



**AUVERS-SUR-OISE**  
VILLAGE D'ARTISTES

Sur les pas  
de **VAN  
GOGH**

**PRESS RELEASE**  
CULTURAL SEASON 2014

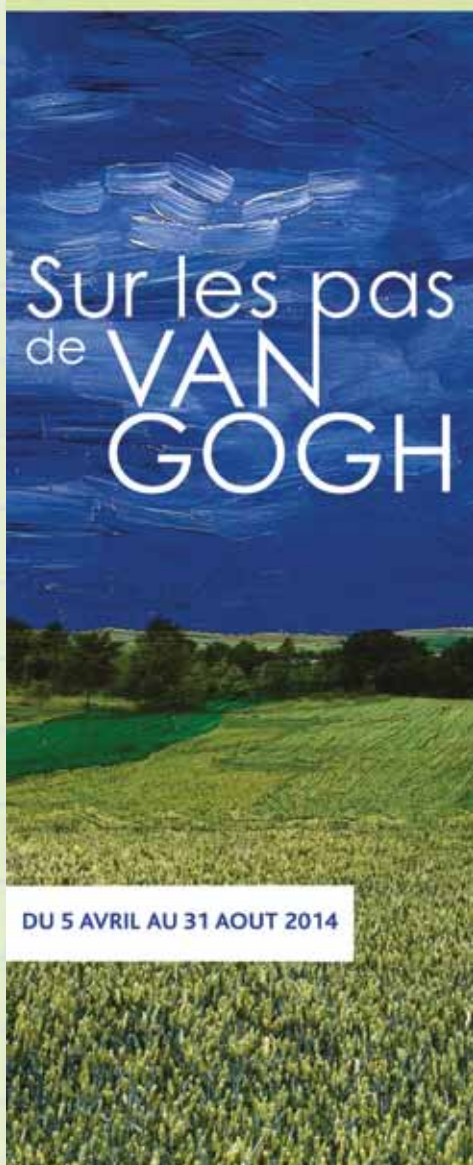
# Press Release

## “ In the footsteps of Van Gogh ”

Auvers-sur-Oise // 11 February 2014

THE 2014 CULTURAL SEASON IN AUVERS-SUR-OISE IS DEDICATED TO VINCENT VAN GOGH

AUVERS-SUR-OISE  
VILLAGE D'ARTISTES



From 5 April until 31 August, the cultural season in Auvers-sur-Oise is dedicated to Vincent van Gogh. The initiative for the program “In the footsteps of Van Gogh” has been taken by the town of Auvers-sur-Oise, supported by the *Paris Region Tourist Board* in partnership with the *Institut Van Gogh*. The theme of walking ‘in the footsteps of Van Gogh’ has inspired those responsible for cultural life in this artistic centre to create an exciting and varied program for the benefit of the town’s numerous visitors\* and « pilgrims ». The theme will be extended in 2015 – for the 125th anniversary of Van Gogh’s death – and 2016.

\* (Auvers is welcoming 220 000 visitors/year)

**Auvers-sur-Oise, a village in the “Paris hinterland” owing its fame to Van Gogh**

Auvers-sur-Oise, which is the gateway to the Natural Park *Vexin Français*, is less than thirty kilometers (about twenty miles) from Paris. It has become a natural port of call for all lovers of impressionist painting. It owes its fame above all to Vincent van Gogh. This is how he described it in a letter of 20 May 1890 to his brother Theo: “*Auvers is gravely beautiful, it’s the heart of the countryside, distinctive and picturesque.*” In fewer than 70 days the artist painted close to 80 works. Some of the paintings are among his most famous, such as *Wheatfield with Crows*, *Portrait of Dr Gachet* or *The Church of Auvers*. Today the town attracts visitors from all over the world, who have come like ‘pilgrims’ to walk in the footsteps of Van Gogh. They find waiting for them a kind of « open-air » museum set in unspoiled countryside and full of French National Monuments such as the church of Notre Dame, the Château of Auvers, the House and Studio of Daubigny, the House of Dr Gachet and the Auberge Ravoux containing Van Gogh’s room.

