

Letter 517
Arles, c. 3 August 1888

My dear Theo,

I more or less presume that you have gone to Holland. I am rather inclined to think that they were expecting you in Holland, from the letter I received from our sister, and also because I have not heard from you about this business.

I have had a letter from Gauguin, in which he talks about painting, and complains of not having enough money to come here, but nothing new or different.

I have sent Russell 12 drawings after painted studies, and so had an opportunity to speak to him about it again.

It will soon be Michaelmas, and I have only taken the house till then. Am I to take it for a half-year again or not, that is what I would very much like to decide, after G. had seen it, and not without him.

I could not pay my rent on the first, as I had the model all week. I am working on two portraits of the same model, which are more important to me than anything else. But it was just when I put my fellow off till next Monday for the month's rent that he said something about being able to find another tenant for the house if I had not decided to keep it. I'm not much surprised, since I have had it repaired myself, and it is worth more.

In my last letter I forgot to answer your question about the new canvas from Tasset at 5.50 fr. It is very good and just what I wanted. If I do a portrait, or indeed anything that I am anxious to make lasting, he may be sure that I'll use it. But not much of it, as I have just made up my mind to use cheap canvas for the studies.

If your package has not been sent off, I should very much like you to add 4 small tubes of geranium lake. If, indeed, I haven't already ordered this colour, but I don't think I ordered any reds except carmine. So now I am working on two figures, one the head [F 433, JH1524], and one a half length with the hands [F432, JH1522], of an old postman in a dark blue uniform. He has a head like Socrates, interesting to paint. There is no better or shorter way of improving your work than doing figures. And I always feel confident when I am doing portraits, knowing that this work has much more depth – it isn't the right word perhaps, but it is what makes me cultivate whatever is best and deepest in me.

Good-by for the present, and a good handshake.

Ever yours, Vincent