

ABOUT

the Author

CHIARA LOSSANI has written a number of books in Italian for young children. She has collaborated with Octavia Monaco before on a picture book about Demeter and Persephone. Chiara lives in Milan, Italy.

the Illustrator

OCTAVIA MONACO has created the art for many children's books, including *Klimt and His Cat* (Eerdmans). Octavia lives in Modena, Italy. For more information, visit her website at www.artofoctaviamonaco.com.



PRAISE FOR

Vincent van Gogh and the Colors of the Wind

“Large, imaginative illustrations match the lyrical quality of the text, while bold brushstrokes, vivid color, and images of sunflowers subtly evoke the artist’s style. Reproductions of van Gogh’s paintings are deftly integrated into many of the illustrations, providing readers with a look at his artistic evolution.”

— *School Library Journal*

“The lines are descriptive and informative and may inspire young people to . . . connect with nature, listen to their hearts, and ask themselves about their passions.”

— *Booklist*

VINCENT VAN GOGH AND THE COLORS OF THE WIND

Written by Chiara Lossani
Illustrated by Octavia Monaco

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8¾" x 12¼" ❖ 34 pages ❖ Ages 7 & up

TO ORDER

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Website: www.eerdmans.com/youngreaders

If you have any suggestions for using *Vincent van Gogh and the Colors of the Wind* with young readers, we would be happy to hear from you.

Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
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This guide was written by Ed Sullivan,
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VINCENT VAN GOGH AND THE COLORS OF THE WIND

Written by
Chiara Lossani
Illustrated by
Octavia Monaco



“Who’s that madman dressed like a scarecrow wandering in the fields with canvases under one arm and paintbrushes under the other?”

THEMATIC CONNECTIONS

- ❖ Art
- ❖ Impressionism
- ❖ Creativity
- ❖ Biography
- ❖ Brothers

*Eerdmans Books for Young Readers
Discussion Guide*

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE READING THE BOOK

1. If you're not familiar with the concepts of metaphor, simile, and personification, have your teacher describe these literary figures of speech for you. How is the title of the book an example of metaphor?

2. What do you think the author means by the phrase "colors of the wind" in the book's title? What qualities does wind have that could make it a creative inspiration?

3. Before reading the book, invite your art teacher to speak to your class or reading group about Impressionism. Look at examples of works by painters mentioned in the story: Pissarro, Toulouse-Lautrec, Seurat, and Gauguin. If possible, ask the art teacher to show the kinds of equipment and materials Van Gogh would have used to create his art.



VOCABULARY

Use an online or print dictionary to look up the meanings of the following words: anguish, brawl, flabbergasted, inheritance, insufferable, murmur, reminisce, sensation, somber, technique.



QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON AFTER READING THE BOOK

1. Vincent and Theo are described as "so alike and yet so different." What are some ways they are alike? In what ways are they different?

3. How would you describe the relationship between Theo and Vincent?

4. How does Theo help Vincent pursue his work as an artist?

5. What is it about Vincent's personality that makes it so difficult for him to get along with other people, even his own brother?

6. What makes Vincent decide to become a preacher? Why is he ill-suited for that vocation?

7. What roles does the wind play in the story? How does the wind help Vincent discover his destiny?

8. When Vincent goes to Paris, how do his paintings change from those he created in Holland? What are some inspirations for this change?

9. In what ways is nature important to Van Gogh's art?

10. What drove Vincent to take his own life?



ACTIVITIES

1. Go back through the book page by page and identify examples of personification, simile, and metaphor in the text and illustrations.

2. Vincent writes in a letter to Theo, "Painters teach us to see." Inside the front cover of *Vincent van Gogh and the Colors of the Wind* is a list of fourteen paintings by Van Gogh that appear in the book. Find good representations of these paintings in art books, prints, or online resources. An excellent online resource is www.vangoghgallery.com. Choose one of the paintings and write a few paragraphs explaining what you think Van Gogh is trying to teach people to see within it. Share what you write with your class.

3. In a sense, a painting can be considered a visual poem. Compose a poem that captures the imagery and expresses the emotional tone of one of the fourteen paintings. Share your poem with your class.



RECOMMENDED READING

Greenberg, Jan, and Sandra Jordan. *Vincent Van Gogh: Portrait of an Artist*. Delacorte, 2001.

Lach, William, ed. *Vincent's Colors*. Chronicle, 2005.

Mühlberger, Richard. *What Makes a Van Gogh a Van Gogh?* Viking, 1999.

Rubin, Susan Goldman. *The Yellow House: Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin Side by Side*. Illus. Joseph A. Smith. Abrams, 2001.