

# 1 ∩

## The Lover (Portrait of Lieutenant Milliet), 1888

Milliet's success with women, about which Van Gogh was both amused and envious, made the lieutenant the perfect model for *The Lover*. Van Gogh depicts Milliet in the dashing uniform of the Zouaves – one of the infantry units linked to North Africa – whose star and crescent regimental emblem Van Gogh reverses (for reasons unknown) in the background. The men became friends in Arles, with Van Gogh giving Milliet drawing lessons.

Oil on canvas  
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands

# 2

## The Poet's Garden (Public Garden in Arles), 1888

The unremarkable public garden in front of Van Gogh's home in Arles was the starting point for many views in which he used artistic licence and his imagination to create idealised worlds. He described the site in which young lovers stand in the shade of a spreading fir tree as 'the poet's garden' and imagined it as a place frequented by artists and writers of the past.

Oil on canvas  
Private collection

# 3

## The Poet (Portrait of Eugène Boch), 1888

Van Gogh had detailed plans for how he would depict a poet some time before he found Eugène Boch (a painter) to be his model. Van Gogh felt Boch was ideal as he had a narrow face that reminded him of the 13th-century poet Dante. The deep blue sky behind the figure, intended to express a man 'who dreams great dreams', was essential to the symbolism of the work.

Oil on canvas  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, bequest of Eugène Boch, 1941

## Room 2

### The Garden: Poetic Interpretations

Van Gogh chose a great variety of motifs from the public garden in front of his home in Arles and later within the confines of the grounds of the hospital of Saint-Paul de Mausole at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. In his paintings and works on paper, he selected specific viewpoints and varied his approach to style and use of colour to explore wide-ranging emotional and poetic possibilities, often with a literary or artistic source in mind. In aiming to convey meaning rather than accurately record nature, Van Gogh took a free hand in adjusting or recomposing what he observed to achieve his desired effects.



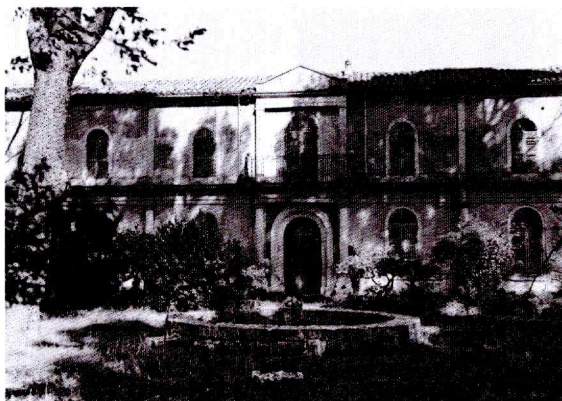
## 8

### The Garden of the Asylum at Saint-Rémy, 1889

This was one of the first works Van Gogh painted after arriving at the hospital at Saint-Rémy. During his first weeks, Van Gogh was not allowed beyond the hospital garden but found delight in its overgrown and intimate corners, which he associated with 'nests of greenery for lovers' – continuing a poetic theme he had explored in the park in Arles.

Oil on canvas

Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo, The Netherlands



The courtyard of the Saint-Paul Cloister in Saint-Rémy

Fotocollectie Van de Poll © Dutch National Archives, 2.24.14.02 / 252-1828

## 9

### Flowering Shrubs, 1889

Chalk, brush, diluted oil paint and pencil on paper  
Colección Pérez Simón, Mexico

## 10

### Tree and Bushes in the Garden of the Asylum, 1889

Chalk, brush and oil paint and ink, on paper  
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam  
(Vincent van Gogh Foundation)

These close-up views of shrubs and flowers were made during Van Gogh's first weeks at Saint-Rémy in May–June 1889. His assured, rapid application of bold dashes, hatching, dots and swirls capture the different textures of the vegetation to create richly patterned surfaces. The works on paper belong to a small and unique group in diluted paint in which Van Gogh sought to capture the vibrancy and profusion of spring growth, as well his excitement at the artistic possibilities offered by his new environment.

## 19

### Garden with Weeping Tree, Arles, 1888

Diagonal stripes of hay wilting on a newly mown lawn create an almost abstract pattern in this extraordinary view onto a small patch of the public gardens at Arles. A great variety of marks evoke cut grass, shadows, foliage and gravel. This drawing was made after an oil painting that Van Gogh hailed as a 'new subject'. In this and other works on paper he explored the subject further, aiming for more 'clarity of touch'.

Ink with traces of graphite on paper  
The Menil Collection, Houston

## 20

### Weeping Tree, 1889

'Today I've made one of those drawings which became very dark and quite melancholic for springtime', Van Gogh wrote to his brother in May 1889. Depicting the same tree and round bush he had often captured in drawings the previous year (**18** and **19**), Van Gogh created an entirely different composition. He also made more vigorous use of one of his own hand-cut reed pens and other media to give the work its emotional charge.

Reed pen and black-brown ink, with black chalk on  
off-white wove paper  
The Art Institute of Chicago,  
Gift of Tiffany and Margaret Blake, 1945.31