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“CÉZANNE IN PROVENCE” AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, AND THE MUSÉE GRANET, AIX-EN-PROVENCE, IN 2006, MARKS CENTENARY AND EXPLORES GREAT ARTIST’S TIES TO BIRTHPLACE



Paul Cézanne

Houses in Provence: The Riaux Valley near L'Estaque, c. 1883

oil

65 x 81.3 cm (25 5/8 x 32 in.) framed: 84.4 x 100.3 x 5.7 cm (33 1/4 x 39 1/2 x 2 1/4 in.)

National Gallery of Art, Washington, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon, 1973.68.1

Washington, DC—The year 2006 marks the centenary of the death of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), a founding father of modern art who created some of the most powerful and innovative paintings of the late-19th and early 20th centuries. His achievement will

be celebrated in a major international exhibition of 117 of his greatest oil paintings and watercolors of Provence, its people, and its surrounding countryside. **Cézanne in Provence** is the first exhibition to explore the artist's complex emotional engagement with his birthplace through some of his most original and compelling landscapes; penetrating portraits of friends, employees, and family members; and the monumental series known as the Bathers.

Cézanne in Provence will be shown in the National Gallery of Art's West Building, in Washington, D.C., from January 29 through May 7, 2006, and the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence, from June 9 through September 17, 2006, where it will inaugurate a series of events in honor of the artist to mark the reopening of the Musée Granet, one of France's premier regional museums, after a major renovation. The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, the Musée Granet and the Communauté du Pays d'Aix, Aix-en-Provence, and the Réunion des musées nationaux, Paris.

"Paul Cézanne was one of the greatest post-impressionist painters and has influenced generations of artists to the present. This landmark exhibition will focus on the sense he had of his own achievement, as a celebrant of the very particular and characteristic landscape around Aix-en-Provence," said Earl A. Powell III, director, National Gallery of Art. "The Gallery is deeply grateful for the cooperation of the many lenders worldwide and our museum partners in France, as well as the generosity of DaimlerChrysler in making this landmark exhibition possible."

Exhibition Support

This exhibition is made possible by a generous grant from the DaimlerChrysler Corporation Fund, which also sponsored **Art Nouveau, 1890-1914**, at the National Gallery of Art in 2000-2001.

"We are pleased to play a part in bringing **Cézanne in Provence** to the National Gallery," said Robert Liberatore, group senior vice president, DaimlerChrysler. "We have a strong commitment to making a positive impact in the communities in which we do business, and this exhibition at the National Gallery will demonstrate that

commitment to visitors from around the world.”

The exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Paul Cézanne and Provence

The son of a banker in Aix-en-Provence, Cézanne along with his friends spent idyllic days of childhood lying under great pine trees; exploring the ruins of a Roman aqueduct; swimming and fishing in the River Arc; or climbing the rocky canyons to the Zola Dam and the foothills of Montagne Sainte-Victoire. The ancient history and natural beauty of the land became part of the artist’s persona.

Cézanne pursued his passionate desire to become an artist despite paternal disapproval. After studying drawing and flirting with a career in law, he made several trips to Paris in the 1860s. There he studied the work of old masters such as Veronese, Tintoretto, and Rubens, and the modern giants Eugène Delacroix and Gustave Courbet, and met young impressionist painters, such as Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, and Camille Pissarro. Under Pissarro’s influence, Cézanne learned to use a lighter range of color, to vary his brushwork, and paint outdoors. When his father died in 1886, leaving him a legacy, Cézanne returned to his native Aix, where he spent most of his last twenty years.

Although he experimented with impressionist techniques in the 1870s, he soon grew impatient with them and reached instead for a more formal, structured style. An emotional man, he found stability in the painted depiction of nature, especially in the familiar countryside around his native Aix-en-Provence. In 1886 Cézanne referred to his birthplace as “this country, which has not yet found an interpreter worthy of the riches it offers.”

At the end of his life Cézanne built a studio on the outskirts of Aix, where he painted a series of Bathers, considered by many to be his crowning achievement. From Aix, Cézanne wrote to fellow artist Emile Bernard, “I have sworn to die painting,” a vow he fulfilled, for he was found outdoors after a cold autumn rainstorm, lying unconscious beside his easel. He died a few days later, in October 1906, at the age of 67.

The Exhibition

Cézanne in Provence includes 87 oil paintings, 29 watercolors, and two lithographs that are presented primarily by theme. The exhibition begins with the artist's family estate, the Jas de Bouffan, which is represented by views in its park, such as *Chestnut Trees at the Jas de Bouffan in Winter* (1885–1886) from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; portraits of family members, including *The Artist's Father, Reading "L'Événement"* (1866), from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and *Madame Cézanne (Hortense Fiquet, 1850–1922) in the Conservatory* (1891–1892) from The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and estate employees, such as *Cardplayers* (1893–1896) from the Musée d'Orsay, Paris. The dazzling light of the Mediterranean coast is revealed in various views of the viaduct, rocky hillsides, and gulf of Marseille at L'Estaque, where Cézanne took a house in 1870.

From the coast, the exhibition will take the visitor inland to the old Provençal village of Gardanne where Cézanne studied the angular forms of its buildings that climbed up the hillsides, and Bellevue, where he found vantage points for his most clearly articulated and classical views of Montagne Sainte-Victoire presiding over the verdant valley of the River Arc. Lush paintings and sketchy watercolors, many from the 1890s, depict some of Cézanne's most personal landscape motifs in the abandoned stone quarry of Bibémus; the rocky, overgrown estate of Château Noir, where Cézanne rented space; and the village of Le Tholonet.

Cézanne's studio at Les Lauves will be commemorated with many of the late works executed there, including the still lifes, such as *Still Life with Statuette* (1894–1895) from the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, and the bathers, including the monumental *Large Bathers* (1894-1905) from the National Gallery in London, and related earlier figurative works. Cézanne's last great series of panoramic views of the Montagne Sainte-Victoire are included in the last gallery of the exhibition that is devoted to the dramatic gray limestone formation that presides over the valley of the River Arc.

The exhibition is also a tribute to the memory of the late, preeminent Cézanne scholar John Rewald. In the study of the sites in Provence and their significance for Cézanne, the exhibition organizers have been aided by the presence of the original site

photographs in the National Gallery of Art Library Image Collections and Rewald's Cézanne papers in the Gallery Archives.

Curators, Catalogue, and Related Activities

The principal curators of the exhibition are Philip Conisbee, senior curator of European paintings, National Gallery of Art, and Denis Coutagne, director of the Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence. They are also the authors of the exhibition catalogue, which celebrates the artist's remarkable and varied depictions of his native Provence. While Cézanne is recognized as one of the fathers of the modern movement, this book focuses on his own sense of achievement in capturing the landscapes in and around his hometown of Aix-en-Provence. In addition to essays by Conisbee and Coutagne, the catalogue features contributions by Françoise Cachin, Isabelle Cahn, Bruno Ely, Benedict Leca, Véronique Serrano, and Paul Smith. Published by the National Gallery of Art in association with Yale University Press, New Haven and London, the catalogue will be available in early January 2006 for \$60 in hardcover and \$45 in softcover. To order call 1-(800)-697-9350 or (202) 842-6002; fax (202) 789-3047; or e-mail mailorder@nga.gov (368 pp., 330 color and 34 black-and-white).

The National Gallery of Art is planning a full program of related lectures, tours, and concerts. Please see "Related Activities" in this press kit.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt) at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on [Twitter](http://twitter.com/ngadc) at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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