

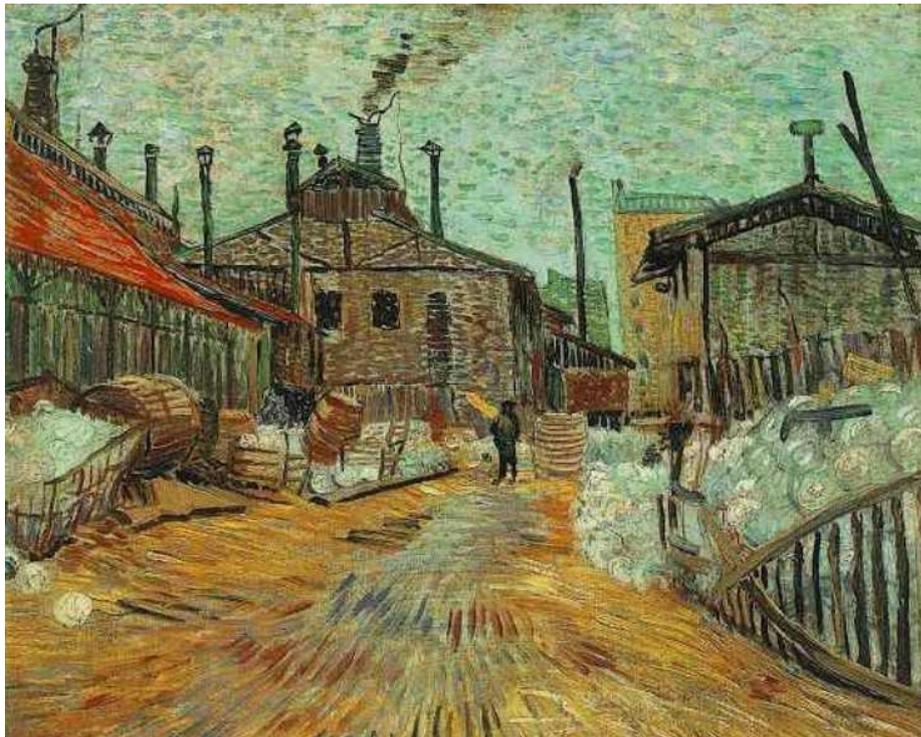
Vincent van Gogh's painting located in Paris

We love to do research on Vincent van Gogh and since 2012 we have been engaged in putting together the multi-lingual website [VanGoghLocations.com](https://vangoghlocations.com).

Our mission is to find locations in Europe where Vincent van Gogh lived and worked.

Our extensive website now covers over 750 locations. You will find these locations on a digital map together with descriptions, visual material and street view. However, there are still Van Gogh places that we cannot locate with certainty, especially places where he drew and painted. Just recently we were fortunate enough to locate the exact place in Paris where he painted "A factory in Asnières".

This work is in the collection of The Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia, USA.



Vincent van Gogh

The Factory
[JH 1288; F 318].

summer 1887
Oil on canvas
size 46.5 x 54 cm

This work by Van Gogh is in the collection of The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, USA (Room 6).



In this painting we see the forecourt of a factory complex with smoking chimneys, wooden barrels and collections of green / white glass objects on the right and left.

In his oeuvre catalog⁽¹⁾ the Dutch researcher Jan Hulsker dates this work around September 1887 and locates it as "probably" Asnières.

That is why we had been looking for a more precise location for a long time.

The Barnes Foundation Philadelphia⁽²⁾ describes this work as:

"In the late nineteenth century, the French landscape was increasingly marked by signs of industry. Van Gogh depicts a glass factory in Asnières, a suburb northwest of Paris where the artist painted frequently in the summer of 1887. The round objects stacked along the sides of the pathway are balls of glass awaiting melting inside the buildings. They would have been formed into lanterns for gas streetlights and interior fixtures."

That the Barnes Foundation refers to the factory as a glass factory helped us in our search but which factory might it have been? And where was it located?

White spheres

An extensive search led us to a French book titled "La Cristallerie de Clichy"⁽³⁾ written by, among others, descendants of former owners of glass factories.

Now Clichy is not Asnières, but a Parisian neighbourhood between Montmartre, where Vincent lived and Asnières where Vincent's painter friend Emile Bernard had his studio.

In the second half of the 19th century there were a number of glass and crystal factories just

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outside the former ramparts which are described in this book.

The book contains an old postcard of a forecourt of a "verrière" (glass factory) with all the details of the painting: smoking chimneys, buildings, wooden barrels and... glass spheres. What a wonderful coincidence! It was a real eureka moment. In addition, the postcard in question also bears the name of the factory: **Verrerie du Pont de Clichy**.



the old postcard

CLICHY. -
L'Intérieur de la
Verrerie du Pont de
Clichy = G.T.

photo around 1900
stamped in 1904

size 9 x 14 cm

It shows practically the same picture as the Van Gogh painting: a forecourt, factory buildings with chimneys, wicker baskets filled with straw and glass bulbs. Looking closely, we see the wall of the factory building on the left with the same wooden beams as in the painting. Even the half timbered front of the building in the background shown in the painting is reflected in this historic photo of the glass factory. The position of the 'black' windows is the same. From the shadow, for example under the horse and cart, we can deduce that the photographer as well as the painter chose the same position from the west to the east.

Bingo!

