

My dear Theo,

Tomorrow I shall send a small roll of canvases by goods train. There are four, namely the following:

1. View of Arles – Orchards in bloom [F 515, JH 1683]
2. Ivy
3. Lilacs [F 579, JH 1692]
4. Red Chestnuts in the Jardin des Plantes in Arles [F 517, JH 1689]

Which will go with the ones you already have, such as the red and green Vineyard, the Garden, the Harvest, the Starry Sky.

I am putting in with them some more studies which are dry, but which are more studies from nature than subjects for pictures.

And it is always like that, you must make several before you can get a whole that has character. Now for the subjects of these seven studies:

“Irises”—“View from the Asylum at St. Rémy,” size 30 canvases. “Peach Trees in Bloom” (Arles), “Meadows” (Arles), “Olives” (St. Rémy), “Old Willows” (Arles), “Orchard in Bloom.”

[These were F 608, JH 1691; F 622, JH 1766; F 514, JH 1681; unable to identify; F 712, JH 1740; F 520, JH 1690; F 515, JH 1683]

Now the next package, which will follow in a little while, will be made up mostly of the wheat fields and olive gardens.

As you see, I have been to Arles to get these canvases, the attendant here accompanied me. We went to M. Salles’ house, but he had gone on vacation for two months, then to the hospital to see M. Rey, whom I did not find either. Then we spent the day with my former neighbours, such as my old charwoman and some others.

You get very fond of people who have seen you ill, and it has done me a world of good to see again some people who were kind and gentle with me then. Someone told me that M. Rey had passed an examination and had been to Paris, but the porter at the hospital said he did not know anything about it. I am curious to know if you have seen him, for he had intended to go and see the exhibition and to pay you a visit then. The doctor here may not be going to Paris, he suffers a good deal from his gout.

I have received the second package of canvases and paints and I thank you very much for them.

The last canvas I have done is a view of mountains with a dark hut at the bottom among some olive trees.

I expect you will be greatly absorbed by the thought of the child who is to come; I am very glad it is so; I dare think that in time you will find a good deal of inner tranquility that way.

The fact that in Paris you take on, as it were, a second nature, which over and above the preoccupation of business and art makes you less strong than the peasants—that fact does not prevent you from linking yourself through the bonds of a wife and child, with this simpler and truer nature, the ideal of which keeps haunting us.

What a business, that Sécrotan sale! I am always pleased that the Millets hold their own. But I should very much like to see more good reproductions of Millet, so as to reach the people.

His work is sublime, especially considered as a whole, and it will become more and more difficult to get an idea of it when the pictures are dispersed.

I am sorry not to be able to put the wheat field with the reaper into the package.

Write me a line soon. A handshake for you and Jo.

Ever yours, Vincent