The COURTAULD CÉZANNES
26 June – 5 October 2008

Teachers’ Resources

Montagne Sainte-Victoire c.1887

Card Players c.1892-1895

L’Etang des Soeurs, Osny c.1875
The Courtauld Institute Education Programme aims to help young people understand art as a means of exploring creative ideas and cultural history in an informed and critical way.

The new resources for schools are underpinned by the intellectual rigour and excellence that is characteristic of The Courtauld Institute of Art. The content is designed to encourage further research and experimentation and we welcome your feedback.

We hope the material proves useful and inspires interest and enthusiasm for the subject itself and for The Courtauld as a unique source of learning and a fantastic place to visit.

With Best wishes,

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The Courtauld Gallery holds the finest group of works by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) in Britain. As the culmination of The Courtauld Institute of Art’s 75th anniversary, the exhibition ‘The Courtauld Cézannes: An Exhibition’ marks an important milestone in the gallery’s illustrious history. This exhibition is a testament to the artist’s monumental contributions to 20th-century art, as well as to the institution’s ongoing commitment to the preservation and promotion of his legacy.

Cézanne is revered for his role in the development of modern art, particularly for his innovative approach to composition and his exploration of space and form. The exhibition will showcase seminal paintings, drawings, and watercolours that chart the development of his revolutionary approach. Works such as the iconic Montagne Sainte-Victoire (c.1887) and Card Players (c.1892-5) will be on display, offering visitors a comprehensive understanding of the artist’s evolution and his profound influence on subsequent generations of artists.

Beyond its artistic significance, the exhibition is also significant for its educational value. The Courtauld also holds an important group of nine hand-written letters in which Cézanne reflects upon the fundamental principles of his art. This exhibition will be the first opportunity to enjoy this extraordinary collection in its entirety.

The collection includes such masterpieces as the iconic Montagne Sainte-Victoire (c.1887) and Card Players (c.1892-5) that will chart the development of the artist’s revolutionary approach that would later see him acclaimed as the father of modern art. Having been rejected by the official Paris Salon in 1870, Cézanne exhibited at the first Impressionist group exhibition in 1874, where his work was radically different from that of his contemporaries and found little favour with critics and collectors.

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The Courtauld Gallery holds the finest group of works by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) in Britain. As the culmination of The Courtauld Institute of Art’s 75th anniversary, the Gallery is showing the entire collection together for the first time. The importance of the collection lies not only in its exceptionally high quality but also in its wide range with seminal paintings, drawings and watercolours from the major periods of the artist's long career.

The Courtauld also holds an important group of nine hand-written letters in which Cézanne reflects upon the fundamental principles of his art. This exhibition will be the first opportunity to enjoy this extraordinary collection in its entirety.

The collection includes such masterpieces as the iconic Montagne Sainte-Victoire (c.1887) and Card Players (c.1892-5) which show Cézanne working at the height of his powers. Through such works the exhibition will chart the development of the artist’s revolutionary approach that would later see him acclaimed as the father of modern art. Having been rejected by the official Paris Salon in 1870, Cézanne exhibited at the first Impressionist group exhibition in 1874. However, his work was radically different from that of his contemporaries and found little favour with critics and collectors.

Following his lack of success in Paris, Cézanne withdrew into relative obscurity at his family home near Aix-en-Provence. Here he formed a deep bond with the landscape and the local people, such as père Alexandre, a gardener on his estate who is depicted in both Man with a Pipe and Card Players.

The landscape around Aix exerted a powerful influence with the great Montagne Sainte-Victoire taking on an iconic status for the artist. The Courtauld painting is one of the finest examples of Cézanne’s treatment of this subject. When the artist showed this work at a local society of amateur painters in 1895 it was greeted with incomprehension by all but the young poet Joachim Gasquet; Cézanne signed the painting and presented it to him in gratitude. Two years after Cézanne’s death in 1906, Gasquet sold it for the astonishing sum of 12,000 francs. By then Cézanne had been rediscovered by the young avant-garde, including Emile Bernard with whom the letters now at The Courtauld Gallery were exchanged. In one of these Cézanne famously advised his protégé to “treat nature in terms of the cylinder, the sphere and the cone”. This celebrated statement would become a theoretical underpinning for the move towards abstraction in the twentieth century. In a further letter sent shortly before his death he wrote poignantly, “I have sworn to die while painting, rather than sinking into the degrading senility that threatens old men”.

The majority of The Courtauld Gallery’s collection was put together by the industrialist Samuel Courtauld (1876-1947) and formed part of his founding gift that established the Courtauld Institute of Art in 1932 as the first centre in Britain dedicated to the study of art history. Courtauld assembled his collection of Cézannes between 1923 and 1929 at a time when the artist was regarded with hostility and suspicion by the British art establishment. It was only in 1925, at Samuel Courtauld’s insistence and with his financial support, that the national collections were able to acquire their first painting by the artist.
Courtauld’s conversion to the art of Cézanne came in 1922 when he visited an exhibition at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London entitled ‘The French School of the Last Hundred Years’. He wrote later of his epiphany, “At that moment I felt the magic, and I have felt it in Cézanne’s work ever since”. The following year he bought, for his private collection, one of the most important and complex of Cézanne’s late still lifes, *Still life with Plaster Cast* (c.1894). Its radical distortion of perspective challenged the conventions of Western painting and prefigured the advent of cubism. A similarly experimental approach is evident in *Lac d’Annecy*. Cézanne painted this work while on holiday in the Haute-Savoie in 1896, writing dismissively of the conventional beauty of the landscape as “a little like we’ve been taught to see it in the albums of young lady travellers”. He rejected such conventions, seeking not to replicate the superficial appearance of the landscape but to express what he described as a “harmony parallel with nature” through a new language of painting.

