



# Press release



## PRESS RELEASE

### Het Noordbrabants Museum acquires exceptional watercolour by Vincent van Gogh

To mark this occasion, the Museum is offering free admission to the public on Saturday, 10 December

's-Hertogenbosch, 8 December 2016 – Het Noordbrabants Museum recently acquired from a private collection *The garden of the vicarage at Nuenen* by Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). The work of October-November 1885 is the last known watercolour Van Gogh produced in Nuenen and occupies a special place in his oeuvre. This acquisition – the most important purchase ever made by Het Noordbrabants Museum – underlines our ambition to offer a representative overview of Van Gogh's Brabant period by means of original works by the artist. The purchase of *The garden of the vicarage at Nuenen* was made possible by the generous support of the BankGiro Lottery, the Mondriaan Fund, the VSB Foundation, the Friends of Het Noordbrabants Museum, the Renschdael Art Foundation and Coen Teulings. The BankGiro Lottery donated almost half of the total purchase price of over 1 million euros. To celebrate its acquisition, Het Noordbrabants Museum is offering free admission to the public on Saturday, 10 December from 11 am to 5 pm.



Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), *The garden of the vicarage at Nuenen*, 1885, Watercolour on paper, 38 x 49 cm  
Purchased with support from the BankGiro Lottery, the Mondriaan Fund, the VSB Foundation, the Friends of Het Noordbrabants Museum, the Renschdael Art Foundation and Coen Teulings

#### Its importance to Dutch cultural heritage

Vincent van Gogh lived with his parents in the vicarage at Nuenen for nearly a year and a half. The garden behind the vicarage was one of his favourite spots, and he produced a number of works there, some of them very ambitious indeed. This watercolour occupies an important place in Van



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Gogh's oeuvre for a variety of reasons. In a letter to his brother Theo, Vincent wrote: *'I've also made another autumn study of the pond in the garden at home. There's definitely a painting in that spot.'* In fact, Van Gogh did make a large painting based on this drawing, but it was lost in the Second World War and is known only from black-and-white reproductions. The watercolour drawing gives a rough idea of the palette of the lost painting. Both works were intended to be used as examples for a well-conceived, complex figure piece, the kind of picture that Van Gogh had been wanting to make from the beginning of his artistic career. It is, moreover, his first experiment with a subject that he would also depict in Paris and Arles: strolling figures and couples in an attractive garden or a poetic park setting. As one of his last Nuenen works (and the only drawing), this sheet displays the brighter colours that Van Gogh began to use after visiting the Rijksmuseum in early October 1885. Studying the Old Masters there had made him realise that he had gone too far in his preference for a dark palette. Back in Nuenen, he immediately set to work, bearing in mind his new insight; this resulted in the appealing (and well-preserved) coloration of this work. The watercolour was presumably acquired in 1903 by the renowned art critic and lecturer H.P. (Hendrik) Bremmer, who later became adviser to Helene Kröller-Müller; after Bremmer's death in 1956 it became the property of his heirs. Around 1969 the work ended up in the collection from which it was recently acquired through the art dealer Ivo Bouwman.

## Its importance to Noord-Brabant

In 'Van Gogh Brabant', five cultural heritage institutions in the province of Noord-Brabant – the Van Gogh Village in Nuenen, Vincents Tekenlokaal in Tilburg, the Van Goghkerk in Etten-Leur, the Vincent van Gogh House in Zundert and Het Noordbrabants Museum in 's-Hertogenbosch – have joined forces to preserve and share Van Gogh's cultural legacy in Brabant. There is increasing collaboration with 'Van Gogh Europe', a joint Dutch, Belgian and French venture, the goal of which is to preserve and promote Van Gogh's legacy in this international context. The purchase of the watercolour also fits in with the intention of the province of Noord-Brabant to pursue a more active policy in the coming years to link Van Gogh more explicitly to Brabant. Interestingly, the new acquisition actually depicts one of the Van Gogh cultural heritage sites in Brabant.

## Van Gogh in Het Noordbrabants Museum

Het Noordbrabants Museum is the only museum in the southern part of the Netherlands to exhibit original works by Vincent van Gogh. They are on display in *Het Verhaal van Brabant* (The Story of Brabant): to be exact, in a pavilion devoted to Van Gogh and his Brabant period. In addition to the one painting in its possession (*Peasant Woman Digging*), the museum has, among others, two works on permanent loan from the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands) and several works on temporary loan from the Van Gogh Museum. The new acquisition will be added to the display in the Van Gogh pavilion. Owing to its fragility, the watercolour will now be shown only until 19 March 2017. After a few months of rest, it will return to a specially built display case, where it can be viewed for longer periods.

## Free admission on Saturday, 10 December

To celebrate this purchase, Het Noordbrabants Museum is offering free admission to the public on Saturday, 10 December from 11 am to 5 pm. The festive occasion will be celebrated in style with various activities: live music in the forecourt (Voorplein), a 'green screen' photo studio, where



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visitors can figure in a scene of the vicarage garden, and an explanatory talk given by curator Helewise Berger at 12 and 2 pm in the Statenzaal. The first 500 visitors will receive a free snack.

## **Van Gogh Examined – presentation of research results**

Between 1884 and 1888, Van Gogh re-used his canvases with some regularity. Het Noordbrabants Museum wishes to know more about what is beneath the paint layer of a number of works in the permanent display. For this reason, five paintings will be examined by means of X-radiography, infrared photography, infrared reflectography and raking light photography. The exhibition *Van Gogh Examined* (24 June 2017 – 21 January 2018) will present the results of this research.

## **Visitor's information / Het Noordbrabants Museum**

Het Noordbrabants Museum  
Verwersstraat 41, 's-Hertogenbosch  
Tel. +31 (0)73 – 6877 877  
[www.hetnoordbrabantsmuseum.nl](http://www.hetnoordbrabantsmuseum.nl)

Open Tuesday through Sunday from 11 am to 5 pm.

Closed on Monday (except for holiday Mondays), New Year's Day, Carnival, King's Day and Christmas Day.

Price of admission / Het Noordbrabants Museum

Adults: € 12

Museumkaart, Rembrandt Association and ICOM: free admission

Children 4 – 17 years: free admission

Het Noordbrabants Museum and the Stedelijk Museum 's-Hertogenbosch combine to form the Museum Quarter 's-Hertogenbosch, one of the largest cultural attractions in the Netherlands.

The price of a combi-ticket for both museums is

Adults: € 15

Museumkaart, Rembrandt Association and ICOM: free admission

Children 4 – 17 years: free admission

## **--- EDITORIAL NOTE ---**

High-resolution images can be found on the website of Het Noordbrabants Museum:

**[www.hnbm.nl/press](http://www.hnbm.nl/press)**

More information about the acquisition:

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