

INT. A LECTURE HALL - DAY

The room is in muted tones of grey, shades drawn, shielding the projection screen from the intruding sunlight. Students force cavorting shadow puppets upon the white, empty screen.

LECTURER

Van Gogh...

A slide of a VAN GOGH SELF-PORTRAIT flashes on the screen.

LECTURER (cont'd)

...an intense, difficult and unhappy individual whose early failures exhausted him.

The LECTURER steps across the path of the projected image and back into the darkness.

LECTURER (cont'd)

He would spend his life searching for an emotional release he would never find, resulting in his ultimate despair.

Another slide, "STARRY NIGHT", glows on the screen.

LECTURER (cont'd)

Subsequently, he turned to canvas and palette in his pursuit of fulfillment. His haphazard attack of thick, linear brush strokes and arbitrary assault of new color, yellow being his favorite, would have been disastrous except for his sensibility. Here he could use color to forcibly express his emotions.

A third slide, "THE NIGHT CAFE", saturates the screen.

LECTURER (cont'd)

For example, his moody depiction of life in Night Cafe, he conveys an oppressive atmosphere of misfortune through every possible distortion of color. Van Gogh meant for you to feel the scene, not just observe it. The inhabitants are the very color of the mood in which they are drawn...melancholy green. The floor is acid yellow; the ceiling, poisonous green...contrasting febrile red walls. A disturbing expression of the artist's increasing despondency...

The screen goes to stark white.

LECTURER (cont'd)

Two years later, while suffering from mental anguish, he was placed in a sanitarium where at the age of thirty-seven, he took his own life.

A LOUD, INTRUSIVE BELL signals the end of the class. Sounds of CHAIRS SCRAPING the floor and erratic BUSTLE of STUDENTS SHUFFLING from the room. Slowly, a lone figure, silhouetted against the screen, crosses, pauses, and adjusts its hat. The projection screen abruptly plunges to black. The NOISE of the departing students is displaced by the PENETRATING REVERBERATION of the STREET.

DISSOLVE TO:

A mass of undulating colors - reds and yellows turning orange, blues and yellows mutating into tints of vibrant greens - broad, distinctive strokes of expression.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

So Vinnie...

VINCENT (V.O.)

Vincent...

ANTHONY (V.O.)

What's that?

VINCENT (V.O.)

If you would...Vincent.

ANTHONY (V.O.)

Oh, yeah...my heritage must be showin'. Like, I don't like nobody callin' me Tony.

EXT. SCARPELLI'S PIZZERIA - LATE AFTERNOON

A large plate glass window ablaze with colors. A sign proclaiming, "UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT." Passers-by generally ignoring the activity on the other side of the window.

ANTHONY (V.O.cont'd.)

So, Vinnie...Vincent. What the hell is that?

INT. SCARPELLI'S PIZZERIA

VINCENT, dressed in white from head to toe - painters cap, smock, scarf tied neatly about his neck, white bucks, white gloves - doesn't flinch, but keeps painting. He is a tiny, elf of a man in his 60s, 70s or 80s.

It's hard to place an age on him. TONY, a swarthy young entrepreneur, stands behind Vincent. FREDDIE, Tony's assistant, busies himself in the background.

VINCENT
(beat)
Art.

ANTHONY
Nah...that ain't art.
(holding a pizza)
This...this is art.

Vincent studies his colors.

ANTHONY (cont'd)
Nobody can make a pizza like me. Smell that? "What," you say...you don't smell it? See, it's what you don't smell that makes this...Vincent, you listenin'?

Vincent pauses to dip some color from a tomato can of paint.

VINCENT
What I can't smell...

ANTHONY
Oregano. No...oregano...

VINCENT
Hmm.

ANTHONY
See...any idiota can use oregano...

Vincent studies the pizza.

ANTHONY (cont'd)
Okay...so it ain't the roof over the Cistern Chapel... Hey, don't get me wrong here. Beauty in the eye of the beholder and all, but... I'm lookin'...I don't see no putti. You know, like seraphims...cherubims. There's supposed to be...these putti holdin' a Scarpelli suprema.
(beat)
I don't see no putti, Vincent.

Vincent continues to paint.

VINCENT
If you're not satisfied...

ANTHONY
I don't see no suprema, neither...

VINCENT
...you don't have to pay me.

ANTHONY
You ain't done, right?

VINCENT
Nearly...

LOUIS, a natty barber of the old school - trim mustache, barber's smock, slicked, thinning hair - ambles through the door.

LOUIS
Tony...two slices, plain...coffee...don't forget the hots like your predecessor always did.

He regards the painting

LOUIS (cont'd)
Holy... Will you look at that?
Vincent...

VINCENT
(using the French
pronunciation)
Louis...

LOUIS
That's got to be your best ever.

Anthony throws the slices into the oven

ANTHONY
You think...you think it's... He forgot the putti.

LOUIS
And you forgot the hots. Very clever... I like how you made the sun into...very clever, indeed.

Anthony sprinkles the hots on the pizza.

ANTHONY
The sun...what?

LOUIS

You're a genius, Vincent. Hey, there's a new window in the door at the barber shop just begging for some more of your genius.

Anthony pours the coffee.

ANTHONY

The sun... I don't see...

LOUIS

Tony, my man, you can thank your lucky stars that Vincent has graced your establishment with one of his masterworks.

ANTHONY

He forgot the putti...

Louis scrutinizes the painting as Vincent begins to clean his brushes. Tony wraps the pizza.

LOUIS

It'll come to you. Give it time. The more you look at it... You'll see.

Louis picks up his order.

LOUIS (cont'd)

Tab me, will you?

Louis pauses at the door.

LOUIS (cont'd)

Vincent...

VINCENT

I could use a trim.

LOUIS

Tomorrow?

VINCENT

Okay.

Louis backs through the door.

ANTHONY

Look, I don't...

VINCENT

You're not satisfied, you don't..

ANTHONY
Deal's a deal even if I don't... You
sure all you want is...

VINCENT
...something to eat...

ANTHONY
..and drink...

VINCENT
(shrugging)
You're not satisfied...

Vincent gathers the last of his belongings into his painters
box as Anthony plops a bag on the counter.

ANTHONY
It's not...look, I'm about ninety-nine
and thirty-four, one hundredths percent
okay with it, okay?
(beat)
I threw in a canoli and...

VINCENT
Thank you.

ANTHONY
Yeah. Yeah...okay.

Vincent shuffles to the door with his payment, pausing to
gaze outside.

ANTHONY (cont'd)
Tomorrow...you'll be back tomorrow,
right?

VINCENT
Don't look.
(taking a deep breath)
Feel.

As Vincent disappears through the frame of the door, Anthony
turns his attention to the mural on his window. The
VIBRATIONS of the CITY almost slip away to the quiet TRILL of
a BIRD and the GENTLE RUSH of BREEZE THROUGH a GROVE of
TREES.

CRASHING GLASS shatters Anthony's respite.

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