Courtauld bought works which he responded to personally and intuitively, rather than according to art-historical principles. In addition to major canvases, a number of outstanding watercolours were also purchased. *Apples, Bottle and Chairback* (c.1904-6) is a supreme example of Cézanne’s mastery of the watercolour medium and is remarkable particularly for its scale and complex luminous washes of brilliant colour.

In 1978 The Courtauld Gallery’s collection was further enriched with a group of works by Cézanne assembled by the celebrated Old Master collector Count Antoine Seilern (1901-78). The bequest included *The Turning Road*, one of Cézanne’s largest landscapes. This late work is characterised by an almost abstract treatment of the landscape in patches of muted colours.

Seilern’s collection also included some fine watercolours and drawings, such as the carefully observed and ambitiously composed portrait of Hortense Fiquet sewing. Cézanne would marry Hortense in 1886. The couple already had a son but the artist had kept the relationship secret from his disapproving father. This drawing was later used as an illustration on the title page of the first monograph on Cézanne, published by the pioneering dealer Ambroise Vollard in 1914.

As well as celebrating The Courtauld Gallery’s exceptional collection of works by Cézanne, this exhibition and its catalogue presents the findings of a major new technical research project on the artist’s oils and watercolours conducted in the Courtauld Institute of Art Department of Conservation. Using the very latest imaging technologies, this research has provided fresh insights into the artist’s working methods and techniques, in particular his experimental use of colour and line. The fully illustrated catalogue includes essays and individual entries as well as facsimiles of all the letters with new translations.
BECOMING MODERN

From ‘Cézannism’ to Cubism

If the Impressionists had embraced the experience of modern life at the end of the nineteenth century and had presented it on their canvases with both honesty and pride, the special preserve of the Post-Impressionists was to do so with increasingly experimental and often scientific artistic techniques.

For example, in contrast to the loose and sketchy brushwork of Monet, the pointillism of Seurat and Signac (often called Neo-Impressionists) was carefully constructed from small dots of contrasting colours applied side by side so that when seen from a distance these dots would blend. The colours were, as they saw it, ‘mixed on the retina’ as opposed to the artist’s palette, an idea they took from recent colour theory such as Chevreul’s ‘On the laws of simultaneous colour contrast’ of 1839. Cézanne, with his linear, parallel brushwork and his direct sketching onto the canvas, creating works that often appear unfinished in any conventional sense, lies between the two: this explanation will consider him in light of the assertion that he was the father of modern art, or a catalyst for the art of the avant-garde.

When Alfred H Barr drew a diagrammatic analysis of the influences of various modern movements on each other, he placed Cézanne at the top, with direct lines between him and both Fauvism and Cubism, two of the most important tendencies of the early twentieth century (fig. 1). Guillaume Apollinaire, an art critic and friend of the artists involved in both groups, wrote in The Cubist painters (1913) that ‘Cézanne’s last paintings and his watercolours belong to Cubism’ and named both Impressionism and Fauvism as fundamental to the development of Cubism.

He also cites Gustave Courbet as a significant influence, Courbet’s celebrated Realism being of prime importance to modern artists. More recent analyses have used the term ‘Cézannism’ as a way of understanding the strength of Cézanne’s importance to Cubism in particular (see, for example, Antliff and Leighton, Cubism and Culture, p.61).

We will deal with the issues that emerge from these ideas in turn: firstly, the way in which Cézanne’s work led into Fauvism; secondly, the ways in which the influence of both Fauvism and Cézanne directly can be seen in the art of Cubism; in both instances it will be important to consider both the subject matter and the painting techniques used. Cézanne’s work would have been well known to both the Fauves, some of whom knew him and even painted with him, and the Cubists, who would have seen the large 1907 retrospective of his work in Paris.

The French word fauve means ‘wild beast’, and whilst it was originally used as an insult against a display of paintings by Matisse, Derain and others at the Salon d’Automne of 1905, it was adopted by them and their supporters as a fitting description of their instinctive use of brash colours, thick paint and cursory brushwork to create pictures that went against ‘civilised’ academic rules.

Cézanne’s Turning Road, also of 1905 (fig. 2), is representative of his tendency to leave large areas of canvas unpainted (leading paintings such as this

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Figure 1  Alfred H Barr  Routes to Abstraction  1936
Figure 2  Paul Cézanne The Turning Road  c.1905
to be ambiguously seen as unfinished), and of his painting directly onto the canvas without using carefully composed studies and preparatory sketches. Lines of blue or brown paint can still be seen in places where his sketched guidelines have not been covered up and the visible primed canvas (originally white, but now discoloured) seems to contribute to the shaping, shading and outlining of the landscape. Similarly, in Matisse’s *Woman in a Kimono* (1906, fig. 3), large areas of bare canvas form major parts of the painting and cursorily applied facial features, such as the arched eyebrows, are left to identify the sitter as Matisse’s wife Amélie. There is, as Matisse put it, no superfluous detail to detract from the essence of the subject. He intended his work to be pleasurable to look at and free from the constraints of the academic practices of careful composition, preparation and high finish.

The directness of the work of both Cézanne at this point and the Fauves, including Matisse, stem from the techniques with which Monet and others had experimented, working in front of the landscape they were painting, and claiming their painted ‘sketches’ as finished artworks. In this way, Apollinaire’s claim that both Impressionism and Cézanne were at the heart of the Fauvist impulse is borne out.

