

French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945

The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Editor



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Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1905

Artist	Paul Cezanne, French, 1839–1906
Title	<i>Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves</i>
Object Date	1904–1905
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>La Montagne Sainte-Victoire; Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves; La Montagne Sainte-Victoire vue des Lauves</i>
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions (Unframed)	25 1/8 x 32 1/8 in. (63.8 x 81.6 cm)
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 38-6

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Catalogue Entry

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Fig. 1. Maurice Denis, *The Visit to Cezanne*, 1906, oil on canvas, 20 1/16 x 25 3/16 in. (51 x 64 cm), Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence, France, inv. 2012.3.1. © Cliché Jean Bernard / Musée Granet, Ville d'Aix-en-Provence

Writing from Aix-en-Provence to the artist Émile Bernard (1868–1941) in August 1905, Paul Cezanne remarked, "Time and contemplation modify our vision . . . and in the end, we receive understanding."¹ The letter was one of several exchanged between the two artists from 1904 to 1905, the time when Cezanne painted this work in

which he ruminates on art and influence, life and death, the struggle for acceptance, and lasting memory. Cezanne died fourteen months later, on October 23, 1906, at age sixty-seven, reportedly painting in front of the landscape and the mountain he so loved. Cezanne made more than thirty oil paintings of Mont Sainte-Victoire, from a variety of vantage points, from the early 1880s until his death, continually seeking to understand his subject and also be understood himself.²

Toward the end of his life, Cezanne painted subjects near his last studio, just to the north of Aix-en-Provence: a small, two-story stone building erected in 1902 on a hillside road across the valley from the mountain. From there, he walked to a vantage point on the hill of Les Lauves, as seen in a painting from 1906 by Maurice Denis (1870–1943) that depicts the artist holding court with Denis, fellow artist Ker-Xavier Roussel (1867–1944) and others, standing at his easel before a panoramic view of the mountain and the verdant terrain leading to its limestone base (Fig. 1). A few years earlier, Bernard accompanied him to the same spot, noting that Cezanne “was filled with admiration for this mountain.”³ Named “Victoire” possibly sometime after the Roman general Caius Marius defended it against invading Cimbrian and Teuton tribes in 102 BCE, and later Christianized to “Sainte-Victoire,” the mountain stands sentinel over the valley of Aix, rising up 3,317 feet, as a reminder of this historic struggle and of the battle Cezanne himself waged in his perpetual quest for clarity of purpose and vision.

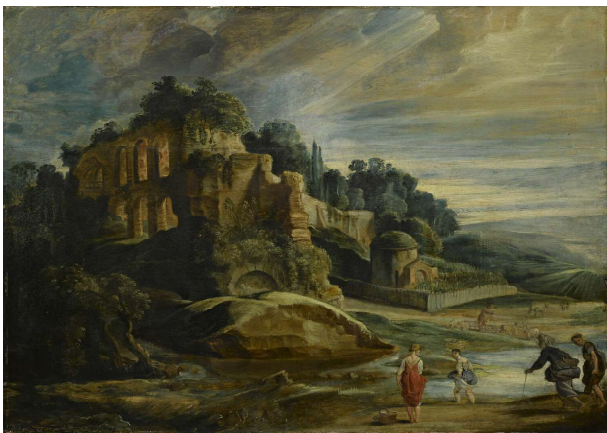


Fig. 2. Peter Paul Rubens, *Landscape with the Ruins of the Palatine Hill in Rome*, ca. 1614–1618, oil on wood, 30 x 42 1/8 in. (76x 107 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, MI 966. Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux

Studying and painting directly from nature aligned Cezanne with Impressionists like Claude Monet (1840–1926), who also painted in series (for example, see *Water Lilies*). This method of working broke from the academic practice of painting a historical subject from one’s imagination in a studio. Yet Cezanne had an abiding interest in both the past and the present, in tradition and innovation, and these influences can be found in the Nelson-Atkins *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*.

Cezanne activated and fulfilled his interest in the past through visits to the Louvre museum in Paris, registering as a copyist many times in the 1860s.⁴ In 1870, the museum received its single-largest gift of fine art: a collection of 583 paintings from Paris-based collector Dr. Louis La Caze (1798–1869).⁵ Significant works by sixteenth-century Italian artists, including Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto; by seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish artists, including Rembrandt van Rijn and Peter Paul Rubens; and by eighteenth-century French artists Jean Antoine Watteau, Jean Siméon Chardin, and Jean Honoré Fragonard, among others, strengthened the museum’s holdings. Cezanne returned to the Louvre following the Franco-Prussian War to witness this watershed addition to the collection, and he accessed the collection regularly thereafter. The Louvre became a secondary school to guide him in his evolution and understanding of the development of form, structure, and space.

Two works from the La Caze bequest that share many formal qualities with *Mont Saint-Victoire* are *Landscape with the Ruins of the Palatine Hill in Rome* by Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640), painted around 1614–1618 (Fig. 2), and *White Horse in an Italian Landscape*, by Karel Dujardin (Amsterdam, 1621/1622–Venice, 1678), painted around 1670–1680 (Fig. 3). Rubens was as preoccupied with structuring space as Cezanne was, and a master at interlacing compositional elements together.⁶ Consider the wide-open expanse of land from which the ruins of the Palatine Hill stand tall against the Roman campagna, similar to the way Mont Sainte-Victoire rises up against the Provençal sky from across a sweeping and clearly delineated foreground, middle ground, and background. In his work, Dujardin defines these zones distinctly through three bands of colors: a russet foreground, green middle ground, and blue background. Not only does Cezanne adopt and adapt this strategy in the Nelson-Atkins picture, but he employs the foreground trees as staffage, akin to Dujardin’s white horse, goat, and young woman. Cezanne depicts the notch in the top of Mont Sainte-Victoire, a real geological aspect of the

mountain, as analogous to a detail in the foliage at the top of Rubens's ruins and in the peaks in the background of the Dujardin.⁷ All three works share a similar palette of mossy greens, deep blues, and russet browns.



