

## *The Eyes of Van Gogh*



### SYNOPSIS

After the disastrous months spent with Gauguin in the yellow house in Arles, Vincent van Gogh, in desperate search of a cure from attacks that increasingly plague him, voluntarily enters an insane asylum. *The Eyes of Van Gogh* is a story, never told before, of the twelve nightmarish months van Gogh spent in the insane asylum at St. Remy. Through hallucinations, terrifying dreams and wrenching memories, the film tells a tale of magnificent battles: to create – to connect - to love - to change the world. It visualizes the drive and complexity, the heroism and agony of a great artist and a great man. The film explores the theme of an artistic mind in torment, a creative soul in despair, an exquisitely sensitive being ravaged and destroyed by cruelty, wracked by indifference and loneliness, yet desperately seeking to live, to hope, to finish his work, to find a path other than those leading to madness or death.

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Screen Actors Guild      New York City Mayor's Office of Film, Theatre & Broadcasting      BMI  
Film shot in 24p Digital Video  
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## ALEXANDER BARNETT: WRITER/DIRECTOR/VINCENT VAN GOGH

Early in his acting career, Alexander Barnett performed on *Playhouse 90*, *Target: The Corrupters*, *Arrest and Trial*, *Climax*, *The Great Adventure*, *Kraft Suspense Theatre*, *G.E. Theatre*, *The Defenders* and *Rawhide*. He made his directorial debut in Los Angeles with an acclaimed production of *Look Back in Anger*, followed by *Winterset*, *Golden Boy* and *A View from the Bridge*. His writing career also began in Los Angeles with an adaptation for the stage of *Wuthering Heights* and the stage play *Remnants of a Man*. Moving to New York, he embarked on his journey as a Shakespearean actor and director with a production of *Macbeth* and continued his love affair with the classics of the American theatre in a production of *Death of a Salesman*. During this time he also wrote two more plays: *Stranger on the Earth* and *Still Life with Booze*, both of which were produced in New York. Determined to tour the world with the greatest plays of the English language, he founded Classic Theatre International. Opening in Zurich, Switzerland, Classic Theatre International's maiden production, *King Lear*, marked the first time ever that an American cast toured Europe with a Shakespearean play. Over the following years, the work produced by Classic Theatre International under Barnett's artistic direction was seen on major stages in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, Greece, France, Spain, England, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Japan. For the group, Barnett wrote his second stage adaptation, an acclaimed version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Barnett's most prominent roles include Lear, Hamlet, Iago, Macbeth, Richard III, Shylock, Prospero, Richard II, Coriolanus, Brutus, Oedipus, Willy Loman, Eddie Carbone, Becket and Heathcliff. In addition to plays by Sophocles, Ibsen, Chekhov, Anouilh and most of the American classics, he has directed all of the Shakespearean tragedies. Reviews are available. He has also lectured extensively on Shakespearean tragedy and on the life of Van Gogh, Gauguin and the Impressionists at universities and libraries across Europe. After returning to the States and appearing in a number of independent feature films, he wrote his first screenplay, *The Eyes of Van Gogh*. The film completed post-production in April 2005.

### DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The goal I set for myself in transferring the film script to the screen was never to present but rather to uncover. I employ a subjective camera throughout the entire film. The idea is to get inside Vincent's head. Everything seen and felt is from his point of view. In order to achieve this, the camera, rather than viewing the action, will always be within it.

We strove to give objective expression to inner experience, i.e., to show what Vincent was thinking and feeling; to show how a memory, dream or hallucination registers in his mind: texture, sound, color, shape, tempo. The purpose is not for the audience merely to be a witness, but rather for them to live within the image and to participate psychologically in the action.

Vincent's mind, from beginning to end, is always engaged. His confusion, struggle, bewilderment and desperation grow and grow. He is never totally in one place. When he is in the past he still retains some of the present and vice versa.

Many scenes are dream, imaginary or hallucinatory sequences. In order to convey the intensity and obsessive quality and to maintain the subjective camera movement, all of the scenes were shot at 360 degrees with a handheld camera.

From childhood on, Vincent never took anything for granted. He always marveled at every new discovery; at all the wonders of the world.

Vincent suffered constantly with terrible bouts of guilt, remorse and regret because of the burden he put on Theo and because his work never sold.

Vincent came to St. Remy because he wanted to be isolated from the outside world and be in a protective environment. As long as he could discover and reveal new truths and carry on with his work he could hold the horrible disease at bay. For Vincent, inactivity was absolute torture. Painting was the only thing that protected him from the constant questions and doubts that haunted him. By going without proper sleep or food, by working himself to the point of exhaustion -- this alone helped silence the most frightening thoughts.

