

Arles, 8 October 1888 (includes last part of 546)

My dear Theo,

My whole mind, like yours, is set on Gauguin now. And like you, I hope that he will come right away.

This is great about Bague!

Not that it amazes me, but I am pleased for Bague, for I always thought him the penitent thief.

So if you happen to see him – and if you don't, then go on purpose – let him know that I have a “Starry Night,” the “Furrows,” the “Poet's Garden,” the “Vineyard.”

In short, romantic landscapes.

Do not say too much about the studies, which certainly are more trouble to do, but are less saleable. If you had sent me 200 fr. I should have done the same thing with the sea at Stes-Maries.

We are now in the midst of a merciless mistral, it is very bad for the work. But later, before the real winter, we shall have more fine weather, and in any case I hope to add other things to the series I am working on.

Do you know what I have left today out of the money you sent this very day? Well, I have 6 francs.

I asked you to send it to me on Friday, and I only received your letter four days later, on Monday noon.

It is mostly the fault of the frames, which I have already ordered, and which I need very badly. I can only finish in a frame. And besides, we may make use of them in Marseilles.

I have three kinds of wood, walnut, chestnut and pine, for the frames.

And if you see him, do give Bague my kind regards, and tell him that I recommend him my “Vineyard” and my “Starry Night.” And the same to Tripp. Didn't they buy a lot from Mauve, didn't they even buy Mauve's last big water colours at a good price? I do not know, it is so long since I saw anything of them. But in the past I never quarreled with either Tripp or Bague.

Only, while not saying too much about the first two batches, tell Bague that I am very pleased he has bought that study, and that I shall be doing studies as long as the autumn is propitious, and that I want him to come and see them when we send them with some Gauguins.

As for Thomas, I think it would be the right thing to go and see him.

I have just written that, all told, I have 6 francs left.

Is that enough for a week? No.

So I really beg you to send me a louis, and that by return mail, please. That will give me 16 francs for the week, and then I shall manage to get through. But do not delay. Besides, I must be ready to work as soon as the fine weather appears. We have an absolutely merciless mistral, but I must hold myself in readiness, the work is done in short intervals. So that everything must be prepared and ready for the attack.

Tasset has not sent any canvas. It is very, very urgent, do please order 10 or at any rate 5 meters from him at once. It is very urgent, because already I have bought some canvas here so as to be ready for tomorrow or the day after, according to what the weather will be. The thing is that you must take advantage of the intervals in the mistral and be ready beforehand.

My dear Theo, a thousand thanks for the paints and your letter of today.

The work holds me in its grip, and I am sure I shall not lose by it if I can go on like this, the big canvases are all good.

But they are exhausting too.

Herewith yesterday's letter which I am sending you, such as it is. From it you will see what I think of Gauguin's portrait. Too dark, too sad.

I do not say that I do not like it as it is, but he will change, and he must come. Yes, indeed, they spend less than I, yes – but – if I was with two others as he is – if he spent a little more it would be better. Once more, one must not do flesh with Prussian blue. Because then it ceases to be flesh; it becomes wood. And there is nothing so urgent for Gauguin, nothing better for him to do, than to join me. However, I venture to think that with regard to colouring, the other Breton pictures will be better than the portrait he has sent me, done, after all, in haste. And I am far from judging studies such as that. However, you will see for yourself.

Say, if you can, don't let me be so hard up all the week. If you can, send me another louis. I don't quite know how to manage without it.

Yours, Vincent