Fig. 3. Karel Dujardin, *White Horse in an Italian Landscape*, ca. 1670–1680, oil on canvas, 21 x 17 7/16 in. (53.5 x 44.3 cm), Musée du Louvre, Paris, MI 935. Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Tony Querrec

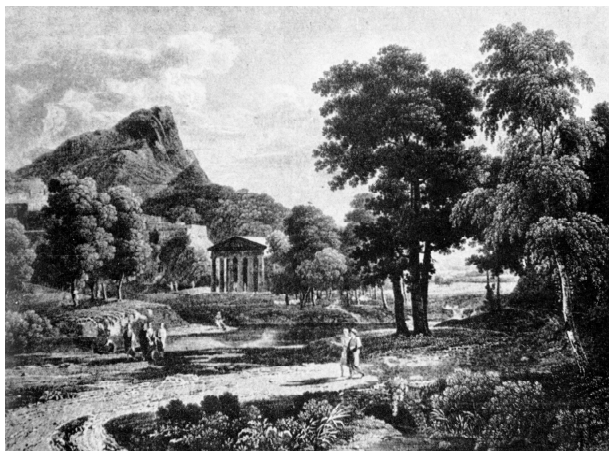


Fig. 4. Etienne Devillier (1784–1844), after Nicholas Bertin (1668–1736), *Aristides Receiving a Crown*, engraving, reproduced in Theodore Reff, "Reproductions and Books in Cezanne's Studio," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 56, no. 1102 (November 1960): 305

While Cezanne accessed the Old Masters directly at the Louvre, when painting in Aix, he relied on print reproductions, many of which remained in his studio after his death.⁸ One such example found in his studio was Nicholas Bertin's *Aristides Receiving a Crown* (Fig. 4). Not only does this composition employ a similar visual language as the Nelson-Atkins painting, with a notched mountain in the background, but there are also three distinct delineations of space. In reproductive form, the stark tonalities of light and dark further emphasize these zones in a way that Cezanne must have registered when creating the Nelson-Atkins composition.

Cezanne absorbed many influences from the old masters, but he was especially keen on seventeenth-century artists. Rubens, particularly his use of space, figures prominently in Cezanne's letters from his later years.⁹ The archaeologist Jules Borély recounts a visit he had with Cezanne in 1902, in which the artist "stretched out his arm to measure the bell tower of the cathedral between his thumb and index finger." Borély recalled that Cezanne remarked, "How little it takes to transform a thing. . . . I try and it's hard for me. Monet has that rare talent; he looks and can immediately draw in proportion. He takes it here and puts it there; it's the gesture of a Rubens."¹⁰ At this point late in Cezanne's career, whether realizing it or not, he too was able to draw in proportion. He may have employed some type of measuring device in delineating the zones in the Nelson-Atkins canvas, because the sky and the middle ground are exactly the same width, whereas the foreground is half the width of the other two zones. There is no technical evidence of the artist's use of a stylus or other device to measure these zones,¹¹ so he may have used a combination of an outstretched arm, thumb, and forefinger.

Cezanne's subtle homage to the Old Masters signaled his allegiance to them while, at the same time, announcing his modernity.¹² Writing to Bernard in 1905, Cezanne noted, "The Louvre is the book in which we learn to read. We must now, however, be satisfied with memorizing the attractive formulas of our predecessors. We must leave the museum to study Nature in all its beauty."¹³ And study nature he did, directly and en plein air, with Camille Pissarro (1830–1903) and Armand Guillaumin (1841–1927) in the 1870s outside of Paris and the surrounding Île de France area. This was a period of great personal development for Cezanne, as he worked to gain clarity of form and color through the development of short and close parallel brushstrokes in subtle tonal gradations, known as "constructive

strokes."¹⁴ Through this method, Cezanne built form through color, yet because of his unified tones, the spaces appear flattened. Although credit is largely given to Pissarro for prompting Cezanne's development in this phase of his career, the latter was also very aware of the sense of structural solidity within Guillaumin's brushwork in the early 1870s, with its emphasis on architectural forms.¹⁵ Evidence of this type of brushwork can be found in Guillaumin's early landscape of Ivry-sur-Seine in the Nelson-Atkins collection.

