

# “Cézanne and Beyond”

The Philadelphia Museum of Art looks at the influence of artist Paul Cézanne.



## BASIC

The artist who painted these pictures — including one of himself, shown at left — was mostly unknown during his lifetime. Paul Cézanne was born in France in 1839. He was the son of a wealthy banker, and his father wanted him to be a banker, too. But Cézanne wanted to be an artist. He didn't make much money at it, and he had to struggle to support his wife and family. **Do you think it was hard for Cézanne not to give up his dream to be an artist?** Cézanne was friends with an artist named Camille Pissarro. Pissarro was a leader of a new style of painting called

impressionism. Impressionist painters tried to paint pictures that looked like what your eye might see with a quick glance. They used bright colors and quick, short brush strokes. Cézanne learned from Pissarro, and developed his own style of painting. This painting, showing a group of items, is called a still life. **What do you think of this still life?** The Philadelphia Museum of Art has an exhibit showing how much Cézanne influenced other artists. NEXT

## GENERAL

The artist who painted these pictures — including the self-portrait on the left — was almost unknown during his lifetime. But he had a huge influence on the artists who came after him. A new exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art looks at how this happened.

Paul Cézanne was born in 1839 in southern France, the son of a wealthy banker. His father wanted him to become a banker, too. But Cézanne wanted to be an artist, so he worked at that. He didn't make much money, and he had to struggle to support his wife and family. The paintings he sent to art galleries were usually turned down. Many art critics of his time made fun of his work. Some were even angered by his style of painting, because it was so different from what other painters were

doing at the time. **Why do you think he didn't give up his dream?**

Cézanne didn't have a lot of friends. Some people thought he was grumpy and bad-tempered. Actually, he was polite, but very shy. One person he admired and who taught him a great deal was the artist Camille Pissarro. He was a leader of a new painting style called impressionism. Impressionists tried to paint quickly, capturing images of what their eyes could see with a quick glance. They used bright colors and quick, short brush strokes. Cézanne didn't want his paintings to look like quick glances at an image. He wanted his pictures to look permanent, and perfectly arranged. So he developed his own style of painting. **What do you think of the paintings you see here?** NEXT

## ADVANCED

Artist Paul Cézanne got almost no public recognition for his work during his lifetime. Late 19th-century art critics called Paul Cézanne's work clumsy and amateurish. They mockingly said that children could paint better pictures. But among artists in the early 20th century, he was considered a genius, and his influence is still strong today. A new exhibit at the Philadelphia Museum of Art examines this influence.

Cézanne was born in 1839 in Aix-en-Provence — *ayks-ahn-PROH-vahns* — where he spent most of his life. His father was a wealthy banker who wanted his son to go into law or banking himself. But the younger Cézanne wanted to pursue art. When his father ran out of patience supporting him, Cézanne

struggled to support his wife and family, selling a few paintings. **Why do you think he didn't give up on his art?**

One of his few close friends was impressionist painter Camille Pissarro. **What do you know about impressionism?** (*It tried to capture what the human eye sees in a quick glance. Impressionist painters were very interested in light, particularly shimmering reflections and dappled shadows.*) Cézanne liked the impressionist's use of bold colors and quick, short brush strokes. But he wanted his paintings to appear permanent and solid, rather than fleeting glimpses. So he adopted what he considered to be the best elements of impressionism, and created his own style. **What do you think of Cézanne's style?** NEXT

## “Cezanne and Beyond” (cont’d)

Called the “father of modern art,” Cézanne bridged the gap between impressionism and cubism.

### BASIC

On the left is a painting by Cézanne of his wife, and on the right is a painting by artist Henri Matisse, who was influenced by Cézanne. **In what ways are these paintings alike, and in what ways are they different? What do you think Matisse meant by the words you see here?** Cézanne’s wife was one of the few models with the patience to sit as still and expressionless as he wished — to, quote, “sit like an apple.” **How would you sit like an apple?**

Another great artist who followed Cézanne’s style of painting was Pablo Picasso. Picasso

turned Cézanne’s style of painting into a new style called cubism.

Cubist paintings turned objects into shapes like squares or cubes. Picasso called Cézanne “the master of us all.” Many great artists were inspired by Cézanne’s work. For this reason, Cézanne is often called the father of modern art. **Which painting here do you like better? Why? Do you think Cézanne was a great painter? Why or why not?** END



### GENERAL

On the left you see a portrait by Cézanne of his wife. Cézanne’s wife was one of the few models with the patience to sit as still and expressionless as he wished — to, quote, “sit like an apple.” **What do you think of this painting?** On the right is a painting done 60 years later, by artist Henri Matisse. Matisse was very influenced by Cézanne’s earlier painting. **In what ways are these two paintings alike? In what ways are they different? Which one do you like better? Why? What do you think Matisse meant by the words you see here?**

Impressionists often painted small dots with their paintbrushes, and from a distance the thousands of dots formed a picture. Instead of dots, Cézanne often used square shapes in his landscape paintings. Later painters followed Cézanne’s example

of dividing a picture into many squares. These artists went even further than Cézanne, creating paintings that showed objects or landscapes as simple shapes rather than realistic pictures. This style of painting was called cubism, and the most successful of these artists was Pablo Picasso. Picasso was so influenced by Cézanne, he called him “my one and only master!” Impressionists in the 19th century first painted pictures that weren’t truly realistic. Cézanne was inspired by the impressionists, and in turn he inspired newer artists whose work was even less realistic, and more dreamlike — a kind of art that had never been seen before. For this reason, Cézanne is often called the father of modern art. **What do you think modern art is? How would you create a piece of modern art?** END

### ADVANCED

Here you see a comparison from the Philadelphia exhibit of work by Cézanne on the left, and an artist he influenced, Henri Matisse, on the right. **Have you seen other works by Matisse?** “Madame Cézanne in a Red Armchair” was painted in 1877, and Matisse’s “Woman in Blue” came 60 years later. **How do you think Cézanne’s earlier work influenced the creation of this Matisse portrait? What similarities do you find in the two pieces?**

Cézanne’s paintings changed as his style became more abstract. While impressionists tried to capture their subjects’ movement, Cézanne tried to represent movement of the viewer’s eye from one focal point to another. He often used warm colors to

make things appear to advance toward the viewer, and cooler colors to make things appear to recede.

The young artist Pablo Picasso was among those who attended an exhibition of Cézanne’s work in 1907, the year after his death. Picasso was inspired by the way Cézanne broke up his forms into slanting, square patches of color. Picasso and others took this idea even further, breaking down their subjects into abstract forms and shapes. **Who knows the name of this art movement?** (*Cubism.*) For his role in bridging the gap between impressionism and cubism, Cézanne is often called the father of modern art. **Have you seen other works by Cézanne? What do you think of his work?** END