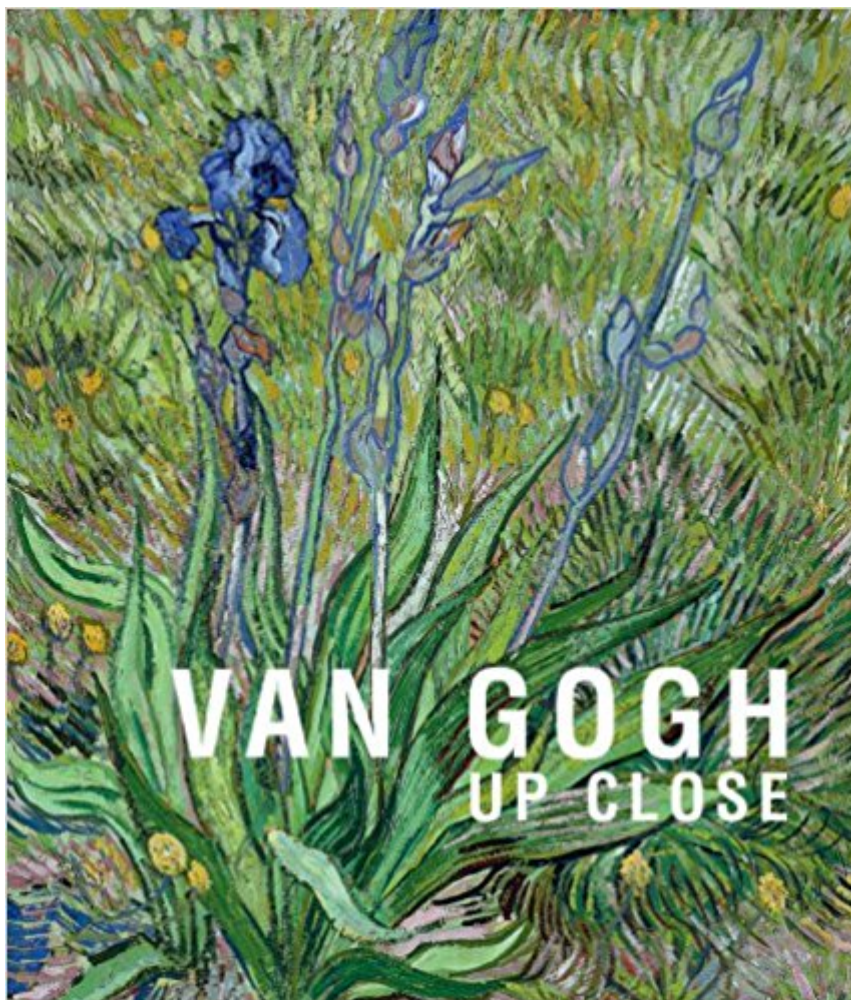


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# Van Gogh: Up Close



## Synopsis

This sumptuously illustrated book offers a completely new way of looking at the art of Vincent van Gogh, by exploring the artist's approach to nature through his innovative use of the close-up view. Focusing on the last years of the artist's career— from 1886 until his death in July 1890— an international team of leading scholars in the field examines Van Gogh's radical approach to the close-up and sets it in the context of contemporary and historical references, such as his hitherto unrecognized use of photography and his fascination with the Old Masters and with Japanese art and culture. One hundred key paintings dating from his arrival in Paris in 1886 to the end of his career show how Van Gogh experimented with unusual visual angles and the decorative use of color, cropping, and the flattening of his compositions. In some paintings he zoomed in on a tuft of grass or a single budding iris, while depicting shifting views of a field or garden in others. Van Gogh: Up Close not only reveals how these paintings became the most radical and innovative in the artist's body of work but also demonstrates that, far from being a spontaneous or undisciplined artist, Van Gogh was well aware of the history of art and was highly conscious of his efforts to break new ground with his work.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Cornelia Homburg, formerly chief curator at the Saint Louis Art Museum, is an independent art historian and curator living in France.

It's a pity that the admittedly ambiguous title of this volume has disappointed some readers' expectations and left them frustrated and dissatisfied. I confess that I myself did not know quite what to expect when I first opened it up, but it is quickly apparent from the first sentences one reads (if one bothers to read the "Sponsor's Foreword") that the subject of the book is not going to be close-up views of Van Gogh's paintings, but views of Van Gogh's close-up paintings. He made a great number of such close-ups, usually of natural elements like insects, flowers, and tree trunks, and that is one of the two major focusses of the exhibition. The other is a number of paintings, mostly landscapes, in which he has a foreground close-up and then lengthens the perspective out to encompass middle-ground elements and finally meets a fairly high horizon. As a theme for an exhibition and book I found this original and compelling. The book is not exactly an exhibition catalogue in the usual sense, but a compilation of lavishly (and excellently--my copy had no problem with blurred reproductions) illustrated essays on the topic designed to accompany the exhibition, which was arranged by the National Gallery of Canada and was first at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (February to May) and then in Ottawa (May to September, 2012). The reviewer Grady Harp has already provided a succinct summary of the contents, and I can only agree with his assessment that this is one of the most interesting of recent art books. I found most of the essays informative and would point especially to Richard Schiff's very original and thought-provoking take on the "materiality" of Van Gogh's painting and to the two smaller contributions of Noelle Paulson, which are models of clear and nuanced articulation of a sensitive perception. The book itself is beautifully produced, another triumph of Yale University Press's brilliant designer, Gillian Malpass, who, just within the past several months, has brought us some other magnificent volumes like "Renoir: Impressionism and Full-Length Painting" and "Renoir in the Barnes Foundation." This is an excellent contribution to the literature on Van Gogh and highly recommended.

I went to this expo in Philadelphia and loved it. I needed a memento and this was perfect.

Beautiful, oversized hardbound book, with many photos of paintings and drawings. Many references to artwork through letters to Theo. Its mesmerizing

I LOVE this book and often look at it just because the artwork is so beautiful and to calm my mind when I am anxious. I read an review before purchasing this book (but bought it anyway) that said they thought the photos were unclear. I think that reviewer was mistaking blurry photography with Van Gogh's artistic style which is often soft, dreamy, and romantic. If you are a Van Gogh fan, I

think you will like this book and you can't beat the price.

I bought this as a birthday present for my girlfriend. She only mentioned him once but I knew she would be surprised to see it. She has gone back into it several times and thumbed through the pages, enjoying his work. English is not her first language so she has a little trouble with the text. This is a good quality, well-produced collection. I gave it 5 stars because my girl friend likes it so much.

I chose this rating because I thought by the title that this would be a book about Van Gogh's paintings and especially his iris paintings and close up views in the garden. Instead this book is about a plethora of other artists and their works with only a few pages dedicated to the work of Van Gogh. The title and cover is very misleading. It is a nice book with nice paper and great color images but not at all what I thought I was buying.

Beautiful colour reproduction, size of image and quality paper. Best complete serious reference addition to an artist's library and a very affordable price. Initially found in local library in Brisbane. Thank you, National Gallery!

I highly recommend this book to Van Gogh enthusiasts everywhere. The pictures are high quality with vibrant color and the commentary is thoughtful and moving.

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