

# Paul Cézanne

1839 – 1906

(say-ZAHN) French painter

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Cézanne was born in Provence in the South of France. His father, Louis-Auguste was the co-founder of a banking firm that prospered throughout the artist's life, affording him financial security that was unavailable to most of his contemporaries.

In 1852 (13) Cézanne entered college where he became friends with Émile Zola and Baptistin Baille. They came to be known as "les trois inséparables" (the three inseparables). In 1857 he began attending the Free Municipal School of Drawing in Aix. From 1858 to 1861 (19-21), complying with his father's wishes, Cézanne attended law school, while also receiving drawing lessons.



Going against the desires of his father, he committed himself to pursuing his artistic development and left Aix for Paris in 1861. He was encouraged to make this decision by Zola, already living in Paris. Eventually, his father reconciled with Cézanne and supported his choice of career. Cézanne later received an inheritance from his father, which rid him of all financial worries.

Cézanne was interested in the simplification of forms: he wanted to "treat nature by the cylinder, the sphere, the cone." He was proficient in still lifes, portraits, landscapes and studies of bathers.



Some religious images appear in Cézanne's work, who was Roman Catholic and said, "When I judge art, I take my painting and put it next to a God-made object like a tree or flower. If it clashes, it is not art."

**Dark period**, Paris, 1861–70. His works of this period are characterized by dark colors and the heavy use of black. He painted several violent subjects, including



*The Murder* c. 1867- 68 (28-29), which depicts a man stabbing a woman who is held down by his female accomplice.

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*Self Portrait*, 1878-80 (39-41). *Portrait of Emile Zola*, 1864 (25).

*The Artist's Mother*, 1867 (28). *The Artist's Father Reading his Newspaper*, 1866 (27). *Christ in Limbo*, 1867 (28).

*The Feast - The Banquet of Nebuchadnezzar*, 1870 (31).

*The Murder*, 1868 (29).

*Still Life with Bread and Eggs*, 1865 (26).





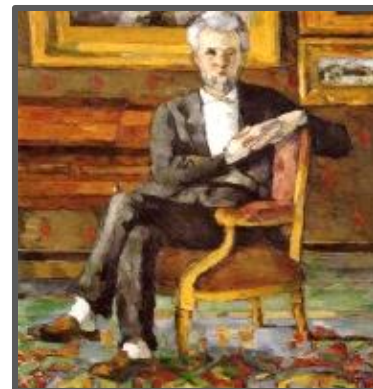
1877-78 (38-39).



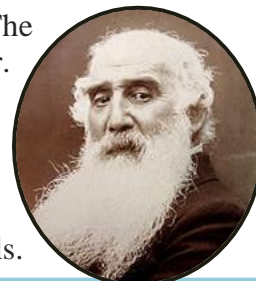
*Portrait of Madame Cezanne, or Hortense Fiquet, in a striped skirt*



After the start of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 (31), Cézanne left Paris for a town near Marseilles, where he changed themes to predominantly landscapes. He was declared a draft dodger but the war ended the next month and he and his mistress, Hortense, moved back to Paris in 1871 (32). They had a son, Paul, in 1872 (33).



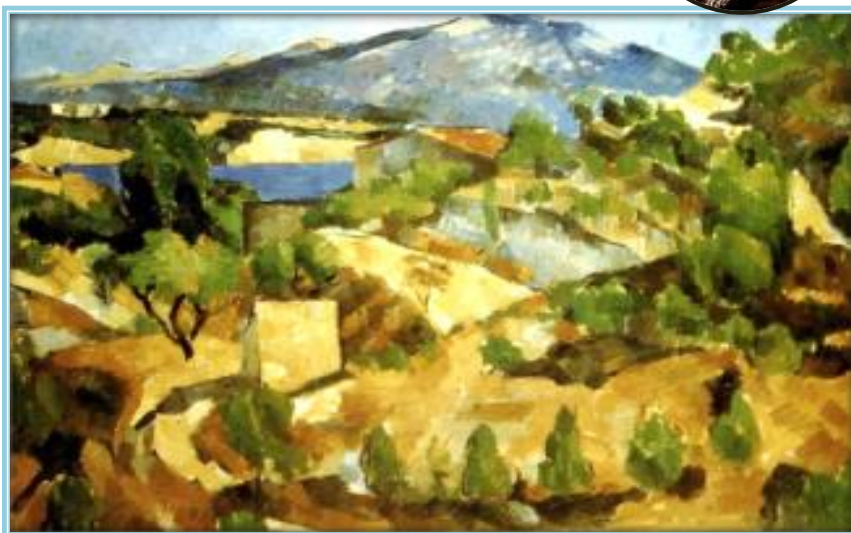
Cézanne's mother was kept a party to family events, but his father was not informed of Hortense for fear of risking his wrath. The artist received an allowance from his father.



