

DROUOT PARIS

AUCTIONART
rémy le fur & associés

VAN GOGH'S ALLEGED SUICIDE GUN ACHIEVES €162,500

WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 2019 AT DROUOT



Paris – At Drouot this afternoon of 19 June, the most celebrated gun in art history which Van Gogh would have used to shoot himself was sold by auction house AuctionArt – Rémy Le Fur for €162,500.

In a crowded saleroom, 18 bids kept the public waiting for the final auction which exceeds twice its high estimate. The gun was initially estimated €40,000 to €60,000.

This result reflects the enthusiasm this legendary gun generated all across the globe and illustrates the myth surrounding the painter, key figure of the “cursed painters”, said Grégoire Veyrès, in charge of the auction.

The emblematic Dutch artist of the 19th century moved in Auvers-sur-Oise in the South of France in 1890. He lived in room number 5 of Arthur Ravoux's inn. At this time, Vincent Van Gogh was at the top of his art, he produced over a painting a day, but was mentally unstable.

That same year, on Sunday 27 July, he went to a field behind the village's castle and shot his own chest. He lost consciousness and woke up at dusk, seriously injured. He went back to the inn where he died 2 days later.

The gun offered in this sale was found in this field by a farmer around 1960 and was handed to the current owner's mother. Writer Alain Rohan investigated this case and wrote the book "Did we find the suicide weapon?" in 2012. Several pieces of evidence show it must be Van Gogh's suicide gun: it was discovered where Van Gogh shot it; its caliber (7 mm) is the same as the bullet retrieved from the artist's body as described by the doctor at the time; scientific studies demonstrate that the gun had stayed in the ground since the 1890's and finally, it is a low power gun so it could explain why Van Gogh didn't instantly die after shooting it.

Another theory about Van Gogh's death appeared in 2011. According to 2 American researchers, the artist didn't kill himself. He would have been the victim of an accident. 2 young boys were playing with a gun next to him when one of them pressed the trigger by mistake and wounded him. However, even if this assumption is right, the weapon could still be the one that killed Van Gogh. The gun would have been left in the field.

In 2016, the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam exhibited this gun during the exhibition "On the Verge of Insanity. Van Gogh and his illness."



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About Drouot

Founded in 1852, Drouot is the largest auction place in the world ever since. The institution now gathers 63 auction houses and hosted over 1,000 auctions in 2018 that totalled €376M. Each year, Drouot welcomes 500,000 visitors, who browse through the 17 salesrooms which feature the works of art from over 21 categories, from antiquities to street art. The Drouot Group includes several branches, including Auctionspress which publishes the weekly Gazette Drouot and Drouot Digital, the e-commerce platform that offers 'live' services (auction streaming and live bidding) and online-only sales.

Interviews and images on request

