

Letter 278  
The Hague, 2 April 1883

Dear Theo,

I was very glad to get your letter and thank you warmly for what was enclosed. But I am very sorry that probably sending it to me after all inconvenienced you more than you say. I sincerely hope that you have got that money back since.<sup>1</sup>

So Hendrik has also returned from the Indies. Were he and his family in good health? Or was ill health the cause for their return? In the past Hendrik made a much less favourable impression on me than his two brothers – is this your opinion too?

Lately I have been working with printer's ink, which is diluted with turpentine and applied with a brush. It gives very deep tones of black. Diluted with some Chinese white, it also gives good greys. By adding more or less turpentine, one can even wash it in very thinly.

I think it will give good results on that paper Buhot gave you.

Sometime when you are here we'll talk that matter over, and I will show you drawings that might be made on it. A year ago it puzzled me, how to get some very deep tones of black, but I found a few of them in the printer's office. So now I can penetrate a little further into seeking for plastic effects and chiaroscuro.

Thanks for the good wishes on my birthday. It happened to be a very pleasant day, as I just had an excellent model for a digger. One thing I can assure you of, the work gets more and more stimulating, and it gives me, so to speak, more vitality; and then I always think of you, because it is you who make it possible for me to work. That is, without fatal obstacles, without direct handicaps. Difficulties sometimes spur one on even more. Now the time has come to put more energy into it.

My ideal is to work with more and more models, quite a herd of poor peoples to whom the studio would be a kind of harbour of refuge on winter days, or when they are out of work or in great need. Where they would know that there was fire, food and drink for them, and a little money to be earned. At present this is so only on a very small scale, but I hope it will grow. Right now I confine myself to a few models, and stick to them – I cannot spare one of them, but would have use for some more.

You write about some art lovers who might take my work some time, even though it shouldn't become exactly a current article. Well, I really believe the same. If I should succeed in putting some warmth and love into my work, it will find its friends. The thing is to keep on working.

I am glad your patient is progressing, though slowly. It is beautiful spring weather here, the evenings are indescribably beautiful. If the weather is the same in Paris, it will do her good. Is she up already?

Today I have the old man again, and must go and get my things ready.

This week I met Van der Weele again, and also expect him here one of these days.

Probably you will be very busy with the Salon. I suppose you can't tell me approximately when you will come to Holland yet, can you? Have a good time, and if you have a moment to spare, write me again.

Adieu, with a handshake,

Yours sincerely, Vincent

1. Theo had lent some money to a cousin from the Indies.