

RELEASE 24 October 2019

Becoming Van Gogh
5.9.2020 – 31.1.2021



Vincent van Gogh: *Boy with a sickle*, 1881. Collection Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands.
Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

In 2020, Didrichsen Art Museum will celebrate its 55th anniversary, which in the autumn will culminate with an exhibition of works by **Vincent van Gogh** (1853 –1890). The heart of the exhibition will comprise a selection of drawings from the early years of the artist's career that are on loan from the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands. The two oil paintings featuring in the exhibition recall Van Gogh's expressive power at the height of his artistic creativity: Finland's only work by Van Gogh, *Street in Auvers-sur-Oise*, 1890, which is in the collection of the Ateneum Art Museum, and *Self-Portrait*, 1887, in the collection of the Kröller-Müller Museum.

In the world of international art exhibitions, Van Gogh is definitely one of the most sought-after artists. His works have quite rarely been exhibited in Finland and *Becoming Van Gogh* is so far the most extensive collection of Van Gogh's works to be seen in Finland and the first exhibition featuring solely works of art by Van Gogh.

***Becoming Van Gogh* – Van Gogh’s formative years as an artist**

Vincent van Gogh was essentially a self-taught artist. In summer 1880, after a number of unsuccessful career choices, he decided to become an artist. Aged 27 at the time, he had earlier come into contact with art when working as a clerk for the fine art and print dealer Goupil & Cie.

Becoming Van Gogh shows the artist’s career in the early years, 1881–1886. The drawings tell about Van Gogh’s journey to becoming an artist, his preoccupation with drawing and his endeavours to put the world he observed onto paper. Central motifs include depictions of peasants and agricultural labour, the Dutch landscape with rural and urban scenes, as well as studies.

Drawing formed the basis of Van Gogh’s art and during the first years of his career, he concentrated on developing his drawing skills. In accordance with traditional academic art training, he began by drawing, first copying etchings and then drawing live models. He relied on drawing guides and also used a perspective frame to facilitate his perception of the subject he wanted to draw. The artist first experimented with oil colours in 1881–1882, but it was not until 1884 that painting evolved as his primary technique of expression. Nevertheless, drawing remained of great importance throughout the remaining ten years of his career. Many of the artist’s sketches made for painting and his drawings have been preserved and these can be considered independent works in themselves.



Vincent van Gogh: *Woman seated*, 1882.
Collection Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands. Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Landscapes and studies

Becoming Van Gogh exhibition will feature 39 drawings and one graphic from 1881–1886 as well as two oil paintings from 1887 and 1890.

The drawings were created mostly in the Netherlands, where the artist lived during 1881–1885. The works on paper are views from various cities, Etten, The Hague, Nuenen and Paris, where the artist lived. Studies and portraits depict peasants and his inner circle of friends. The works tell about the itinerant, irregular life of a living artist who incessantly interpreted his immediate environment into his images. In some of the works, Van Gogh has merged water colours and gouache into the drawing.

Alongside Van Gogh's drawings, the exhibition at the Didrichsen Art Museum will also feature two oil paintings, *Self-Portrait*, 1887, from the Kröller-Müller collection, and *Street in Auvers-sur-Oise*, 1890, from the Ateneum collection. These represent the distinctive painting method that evolved as a synthesis of impressions from the artist's years in the Netherlands and his French period 1886–1890. His *Self-Portrait*, 1887, reflects the role the artist Vincent van Gogh had begun to pursue through his drawing exercises seven years earlier.



Vincent van Gogh: *Windmills at Dordrecht (Weeskinderendijk)*, 1881. Collection Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, the Netherlands. Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

Kröller-Müller Museum

The main drawings, graphic work and self-portrait on display in the exhibition are on loan to the Didrichsen Art Museum from the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands. Like the museum established by Gunnar and Marie-Louise Didrichsen in 1965, the Kröller-Müller Museum was also founded as the result of passionate collecting by private individuals. Helene Kröller-Müller (1869 – 1939) and Anton Kröller (1862 – 1941) accumulated a very important collection of modern art in the first decades of the 1900s. Helene Kröller-Müller was among the first to recognise Vincent van Gogh's distinctive art. In 1935, she donated her collection to the state of the Netherlands and the museum was founded in 1938. The museum's collection currently includes more than 90 Van Gogh paintings and more than 180 drawings, making it the second largest collection after the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. The Kröller-Müller Museum is in the Hoge Veluwe National Park, Otterlo, some 70 km to the southeast of Amsterdam.



krollermuller.nl

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Photographs: <https://www.didrichsenmediabank.com/>, password: didrichsen2020

Exhibitions

1.2.–3.5.2020, Tue–Sun 11–18

Kuutti Lavonen – Time and eternity

20.5.–16.8.2020, Tue–Sun 11–18

Björn Weckström – Man, machine and jewelry

5.9.2020–31.1.2021

Becoming Van Gogh

Extended museum opening hours during *Becoming Van Gogh* exhibition

Tue. 10–18, Wed–Thu 10–20, Fri–Sun 10–18

The Sculpture Park is always open

***Becoming Van Gogh* - admission tickets**

€16 / €14

Free admission for children under 18

Museum Card

Free admission to the Sculpture Park

***Becoming Van Gogh* - guided tours**

Guided tour prices:

Tue–Fri €90, Sat–Sun €110

Max. 25 people/group

Didrichsen Art Museum

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How to get there: Buses 510 and 552, e.g. from Munkkiniemi (Munkkiniemen aukio) or Otaniemi (Aalto University metro station).

Website: www.didrichsenmuseum.fi

Facebook: [DidrichsenArtMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/DidrichsenArtMuseum)

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