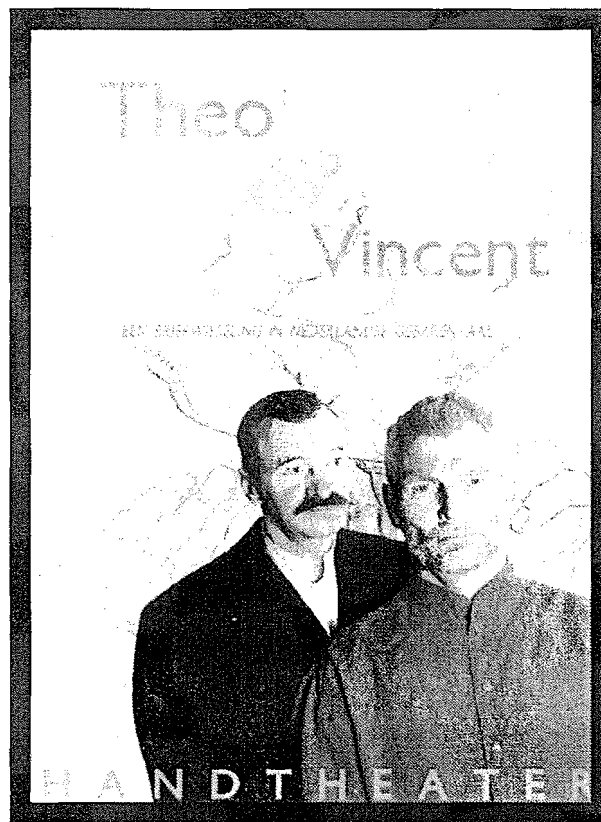

Deaf Way II International Arts Festival

Theo & Vincent

Handtheater (Netherlands)



Phyllis Frelich Theatre on the Green, Gallaudet University

Tuesday July 9, 2002 at 8:30 pm

Wednesday July 10, 2002 at 11:30 am

Saturday July 13, 2002 at 2:00 pm



Presented by Gallaudet University

Festival coordinated by

Quest: arts for everyone

BIJLAGE

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**ENGELSE TEKST
THEO & VINCENT**

Vincent

My house is golden yellow like my shirt, with bright green shutters, like grass.
It's on a square with planetrees, acacias and oleanders.
The house shines in the sun, and above it is blue sky.
In it I can live, breath, think and paint.
The walls are whitewashed and here is a red tiled floor.
Downstairs there are two studios. In one of them there is a kitchen.
Upstairs to one side is my bedroom, with simple furniture, a bed, a table and two cane chairs.
On the wall I have hung studies for portraits that I've made.
The guestroom has grand, elegant furniture, a bed, a dressing table and a chest of drawers. The bedspread is blue.
In this tiny room I want to hang up six large canvases of sunflowers.
If you open the window, you look out onto a park where you can see the sun rise.

It's very windy outside. I must make sure my easel doesn't blow over.
The canvas is fluttering in the wind, so I can't control my brush properly.
Despite the wind, the sun and the inquisitive people around me, I work as best I can and the results are astonishing, because I manage to get the essence on the canvas.

PAINTING 1: BRIDGE (together)

Vincent

You give me money and I give you paintings in return.
I'm dependent on you. We can't change the situation. That's the way it is. You're doomed to sell things, and I paint the whole time. Yet I hope in the end you'll realise that we've created all this art together.
My eyes are tired. My head is empty. I'm not sick, but I must eat properly and rest for a while, otherwise I'll collapse.

Theo

It hurts me to hear that you are not well. You must have been working a lot and forgetting to look after yourself. What makes me sad is that you give your money to other people. I wish you'd keep it for yourself.

By the way... your friend Gauguin... who is staying with you right now... I've sold a very large painting of his for 500 francs. I'll send you the money so you can pass it on to him.

Vincent

The need to paint is mentally and physically exhausting. I can't help it that the paintings don't sell. Gauguin and I use cheap paint and we stretch and prepare the canvases ourselves.

I believe the day will come when our paintings will sell, but not yet. Now you earn the money and I spend it. That hurts.

