

Letter 446
Antwerp, c. 22 January 1886

Dear Theo,

I have now been painting at the academy for a few days, and I must say that I like it pretty well. Especially because there are all kinds of painters there, and I see them work in the most varied ways, something I have never experienced before – I mean seeing others work.

It would be by far the best thing for me to stay here a long time, for their models are good, and it will save a great deal of expenses of painting and models, and it is much more difficult than you seem to know, especially if one works alone. But let's hope that in this way things will improve.

Next Monday we shall get new models; in fact, then I shall begin in earnest, and for Monday I ought to have had a large canvas; they also told me that I must definitely have other brushes, etc.

But I haven't any money left, so it is really pressing, and I wish you would do what you can, for I am also doing what I can, and almost all the time it is such that hardly anything is left for food.

In the evening I also go there to draw, but I think the fellows in the drawing class all work badly and in an absolutely wrong way.

The painting class is better and, as I think I wrote you already, there are all kinds of people and of all ages, about five of them even older than I am.

I am working for the moment on a child's head.

It would be a relief to me if I could have your letter before Monday. What I wrote you about the clothes I want is also rather urgent. I have already made a few acquaintances who have seen the things I had brought for the admission.

Among the studies of former pupils that are hanging there are some damned good ones.

There are some by Neuhuys and Huibers among others.

But the best one perhaps is by an American, I do not know the name. A nude study of an old man, one would say like a Fortuny or a Regnault.

I do not think I can take a shorter cut to make progress, and whether I go to the country afterward or to a studio in Paris, at all events it is a good thing to see many others paint, and specially to work regularly from the model as much as ever is possible.

Goodbye, I write you in a hurry because I must get to work. But try your best not to keep me waiting, for the work depends on it, and I assure you in any case it will be hard enough for me.

With a handshake,

Ever yours, Vincent