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### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF VAN GOGH

#### CULTURAL PROGRAM 2014: 5 APRIL – 31 AUGUST

Details in the files of the partner organizations

#### SITES OWNED BY THE VAL D'OISE DEPARTMENT:

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- Château d'Auvers: Nowart Exhibition in the Orangery
- House of Dr Gachet: Exhibition of manuscript letters by artists  
(in partnership with the Museum of Letters and Manuscripts, Paris)

#### PUBLIC ACCESS SITES IN AUVERS-SUR-OISE:

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- The Daubigny Museum: Exhibition of work by contemporary artists  
(in partnership with the Musée d'Estrine of St Rémy de Provence)
- Tourist Office: Audio-video guided circuit 'In the footsteps of the painters'
- Gallery of Contemporary Art: Exhibition of the work of Soulié
- The Church of Notre Dame d'Auvers
- Town Cemetery

#### PRIVATELY RUN SITES:

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- The House and Studio of Daubigny
- The Auberge Ravoux, known as the “House of Van Gogh”
- The Absinth Museum

#### OTHER PARTICIPANTS:

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- The Auvers Festival: a reading by the Poivre d'Arvor brothers of correspondence between the Van Gogh brothers
- Van Gogh Europe
- The Institut Van Gogh
- The Paris Region Tourist Board in conjunction with the Auvers Town Council is installing explanatory panels at special sites in the town



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### Van Gogh – 125 years of inspiration

The 29th July 2015 will be the 125th anniversary of Vincent van Gogh's death in Auvers-sur-Oise. The Van Gogh Europe Foundation will mark the occasion by paying tribute to the artist on the theme of “125 years of inspiration”. All the towns and villages in Europe which played a significant part in Van Gogh's life and work are collaborating to create a program of high profile exhibitions and cultural events.

### The Institut Van Gogh

The Institut Van Gogh, which was created in 1987, has the mission of preserving the spirit and soul of Van Gogh in Auvers-sur-Oise. Here, in the Auberge Ravoux, is where Van Gogh's short life came to an end, and the Institute exists to honour the memory of the artist at this time. The site is a 'place of memory - place of life' and has been a French classified “Historic Monument” since 1985. Van Gogh had many abodes in his life but this is the only one to survive in its original state. For the whole of the period 2014-2016 *the Institut Van Gogh*, in partnership with the *Paris Region Tourist Board*, will be coordinating and supporting the harmonious development of quality cultural tourism on a theme entitled “In the Footsteps of Van Gogh”.



### NOTE FOR EDITORS

The press dossier on the whole of the 2014 cultural program in Auvers-sur-Oise cultural program as well as the article «Vincent van Gogh in Auvers» by Dr Wouter van der Veen can be downloaded can be downloaded from the sites [www.surlespasdevangogh.eu](http://www.surlespasdevangogh.eu) and [pro.visitparisregion.com](http://pro.visitparisregion.com)

The site contains high resolution images of certain Van Gogh paintings and photographs of Auvers-sur-Oise, all royalty-free.

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# Vincent van Gogh in Auvers

— Dr Wouter van der Veen\* —  
February 2014



## AUVERS-SUR-OISE: A VILLAGE IN THE PARIS HINTERLAND

When the landscape painter Charles-François Daubigny moored his studio-boat in Auvers-sur-Oise around 1860 he could not have known at that time that this long stretched-out village less than thirty kilometers from Paris – the gateway to the 'French Vexin' region – would one day become the first port of call for all lovers of Impressionist painting. There was a good reason: in 1860 Impressionism still had to be invented. Daubigny's open-air painting on the banks of the Oise helped to give birth to it, and Auvers, where the artist finally settled in 1861, was to become one of the nerve centres of the movement.



Daubigny's floating studio

For Daubigny, Auvers possessed everything that a painter could hope for in a village: it was authentic, picturesque and typical of the region. And in 1846 a railway line linked it to Paris. After a journey of less than an hour Parisians could escape from the frantic hustle and bustle and polluted air of the capital; their escape lasted the whole of Sunday or sometimes longer.



Daubigny's floating studio

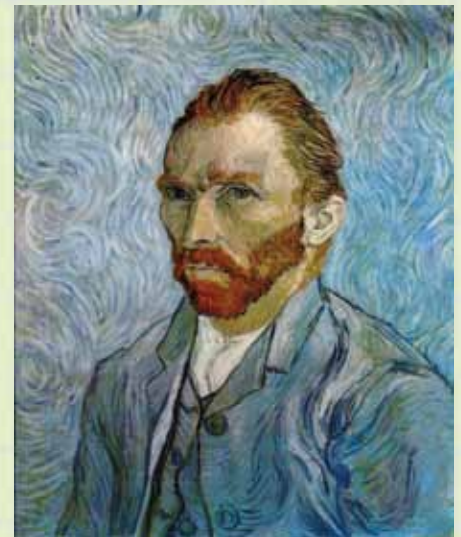
\*Wouter van der Veen: co-author with Peter Knapp of Vincent van Gogh in Auvers, Chêne



