



AiA Art News-service



China's Van Goghs 81 min.

[Haibo Yu](#), [Kiki Tianqi Yu](#), China / The Netherlands, 2016, color, DCP

Until 1989, the village of Dafen in the city of Shenzhen, China was little more than a hamlet. It now has a population of 10,000, including hundreds of peasants-turned oil painters. In the many studios, and even in the alleyways, Dafen's painters turn out thousands of replicas of world-famous Western paintings. Nobody thinks anything of an order for 200 Van Goghs. To meet their deadlines, painters sleep on the floor between clotheslines strung with masterpieces. In 2015, the turnover in painting sales was over \$65 million. Directors Haibo and Kiki Tianqi Yu followed one of the painters, Xiaoyong Zhao. He and his family have painted around 100,000 Van Goghs. After all these years, Zhao feels a deep affinity with Van Gogh. He traveled to Europe to see the original works at the Van Gogh Museum, and to visit one of his best clients, an Amsterdam art dealer. This debut film is a fascinating, at times picturesque portrait of a village where artists pursue their dreams, but also have them shattered.