Picasso and Braque, unarguably the two most famous Cubist painters, were painting in a style very similar to that of Cézanne at the start of the twentieth century. Braque’s *Viaduct at l’Étatsque* (1908, fig. 4), for example, a later version of which was reproduced by Apollinaire in *The Cubist painters*, uses the same parallel brushwork, applied with a square brush or palette knife, that is so central to paintings such as *The Montagne Saint-Victoire* (1887) or *The Lac d’Annecy* (1896, fig. 5). Unlike the Fauves, Braque and Picasso took on Cézanne’s use of muted colours and restricted tonal range in their landscapes of this period and did so to an even greater extent in their later portraits such as Picasso’s *Portrait of Daniel Henry Kahnweiler* (1910, fig. 6). The type of faceted brushwork used by Cézanne to suggest light and reflection was used by the Cubists in works such as this not dissimilarly, to show the depth of objects and forms through a three-dimensional analysis of them that was the result, as they saw it, of ‘multiple viewpoint perspective’, whereby all sides of a three-dimensional form might be simultaneously represented on the same picture plane. The overlapping of planes in this manner would become known as passage, a term that can be applied equally to the way in which one form seems to dissolve into another in Cézanne’s landscapes and to the way that the forms are broken up and shifted apart as a means of abstraction in Cubism.

Two very good examples of the way in which Cézanne’s techniques were adopted by the Cubists and used to progress to new forms of art are currently on display in the Courtauld Gallery: Picasso’s *Yellow irises* (1901) shows very clearly the transitional phase in Picasso’s work between a use of vigorous, parallel brushwork and Cubism proper, whilst Fernand Léger’s *Contrastes de formes* (1913) demonstrates an almost total abstraction of what began as a recognisable scene of smoke over the rooftops of Paris. Whilst the geometric forms of the Léger have a clear root in Cézanne’s brushwork, their proportions and the non-naturalistic colours depart from Cézanne’s influence and demonstrate the preserve of Modernism proper: a preoccupation with the fast-paced
simultaneity of modern life that had only been hinted at in the city-based works of the Impressionists.

One final comparison, between Cézanne's *The Card Players* (1892-5, fig. 7) and Picasso's *Guitar, bottle of Bols and playing cards* (1913, fig. 8), serves to demonstrate the importance to modern artists of the type of subject matter prized by Cézanne. Apollinaire, again in The Cubist Painters had written ‘you can paint with what you like, with pipes, postage stamps, postcards, playing-cards, candelabras, pieces of oilcloth, shirt collars, wallpaper or newspapers’, and indeed such elements appear in many of Picasso and Braque’s paintings, sketches and collages. The muted browns of Picasso’s sketch are reminiscent of Cézanne’s palette in *The Card players* and the elements of café life and popular culture enter the composition in the form this time of a still life: this could be a depiction of the card players’ surroundings, missing only the people themselves.

Cézanne was a catalyst, then, for the type of Modernism that prized the presence of the canvas over the careful elimination of it through illusionistic painting. In his willingness to leave areas of his paintings ‘unfinished’, in his faceted brushwork and in his preoccupation with the analysis of light and form, he moved towards the Modernism of both Fauvism and Cubism. In his painting of scenes such as men playing cards and landscapes with no universal significance, but of personal importance, he, like the Impressionists before him, rejected the academic tradition of painting important historical or mythological subjects and engaged instead with the modern life that surrounded him.
Suggestions for further reading:


Images:

Figure 1 Alfred H. Barr junior, ‘The Development of Abstract Art’, chart prepared for the cover of the catalogue Cubism and Abstract Art, 1936.

New York, Museum of Modern Art, Figure 2 Paul Cézanne, La Route tournante (The Turning Road), c.1905.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries.

Figure 3 Henri Matisse, Femme au kimono (Woman in a Kimono), c.1906.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries.

Figure 4 Georges Braque, Le Viaduc de l’Éstaque (The Viaduct at l’Éstaque), 1908.
Paris, Musée national d’art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou.

Figure 5 Paul Cézanne, Le Lac d’Annecy (The Lac d’Annecy), 1896.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries.

Figure 6 Pablo Picasso, Portrait de Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (Portrait of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler), 1910.
Art Institute of Chicago.

Figure 7 Paul Cézanne, Les Joueurs de cartes (The Card Players), c.1892-5.
London, Courtauld Institute Galleries.

Figure 8 Pablo Picasso, Guitare, bouteille de Bols et cartes de jeu (projet pour une construction) (Guitar, bottle of Bols and playing cards (project for a construction)), 1913. Paris, Musée Picasso.
Suggestions for questions during a gallery visit or when using the image CD

1. *Still life with Plaster Cast* (c.1894) was the first painting by Cézanne that the wealthy industrialist and art collector, Samuel Courtauld bought. The composition of this still-life is very unusual, particularly as it includes other canvases amongst the arrangement of objects.

• What is unusual about the view of the objects and how he has painted them?

• Why do you think Cézanne included other paintings in the composition?

2. The collection includes paintings on paper as well as on canvas; these are not usually displayed in the gallery although they belong to the Courtauld. What do you think is the reason for this?

• Can you tell by looking at the works what kind of paint is used and whether they are on paper or canvas?

• What can we find out about the artist’s way of working by looking at the two different types of painting together?

3. Cézanne always painted from real life, whether in the studio or outside and he believed passionately in the importance of looking at nature in detail; many of the letters he wrote to a young artist named Emile Bernard are about that subject. He believed that areas of colour should be built up to create form and structure in a painting and lines were of far less importance.

• Can you see how he did this; particularly in the unfinished works on display?

