

Letter 367
Nuenen, c. 30 April 1884

Dear Theo,

Many happy returns of the day.

That was important news indeed in your last letter, and I think you will be glad the situation has at least become clearer.

I am already looking forward to your next letter.

As to the work, I am working on a rather large picture of a weaver, the loom seen from the front – the little figure a dark silhouette against the white wall [F 30, JH 479]. At the same time another one, which I began last winter – a loom on which a piece of red cloth is being woven; there the loom is seen from an angle [F 29, JH 471]. I also started two more: effects on the heath. And a landscape with pollarded birches [F 31, JH 477].

Those looms will cost me a lot of hard work yet, but in reality they are such splendid things, all that old oakwork against a greyish wall, that I certainly believe it is a god thing that they are painted once in a while. But we must try to get them so that the colour and tone will harmonize with other Dutch pictures. Soon I hope to start on two others of weavers in which the figure comes quite differently, that is to say, the weaver is not sitting behind it, but is arranging the warp threads of the cloth.

I have seen them weaving in the evening by lamplight, which gives very Rembrandtesque effects.

Nowadays, they use a kind of suspension lamp, but from a weaver I got a little lamp like the one in “La Veillée” [The Night Watch] by Millet, for instance. They used to work by them before.

The other day I also saw coloured pieces of cloth woven in the evening; I will take you there when you come here. When I saw it, they were also just arranging the warp threads, so I saw dark, bent figures standing out against the light and against the colour of the cloth, big shadows of the laths and beams of the loom cast on the white walls.

Goodbye, write soon if you can.

Yours sincerely, Vincent