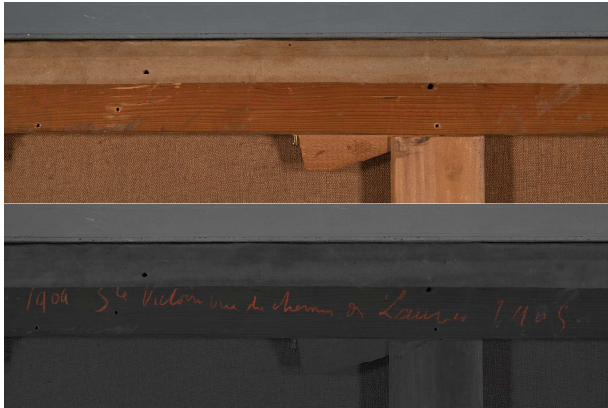


Fig. 5. Detail of verso of Paul Cezanne, *Mont Saint Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905): inscription in red wax pencil or crayon on the top stretcher member in normal viewing light (above) and digitally enhanced for legibility (below)

As Cezanne developed his style and moved from canvases covered entirely in tightly controlled parallel brushstrokes to those in which he allowed the primed white of the canvas to show through, as in *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, questions invariably arise among scholars about finish. While acknowledging the increasing difficulties he faced due to his advancing age, Cezanne wrote to Bernard around the time he painted the Nelson-Atkins painting, remarking, "It's sad to have to note that the improvement that manifests itself in the understanding of nature, with respect to the picture and the development of the means of expression, should be accompanied by age and the weakening of the body."¹⁶ He struggled with diabetes and related eye issues and lamented in another letter to Bernard that "now old as I am, nearly 70, —color sensations, which make light in my painting, create abstractions that keep me from covering my canvas or defining the edge of objects where they delicately touch other objects, with the result that my image or picture is incomplete."¹⁷ These ailments, in tandem with his age, made him feel that time was

running out, which may have pushed him to work more quickly.¹⁸ Indeed, there is no underdrawing evident in the Nelson-Atkins composition;¹⁹ however, he did leave space for the mountain in reserve, sketching its contours with a few deft strokes of dark blue paint. In addition to passages of wet-into-wet brushwork, there are also passages of wet-over-dry media, suggesting that while he may have worked quickly in the former areas, more time passed between paint application in the latter areas.



Fig. 6. Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, 1904–1906, oil on canvas, 33 x 25 5/8 in. (83.8 x 65.1 cm), The Henry and Rose Pearlman Foundation, on loan since 1976 to the Princeton University Art Museum, L.1988.62.5

The Nelson-Atkins canvas was one of ten views of Mont Sainte-Victoire dispersed from Cezanne's studio in Aix-en-Provence shortly after his death in October 1906, purchased jointly by Cezanne's former dealer Ambroise Vollard and the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune in two lots: February 12, 1907, and March 11, 1907. Recorded in Vollard's second stock book, the Nelson-Atkins picture was part of the March sale.²⁰ Although the painting was relined and its tacking margins removed at some point early in its history,²¹ a verso sticker with a Vollard stock number, 4477, suggests that the stretcher is indeed original. In addition to the Vollard verso sticker, a faint

red chalk inscription across the top of the stretcher bar reads, “1904 5^{te} Victoire vue du Chemin du Lauves 1905” (Fig. 5). According to independent art historian Jayne Warman, the inscription is not in Cezanne’s son’s hand, and she remains doubtful that it is in the artist’s hand.²² A comparison of handwriting between several individuals in the painting’s early provenance suggests that the handwriting is closest to Vollard’s.²³

For some time, the Nelson-Atkins painting has been dated between 1902 and 1906.²⁴ However, if the inscription is in fact by the artist’s dealer, Vollard would certainly have had a good idea when Cezanne painted the canvas, thus offering an opportunity to refine the date to 1904–1905. When comparing the painting to a similar work in the Pearlman Collection, dated 1904–1906 (Fig. 6), a case can further be made, on stylistic grounds, to suggest a slightly later date. The vantage point is slightly higher in the Pearlman painting (possibly because of its vertical format), but the two works share an ochre and green foreground landscape that is similarly populated by a row of spartan trees, some more realized than others. Although the Pearlman picture has a wider middle-ground landscape, both paintings depict the space from foreground to background in three distinct zones, creating a strong and sturdy base for the triangular form of the mountain. The solidity of form and overall stability of both compositions suggest they may be among the artist’s last views in the series.²⁵

Cezanne’s preoccupation with this motif, this mountain—which was the site of struggle during the ancient era, and which figured in his work for over twenty years in a multitude of formats and from a variety of vantage points—came into sharper focus one month before his death. He wrote to Bernard apologizing for returning to the same subject again and again:

... but I believe in the logical development of what we see and feel through studying nature, free from preoccupation with methods, methods being only simple means for us to make the public feel what we feel and to make ourselves accepted. The masters whom we admire probably did no more.²⁶

After twenty years of absorbing the lessons of these masters, including Rubens, Dujardin, Bertin, and many others, tempered with new techniques and brushwork of Cezanne’s contemporaries, time and contemplation had, in fact, modified Cezanne’s vision. In the end, he received the understanding for which he so longed as he stood before his beloved mountain with Denis and

Roussel, as if to pass on these lessons through his art—as a lasting monument, much like the mountain itself, raised by struggle to his own glory.²⁷

