

Van Gogh Alive – immerse yourself in sunflowers

Despite selling only one painting during his lifetime, Van Gogh once indicated that his work would be recognised eventually.

What would the artist, who died in July 1890 at the age of 37, make of the current multi sensory experience in a tent at Festival Square?

My nine-year-old daughter Christina was completely immersed.

Near the exhibition, the entrance is a reconstruction of Van Gogh's bedroom featured in the painting 'Bedroom In Arles' where you can even sit on the featured wicker chair.



The author at the Van Gogh experience

The exhibition facilitates a sense of fun, allowing visitors to pose for pictures in the room and walk among the sunflowers featured in some of his most famous paintings from 1888/89.

Through his words, a sense of the painter's deepest thoughts and beliefs are summoned. A man in love with nature and light, we are submerged in his vision of the sun, the wheat fields and of course sunflowers.

The exhibition drives the narrative away from the tortured artist who cut off his ear and the image of madness portrayed by Kirk Douglas in *Lust for Life* (1956). John Wayne once asked the actor: "How can you play a part like that? There are so few of us left. We got to play strong, tough characters."

Douglas replied, "It's all make-believe, John, it isn't real. You're not really John Wayne, you know."

The exhibition offers a more nuanced reading that leans towards the experimental, contemplative man of faith with gentle brush strokes allowing van Gough to essentially narrate the work through his letters.

Unlike some suggestions, he is not in a state of deranged madness when he paints but in a state of joy and passion for the world.

At the end of the exhibition there is the opportunity to take a lesson in the art activity area, we had a shot at painting The Starry Night allowing us a final experience of the artist we've been talking about daily ever since.

This [exhibition](#) runs in Festival Square until 17 July.



Richard and his daughter enjoyed the exhibition