CEZANNE



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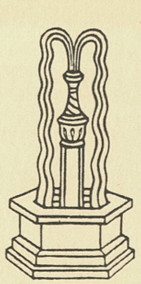
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PAUL CEZANNE

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MILTON S. FOX, Editor • WALTER NEURATH of Thames & Hudson Inc., Supervisor of Color Plates

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THE BATHERS (color lithograph, 1899) *Museum of Modern Art (Lillie P. Bliss Collection)*

PAUL CEZANNE

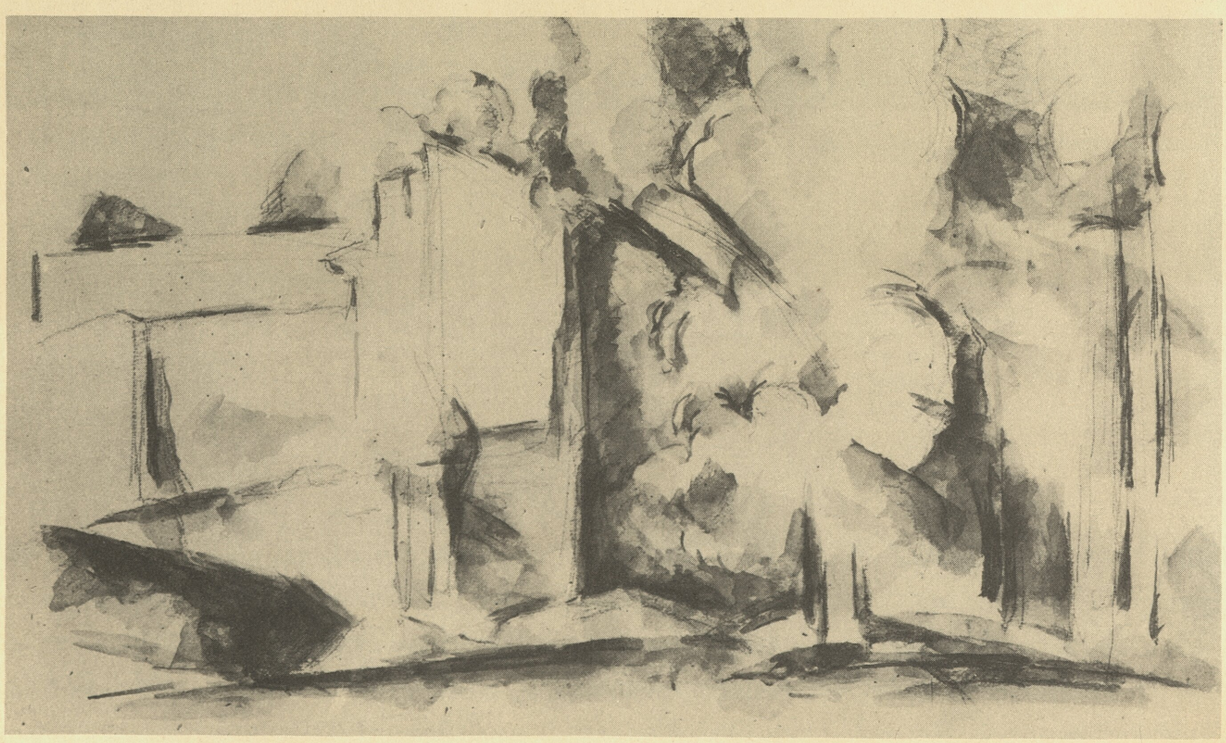
(1839-1906)

BY HIS FATHER, A SELF-MADE MAN who had acquired a bank in Aix and an estate near by, the young Cézanne was sent to law school and destined for the family business. In his own dreams he was destined for the arts, and at twenty-two, after much resistance at home, he joined his schoolmate and closest friend, Emile Zola, in Paris where they had envisioned together a life of heroic independence as painter and writer. Cézanne threw himself fervently into the advanced currents of Parisian art, assimilating realism and the tonal style of Manet. At the same time he discovered in

the museums the grandeur of the old masters and his own kinship with tradition. Year after year he sent pictures to the Salon where they were automatically rejected. A timid and passionate provincial, he was ill at ease in Paris and suffered from his profound uncertainty. In 1870 he returned to Aix to sit out the Franco-Prussian War in hiding. In the North again in 1872, he renewed his friendship with the Impressionist Pissarro who was to him a second father, teaching him to paint more objectively and with a brighter palette. From this association with Pissarro dates Cézanne's maturity as an artist. In the seventies, he exhibited with the Impressionist group, but continued to send his offerings—still unaccepted—to the official Salon.