## VINCENT VAN GOGH

Thirty years later, by May 1890, the village had been visited notably by Honoré Daumier, Camille Corot, Camille Pissarro and even Paul Cézanne. But in that month Auvers-sur-Oise took on a new dimension in art history when Vincent van Gogh came to stay for a short but highly creative and prolific time. In less than 70 days he created close to 80 works, some of which were to be among his greatest paintings, such as *Wheatfield with Crows*, *Portrait of Dr Gachet*, or *The Church of Auvers*.

Van Gogh chose Auvers because that is where he found the tranquillity and artistic inspiration that he needed after a period of mental turmoil, for which he had been treated in a clinic near Saint-Rémy de Provence. He was under the care of Dr Gachet, who was both a medical man and a well-informed contemporary art lover and thus a pillar of support in the event of a relapse. He was above all someone who Van Gogh could talk to. Gachet understood him and could encourage him artistically.



Self portrait by Van Gogh, 1889

This picture, which is in the Musée d'Orsay, was painted in Saint-Rémy de Provence. Van Gogh brought it with him to Auvers-sur-Oise to show his innovative approach to the art of portrait painting.

## “AUVERS IS GRAVELY BEAUTIFUL”



The farm of Jorgus (Tate, London)

«Here it is far enough away from Paris to be real countryside.»

Letter by Van Gogh to his brother Theo, Auvers-sur-Oise, 25 May 1890

Auvers provided Van Gogh with the tranquillity that he needed. At the same time he loved the expanses of verdure, vast fields of wheat, the company of other artists and a certain amount of lively activity: the village at that time could boast of no fewer than twelve cabarets and a casino. The banks of the Oise were regularly covered with boating enthusiasts and city folk on country outings. People were free to paint or just stroll by, enjoying the healthy, convivial atmosphere of this brief country idyll so close to Paris. Vincent wrote about it to his brother Théo. Describing the village where he had chosen to reside, his words may strike us today as surprisingly modern: *“Really it’s gravely beautiful, it’s the heart of the countryside, distinctive and picturesque.”*

## THE BEGINNINGS OF RECOGNITION

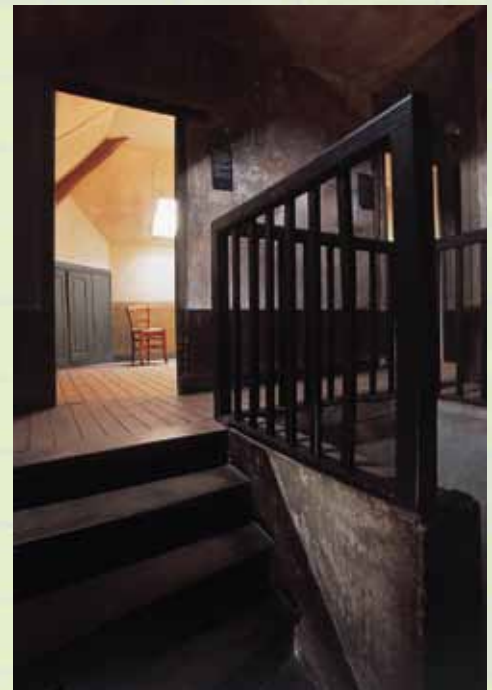
Three months before he arrived in Auvers, Van Gogh, who wished to be known just by his Christian name, Vincent, had at last enjoyed critical acclaim. An article in the *Mercure de France* had indeed poured praise upon him, deeming him to be a worthy successor to the great painters of the Dutch Golden Age, such as Rembrandt or Vermeer.

So when Van Gogh moved in to the Auberge Ravoux - a modest establishment where he had agreed on a price of daily bed and board for 1 franc and 2,50 francs respectively - he was a man full of hope and energy and artistic plans.

It was there that he learned from Théo that one of his paintings had been bought by the Belgian artist Anna Boch for 400 francs.

Unfortunately the optimism was short-lived. Van Gogh once again became the victim of the evil demons that were always waiting to haunt his mind. He shot himself in the chest in circumstances that are impossible to determine - but continue to be the subject of the wildest speculation.

He died on 29 July 1890 in room no 5 of the Auberge Ravoux.