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan

April 2022

Notes

1. Paul Cezanne to Émile Bernard, Friday, [1905], as cited in Michael Doran, ed., *Conversations with Cézanne*, trans. Julie Lawrence Cochran (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 47, letter 7.
2. Although Mont Sainte-Victoire appeared in the background of other works by Cezanne in the 1870s, it was not the central subject of his work until around 1883. Cezanne’s search for clarity and understanding is a continual refrain in his letters to Bernard.
3. As cited in Doran, *Conversations with Cézanne*, 56.
4. According to Theodore Reff, Cezanne registered as a copyist at the Louvre on November 20, 1863, as a pupil of Ernest Chesneau (1833–1890). He began copying Poussin’s *Shepherds of Arcadia* on April 19, 1864. He registered again on February 13, 1868, as a pupil of Chesneau; however, no known copies correspond to this registration. Reff claims that copies Cezanne made of Sebastiano del Piombo’s *Christ in Limbo* were painted from a reproduction, and that those of Delacroix’s *Dante and Virgil* and *Liberty Leading the People* were painted in the Musée du Luxembourg, where the originals remained until 1874. See Theodore Reff, “Copyists in the Louvre, 1850–1870,” *Art Bulletin* 46, no. 4 (1964): 555n2.
5. La Caze bequeathed 583 paintings to the museum upon his death in 1869. See Guillaume Faroult and Sophie Eloy, et al., *La Collection La Caze: Chefs d’œuvre des peintures des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Hazan, 2007).
6. We know, for example, that Cezanne sketched the Flemish master’s Marie de Medici cycle at the Louvre. For more on Rubens and his legacy among artists ranging from Anthony van Dyck to Cezanne, see Nico van Hout, *Rubens and His Legacy* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2014).
7. The notch appears in a watercolor study Cezanne painted, which is in the Tate Collection. The

- museum dates it to 1905–1906; however, it appears with a wider date range of 1902–1906 in Christopher Lloyd, *Paul Cézanne: Drawings and Watercolours* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2019), 233.
8. See Theodore Reff, "Reproductions and Books in Cezanne's Studio," *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 56, no. 1102 (November 1960): 303–09. Although it is impossible to determine a complete account of Cezanne's studio contents at his death because family members removed many items, Reff's article assembles a list of items culled from artist recollections in addition to what remained. Examples include reproductive prints by Rubens, among many others.
 9. See the conversation between Joachim Gasquet and Cezanne in Doran, *Conversations with Cézanne*, 153–54.
 10. Jules Borély, "Cezanne à Aix," as cited in Doran, *Conversations with Cézanne*, 20–21.
 11. See accompanying technical entry by Diana Jaskierny.
 12. See Judit Geskó, ed., *Cézanne and the Past: Tradition and Creativity* (Budapest: Museum of Fine Arts, 2012).
 13. Cezanne to Bernard, Friday [1905].
 14. "The constructive stroke" was a term first used by Theodore Reff to describe the parallel brushwork often seen in Cezanne's paintings. See Reff, "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke," *Art Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Autumn 1962): 214–27.
 15. Danielle Hampton Cullen draws these connections in her forthcoming entry for this catalogue on Armand Guillaumin, *Landscape, Ivry-sur-Seine*, <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.621>. Hampton Cullen's entry builds on John Rewald, "Cézanne and Guillaumin," in *Études d'art Français offertes à Charles Sterling* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), 344, 346–47. See also James H. Rubin's chapter, "Armand Guillaumin and Paul Cézanne in Ile-de-France," in Denis Coutagne, *Cézanne and Paris*, exh. cat. (Paris: Éditions de la RMN-Grand Palais, 2011), 67–68.
 16. John Rewald, ed., *Paul Cezanne: Correspondence* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1978), 313, as cited in Felix Andreas Baumann, ed., *Cézanne: Finished, Unfinished*, trans. Isabel Fede (Ostfildern Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2000), 346.
 17. According to ophthalmologists P. Ivanišević and M. Ivanišević, Paul Cezanne was diagnosed with diabetes in 1890 at age fifty-one. "A triggering factor was emerald green poisoning caused by his painting 'a la couillarde,' which is crude painting with his fingers. Diabetes induced concurrent retinopathy, causing blue-green color blindness." See P. Ivanišević and M. Ivanišević, "Retinal Diseases and Painting," *Collegium Antropologicum* 39, no. 1 (2015): 243–46, <https://www.collantropol.hr/antropo/article/view/3>. See also Cezanne to Bernard, October 23, 1905, in Doran, *Conversations with Cézanne*, 48, letter 8. Cezanne was also nearsighted but refused to get glasses.
 18. Birgit Schwarz cites Joachim Gasquet, "Ce qu'il m'a dit . . ." (1921), in Doran, *Conversations with Cézanne*, 110, in her catalogue entry in Baumann, *Cézanne: Finished, Unfinished*, 346n2.
 19. See accompanying technical entry by Diana M. Jaskierny.
 20. Rebecca A. Rabinow, ed., *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 345. See also Jayne Warman to Brigid M. Boyle, April 3, 2020, NAMA curatorial files.
 21. See accompanying technical essay by Diana M. Jaskierny.
 22. See email exchange between Brigid M. Boyle and Jayne Warman, February 21, 2022, NAMA curatorial files.
 23. I have looked through several letters from Vollard to various individuals from roughly 1880 to 1907, noting several similarities in his handwriting to the verso inscription on the Nelson-Atkins canvas. Although Vollard often signs his name with a loop in the capital "V," and there is no visible loop in the verso inscription, some of the letters Vollard writes from 1905 incorporate a similar "s" shape for the 5, which is distinct. There is also a kinship with the letters and the verso inscription in the way the letters "ch" are connected; a smaller, open "4" is used for the date; and the way he connects the "v" to the top of the "u" in the word "vue," all of which relate to the verso inscription.

Comparisons of handwriting with others connected to the painting's provenance, including Bernheim-Jeune and Carl Montag, proved more definitely not to be a match.