Theo

Money and selling the paintings are not an issue to me. You don't have to pay

me back the money you owe me. What I want is that you shouldn't have to worry. We can live on what I earn. If we don't spend too much, don't overdo things, we can manage for quite some time.

PAINTING 2: HARVEST (together)

Theo

Gauguin and you are working so hard. If you have no money, if you have nothing to eat, if you're sick, please let me know.

Vincent

Gauguin and I just keep on working till we drop. Then we go to the bar and then off to bed very early. That's the way we live.

I've painted two amusing studies on thin canvas with thick impasto. One shows my chair in daylight, with a pipe and tobacco on the seat. The other shows Gauguin's chair at night, with two books and a candlestick on the seat.

Now it is winter. The sun breaks through the clouds now and then. I work indoors and paint from memory. I hate the cold, but I don't mind the summer heat.

Gauguin is disappointed in me. He doesn't like the yellow house nor the town. Both of us are having serious problems. We have arguments about art.

EAR MOVEMENT, VISIT FROM THEO

Vincent

I'll stay in the hospital for a few more days. Once my head calms down, I'll go back home/ Please, don't worry – that is too much for me.

There was no need for you to make that train journey.

I struck an artery and ran a high temperature Physically I'm fine. It was just an artist's aberration.. So forget about my illness and your journey. That's all over now.

MOVEMENT 3: INSANITY

Theo

How are you feeling? I haven't had a letter from you. I keep on waiting without knowing. Please tell me so that I can help you, just like you helped me.

Jo and I are so happy, yet you're having such a bad time. That makes us so sad. As brothers we have always been close, and Jo imagined that you would be a brother to her too.

In our apartment I've hung your paintings on the walls. They are so cheerful, and natural.

I want to visit you, but it's such a long way, I don't really have the time, and I wonder whether my visit would serve any purpose. I don't know.

MOVEMENT 4: PRISON

Vincent

In your kind letter I sense so much concern about me that I can no longer remain silent.

I am in my right mind, I am the brother you know. I must tell you what has happened. Some people handed in a petition to the mayor saying that I should not be allowed to live as a free man. The mayor spoke to the chief of police, who had me arrested. Now I am behind bars, even though I haven't been found guilty of anything.

If I were to express my indignation, people would think I was crazy. So I restrain myself, I keep on hoping and I remain patient. That they turn against me, is a terrible blow. I am ill, it is cowardly of them!

MOVEMENT 5: THEO AND VINCENT WALKING

Vincent

I have nothing to take my mind off things - I'm not even allowed to smoke. Night and day I think of you, of my family and friends. There are so many problems for me and for you. I would sooner be dead.

I want to work in the orchards. Can you send me some tubes of paint?

PAINTING 3: ORCHARD (together)

Vincent

At the end of the month I want to go to the lunatic asylum.

I can no longer live like this - all alone in the studio, then off for a drink and a meal somewhere, with people criticizing me all the time. And living together with another artist is very difficult and a great responsibility.

I have packed up the furniture and put it into storage, and I have rolled up the paintings and sent them off to you.

You have given me all this with so much love. You are the only one who has supported me all these years. That makes me sad.

Theo

I have given you money, but you have given me your paintings, your brotherhood. Money doesn't matter, brotherhood does.

You say you are confused, but I see no signs of insanity in your letter, yet you want to go into an asylum. That hurts me.

Our apartment looks very cheerful. Your painting of the sunflowers is hanging on the wall. It looks like silk, embroidered with gold.

Jo and I, we feel really happy.

PAINTING 4: THE SOWER (Theo, alone)

Vincent

If not for your friendship, people would drive me to suicide.

The famous English writer, Dickens wrote a book. It says that a glass of wine a day, a piece of bread and cheese and a pipe of tobacco make thoughts of suicide vanish.

I'll turn over a new leaf. I'll go to Africa and join the Foreign Legion for five years.

No, I won't manage that. But to pay the asylum 100 francs a month for the rest of my life is such a waste.