• Why do you think he chose particular colours and what impression do the colours give us?

4. Cézanne lived in the South of France and painted a particular view of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire that was close to his home many times. The view would have been different every day as the light and the seasons changed.

• Do the paintings depict a view in a single day or over several weeks or even years? During which season did Cézanne paint these landscapes; how can you tell?

• Is the idea of how a place may change over time something that could be captured by something other than in a painting? How might an artist working today convey this idea?

View Finder – suggested classroom excercise

• Make view-finders out of a piece of stiff, black or white paper.

• Fold an A4 sheet into 4 and cut out a small rectangular hole approximately 5 x 2.5 cm from the corner so when unfolded you will have a small viewer in the middle of a larger frame.

• Students can use the view finder to select an image or section from a still-life arrangement; they should try and choose a composition with a variety of colours and shapes within it but can be just a section of something larger.

• Fix the view finder in the chosen position and then draw, paint or pastel the compositions. By frequently looking at their chosen views students should try to create an image without drawing any lines, instead they should use only colour in layers to build up the composition and structure.

• Review the images and discuss the benefits and challenges of working in this way.
‘Drawing and colour are not separate at all; in so far as you paint, you draw. The more the colour harmonizes, the more exact the drawing becomes. When the colour achieves richness, the form attains its fullness also. The contrasts and relations of tones – there you have the secret of drawing and modelling’
Paul Cézanne
Letter to Emile Bernard 15 April 1904
Excercise 1 (Suggested KS3)
Make a 3D landscape that breaks up areas of the image so that background becomes foreground.

How?
• Take a piece of A2 card and paint a landscape scene, don’t make any pencil marks to give you guides, work straight onto the paper with paint.
• Use both thick and thin marks and light and dark tones to achieve the effects of tonal perspective.
• Use different brush sizes to make a variety of marks on your paper; use larger marks at the bottom of the paper and smaller marks in the middle of the paper, the horizon line. Refer to Excercise 2 if you wish to experiment with how the marks could look. (fig. 1)
• Paint the top half a sky-blue varying the colour and mark-making. Think about how a sky has perspective as well; think about how the clouds in the distance that would be lower to the horizon.
• Cézanne was an artist who worked En-Plein Air (in the open air) whilst this can be hard to achieve in some schools do try to encourage the class so they can make their composition from a view, perhaps from the windows of the art room.
• Let your compositions dry then fold in half so the painting is on the inside.
• Keep the fold at the top of your paper and draw the outlines of some features from a landscape making sure that the top of the feature touches the fold line, leaving a small gap. (fig. 2)
• In Cézannes Mountagne Saint Victoire there is a tree to the left, a mountain to the right and an aquaduct shape to the right in the distance, consider these features compositionally before deciding upon your own.
• Cut along the lines of the landscapes features. Make sure you leave a bit of paper attached at the top and bottom of your landscape feature.
• Flatten your painting and then push out the incisions to make a landscape of broken de-lineated forms. (fig. 3)

VIEW POINTS

Paul Cézanne is known today as one of the artists who rejected every tradition in painting and laid the foundations for modern art. However, when he was a young man he failed the entrance exam to the famous art college, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and his early work was repeatedly rejected by the annual exhibition at the Paris Salon.

Despite this Cézanne was determined to be a painter and he continued to study the work of other artists; practicing the disciplines of traditional painting in order to develop his own skills and techniques. As part of this discipline he frequently visited the Louvre Museum in Paris where he copied works of art by figurative painters he admired such as Delacroix and Ingres.

Like many of the great artists of the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist period Cézanne was highly skilled in the traditional techniques of art such as figurative drawing and the use of perspective. These skills served as a strong foundation for the experimental work which led to the development of his distinctive style.

The following exercises aim to introduce students to certain elements of traditional landscape painting before taking a more experimental approach. The view-finder excercise on the previous page can also serve as a tool to observe and model a composition through observation and the use of colour.

The following excercises introduce, in simple ways, methods of learning linear and tonal perspective as well as landscape compositions that can be influenced by Cézanne’s way of working and also begin to investigate structure reminiscent of the Cubists.

Cézanne innovatively broke away from the conventions of taught painting and developed a way of working that greatly influenced many of the important artistic movements throughout the 20th Century such as the Cubists and the Fauves.

Please read section 2: Becoming Modern for further information.

fig. 1  fig. 2  fig. 3
Excercise 2 (suggested KS2)
Make a 3D Landscape using Cézannes “Montagne Saint Victoire” as a reference point.

What will you need?
A2 card or heavy weight drawing paper and drawing pencils. Paints in the primary’s; red, yellow, blue and white. We suggest a high pigment acrylic to get the best colour definition, especially when mixing up secondary colours. You will also need the obvious things such as palettes, paintbrushes (both thick and thin), glue, and scissors.

How?
• Take one piece of A2 card and fold it in half (portrait format)
• Paint the top half a sky-blue varying the colour and mark-making. Look at the way Cézanne’s skies swirl. (fig. 4)
• Divide the centre line into three equal parts by drawing two dots.
• Draw a line from the left hand dot to the lower left hand corner and repeat on the other side.
• Divide the three shapes into various sizes with horizontal lines, playing with linear perspective. Try to make the divisions smaller near to the middle of the page and the bigger near the bottom of the page. (fig. 5)
• Paint the bottom half of the card using colour mixing and tonal perspective. Make the marks at the bottom of the page darker and larger, as you work up towards the horizon line, the middle of the page, make smaller and lighter marks. (fig. 6)
• There is now the sense of distance, try exploring Cézanne’s distinct use of parallel brush marks to add to the sense of depth. Put the piece of card aside to dry.
• On a second sheet draw some features from a Landscape. In Cézannes Montagne Saint Victoire he painted a mountain shape in the middle, a simple, stylised tree to the left and an aqueduct shape to the right in the distance.

