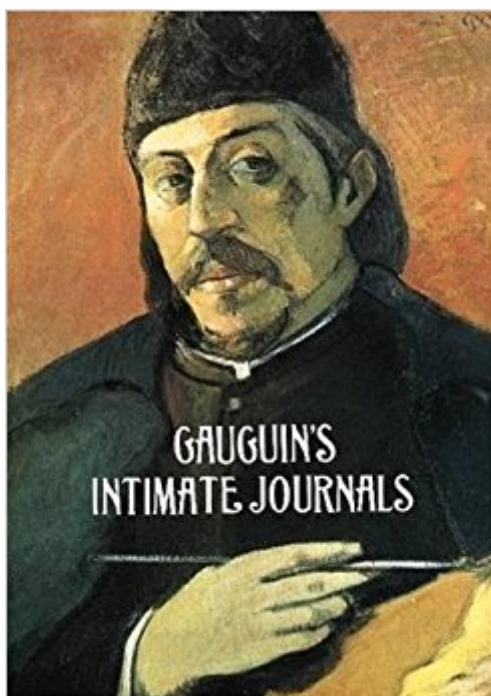


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# Gauguin's Intimate Journals (Dover Fine Art, History Of Art)



## Synopsis

"These journals are an illuminating self-portrait of a unique personality. They bring sharply into focus for me his goodness, his humor, his insurgent spirit, his clarity of vision, his inordinate hatred of hypocrisy and sham." — Emil Gauguin, the artist's son, in the Preface. One of the great innovative figures in modern art, Gauguin was a complex, driven individual who, in 1883, gave up his job as a stockbroker in order to be free to paint every day. As time passed, he determined to sacrifice everything for his artistic vocation. Finally, in pursuit of a place to paint "natural men and women living lives unstained by the sham and hypocrisy of civilization, he took up residence in the South Seas, first in Tahiti and, later, in the Marquesas Islands. Completed during the artist's final sojourn in the Marquesas, these revealing journals — reprinted from rare limited edition — throw much light on the painter's inner life and his thoughts about a great many topics. We learn of Gauguin's first stay in Paris in 1876, and his initial encounter with Impressionism, his tumultuous relationship with van Gogh when they lived and painted together in Arles, his pithy evaluations of Degas, Cézanne, Manet, and other artists; his opinion of art dealers and critics (poor), and much more. Also here are illuminating glimpses of Gauguin's life in the islands: his delight in the simple, carefree lives of the natives and the physical charms of Polynesian women, counterbalanced by his struggles with poverty, hatred of the missionaries, and despair over the failures of French colonial justice. Witty, wide-ranging, and aphoristic, these writings are not only entertaining in themselves, they are crucial for anyone seeking to understand Gauguin and his work. The text is enhanced with 27 full-page illustrations by Gauguin.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Modern artist Gauguin's journals, completed during his final years, appears in a fine reprint from a rare edition to provide Gauguin scholars with the painter's own thoughts and life. Surprisingly witty and revealing, these writings should appeal to any with even a casual interest in Gauguin's life or art. -- Midwest Book Review

Text: English Original Language: French

Disappointed. A lot. Only about a quarter of the way through the book because it's not an easy or especially fun read. He does not speak much about his own thoughts, feelings, ideas about art; talks mostly about the island people, tells stories about them, and sometimes I can't even follow what he is trying to say. Sorry I purchased it.

just what I wanted, thank you

Gauguin wasn't Picasso or Munch. Picasso thought his diary would someday make him even more famous as an important writer who also dabbled in the visual arts. Edvard Munch thought that his poetry-prose journals were as good as his paintings--even the title of his journals "We Are Flames Which Pour Out of the Earth" gives his readers a clue to the seriousness of his private journals. Gauguin didn't consider himself a great writer. He didn't feel that the words he was scribbling were all that important. He said "I should like to write as I paint my pictures,--that is to say, following my fancy, following the moon, and finding the title long afterwards." Gauguin was true to that desire. Also unlike the poetry of Picasso and Munch, a reader doesn't have to carefully parse obscure poetic verses to maybe gain an insight into the mind of the artists. In Picasso's case he loved to write in different languages and in different styles and riddles and often in a stream of consciousness manner. As with his art, he couldn't resist toying with his audience. Gauguin wrote straightforward descriptions of people, places and things that fascinated him. One of the best parts of this book is Gauguin's eyewitness account of Vincent Van Gogh, his housemate's strange behavior. One evening Vincent ran toward him on the street with an open razor in his hand, but stopped suddenly in front of him, bowed and then turned and went home alone. Once there, he cut

off his ear, taped up the wound enough to allow him to go out into the streets wearing a Basque Beret pulled down to conceal the missing ear. Van Gogh went straight to a local house of ill repute "and gave the manager his ear, carefully washed and placed in an envelope. 'Here is a souvenir of me,' he said. Then he ran off home, where he went to bed and to sleep." The next morning the local police accused Gauguin of murdering his housemate, until Gauguin, who fearing for his own life, had spent the night in a hotel checked the undisturbed body in the blood-soaked bed and discovered his friend to still be alive. The hapless police then called an ambulance, but didn't apologize for their incompetent bungling. Gauguin hated government bureaucrats and felt they, along with the French clergy were exploiting and destroying the pure culture of the South Seas and anywhere else France controlled. This is fascinating, easy-to-read, meandering and very natural journal-diary. It provides lots of fresh and politically incorrect views of Gauguin's world in a very pithy style.

This is a 'journal'. It's not a diary, nothing so organized, and he claims repeatedly that "This is not a book." Instead, it's a sequence of slightly connected thoughts, anecdotes, and aphorisms. Give the book time, though, it develops into something much more revealing in its second half. Gauguin is known for his abrupt departure from respected commercial and family life into the most primitive world available to him. His son prefaces this book by explaining that the parting of ways was necessary and mutual. This book itself presents a few hints at what drove him out of polite and wealthy society - a distaste for the venal gendarmerie, a contempt for the church, and more. What I found more interesting, though, was his recollections of rooming with Van Gogh and his first-person narrative of the Impressionist revolution in France. He sweetens any bitterness by describing the Tahitian people, as a society, as a system of mores, and as healthy and beautiful human animals. There's a slight self-consciousness here. Gauguin seemed to be writing for some imagined reader, and in fact sent these journals to be published. I feel that not nearly enough is said; what's written here does little to describe the personal angel or demon that drove him to the farthest point on the planet. Still, I value the master's words. I admit that I'm not fond of his art. Still, I acknowledge the place that history has given him, and I feel somewhat more of a person for reading what he chose to write.//wiredweird

It is impossible to read and re-read GAUGUIN'S INTIMATE JOURNALS and not be inspired to jump into the thrills of creativity and rebellion that sparks greatness in artists. Paul Gauguin's life has been well captured in films, in poems, in numerous biographies, in essays - but none of these

supply what these extraordinary journals offer: here is the motivation for the fauvist mind and career and art movement Gauguin sprouted. In these beautifully translated journal entries we learn why Gauguin, a self-taught artist, son of financially secure parents, a businessman able to succeed in the financial world of his era, would leave all of that to first paint in France with the likes of his roommate Vincent Van Gogh and ultimately flee to the Pacific Islands where his unusual and avant-garde painting style set all of the art world into motion to change. Beginning with the preface by his son Emil Gauguin, these journals are accompanied by full page, full color reproductions of some of this finest paintings, works which take on new life when informed by the accompanying words of the artist. This is a splendid book well worth adding to the art library of everyone. Grady Harp, October 05

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