



THE ROMANTIC  
AGONY

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**Discovery of an unknown portrait :**

# Vincent Van Gogh

**in conversation with Paul Gauguin and Émile Bernard**

**This photograph is part of our summer public sale (June 19th)**

Daguerreotypes, calotypes, autochromes, documentary photography

Public auction on the 19th July 2015 at 2 p.m.

#### PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

À In Paris, 5, rue du Perche, near the Picasso Museum

From the 03/06/2015 to the 08/06/2015 10 am to 6pm

In Brussels, 40 rue de l'aqueduc, near the Horta museum

From 12/06/2015 to 19/06/2015 10 am to 6 pm

The auction will be also online with 

<http://www.photoceros.com/19-06-2015-photographic-auction-in-brussels-romantic-agony/>



Attributed to Jules Antoine (1863-1948)

**Vincent Van Gogh in conversation with Paul Gauguin, Félix Jobbé Duval, Emile Bernard, standing : André Antoine; standing slightly aside, probably Arnold Koning. Paris, in the courtyard of the Auberge Blanche, c. December 1887**

*Melanotype (direct positive with sensitized collodion on cardboard) , 88mm x 119mm, Gautier-Martin stamp, recto.*

This exceptional photograph is one of the rare known pictures of Van Gogh. Sitting around him: Paul Gauguin and Emile Bernard, wearing the 'bragou-berr' a traditional garment from Pont-Aven where they've stayed. Sitting next to Gauguin, the painter Félix Jobbé-Duval, an old friend who told him about Pont-Aven. Origin: Ronald Davis, official librarian of Myriam de Rothschild.

Paul Gauguin is in Paris for a few weeks from mid-november 1887 to the end of next January. Emile Bernard, Félix Jobbé- Duval, André Antoine and Arnold Koning were also present during that short period. Vincent Van gogh leaves for Arles only in February 1888.

They meet in the courtyard of the 96 rue Blanche; where André Antoine, founder of the Théâtre-Libre had invited the pioneering young artists to exhibit their works in his new rehearsal hall. Three artists have replied positively to the appeal published in the Cri du peuple the preceding 7th of September: Georges Seurat, Paul Signac and Vincent Van Gogh for whom this exhibition is the culmination of his stay in Paris. The presence of his painting Garden in Montmartre with lovers in a competing exhibition at the Restaurant du Chalet, Grand Bouillon, 43 avenue de Clichy caused a dispute with Emile Bernard. The souvenir of this dispute reached us through a long and beautiful letter written by Vincent which is a rare information source about this exhibition.



On this occasion, Vincent Van Gogh accepts to pose with his friends. He has put his curious hat made from rabbit fur in the middle of the table. He wanted to look his best in Paris and had his whole dentition remade. Only after this "cosmetic surgery" did he start his series of self-portraits.

Standing aside, wearing a hat, probably Arnold Koning, who had just finished his exhibition with the painters of the Petit Boulevard.

This intimate and moving collodion, found in the archive of a great parisian librarian of the golden twenties, reveals a group of friends in conversation.

They are bringing a revolution to the world of Art.



**Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890)**

In Paris, Vincent Van Gogh spends a considerable amount of energy to meet the painters and to discover new techniques and sources of inspiration.

His appearance, a « Bouvier des Flandres with a fur Toque » as described by Gauguin is in contrast with his incredible erudition. His kindness and wittiness will make him a friend of the whole clique very fast. Vincent is a regular of père Tanguy's shop, where he meets many avant-garde painters. Long and animated conversations with all these painters have taken place in Montmartre in the different cafés and brasseries.

An artistic movement was agitating Paris: the divisionism of Georges Seurat and his friend Paul Signac. Vincent is won over: "Seurat is the master" says he, facing the criticism of Bernard who loathed the divisionists. Vincent had a dream of an association of artists and didn't understand these "disastrous civil wars".



**Paul Gauguin (1848-1903)**

Paul Gauguin meets Emile Bernard for the first time in Pont-Aven in August 1886.

In November 1887, after a tiring trip to Panama and the Martinique with Charles Laval, he returns to Paris, sick, and visits the exhibition organized by Vincent in the Restaurant du Chalet, avenue du Clichy (painters of the Petit Boulevard: Toulouse-Lautrec, Van Gogh, Bernard, Anquetin and Koning). Gauguin already has 15 years of painting under his belt when he visits this exhibition. Vincent proposes an exchange of 2 of his paintings against one of Gauguin's.

Gauguin meets Vincent and Theo many times during the winter of 1887. Theo buys a few paintings and ceramics from Gauguin. When he leaves for Arles, Vincent has become his friend, he addresses him with a "my dear Vincent". At the beginning of the year 1888, Gauguin chooses Pont-Aven to paint and recover from malaria he contracted in the Martinique (he is feeling very sick).



**Félix Armand Jobbé-Duval (1821-1889)**

Painter from Carhaix (Finistère), Felix has been travelling through Brittany since the 1860's and knows the Gloanec Hostel really well. He is also a close friend of the père Tanguy, Breton like him, and an old communard.

He wears the badge of the Legion of Honour on the left side of his jacket, awarded in 1861.

Gauguin subleased him a floor of his Pavilion on the rue de Carcel in 1880. Jobbé Duval also witnessed the birth of first son, Jean René Gauguin in 1881.



