

Letter 243
The Hague, c. 6 – 8 November 1882

Dear Theo,

While waiting for more information on the process, I have, with the help of Smulder's printer, made a lithograph of which I have the pleasure of sending you the very first print. I drew this lithograph on a piece of prepared paper, probably the same as that which Buhot mentioned to you.

Meanwhile, I long very much to compare the paper of the *Vie Moderne* with that which I bought from Smulders. S.'s is very expensive, 1.75 guilders a sheet, but it is pleasant to work on.

You see, I scratched this sheet as simply as possible. I shall be quite satisfied if there is something in it which reminds you of the old lithographs from the period when there was in general more enthusiasm for this branch of art than there is now.

I can get a hundred prints for 5 guilders, and for a little more the stone becomes my property.

Is this worth while, do you think? I should love to make more of them. For instance, a series of about thirty figures.

But in the matter of printing, I must first know your opinion.

But this is what I should like: if we could show, without a third party's intermediary, a series of about thirty pages, not too elaborate, but vigorously done, which we had got printed at our own expense. This would give us more prestige in the eyes of the people whom we shall need later, namely the editors of the magazines. But in business matters you see more clearly than I, and sometime we shall talk it over together.

Do try to give me all the information you can about the process. On what must one work with autographic ink? Can everything be printed that is drawn with autographic ink? Etc.

Here is my model, a sweeper from the *Bezuidenhout* [F 979a, JH 257], so with a handshake,

Yours sincerely, Vincent

If at all possible, do not send me the money later than the tenth, for I have had some extra expenses because of one thing and another.

I want to add a few words to this letter.

I think Buhot, for instance, will be able to tell you something constructive about the technique more clearly with this sheet in hand.

Wouldn't it be great if this proved a success? But for me, what is a hundred times more important than the process is the drawings themselves. I work with the model as much as my purse allows. For you understand one must have ammunition in the form of studies once one starts illustrating if one wants to continue it for any length of time. And more important things will follow from it. So I cannot stress this enough: it is of more importance to me to have a supply of drawings on hand than to hurry to get employment, though such would be quite welcome to me.

But if they do not readily accept them, well, nothing's lost, and I think that later I shall get better results with the larger stock of drawings. Also because I shouldn't wonder if the need for draughtsmen became more and more manifest.

I am very sorry that I did not know this process before. When I was in Brussels, I tried to find employment with some lithographer, but was rebuffed everywhere. I asked there for any kind of work, as I only wanted to see something of lithography and especially to learn. But they didn't want people like that.

Simmonneau and Fouvey were the least unwilling. They said that the young men they had tried to instruct had given them little satisfaction, and business was so slack that they had enough employees. I went on and mentioned De Groux's and Rop's lithographs, but they said, Yes, but such draughtsmen do not exist any more. The impression I received there and in other establishments was that lithography was definitely dying out.

However, this new invention proves that they are trying to revive it.

What beautiful things have been lithographed – Charlet, Raffet, Lemud, besides the others whom we talked about recently.

Last night I looked over the *Gavarnis* with renewed pleasure.

I hope you see from this specimen that I am very eager to try my best to make something.

I wrote you, didn't I, how I came to make this as a result of my telling Smulders what you wrote me about that paper, and his saying that he still had some of it in stock?

He seemed rather astonished when I came back with a drawing a few hours after I had bought it.

Do you want another copy with a wider margin?

I have just finished drawing two diggers.

If this size is too large (but I hardly think so, as it is rather vigorously drawn) I could – but first I must know how to erase something on that paper – reduce them by a half or a third without losing accuracy, namely by means of quadrangles.

Well, we'll see about this.

At the same time you see on this sheet one of the studies which I have several of and which I wrote you about.