It is crystal clear: Vincent van Gogh painted this courtyard of the Verrerie du Pont de Clichy! Between July and September 1887 he put his easel at the entrance of the factory. Quite coincidentally, the photographer of the postcard chose the same spot and was inspired by almost the same view that appealed to Vincent only thirteen years earlier.

Painting location

Then our question remained: where exactly was this factory located?

The French book also provides the answer to this question. A map on page 30 shows the locations of the various glass factories. The old "Verrerie du Pont de Clichy" is very close to its name giver: the "Pont de Clichy" bridge. The authors give the address as Rue du Réservoir. However, now this street is renamed to Rue Médéric. The numbering too has changed. But the location found is obvious correct because when Vincent, on a walk of more than an hour, walks from his home in Montmartre to his friend Emile Bernard, he certainly passed this bustling glass factory.

Further research⁽⁴⁾ shows us that this Verrerie du Pont de Clichy was started in 1866 and had more than 130 employees and was located on no. 44 in (formerly) Rue du Réservoir / corner Rue du Chemin Vers in Clichy⁽⁵⁾ They produced soda water bottles, glass globes, glass ornaments and lighting articles.

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Beloved painting location

In our search⁽⁶⁾ for the right location of this factory we are helped by Van Gogh's contemporaries. Vincent and other painters such as Monet, Seurat and Signac loved this environment very much.

In springtime 1887, the same year in which Van Gogh painted his glass factory, Paul Signac made his painting **Sunlight, Quai de Clichy, Opus 157**.



Paul Signac

Sunlight, Quai de Clichy, Opus 157

spring 1887
Oil on canvas
size 46.04 x 65.09 cm

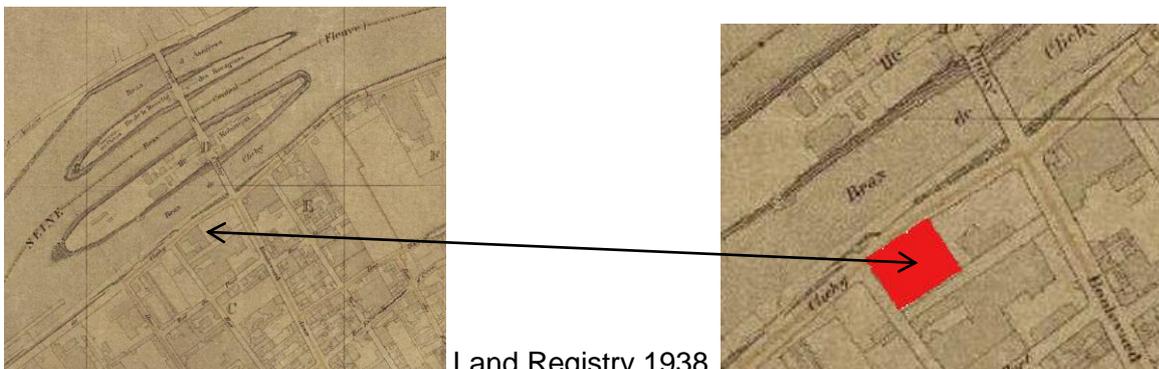
This work by Signac is in the collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art, USA.

object: 1928.6.1

Signac made this painting close to where the old Rue du Réservoir ends up on the Quai de Clichy. We strongly believe that we recognise the Verrerie du Pont Clichy in the white building at the horizon in the background of the painting to the right side of the high factory chimney. The location corresponds completely with our sources. Rue de Reservoir in Clichy crosses the then newly constructed boulevard to a loading / unloading point in the Seine (left).

Pont de Clichy

The original Pont de Clichy bridge as painted by Vincent and Signac was built in 1866 and crossed two Seine Islands (L'île des Ravageurs and l'île de Robinson). In 1975 a new Clichy bridge was built a little more downstream (to the north). A few pillar markings of the old bridge remained on the river banks. The Seine was canalised at that point and the islands disappeared too.



Land Registry 1938

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The accurate title

We are convinced that this is the exact location where Van Gogh placed his easel in July - September 1887: It must have been in the immediate vicinity of number 54 in what is now called Rue Médéric, Clichy. That is why we suggest a change in the title of The factory of Vincent van Gogh into the more accurate title "Glass factory Pont de Clichy" ("Verrerie du Pont de Clichy").

We discovered on eBay⁽⁷⁾ that the photo from the book was for sale as a historic postcard. We could not resist the temptation and bought the postcard from 1900. This gave us an even clearer picture of what Van Gogh must have seen in his days. We are pleased to share all this with you on our website VanGoghLocations.com.

Gerard Netten and Remmet van Luttervelt

Van Gogh researchers

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Sources:

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2. <https://collection.barnesfoundation.org/objects/5657/The-Factory/information>
3. Roland Dufrenne, Jean Maës, Bernard Maës, [La Cristallerie de Clichy - une prestigieuse manufacture du XIXe siècle](#), Clichy-La-Garenne 2005
4. among others Gallica.bnf.fr and <http://vincentinparis.com/>
5. <http://consultation.archives.hauts-de-seine.net/>
6. <http://artifexinopere.com/?p=3530>
7. <https://picclick.fr/Carte-Postale-Clichy-Attelage-Linterieur-De-La-Verrerie-141443030879.html>



commercial year book 1888



rear side of the factory