Van Gogh's room in the Auberge Ravoux

## ANTONIN ARTAUD AND KIRK DOUGLAS

The Auvers period of his life is the one that lends itself the most easily, and quite rightly, to the 'demythification' of Van Gogh, who is all too often considered to have been poor, deranged and unappreciated. It is a Romantic vision that has clung to him tenaciously, presenting him from the very first moments following his tragic death as a martyr sacrificed on the altar of art.

This false notion was reinforced by the lurid biography written by Irving Stone, *Lust for Life* (1934), then by Antonin Artaud's lyrical pamphlet *Le Suicide de la Société* (1948) and finally the film version of *Lust for Life* (1956), which achieved almost cult status, starring Kirk Douglas as a caricatural Van Gogh, archetype of the doomed artist.

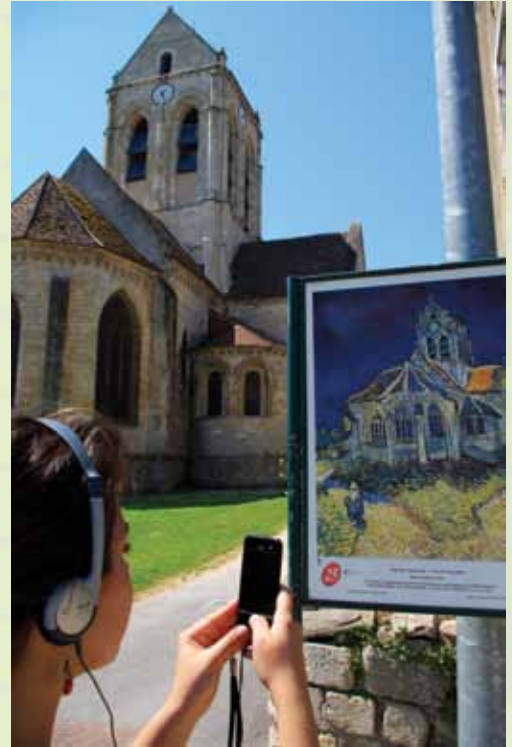
Recent research reveals the artist to have been just the opposite. He was lucid, cultivated and acknowledged in avant-garde art circles. And he was not without the means to live decently and paint as much as he wished.



## AUVERS, AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

Auvers still attracts as many people as it did in the nineteenth century, and for the same reasons that it was popular at that time with Parisians on a Sunday outing. Now as then the visitor can escape from the frantic pace of civilization and all the stress of the internet era. Once in Auvers, the visitor has the time and space to ponder upon life, to reflect a little and relax. The village in the course of time has kept its old-style charm despite growing urban pressures.

The range of activities and attractions is as rich as ever. There is something for every kind of visitor: the church of Notre-Dame, Daubigny's studio, Town Hall square, Absinth Museum, House of Dr Gachet, the Château of Auvers, Van Gogh's room in the Auberge Ravoux, and the Cemetery. All of these visitable places are within easy walking distance of one another and can be guaranteed to satisfy the visitor's intellectual and cultural curiosity. The fields round about the village and the banks of the Oise are an opportunity to recharge one's batteries from the contact with nature. To fully understand the spirit of the place and discover Van Gogh's universe there is nothing like a visit to Auvers-sur-Oise, following in the footsteps of so many other 'pilgrims' in recent years. The soul of Auvers has not changed in nearly 150 years, when one thinks hard about it. This is not a breath-taking discovery, but it is at least excellent news!



The Auvers-sur-Oise Tourist Office's audio-guide «In The footsteps of the artists»

## A VILLAGE AT THE HEART OF MODERNITY FOR OVER 150 YEARS

In 1999 the American economist John Naisbitt prophesied that the biggest economic sector of the 3rd millennium would be that of technology...the next biggest being everything that enabled us to escape from technology! With this in mind he created the notion of High Touch to contrast with High Tech. Auvers-sur-Oise is creating in 2014 an imaginative program of activities to unite these two realities, which are not mutually exclusive. At a time when the whole world is becoming a chaotic place, with information flying round the planet at the speed of light and billions of individuals exchanging innumerable messages and goods every day, Auvers-sur-Oise is proud to be there for visitors looking for a haven of peace, a place where time is at the service of mankind and not the reverse.