It was vitally important to him that his work be recognized; for there to be some sense of recompense, because then he could ease the burden placed on Theo. Vincent van Gogh's three greatest fears were: suffering another attack; being incapacitated and unable to work; and failing to justify though his work all that Theo had done for him. He felt that if he couldn't work he had no reason to live, no right to take money away from Theo.

The constant obsession by psychoanalysts, doctors and armchair experts to pigeonhole van Gogh's illness, to give it a specific name, to use it to explain his actions, to claim that the very quality of his personality and his genius can be attributed to a specific malady: bi-polar disease, schizophrenia, autism, tinnitus, gonorrhea, lead poisoning, ad finitum ad nauseam is utter rubbish. It's an insult to Vincent and proof that these people have absolutely no understanding of the man. Vincent was completely original both in his work and in his illness. Certainly he had severe emotional problems and no doubt they were exacerbated by malnutrition and traumatic experiences - the Borinage, etc. that made him more vulnerable - but ultimately he was defeated by an immense sensitivity and an overwhelming empathic nature that was unable to cope with the reality of the world and the nature of most people. In spite of what most think, Vincent was a realist both in his life and his work, but his reality was light years beyond everyday reality and therein lay his genius. He indeed saw life as it was but was never able to come to terms with it.

Most realists become cynics, but Vincent was totally incapable of this. When an artist becomes a cynic, he also become a hack and is no longer capable of producing heartfelt work. Technical virtuosity may remain, but the "soul" of the work is lost. Vincent never lost either.

By the world's standard of normalcy, then and now, Vincent was not an idealist but quixotic. However, the "world's standard of normalcy, then and now," is by definition pedestrian, mediocre, compliant, herdish, pragmatic, accommodating and

compromising. Vincent was extremely difficult to deal with. If he saw something unjust or wrong, he felt compelled to attack it. It was always love or hate and this created many enemies. Even Theo found him impossible to live with. All Vincent thought about, all he cared about was the work. Nevertheless, Theo, like Roulin the postman and Vincent's teacher in Amsterdam, Mendes da Costa, always thought that Vincent was a great and unique individual. These were the only three friends Vincent ever had, the only people who understood and loved him for what and who he was. But they were also unique and wonderful people, atypical from the average person.

Many people today who adulate Vincent make him into a Christ-like martyr. He was neither and would have detested the notion. He is depicted as the ultimate "communal" artist. This is nonsense. He was in fact the ultimate "individualist" who was never able to work well with others, or to be bound by any sort of cooperative rules. His desire to work with others came from loneliness more than anything else. Another myth is that he sacrificed his life (again, the martyr syndrome) for humanity. No. He gave his life to his work. He did indeed have an obsessive desire to educate and inspire people. But he strove to do so through his work, which superseded everything else.

The most significant and revelatory things about van Gogh are not that he cut off his earlobe or that he suffered attacks of madness or that he committed suicide, but rather that he lived life to the fullest, realized his artistic potential as much as humanly possible, fought magnificently against the attacks and all forms of adversity, never willingly giving in to them.

Most important, he created a superb body of work that will live as long as the human race survives. The theme of his life, and the theme of my film *The Eyes of Van Gogh*, is Vincent's quest to achieve immortality through his work.

## PRINCIPAL ACTORS

### **ROY THINNES: DR. PEYRON**

As a professional actor for five decades, Roy Thinnes has performed on stage, radio, television and motion pictures. He played characters on the 1950's TV series: *Gunsmoke*, *The Untouchables*, *Death Valley Days*, *Playhouse 90* and *Climax*. In the 60s he created the role of Dr. Brewer in the debut of *General Hospital* before starring in the primetime series *The Long Hot Summer*, *The Invaders*, *The Psychiatrist*, *From Here to Eternity*, *Falcon Crest*, *The New Dark Shadows* and *First and Ten*. He returned to daytime as two different characters that die three times on *One Life to Live*. Thinnes created roles in numerous motion pictures such as *The Hindenburg*, *Journey to the Far Side of the Sun*, *Charlie One Eye*, *The Other Man*, *The Norliss Tapes*, *A Beautiful Mind* and *Leadcatcher*. On stage: *Summer Pygmies*, *Spring's Awakening*, *Private Lives*, *I Do, I Do* (with Maureen McGovern), *Room Service*, Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* (starring Jerry Stiller as Nathan Detroit) at the Guthrie Theatre. Recently he starred in two Off-Broadway plays, Charles Mee's *True Love* and Adam Rapp's *Faster*. Thinnes has played on recent episodes of *The Sopranos*, *X Files*, *OZ*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and *Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit*. A painter for many years, Thinnes' work has recently been exhibited in Houston, Memphis, and Roswell, N.M. and is in institutional and private collections here and abroad.