He was fortunate both in his father's resistance to his calling—a resistance that perhaps stimulated his tenacity, his will to achievement—and in his father's eventual consent. From this severe bourgeois Cézanne obtained an allowance and then in 1886 a fortune. Without these the painter could hardly have survived. He was a tormented, unsociable nature, easily depressed, and helpless in practical matters. He suffered continual rebuffs from the critics and sold little before he was fifty.

Yet it should be said that he was appreciated early, first by his friend, Zola, who encouraged and pushed Cézanne into his career and dedicated to him the book he had written in defense of Manet; then by the great artists of his own generation—Renoir, Pissarro, Monet, and Degas—who bought his works. In 1877 this self-doubting man had the astonishment and happiness to read in a friendly review of the current Impressionist show that he was "a great painter" whose pictures could be likened for their classic qualities to Greek art of the best period, even to the Parthenon. In the 1890's he won a more general recognition; although the public and the Salon remained hostile, the younger artists—Gauguin, van Gogh, Signac, Bernard, and Denis—spoke of him as the great



HOUSE AMONG TREES (watercolor, 1890-1900) *Museum of Modern Art (Lillie P. Bliss Collection)*

AT RIGHT: *Madame Cézanne in the Conservatory*

COMMENTARY ON PAGE 24



modern master; in 1895, two of his pictures entered the Luxembourg Museum in Paris with the Caillebotte bequest and Vollard showed a hundred and fifty of his paintings. These successes did not quiet his anxieties. He broke down and wept when Rodin greeted him with respect, and he fled when praised by Monet, thinking he was being mocked. A republican and free-thinker in his youth, he became conservative in his fifties, an anti-Dreyfusard and a devout Catholic, although in art he was firmly attached, as he said, to reason and sensation and disapproved the religious tendencies in the art of certain of his young admirers. He worked mainly in his native Provence, acquiring the reputation of an unsocial hermit, fearful of intrusion on his privacy, yet he was often warm and expansive with friends and passionate in expounding his ideas. At the moment of his death in Aix in 1906, his painting had become the most important single factor in the art of the new century, inspiring both the Expressionist and Cubist tendencies.

The mature paintings of Cézanne offer at first sight little of "human interest" in their subjects. His themes are rarely touching or profound. We are led at once to his art as a colorist and composer. He has treated the forms and tones of his mute apples, faces, and trees with the same seriousness that the old masters brought to a grandiose subject in order to dramatize it or to perfect it for the eye. His little touches of paint build up a picture-world in which we feel great forces at play; here stability and movement, opposition and accord, are strongly weighted aspects of things. At the same time the best qualities of his own nature speak in Cézanne's works: the conviction, integrity, and robustness of a sensitive, meditating mind.



SELF-PORTRAIT (pencil, 1886?) *The Art Institute of Chicago*

It is the art of a man who dwells with his perceptions, steeping himself in this world of the eye, not with melancholy or doubt, but serenely, although he is often stirred—in short, a strong contemplative spirit without fancies or illusions. Because this art requires a long concentrated vision, it is like music as a mode of experience—not as an art of time, however, but of grave attention, an attitude called out only by certain works of the great composers.



TWO STUDIES OF THE ARTIST'S SON (pencil, 1876?) *The Art Institute of Chicago*

Cézanne's art is the result of a steadfast searching and a struggle with the self as well as the medium. If in the most calm and classical works we suspect that the painter's detachment is a heroically achieved ideal, an order arising from the mastery of chaotic impulses, in other works the conflict is admitted in the passionateness of the lines and colors. In his first works, painted in the 1860's in Aix and Paris, he is often moody and violent, crude but powerful, and always inventive—to such a degree that in his immaturity he anticipates Expressionist effects of the next century. This early art is permeated by a longing for solitude and by a great restlessness. Impressionism released the young Cézanne from troubling fancies by directing him to nature; it brought him a discipline of objectivity, together with the joys of light and color which replaced the gloomy tones of his vehement, assertive phase. Yet his Impressionist pictures, compared with those of Pissarro or with Monet's, are graver, more troweled or charged with contrasts. Unlike these men, he was always deeply concerned with composition for which he showed since youth an extraordinary gift—he was a born composer, with an affinity to the great masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the largeness and sureness of his forms, in his delight in balancing and varying the massive counterposed elements. The order he creates is no cool, habitual calculation; it bears evident signs of spontaneity and the bias imposed by a dominant mood, whether directed toward tranquillity or drama. Some of his later works are as passionate as the romantic pictures of his youth; only they are not images of sensuality or physical violence, but of nature in a turbulence or solitariness responding to his mood. A great exaltation breaks through at times (page 23), and there is a rare picture with struggling bacchanalian nudes that tells us (more directly than the paintings of skulls and muted faces) of the burden of repressed emotion in this shy and anguished, powerful spirit. Still more, the late works allow us to see the range of his art which transposes in magnificent images so vast a world of feeling.