Consider these shapes compositionally and how they frame the canvas before deciding what you will paint on your own work. (fig. 7) Why not try painting a house, a windmill or how about a tower.
• If you choose to paint a landscape influenced by Cézannes look at the mountain in Montagne Saint Victoire and the shades Cézanne uses, the pinks and blues, with dabs of pale brown. Try to achieve a similar effect.
• Leave to dry and return to sheet one, folding it in half with the paint on the inside.

Either
• Make simple stands from strips of paper folded into triangles, cut out your landscape features and stick the stands on the back.
• Move your landscape features around to experiment and manipulate your composition.
Or
• Cut small incisions into the back of your background painting. (fig. 8)
• Open up the paper and push the incisions out at at right angles, creating stands.
• Now cut out your landscape features, for example the mountain, tree and bridge and stick onto the stands. (fig. 9)

Why?
So many techniques are covered in this exercise, it can be extremely good fun and very effective. Some fairly sophisticated concepts are introduced in a simple way and can be applied to making other art works and studying other artists. Try to see if the class can spot either linear perspective or tonal perspective in other paintings by Impressionist and post-impressionist artists. Please use the images on the accompanying CD.

Variations.
Different sized pop-ups could be made. Other artists with other themes could be used as the starting point for example still life or an urban landscape. Different mediums such as collage or printmaking could also be used. Try using photo-montage and really playing with the idea of space and depth.

Links.
Art, Art History, DT, History, numeracy, Geography and Science.
CÉZANNE 
EN FRANÇAIS

These two activities have been outlined to use French KS3 skills such as verbs, tenses, adverbs and questions. They can be done individually or in class. Each activity is accompanied by a text, where more information about Paul Cézanne’s paintings and France in the 19th century is given.

KS3 Activité 1 - Géographie de la France 
comparaison entre les paysages: Le Lac d’Annecy et La Montagne St Victoire de Paul Cézanne

- Décrivez ces deux tableaux ; pouvez vous trouver des différences et des ressemblances parmi ces deux compositions?
- Quelles sont les couleurs utilisées? En quoi sont-elles différentes?
- A votre avis, ces deux paysages proviennent-ils de la même région de France? Pourquoi?
- A quelle période de l’année ont été peints ces tableaux?
- A votre avis, quelles sont les activités (agricoles, commerciales, sociales, sportives) de ces différentes régions?
- Que font les habitants dans ces deux régions?
- Quel type de plantes et d’animaux pouvez vous rencontrer dans ces paysages?


Parce qu’elle apparaît de façon dramatique dans le paysage provençal, la Sainte Victoire a longtemps été considérée comme un lieu sacré. Au Moyen Age déjà, des rites religieux y étaient célébrés. Au 19e siècle, après la guerre contre la Prusse, une croix chrétienne est érigée à son sommet. Depuis qu’elle est devenue l’emblème de Cézanne, la montagne est devenue au 20e siècle, un lieu de pèlerinage artistique et intellectuel. Le lac d’Annecy quant à lui, est l’emblème de la ville d’Annecy, qui se trouve en Haute Savoie, proche de la frontière Suisse. Comme sa voisine Genève, Annecy s’est développée au 19e siècle grâce à l’essor du tourisme de montagne. Aujourd’hui, c’est une ville encore très active, qui attire de nombreux visiteurs, surtout en été. Les deux toiles sont similaires dans leur composition: un grand arbre sur la gauche encadre le sujet (la montagne ou le lac), présenté au lointain. La technique utilisée (Cézanne applique des touches de couleurs quasi-géométriques) est aussi comparable. Ce qui distingue pourtant les deux tableaux est la différence dans les palettes de couleurs employées. Des couleurs chaudes, lumineuses et joyeuses (jaune, orange, bleu et vert clair), sont utilisées pour décrire la montagne Sainte Victoire, et illustrer le climat méditerranéen de cette région de France.

La Provence, bénéficie en effet d’un climat chaud et ensoleillé toute l’année. L’agriculture (fruits et légumes) est très riche, puisqu’elle profite de l’irrigation de la vallée du Rhône. On peut apercevoir de nombreuses parcelles de champs, ainsi que quelques fermes et ‘mas’ (maisons provençales traditionnelles) dans la toile de Cézanne. A l’opposé, les tons plus sombres et plus graves (bleus et verts foncés) qui dominent le Lac d’Annecy, représentent parfaitement la ville de
montagne et d’altitude. Encadrée par des montagnes et des forêts, Annecy est avant tout une ville élégante, de plaisir et de promenade, qui regorge de richesses architecturales. Le lac, comme à Genève, est l’emblème de la ville et mesure 14 km de long. Les touristes aiment s’y promener, s’y baigner, faire du pédalo ou encore nager et pêcher. Les montagnes alentours offrent de nombreuses activités sportives.

Cézanne se rend à Talloires (petite ville au bord du lac) durant l’été 1896 avec sa femme et son fils. Dans une lettre à son ami Gasquet, il écrit qu’il apprécie le lac qu’il trouve ‘très beau avec ces grandes collines tout autour’ mais est un peu déçu par le paysage alentour qu’il juge trop précieux, un peu comme ‘nous avons appris à le voir dans les cahiers de croquis de jeunes filles’.


