

Indy artist helps paint Van Gogh to life in monumental new animated film

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(Photo: Provided by BreakThru Films)

One glance at the [new trailer for "Loving Vincent"](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47h6pQ6StCk) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47h6pQ6StCk>) — now making the rounds in the art world and on social media — and you can tell the film is never-before-seen material.

Instead of using traditional animation techniques, the upcoming film, set for a September 2016 release by BreakThru Films, will use tens of thousands of handcrafted paintings to tell the story of Vincent Van Gogh.

The film will be the world's first feature-length painted animation about the Dutch post-Impressionist painter, with picturesque scenes of the European countryside and swirling backdrops in the vein of "[Starry Night](http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/vincent-van-gogh-the-starry-night-1889)" (http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/vincent-van-gogh-the-starry-night-1889)."

One of the artists tapped to contribute to this historic project? Indianapolis-based artist Pamela Bliss, known locally for her Kurt Vonnegut mural on Massachusetts Ave.

Bliss is one of five artists in the U.S. to be sent to Poland to help out with "Loving Vincent."

"It's a once-in-a lifetime opportunity," said Bliss, who flew to BreakThru Films' studio in Gdansk, Poland, last week and plans to stay for several months.

The film, shot first using real actors then turned into oil paintings by a trained staff of artists, will feature 12 paintings per second. That's 43,200 paintings per hour.

"We are interpreting Van Gogh's style rather than matching it," director Dorota Kobiela [told Filmmaker Magazine](http://filmmakermagazine.com/84440-loving-vincent-animation-in-oil/#.V1cYt_krK00) (http://filmmakermagazine.com/84440-loving-vincent-animation-in-oil/#.V1cYt_krK00). "The important thing is that people feel the color and emotion of Vincent coming through in the animation."



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Bliss said that even though she won't break even on the trip — the studio will provide a living stipend but not airfare — she is excited to be part of the project.

"We'll have to paint really quick," she said. "It all has to look like Van Gogh."

Bliss is raising money to support her trip to Poland through a [Facebook donating page](https://www.facebook.com/PamelaLovingVincent/?sk=timeline&app_data) called "Pamela Bliss's Loving Vincent." (https://www.facebook.com/PamelaLovingVincent/?sk=timeline&app_data)

Artists hail from Japan, Mexico, Canada and Europe, as well. The film is by the same studio that produced the Oscar-winning short film "Peter and the Wolf."

Bliss was selected two weeks ago through a highly competitive process. The Indiana University-trained artist said her portrait skills gave her the leg up. But the big test, she said, will be surviving a rigorous training regiment, followed by pumping out accurate paintings.

"I'm up for the challenge," Bliss said.

Call IndyStar reporter Wei-Huan Chen at (317) 444-6249. Follow him on Twitter: [@weihuanchen](https://twitter.com/weihuanchen) (<https://twitter.com/weihuanchen>).

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