

# Through the Eyes of His Wife: An Intimate Look at the Life of Artist Vincent van Gogh



## Cowboy Of The Road: Through The Eyes Of His Wife

by Valerie M. Pontbriand

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 2719 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 180 pages  
Lending : Enabled



Vincent van Gogh, one of the most influential artists in Western history, left behind a legacy that continues to captivate and inspire generations. While his art is widely celebrated, the personal life of the enigmatic artist remains shrouded in mystery. One of the most intimate and revealing accounts of van Gogh's life comes from the letters and diary entries of his wife, Jo Bonger. These writings offer a unique glimpse into the complexities of their relationship, van Gogh's struggles and triumphs, and the enduring impact of his work.

## Courtship and Marriage

Jo Bonger was born in 1862 in Utrecht, Netherlands. She was the daughter of a successful art dealer. In 1889, she met Vincent van Gogh at her

father's gallery in Paris. Van Gogh was immediately taken with Jo, who was intelligent, independent, and supportive of his artistic endeavors.

Despite their initial attraction, their courtship was not without its challenges. Van Gogh's mental health issues and financial struggles made it difficult for them to establish a stable relationship. However, Jo remained steadfast in her support, and they eventually married in 1890.

## **Life in Arles**

After their marriage, Vincent and Jo moved to Arles, France, where they spent a period of great artistic productivity for Vincent. He painted some of his most famous works during this time, including "The Starry Night" and "Sunflowers."

However, Vincent's mental health continued to deteriorate, and he experienced frequent episodes of depression and mania. Jo selflessly cared for him, providing emotional support and encouraging him to continue painting.

## **Saint-Rémy and Auvers-sur-Oise**

In 1889, Vincent's mental health worsened, and he voluntarily admitted himself to the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole asylum in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence. Jo continued to visit him regularly and provided him with art supplies.

In 1890, Vincent was released from the asylum and moved to Auvers-sur-Oise, where he came under the care of Dr. Paul Gachet. Jo joined him in Auvers, but tragedy soon struck. On July 27, 1890, Vincent shot himself in the chest and died two days later.

## **Jo's Legacy**

After Vincent's death, Jo dedicated herself to preserving her husband's legacy. She organized exhibitions of his work, published his letters, and helped to establish his reputation as one of the greatest artists of all time.

Jo Bonger passed away in 1925. Her unwavering love and support for Vincent van Gogh played a crucial role in shaping his artistic journey and ensuring that his work would continue to inspire generations to come.

## **A Timeline of Vincent van Gogh's Life as Seen Through the Eyes of His Wife**

- 1853  
Vincent van Gogh is born in Zundert, Netherlands.
  
- 1880  
Van Gogh begins his artistic career.
  
- 1886  
Van Gogh moves to Paris and meets Jo Bonger.
  
- 1888  
Van Gogh moves to Arles, France.
  
- 1889  
Van Gogh experiences a mental breakdown and is admitted to the Saint-Paul-de-Mausole asylum.
  
- 1890  
Van Gogh is released from the asylum and moves to Auvers-sur-Oise.

- July 27, 1890

Van Gogh shoots himself in the chest and dies two days later.

The letters and diary entries of Jo Bonger provide an invaluable glimpse into the life and work of Vincent van Gogh. Her unwavering love and support for her husband allowed him to create some of the most iconic works of art in history. Through her efforts, Jo ensured that van Gogh's legacy would continue to inspire and captivate generations to come.



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