24. Scholars continue to revise the dating of Cezanne's Mont Saint-Victoire paintings. Some historians date the Nelson-Atkins picture to 1902–1906, but others propose 1904–1906. See Walter Feilchenfeldt, Jayne Warman, and David Nash, "La Carrière de Bibémus, 1898–1900 (FWN 353)," *The Paintings, Watercolors and Drawings of Paul Cezanne: An Online Catalogue Raisonné*, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://www.cezannecatalogue.com/catalogue/entry.php?id=814>.
25. Comparisons with both Philadelphia canvases (catalogue raisonné nos. FWN 351 and FWN 352), as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art (FWN 356), all dated 1902–1906, do not present the same degree of banding in the landscape as in the Nelson-Atkins composition. All were left in the artist's studio and dispersed after his death.
26. Cezanne to Bernard, September 21, 1906, as cited in Doran, *Conversations with Cézanne*, 49, letter 9.
27. This is Émile Bernard's opinion, as expressed in Doran, *Conversations with Cézanne*, 78.

Technical Entry

Citation

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Diana M. Jaskierny, "Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1905," technical entry in *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, ed. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.712.2088>.

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Fig. 7. Detail of the exposed ground in the sky, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905)

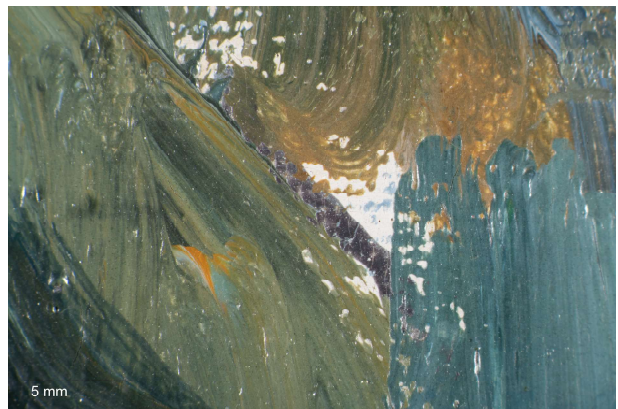


Fig. 8. Photomicrograph of a purplish-blue painted line below the paint in the left tree, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905)

Painted near the end of Paul Cezanne's (1839–1906) career, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* embodies a range of techniques that the artist developed throughout his oeuvre, including the evolution of the constructive stroke.¹ The painting was completed on a fine, plain-weave canvas and is affixed to a six-member stretcher. Early in the painting's history, the tacking margins were removed and the painting was lined. It appears the canvas retained its original size through this intervention, though possibly with slight adjustments. As part of the lining process, paper tape was added to all four edges, further limiting information about the canvas. Along the left and bottom edges, the paint layer appears to stop at the interface of the paper tape. In contrast, along the top and right edges, the paint layer extends beneath the paper tape and to the

edge of the original canvas.² Based on the existing dimensions, the canvas used was a standard-size format no. 25 *portrait*, rotated 90 degrees.³

The ground layer, opaque and slightly off-white or pale gray in color, is visible throughout the composition, most noticeably in the sky and foreground (Fig. 7).⁴ This layer is thinly and evenly applied, indicating commercial preparation. With exposed ground visible throughout the composition, it appears there was little to no *imprimatura* laid in during the early stages of painting.

No distinct carbon-based underdrawing was found through infrared reflectography. Additionally, no clearly identifiable painted underdrawing was observed within the composition. One isolated purplish-blue painted line was noted within an opening of exposed ground (Fig. 8).⁵ However, it is difficult to determine if this relates directly to an underdrawing, as there are no other clear examples found on *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*. While both methods of underdrawing have frequently been identified throughout Cezanne's oeuvre,⁶ it is possible that at this point in his career he was relying less on preparatory drawings, especially on a subject so heavily revisited as *Mont Sainte-Victoire*.



Fig. 9. Raking light detail of the sky, showing wet-over-dry brushstrokes, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905)

The composition was overwhelmingly created with thinly applied paint and little impasto.⁷ While in many places wet-over-wet paint application is visible, revealed by displaced paint and inadvertent blending, throughout the painting it is evident that Cezanne frequently layered paint after sections had dried. This is especially noticeable in raking light, where the texture of lower brushstrokes can be seen through the top layer (Fig. 9).

By layering the paint in this manner, it is clear Cezanne completed the painting over the course of multiple sessions, as he was known to do.⁸

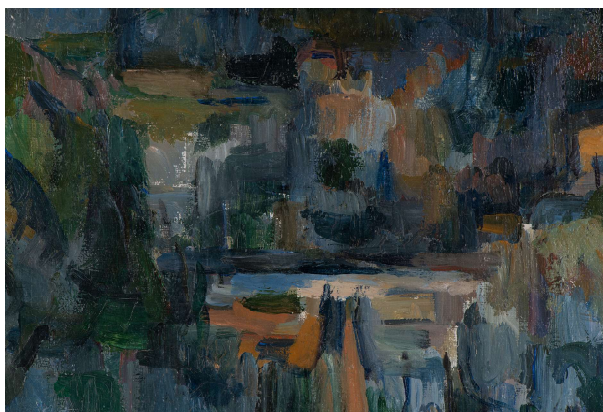


Fig. 10. Detail of horizontal and vertical brushstrokes in the middle ground, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905)