Painted about 1866

UNCLE DOMINIC AS A MONK

Collection Mr. and Mrs. Ira Haupt, New York

(25⅝″ x 21¼″)

THE YOUNG CÉZANNE made several pictures of passion and dark fantasy. In portraying his uncle—his mother's brother—in the costume of a monk, he avowed a desire for solitude and for mastery over the flesh. During this period he also painted a large canvas of the Temptation of Saint Anthony. The choice of the white Dominican robe is perhaps more than a play on the uncle's name. The order had been revived some years before by the preacher Lacordaire, an ardent religious figure who stirred the youth of France by his attempt to win the Catholic church for republican ideals and later opposed the dictatorship of the emperor Louis Napoleon. Many painters, especially among the romantics, were drawn to Lacordaire who founded a society for the renewal of religious art. The Dominican order was a retreat for despairing romantic spirits.

The painting of Uncle Dominic is not a true portrait, but something between an ideal symbol and a masquerade, through which the artist could re-live his own struggles and dream of release. Painted in the solitude of the family estate near Aix, it is the image of a strong, fleshy person who strives to contain his passions through the religious habit—it encloses the somber, powerful head yet allows the body to show its fullness—and through the self-inhibiting gesture, a crossing or reversal of the hands, which is a kind of resignation, a death of the self.

The opposites of the sensual and the meditative, the expansive and self-constraining, are well expressed here. The color is imbued with the pathos of the conflict. A scheme of white, grey, and black plays against the ruddiness and earthen tones of the flesh. We pass from white to black through a cold series of bluish tones and a warm series of yellows, reds, and browns. The cold, piercing gleam of blue in the neckpiece brightens the whole. The execution, rude and convinced, is of a rare vehemence, even ferocity, like an Expressionist painting; the palette knife is its chief instrument, raising a relief of thick pigment. Within the common intensity of the paint each large area has its own texture and rhythm of handling.

The conception has a certain grandeur through its simplicity. The figure fills the space to bursting, but is also rigid. The starkness of the form is moving. The dark spots of the face and hands are like three leaves on the common stem of the axis marked by the cross. This cross, in line with the vertical of the left sleeve and tying the head to the hands, is part of a longer double-armed cross formed by the lines of the left hand and sleeve—a remarkable invention that points to later works in which such continuities of neighboring objects are a constructive, anti-dramatic device. The projecting tip of the hood is a sensitive point, prolonging and narrowing the head and displacing its axis—a vaguely spiritual, even Gothic suggestion; it is like the pointed tips of the hands, through which these are further assimilated to the head.



Painted about 1874

VIEW OF AUVERS

The Art Institute of Chicago

(25⅝″ x 31⅞″)

THE IMPRESSIONISTS TAUGHT CÉZANNE to lighten his palette. He replaced the blacks, greys, and browns by brighter and softer outdoor colors; he subdued the force of his strained contrasts and broke up the surface of the canvas into many small points of interest. Most important of all, he acquired a discipline: he now studied, meditated, painted touch by touch, and he painted what existed before his eyes rather than in fantasy.

Auvers is a village near Paris where the Impressionists often came to work. Here lived Dr. Gachet, an amateur artist and friend of Pissarro and Cézanne, who was to care for the despairing van Gogh some fifteen years later.

The landscape extends almost equally in all directions, without clear paths or dominant lines below the high horizon (although a movement from the lower right to the upper left emerges discreetly). Endlessly spotted by houses, trees, and fields, it is seen from above with no road for the observer to enter the village which lies embedded in the soft green plain. This open, dispersed world offers a great freedom to the eye; at many points is some bright color or contrast—it is a kaleidoscope which gives a different picture with every turn, but all the pictures have the same twinkling elements and the same unsorted, unarranged quality (except for the broad band of the sky). Without deep feeling, but with a great charm and ease—the result of the profusion, delicacy, and lightness of the elements—its prevailing tone is a high green, unbounded, richly nuanced, and cool. The stronger touches—blue, red, and white—are small and scattered; the quantity of white, often weakly contrasted with the adjoining light colors, brightens and softens the whole.