Theo

Why do you want to go to Africa? Do you want to be a soldier all of a sudden? No, you're afraid that you won't be able to paint for the rest of your life, that I'll have to support you and take care of you. You're so afraid you won't be able to pay me back. But there's no need to worry. I earned a lot last year, so I can keep on giving you money. Please, don't worry.

You're sick in the head because of lack of money and a hard life.

Vincent

I used to be frightened of crazy people. But now I'm here I'm hardly frightened any more. People are constantly yelling and screaming like animals in a zoo, but if they have an attack, they help each other. When I work in the garden, they all come and watch. They are modest and polite – a good deal nicer than the decent citizens of the town.

I may well stay in here a long time. I feel so calm here, and I finally manage to paint.

Theo

I hope that staying in the asylum will restore your strength. It reminds me of something I saw in Paris. There was a road leading up the hill, and a horse drawn carriage was trying to get to the top. But halfway up the horses became exhausted and the coach had to turn round. At the bottom of the hill the coachman turned round again. He whipped the horses and this time they got up the hill with no difficulty. It's the same with you.

Vincent

I sent you two boxes with canvases. There's a lot of rubbish in among them, but I've sent you the lot so that you can choose. Throw away anything that's no good.

Theo

I've received the boxes. Everything's arrived safe and sound.
(Paintings.)

They are not beautiful or refined, but they are so stirring, so close to reality.

PAINTING 5: STARRY NIGHT (Vincent, alone)

Theo

I hope you won't stay in the asylum for a long time. It can't be much fun with all those lunatics around you. Tell me what it's like there. Do you get on well with the others? Is there enough food? What can you see of the surrounding area?

Vincent

It really is all right here. I have a small room of my own. Through the bars I can

see a walled cornfield where the sun rises in the morning. There are at least thirty empty rooms in the asylum, so I have an extra room to paint in. The food is not so good. It smells a bit mouldy, like those eating-houses in Paris, the ones with the cockroaches.

Theo

When I look at your paintings, I wonder what goes on in your head. Your paintings have a rare intensity of colour. You have put your ideas about nature and life onto canvas. This has taken you so deep down, so far away and so high up that you are bound to feel dizzy. If you venture into such mysterious country, you may become confused. Don't go too far. I suggest you stick to concrete subjects.

MOVEMENT 6: VINCENT ON THE GROUND

Theo

I sent you a letter with 10 francs inside. Didn't you receive it? You used to reply so quickly. Now I haven't heard from you for a long time, that worries me.

MOVEMENT 7: THEO SITTING ON A CHAIR

Theo

It was so strange that I hadn't had a letter from you. Then the doctor wrote me a letter saying that you've been ill for some time, but that you are feeling better now. He also wrote me that you've been having nightmares. Tell me how I can help you stop the nightmares.

You're more sensitive than I am and I can imagine that your thoughts are strangling you. We are more than just brothers. I can't manage without you.

Vincent

I was out painting in the field on a windy day. I became totally confused. I have a feeling that the attacks are going to start again. It's awful. I haven't been able to eat for four days because my throat is swollen up. They say I've been eating dirt off the floor, but I can't remember. I can't keep going, and I'm losing hope.

Theo

I love your drawing of the view from your window, the cornfield. Here in Paris, we don't have cornfields. I don't even know when the corn is harvested or the potatoes are picked. Of course you meet interesting people in Paris, but sometimes I get tired of them. I'd like to get away, but I can't, so I'm glad we have one of your paintings on the wall in our apartment.

PAINTING 6: CORNFIELD WITH REAPER (Vincent, alone)

Vincent

In the farmer I can see the image of death. The harvested corn represents dying humanity. But there is nothing sad about it. The sun bathes everything in a fine golden light. The weather has been fine for a long time now, yet I've been indoors for two months. I don't know why. I don't dare go outside. The empty fields make me feel terribly lonely.

Theo

At the gallery I see countless paintings and sometimes I get tired of them. I prefer paintings from nature, I find them attractive.

Vincent

The fact you're getting tired of paintings proves that you are too worried. Don't just concentrate on paintings, open up your eyes. If not, you'll collapse.