### **GORDON JOSEPH WEISS: THEO VAN GOGH**

During the filming of *The Eyes of Van Gogh*, Gordon Joseph Weiss was also appearing on Broadway as the Police Chief in the Richard Dreyfus production of *Sly Fox*. Among his eight other Broadway productions are *The Life*, *Jelly's Last Jam*, *The Visit* and *Ghetto*, for which he received both TONY® and NY Drama Desk Award nominations. His feature film credits include *Joe Gould's Secret*, *Howard Stern's Private Parts*, *Awakenings*, and *Reversal of Fortune* among others. He has been seen on the television series *Law and Order*, *Third Watch*, *Spin City*, *Law and Order: Special Victim's Unit*, and *NYPD Blue*. Other stage credits include Off-Broadway productions and the nation's principal regional theatres.

### **LEE GODART: PAUL GAUGUIN**

Having completed his work on *The Eyes of Van Gogh*, Lee Godart returned to the stage as King Henry in *The Lion in Winter*. Other stage work includes Nils Bohr in *Copenhagen*, Tom Sergeant in David Hare's *Skylight* at The Actors Theatre of Louisville, Marc in several productions of *Art* (Yasmine Reza), Shannon in Tennessee Williams' *The Night of the Iguana*, numerous Shakespearean productions, among which are Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, Cassio in *Othello* in New York City; and in Paris, Titus in Racine's *Bérénice*, Max in Gabriel Arout's *Oui*, and Athanase in *Athanase*. His television credits include Gabriel in *La Poupée Sanglante*, a mini-series for Antenne 2, Gaumont, France, a guest appearance on *The New Avengers (The Lion and the Unicorn)*, filmed in Paris, and Endo Lascar in the French film *Consortium*. He was last seen Off-Broadway as the ill-fated son Jan in Albert Camus' *The Misunderstanding*. Godart, also a painter, lives in New York City.

**KEITH PERRY: THEODORUS VAN GOGH**

Keith Perry has performed in six Broadway productions: *City of Angels*, *Copperfield*, *The Inspector General*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *I'm Solomon* and *Pickwick*; two pre-Broadway shows and four National and International Tours, with such plays as *Man of La Mancha* and *Amadeus*, among others. He has performed in many of the important regional and stock theatres throughout the United States. He has also had roles on many television shows including *Too Good to be True*, *Saturday Night Live*, *Another World*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent* and *Sex and the City*, as well as principal appearances on innumerable commercial shoots. Among his additional film credits are *Push*, *Shooting Livien* and *Keeping the Faith*.

**EDWIN J. McDONOUGH: REVEREND ROCHEDIEU**

Edwin J. McDonough has appeared on Broadway in two productions of *Othello* (1970 & 1982), *The Changing Room*, the legendary production of *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (1974), with Jason Robards and Colleen Dewhurst, *Play Memory*, *Anna Christie* (1977), *Da* and *Macbeth* (1988), the latter with Christopher Plummer and Glenda Jackson, the National Tour of *Noises Off* and in regional theatres from Alaska to Florida. He has been featured on television in *Law and Order*, *Sex and the City* and *Ed*, as well as the films *Reversal of Fortune*, *It's My Turn* and *Kinsey*. Dr. McDonough is the author of *Quintero Directs O'Neill*, published by a cappella press.

**DIANA AGOSTINI: KEE VOS**

Diana Agostini's film credits include *The Room*, *Pleasant Dreams*, *Godfather III*, *I'm Not Rappaport*, *Noises Off*, *Cotton Club*, *Heartburn* and *Sweet Liberty*. She has been seen on television in episodes of *The Sopranos* and *Saturday Night Live* among others. She has appeared on stage in London and New York, including the George C. Scott production of *Sly Fox*. Off-Broadway productions include *Beyond Therapy*, *The Cave Dwellers*, *The Young Wife* and *Jules Feiffer*.