Vincent van Gogh : Rainy landscape with train»  
Pushkin State Museum-Moscow

*«I seek to find an expression for the desperately swift passing away of things in modern life.»*

Letter by Van Gogh to his sister Wilhelmina, 13 June 1890»



# Extraits Livre d'Or

Institut Van Gogh // Auvers-sur-Oise

*" C'est gravement beau.*

*La passion de Vincent et de l'authenticité, un exceptionnel sens de l'accueil... tout cela est réuni à l'Auberge Ravoux. Mille bravos pour cette réussite unique et toutes les initiatives qui l'accompagnent. La magie de Vincent fonctionne à merveille. "*

Jean-Marie M.

*" Moi, César  
13 ans, je suis  
venu, j'ai vu et  
je suis conquis !"*

*" La convivialité,  
L'émotion,  
La gastronomie,  
Le bonheur  
à Auvers... "*

François M.

*" Quelle merveilleuse  
journée ! Nous ressentons  
une grande émotion !  
Est-ce l'âme de Van Gogh  
qui préside cette journée ?  
Peut-être, en tout cas, c'est  
merveilleux !"*

Une famille des Yvelines



*" Il y a des endroits hors du temps,  
Pour toujours. "*

Vincent F.

*" On vient sans savoir, on repart désolé de ne pas avoir su avant qu'il existait si près de Paris un paradis d'où l'on repart serein, ébloui. Merci mille fois d'avoir fait vivre aussi bien Van Gogh dans l'émotion et à travers le temps. "*

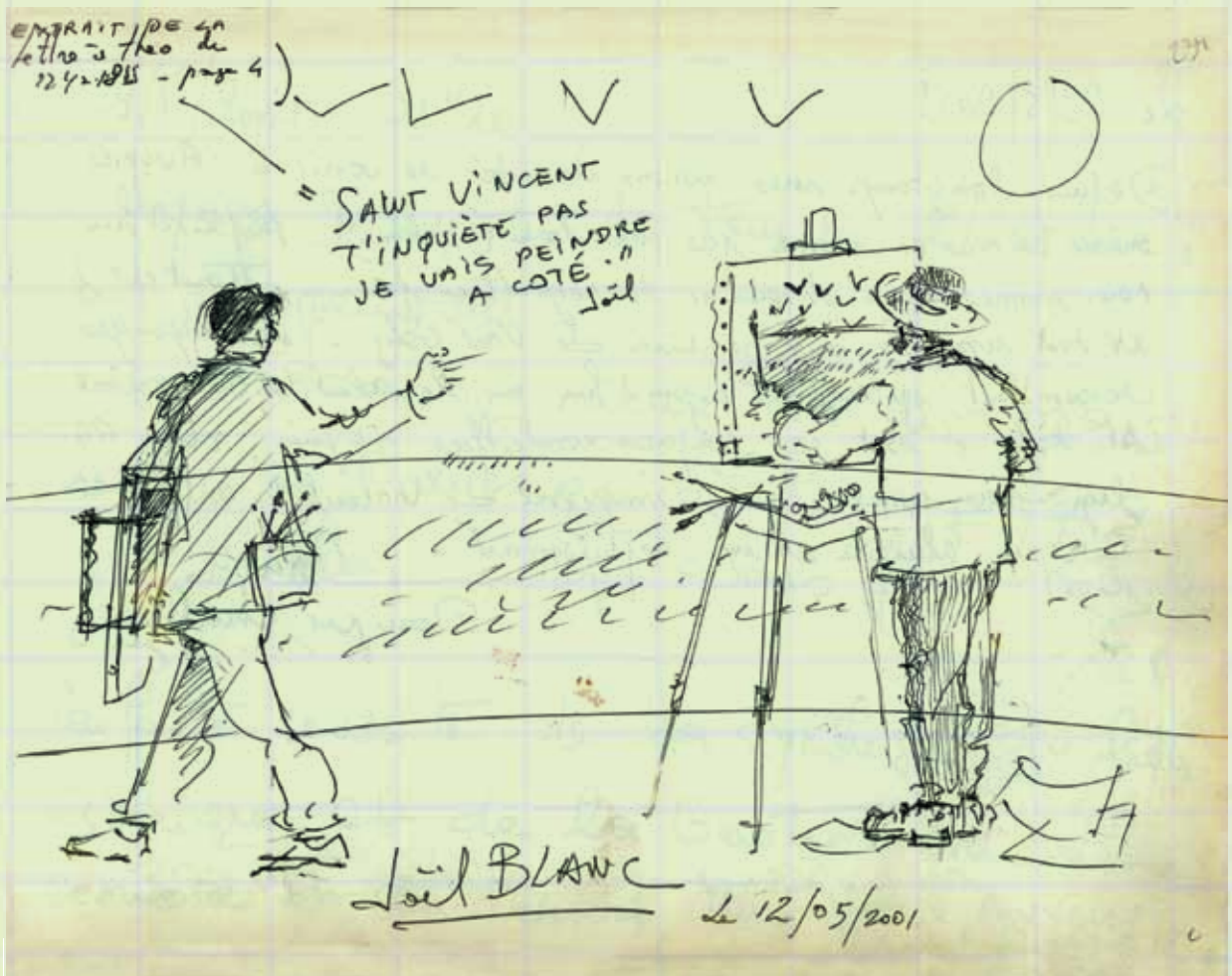
Mimi M.