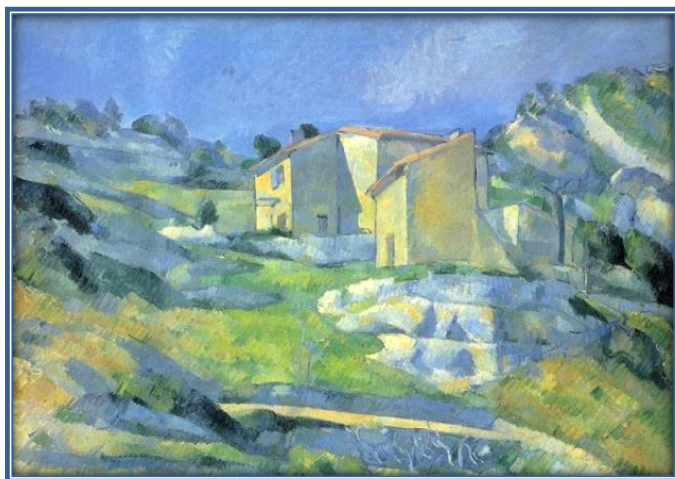
In Paris, Cézanne met the Impressionist Camille **Pissarro**. Cézanne described himself as Pissarro's pupil for a long time, referring to him as "God the Father", as well as saying: "We all stem from Pissarro." Under Pissarro's influence Cézanne began to abandon dark colors and his canvases grew brighter. A decade of landscape painting excursions together, however, led to a friendship between equals.

Cézanne exhibited twice with the Impressionists. His exhibited paintings originally attracted hilarity, outrage, and sarcasm.

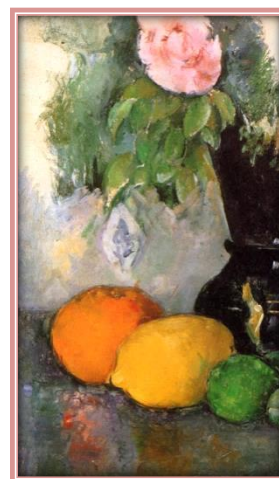
In 1878 (39), Cézanne's father found out about Hortense and threatened to cut Cézanne off financially, but, later, he relented and decided to give him 400 francs for his family. Cézanne migrated between the Paris region and Provence until his father had a studio built for him at his home. This was on the upper floor, with an enlarged window allowing in the northern light, but interrupting the line of the eaves. This feature remains in the house today.