Theo

Paintings of abstract ideas or in a particular style, I don't like. You may reply that painters need to develop a complicated train of thought before they can paint, but I'm telling you that artists also need to be inspired by nature from time to time. I can understand and appreciate paintings like that, like your paintings.

Vincent

I constantly paint from nature, without thinking about it. It's like being a shoemaker. Does he think? No, he makes shoes. Whether it's making shoes or paintings, you learn how to do it by doing it every day. It's a slow business, but rushing things isn't the answer.

Theo

You're so right to think of yourself as a shoemaker. Compared to those of the famous masters, your canvases are just as good. Nowadays everyone can do what he likes – people are no longer forced to stick to a particular style. You can work from nature, and you don't have to do things this way or that way. Everyone is free to choose his own colours and his own lines and to express his innermost feelings on the canvas.

PAINTING 7: CYPRESSES AGAINST A STARRY SKY (together)

Theo

Jo has had a baby boy. He yells a lot, but he looks healthy. It was a painful birth, because her water broke too early. Luckily we have an patient doctor who doesn't immediately reach for the forceps. The baby has blue eyes and fat cheeks, like the one you painted.

PAINTING 8: PIETA (together)

Theo

The baby is growing really fast. He lies awake for hours without crying, laughs and babbles learning to talk. If you come to visit us, you can play with him – it would do you good.

Vincent

You have sent me several letters and I have tried to read them, but I can't. My head is so heavy – it doesn't hurt, but I feel dazed. I have been patient for a whole year. I feel bored. I must get away. I'm longing to see you, Jo, the baby and our friends. I'm definitely coming to Paris. It's better for me to be there.

Theo

Are you coming alone? But on the way you'll see places you know and you may become confused. So let someone you know accompany you, don't travel alone.

Vincent

You say I should let someone accompany me? I don't see why. I'm not some kind of dangerous animal. If I have an attack and the train reaches a station, someone will help me, and I won't resist.

I'll get there around 5 o'clock.

MOVEMENT 8: PARIS 1 (together)

Vincent

How noisy Paris is! Here, in this little village, it is beautiful. There are old houses with thatched roofs.

I've met a doctor, Doctor Gachet, and I've painted a portrait of him. I have a feeling that I will visit him often in the future and will be able to paint quite well there. He has invited me to come for a meal every Sunday or Monday.

He is an intelligent man with a love of art. That's why I can work with him.

I painted a portrait of the doctor's daughter, in pink, an upright, oblong canvas. And another one, horizontal, a yellow-and-green cornfield. They complement each other well, although people haven't noticed yet.

Theo

Our baby was seriously ill and we were terribly worried. But the doctor told us that the baby would not die. He couldn't stop crying and wailing. I felt so helpless. Now he is feeling better.

I admire Jo. She's a real mother. Life is so hard for her. We're wondering if we should move down to the second floor, move out to join you, or go back to Holland.

Even though I work all day, Jo finds it hard to make ends meet. I don't earn anything extra. My employers are penny-pinchers. They treat me like a beginner. When I tell them what I feel and make demands which they reject, it occurs to me that I should start my own business. I think that's what I'll do!

Please come and visit me.

MOVEMENT 9: PARIS 2 (together)

Vincent

The whirlwind, which has struck you, has struck me too. O, my God! I try to keep in good spirits, but my life is like a tree with damaged roots. Once I got back here (from Paris) I painted till the brush fell from my hand.

I've painted three large canvases of cornfields against angry skies. I've tried to express sadness and loneliness in them. They remain calm even in adversity, and we have achieved that together.

PAINTING 9: CORNFIELD WITH CROWS (Vincent, alone)

Theo: epilogue

Mother, dearest mama,

I am too sad to write. Pouring out my thoughts onto paper doesn't help. Please can I come and see you? I could leave in the morning and reach you in the evening.

The pain in my head and my heart will never go away.

Vincent said he wanted to go, and shortly afterwards he left.

Life weighed down so heavily on him – now everyone praises his talent.

From the time we were small, and all through my life, he was my very own brother.