*" A beautiful village  
A wonderful lunch  
A unique view of history"*

William H.

*" Sur ses tableaux comme dans son  
auberge, c'est le triomphe de la vie !"*

Gautier V.



*" Merci d'avoir (p)réservé la chambre  
de Vincent pour l'éternité"*

Catherine R.

*" Il y a bien longtemps que je voulais venir,  
merci d'avoir su préserver son petit coin de  
campagne et l'endroit où il repose."*

Mme A.

*" What a moving tribute to  
Monsieur Van Gogh!*

*Please continue to preserve the  
memory of his genius.*

*Thank you for this unforgettable  
experience."*

Lisa F.

# Extraits Livre d'Or

Journalistes



*" Si j'avais su que c'était si beau, j'aurais emmené les enfants."*

D.C. Valière  
l'Express

*For those who have experienced life's disappointments, Van Gogh's room is a chance to imagine themselves a misunderstood artist for a day.*

Nicholas Lequesne  
Time News Magazine

*Auvers, sa lumière changeante sous les brumes matinales qui montent des berges de l'Oise, ses champs dorés sur le plateau du Vexin... on imagine l'éblouissement de Van Gogh.*

Thierry Morvan  
l'Humanité Dimanche

*" The Van Gogh room is bare, a black canvas on to which visitors can project their own reactions."*

Rodrey Balt  
The Sunday Telegraph

*" For Van Gogh's fans, there's room at the inn."*

Ginger Danto  
The New York Times

*" The little attic room where Van Gogh died is so dingy, so tragic, so poignant that it leaves you slightly drunk at the thought of finally beginning to understand the inner torment of an extraordinary artist."*

Paul Betts  
Financial Times

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Parmi les nombreuses vidéo dédiées à Auvers-sur-Oise ayant paru sur Youtube, une contribution de Samuel Julien, 13 ans, nous a particulièrement touchés. Le jeune vidéaste conclut son propos de 4 minutes par les mots "c'est un endroit où on est en contact avec l'histoire"  
<http://youtu.be/pMg-ZxYSCbo>

# Auvers-sur-Oise : paintings by Van Gogh

High resolution images, all royalty-free

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The following images can be downloaded on [pro.visitparisregion.com](http://pro.visitparisregion.com) and [www.surlespasdevangogh.eu](http://www.surlespasdevangogh.eu)



Fields beneath a stormy sky  
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam  
(Fondation Vincent van Gogh)



The Town Hall ('Mairie') of Auvers  
Private collection



Portrait of a young woman  
with an apron  
Private collection



Street in Auvers with red roofs  
Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki



Village houses with blue roofs  
Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam  
(Fondation Vincent van Gogh)



View of the River Oise  
Tate, Londres



Rainy landscape with train  
The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts,  
Moscou



Portrait of Doctor Gachet  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Portrait of Adeline Ravoux  
Private Collection



Notre-Dame church  
Auvers-sur-Oise  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Boating on the Oise  
The Detroit Institut of Arts

# Auvers-sur-Oise : photos

High resolution images, all royalty-free

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Auvers seen from the sky  
© Institut Van Gogh



The Château of Auvers  
© Erik Hesmerg



Field of colza and Auvers church  
in the background  
© Dominique Martinelli



Cottage roofs in Auvers  
© Peter Knapp



The Auvers church of Notre-Dame  
© Erik Hesmerg



Auvers town hall, Place de la Mairie  
© Erik Hesmerg



Graves of Vincent and Theo van Gogh  
© Erik Hesmerg



Wheatfield in Auvers  
© Erik Hesmerg



Van Gogh's room, Auberge Ravoux  
© Institut Van Gogh



The Auberge Ravoux in 1890  
© Institut Van Gogh