



Trees by the Water
Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904), c. 1880



Lake with a Boat
Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904), c. 1880



Landscape with Trees and Figure
Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904), c. 1880



View of a Lake with Boat
Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904), c. 1880

Works Collected by Theo and Vincent

Paintings and Drawings

Théophile de Bock

The Van Gogh Museum has two paintings and two watercolours by Théophile de Bock (1851–1904) in its collection. He probably made them in the vicinity of The Hague, where he lived from 1869 to 1887. In 1880, De Bock visited Paris, where he occasionally saw Theo van Gogh (1857–1891). On 5 July 1880, Theo's mother wrote to him: 'It's nice that until October you've got a good friend in Mr de Bock and then Rappart [sic].'⁰¹ De Bock first exhibited a painting at the Paris Salon that year, and he probably wished to see it with his own eyes.⁰² It is likely that the four works by De Bock entered Theo's collection, either as gifts or purchases, around this time and that they can also be dated to this period.⁰³ It was at this time, too, that De Bock bought drawings or etchings by Jean-François Millet (1814–1875) from Theo at Goupil's Paris branch.⁰⁴ It is not known why precisely these paintings and watercolours by De Bock ended up in Theo's collection. The only thing that can be said is that these four landscapes are representative of his oeuvre: they are all in vertical format and display a low horizon that provides ample space for a dynamic, cloudy sky, while the bodies of water and the reflections on them, the winding paths and the recognizable tree species are also recurring elements in De Bock's compositions.

Working in a tradition

De Bock may be counted among the third generation of artists of the Hague School.⁰⁵ Over the years he received instruction from various predecessors, among them Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch (1824–1903) as well as Jacob (1837–1899) and Willem Maris (1844–1910), the latter of whom became a friend and collaborator. Willem Maris frequently painted the animals and sometimes the people in De Bock's landscapes.⁰⁶ The French painters of Barbizon were also important examples for De Bock. It is highly likely that, while staying in Paris in 1880, he also visited the painters' colony in the Forest of Fontainebleau, to the south-east of the city.⁰⁷ After returning to the Netherlands, he exhibited two paintings of the landscape around Fontainebleau and Paris at the *Tentoonstelling van Levende Meesters* (Exhibition of Living Masters) in 1881.⁰⁸ Moreover, he copied work by Jean Baptiste Camille Corot (1796–1875).⁰⁹ De Bock's compositions often contain recognizable features of Corot's style, such as the use of colour and manner of painting, as seen for example in *Trees by the Water*.

De Bock was known to be especially fond of trees; he even went so far as to give pet names to some of the trees in his immediate surroundings.¹⁰ This predilection did not result in precise depiction, however. The foliage of De Bock's trees is characterized – as it is in the work of Corot – by a certain woolliness. De Bock articulated the essence of his own notion of style and that of many artists in his circle in a discussion of a 'tree painting': 'Finishing this piece I understand as imbuing it with atmosphere – indeed, it has happened to me that I made the foliage too precise, then it became stiff, coldly executed, and without any fascination. The concern of wanting to make something complete then deteriorates into component parts – and harms the whole.'¹¹ In his view – which was in keeping with the ideas of the Hague School – a general impression of nature was the best strategy for capturing a fleeting, personal perception of the ambience.

The four works in the family collection

The trees in the painting *Trees by the Water* were not worked out in much detail either, but nonetheless they clearly display the characteristics of pollard willows and birches. The work is painted in shades of green, blue and white. Barely visible on the path between the trees is a woman wearing blue and grey clothing and a white cap on her head.

A similarly clothed woman is depicted in the watercolour *Standing Figure in a Landscape with Trees*. She stands at the crossing of two diagonal lines in a landscape that is closed off on the right by tall trees. By inserting such figures, De Bock emphasized the proportions within a landscape. The drawing was probably exposed to too much light, making it impossible to determine the original appearance of the highly discoloured sky passage. In the three other works in the collection, however, the sky is full of contrast and contributes greatly to the lively impression of the landscape.

The painting *Lake with a Boat* was executed in a palette similar to that of *Trees by the Water* and on a canvas of the same format – a standard paysage 10.¹² The way in which the paint was applied is also very similar.¹³ The surface of water in the foreground and the reflections on it were painted with a few loose but unerring brushstrokes.

