

The Museum of Modern Art

11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y. 10019 Tel. 956-6100 Cable: Modernart

Cézanne

The Late Work

ADVANCE FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION CÉZANNE: THE LATE WORK

NO. 56
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ITINERARY The Museum of Modern Art, New York
October 7, 1977 - January 3, 1978
Press Preview: October 5, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas
January 25 - March 21, 1978

Grand Palais, Paris (under the auspices of the Louvre)
April 28 - July 23, 1978

MADE POSSIBLE BY GRANTS FROM IBM CORPORATION AND THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

DIRECTORS William Rubin, Director, Department of Painting and Sculpture
The Museum of Modern Art

John Rewald, Professor of Art History, Graduate School,
City University of New York

Theodore Reff, Professor of Art History,
Columbia University

CONTENTS This exhibition will be the first ever held to focus primarily upon the ten years preceeding Cézanne's death. Containing over 100 works from public and private collections in 14 states and 8 foreign countries, this show, one of the most important in the Museum's history, will offer the unprecedented opportunity to study Cézanne's late works in depth and continuity. The exhibition has been organized around the recurrent themes of the late period to allow the rich and complex evolution of Cézanne's last phase to be fully appreciated.

During the final decade (1895-1906) of his life, Paul Cézanne's art underwent a series of profound changes. In his old age, the balanced, almost classical style characteristic of Cézanne's work of the 1880s gradually gave way to an expressive, dramatically intense manner, which in many ways echoes the impetuous romanticism of his youthful works. However, the animated execution and vibrant colors of Cézanne's late paintings are always contained by an unerring sense of structure that distinguishes them as the culminating creations of his long development.

Watercolors form an essential part of Cézanne's late career and comprise a large part of this exhibition. In these fragile works, which are rarely on public view in such large numbers, Cézanne achieves an extraordinary freedom of line and color not possible in the more resistant medium of oil paint. In his last oil paintings, however, Cézanne arrived at a brilliant translation of the transparent colors and nearly abstract appearance of these watercolors.

(more)

Cézanne's work from the '80s onward was an important influence on the evolution of twentieth-century art; but the near abstraction and fragmentation of the motif demonstrated in his late work provided a foundation and sanction for the development of Cubism and other modernist styles. In this sense his last works form a major art-historical bridge between the 19th and 20th centuries.

ORIENTATION GALLERY

The orientation gallery accompanying CÉZANNE: THE LATE WORK will be located in the south two-thirds of the East Wing. Consisting of a series of illustrated wall panels containing brief discussions of Cézanne's late work and a small auditorium, the orientation gallery is not meant to substitute for the firsthand experience of encountering Cézanne's art; for this reason it is physically separate from the main exhibition galleries. It is hoped that the gallery will function as a reference tool which can be used to enhance the viewer's appreciation of the original works by providing supplemental information.

The orientation gallery will include biographical material, a section devoted to placing Cézanne's art within the context of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, and a discussion of the formal means of Cézanne's "late style"-- pointing out how it differs from, as well as builds upon, his earlier career. The major landscape motifs of Cézanne's late period -- the Mont Sainte-Victoire, Château Noir, and Bibemus quarry -- will be discussed with comparative photographs, enabling viewers to see how Cézanne proceeded from nature, yet dramatically altered it in the course of making a picture. Some of the problems surrounding Cézanne's late portraits will be examined, and background information on two important late period themes -- the Bathers and the still lifes of skulls -- will be provided.

Two slide programs will be alternately shown in the auditorium. The first, prepared by Professor Robert Ratcliffe of the Courtauld Institute in London, will provide a photographic "mini-tour" of the places where Cézanne lived and worked during his last years. The second program, produced by the Museum's staff, will discuss Cézanne's diverse and multi-faceted importance for twentieth-century painting.

AUDIENCE EXPANSION

"People to Pictures" is a new approach to the problem of providing a nationwide audience with the opportunity to view a major exhibition that can be presented in only one or two places. For this show, arrangements are being made for group visits by educational institutions and art organizations from around the country and in Canada. Under this program each participating group will be able to see the exhibition in uncrowded galleries and with its own lecturer. The "People to Pictures" program, by expanding the Museum's capability to reach a public outside of the New York area, will enable a wider audience to share in the unique experience afforded by this exhibition. (Groups from Nova Scotia to California have already made reservations to take part.)

PUBLICATION Cézanne: The Late Work, edited by William Rubin, with essays by noted scholars, catalogue of the most important late works, 50 color plates, 180 black-and-white illustrations, and supplementary documentary material; 340 pages. To be published by The Museum of Modern Art, October 7, 1977.

LECTURES AND SYMPOSIA

"Cézanne: The Late Work -- Five Public Lectures"; October 7-11, 8:30 p.m.

"Cézanne in Perspective -- Six Public Lectures"; Tuesdays, October 25-November 29, 8:30 p.m.

"Cézanne Studies: A Week of Specialized Symposia," art-historical discussions; October 8-11, 2:30 p.m.

July 21, 1977

Additional information available from Linda Gordon, Associate Director, or Bruce Wolmer, Assistant, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019. Tel: (212) 956-2648; 7295.