**André Antoine (1858-1942)**

Actor and stage director, this "ex-gas company worker" brought the world of showbusiness to a revolution when he invented the Théâtre-Libre in 1887. This adventure starts in the spring of 1887 in the Butte Montmartre when in September 1887, he rents a workshop for the rehearsals with an independent staircase at the end of a narrow alley and a cosy little smoke-house on the 96 rue Blanche:

*"We have a head office and it is an honest admiration of the authors and young ones who took on the habit of going upstairs to chat..."* André Antoine, *Mes souvenirs sur le Théâtre Libre*. A hostel, with the beautiful name of Auberge Blanche (White Hostel) is on the ground floor, the entrance is on the interior of the porch.

His younger brother, Jules Antoine is close to Theo Van Gogh and the neo- impressionists, he has written articles about them in the magazine *Art et Critique*, he is passionate about photographic processes.



### Émile Bernard (1868-1941)

The youngest of the clique. He meets Paul Gauguin in Pont-Aven through Emile Schuffenecker during the summer of 1886 while he tours Brittany by foot.

He often crosses Vincent's path in père Tanguy's shop and they regularly go for walks from Montmartre to Asnières, then an enjoyable resort where his parents have a house. Emile is the great friend, the fellow of Vincent in the year 1887.

They exhibit together, first in the café *le Tambourin*, managed by the ex-model Agostina Segatori, then at the restaurant du Chalet with the painters of the Petit Boulevard. End of 1887, Emile will try to convince Vincent to accompany him to Pont-Aven where he wants to paint. He also tries to convince him to give up his exhibition with Signac and Seurat in the rehearsal hall of André Antoine, in vain.



### A young man : Arnold Koning (1860-1945)

The "young Koning" as Vincent nicknamed him, arrives to Paris in September 1887.

He instantly exhibits with Vincent and the group of the Petit Boulevard in the restaurant du Chalet.

The Van Gogh brothers show sympathy to this young painter recently arrived from the Netherlands. After Vincent's departure to Arles, Theo would even host Koning on the rue Lepic, from March 14th to May 30th 1888, on the same bed where his brother had slept.



**The painting exhibited on the 96, rue Blanche : *le Jardin avec amoureux***

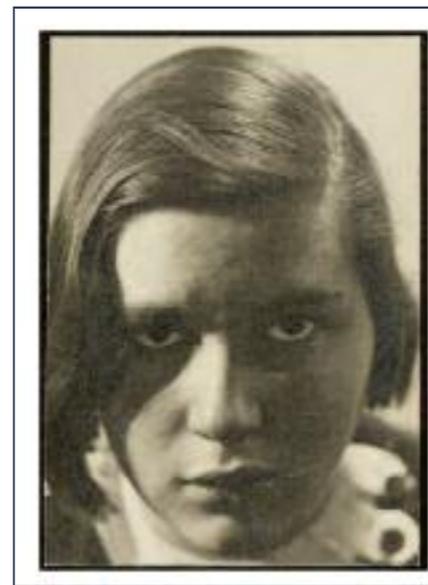
*“The Parc Voyer d'Argenson was an ambitious undertaking for Van Gogh. It exudes confidence with its modern use of colour, new type of brushwork and subject matter, all of which Van Gogh explored during his sojourn in Paris. It also exemplifies his aspirations for a career as an avant-garde artist. He presented it in a small exhibition in the foyer of the Théâtre Libre, together with works by Seurat and Signac. While the general public would not have known this small venue, it was recognised in art circles as a showplace for the avant-garde, and offered an opportunity for the initiated to see the newest developments in painting. For Van Gogh this installation was the first occasion on which he could demonstrate his assimilation of the latest ideas in painting and it served to associate him publicly with prominent members of the avant-garde. He must have considered this venue as a decided step upward from the restaurant exhibitions he himself had organised in 1887, even though those displays had included many more canvases. Van Gogh's inclusion in the Théâtre Libre show indicates that he had gained access to the neo-impressionists and was, at least to a certain extent, accepted by their leaders. While we do not know if he showed other paintings at the same time, Parc Voyer d'Argenson was undoubtedly a prominent example of his latest work. The size and finish of the composition would have suggested artistic confidence, while the deliberate use of new stylistic elements would have proclaimed the artist's avant-garde leanings. Van Gogh must have considered this presentation a fitting conclusion to his sojourn in Paris. With his departure for Arles he began to develop his own artistic identity, one that he hoped would not only allow him to join the ranks but make him stand out among his contemporaries.”*

*(Van Gogh Museum Journal, 2002, extracts)*

The exhibition at the théâtre-libre marks the end of his stay in Paris. It would be the third and last exhibition to which Vincent would take part in. With only one painting, “*Parc Voyer d'Argenson*”, also named by the artist: “*Garden in Montmartre with lovers*” stayed on exhibit 3 months after he left on the 21st February 1888 for Arles, looking for colours.

Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, émile Bernard, André Antoine, Félix Jobbé-Duval... a conversation.

This photograph is, to this day, the unique testimony to this exceptional gathering; an image between myth and reality.



Grande vente de photographies à Bruxelles

**June 19th and 20th 2015**

In Paris, 5 rue du perche, near the Picasso Museum From the 03/06/2015 to the 08/06/2015 10 am to 6pm Late opening on Friday the 5th

In Brussels, 40 rue de l'aqueduc, near the Horta museum From 12/06/2015 to 19/06/2015 10 am to 6 pm Late opening on Friday 12th

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