





THE LETTERS OF VINCENT VAN GOGH

‘Van Gogh’s letters... are one of the greatest joys of modern literature, not only for the inherent beauty of the prose and the sharpness of the observations but also for their portrait of the artist as a man wholly and selflessly devoted to the work he had to set himself to’ - *Washington Post*

‘Fascinating... letter after letter sizzles with colorful, exacting descriptions ... This absorbing collection elaborates yet another side of this beuiling and brilliant artist’ - *The New York Times Book Review*

‘Ronald de Leeuw’s magnificent achievement here is to make the letters accessible in English to general readers rather than art historians, in a new translation so excellent I found myself reading even the well-known letters as if for the first time... It will be surprising if a more impressive volume of letters appears this year’
— *Observer*

‘Any selection of Van Gogh’s letters is bound to be full of marvellous things, and this is no exception’ — *Sunday Telegraph*

‘With this new translation of Van Gogh’s letters, his literary brilliance and his statement of what amounts to prophetic art

theories will remain as a force in literary and art history' —

Philadelphia Inquirer

'De Leeuw's collection is likely to remain the definitive volume for many years, both for the excellent selection and for the accurate translation' - *The Times Literary Supplement*

'Vincent's letters are a journal, a meditative autobiography... You are able to take in Vincent's extraordinary literary qualities ...

Unputdownable' - *Daily Telegraph*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, EDITOR AND TRANSLATOR

VINCENT WILLEM VAN GOGH was born in Holland in 1853. He became an assistant with an international firm of art-dealers and in 1881 he went to Brussels to study art. After an unsuccessful love affair with his cousin he returned to Holland and in 1885 he painted his first masterpiece, *The Potato Eaters*, a haunting scene of domestic poverty. A year later his brother Theo, an art dealer, enabled him to study in Paris, where he met Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec and Seurat, who became very important influences on his work. In 1888 he left Paris for the Provencal landscape at Arles, the subject of many of his best works, including *Sunflowers* and *The Chair and the Pipe*. It was here Van Gogh cut off his ear, in remorse for threatening Gauguin with a razor during a quarrel, and he was placed in an asylum for a year. On 27 July 1890 Van Gogh shot himself at the scene of his last painting, the foreboding *Cornfields with Flight of Birds*, and he died two days later.

RONALD DE LEEUW has been the director of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam since 1986. He trained as an art historian at the universities of Los Angeles, California, and of Leiden, The Netherlands. As a specialist in nineteenth-century painting, he has been responsible for numerous exhibitions in The Netherlands and abroad, including the 1990 Vincent Van Gogh Centennial retrospective in Amsterdam. Since 1990 Ronald de Leeuw has also directed the Museum Mesdag in The Hague, known for its fine Barbizon and Hague School holdings. In 1994 he was appointed professor extraordinary in the history of collecting at the Free University of Amsterdam.

ARNOLD POMERANS was born in 1920 and was educated in South Africa. He emigrated to England in 1948, and from 1948 to 1955 taught physics in London. In 1955 he became a full-time translator and has had just under two hundred major works issued by leading British and US publishers. Among the authors translated by him are Louis de Broglie, Anne Frank, Sigmund Freud, George Grosz, Jan Huizinga, Jean Piaget and Jules Romain.

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Selected and Edited by Ronald de Leeuw

Translated by Arnold Pomerans

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For Gerlof