The panoramic depth is created not by converging lines, but by the recession of overlapping parts which become smaller and smaller. The tones offer no obvious or legible order: there are strong greens near the horizon and sharp reds in the middle space, and the same soft colors appear in the foreground and distance. The difference between the series of greens in the nearer and farther space is extremely refined. The intensity of color, the degree of contrast of neighboring tones, change by tiny intervals between the foreground and the horizon. The blue roofs of the foreground are coupled with weakened reds, the bright reds of the middle distance with weakened blues and greens. Yet the span of contrast does change noticeably at certain points as we advance into depth: it is yellow against blue in the right foreground, red against green in the middle distance, green against light blue at the horizon. In the spotting of the thickly painted colors, we pass from the relative chaos of the foreground and middle ground to the clarity of the far distance. The surface feels unconstructed and motley yet all of a piece. The charm of light and color has been won by a sacrifice of Cézanne's usual solidity and concentration. It is mainly in the decided strokes of red and blue in the roofs and chimneys, many of them vertical and horizontal, that we see a tendency toward the constructive.



Painted about 1886

THE BAY FROM L'ESTAQUE

The Art Institute of Chicago

(29⅞″ x 38⅛″)

A FAVORED HIGH VIEW, the landscape gave Cézanne a command of vast space with elements of grandiose span and force; buildings, water, mountains, and sky follow in alternating movement and repose, projection and calm surface. Without paths or human figures, the world is spread out before his eyes, a theme for pure looking; it invites no action, only discernment; it is sunny, but not gay or cheerful—a balance of warmth and coolness, the momentary and the timeless, the stirring and the stable, in perfect harmony and fullness.

The painting lives through the power of great contrasts: the luminous, richly broken field of reds, oranges, and greens against the blue sea; the modeled wavy mountains, convex, against the filmy, substanceless sky. These mountains have a human, or at least organic, quality—sleeping limbs at rest upon the earth—opposed to the rigid architecture below. The broad strata of the landscape are interlocked pairs, forming larger rectangular zones which become more cohesive still through the horizontals in the diagonal fields and the sloping forms in the horizontal. An ever-active touch, responding to the lie or swerve or rise of objects, unites this extended world from point to point. Nothing is perfectly still; the dark water has its pulsations and nuanced mood, and the pure sky, a delicate quivering of ethereal tones.

Below, a great block of a building breaks the alignment of the buildings beside it and the banding of earth, sky, and distant mountains. Parallel to the ascending shoreline, it looks to the puff of smoke and the highest mountain and induces an undrawn diagonal between them across the sea. But mountain and smoke are parallel to the major roof-lines of this building—these are directed like the slope of the shore and re-enforced by the unique cast shadow of the chimney. Following these lines, each of another color, we come upon the finesse of the far-off jetty pointing to the puff of smoke along the same inclined axis, and below this jetty we discover the little red house on the shore and the high chimney—a mysterious unstressed grouping of isolated elements which take their places in the harmony of the whole. The chimney is an object for wondering contemplation, so beautifully wedded it is, in its multiple character, to the forms and colors of the whole—rising from light warm to dark cool; re-enacting the contrast of earth and sea; ending at a level where an inlet dovetails the line of water and land; opposing and uniting the strong horizontals of roofs and ground; and focusing the play of scattered verticals by its culminating form.

A marvelous peace and strength emanate from this work—the true feeling of the Mediterranean, the joy of an ancient nature which man has known how to sustain through the simplicity of his own constructions.



Painted about 1885 to 1887

THE BATHER

Museum of Modern Art, New York

(49⅝″ x 37⅜″)

IT IS A STATUE IN A LANDSCAPE; not of a bather, but a man in thought. Completely absorbed in himself, he is welded to his surroundings: the color of his flesh is like the ground, and the shadow tones of blue, violet, and green, the rosy and lightened high lights, are like the water and sky. His great vertical form rests on a world of horizontal bands; verticals and horizontals belong together. The bent arms resemble the sloping rock profile at the right. The opening of the legs is like the fingers of water laid out on the contrasting ground. Besides the symmetry of the rock edge and the bent arm, there is the symmetrical pattern of the segments of sky between the body and the arms and the related belt—a tight construction of upright and horizontal forms. On the belt, the banded lines are seen together with the fingers above them, but also with the banding of the earth at the left—the reddish prongs of the ground which alternate with blue inlets of water.

