

# Van Gogh



Vincent van Gogh was born in Holland in 1853. His paintings are worth millions today, but he only managed to sell one in his life. He suffered from mental illness and killed himself in 1890.

## A welcoming picture

Van Gogh loved the local sunflowers and painted them again and again, working rapidly in thick, bumpy layers of paint.

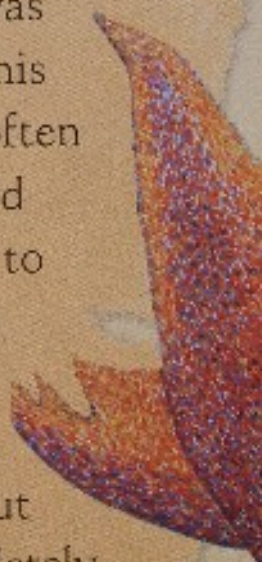
He used the paintings to decorate his house and welcome his friend, the artist Paul Gauguin, who came to stay with him in Arles.



Van Gogh painted *Sunflowers* in 1888, using oil paints on canvas. He chose bright, modern paint colours, often applying paints straight from the tube. The picture measures 92 x 73cm (36 x 29in).

# Seurat

Georges Seurat was born in 1859 in France. He became known for painting with dots. This method was very slow and his pictures were often huge, so it could take him years to complete one. *The Circus* was his last big painting, but he never completely finished it. It was exhibited in Paris in 1891. Seurat died during the exhibition, aged only 31.



## Going Jolly

If you look closely at the painting, you can see it is made up of thousands of coloured dots. But, from a distance, the dots seem to merge and form new blended colours. Seurat believed these colours would appear brighter and more vivid, because the mixing is done not with paint but with light in the viewer's eye.

One of his fellow artists described the technique as "painting with jewels". It became known as Pointillism.

You can see the dots more clearly in this detail. Seurat dabbed on each dot separately, using just the tip of his brush.

Notice how Seurat avoided using black. The dark areas are actually made up of blue dots.



# Klimt

Gustav Klimt was born in Austria in 1862, the son of a gold and silver engraver. After studying art, he and his brother set up a successful business painting murals. But Gustav's pictures often shocked people, because of the sensuous way he drew women. In the end, he resigned from his official art jobs so he could pursue his own ideas more freely. He died in 1918.

## A new art

Klimt's rich, decorative style is often linked to a movement known as Art Nouveau, which means "new art" in French. Art Nouveau was all about ornamental touches, especially flowery swirls and curls – not just in paintings, but in all kinds of art and design, including buildings, furniture and advertisements.

## Gold and jewels

The painting on the left is Klimt's most popular work – a dazzling, golden image of a man kissing a woman. But, apart from the carpet of jewel-like flowers, the background is strangely empty. This lack of setting makes the picture feel timeless. Only the couple's faces, hands and feet are clearly shown – the rest is lost in a swirl of patterned gold. The different patterns overlap and mingle, symbolizing the couple's closeness.



The woman's clothes have a flowery pattern, while the man's clothes are covered with rectangles.

