

Letter 568  
Arles, 7 January 1889

My dear Theo,

Perhaps I shall not write you a very long letter today, but anyway a line to let you know that I got back home today. I do so regret that you had all that trouble for such a trifle. Forgive me, who am after all probably the primary cause of it all. I did not foresee that it would be important enough for you to be told of it. Enough... M. Rey came to see the paintings with two of his friends, doctors, and they were uncommonly quick at understanding at least what complementaries are. I now intend to do a portrait of M. Rey and possibly other portraits as soon as I am a little used to painting again.

Thanks for your last letter. Indeed, I always feel your presence, but do realise on your side too that I am working at the same thing as yourself.

How I wish you had seen the portrait of Brias by Delacroix and the whole Montpellier Musée where Gauguin took me. Since others before us have worked in the South, indeed it is rather difficult for me to believe that we are so far astray as all that. As for it's being a hot country, my word, I can't help thinking of a certain country Voltaire talks of, not to mention the simple "castles in the air." These are the thoughts which occur to me as I come back to my own home.

I am very anxious to know how the Bongers are and if the relations with them continue. I hope so.

If you agree – now that Gauguin has gone – we will put the money back again at 150 fr. I think that now I shall see calmer days here than in the past year.

What I greatly need for my better information are all the reproductions of Delacroix's pictures that are still available at that shop where they sell, I think at a franc apiece, lithographs after artists, ancient and modern, etc. I most certainly don't want the more expensive ones.

How are our Dutch friends De Haan and Isaäcson? Give them my very kind regards.

Only I think that we must still keep quiet with regard to my own painting. If you want any pictures, certainly I can send you some already, but when my peace of mind comes back to me, I hope to do different things. However, as to the Independents, do what seems best to you, and what the others do.

But you have no idea how much I regret that your journey to Holland has not yet come off.

After all, we cannot alter what has happened, but make up for it yourself by letter, or any way you can, as far as possible, and tell the Bongers how I regret having involuntarily caused this delay. I shall be writing Mother and Wil one of these days, and I must also write Jet Mauve.

Write me soon, and set your mind at rest about my health. It will completely cure me to know that things are going well with you. What is Gauguin doing? As his family are in the North, and he has been invited to exhibit in Belgium and now has some success in Paris, I like to think that he has landed on his feet. A good handshake. In spite of everything I am terribly happy that this is a thing of the past. Once more a good hearty handshake.

Ever Yours, Vincent