

Letter 526  
Arles, c. 21 August 1888

My dear Theo,

I write in great haste to tell you that I have had a note from Gauguin, saying that he has not written much, but that he is quite ready to come South as soon as the opportunity arises.

They are enjoying themselves very much painting, arguing and fighting with the worthy Englishmen; he speaks well of Bernard's work, and B. speaks well of Gauguin's.

I am hard at it, painting with the enthusiasm of a Marseillais eating bouillabaisse, which won't surprise you when you know that what I'm at is the painting of some big sunflowers.

I have three canvases going – 1<sup>st</sup>, three huge flowers in a green vase, with a light background, a size 15 canvas [F 453, JH 1559]; 2<sup>nd</sup>, three flowers, one gone to seed, having lost its petals, and one a bud against a royal-blue background, size 25 canvas [F 459, JH 1560]; 3<sup>rd</sup>, twelve flowers and buds in a yellow vase (size 30 canvas) [F 456, JH 1561]. The last one is therefore light on light, and I hope it will be the best. Probably I shall not stop at that. Now that I hope to live with Gauguin in a studio of our own, I want to make decorations for the studio. Nothing but big flowers. Next door to your shop, in the restaurant, you know there is a lovely decoration of flowers; I always remember the big sunflowers in the window there.

If I carry out this idea there will be a dozen panels. So the whole thing will be a symphony in blue and yellow. I am working at it every morning from sunrise on, for the flowers fade so soon, and the thing is to do the whole in one rush.

You were quite right to tell Tasset that he must give us some tubes of colour for the 15 francs carriage not prepaid on the two packages. When I have finished these sunflowers, I may need yellow and blue perhaps. If so I will send a small order accordingly. I very much like the ordinary canvas of Tasset's which was 50 centimes more expensive than Bourgeois's; it is very well prepared.

I am very glad that G. is well.

I am beginning to like the South more and more.

I am working on another study of dusty thistles, with an innumerable swarm of white and yellow butterflies.

I have again missed some models which I had hoped to have these last few days. Koning has written saying that he is going to live in The Hague, and that he means to send you some studies.

I have heaps of ideas for new canvases. I saw again today the same coal boat with the workmen unloading it that I told you about before, at the same place as the boats loaded with sand which I sent you a drawing of [F 437, JH 1570; F 438, JH 1571]. It would be a splendid subject. Only I am beginning more and more to try a simple technique which is perhaps not impressionistic. I would like to paint in such a way that everybody, at least if they have eyes, would see it. I am writing in a hurry, but I wanted to enclose a few words to our sister.

A handshake, I must get back to work.

Ever yours, Vincent

Gauguin said that Bernard has made an album of my sketches and has shown it to him.