The watercolour *Landscape with a Boat on a Lake* displays almost the same composition as the painting, except that the boat – now manned by two figures – is seen from the front.¹⁴ De Bock found that transparent watercolour lent itself much better to conveying subtle reflections in rippled water, as clearly shown by the pole to the right of the boat. The bulrushes, with their recognizable sword-shaped leaves and cigar-like flower spikes, as well as other water plants, are very true to life.

Admiration and criticism

De Bock's efforts all served to express his love of nature's beauty: 'I prefer to give back the beauty that I see and feel, that is my enjoyment of life. [...] let me paint in my own way: the glorious light of the temperate sun, the solemn moonlight, the trembling of the stars in the deep blue atmosphere, the velvety green frosts, the pattering water, everything, everything that seems beautiful to me, because I believe that everything is of and for me.'¹⁵ Philip Zilcken, chronicler of Dutch art in the nineteenth century, characterized De Bock's work - on the basis of an etching - somewhat more concisely: 'It was a true De Bock, a group of trees by a pond, full of taste and elegance.'¹⁶

Those tasteful landscapes appealed to a large public. Like many artists of the Hague School, De Bock sold well in the late nineteenth century both in the Netherlands and abroad. In Canada, for example, Dutch paintings were 'a symbol of standing and wealth. People said to one another: "Oh, I see that you don't have a De Bock yet." "No - do you already have your Blommers?"'¹⁷ Compared to the warm reception in Canada, there were mixed reactions to De Bock's work in Dutch newspapers. One critic applauded the 'view [of] rare acuity and fine feeling for our Dutch landscape', while others maintained that his work was somewhat 'superficial' or 'narrow-minded'.¹⁸

A description of the paintings he submitted to the Tentoonstelling van Levende Meesters in 1881 is typical of this ambivalent attitude (which, for that matter, can also be found in reviews of the work of other masters of the Hague School): 'It is indeed no small virtue to compose wooded landscape with such taste and to convey its general aspect as naturally as De Bock succeeded in doing in his *On the Marne and Evening at Fontainebleau*. If one paints them on such a scale, however, then the viewer nevertheless has the right to expect something more than that the character of the trees is scarcely expressed and the leaves and branches display only a formless mass of paint.'¹⁹ Repeating a successful formula therefore had its drawbacks.

De Bock and Vincent van Gogh

Most likely it was Theo who brought Vincent into contact with De Bock. Both artists were working in The Hague and its environs in the early 1880s. In August 1881, Vincent first wrote to Theo about De Bock, and from then on, for the next two years, they sought each other out, sometimes working together and talking about art. In the summer of 1883, Van Gogh stored his artists' requisites and artworks in De Bock's studio so that he would have less to carry when he went to work in Scheveningen.²⁰ Judging by his letters, Van Gogh's opinion of De Bock's artistic qualities tended to vary.²¹ Since Van Gogh was himself striving at this time to produce raw and impassioned depictions of nature, he thought – just as the reviewer of the *Tentoonstelling van Levende Meesters* did – that De Bock's landscapes were attractive but also superficial: 'He has a feeling for landscape, he sometimes manages to imbue them with a kind of charm [...] but in himself there's nothing to get hold of. He's too vague and too insubstantial – cotton too finely woven. His paintings are a shadow of an impression, and in my opinion that impression is scarcely worth repeating so often.'²²

In 1892, two years after Van Gogh's death, De Bock played a key role in organizing the first retrospective exhibition of his work, even though this task had come his way accidentally. At first the exhibition was to take place at Pulchri Studio, but after the board cancelled it, the Haagsche Kunstkring (Hague Art Circle) took on 'Pulchri's "cast-offs"' – in the words of their chairman, De Bock.²³ He continued with an analysis that can be seen in light of the bond between the two artists and their differing artistic ideas: 'I feel profound sorrow at the work of Vincent van Gogh – the phosphor affected him as violently as earthquakes. Oh, why didn't he have a regulator, the poor soul, the untimely fallen painter!!!'²⁴ De Bock handled the contact with Jo van Gogh-Bonger regarding her loans to the exhibition.²⁵ On display at the same time as the works by Van Gogh were etchings by Millet, Corot and Charles François Daubigny (1817-1878), which, as he wrote to her, were intended to stimulate the 'friction of ideas'.²⁶ Thus Van Gogh was presented in the proximity of his examples, who had also exerted a great influence on De Bock.