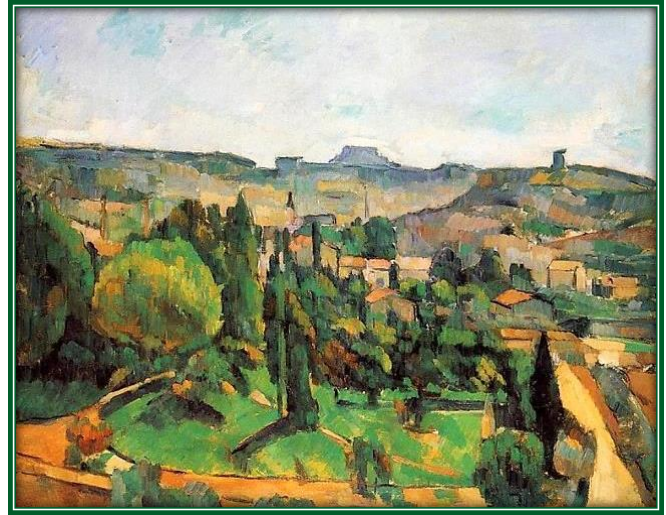
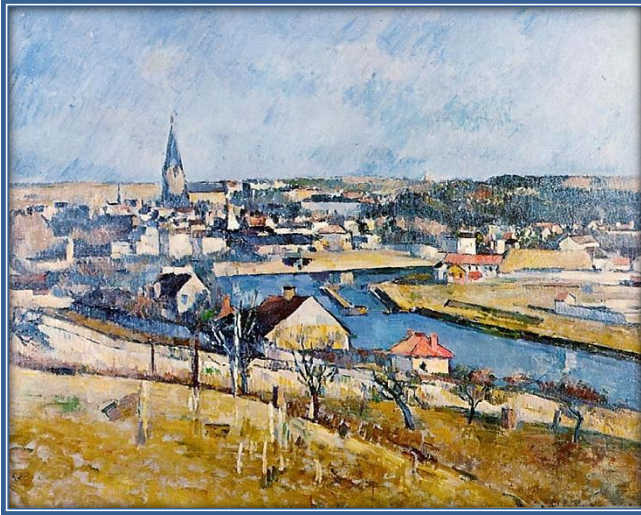
In the early 1880s the Cézanne family predominantly remained in their Provence residence, except for brief sojourns abroad. He painted with **Renoir** there in 1882 and visited **Renoir** and **Monet** in 1883.



*Portrait of Chocquet, 1877 (38).* Chocquet financially encouraged and supported Cezanne's art.  
*Portrait of the Artist's Son, 1885 (46).*  
 Photo of Jacob Abraham Camille Pissarro, c. 1900.  
*Mountains as seen from L'Estaque, 1879 (40).*  
*Houses at the L'Estaque, 1880 (41).*  
*Flowers and Fruit, 1880.*







Two paintings named “Ile de France Landscape”, 1880 (41).

### Jas de Bouffan

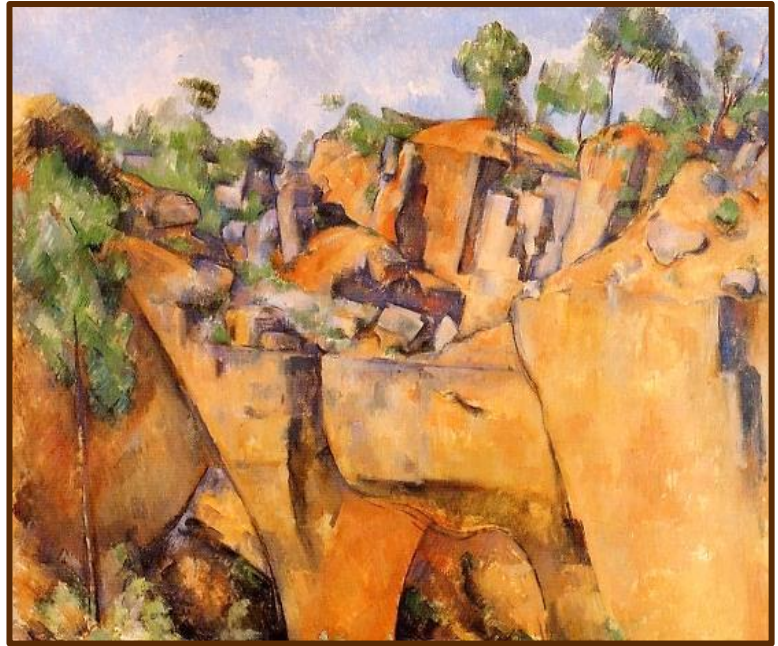
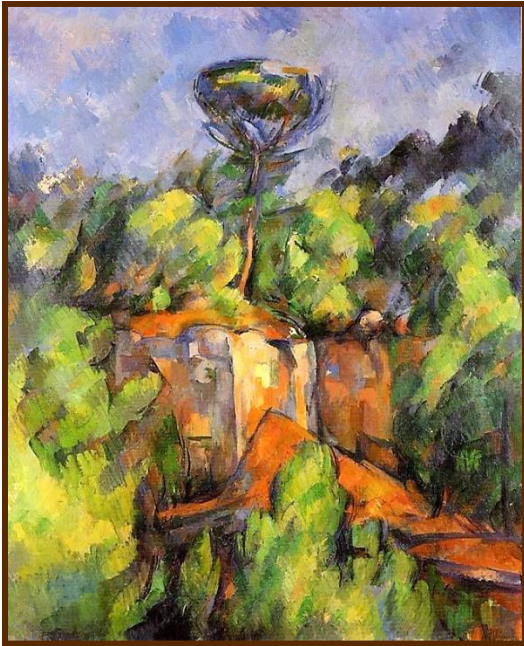
In 1886 (47) Cézanne married Hortense and his father died, leaving him the Jas de Bouffan estate. There was a substantial house and grounds with outbuildings, which afforded a new-found comfort. This house, with much-reduced grounds, is now owned by the city and is open to the public on a restricted basis.



