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# Sleep Health

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SLEEP HEALTH



## Cover Art

### *Noon: Rest from Work, after Jean-François Millet by Vincent van Gogh*

About the cover:

Many artists and writers have been fascinated by sleep.<sup>1</sup> Every issue of SLEEP HEALTH will feature on the cover a work of art related to the topic of sleep. We will also include in each issue a few words about the image and its significance.

In this inaugural issue, we begin with a description of perhaps one of the best known such works of art, *Noon: Rest from Work, after Jean-François Millet* by Vincent van Gogh, which has become

What is not widely known is that he copied the image from one and perhaps two other artists.

Jean-François Millet (1814-1875), the French painter best known for his magnificent *Gleaners*, which showed peasants toiling in a field, created *Noonday Rest* in 1866 showing 2 people asleep and resting in a field.

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925) created *Noon After Jean-François Millet* in 1875. This image was created when Sargent was 19 years old, and it is an obvious mirror image of the Millet picture. In fact, it



Vincent van Gogh. *Noon: Rest from Work, after Jean-François Millet*.  
Photo credit for the journal cover image and the image above:  
Alfredo Dagli Orti / The Art Archive at Art Resource, NY



John Singer Sargent. 1875. *Noon After Jean-François Millet*  
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an iconic image of sleep. This widely known painting (also called *Siesta*) is a beautiful image that is a homage to rest and sleep.



Jean-François Millet, French, 1814-1875. *Noonday Rest*, 1866.  
Pastel and black conté crayon on buff wove paper. 29.2 x 41.9 cm  
(11 1/2 x 16 1/2 in.) Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of Quincy Adams Shaw  
through Quincy Adams Shaw, Jr., and Mrs. Marian Shaw Haughton.  
17.1511. Photograph © March 2015 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

is probably a copy of an engraving by Adrien Lavieille, who produced a mirror image of the Millet picture in 1873. Sargent had been a student at L'École des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) worked and studied in Paris fairly late in his short career, between 1886 and 1888 during which time he had contact with many well-known artists and soon-to-be well-known artists. Van Gogh, who had a history of mental and/or neurologic illness,<sup>2</sup> was a patient in Saint Paul of Mausole Monastery in Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, France, between May 1889 and May 1890. This monastery, built in the 11th century, had been converted into a psychiatric hospital in the mid-1800s. His psychiatrist, Dr Théophile Peyron, was a practitioner of Art Therapy. Van Gogh was provided 3 rooms: 1 for sleeping, 1 for painting, and 1 for storing his works. During this year he completed approximately 150 oil paintings and 150 drawings: an astonishing average of 1 work a day. It is during this perhaps manic phase that *Siesta* was painted. Van Gogh copied this image from the aforementioned engraving by Adrien Lavieille. In fact, van Gogh copied three other images from the Lavieille engravings of the series *Four Times of the Day* by Millet.<sup>3</sup> Van Gogh died at the age of 37 years as a result of a self-inflicted gunshot wound shortly after leaving the hospital.

Copying famous works was a way of paying homage. All four artists were paying homage to the rejuvenation that comes with sleep.

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Art Editor

## References

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2. Hughes JR. A reappraisal of the possible seizures of Vincent van Gogh. *Epilepsy Behav* 2005;6(4):504–10.
3. <http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let805/letter.html>. [accessed October, 2014].