

## Art Essay - Paul Cézanne

Paul Cézanne is considered one of the greatest artists of the last century, known to many as the 'Father of Modern Art'. Cézanne worked ahead of his time and dedicated himself to self-depression on his own terms. Cézanne is creative and perfect in many different aspects of his art. In his paintings, single patches of the brush reveal themselves as a choice meaning that he thought carefully about his work down to the last brush stroke. He had his own unique quality that gives his paintings a ripe, continuous growth and its own character that is striking and inspiring, which I'm sure you would appreciate if you ever see one of his paintings in a gallery. Every one of his masterpieces is taken to a new height and is specifically individual in its nature. His painting is a balanced art; its qualities are compensated in a structural fashion.

Paul Cézanne was born on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1839 in a southern French town of Aix-en-Provence to Louis-Auguste a wealthy banker and his mistress Anne-Elisabeth Honorine Aubert. They did not marry till 1844 when Paul was five. This may have branded him with a stigma of illegitimacy causing him discomfort as a child. From an early age Cézanne developed an interest in art and attended classes at a local drawing academy. Cézanne and his father never had a good father son relationship, Cézanne wanted to become an artist however his father had different ideas. He wanted his son to become successful in business and gain a worthy profession. When the family moved to an 18<sup>th</sup> century manor – Jas de Bouffant in 1859 Cézanne spent a year studying law but his desire to go to Paris was much greater. He finally picked up the courage and told his father about his dreams. After many disputes he was allowed to go to Paris in 1861. However his stay in Paris did not last for long he was there only 6 months. He destroyed many of his canvases during depressive moments and returned home full of self-doubt. After spending a year working with his father he returned to Paris but failed his entrance exam for the painting school – Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Salon (a famous art gallery in Paris) rejected his paintings. However thanks to Camille Pissarro (a sort of father figure and mentor to Cézanne) who introduced him to different techniques and great impressionist painters such as Mante and Degas. Impressionism is a style of art that originated and developed in France in the 1870s. It presents a direct impression of an object or event. Impressionist painters concentrate on the general impression produced by the object of incident and tried to show what they saw through their eyes at a glance rather than what they knew or felt about the item. Impressionist painters preferred to work outdoors rather than inside due to the fact they liked to work with the natural light. Impressionists gave themselves a limited time whilst working outdoors, often they would quickly sketch the object or event they were portraying and later in their studios developed the paintings. They would use unmixed primary colours and small strokes to simulate and catch the reflecting light as it appeared to the eye. This gave the paintings an effect of vibrating brilliance. When Cézanne was 30 he changed his style and habits. He met Hortense Fiquet who modelled for him and later became his mistress. Cézanne whose art had previously been black and morbid changed and he began to concentrate on landscapes. This period is known as 'constructive' characterised by the grouping of parallel, hatched brushstrokes that have the power to build a feeling of mass. With the arrival of their son in 1872 the family moved to Pontoise where Pissarro lived. Finally in 1874 Cézanne's work was exhibited alongside other great impressionists. Pissarro's influence was a great importance to Cézanne's artistic development. For many years

Cézanne painted still-lives and landscapes. In 1886 Cézanne's father died and left him with a comfortable inheritance. Over the next few years Cézanne became more and more isolated from his family. He cut himself off from the outer world living the life of a recluse. Finally in his late fifties Cézanne's work started to attract attention it deserved. Ambroise Vollard (a renowned art dealer) displayed some of Cézanne's work in Paris and eventually bought every painting from Cézanne's studio in 1897. In Cézanne's later life he studied the same subjects over and over again trying out different techniques. One of his favourite subjects was 'The Great Bathers'. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1906 Cézanne died of pneumonia after getting soaked in a storm. Like many famous painters fame came after their deaths and Paul Cézanne unfortunately experienced this.

Cézanne's work demonstrates beautiful and inspiring masterpieces. Through his life there were many down falls and painful struggles and we can see this in his work. His early life shows many signs of destructiveness, depression and black moods, which are almost certainly expressed in his works. The accent relating to his moods can be seen to lift with his later works ranging from the dark depressive early days to the bright colour and tones he incorporated in his latter days. He is beyond a doubt a Father of Modern Art.