It is a strange landscape, imagined in the studio, yet natural for the naked figure, his only possible milieu—empty, mostly barren, and delicate like revery. Figure and landscape echo each other and bear the same brushwork, the same substance of color, equally free, spotted, and changing. The main lines of the landscape coincide with divisions of the figure. The upper body is in the sky, the lower is on the earth. Where the knee advances, marked with red, begins a green band of the earth. The bent arms call out luminosities and turbulence in the adjoining sky, like the angels fluttering about a holy figure in old art.

The drawing is an effect of naïve searching, an empirical tracing and fitting of the forms, a little awkward yet rhythmical and strong, and finally right; some touches, as in the well-articulated legs, exploit a past study; other parts are more arbitrary and fresh. This drawing, so earnest and free, was a revelation to young artists around 1906 and helped to liberate them. The body is not stylized nor reduced, but reconstructed scrupulously according to an ideal of harmony and strength. It is a drawing without banality or formula, even a new formula.

But is it essentially a "pure form," an "abstract" construction? I do not think so. There is in this monumental bather a complex quality of feeling, not easy to describe. Rigorously tied to the landscape, the figure is nevertheless detached, unaware of the world around him. But the meditativeness is only half the story. The upper body is immobilized by its posture; it looks inward and closes itself. The man walks, yet holds his sides. This upper body is ascetic, angular, strictly symmetrical, and relatively flat; the lower body is more powerful, athletic, fleshy, modeled, and in motion—an open asymmetrical form. Two opposed themes are joined in one body, and this opposition appears also in the character of the sky and earth, one vaporous, the other more stable and solid. The drama of the self, the antagonism of the passions and the contemplative mind, of activity and the isolated passive self, are projected here. The contemplative dominates in the end, but the body remains warm in color, powerfully set, while the world—an enveloping void—is distant and cool.



Painted about 1890 to 1894

STILL LIFE WITH BASKET OF APPLES

The Art Institute of Chicago

(25⅝″ x 31⅞″)

IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE A CIRCUMSTANCE of everyday life in which these objects would occur together in just this way. We are led to consider the whole as an arrangement by the artist, a pure invention. The basket rests on a block, the cookies on a platter set on a book, the apples on a richly folded cloth, and all these together lie on a table. This insistent superposition of things—very clear in the biscuits—is the clue to the artistic idea: the painting is a construction. The table too is treated as a kind of masonry with strongly banded forms. What makes all this more interesting is that so many of the elements are unarchitectural in feeling: the thirty or more apples, irreducibly complex in the sequence of colors, each fruit a singular piece of painting, a unique object; the tilted asymmetrical bottle and the basket; the hanging, rumpled tablecloth. This carefully considered still life, so exact and subtle in its decisions, retains an aspect of randomness, of accidental grouping. It is an order in which sets of elements of different degrees of order are harmonized: the apples in the basket—the apples on the tablecloth; the broken folds of the latter—the regular pattern of the biscuits. Balanced as a composition, the painting risks a great unbalance in the parts. It is not simply an equilibrium of large and small units, but of the stable and the less stable. The odd tilting of the bottle must be understood in relation to other instabilities as part of a problem: to create a balanced whole in which some elements are themselves unbalanced. In older art this was done with figures in motion, or with a sloping ground, or hanging curtains and reclining objects. What is new in Cézanne is the unstable axis of a vertical object—a seated figure, a house, a bottle. Such deviations make the final equilibrium of the picture seem more evidently an achievement of the artist rather than an imitation of an already existing stability in nature. Here we cannot help but see together as balanced variations of a common unbalance the diagonals in different planes—the tilting of the bottle, the inclined basket, the foreshortened lines of the cookies, and, corresponding to these three tilted forms, the lines of the tablecloth converging to the lower edge.

The color is luminous, robust, and clear; tempered in the large objects, more intense in the small; and everywhere finely nuanced—the product of a visibly active brush. Although the bottle has the smoothness of glass, the other objects are fairly neutral in texture; assimilated to the qualities of the pigment and the stroke, they look solid but are not distinct substances—in the table this character goes with the astonishingly radical "abstract" treatment of its structure. The bottle too is submitted to this concreteness of paint and touch in the loosened, open rendering of its right edge.


