

MAY 2011 OOM CLUB

CEZANNE CHESTNUT TREES AT JAS DE BOUFFAN painted 1885-1886

Cezanne considered one of the forerunners of Modern Painting – integrating the old and the new.

Obsession with portraying through technical language -combining thought and emotion. Exact impression of the sensations he experienced.

First influences were Delacroix (composition and colour) , Courbet (rich texture) and Daumier.

Early works : 1862 -1870 – violent in both subject and treatment. Also dark. Later – influence of Pissarro. Painting in manner of Impressionists. Palette became lighter, brushstrokes broken up- less paint. But still expressing passionate and mercurial temperament. Under Pissarro influence moved away from Romanticism. Nature only model to follow. **“We must do Poussin over again from Nature “.**

Wanted to go further than Impressionists – Criticized their obsession with light and capturing the fleeting moment. **“We must make of impressionism something durable like the art of the Museum. “**

Later work became more abstract - but not to be classified as either impressionist, symbolist or cubist. (though his work became point of departure of Braque and Picasso in their development of cubism – like two climbers climbing a mountain tied by a rope) he was obsessed by geometric forms in nature but saw them more as natural. “ See in nature the cylinder, the sphere and the cone , putting everything in perspective **No hesitation to distort if needed and eliminate items to get to the truth.** Portray nature in its elemental grandeur and truth.

Life

Born in Aix en Provence 1839 - son of a self made man – very dominant . Was a felt hat maker – successful business lead him into banking – Purchased Jas de bouffant in 1859. The house had been the home of the Governor of Provence – so definite self improvement move. Father was a tyrant obsessed by money and Cezanne much closer to his mother and his sister. (Marie Born 1844 strong presence in his life)

His mother supported his painting and Cezanne found refuge in his painting.

Moved to Paris in 1861

Training in Law but lessons on the side at le Pere Suisse. Meets Monet , Renoir , Pissarro (already old) . Admires Manet. Abandons Law studies. 2 paintings accepted at the Salon des Refuses in 1863 (not known which paintings) .

Becomes marginalized... scared and shy of women.

Back to Aix in 1877 (final exhibition with Impressionists) choosing to leave the turbulence of Paris.

His painting accepted at the Salon of 1882 constitutes an exception which will not be renewed, and, refused once again in 1884, **Cezanne "gives up the fight for Paris "** .

Quite isolated from artistic currents, Cezanne now works more and more often and for long periods of time in Provence, at Aix.

He keeps in contact with Pissarro whom he sometimes visits, and Renoir who visits him in 1882, and again in 1883 accompanied by Monet.

The middle of the 1880s will mark a turn in his personal life. He breaks with Zola in 1886, at the time of the publication of "*The Work*", where he would recognize himself in the character of the fallen painter Claude Lantier. The same year, the death of his father puts him in possession of a fortune sufficient to ensure him definitive independence.

His paintings will be very seldom shown to the public : in 1889 with the World Fair, in 1887 and 1890, with the group of the XX, in Brussels.

■ LATE POPULARITY

In 1895, a retrospective of Cezanne's work organized by Ambroise **Vollard** , then a young 27 years art dealer, where 150 of his paintings are exhibited, was going to mark a turn for Cézanne, hitherto rejected by the Official Salon and violently attacked at the Impressionist exhibitions.

Cezanne is then discovered : by his **former friends**, who were unaware of his evolution, but also by **young artists** for whom he is a point of anchoring, an immediate reference.

Major retrospective after his death in 1907.

Recognized fully after his death (1906) – In Armory Show 1910.

His Marriage

In 1869 – Cezanne meets Hortense Fiquet a model who will become his companion but fearing his father 's reaction and wishing to keep the small pension he receives from his father – Cezanne hides this relationship and the birth of his son Paul in 1872 until this is discovered by his father in 1878. The marriage finally takes place in 1886.

Provenance of Chestnuts.

Purchased in 1982 from the Frick – prior to this in the collection of Egisto Fabri of Florence – one of the first European collectors of Cezanne.

Description

Austere beauty – expresses the beauty of the Midi (South of France) in winter. Towering trees, bare fields. Winter strips the landscape of the incidental elements – shows eternal immutable quality of nature. Full bold forms of trees.

Unusual view of Cezanne's country villa near Aix en Provence. Does not show house itself but an avenue of Chestnut trees that leads to the House on the left – Buildings shown are outbuildings.

Representative of Cezanne's intermediary work. Painted 1885-87. At same time as many canvases of Mont Sainte Victoire which can be seen in the background.

He painted the Jas de Bouffan over 50 times until it was sold in 1899- The Jas de Bouffan (Of the wind) was purchased by his father as a country home.

Important Composition and colours.

Composition :

Strong vertical forms. Series of receding planes from low boundary wall to the towering mass of Mont Saint Victoire (Mountain of the Holy Victory)
Very intentional arrangement of deep space. Small overlapping planes of modulated color, large areas of colour which reinforce the large structural planes, distortion, use of superimposed line to define contour. Abandonment of linear perspective.

Cezanne achieved depth through a series of receding planes which increase rather than diminish in size as they move back. - Explain : Mountain is fixed in the distance yet remains part of the foreground through its mass and firmness of contour. In addition design of interlacing trees. Result = 3D : “ **how distant everything is yet so close** “

**In addition belief in the value of lines. (as opposed to Impressionists)
Lines parallel to the horizon (wall) give breadth and lines perpendicular = depth.**

Colours :

Somber color scheme of grey – grey green and grey blue – contrast with warm yellow planes of the farm buildings. Same in forefront in application of pigment alternating greens and warm colours helping to impart depth .

Thin application of pigment – canvas showing through .

Small overlapping planes of modulated color – in foreground of painting =
Cezanne's development of the colour theories of the impressionists. Combines
advancing quality of warm colours and receding cool colours.

Adds volume and solidity to the style of the impressionists.

Disillusion of old age - misunderstood by his old friends – but in counterpart –
huge influence on Gauguin, Van Gogh and Bernard. Also Maurice Denis.