Ces deux régions, très différentes en géographie, topologie et climat, montrent deux aspects bien différents de la France. Cézanne, qui a toujours été fortement attaché à sa Provence natale où il résidait presque toute sa vie, écrit dans la même lettre à Gasquet : ‘pour soulager mon ennui, je peins. Ce n’est pas très intéressant, mais le lac est très beau avec ses grandes collines tout autour...(cette région) n’est (tout de même) pas aussi belle que la nôtre.’

Poires et pommes sont des fruits typiquement français, qui à l’époque de Cézanne et encore de nos jours, sont abondamment consommés et cultivés en France.

On trouve des pommiers et des poiriers dans presque toutes les régions de France, ainsi que dans beaucoup de vergers et de jardins de particuliers.

Alors que les poires et les pommes sont des fruits récoltés au début de l’automne, le primevère est une plante de début de printemps. Les primevères produisent leurs premières fleurs généralement en Février ou en Mars et poussent généralement à l’état sauvage, et en abondance, dans les champs ou en bordure de route. Cézanne, qui dans les années 18880-90 vit à Aix-en-Provence, et observe avec attention le monde agricole autour de lui, sait qu’il est très rare de trouver une telle combinaison de plantes et de fruits au même moment de l’année. C’est donc bien la qualité esthétique des plantes et des fruits que Cézanne décide de présenter ici, plutôt que le réalisme naturel ou biologique de la composition.

KS3 Activité 2 : la nature dans Pot de primevères et fruits de Paul Cézanne

- Décrivez ce tableau.
- Quels sont les fruits et les plantes que l’on peut voir?
- Décrivez les couleurs, les formes et la composition du tableau. Où se situe la scène ? Que voyez-vous à l’arrière plan ?
- Où peut-on trouver ces plantes et ces fruits?
- En quelle saison ?
- Aimez-vous ce tableau ? Pourquoi ?
- Les objets du tableau vous aident-ils à dater le tableau ?
- Trouvez-vous le sujet intéressant ? Aimez-vous les natures mortes ?

La nature morte, Pot de primevères et fruits, met en scène quelque fruits et un pot de fleurs. Les poires et les pommes (certaines sont posées dans une petite assiette) et le pot de primevères reposent sur une surface plate, possiblement une table. La composition de l’arrière plan, ne permet pas d’identifier avec certitude les éléments (un chevalet, un cadre de porte ?) du fond de la pièce.

La nature morte, Pot de primevères et fruits, met en scène quelques fruits et un pot de fleurs. Les poires et les pommes (certaines sont posées dans une petite assiette) et le pot de primevères reposent sur une surface plate, possiblement une table. La composition de l’arrière plan, ne permet pas d’identifier avec certitude les éléments (un chevalet, un cadre de porte ?) du fond de la pièce.


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These activities have been designed specifically for A2/AS students, wanting to further their knowledge of French culture at the end of the 19th century through Paul Cézanne’s works. The activities offer ways to use French KS4 level skills, such as describing, locating, using different tenses, expanding vocabulary. The ‘Recherche et Analyse’ sections introduce themes to explore individually or in class.

**KS4 Activité 1 – La classe paysanne dans la seconde moitié du 19e siècle français**

Au cours des années 1890, Cézanne peint de nombreuses toiles ayant pour sujet les habitants de sa ville natale, Aix-en-Provence. Plus particulièrement, il est très intéressé par les paysans et les agriculteurs qui travaillent les terres alentours. Ainsi, le père Alexandre, qui est le jardinier de Cézanne, devient le modèle pour l’Homme à la Pipe, et pour le personnage situé à gauche dans Les Joueurs de Carte, une de ses œuvres les plus ambitieuses. Les nombreux croquis et dessins préparatoires qui existent montrent l’importance que Cézanne apporte à ce thème et suggèrent que les personnages de la composition ont posé à un moment donné pour le peintre. Selon Joachim Gasquet, ami du peintre, Cézanne exécuta ces toiles dans sa propre maison au Jas de Bouffan. La présence des panneaux de bois et de la bouteille de vin au second plan des Joueurs de Carte rappelle pourtant l’intérieur d’un café. Peu d’autres détails permettent de situer précisément le lieu de la scène.

Les tons prédominants de gris et de bruns, évoquent les couleurs traditionnellement associées à la terre et aux travailleurs agricoles. La facture de l’Homme à la Pipe révèle aussi l’innovation technique et artistique de Cézanne, qui lui vaudra plus tard le titre de ‘père du modernisme’. Le regard de l’homme, ses traits de visage, ainsi que son apparence physique (il semble légèrement courbé) amènent à interroger le comportement et les émotions du personnage.

Les Joueurs de Carte

- Qui sont ces hommes? Que font-ils?
- Pouvez-vous décrire la composition du tableau?
- Où sont ces hommes? À votre avis, que représente la tache de couleur rouge au fond du tableau? (NB: aucune explication précise n’est donnée pour cet élément: certains y voient une décoration accrochée au mur, d’autres un miroir avec un reflet)
- Qu’expriment leurs visages? Quelle attitude ont-ils?
- Aimez-vous la façon dont leurs visages sont peints?
- Essayez de raconter leur histoire personnelle et les circonstances de leur rencontre/jeu?

L’homme à la Pipe

- Qui est cet homme?
- Que fait-il?
- Comment s’habille-t-il ? Quels vêtements porte-t-il?
- À votre avis, quels sentiments éprouve-t-il?
- Comment se présente-t-il face au peintre/au spectateur?

Recherche et analyse

Demander aux élèves de faire une recherche sur la condition paysanne dans la seconde moitié du 19e siècle.