Renske Suijver
March 2023

Citation

Renske Suijver, 'Paintings and drawings by De Bock, c. 1880', catalogue entry in *Contemporaries of Van Gogh 1: Works Collected by Theo and Vincent*, Joost van der Hoeven (ed.), Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 2023.

[↗ doi.org/10.58802/OJAS6628](https://doi.org/10.58802/OJAS6628)

This contribution is licensed under a [↗ CC BY-NC-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) licence.



Object details

Trees by the Water

Artist

Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904)

Date

c. 1880

Medium

oil on canvas

Dimensions

56 cm x 38 cm

Inscriptions

Th. de Bock

Inventory Number

s0211V1962

Credits

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



Object details

Lake with a Boat

Artist

Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904)

Date

c. 1880

Medium

oil on canvas

Dimensions

55.5 cm x 38 cm

Inscriptions

Th. de Bock

Inventory Number

s0210V1962

Credits

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



Object details

Landscape with Trees and Figure

Artist

Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904)

Date

c. 1880

Medium

transparent and opaque watercolour on wove paper

Dimensions

39.5 cm x 27.6 cm

Inscriptions

Th. de Bock

Inventory Number

d0651V1962

Credits

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



Object details

View of a Lake with Boat

Artist

Théophile de Bock (1851 - 1904)

Date

c. 1880

Medium

transparent and opaque watercolour on wove paper

Dimensions

37 cm x 24.5 cm

Inscriptions

Th. de Bock.

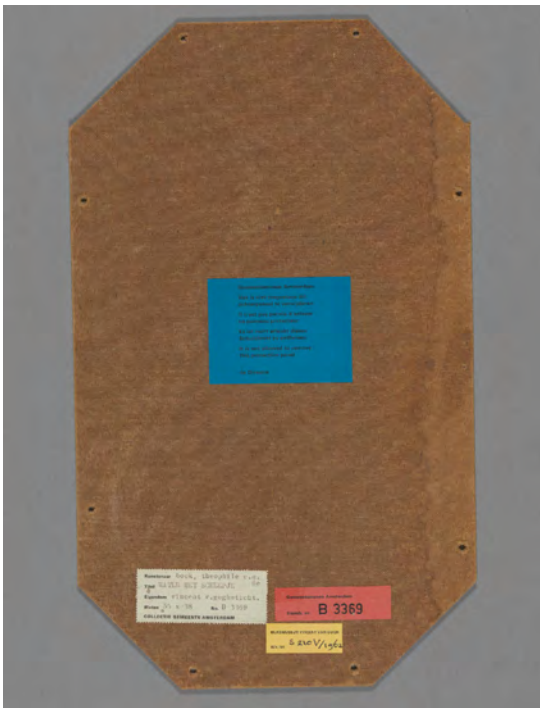
44x60 Co[...] Bugeon[...] & passepartout

Inventory Number

d0652V1962

Credits

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



Lake with a Boat

Front & Back

**Provenance****Trees by the Water**

Theo van Gogh, Paris, c. 1880; after his death on 25 January 1891, inherited by his widow, Jo van Gogh-Bonger, and their son, Vincent Willem van Gogh, Paris; administered until her death on 2 September 1925 by Jo van Gogh-Bonger, Bussum/Amsterdam/Laren; transferred by Vincent Willem van Gogh, Laren, to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam, 10 July 1962; agreement concluded between the Vincent van Gogh Foundation and the State of the Netherlands, in which the preservation and management of the collection, and its placing in the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, to be realized in Amsterdam, is entrusted to the State, 21 July 1962; on permanent loan to the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh from the opening of the museum on 2 June 1973, and at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, since 1 July 1994.

**Provenance****Lake with a Boat**

Theo van Gogh, Paris, c. 1880; after his death on 25 January 1891, inherited by his widow, Jo van Gogh-Bonger, and their son, Vincent Willem van Gogh, Paris; administered until her death on 2 September 1925 by Jo van Gogh-Bonger, Bussum/Amsterdam/Laren; transferred by Vincent Willem van Gogh, Laren, to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam, 10 July 1962; agreement concluded between the Vincent van Gogh Foundation and the State of the Netherlands, in which the preservation and management of the collection, and its placing in the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, to be realized in Amsterdam, is entrusted to the State, 21 July 1962; on permanent loan to the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh from the opening of the museum on 2 June 1973, and at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, since 1 July 1994.



