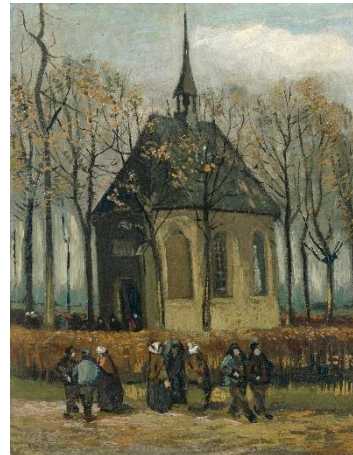


For immediate release

## VAN GOGH MUSEUM ANNOUNCES DATE FOR RETURN OF STOLEN PAINTINGS TO AMSTERDAM

Press conference for the return of *Seascape at Scheveningen* and *Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen* will take place on Tuesday 21 March 2017 at Van Gogh Museum



Vincent van Gogh, *Seascape at Scheveningen*, 1882;  
Vincent van Gogh, *Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen*, 1884 - 1885

**Amsterdam/Naples, 6 February 2017 – Today, at an official ceremony in Naples, it was announced that two paintings by Vincent Van Gogh that were stolen from the Van Gogh Museum in 2002 – *Seascape at Scheveningen* (1882) and *Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen* (1884/85) – will resume their place in the museum’s permanent collection from 21 March 2017. As a gesture of thanks to the Italian authorities for their efforts and commitment to the investigation, the paintings will first go on display at the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples, in the region where they were recovered, until 26 February.**

The return of the two Van Goghs to Amsterdam represents the return of important pieces of the Dutch cultural heritage and the art historical value of the paintings for the Van Gogh Museum’s collection is huge. *Seascape at Scheveningen* is the only painting in the collection dating from Van Gogh’s period in The Hague (1881-1883) and one of only two seascapes that he painted during his years in the Netherlands. It is a striking example of Van Gogh’s early style of painting, already showing his highly individual character, and its return will fill an important gap in the museum presentation.

*Congregation leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen* is a small canvas that Van Gogh painted for his mother in early 1884, showing the church of the Reformed Church community in the Brabant village of Nuenen, Van Gogh’s father being its Minister. In 1885, after his father’s death, Van Gogh reworked the painting and added the churchgoers in the foreground, among them a few women in shawls worn in times of mourning, perhaps as a reference to his father’s death. The strong biographical undertones make this a work of great emotional value. The museum collection does not include any other painting depicting the church and, moreover, it is the only painting in the Van Gogh Museum collection still in its original stretcher frame.

Despite a 14-year journey, the works are in reasonably good condition and will be displayed in the state in which they were found in Castellammare di Stabia.

Axel Rüger, Director of the Van Gogh Museum: *‘It is really a miracle that the paintings, which since 2002 were thought to have vanished from the face of the earth, have been found. The efforts of so many people have made the impossible possible. The fact that these two Van Goghs are again on public display after fourteen years calls for a celebration worthy of the occasion. As a ‘grazie mille’ for the efforts of all those involved in Italy in the recovery of the artworks, they are first being shown to the public in the region where they were found.*

*Afterwards, our Van Goghs will return home, where a festive welcome awaits them and our visitors can once more admire them in the Van Gogh Museum. I cannot tell you how happy I am!*

**Notes to Editors**

The Van Gogh Museum will hold a **press conference on 21 March 2017**. A number of issues will be addressed: the return of these works, their art-historical value and their condition. During the press conference, there will be ample opportunity to ask questions, as well as to photograph and film the paintings.

To RSVP and to submit your questions and remarks, or for any further information, please contact:

Lisa Hill | SUTTON

E: [lisa@suttonpr.com](mailto:lisa@suttonpr.com) | T: +44 (0) 20 7183 3577