

Letter 483  
Arles, c. 7 May 1888

My dear Theo,

I have just received your letter enclosing 100 Frs. Thank you very much, also for the earlier one (likewise dated from Brussels) enclosing 50 Frs. This is to tell you that I got them all right. Only there must be at least two letters that I sent to Paris, and a roll of drawings which, just as you thought, Koning cannot have sent on to you. Koning has sent me a postcard saying that he had had a note from the Independents that if the pictures were not taken away between April 5 and 6, they would be deposited elsewhere in a furniture store. All he had to do was to get them, if he meant between May 5 and 6. It's likely that the good boy has rather lost his head, because of your being away.

I am glad that you have sold a Degas, and to hear what you say of this buyer Meunier. I have seen very fine things by him myself and of course by Henri de Braekeleer too.

That fellow who came to Paris from the Vingtistes, you remember, Los Rios de Guadalquivir [R. de los Rios], or something even more sonorous, declared that De Braekeleer had been reduced to utter helplessness by a disease of the brain that had left him a hopeless wreck. I should like to think it isn't true. Have you heard of it?

You will see by the letters in question that I have taken a studio, an entire 4-room house at 180 francs a year. Now the thing is to go and sleep there. I am going to buy a mat and a mattress and blanket today. I also have to pay the hotel 40 francs, so I shan't have much left. But from now on I shall be free of that inn where one paid far too much and wasn't comfortable at that. And I shall begin to have a home of my own. You will find details in the letters I have already written. There has been a good deal of mistral here, so I did the dozen little drawings which I have sent you.

Now the weather is splendid, I have done another two big drawings and five small ones.

I have found a case to send my things in, and I hope they'll leave tomorrow. I am sending the five small drawings to you in Brussels today.

You will see some lovely things at Claude Monet's. And you will think what I send very poor stuff in comparison. Just now I am dissatisfied with myself and dissatisfied with what I do, but I have just a glimmer of hope that I'm going to do better in the end.

And then I hope that later on other artists will rise up in this lovely country and do for it what the Japanese have done for theirs. And it's not so bad to work towards that end.

I often used to go for walks with Rappard where you said. Is the suburb and the country beyond the Congress Column called Schaerbeek? I remember a place called, I think, the valley of Jehosaphat, where there were some poplars, and where Hypolyte Boulanger the landscapist did some lovely things.

I remember sunsets in the Jardin des Plantes seen from the boulevard which runs alongside.

You will find some reeds for Koning in the case I'm sending. The address from now on will be:

2 Place Lamartine.

I hope – indeed I'm sure – that when you return to Paris it will be spring at last, and my word, none too soon.

You get nowhere if you live at a hotel, but now after a year I shall have some furniture, etc., which will be my own; and though this would not matter if I were only in the South for a few months, it is very different when it's a question of a long stay. And I have no fear but that I shall always love this country. It is rather like Japanese art, once you love it, you never go back on it.

With a handshake,

Ever yours, Vincent