## PRODUCTION TEAM

### IAN A. DUDLEY: DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

In addition to *The Eyes of Van Gogh*, cinematographer Ian A. Dudley numbers among his feature film credits *The Fallen*, directed by Ari Taub, *Love Lessons*, directed by Jon Stahl, *The Color of Truth*, directed by Fred B. Smith, *P.O.E.*, written and directed by Damon Chambers and Natural Langdon, *The Gothic Line*, *Joy*, written and directed by Jackie Alexander, *Queen Elisabeth*, *Winning Girls through Psychic Mind Control*, directed by Barry Alexander Brown, *Cross-Eyed*, *Jane the Stalker*, *Young Gentlemen*, *Moving Target*, *Death Fish*, written and directed by Carlos Sanchez Lopez, and *A Better Place*, written and directed by Vincent Pereira. The 16mm B&W film *Cry Havoc*, written and directed by Adam Lamas, picked up the Best Photography Award from the 1999 Silversand Film Festival. His many short films include *Martini's Shot*, *Learned Innocence*, *The Assignment*, *Looking for...*, *Roots*, *Purity of Blood* and *An Echo Remains*. He has served as director of photography on several music videos, including the 35 mm color *Oye Como Va*, with famed salsa star Celia Cruz. Among his documentary credits are *9/11/03*, *A Day in the Life of NY* for PBS, *Amar Schona Bangla*, *A Conversation with Ruth Gruber* and *The Center for Jewish History*.

### MARK ZAKI: SOUND DESIGNER

A musician with many diverse interests, Mark Zaki has created works that range from traditional chamber music to new media and music for film. Demonstrating a wide range of compositional techniques, his music has incorporated and transformed elements from a variety of traditional and popular musical forms, serial procedures, improvisatory contexts and acousmatic practice into a highly idiosyncratic style. In addition to his work on *The Eyes of Van Gogh*, his most recent projects include a score for the Peabody award nominated documentary *The Political Dr. Seuss* (PBS), and a new media installation *Absence, Presence* for the California Museum of Photography in Riverside, California. His credits include work on more than 50 films, television programs, theatre and music recordings. Zaki also holds doctorates in music composition and technology from Princeton and in violin performance from Rutgers University. He divides his time between New York City and Los Angeles.

### VÉRONIQUE N. DOUMBÉ: EDITOR

Véronique Doumbé's work on *Forever*, a short directed by Anabela Zigova, won "Best Editing Award" at the 6th annual Chicks with Flicks film festival 2004 (New York City). Other work in fiction shorts include *Betrayal*, directed by Thierry Ngooh; *Johnny Moment* and *Adam and Yvette*, directed by Reynier Moleenar; *Voices of Pieces* directed by Stephen Black and *Dish*, directed by Dianne Moriarty (feature). The feature documentary *Denis A. Charles: An Interrupted Conversation*, which she also directed, won "Best Video Documentary Production" at the XVII Black International Cinema 2002 (Berlin, Germany), "Audience Award" for Best Feature at Detroit Docs 2002, and "CinyAward 2002" for Outstanding Documentary at CinewomenNY film series. Other

documentaries she has directed and edited include the shorts *Solar Cars*; *Carnaval Royal*; and *Portrait of an Artist: Ray Grist*. She has served as an editor for ARTE (French/German Television); "BET Tonight" for Black Entertainment Television; "Eye on Asia" (WNYC TV31); World Wide Television News; and "Dance Trax" (WNYE Ch.25). Other work includes *AVP, A Step towards Peace*, which she also produced and directed for the Alternatives to Violence Project, Inc.; *The Next Generation* and *Project Return*.

#### **MICHAEL BEVINS: COSTUME DESIGNER**

Michael Bevins is a twenty-year veteran of the fashion industry, and has recently focused on costumes for stage and film, where he enjoys the collaboration between the director and the actors to achieve the right look for each character. *The Eyes of Van Gogh* has been a costume designer's dream, as it has all the elements to challenge and inspire creativity. Other features include *Planet Ibsen*, *The Killing of John Lennon*, *Un Pave dans les Nuages*, *Firefighter*, and several shorts. For the Théâtre du Sens in Paris, he designed the costumes for a production of Racine's *Andromaque*.

#### **ASHLEY MARCH: PRODUCER**

Ashley March is a Management and Development Consultant specializing in the nonprofit world. For clients she has identified resources to sustain the financial condition of organizations, created fundraising, subscription and marketing strategies, developed and written proposals to generate funding from private and government sources, conducted organizational assessments, and provided capacity building in the areas of development, public relations, web site management, communications and volunteer management. She was the founding Managing Director of Classic Theatre International, an international not-for-profit touring theatre company. She had direct supervision of booking agents, tour managers, marketing, development and production departments; responsibility for all management and financial decisions; preparation and analysis of budgets, grant proposals and production schedules. She was responsible for all contract negotiation and supervision, hiring of technical and administrative staff. She oversaw the design of promotional materials and was the principle liaison with producing directors, programming managers, front-of-house staff, sponsors and art councils. She coordinated media relations in major cities for runs of one to twelve weeks, secured new performance venues and contracts and negotiated for corporate sponsorships. Prior to that, she served as the General Manager for a 175-seat New York City venue in Chelsea for performing and visual arts, readings and lectures.