- Quel est le climat politique, social et culturel de la France à cette période?
- Pouvez-vous donner plus de détails sur la condition des agriculteurs/paysans dans la seconde moitié du 19e siècle? De quoi vivaient-ils? Comment s’habillaient-ils?
- Quelles ont été les lois, mesures passées, politiques
menées en leur faveur/défaveur?
• Quelles ont été les grandes crises agricoles de cette période?
• Quelle est la relation qu’un artiste peut entretenir avec un paysan?
• Ont-ils des intérêts communs?
• A votre avis, pourquoi Cézanne était-il autant attaché au père Alexandre et à sa ville natale d’Aix-en-Provence?

KS4 Activité 2 - La Nature


Les Grands Arbres au Jas de Bouffan est une des nombreuses toiles que Cézanne peint de sa maison (le Jas de Bouffan est la propriété dont Cézanne hérite et où il réside une grande partie de sa vie). Les touches de couleur, les traces de pinceau et la composition unique de ces deux toiles ne permettent pas cependant de définir si l’artiste considérait ces toiles comme achevées ou non.

• Pouvez-vous décrire ces tableaux?
• Pensez-vous que les titres de ces tableaux sont adéquats? Quel autre titre pourriez-vous leur donner?
• Quelles sont les couleurs utilisées? Comment reliaient-elles le sentiment de nature? Comment décrivent-elles la nature autour de la ferme?
• Où se situent géographiquement Hattenville et le Jas de Bouffan en France?
• Pouvez-vous citer d’autres peintres intéressés par la nature au 19e siècle? Si oui, lesquels?
• Présentent-ils la nature de la même façon?
• Comment trouvez-vous la description des éléments naturels dans ce tableau?

Comparaison
Comparer ces deux toiles avec d’autres tableaux Impressionnistes et Post-Impressionnistes (certaines images sont fournies dans ce pack) avec les élèves. Centrer la discussion sur les différents types de nature représentés et sur les différentes façons de peindre des éléments naturels tels que les arbres etc.

Recherche et analyse
Sujets possibles de recherche
• Ville et campagne dans la seconde moitié du 19e siècle.
• Paris et ses alentours (Argenteuil et l’industrialisation du bassin parisien)
CÉZANNE IN FRENCH

KS 3 Activity 1 – Two different aspects of the French landscape Le Lac d’Annecy and La Montagne St Victoire by Paul Cézanne

- Describe the paintings? Can you find similarities/differences?
- Which colours are used? Are they different? • Were these landscapes painted in the same area of France? Why not? • What does the surrounding nature look like? How are the mountains, the trees? Are they the same in both paintings? What kind of animal can you meet in these different places?
- Where would you rather spend your holidays? In Provence or in the Alps? Why?

Even though both paintings look quite similar at first glance, La Montagne Sainte Victoire, painted around 1887 and Le Lac d’Annecy, painted in 1896, depict two very different geographical parts of France. On the one hand, the Montagne Sainte Victoire, presents a peaceful and sunny landscape from Provence, in the South of France. On the other hand, the Lac d’Annecy depicts the famous alpine lake, high in altitude and surrounded by tall mountains, close to the French-Swiss border.

The mountain Sainte Victoire, located behind Aix-en-Provence, has been a sacred site in Provence since the Middle Ages and is still considered as one of the key features of the region. Similarly, the lake in Annecy is the symbol of the town and its peaceful atmosphere. It has attracted flocks of tourists since the 19th century and is still one of the busiest resorts in the Alps.

Cézanne frames both compositions similarly with a large tree on the left and he applies shaped brushstrokes to both canvases. However, the palette is very different in the two paintings, with luminous and varied tones used in the Sainte Victoire landscape (yellow, orange, light blue and green) and more deep and sombre colours used in the Lake d'Annecy (dark blues and greens, brown). Cézanne describes the scenery in a letter to his friend Gasquet, during his stay near Annecy in the summer of 1896. He writes: 'This is a temperate zone. The surrounding hills are quite lofty. The lake, which at this point narrows to a bottleneck, seems to lend itself to the linear drawing exercises of young lady travellers.' He seems determined to transcend the commonplace picturesque in the mountain landscape, by using dark and unusual shapes to build up his composition.

Even though Cézanne appreciates the lake’s beauty, he still prefers the Provence landscape as he writes to his Aixois friend Philippe Solari: ‘To relieve my boredom I’m doing some painting, it’s not much fun, but the lake is very fine with big hills all around…it’s not as good as our country.’

A few fruits (some pears and possibly apples) and a potted primrose plant make up the still life Pot of Primroses and Fruits painted by Cézanne between 1888 and 1890. Although a few elements are depicted in the background, the foreground (fruits and plant) is very simply laid out. It looks as if Cézanne is simply painting what is in front of him, without re-arranging or assembling the elements of his subject first.

The colours of the painting, applied in small thin layers, illuminate the composition vividly. A clear background (hues of light blue and yellow) sets a luminous and calm atmosphere. More vivid colours are used to paint the foreground elements. Echoes of white (the plate, the plant pot and the primrose flower) bring out the vividness of the still life. Apples and pears are fruits very common to the French landscape which in Cézanne’s days, and still nowadays, are widely cultivated. They are grown extensively in orchards to meet the commercial demand, but also in private gardens.

While apples and pears are picked in the autumn, primroses flower and prosper in early spring, usually growing in the wild. Cézanne, who in the late 1880s lives in Aix-en-Provence and takes a keen interest in nature, would have been aware of this small seasonal anachronism. It seems the beauty of this composition, rather than its biological reality appealed to the painter.