Cézanne

Painted about 1890 to 1892

THE CARD PLAYERS

The Louvre, Paris

(17¾″ x 22½″)

OF THE THREE VERSIONS, the little painting in the Louvre is the last and undoubtedly the best; it is the most monumental and also the most refined. The single shapes are simpler, but the relationships are more varied. The extraordinary conception of the left player is the result of a progressive stabilizing and detachment of this meditating figure.

It is the image of a pure contemplativeness without pathos. Given the symmetry of the two card players looking fixedly at their cards, Cézanne had to surmount the rigidity and obviousness of the pair and yet preserve the gravity of their absorbed attitudes. It is remarkable how thoroughly interesting is this perfectly legible picture, how rich in effective inventions of color and form.

The problem: how to image the figures as naturally symmetrical, with identical roles—each is the other's partner in an agreed opposition—but to express also the life of their separateness, without descending to episode and weakening the pure contemplative quality, so rare in older paintings of the game.

It is accomplished in part by a shift of axis: the left figure is more completely in the picture; his partner, bulkier, more muscular, is marginal—but oddly also nearer to us—and takes up more of the table. His head is bent forward; he is more intensely concerned. The first man is the more habitual player, relaxed and cool, and his long columnar form is contrasted with the horizontal line behind him. The two hats, one with arched brim, firm and poised, the other with turned-up, irregular brim, soft and battered, convey this difference of feeling—two tonalities of meditation. The left player has a bright mind and a sluggish body, the right has a slower mind and a livelier body or temper. The former's arm begins very low, his limbs are detached from the tiny head which is intent but not anxious (it is remote from the body and is like the hat on the head). The other has a hunched effect; if he is ready to play, he is more strained in deciding. The arms of the first are parallel, the other's arms converge. The first head is set against a vague landscape, the second against an architecture of verticals, a more rigid, pressing form which measures the inclination of his body. The long man's face is shaded and lit with inner contrasts that subdue the silhouette; the other's is more open, more fully given. The first has light cards, the second, dark, and his hands are nearer to us. The tablecloth ends in a stable right angle at the left, in a sharply pointed form at the right. The color too is a subtly contrasted expression: violet against yellow, but both neutralized; in the left figure, violet jacket, yellow pants; the converse in the right. The latter is therefore more strongly contrasted with his surroundings in color as well as form. But this contrast is crossed: the straight figure against a sloping chair, the inclined figure against a vertical edge.

The inherent rigidity of the theme is overcome also by the remarkable life of the surface. There is a beautiful flicker and play of small contrasts, an ever-responding sensibility on every inch of canvas.



Painted 1895

PORTRAIT OF GUSTAVE GEFFROY

Collection Lecomte, Paris

(45⅝″ x 35″)

