

Letter 558a
Arles, c. 25 November 1888

My dear Theo,

Thanks for your kind letter and the 100-fr. note enclosed.

I am very glad of Gauguin's success in the matter of the continuous sale. If he could have sold enough within a year from now to execute his plan to go to settle in Martinique, I should think his fortune would be made. Only, as I see it, he oughtn't to risk returning there before he has saved 5000 francs; according to him he will need 2000. But to my mind in that case he would not go away by himself but along with another man or with other men, and would found a studio there for good and all.

But oh well, till then a lot of water will flow under the bridge.

I am greatly interested in what you write about the Dutchmen. I hope to meet both of them personally someday. How old are they? I dare hope that ultimately they will find their coming to France was a good thing.

Their having trouble with their colour – damn it – does not surprise me; may De Haan never forsake the serious study of Rembrandt which the two drawings I am looking at now reflect!

Have they read Silvestre's book on Eug. Delacroix, and also the article on colour in the Grammaire des arts du dessin by Ch. Blanc? Ask them this for me, and if they have not read them, let them do so still. As for me, I am thinking more of Rembrandt than might appear from my studies.

This is a sketch of the latest canvas I am working on, another Sower. Immense citron-yellow disk for the sun. Sky green-yellow with pink clouds. The field violet, the sower and the tree Prussian blue. Size 30 canvas [F 494, JH 1627]. Let's quietly postpone exhibiting until I have some thirty size 30 canvases. Then we are going to exhibit them only once in your apartment for our friends, and even then without exercising any pressure. And don't let's do anything else.

There are quite a few reasons not to make a stir at present. It won't be for long for that matter, I think that I shall be able to send it to you around the time of the exhibition or soon after. In the meantime it will dry thoroughly here, and then I shall be able to put a finishing touch to all the canvases, once they are thoroughly dry even in the thickly painted spots.

At the age of forty when I make a picture of figures or portraits in the way I feel it, I think this will be worth more than a more or less serious success at present.

Have you see the studies that Bernard brought back from Brittany? – Gauguin told me a lot about them. He himself has one that is simply masterly. I think that buying one from Bernard would mean doing him a service, and that he really deserves it.

Only you must not forget to return to Gauguin, either at the end of the year or in March, the money he may have spent, for instance, on sheets and other things that are to remain in the studio.

I think that on all counts it will be a good thing to alter nothing, absolutely nothing, in the financial arrangement as it is fixed. If after a year things are found to be going satisfactorily, then we shall see.

Gauguin is working on a very beautiful picture of women washing, and also on a large still life of an orange-coloured pumpkin and apples and white linen on a yellow background and foreground.

Here the weather is cold, notwithstanding which one sees very fine things. For instance yesterday evening an extraordinarily beautiful sunset of a mysterious, sickly citron colour – Prussian blue cypresses against trees with dead leaves in all sorts of broken tones without any speckling with bright greens.

You cannot imagine how much it pleases me that you have painters staying with you, and that you are not living all alone in your apartment, just as it pleases me very much to have such good company as Gauguin's.

I shall write again soon, and once more thanks for your kind letter.

Ever yours, Vincent

What do De Haan and Isaäcson say about Monticelli? Have they seen other pictures of his than those in your house? You know that I myself still have the pretension to continue the job that Monticelli started here.