

# Van goghs



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

During Van Goghs stay in the asylum at Saint- Remy, he devoted himself entirely to his artwork calling it the 'lightening conductor for his illness' he believed that painting was the only thing that kept him from losing his sanity. His painting 'the irises' was the first completed work in the asylum, which differs from his later pieces as it does not show traces of tension and bad mood which represented his thoughts and feelings about his situation in Saint-Remy. His set up shows bright colours, which symbolise joy and happy emotion.

The closely packed elements in the picture; the deep green from the leaves, bright blue from the irises, red ground and distant warm yellow, attract the eye without a loss of freedom from the division of the canvas. Each area of colour approaching symmetry contains its own characteristics with luminous shapes and brush strokes. The most interesting aspect is the mass of the blue colour with the mild hints of green from the leaves, which contrasts with the complementary red found along the margins of the image.

This contrast helps create a muted harmony, which still preserves the happy and joyful richness. The originality of the 'Irises' drawing is different from impressionist flowers, Van Gogh uses sincerity and precision similar to the techniques used in his portraits to carefully individualize the shapes and silhouettes of the flowers. Each flower is depicted with its own individual angle of movement. Art critics have taken a different perspective of Van Goghs painting and state that the 'overlapping.

Withing floral forms convey a sense of claustrophobia and confinement' this could have been a method that Van Gogh used to present his thoughts and feelings towards the asylum. Another aspect of the painting, that a lot of

attention is drawn to, is the lone white iris found on the left of the painting. Many believe that it was Vincent Van Gogh depicting himself isolated and detached from the rest of the inmates at Saint-Remy.

The single iris can be seen as representing 'one you stands out from the crowd' which can explain to us the way he felt himself standing out and is perhaps autobiographical. Another popular opinion is that Van Gogh inspired his 'Irises' from Japanese woodblock prints in order to help reinforce the expressive power of the painting. His use of black contours to the irises is a typical element of Japanese woodblock art and Van Gogh and many other artists were influenced by this method of art.