Cézanne's idyllic period at Jas de Bouffan was temporary. From 1890 (51) until his death he was beset by troubling events and he withdrew further into his painting, spending long periods as a virtual recluse. His paintings became well-known and sought after and he was respected by a new generation of painters. Problems began with the onset of diabetes in 1890 (51), destabilizing his personality to the point where relationships with others were strained, including his relationships with Hortense and his son. Cézanne chose Provence to live; Hortense and Paul junior, Paris. Financial need prompted Hortense's return to Provence but in separate living quarters. Cézanne moved in with his mother and sister. In 1891 (52) he turned to Catholicism.

Bottom: Right 2 – both titled: *Jas de Bouffan (2)*, 1885–1887 (46-48). Left: *Jas de Bouffan, the Pool*, 1876 (46-48).



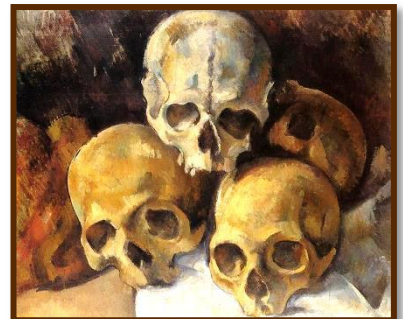


In 1895 (56) he visited Bibémus Quarries and the labyrinthine landscape there is believed to have inspired the embryonic "Cubist" style.

Also in that year, his mother died, an upsetting event. In 1902 (63), he had a will drafted that excluded his wife from his estate and left everything to his son. She is said to have burned the mementos of his mother.

From 1903 (64) to the end of his life he painted in his studio. After his death it became a monument, Atelier Paul Cézanne, or les Lauves.

Cézanne was caught in a storm while working in the field. After working for two hours in the rain he decided to go home; but on the way he collapsed. He was taken home by a passing driver. His housekeeper rubbed his arms and legs to restore the circulation and he regained consciousness. On the following day, he intended to continue working, but later fainted. The model with whom he was working called for help; he was put to bed, and he never left it again. He died of pneumonia a few days later, and was buried in his hometown of Aix-en-Provence.



Cézanne's explorations of geometric simplification and optical phenomena inspired **Picasso**, **Braque**, **Gris** and others to experiment with ever more complex multiple views of the same subject and eventually to the fracturing of form. Cézanne thus sparked a revolutionary area of artistic enquiry, affecting the development of modern art.

Cézanne's *The Boy in the Red Vest*, valued at \$110 million, was stolen from a Swiss museum in 2008. It was recovered in a Serbian police raid in 2012, along with works by **Degas**, **Monet** and **Van Gogh**.

*The Bibemus Quarry*, 1895 (56). *Bibemus Quarry*, 1900 (61). *Woman in Blue*. *Madame Cezanne*, 1902 (63). *Self-Portrait with Beret*, 1900 (61). *Pyramid of Skulls*, 1900 (61). *The Boy in the Red Vest*, 1888-1889 (49).