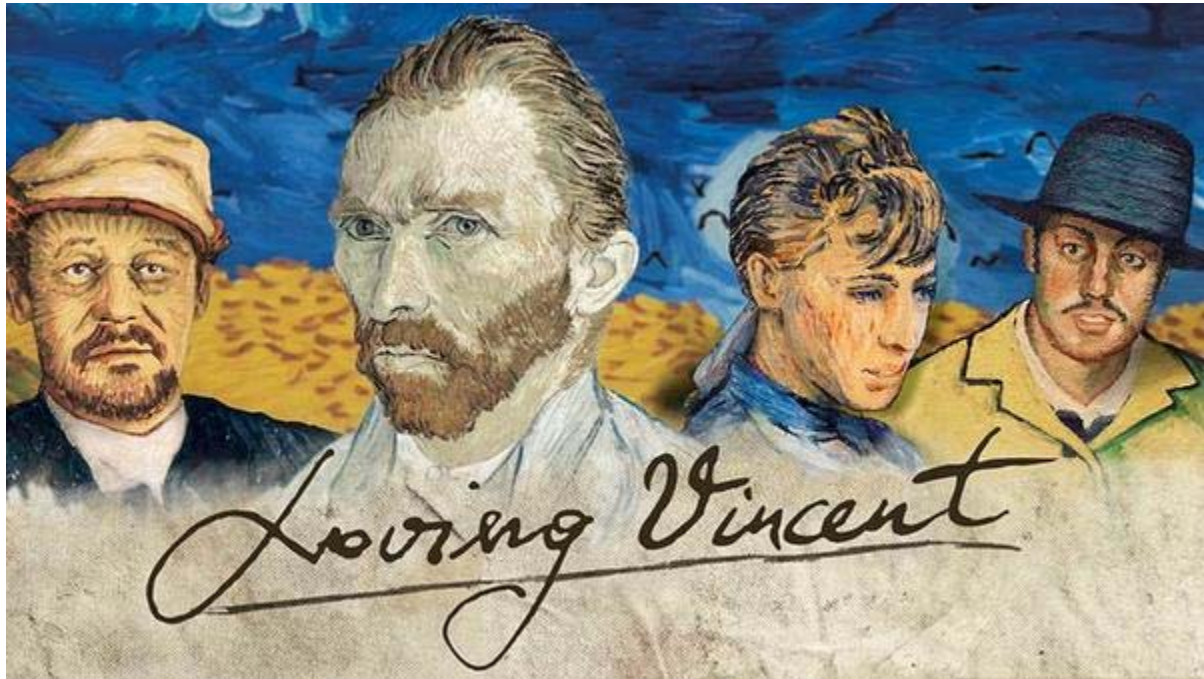


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Van Gogh to life

Amsterdam-Vincent van Gogh is brought to life in a film in the style of his own paintings. 115 painters worked for five years to make *Loving Vincent*. The first minutes of this painted animated film were shown Friday night in Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum.

Loving Vincent is about the last days of the world-famous painter. Was it suicide, murder or perhaps a tragic accident? For decades, the death of painter Vincent van Gogh has occupied historians, scientists, writers and admirers. The Polish artist and animation Director Dorota Kobiela was since her studies at the Art Academy in Warsaw already interested in the mysterious end of the Dutch master. With her directorial husband, Hugh Welchman, she decided to make *Loving Vincent*, a film painted in the style of a reconstruction of the last days of the painter.

During a sneak preview in the Van Gogh Museum the first twenty minutes of this wonderful project were as prestigious as their world premiere. In *Loving Vincent*, we follow the fictional

character Armand Roulin, a young man whose father sends him to convey his condolences along with a letter from Vincent that should be delivered to Theo van Gogh, the brother of the recently deceased Vincent. En route to Paris, he meets several people who have known the post impressionist: his family physician, his paint supplier and the Boatman taking him to his favorite painter places on the river Oise. Contradictions in their stories start to raise doubts in Roulin's mind as to the true circumstances of Vincent's death.



Detective-noir

„ Vincent van Gogh was the Kurt Cobain of the 19th century: a tormented artist whose work spoke to the imagination," says Oscar winner Welchman (Peter & the wolf) after the preview... no wonder that many people are fascinated by his mysterious death. Based on 120 of van Gogh's paintings and 800 letters we have devised a story that works as a detective-noir. The first stage was to shoot in live action with actors, after which 115 painters from 21 countries painted all 65,000 frames of the movie by hand. In the end, that yielded an exciting drama in which famous works like the "Starry Night" and "Café Terrace at Night" could come to light.

To master the oil paintings techniques used by Van Gogh, the painting team of Loving Vincent elicited the help of experts at the Van Gogh Museum. One of these specialists was Senior Researcher Teio Mendendoorp, Senior Researcher. „We have above all transferred our information and knowledge," said the art historian and researcher of the museum. „If you go to a painting, you see only the top layer, the end result. But also the under layer of a work is of great importance, the order in which the paints have been applied. These choices contribute to a brighter effect or better relief. The painters of Loving Vincent have picked this up quite excellently. You should not start comparing their work with the real Van Gogh's. But they are beautiful, they have become independent paintings that are clearly a work inspired by Van Gogh."

**Stress**

Meanwhile, Welchman is glad *Loving Vincent* will at last be coming to cinemas. "This project has consumed five years of my wife and me and created a lot of stress and nightmares. There was a lot of financial uncertainty throughout, it was tough to raise the budget of 5.6 million dollars. Every day the work pressure was extremely high. But fortunately, our marriage has survived all storms. We are looking forward to our life after *Loving Vincent*, and weaning ourselves from eating so many late night pizzas and exercising to get fit. "