Provenance

Landscape with Trees and Figure

Theo van Gogh, Paris, c. 1880; after his death on 25 January 1891, inherited by his widow, Jo van Gogh-Bonger, and their son, Vincent Willem van Gogh, Paris; administered until her death on 2 September 1925 by Jo van Gogh-Bonger, Bussum/Amsterdam/Laren; transferred by Vincent Willem van Gogh, Laren, to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam, 10 July 1962; agreement concluded between the Vincent van Gogh Foundation and the State of the Netherlands, in which the preservation and management of the collection, and its placing in the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, to be realized in Amsterdam, is entrusted to the State, 21 July 1962; on permanent loan to the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh from the opening of the museum on 2 June 1973, and at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, since 1 July 1994.



Provenance

View of a Lake with Boat

Theo van Gogh, Paris, c. 1880; after his death on 25 January 1891, inherited by his widow, Jo van Gogh-Bonger, and their son, Vincent Willem van Gogh, Paris; administered until her death on 2 September 1925 by Jo van Gogh-Bonger, Bussum/Amsterdam/Laren; transferred by Vincent Willem van Gogh, Laren, to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam, 10 July 1962; agreement concluded between the Vincent van Gogh Foundation and the State of the Netherlands, in which the preservation and management of the collection, and its placing in the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, to be realized in Amsterdam, is entrusted to the State, 21 July 1962; on permanent loan to the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh from the opening of the museum on 2 June 1973, and at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, since 1 July 1994.



Exhibitions

Trees by the Water

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 31 March-11 May 1953, no. 7d, *Bomen*

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 11 June-2 August 1953, no. 7d, *Bomen*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 5 September-15 November 1953, no. 7d, *Bomen*

Antwerp, Zaal Comité voor Artistieke Werking, *Vincent van Gogh*, 7 May-19 June 1955, no. 378, *Bomen*

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 29 January-29 February 1960, no. 20, *Bomen*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 12 March-29 May 1960, no. 20, *Bomen*

Tokyo, Seiji Togo Memorial Yasuda Kasai Museum of Art, *Vincent van Gogh and his time. Four seasons from the Van Gogh Museum and the H.W. Mesdag Museum*, 12 September-11 November 1997, no. 27, *Trees by the water*



Exhibitions

Lake with a Boat

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 31 March-11 May 1953, no. 7a, *Water met sloopje*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 5 September-15 November 1953, no. 7a, *Water met sloopje*

Antwerp, Zaal Comité voor Artistieke Werking, *Vincent van Gogh*, 7 May-19 June 1955, no. 377, *Water met sloopje*

Mons, Museum voor Schoone Kunsten, *Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Son art et ses amis*, 22 March-5 May 1958, no. 85, *petit bateau*

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 29 January-29 February 1960, no. 17, *Water met sloopje*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 12 March-29 May 1960, no. 17, *Water met sloopje*

The Hague, Pulchri Studio, *125 jaar Nederlandse kunst*, 25 November-16 December 1972

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Theo van Gogh 1857-1891. Kunsthandelaar, verzamelaar en broer van Vincent*, 24 June-5 September 1999, no. 153, *Meer met een boot*

Sapporo, Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art, *Vincent & Theo van Gogh*, 5 July-25 August 2002, no. 61, *Lake with a Boat*

Kōbe, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Modern Art, *Vincent & Theo van Gogh*, 7 September-4 November 2002, no. 61, *Lake with a Boat*

Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum, *Kiezen voor Vincent. Portret van een familiegeschiedenis*, 10 February-10 April 2023



Exhibitions

Landscape with Trees and Figure

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 31 March-11 May 1953, no. 7b, *Grasveld met bomen*

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 11 June-2 August 1953, no. 7b, *Grasveld met bomen*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 5 September-15 November 1953, no. 7b, *Grasveld met bomen*

Antwerp, Zaal Comité voor Artistieke Werking, *Vincent van Gogh*, 7 May-19 June 1955, no. 379, *Grasveld met bomen*

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 29 January-29 February 1960, no. 18, *Grasveld met bomen*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 12 March-29 May 1960, no. 18, *Grasveld met bomen*