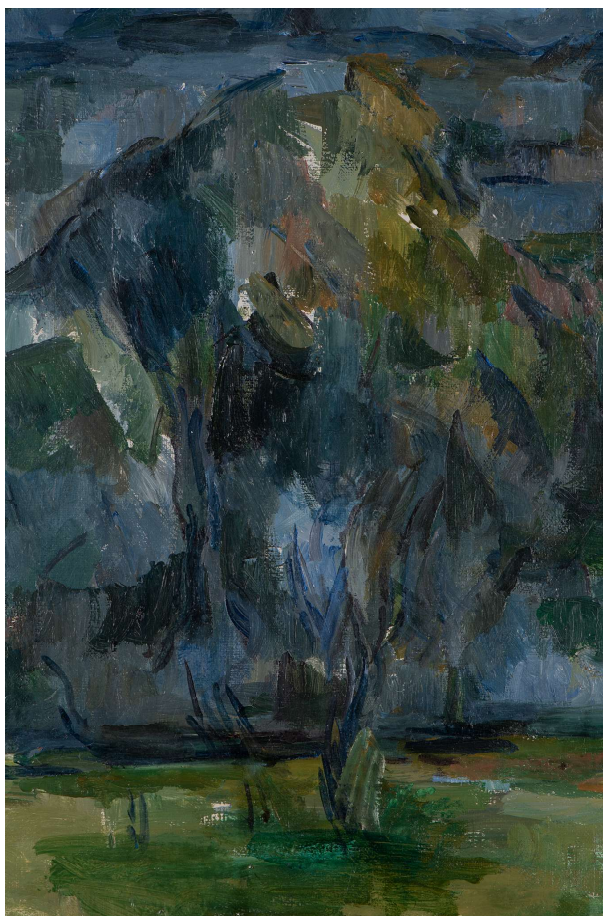


Fig. 11. Detail of angled constructive strokes in the left tree, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905)

In comparison to paintings such as *Quarry at Bibémus*⁹ where the constructive stroke is a powerful component

within the composition, here the constructive stroke is more subtly executed, and the standardized marks of Cezanne can be divided into different shapes within the compositional bands or zones in *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*.^{10,11} Within the middle ground, the brushwork is predominantly hatched horizontal and vertical strokes in the center of the image, representing buildings along the lower mountainside (Fig. 10). Angled constructive strokes are found, to a lesser extent, within the foliage on the left side of the composition (Fig. 11). In contrast, the sky was developed with parallel curved or scalloped brushstrokes, repetitive but not strikingly linear (Fig. 7). Except for the trees, the foreground was produced through scumbles, allowing the luminosity of the ground layer to show through.¹² While the constructive stroke was a quintessential technique of Cezanne's throughout his career, during his later years, it is evident his brushwork was often looser than the strict brushwork earlier in his career.¹³

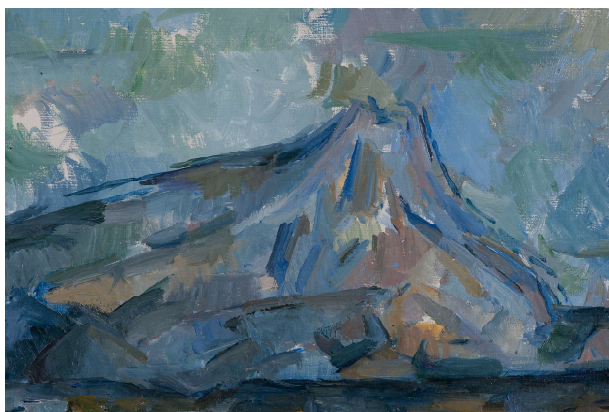


Fig. 12. Detail of dashed blue outline of the mountaintop, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905)

Cezanne's strokes have been described both by their distinct parallel placement and also by the characteristic marks formed with the artist's tools. In many of his paintings, the use of a flat brush resulted in squared-off ends for each stroke.¹⁴ Here, however, it is less obvious what tools were used by the artist: no palette knife marks are visible, and the shapes formed by the individual brushstrokes are somewhat ambiguous. Instead, it is possible that to complete this painting Cezanne employed a combination of flat brushes, where stroke ends are blunted and rounded sable brushes where the strokes have a softer, less linear appearance.

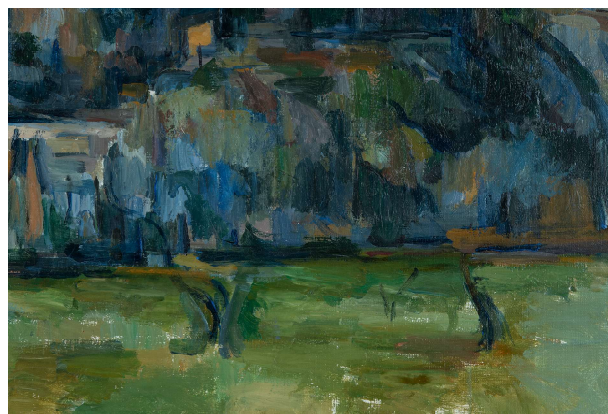


Fig. 13. Detail of smaller trees on the right, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves* (1904–1905)

An element frequently found in Cezanne's works is the blue line, either dilute and transparent to form underdrawings or semi-transparent to outline or emphasize shapes. While few definitive painted underdrawing lines have been identified here, blue lines are used to form non-continuous or dashed outlines within each plane and around various elements. A clear example of this is the perimeter of the mountain (Fig. 12). Without these dashed blue lines, the similarly light-colored sky and mountain would merge into one another. At the same time that these lines form a barrier or division, the openings create communication between the planes.¹⁵

The blue line is again used to create the twisting trunks and branches of the foreground trees. At first glance, it appears the trees on the right are little more than stumps, with intersecting horizontal lines truncating their shapes at the top of the foreground, suggesting that their rendering was still in progress (Fig. 13). Interestingly, similar intersecting lines are also present across saplings in *Normandy Farm, Summer (Hattenville)* (ca. 1882; private collection).¹⁶ When comparing the Nelson-Atkins composition to another from the same vantage point, *Mont Sainte-Victoire* (Fig. 6), the same small trees are present, again with their foliage blending seamlessly into the middle ground. While the concept of "finish" is difficult to define, in this instance both the Nelson-Atkins and Pearlman Foundation paintings likely illustrate a range of mature and young trees interweaving between the middle ground and foreground.