KS3 Activity 2 – Nature in Cézanne’s Pot de primevères et fruits

- Describe the painting • Can you name the fruit(s) and plant on display? • Look at the colours, shapes and the general composition of the painting. Where does the scene take place? What can you see in the background? • Do you like this painting? • Why (not)? • Do you like still-life as a genre or style? Have you seen any other still-lives? Can you name them? Do you remember who painted them? • Look at the objects in the painting (flower pot, plate etc.). Do they look old or modern? • Does this help you date the painting? • Does this mean that a still life is usually age-less? • Do you know when primroses usually flower? • Do you know in which season apples and pears are usually picked?

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KS4 Activity 1 – Farmers in the second half of the 19th century in France

During the 1890s, Cézanne produces numerous paintings on the landscape and the inhabitants of his local, native town, Aix-en-Provence. As a painter, he is very interested in the daily habits of his fellow countrymen, and their relationship with the surrounding countryside.

The figure of Père Alexandre, Cézanne’s gardener, appears in two of the Courtauld Cézanne’s paintings: Man with a Pipe and the Card Players (he is the character on the left). Many preparatory sketches for these paintings survive, and according to the painter’s friend, Joachim Gasquet, they were most likely executed in Cézanne’s own house, at the Jas de Bouffan.

The setting of The Card Players is not easily recognisable: apart from the two men playing on a table, very few other details are included in the composition and it is not clear whether they are playing in a local café or in someone’s house. The wooden panels, the table cloth and the bottle of wine in the background pinpoint to a typical 19th century local café setting.

The dominating grey and brown hues in these two paintings convey a sense of rustic simplicity which Cézanne researched and explored in most of his later compositions. The variation of brown brushstrokes (which mirror the colour of soil and the local Provence stone) combined with blue-grey dabs of paint (the colour of farm and menial workers’ clothes) conjure up a genuine vision of rural Provence at the end of the 19th century. They also bring us to question the character’s presence and emotions in Man with a Pipe where the man’s gaze, unusual features and slightly slouched posture go against the general conventions of portraiture.

Both paintings illustrate Cézanne’s technical originality and innovation where his use of small geometrical shapes and varied colourful brushstrokes delineate elements in his paintings. Because of this, he was to be later named ‘Father of Modernism’, leading the way for Fauve, Cubist and more abstract experimentations.

The Card Players
• Who are these men? • What are they doing? • Can you describe the composition of the painting? • Where are these men? • What do you think the red dab of paint in the background represents? (NB: No clear-cut explanation has been given for this particular feature) • Can you describe the men’s facial expressions? • How are they seated? • How is the table painted? • Is it geometrically correct or symmetrical? • Do you like the way their faces have been painted? • Can you imagine what their daily life is, why they are meeting up for a card game?

Man with a Pipe
• Who is this man? • What is he doing? • What is he wearing? • What is he feeling? What do you think is going through his mind? • How is he looking at the painter/viewer? • How does this impact on the way we look at him? • Where is he? • Can you describe the background? • What do think is his job and his social status? • Can you describe what his daily worries/preoccupations might be?

Analysis and Research

Ask students to do a small research on farmers and agriculture in the second half of the 19th century in France and in England.

• Can you give more details on farmers and labourers in the 19th century in France? And in England? • How were they living? • What were their clothes like? • Which laws were passed? • Where were any new measures implemented? • What was the great agricultural crisis? • In your opinion, what kind of relationship can a painter and a labourer have? What do they have in common? Do they have similar interests?

Activity 2 - Nature

In his correspondence with his friend Emile Bernard, Cézanne insists on the need for a painter to constantly return to nature, observe it closely while painting it. Ferme Normande and Tall Trees at the Jas de Bouffan look very similar in their composition, even though they depict very different regions in France. Cézanne chooses to represent elements of the landscape, such as a tall tree on the left of the painting, a clearing in the forest or in the field, tree trunks, branches and leaves, rather than a wide panorama. This enables him to paint the atmosphere of a place, rather than its geographic reality.

Ferme Normande, Eté (Hattenville), which was almost certainly painted in the summer of 1882, depicts the countryside house of Cézanne’s patron (Victor Choquet). We know he painted three other views of the house, which are all in private collections. Les Grands Arbres au Jas de Bouffan is one of the many paintings of Cézanne’s own house, in which he spent most of his lifetime. It is not clear however whether Cézanne considered the painting finished or not. The large brushstrokes and the sketchy definition of some of the elements are at odds technically with other works Cézanne executed in the same years.

• Can you describe these paintings? • Do you think their titles are relevant? Could you give them other titles? • Which colours does Cézanne use in his palette? How do they convey the feeling/impression of Nature? • Do you like the way natural elements such as trees and grass are painted? How would you paint them differently? • Locate both places on a map of France. Are they from the same region? How can you recognize the geographical difference in the paintings? Do the colours vary? • Can you quote other painters influenced by nature in the 19th century? How are their paintings different? • Can you see a link between Cézanne’s work and their own?

Compare these two paintings with other paintings by French Impressionists. These images can be found on the accompanying image lists. Monet Autumn Effect at Argenteuil, Monet Antibes, Renoir Pont-Aven, Van Gogh Peach blossoms.
On the CD is a collection of images from the Courtauld Cézannes Exhibition and other related works from the Courtauld Collection.

Double click on Cézanne Images and the file will open in either Explorer, Safari or Firefox.

There is also a PDF of the Teachers' Resources.

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WITH THANKS

Becoming Modern: From Cézannism to Cubism
Caroline Levitt

View Points: Making activity
Ashley Davis

Cézanne en Français: Cézanne in French
Alice Odin