

Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890)

Includes:

Reproduction of *The Starry Night*, 1889,

*Wheatfield with Cypresses*, 1889,

*Self Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe*, 1889

*Trees in the Garden of St. Paul's Hospital*, 1889

*Cafe-terrace at Night (Place du forum in Arles)*, 1888.

Undulating trees and stars vibrating with life. This is what Vincent saw and painted. He was considered mentally ill, but was more likely simply a misunderstood autistic genius.

Society and science tell us what stars are, and *that* is exactly what we see when we look up into the night sky. But as a man whose autistic mind allowed him to see differently, Vincent was not held back by society's preconceptions of trees and sky and stars-- he perceived them directly, with *his own senses*.

Did he give us a glimpse of a greater reality? He sold only one painting in his lifetime, to his brother. His paintings now sell for tens of millions of dollars and are considered among civilization's greatest treasures.

Why are his paintings valued, admired and beloved? Is it his painting technique? Or is it the images he painted? Was his autism an impairment or a gift?