The Hague, Pulchri Studio, *125 jaar Nederlandse kunst*, 25 November-16 December 1972



Exhibitions

View of a Lake with Boat

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 31 March-11 May 1953, no. 7c, *Gezicht op het water*

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 11 June-2 August 1953, no. 7c, *Gezicht op het water*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh : met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 5 September-15 November 1953, no. 7c, *Gezicht op het water*

Antwerp, Zaal Comité voor Artistieke Werking, *Vincent van Gogh*, 7 May-19 June 1955, no. 380, *Gezicht op het water*

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 29 January-29 February 1960, no. 19, *Gezicht op het water*

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, 12 March-29 May 1960, no. 19, *Gezicht op het water*

The Hague, Pulchri Studio, *125 jaar Nederlandse kunst*, 25 November-16 December 1972



Literature

Trees by the Water

- Evert van Uitert and Michael Hoyle (eds.), *The Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh*, Amsterdam 1987, no. 1.27, pp. 310, 362; BVG08057 a-l
- John Leighton, *Vincent van Gogh and his time. Four seasons from the Van Gogh Museum and the H.W. Mesdag Museum*, exh. cat., Tokyo (Seiji Togo Memorial Yasuda Kasai Museum of Art) 1997, no. 27, p. 98; BVG13742
- Lisa Smit and Hans Luijten (eds.), *Choosing Vincent: From Family Collection to Van Gogh Museum*, exh. cat., Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum), Bussum 2023, p. 22; BVG26545



Literature

Lake with a Boat

- Evert van Uitert and Michael Hoyle (eds.), *The Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh*, Amsterdam 1987, no. 1.26, pp. 310, 362; BVG08057 a-l
- Chris Stolwijk and Richard Thomson (eds.), with a contribution by Sjraar van Heugten, *Theo van Gogh, 1857-1891: Art Dealer, Collector and Brother of Vincent*, exh. cat., Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum) / Paris (Musée d'Orsay), Amsterdam & Zwolle 1999, no. 153, pp. 153, 157-158; BVG14788 a-b / BVG15262 a-d / BVG14736 a-b
- Anonymous, *Vincent & Theo van Gogh*, exh. cat., Sapporo (Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art) / Kobe (Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art), Sapporo 2002, no. 61, p. 169; BVG16907 a-c
- Lisa Smit and Hans Luijten (eds.), *Choosing Vincent: From Family Collection to Van Gogh Museum*, exh. cat., Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum), Bussum 2023, pp. 21, 22; BVG26545



Literature

Landscape with Trees and Figure

- Evert van Uitert and Michael Hoyle (eds.), *The Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh*, Amsterdam 1987, no. 2.57, p. 375; BVG08057
- Lisa Smit and Hans Luijten (eds.), *Choosing Vincent: From Family Collection to Van Gogh Museum*, exh. cat., Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum), Bussum 2023, p. 22; BVG26545



Literature

View of a Lake with Boat

- Evert van Uitert and Michael Hoyle (eds.), *The Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh*, Amsterdam 1987, no. 2.58, p. 375; BVG0805
- Lisa Smit and Hans Luijten (eds.), *Choosing Vincent: From Family Collection to Van Gogh Museum*, exh. cat., Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum), Bussum 2023, p. 22; BVG26545

