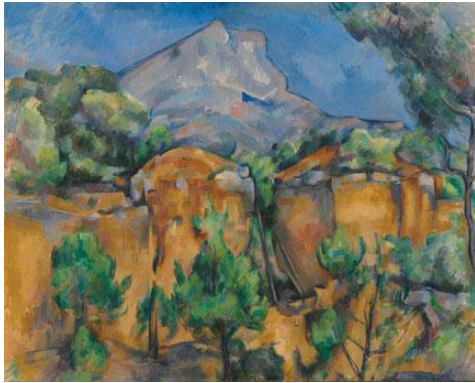


## **Mont Sainte- Victoire Seen from the Bibémus Quarry, c. 1897** **Paul Cézanne (French, 1839-1906)**

**Paul Cézanne manipulated the landscape to make the great mountain appear closer than it actually was. Cézanne has been called “the painter of distance that seems near.”<sup>1</sup>**



Oil on canvas; 25½ x 31½ inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland, BMA 1950.196

Mont Sainte-Victoire is a mountain 3,000 feet high that rises suddenly out of the plains in southern France and dominates the countryside near Aix-en-Provence where Cézanne lived. As a boy, Cézanne climbed its rocky slopes. Later, as an artist, he painted this mountain at least 60 times, never the same way twice. One of Cézanne’s favorite views of the mountain was from Bibémus, an abandoned sandstone quarry with ochre-colored rocks.

Imagine standing next to Cézanne in the Bibémus Quarry. Is the mountain close to you or far away? How long do you think it would take to walk from the quarry to the base of the mountain?

If you were to photograph Mont Sainte-Victoire from the quarry site, the mountain would look disappointingly small in your picture. In order to express the mountain’s grandeur in his painting, Cézanne manipulated the scene.

- The mountain was actually about nine miles away from the quarry.
- Cézanne painted the mountain twice as large as it would appear in a photograph.
- He tipped the mountain forward so that it would rise up rather than slope backwards.
- He outlined the mountain firmly in dark purple so that it wouldn’t fade into the background.

What kind of brushstrokes did Cézanne use to create the cliffs? The trees? The mountain?

- Cézanne used a uniformly-sized brushstroke throughout the painting so that foreground and background seem to be on the same plane, equally close to the viewer.
- Cézanne changed the direction of his brushstrokes as appropriate for cliffs, trees, and mountain.

How did Cézanne repeat colors throughout the painting to link foreground, middle ground, and background together in space?

- Patches of gray/blue (from the mountain) appear on the tops of the cliffs.
- Patches of orange (from the cliffs) appear on the mountain.

<sup>1</sup> Yvon Taillandier, *Cézanne* (New York: Crown Books, 1961) p. 79.