With reference to the General Terms and Conditions for Authentication and the Privacy Declaration set out on our website and in the digital authentication request dated 16 December 2019, I hereby inform you of the following.

We have carefully examined your work Geranium in a Flowerpot - Paris, Summer 1886, oil on canvas, 47 x 38.7 cm, published in the catalogue raisonnés of the works of Vincent van Gogh by J.-B. de la Faille (1928, 1970) and J. Hulsker (1996) as F201 and JH1139 respectively - and are of the opinion that it can indeed be attributed to Vincent van Gogh.

Visual inspection already aroused the suspicion that the current still life might have been painted on top of another painting. When examining the x-ray, an abandoned head of a man revealed itself underneath the top paint layer. When the canvas is rotated 180 degrees one can distinguish the face of a man looking to the left, wearing a jacket or blouse with and open collar. Geranium in a Flowerpot seems to be painted either directly, or with just a very thin covering layer on top of this thinly executed abandoned head. Examination of the paint surface locally reveals colors belonging to this underlying painting, but it is difficult to date the head precisely. It could be painted during his Antwerp period, but a date in the first three months of his stay in Paris is also possible.
The x-ray further reveals a paint loss in the lower left side of the geranium, corresponding with retouches that are visible in the same area. When we compare the photograph from the 1973 Sotheby’s auction catalogue with one from the 1998 Christies auction catalogue, it becomes clear that with several impastoed brushstrokes an extra flower has been added to the leaf on the lower left. Since photos from before 1973 do not show these retouches, the intervention must have been carried out between 1973 and 1998.
The x-ray of the painting was used to analyze the canvas for the Automated Thread Count Research project conducted by the Van Gogh Museum. The canvas has an average thread density of 11.2 horizontal and 11.3 vertical threads per square cm. No match in warp or weft was found with paintings by Vincent van Gogh. The TCR-report by the Van Gogh Museum and Don H. Johnson of Rice University, Houston, is included.
We trust that this information is helpful.

Yours faithfully,

Marije Vellekoop
Head of Collection and Research