Jim Kammerud has had a 20 year career in animated films, most recently working on the storyboards for the *Emoji Movie*, in theaters July 28th. The animator turned painter talks about his career in film and new adventures in painting.

Jim’s first paintings, 10 years ago, were portraits of his friends. An unintentional break from painting occurred due to the demanding nature of working on films. He feels fortunate for the career he’s had in animation. These days though, painting takes most of his time. His preferred medium is oil paint, which he describes as “the coolest”. Painting represents a new artistic challenge for the artist, one that may never be overcome, which is his prime motivation. He says laughing, “I’ll never reach the end, I’ll never climb that mountain and say ‘I’m done!’”.

Much like working on a film production team, he notes the collaborative process between artist, model and patron that influences his final paintings. Moreover, the influence of his storyboarding past is hard to ignore. He still wants to tell stories through his paintings by depicting scenarios of “ordinary, everyday and magical human connections”. His current series depicts sweet scenes of two people in love. Interestingly, his goal with this series is to imbue in each painting interpretations of his own relationship. Thus, what might seem like observations of two stranger’s love, are actually interpretations of his life with his wife.

So what does this animator’s new sunrise in painting bring? This one thing is for sure: a permanence that was not previously possible. Speaking about his role as a storyboard artist, he expresses the frustration that no one ever sees his actual work. “Lots of drawings get thrown away”. Now that’s changed. He’s the director in charge of the final product and he wouldn’t have it any other way.


See the paintings in person at Soft Water Studios.
515 22nd St S, St. Petersburg, FL 33712.