

Composition II in Red, Blue and Yellow, 1930

Piet Mondrian



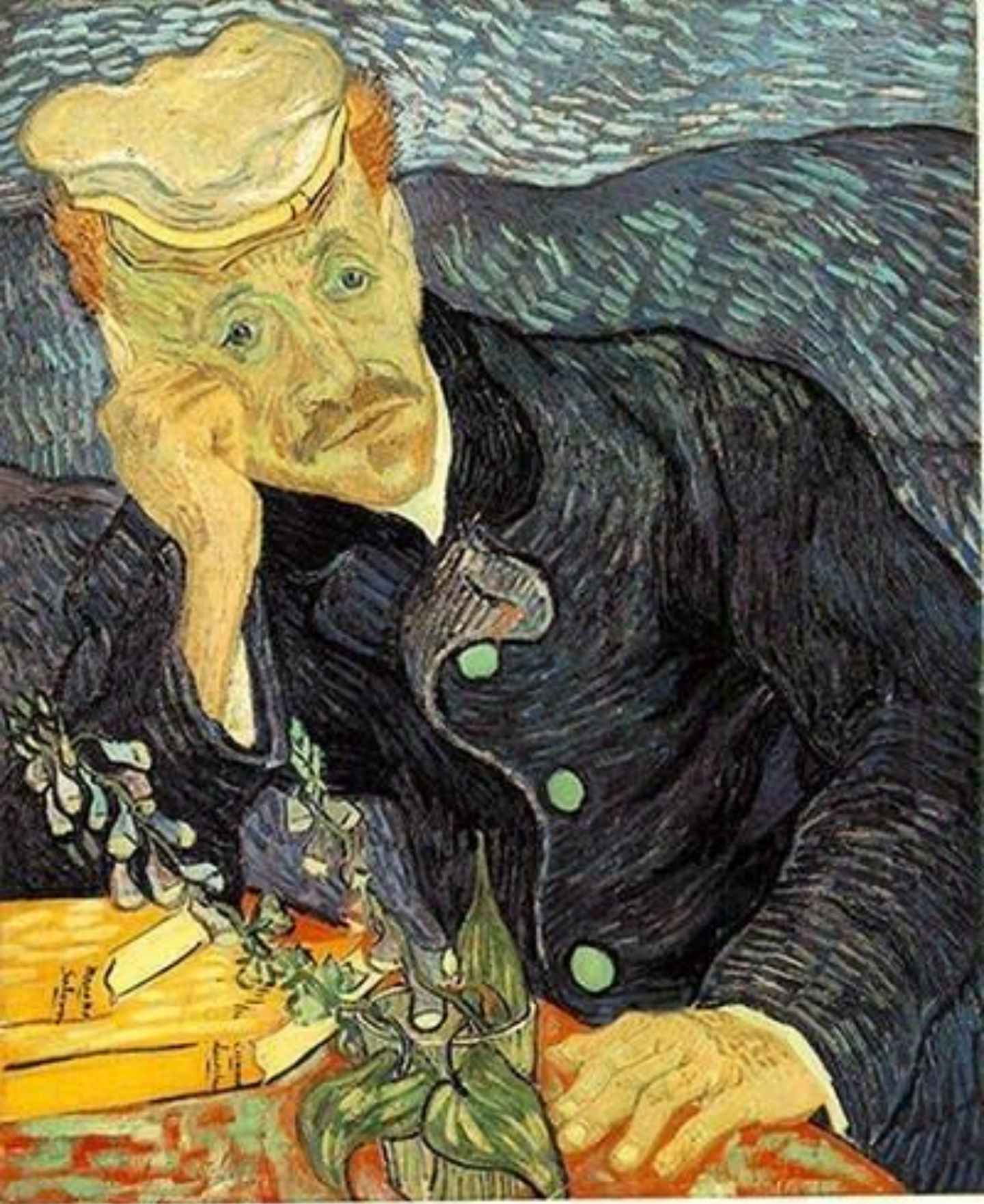
Black Lines, 1913

Wassily Kandinsky



May 1968, 1973

Joan Miro



Portrait of Dr. Gachet, 1890

Vincent Van Gogh



Triple Self Portrait, 1960

Norman Rockwell



The Weeping Woman, 1937

Pablo Picasso



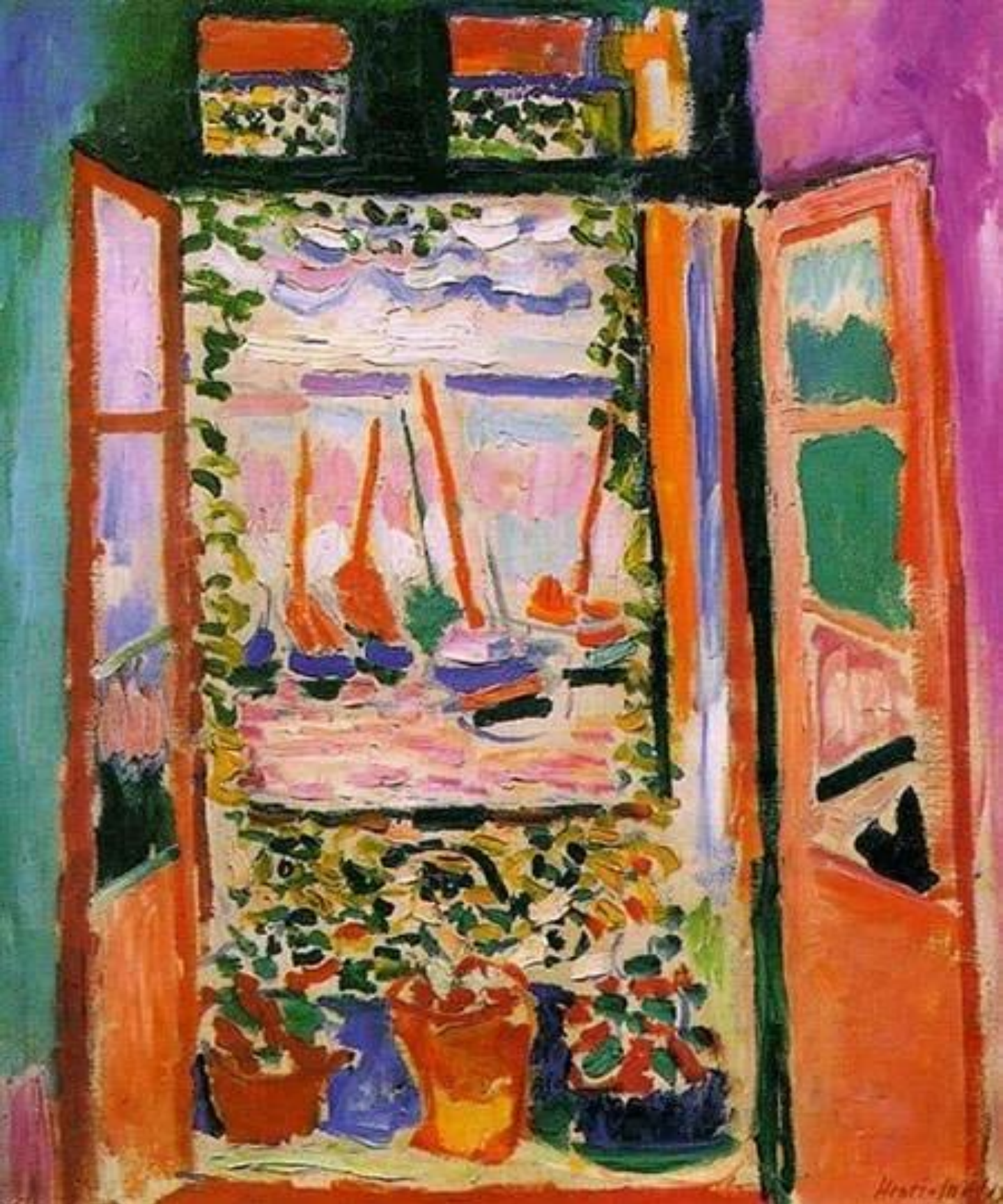
The Burning Giraffe, 1937

Salvador Dali



Woman with a Parasol, 1875

Claude Monet



The Open Window, 1905

Henry Matisse

MONDRIAN: This painting was created at a time when Mondrian's art had reached a high-point of purity and sobriety. Through the previous decade he had evolved his style while creating several neoplastic masterpieces. In this work, Mondrian makes the elements seem to grow further beyond the edge of the canvas in rhythmic expansion. *Composition II in Red, Blue, and Yellow* is among Mondrian's most renowned works. The *front cover* of Australian alternative rock band *Silverchair's 2007 album Young Modern* is a tribute to this painting.

