

= Portrait of Madame Cézanne =

Portrait of Madame Cézanne (sometimes Portrait of Mrs. Cézanne) is a 1962 Pop art painting by Roy Lichtenstein . It is a quotation of Erle Loran 's diagram of a Cézanne painting of the same name . It was one of the works exhibited at Lichtenstein 's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles . The work became controversial in that it led to a reconsideration of what constitutes art .

Lichtenstein and Loran sparred in the press , and art critics were intrigued by the viewpoints of the two . Loran 's view was that Lichtenstein had plagiarized his work , and at one point filed suit . Lichtenstein felt that he was making a statement with his painting on the ridiculous attempt by Loran to explain Cézanne by diagram . The press frequently used the word transformation when crediting Lichtenstein 's work , but Lichtenstein attempted not to accept the association of his work with that word .

= = Background = =

Portrait of Madame Cézanne was exhibited along with works such as Man with Folded Arms at Lichtenstein 's first Pop exhibition in Los Angeles . The linear twice @-@ removed black @-@ and @-@ white (along with Man with Folded Arms) is regarded as a quotation of Erle Loran 's outline diagram of Cézanne 's compositional methods published in a diagram book called Cézanne 's Composition . The book was popular in the academic community . Loran 's representation in a " harsh black outline " depicted the axes of the composition without representing the " texture and expressiveness of Cézanne 's original . " In fact , Loran stated that " this diagrammatic approach may seem coldly analytical to those who like vagueness and poetry in art criticism . " Loran 's diagrammatic techniques were standard at the time ; redrawn outlines of the figure were illustrated with alphabetized arrows to identify areas and directions . The diagram highlighted body part positioning without studying the painted surface .

According to John Coplans 's Roy Lichtenstein , the artist was fascinated by the drawings : " isolating the woman out of the context of the painting seemed to Lichtenstein to be such an oversimplification of a complex issue as to be ironical in itself " ; the oversimplification referred to was Loran 's representing Cézanne 's work with nothing more than black lines . The work marked the first of Lichtenstein 's " artistic appropriations of the canonical works of Modernism " that resulted from his realization of the interrelation " between avant @-@ garde and kitsch " .

= = Description = =

The two images garnered attention among critics by highlighting the nuances between copying and creating art , between real and fake art . As Andy Warhol challenged the status quo by " humanizing mass @-@ produced product " , Lichtenstein dehumanized masterpieces . This demonstrates " that the quotation of popular culture was not the sign of intelligence suspended but rather the shape of thought . "

The publication of this work was considered by some observers as more sacrilegious than Duchamp 's revisions to the Mona Lisa . Loran wrote two hot @-@ tempered letters in response . In September 1963 issues of ARTnews and Artforum , His articles were written after Lichtenstein 's first Pop exhibition in Los Angeles , which featured the two life @-@ sized works depicting Loran 's images . Loran , whose text was by this time over twenty years old , even attempted to sue Lichtenstein . According to David Deitcher , " The angrier of the two tracts appeared in Art News , where Loran openly expressed his contempt for Lichtenstein 's work and hinted at his desire to sue . " :

In a recent sell @-@ out exhibition at the Ferus Gallery , Los Angeles , he [Lichtenstein] gave the title of Portrait of Mme. Cézanne to the black and white line drawing on bare canvas reproduced here . Sale price : \$ 2000 , or more . I suppose I should be flattered that a diagrammatic sketch of mine should be worth so much . But then , no one has paid me anything ? so far .

One critic noted that although Loran was making instructive points with his diagram , Lichtenstein 's

was an artistic statement . However , Loran was joined by Brian O 'Doherty , a critic with The New York Times , in ridiculing the defense of Pop art as transformative rather than appropriationist art . In 1963 , O 'Doherty wrote his belief that Lichtenstein 's work was not art in The New York Times saying , he was " one of the worst artists in America " who " briskly went about making a sow 's ear out of a sow 's ear . " Loran felt Pop art paled in comparison to the aesthetics of Abstract Expressionism . Lichtenstein did not accept the transformation defense . Other critics got involved in the matter , with Gene Swenson querying Lichtenstein " about the charges of antagonistic critics ' that Pop Art does not transform its models . " Lichtenstein responded that art forms but does not transform . Max Kozloff opined that Loran was being mocked and that while Lichtenstein 's product had didactic content , its purpose and need was questionable . Kozloff worried in The Nation that Lichtenstein 's work may lead to the values that modern art held being rejected moving forward .

The painting is regarded as " another of his comments on the way in which we view art . " The work , along with his *Femme au Chapeau* from 1962 mark the beginnings of Lichtenstein 's presentations of art about art because it was among his first paintings that drew upon a predecessor artist . Lichtenstein noted his objection to the attempt to reduce art diagrammatically : " I wasn 't trying to berate Erle Loran ... but it is such an oversimplification trying to explain a painting by A , B , C. " He also noted that " The Cézanne is such a complex painting . Taking an outline and calling it Madame Cézanne is in itself humorous , particularly the idea of diagramming a Cézanne when Cézanne said , ' ... the outline escaped me . ' "

Lichtenstein obtained legal validation that his work was original when Loran 's lawsuit was dismissed , clearing the way for artists to elaborate on images produced by others .