, by the generosity of DMA Members and

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Images: Vincent van Gogh, *Olive Grove*, July 1889, oil on canvas, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands.  
Photographer: Rik Klein Gotink; Vincent van Gogh, *The Olive Trees*, June 1889, oil on canvas, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Mrs. John Hay Whitney Bequest. Digital Image © The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, NY;  
Vincent van Gogh, *Olive Trees*, November 1889, oil on canvas, Minneapolis Institute of Art. The William Hood Dunwoody Fund, 51.7; Vincent van Gogh, *Olive Grove with Two Olive Pickers*, December 1889, oil on canvas, Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands. Photographer: Rik Klein Gotink

**About the Dallas Museum of Art**

Established in 1903, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is among the 10 largest art museums in the country. With a free general admission policy and community outreach efforts, the DMA is distinguished by its commitment to research, innovation, and public engagement. At the heart of the Museum and its programs is its global collection, which encompasses 25,000 works and spans 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Located in the nation's largest arts district, the Museum acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary events, and dramatic and dance presentations. The DMA is an Open Access institution, allowing all works believed to be in the public domain to be freely available for downloading, sharing, repurposing, and remixing without restriction. For more information, visit [DMA.org](http://DMA.org).

**About the Van Gogh Museum**

The Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, established in 1973, houses the largest collection of Van Gogh's works in the world, with over 200 paintings, 500 drawings, and nearly all of his letters. The collection also features paintings, drawings, and sculptures from between 1840 and 1920 by Van Gogh's friends and contemporaries, by artists who inspired him and by those whom he inspired, and a wealth of archival material relating to Van Gogh. In addition, the museum is home to an internationally acclaimed collection of fin-de-siècle prints and a collection of Japanese ukiyo-e woodcuts assembled by Van Gogh. Drawing on its unique collection, the Van Gogh Museum has developed into the leading knowledge institute on Vincent van Gogh. The museum complements the presentation of the permanent collection with a varied program of temporary exhibitions focusing on the art of Van Gogh and his contemporaries. For more information, visit [vangoghmuseum.nl](http://vangoghmuseum.nl).

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