

My dear Theo,

Thanks for your letter and the 50-fr. note. As you learned from my wire, Gauguin has arrived in good health. He even seems to me better than I am.

Of course he is very pleased with the sale you have effected, and I no less, since in this way certain expenses absolutely necessary for the installation need not wait, and will not weigh wholly on your shoulders. Gauguin will certainly write you today. He is very interesting as a man, and I have every confidence that we shall do loads of things with him. He will probably produce a great deal here, and I hope perhaps I shall too.

And then I dare hope that the burden will be a little less heavy for you, and I even hope, much less heavy. I myself realize the necessity of producing even to the extent of being mentally crushed and physically drained by it, just because after all I have no other means of ever getting back what we have spent.

I cannot help it that my pictures do not sell.

Nevertheless the time will come when people will see that they are worth more than the price of the paint and my own living, very meager after all, that is put into them.

I have no other desire nor any other interest as to money or finance, than primarily to have no debts.

But my dear boy, my debt is so great that when I have paid it, when all the same I hope to succeed in doing, the pains of producing pictures will have taken my whole life from me, and it will seem to me then that I have not lived. The only thing is that perhaps the production of the pictures will become a little more difficult for me, and as to numbers, there will not always be so many.

It is agonizing to me that there is no demand for them now, because you suffer for it, but as far as I am concerned – if only you were not too worried by my bringing nothing in – it would pretty much be all the same to me.

But in money matters it is enough for me to realize this truth – that a man who lives for 50 years and spends 2000 a year has spent 100,000 francs, and must bring in 100,000 francs again. To do 1000 pictures at 100 francs during one's life as an artist comes very, very, very hard, but even when the picture is at 100 francs . . . once again . . . at times our task is very heavy. But there is no changing that.

We shall probably bypass Tasset altogether, because to a large extent we are going to use cheaper colours, Gauguin as well as I. And in the same way we are going to prepare the canvas ourselves. For a while I had a feeling that I was going to be ill, but Gauguin's arrival has so taken my mind off it that I'm sure it will pass. I must not neglect my food for a time, and that is all, absolutely all there is to it.

And after a time you will have some work again.

Gauguin brought a magnificent canvas, which he has exchanged with Bernard, Breton women in a green field, white, black, green, and a note of red, and the dull flesh tints. After all, we must all be of good cheer.

I believe that the time will come when I too shall sell, but I am so far behind with you, and while I go on spending, I bring nothing in. Sometimes the thought of it saddens me.

I am very glad of what you write, that one of the Dutchmen is coming to stay with you, so that you will not be alone any more, and it's all right, absolutely all right, especially since the winter will soon be here.

And now I am in a hurry and must go out and set to work again on another size 30 canvas.

Very soon, when Gauguin writes, I'll add another letter to his. Naturally, I don't know beforehand what Gauguin will say of this country, and of our life, but in any case he is very pleased with the good sale you have managed for him.

Goodbye for now, and a good handshake.

Ever yours,

Vincent