#### **MARCIA MOHIUDDIN: PRODUCER**

In addition to *The Eyes of Van Gogh*, Marcia Mohiuddin has produced the following features: *Color of Truth*, directed by Fred B. Smith; *Love Lessons*, directed by Jon Stahl; and *Maere Chobhi (Mother's Portrait)*, directed by A.R. Malik. Among the many short films she has produced are *American Brainwash*, directed by Robert Adely, *Martini's Shot*, directed by Bill Kotsatos, *The Assignment*, directed by Ethan Shirer, and *Living in Fear*, directed by Howard Reichman. She has, as well, a number of producer credits for Industrial shoots and PSAs.

## Production Credits

### Cast (in order of appearance)

Vincent van Gogh	Alexander Barnett
Patient #1	Thomas D. Kaufman
Patient #2	John Lederer
Patient #3	John Alexander
Patient #4	Dean Curtis
Patient #5	John Fitzgibbon
Young Vincent	Matthew Marchetti
Dr. Peyron	Roy Thinner
Anna van Gogh	Celia Howard
Theodorus van Gogh	Keith Perry
Theo van Gogh	Gordon Joseph Weiss
Kee Vos	Diana Agostini
Patient #6	Ray Wasik
Patient #7	Clarke Griffith
Patient #8	Larry Burns
Reverent Rochedieu	Edwin McDonough
Paul Gauguin	Lee Godart
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director	Josh Levine
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Director	Ethan Shrier
2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Directors	Sheri Davani
	Zak Kauffman
2 <sup>nd</sup> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Assistant Director	Loren Sklar
Set PA	Dillon Neaman
Script Supervisors	Veronica Mulero
	Melissa Drotar
Director of Photography	Ian A. Dudley
1 <sup>st</sup> Assistant Camera	Jay Capece
	Nick Hahn
Assistant Camera	Dustin Smithers
	Glen Chin
	Tim Marotta
Still Photographer	Ramsey Davils
Gaffer	Eric Giovon
	Jonathan Stern
Key Grip	Kurt Hyman
	Randy Salo
	Phaedra Kloias
	Abraham Altbuch
Swing	Steffen Hagberg
Sound Designer	Mark Zaki
Sound Mixer	Jacob Burckhardt
Sound Recorders	Alex Portugal
	Tim Elder
Boom Operators	Jeff Dionne
	Andrew Prokopenko
	Joe Surf
Costume Designer	Michael Bevins
Assistant Costume Designer	Hillari James
Costume Intern	Frank Scaiccia
Make-Up & Hair Stylist	Carol Ann Ransaw
Assistants Make-Up	Sait Klein
	Danielle Hershman

Production Designer  
Art Director  
Set Construction/ Props  
Sketch Artist  
Design Assistants

Jerimiah Lawrence  
Lamarr Brown  
Harmeen Jones  
Evgenia Fisher  
Jack Crystal  
Tim Philips  
Cory Noll  
Christina Abdou  
Brandan Carraha  
Isabel Sinistore  
Kristen Konzet  
Daniel Bradbury  
Andrew Wood  
Constantine

Economides

Thomas Parfitt  
Hunter Thompson  
Liz Sales  
Dan Horner  
Patrick Horner  
CC Rentals  
Christopher Fondulas  
Kris Widger  
Erik Zurita  
Christine Mahoney  
Véronique N. Doumbé  
EarthVideo  
Sergei Franklin  
The Hanover Insurance

Transportation  
Behind-the-Scenes  
Photography  
Craft Services

Editor  
Editing Studio  
Colorist  
Insurance  
Company  
Insurance  
Paul Travelers  
Broker

Near North Insurance / St

Ventura Insurance Brokerage,  
Inc.

Assistant to Producer  
Casting Assistants

Susanne De Lorme  
Bonita Luk  
Natasza Fontaine  
Khalid Rahmaan

Production Assistants

Jason Mason  
Mason LeBeau  
Martin Wallace  
John Acosta  
Alejandro Alba  
Nicholas Allen  
Julia Schweiker  
Adam Schryver  
Greg Highsmith  
Diana Agostini  
Michael Civile  
Tom Fatone  
Thierry Ngooh  
Ashley March  
Marcia Mohiuddin  
Alexander Barnett  
Alexander Barnett

Associate Producers

Producer  
Producer  
Screenplay  
Director