Footnotes

- 01 Anna van Gogh-Carventus, letter to Theo van Gogh, 5 July 1880, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), inv. no. b2495V1982: 'Prettig gij tot October goede vriend aan Mr. de Bock hebt en dan Rappart [sic].'
- 02 The Salon des Artistes Français opened on 1 May 1880; it is not known for how long it ran. De Bock's *Environs of Dordrecht (Environs de Dordrecht)* was [↗ exhibited there](#). He was also represented by one work at each of the Salons of [↗ 1883](#) and [↗ 1884](#).
- 03 In inventories of Theo's estate drawn up shortly after his death in 1891, the four works are estimated to be worth 160 guilders: inv. nos. b2214V1982, b2215V1982 and b4553V1982, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation). Often these inventories wrongly refer to four paintings, which probably led Van Heugten and Stolwijk to conclude that at some point two paintings had disappeared from the collection: Sjraar van Heugten and Chris Stolwijk, 'Theo van Gogh, The Collector', in Chris Stolwijk and Richard Thomson (eds.), with a contribution by Sjraar van Heugten, *Theo van Gogh, 1857-1891: Art Dealer, Collector and Brother of Vincent*, exh. cat., Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum) / Paris (Musée d'Orsay), Amsterdam & Zwolle 1999, p. 153.
- 04 Vincent van Gogh mentions drawings in his letter, but the sale of De Bock's estate included four etchings by Millet. Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, 26 August 1881 [↗ \[171\]](#), n. 27.
- 05 Ronald de Leeuw, John Sillevius and Charles Dumas (eds.), *The Hague School: Dutch Masters of the 19th Century*, exh. cat., Paris (Grand Palais) / London (Royal Academy of Arts) / The Hague (Haags Gemeentemuseum), London 1983, p. 15.
- 06 Arnold Lighthart, 'Vincent van Gogh and Théophile de Bock', in *Jong Holland 6* (1990), pp. 19, 21.
- 07 The exact period of De Bock's sojourn in Paris and Barbizon is unknown. According to Maite van Dijk, he visited Barbizon between 1878 and 1880: 'Jacob Maris, Out of Town: from Paris to Barbizon', in Mayken Jonkman (ed.), *The Dutch in Paris, 1789-1914: Van Spaendonck, Scheffer, Jongkind, Maris, Kaemmerer, Breitner, Van Gogh, Van Dongen, Mondrian*, exh. cat., Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum) / Paris (Petit Palais - Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris), Bussum 2017, p. 127. According to Louis de Haes, De Bock's visit was 'of short duration' ('kort van duur'): 'Théophile de Bock', in *Elsevier's Geïllustreerd Maandschrift 3* (1893), p. 262. Judging from the letter written by Theo van Gogh's mother and the fact that De Bock submitted a painting to the 1880 Salon, it is reasonable to assume that he visited Paris and Barbizon that year; op. cit. (n. 1-2 above).
- 08 *On the River Marne (Aan de Marne)* and *Evening at Fontainebleau (Avond te Fontainebleau)*, in *Tentoonstelling van kunstwerken van levende meesters te 's Gravenhage* (Exhibition of Artworks by Living Masters at The Hague), exh. cat., The Hague 1881, p. 9, nos. 39-40. The whereabouts of both works are unknown. See also n. 19.
- 09 Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, 26 August 1881 [↗ \[171\]](#).
- 10 De Haes 1893, p. 264.

