

# The Mystery of Van Gogh's Ear: Bernadette Murphy's Obsession

In the annals of art history, Vincent van Gogh stands as a towering figure, renowned for his expressive brushwork and vivid colors. However, one aspect of his life that has captivated the imagination of countless people is the mysterious circumstances surrounding the loss of his ear.

## The Incident

In December 1888, Van Gogh, then living in Arles, France, suffered a severe mental breakdown. The exact details of the incident are shrouded in mystery, but it is believed that he severed a portion of his left ear with a razor. There are various theories about the reason behind this act, including the influence of mental illness, emotional turmoil, and a possible altercation with his friend, Paul Gauguin.



### Van Gogh's Ear by Bernadette Murphy

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

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## The Lost Earlobe: A Never-Ending Puzzle

For over a century, the whereabouts of Van Gogh's lost earlobe remained unknown. While many speculated that it was buried in a field, thrown into a canal, or even fed to a pet, there was no concrete evidence to support these claims.

Then, in 2009, a bombshell revelation emerged. Bernadette Murphy, a dealer in rare manuscripts and ephemera, came into possession of a letter allegedly written by Van Gogh's brother, Theo. The letter described a young woman named Gabrielle Berlatier as the recipient of Van Gogh's severed ear. Berlatier, a prostitute who lived in the same boarding house as Van Gogh, was said to have preserved the earlobe in a glass jar.

### **Bernadette Murphy's Investigation**

Murphy's discovery set her on a relentless quest to uncover the truth behind the lost earlobe. She spent years meticulously researching the matter, delving into archives, interviewing descendants of those involved, and studying the intricate details of Van Gogh's life and artwork.

Murphy's unwavering determination and tireless efforts eventually led her to a breakthrough. In 2017, she published her book, "Van Gogh's Ear: The True Story," in which she presented compelling evidence to support her theory that Berlatier did, indeed, receive Van Gogh's earlobe.

### **The Star-Shaped Earring**

One of the key pieces of evidence that Murphy discovered was a photograph of a woman wearing a star-shaped earring. The earring was identical to the one worn by Berlatier in a known portrait. Through diligent research, Murphy traced the history of the earring, linking it back to Berlatier and her family.

The star-shaped earring, Murphy argued, was a symbol of Van Gogh's love for Berlatier. She believed that Van Gogh cut off his ear in a desperate attempt to win her affection. Berlatier, however, was shocked and horrified by the gesture and refused to reciprocate his feelings.

### **The Enigma Endures**

Despite Murphy's groundbreaking research, the mystery of Van Gogh's earlobe remains an enigma. Her theory has been met with both skepticism and fascination by scholars and the general public alike. Some experts have questioned the authenticity of the letter she discovered and the reliability of the family history surrounding the earring.

However, Murphy's unwavering belief in her findings has kept the debate alive. Her work has sparked renewed interest in the life and art of Vincent van Gogh and has reminded us that even in the face of the most profound mysteries, the search for truth can be both thrilling and elusive.



Whether or not Murphy's theory will ever be definitively proven, her relentless pursuit of knowledge and her meticulous investigation have provided a fascinating glimpse into the enigmatic world of Vincent van Gogh.



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