KANDINSKY: The period from *1910 to 1914* is considered the peak of the artistic achievement of Wassily Kandinsky and this painting is a fine example of his art at the time. It is one of the first of the artist's truly abstract paintings. Kandinsky's paintings just before the *First World War* have been called "*apocalyptic landscapes*" and in this work he uses forceful black lines over vibrant colors to create what he called "*dissonance*", to suggest destructiveness

MIRO: May 1968 was a period of civil unrest in France marked by a series of student protests against capitalism, consumerism and traditional institutions. The period, which involved strikes by *more than 22%* of the population of France, is considered as a *cultural, social and moral turning point* in the history of the country. Joan Miro, who sympathized with the movement, was inspired by its event to create this masterpiece to capture the spirit of the rebellion.

VAN GOGH: *Paul-Ferdinand Gachet* was a French physician who treated Van Gogh during the last months of his life. This portrait of him is one of the most revered paintings by Van Gogh. There are two versions of the portrait and this is the first version. On May 15, 1990, it was sold for *US\$82.5 million* making it the most expensive painting ever sold. To date it remains the *highest price paid for art at a public auction*. On the inflation adjusted list of most expensive paintings ever sold, *Portrait of Dr. Gachet* ranks sixth to this day.

ROCKWELL: Rockwell's *Triple Self-Portrait* is inspired from a 17th century self portrait painted by *Austrian painter Johannes Gump*. It served as an illustration for the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* of February 13, 1960. Triple Self-Portrait shows Rockwell from behind, looking at himself in a mirror and painting his own portrait. There are a lot of interesting details in the portrait including portraits of famous artists *Albrecht Durer, Rembrandt, Van Gogh* and *Pablo Picasso* pinned to the upper right of the painting. All of these were painted by Rockwell himself. Triple Self-Portrait is a *renowned work in self-portraiture* and one of Rockwell's most famous paintings.

PICASSO: In his masterpiece *Guernica*, Pablo Picasso depicted a weeping woman holding her dead child. He then created a number of portraits based on this figure which culminated with this painting, the last and most elaborate painting of the series. The model in the painting is French photographer and painter Dora Maar, who was his mistress from 1936 to 1944. Maar was one of the most influential figures in Picasso's life during their relationship and also his primary model. Picasso brilliantly uses distorted images, strategically placed tears, blue chattering teeth and piercing black eyes to depict the pain and horror felt by the figure in the portrait. Apart from being the *most famous work in the Weeping Woman series*, this portrait is also Picasso's most celebrated depiction of Maar.

DALI: *The Burning Giraffe* is seen as an expression of the personal struggle of Salvador Dali with the civil war going on in his home country. The painting depicts two feminine figures with undefined phallic shapes protruding from their backs. The hands, forearms and face of the nearest figure are stripped down to the muscular tissue beneath the skin. Prominently, there are *opened drawers* protruding from the left leg and chest of the figurine. Salvador Dali was a great admirer of famous neurologist *Sigmund Freud* and several paintings of Dali were *influenced by Freudian theories*. These open drawers can be traced to Freud's psychoanalytical method and refer to the *inner, subconscious within man*. The burning giraffe image in the background was described by Dali as, "the *masculine cosmic apocalyptic monster*." He believed it to be a *premonition of war*.

MONET: One of his earlier works, this painting depicts his first wife Camille Doncieux with their elder son Jean. Camille is holding a parasol or a light umbrella and it seems that she is catching a glimpse of someone looking at her. The painting is early evidence of Monet focusing more on light and color as opposed to line and shape.

MATISSE: Henri Matisse was the most prominent leader of the short lived but influential art movement *Fauvism*, which was characterized by *vivid expressionistic and non-naturalistic use of color*. This painting depicts the view out of the window of the apartment of Matisse in *Collioure, on the southern coast of France*. In it, he represents the interior of the room, the window itself, the balcony and the harbor view, with a distinctly different handling of the brush. *The Open Window* is one of Matisse's most famous paintings in Fauvism and it is considered an iconic work of early modernism.