- 11 Théophile de Bock, letter to an unknown recipient, The Hague, 30 October 1890, Rijksprentenkabinet, quoted in RKD Excerpts: 'Het àf maken van dit stuk versta ik de stemming er in uit te drukken, - 't gebeurde mij reeds dat ik het gebladerte te precies maakte, toen werd het stijf, koud uitgevoerd, en zonder eenige boeiendheid. De zorg iets compleets te willen geven ontaard dan in onderdeelen, - en doet schade aan het geheel.'
- 12 David Bomford *et al.*, *Art in the Making: Impressionism*, exh. cat., Detroit (Detroit Institute of Arts) / London (The National Gallery), New Haven 1990, p. 46.
- 13 The placing and size of the signatures differ, however, making it unlikely that the two paintings were intended as pendants. With thanks to René Boitelle for his thoughts on the manner of painting.
- 14 The fact that the verso of the sheet displays paint stains indicates, at the very least, that De Bock was working on a painting in the same period.
- 15 Théophile de Bock, letter to Louis de Haes, 15 January 1893, collection of the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD), quoted and dated in De Haes 1893, p. 255: 'K wil liever het mooi's teruggeven dat ik zie en voel' dat is mijn genot van 't leven. [...] laat mij schilderen op mijn manier; - 't heerlijk licht van de maatige zon, de stemmige maneschijn, het trillen der sterren in de diep-blauwe atmosfeer, - de fluweel-groene vorschen, 't kletterende water, alles, alles wat mij mooi schijnt, want ik geloof dat alles van en voor mij is.'
- 16 The Hague 1928, unpublished typescript with notes in pen, Zilcken Archives, Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD): 'Het was een echte de Bock, een groep boomen aan een vijvertje,- vol smaak en élégance.' Philip Zilcken, 'Herinneringen van een Hollandschen Schilder der negentiende Eeuw 1877-1927 (Vijftig jaren Kunstgeschiedenis) met een voorwoord van Dr. A. Bredius'.
- 17 Quoted in John Sillevius, 'The Years of Fame (1885-1910)', in De Leeuw, Sillevius and Dumas, p. 96: 'een symbool van aanzien en rijkdom. Mensen zeiden tegen elkaar: "O, ik zie dat je nog geen De Bock hebt?", "Nee - heb jij je Blommers al?"'
- 18 J.K., 'Over de nieuwe richting in onze schilderkunst, naar aanleiding der jongste tentoonstelling in Amsterdam. (Slot) II.', *De banier: tijdschrift van 'Het jonge Holland'* 3 (1877), no. 1, p. 385: 'zeldzaam scherpen en van fijn gevoel voor de natuur getuigenden blik op ons hollandsch landschap'; 'Tentoonstelling van schilderijen in Arti et Amicitiae. V.', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 22 November 1879, p. 2: 'oppervlakkig'; Camille de Roddaz, 'Kunst en Industrie. VI. (Slot). De moderne meesters', *Het vaderland: Staat- en letterkundig nieuwsblad*, 25 August 1875, p. 1: 'kleingeestig'.
- 19 V., 'Indrukken van de tentoonstelling van kunstwerken van levende meesters te 's-Gravenhage', *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 7 June 1881, p. 2: 'Het is inderdaad geene geringe verdienste, boomrijke landschappen met zulk een smaak te componeeren en het algemeen aspect daarvan zoo natuurlijk weer te geven als de Bock hierin slaagde met zijne Aan de Marne en Avond te Fontainebleau. Schildert men die echter op zulk een schaal, dan heeft de beschouwer toch recht, wat meer te vergen, dan dat ter nauwernood het karakter der boomen is uitgedrukt en de blâren en takken slechts eene vormlooze verfmassa vertoonen.'
- 20 Vincent van Gogh, letters to Theo van Gogh, 26 August 1881 [↗ \[171\]](#), c. 7 July 1883 [↗ \[360\]](#) and c. 11 July 1883 [↗ \[361\]](#).
- 21 See Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Nienke Bakker (eds.), *Van Gogh - The Letters: The Complete Illustrated and Annotated Edition*, 6 vols., Amsterdam, Brussels & The Hague 2009, and Ligthart, pp. 18-34.

- 22 Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, c. 3 January 1882 [↗ \[196\]](#): 'Hij heeft gevoel voor landschap, hij weet er een soort charme soms in te brengen [...] maar ik vind toch geen houvast aan hem. Hij is te vaag en te ijl - du coton filé trop fin. Zijn schilderijen zijn een schaduw van een impressie en die impressie is mijns inziens ter nauwernood de moeite waard om zoo dikwijls gerepeteerd te worden.'
- 23 Théophile de Bock, letter to Nico van Harpen, 12 February 1892, in N. van Harpen, *Menschen die ik gekend heb*, Rotterdam 1928, p. 62: "'afval" van Pulchri'.
- 24 Ibid.: 'innige smart gevoel ik bij het werk van Vincent van Gogh, - hevig als aardbevingen werkte bij hem de phosfor. Ach, waarom had hij geen regulator, de arme mensch, de te vroeg gevallen schilder!!!'.
- 25 In 1889, Jo Bongor visited an exhibition of De Bock's work at the artists' society Arti et Amicitiae in Amsterdam, after which she wrote enthusiastically to Theo (then her fiancé): 'I [...] enjoyed it immensely. Sunny landscapes - a lovely beech wood, a birch-lined avenue - a pond on the Oorsprong near Arnhem. Looking back, it was like spending a lovely day in the country.' ('Ik [...] heb erg genoten. Zonnige landschappen - een mooi beuken boschje, een berkenlaan - een vijver aan de oorsprong bij Arnhem - als ik er aan terug denk ik 't of ik een heerlijken dag buiten heb doorgebracht.')
- Jo Bongor, letter to Theo van Gogh, Amsterdam, 18 and 19 March 1889, quoted in Leo Jansen, Jan Robert and Han van Crimpen (eds.), *Brief Happiness: The Correspondence of Theo van Gogh and Jo Bongor*, Amsterdam & Zwolle 1999, no. 74.
- 26 Théophile de Bock, letter to Jo van Gogh-Bongor, 28 April 1892 (and 21 May 1892), inv. no. b1915V/1962 (and b2072V/1982), Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation): 'wrijving van gedachten'.