

Letter 609  
St. Rémy, 5 October 1889

My dear Theo,

I was longing for your letter, and so I was very glad to get it and to see from it that you are well, also Jo and the friends you speak of.

I have to ask you to send the white that I had ordered as soon as possible, and to add five or ten meters of canvas, at your discretion.

Now I must begin with some rather irritating news, as I see it. It is that there have been some expenses during my stay here which I thought M. Peyron had notified you of as they occurred, which he told me the other day he had not done, so that it has mounted up to about 125 francs, deducting from it the 10 that you sent by money order. It is for paints, canvas, frames and stretchers, my journey to Arles the other day, a linen suit and various repairs.

I use two colours here, white lead and ordinary blue, but in rather large quantities, and the canvas is for when I want to work on unprepared and stronger canvas.

Unfortunately, this comes just at the time when I would gladly have repeated my journey to Arles, etc.

That said, I tell you that we are having some superb autumn days and that I am taking advantage of them. I have some studies, among others a mulberry tree all yellow on stony ground, outlined against the blue of the sky [F637, JH1796], in which study I hope you will see that I am on Monticelli's track.

You will have received the package of canvases that I sent you last Saturday. It surprises me very much that M. Isaäcson wants to write an article on my studies. I should be glad to persuade him to wait, his article will lose absolutely nothing by it, and with yet another year of work, I could – I hope – put before him some more characteristic things, with more decisive drawing, and more expert knowledge with regard to the Provençal south.

It was very kind of M. Peyron to speak of my affairs in those terms – I have not dared to ask leave to go to Arles lately, which I very much want to do, thinking that he would disapprove. Not, however, that I suspected that he believed in any connection between my previous journey and the attack which closely followed it. The thing is that there are some people there whom I felt, and again feel, the need for seeing. Though not having, like the good Prévot, a mistress in the Midi who holds me captive, I can't help getting attached to people and things.

And now that I am staying on here provisionally and, as far as I can see, shall stay the winter – till spring – shan't I stay here too till the summer? That will depend mostly on my health.

What you say of Auvers<sup>1</sup> is nevertheless a very pleasant prospect, and either sooner or later – without looking further – we must fix on that. If I come north, even supposing that there were no room at this doctor's house, it is probable that after your recommendation and old Pissarro's he would find me board either with a family or quite simply at an inn. The main thing is to know the doctor, so that in case of an attack I do not fall into the hands of the police and get carried off to an asylum by force.

And I assure you that the North will interest me like a new country.

But anyway, for the moment there is absolutely no hurry.

I reproach myself for being so behindhand in my correspondence. I would like to write to Isaäcson, Gauguin and Bernard, but writing does not always succeed, and besides, my work presses.

Yes, I should like to tell Isaäcson that he would do well to wait, there is nothing in it yet of what, with continued health, I hope to attain. There isn't anything worth mentioning about my work now. When I am back, it will form at best a sort of whole, "Impressions of Provence," but what could he say now, when I still have to get the accent of the olives, the fig trees, the vines, the cypresses, all the other characteristic things, the same as the Alps, which must be given more character.

How I should like to see what Gauguin and Bernard have brought along. I have a study of two yellowing poplars against a background of mountains [F638, JH1797] and a view of the park here, an autumn effect in which the drawing is a little more naïve and more – home-felt.

Altogether it is difficult to leave a country before you have done something to prove that you have felt and loved it.

If I return to the North, I propose to make a lot of Greek studies, you know, studies painted with white and blue and a little orange only, as if in the open air.

I must draw and seek style. Yesterday I saw at the Almoner's here a picture which impressed me, a Provençal lady with a face full of intelligence and race, in a red dress, a figure like those that Monticelli had in mind.

It wasn't without great faults, but there was simplicity in it, and how sad it is to see how they have degenerated here, as we have from our people in Holland.

I am writing you in haste so as not to delay replying to your kind letter, hoping that you will write again without waiting long. I have seen very beautiful subjects for tomorrow – in the mountains.

Many kind regards to Jo and to the friends, especially thank old Pissarro, when you have a chance, for his information, which will certainly be useful.

Shaking both your hands, believe me,

Ever yours, Vincent

1. Pissarro had talked to Theo about Dr. Gachet in Auvers, a great art lover and art collector who might be willing to have Vincent live with him.