The painting is in good condition. Prior to its history at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the painting was fully lined. Subtle weave interference due to the lining

process is visible when viewing the painting in raking light. Minimal retouching is present on the painting. A low-concentration synthetic varnish saturates the paint layer while creating a healthy but unvarnished appearance, allowing variations of the paint's luster to remain visible.¹⁷

Diana M. Jaskierny
February 2022

Notes

1. "The constructive stroke" was a term first used by Theodore Reff to describe the parallel brushwork often seen in Cézanne's paintings. Dennis Farr and John House, eds., *Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces: The Courtauld Collection* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), cat. 23.
2. Due to the central placement of the mountain, it is unlikely that the canvas was significantly cropped in any way.
3. Near the end of his career, Cézanne frequently used standard-format no. 25 canvases, and from 1885 on, "almost 45 percent of his canvases were of those dimensions [81 centimeters] or larger." Robert Jenson, "Vollard and Cézanne: An Anatomy of a Relationship," in *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*, ed. Rebecca A. Rabinow (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 44.
4. Through microscopic examination, some black and yellow pigment particles are visible. Although present, these particles are sparser than in most colored grounds.
5. A dilute blue line was also found in the foreground below the paint layer but did not appear related to any part of the composition.
6. Elisabeth Reissner, "Ways of Making: Practice and Innovation in Cézanne's Paintings in the National Gallery," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 25 (2008): 11–15.
7. Some impasto appears to have been impacted by the lining process, reducing its height slightly.
8. It is believed that some paintings required dozens of sittings to complete. Erle Loran, *Cézanne's Composition: Analysis of His Form with Diagrams and Photographs of His Motifs* (1943; Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 26. See also Anthea Callen, *Techniques of the Impressionists* (1980; London: Tiger Books International, 1990), 72, 114.
9. See the technical entry for *Quarry at Bibémus* for another example of the constructive stroke: Diana M. Jaskierny, "Paul Cézanne, *Quarry at Bibémus*, 1895–1900," technical entry in Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, ed., *French Paintings, 1600–1945: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art* (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.710.2088>.
10. For a discussion on the various standardized marks, or *taches*, of Cézanne, see Øystein Sjøstad, *A Theory of the Tache in Nineteenth-Century Painting* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2014), 94–96.
11. Although completed a decade earlier, the brushwork in *Hillside in Provence* (ca. 1890–1892; The National Gallery, London) is similarly divided into zones with differing brushwork in each zone. David Bomford, Jo Kirby, John Leighton, and Ashok Roy, *Art in the Making: Impressionism* (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 198.
12. This application is also described as "intense scrambling." Sjøstad, *A Theory of the Tache in Nineteenth-Century Painting*, 95.
13. Another example with looser brushwork found later in Cézanne's career is *Le Lac d'Annecy* (1896; The Courtauld Gallery, London). John House, "Cat. 9 Le Lac d'Annecy," in *The Courtauld Cézannes*, ed. Stephanie Buck, John House, Ernst Vegelin van Claerbergen, and Barnaby Wright (London: The Courtauld Gallery, 2008), 102–05. For further discussion on his later brushwork, see Farr and House, *Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces: The Courtauld Collection*, cat. 24.
14. Bernard Dunstan, *Painting Methods of the Impressionists* (New York: Watson-Guption, 1983), 91.
15. This passage and blocking of light and color is seen repeatedly in Cézanne's compositions. Loran, *Cézanne's Composition*, 26.
16. Farr and House, *Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Masterpieces: The Courtauld Collection*, cat. 22. See also House, "Cat. 2, Ferme Normande,

été (Hattenville),” in Buck et al., *The Courtauld Cézannes*, 78.

17. Solvent testing conducted in 2022 confirmed the varnish classification.

Documentation

Citation

Chicago:

Brigid M. Boyle, “Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1905,” documentation in *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, ed. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.712.4033>.

MLA:

Boyle, Brigid M. “Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1905,” documentation. *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, edited by Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2022. doi: 10.37764/78973.5.712.4033.

Provenance

Paul Cezanne (1839–1906), Aix-en-Provence, 1905–October 22, 1906;

Artist’s estate, Aix-en-Provence, 1906–March 11, 1907;

Purchased from the artist’s estate by Ambroise Vollard, Paris, stock book B, no. 4477, on joint account with the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, as *Paysage. Ste. Victoire à 3 plans*, 1907–no later than 1936 [1];

With Ambroise Vollard, Paris, by 1936 [2];

With Montag, by July 1937 [3];

Purchased from Montag by Wildenstein and Company, Inc., New York, stock no. 1424d, July 1937–1938 [4];

Purchased from Wildenstein by The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 1938.

Notes

[1] Vollard and the Galerie Bernheim-Jeune jointly purchased ten paintings of *Mont Sainte-Victoire* from Cezanne’s estate in two batches, one on February 12, 1907 and the other on March 11, 1907; see Rebecca A. Rabinow, ed., *Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2006), 345. Jayne Warman confirmed that the Nelson-Atkins version was part of the second batch; see email from Jayne Warman, independent art historian, to Brigid M. Boyle, NAMA, April 3, 2020, NAMA curatorial files. A Vollard label preserved on the stretcher says “4477.”

