



# MoMA

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## THE STORY

Vincent Willem van Gogh was born in Groot-Zundert, The Netherlands, on 30 March 1853. From a young age, van Gogh was introduced to the world of art by his uncle Vincent and brother Theo, an established art dealer and life-long champion of the artist's work. Living in England, France and Belgium, van Gogh worked as an art curator and a lay preacher, and taught amateur painters before committing fully to his own art.

In just a decade, from 1880 to his death in 1890, van Gogh completed more than 2,000 works, including almost 900 oil paintings, more than 1,100 watercolour paintings, etchings and ink and pencil drawings. His subjects ranged from humble, hardworking miners and farmers, to landscapes, portraits, interiors and still life pieces.

Van Gogh believed he could make his paintings endure only by abandoning "photographic resemblance" and striving for "passionate expression." He was inspired by Japanese prints and the work of his contemporaries such as Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Cézanne and looked to innovations in colour theory to inform his own palette—by turns vibrant and brooding—as he developed his own unique heavily impasto painting style.

In a letter to Theo in 1888, he wrote "I can do nothing about it if my paintings don't sell. The day will come, though, when people will see that they're worth more than the cost of the paint and my subsistence, very meagre in fact, that we put into them." Though van Gogh did not live to see his predictions come true, his final exhibitions drew critical acclaim.







The Potato Eaters. April 1885. Lithograph, composition: 21.5 × 31.4 cm (8 7/16 × 12 3/8"); sheet: 12 5/16 × 15 3/4" (31.3 × 40 cm). Publisher: unpublished. Printer: Gestel Printing Works, Nuenen. Edition: 18 known impressions. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. A. A. Rosen

Portrait of Dr. Gachet (Man with a Pipe). 15 May 1890. Etching, plate: 18.1 × 15.1 cm (7 1/8 × 5 15/16"). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller

The Olive Trees. Saint Rémy, June-July 1889. Oil on canvas, 72.6 × 91.4 cm (28 5/8 × 36"). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Mrs. John Hay Whitney Bequest



Portrait of Joseph Roulin. Arles, early 1889. Oil on canvas, 64.4 × 55.2 cm (25 3/8 × 21 3/4"). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. M. Burden, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rosenberg, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Bartos, The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, Mr. and Mrs. Werner E. Josten, and Loula D. Lasker Bequest (all by exchange)

" I often think that the night is more alive and more richly coloured than the day."

- Vincent van Gogh



# THE STARRY NIGHT

In May 1889, after a period of deteriorating health, van Gogh admitted himself to the Saint Paulde-Mausole asylum at Saint-Rémy-de-Provence near Arles, France, where he was treated for epilepsy. As part of his therapy, he was encouraged to continue painting. The serene gardens and landscapes in Saint-Rémy allowed him to recover and focus fully on his art. Within a year, he had completed at least 150 works, including *The Starry Night*.

In a letter to his brother, the artist wrote, "*The sight of the stars always makes me dream*." Like many of van Gogh's paintings, this timeless artwork, with its swirling blue and yellow brush strokes, imbues night and nature with an emotional language beyond their actual appearances.

Acquired by The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in 1941, it was the first artwork by van Gogh to enter a New York museum collection, and it continues to be a visitor favourite in the Museum's galleries. Now you can reimagine and create your own 3D version, thanks to this exceptional collaboration between MoMA, fan designer Truman Cheng and LEGO<sup>®</sup> Ideas designers.

#### THE WORLD'S MUSEUM FOR MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

The Museum of Modern Art in New York City brings creativity and inspiration to people all over the world. Founded in 1929 by three women, MoMA was the first museum dedicated to new art—from paintings and drawings to film, design and performance. This bold, experimental vision continues by sharing the most thought-provoking and resonant works today.

# MoMA



Size comparisor

Photo: Brett Beyer





Cypress trees were a common motif in van Gogh's later paintings. A symbol of death in Greek culture, they connect heaven and earth in *The Starry Night*.

The Starry Night. Saint-Rémy, June 1889. Oil on canvas, 73.7 × 92.1 cm (29 × 36 1/4"). The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest (by exchange)



## MEET THE FAN DESIGNER

Truman Cheng (LEGO<sup>®</sup> Ideas name legotruman) from Hong Kong is a PhD student in medical robotics. How does that relate to recreating world-famous art with LEGO bricks?

"Robotics is just one form of creative problem-solving that I love. I also love art and drawing new fantasy/sci-fi characters from my imagination. LEGO is very special to me because it is a unique synthesis of artistic expression and puzzle-solving."

"Van Gogh's work has always fascinated me, and *The Starry Night* is one of his most iconic works. I have always wanted to make a LEGO version of it but couldn't think of a good execution style. One day, I was playing with LEGO elements and discovered that stacking them together in random intervals looks a lot like van Gogh's iconic brush strokes!"

"So, I based my model on the original painting and took some creative liberties with the 3D aspect of the design. It was a good brain teaser to find the best techniques and LEGO parts to capture the look of the original painting. Keeping all parts of the painting on the right scale was really challenging, so I just kept building and modifying. Once the model launched on the LEGO Ideas platform, it gathered 10,000 supporters in just three weeks! Thank you so much to everyone who voted!" The Meet Vincent van Gogh Experience by the Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam " I think the van Gogh minifigure working on his painting while looking upon the LEGO Starry Night model is a really fun detail!"



## THE LEGO® ARTISTS

"This set re-imagines the original painting in a 3D scene, with strong emphasis on the artist's iconic brush strokes and colour choice. A 3D painting is not normally something we would release as a model, but it was a fun challenge. I was amazed by all the details Truman captured from the original painting. I wanted to make sure we created a great building experience as well as a work of art. We worked closely with MoMA, experimented with lots of different building techniques and angles, and I kept going back to every LEGO<sup>®</sup> element to get the colours and placement right and, hopefully, do van Gogh's beautiful brush work justice!"

- Søren Gehlert Dyrhøj, LEGO® Model Design Master

"This set is truly made for every art lover, especially for van Gogh fans. And we couldn't have done it without MoMA. The final model is so impressive, it shows depth and layers that mimic the techniques used in the actual painting. The most challenging part was designing *The Starry Night* painting on a tiny LEGO brick canvas! I incorporated van Gogh's brush stroke techniques in all the decorations. I love the little Vincent van Gogh minifigure, his miniature canvas and palette. You can place the artist inside the painting or display him as a standalone minifigure!"

- Niken Ayumurti Hartomo, LEGO<sup>®</sup> Senior Graphic Designer

















































































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# FEEDBACK

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" It's clear that to paint a starry sky it's not nearly enough to put white spots on blue-black."

- Vincent van Gogh