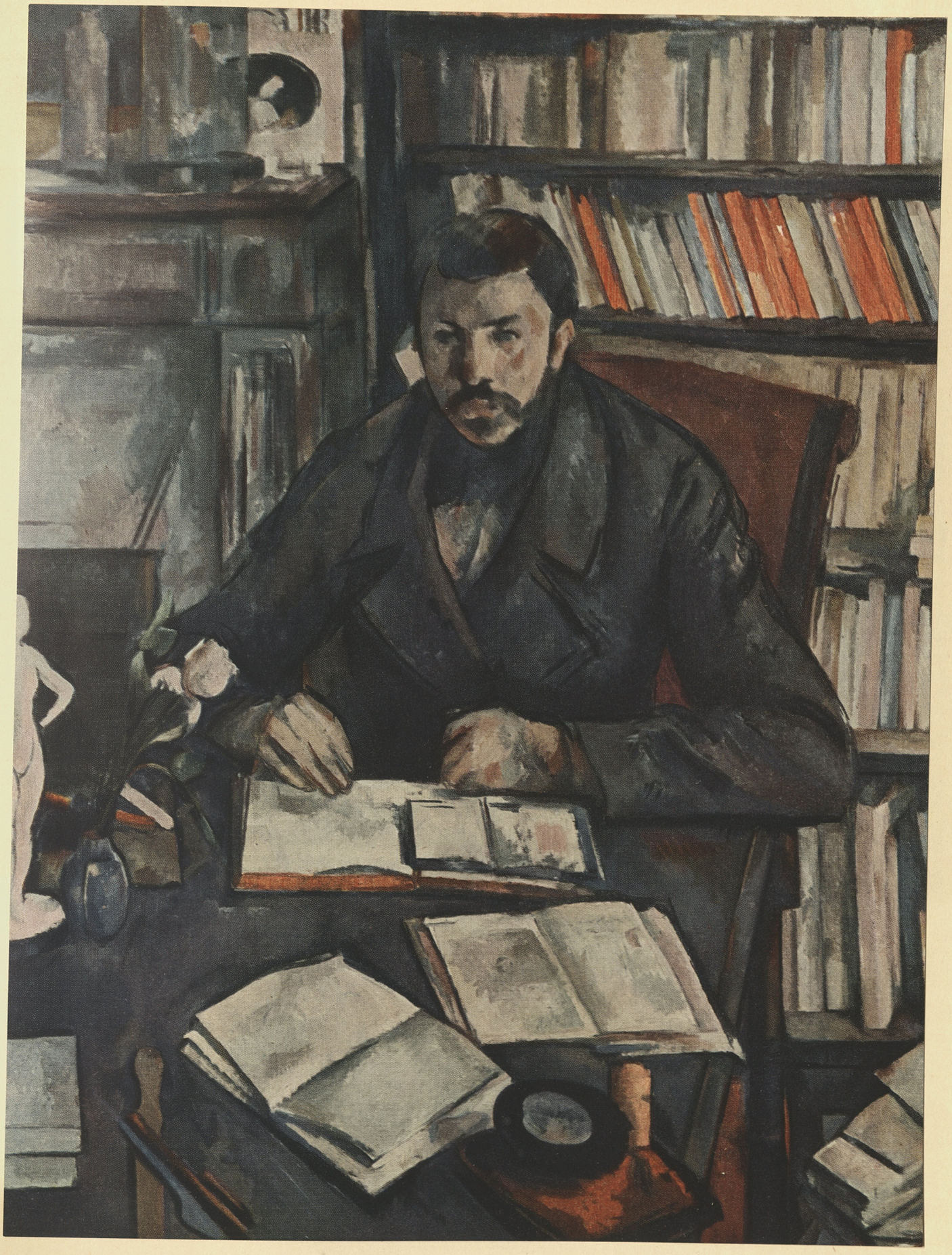
GUSTAVE GEFFROY WAS ONE OF THE FIRST CRITICS to recognize Cézanne's greatness; he wrote about him at length in 1895.

The portrait, so intricate in conception, was done over a period of three months in Geffroy's library. Cézanne despaired of finishing it, although it seems complete enough, a triumph of composition.

It is not a revealing study of the face, but an image of the man of books, the writer among his things. Cézanne often reduces the singularity of human beings; he is most happy with people like his card players, who do not impose themselves, who are perfectly passive or reserved, or immersed in their tasks. The portrait becomes a gigantic still life. The world of objects absorbs the man and lessens the intensity of his person; but it also enlarges him through the rich and multiple surroundings. His repressed activity is transferred to the complicated articulation of his books, the instruments of his profession. Indeed the arrangement of the book behind him, projecting and receding, tilted differently from shelf to shelf and ending in the open volumes below, seems more human than the man, reminding us of a long twisted body in classic counterpoise, like Michelangelo's *Slave* in the Louvre, a work that Cézanne admired and drew.

The man, by contrast, is fixed symmetrically with arms spread and bent—an immovable pyramid. The chair and table between which he is barricaded are another complex of tilted forms abstrusely counterposed to the wall of books and united to these by common tones, and by surprising correspondences of line. The open books lying on the table and the closed books standing on the shelves, both converging to Geffroy's head, belong to a common structure of balanced directions, although one group owes its tiltings to gravity and the other mainly to perspective. The different accents of orange in the bookcase and on the table confirm the contrast of the vertical and horizontal planes. With what care Cézanne studied the parts we can see in the warm strokes on the brow parallel to the slanting orange book nearby, with white and violet strokes between them, and in the slanting light spot at the right shoulder.

The painting is a rare union of the realistic vision of a piece of space, seen directly in all its accidents and richness of detail, with a powerful, probing, rigorous effort to adjust all that is seen in a coherent balanced structure with its own vitality and attraction. The whole looks intensely contrived and intensely natural. We pass often from the artifice of composed forms to the chaos of a crowded room, and from the latter we are soon brought back to the imposing order invented by the artist; the oscillation is permanent. No line is simply a device of design; it has always the quiver of existence in light and is a product of Cézanne's robust, sensitive touch. The straightest and most irregular lines are sensitive alike and are equally parts of the whole in its double aspect of image and painting-fabric. If the little feminine statuette softens the severity of the books, it is also in its axis and bent arm a counterpart of the rigidity of the man; the tulip in the blue vase is inclined with his arm; and his delicately painted, living right hand recalls the distant books above.