[2] Vollard may have purchased Bernheim-Jeune’s ownership share between 1907 and 1936. According to Lionello Venturi, the painting belonged to the “Collection Ambroise Vollard, Paris” by 1936. See Lionello Venturi, *Cézanne: Son art, son œuvre* (Paris: Paul Rosenberg, 1936), 1:235.

[3] Probably Carl Montag (1880–1956), a dealer in Lausanne, Switzerland.

[4] For the purchase date of July 1937, see letter from Eliot W. Rowlands, Wildenstein and Co., to Meghan Gray, NAMA, May 12, 2011, NAMA curatorial files. A Wildenstein label preserved on the stretcher says “1424d.”

Related Works

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1904, oil on canvas, 28 3/4 × 36 3/16 in. (73 × 91.9 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, The George W. Elkins Collection, 1936, E1936-1-1.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, oil on canvas, 25 5/8 × 31 7/8 in. (65 × 81 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Helen Tyson Madeira, 1977, 1977-288-1.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, oil on canvas, 25 5/8 × 31 7/8 in. (65 × 81 cm), private collection.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1906, oil on canvas, 33 × 25 5/8 in. (83.8 × 65 cm), Henry and Rose Pearlman Foundation, New York (on extended loan to the Princeton University Art Museum).

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, oil on canvas, 22 5/16 × 38 1/8 in. (56.6 × 96.8 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, oil on canvas, 25 x 32 11/16 in. (63.5 x 83 cm), Kunsthhaus Zürich.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1906, oil on canvas, 21 1/4 x 28 11/16 in. (54 x 73 cm), collection of Viktor and Marianne Langen, Neuss, Germany.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, ca. 1904, oil on canvas, 21 1/4 x 25 3/16 in. (54 x 64 cm), location unknown, cited in *Impressionist and Modern Art Evening Sale* (London: Christie's, 2020), 121, as *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire vue des Lauves*.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1906, oil on canvas, 23 5/8 x 28 5/16 in. (60 x 72 cm), Kunstmuseum Basel.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1904–1906, oil on canvas, 23 5/8 x 28 11/16 in. (60 x 73 cm), Pushkin Museum, Moscow.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1901–1906, graphite and watercolor on yellowish paper, 18 3/4 x 24 in. (47.6 x 59.7 cm) The Morgan Library and Museum, New York.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves in Winter*, 1901–1906, graphite and watercolor on wove paper, 12 3/16 x 18 3/4 in. (31 x 47.6 cm), Henry and Rose Pearlman Foundation, New York (on extended loan to the Princeton University Art Museum).

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1901–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 17 x 21 in. (41.2 x 52 cm), location unknown, cited in John Rewald, *Paul Cezanne: The Watercolours; A Catalogue Raisonné* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1983), no. 582, p. 236.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1901–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 11 3/4 x 19 in. (29.9 x 46.3 cm), Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1901–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 18 11/16 x 24 3/16 in. (47.5 x 61.5 cm), National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1901–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 18 7/8 x 24 13/16 in. (48 x 63 cm), private collection, Munich.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, ca. 1902, graphite and watercolor on paper, 12 3/16 x 19

in. (31 x 47 cm), private collection, Paris.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 14 3/16 x 21 5/8 in. (36 x 55 cm), Tate Gallery, London.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on wove paper, 19 x 12 3/8 in. (47 x 31.4 cm), Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 12 3/8 x 18 15/16 in. (31.5 x 48.1 cm), collection of the Esther Grether family, Basel.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 12 3/16 x 18 in. (31 x 43.8 cm), private collection.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 16 15/16 x 23 5/8 in. (43 x 60 cm), private collection, Paris.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 17 x 21 in. (41.9 x 52 cm), location unknown, cited in *Impressionist/Modern Evening Sale* (London: Christie's, 2014), 109.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 18 11/16 x 22 in. (47.5 x 53.5 cm), location unknown, cited in Christopher Lloyd, *Paul Cézanne: Drawings and Watercolors* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2015), 232.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, with vertical trace at center right where a second sheet was glued on, 13 x 28 3/8 in. (33 x 72 cm), private collection.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 16 3/4 x 21 3/8 in. (42.5 x 54.3 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from Les Lauves*, 1902–1906, graphite and watercolor on paper, 18 7/8 x 24 7/8 in. (48 x 63.2 cm), Sammlung Oskar Reinhart "Am Römerholz," Winterthur.

Paul Cezanne, *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from around Saint-Marc*, ca. 1906, graphite and watercolor on wove paper, 16 5/8 x 22 in. (42.3 x 54.6 cm), Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence.

Exhibitions

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A Loan Exhibition of Cézanne for the Benefit of the New York Infirmary, Wildenstein, New York, March 27–April 26, 1947, no. 67, as *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire*.

Masterpieces of 19th Century Painting and Sculpture, Seattle Art Museum, March 7–May 6, 1951, no cat.

Cézanne, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, September 23–October 20, 1954, no. 20, as *Mte. Ste.-Victoire*.

Loan Exhibition: Cézanne; Under the Patronage of Mrs. Dwight D. Eisenhower and His Excellency, Monsieur Hervé Alphand, The Ambassador of France to the United States, for the Benefit of The National Organization of Mentally Ill Children, Wildenstein, New York, November 5–December 5, 1959, no. 55, as *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire*.

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