Painted about 1904-1906

MONT SAINTE VICTOIRE

Collection Carroll S. Tyson, Philadelphia

(25⅝″ x 31⅞″)

TOWARD THE END OF HIS LIFE, Cézanne's painting becomes passionately free, to the point of ecstatic release. The intensity of feeling that marked his early romantic pictures returns in a new form. It is no longer a painting of excited mental images of human violence and desire, but a stormy rhapsody in which earth, mountain, and sky are united in a common paean, an upsurge of color, of rich tones on a vast scale. It is an irrepressible lyric of fulfillment which reminds us of Beethoven's music. The dynamism of fervid emotion possesses the entire canvas. The contrasts are not simply of the stable and the unstable, as in his other works, but of different kinds of movement and intense color. The mountain rises passionately to the sky and also glides on the earth. Its surface is like a perspective network of ascending lines, converging to the peak as a goal. The sky in turn bursts into a dance of colors, an explosion of clouds of blue and green, as deep and strong as the blues and greens of the earth—tremendous volumes of sonorous color which form a tempestuous halo of pure tones around the glorious mountain and give the latter a more living, dramatic quality. The earth approaches chaos, yet is formed of clear vertical and horizontal strokes in sharp contrast to the diagonal strokes of the mountain and the many curving strokes of the sky. These reappear in the lower foreground in blues and purples and violets, a reversed echo of the distant mountain.

Under all this turbulence of brushwork and color lies the grand horizontal expanse of the earth.



On the cover

Painted about 1890–94

TULIPS AND APPLES

The Art Institute of Chicago

(23⅝″ x 16½″)

IN THIS BEAUTIFUL STILL LIFE the contrasts of forms and colors, their adjustment to each other, are astonishingly subtle. We see the two red tulips together with the two apples below; the dispersed little flowers repeat in a different way the concentrated yellow of the apple behind the vase; and the spread of the outermost green leaves resembles in reverse the wide angle of the warm dark edges of the table. But the elements of the bouquet are active forms, lively and even charming, a cluster of growing, expanding things painted with great freedom; the apples and the table are closed forms, detached, inert, silent—a sparse world. It is a harmony of opposed elements, a strange balance of contrary qualities, united through hidden analogies and a most sensitive play of color. We feel a vague human drama in this still life, especially in the separateness of the apples, as if the relations of people, their desires and constraints, have been translated into the contrasts and groupings. The severer fields of the table and wall are painted in subdued light tones—contrasted warms and cools—of an extraordinary delicacy; the living plants have angular thrusting forms, large and small, with strong zigzags sharper than the edges of the table and repeated in the great silhouette of dark green in the extended right leaf and the vase. The lower part of the vase is colored like the table, its rounded outline is like the fruit, and the slight curvature of the horizontal boundary of its two colors responds to the faint convexity of the back of the table. Between the apples and the tulips is an undrawn diagonal—an implicit and unescapable line of attraction—which parallels the side of the table and unites tulips and apples with the former. These and many other nice unstressed relationships compel our admiration. Fascinating is the curved shape, like the end of a leaf or petal, reserved on the wall between the legs of the table.

In the text (*page 5*)

Painted about 1890

MADAME CÉZANNE IN THE CONSERVATORY

Collection Stephen C. Clark, New York

(36½″ x 28½′)

A PORTRAIT UNUSUAL FOR CÉZANNE in the search for a tender, idealized, graceful expression. An unfinished work, it gives us a glimpse of Cézanne's method. We see his first strokes, very sparse and thin like water color, and the progressive enrichment and strengthening of the entire canvas as he proceeds. Building up the head, modeling the features with subtle tones, he adds parallel and counter touches around it. The inclination of the head —the bearer of a delicate submissiveness and revery—belongs as much with the tilted lines of the wall and the trees as with her own body. Foreground and background are united in the common sweep of the tree trunk and the sitter's right arm. So rich an interplay of the person and the surroundings is uncommon in Cézanne's portraits; another example, but of a contrary, virile, intellectual quality, is the painting of Geffroy (page 21).



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