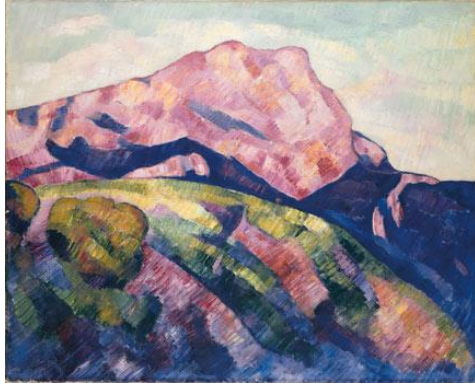


Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1927 [pink mountain]
Marsden Hartley (American, 1877-1943)

Hartley built a mountain and meadow out of patches of color.



Oil on canvas; 32 x 39½ inches. Private Collection of Elaine and Henry Kaufman

The American artist Marsden Hartley greatly admired the work of Paul Cézanne. Even though Cézanne had died in 1906, Hartley traveled to southern France in 1925 to live in the countryside that Cézanne loved. When he first saw Mont Sainte-Victoire, he said, “I couldn’t believe my eyes for what I saw in the way of dignified beauty...” He rented lodging on the same estate where Cézanne had had a studio, affording him the same view of the magnificent Mont Sainte-Victoire that had inspired Cézanne. Hartley thought of himself as a realist and intended to paint the mountain as most people would see it. But in the strong southern light, he found the mountain “full of hypnotic attraction” and began to express his feelings about the mountain through color.

Would this painting be a good illustration for a hiker’s guidebook? How much does it tell you about the type of terrain, useful landmarks, or the distance between the foreground hill and the mountain?

- Hartley simplified the scene in order to focus on the shapes of the mountain, hill, and trees (or bushes) and the patterns of the landscape.
- There is no way to judge distance and no detailed information about vegetation or pathways through the landscape.

What information do Hartley’s colors provide about the spatial relationship between hill and mountain?

- The pink of Hartley’s mountain is so close to the pink of the foreground hill that the two appear to be pressed closely together.
- Hartley did not follow the traditional technique of making the distant mountain look gray.

Did Hartley use the same brushstroke technique on the hill and on the mountain?

- Most of Hartley’s brushstrokes are parallel patches of color moving diagonally from left to right.
- The brushstrokes on the hill form long strips of color that suggest grasses or flowers.
- The brushstrokes of contrasting light and dark pinks on the mountain suggest its faceted rocky surface.

What purpose does the strong dark blue shadow serve?

- The dark shape separates the edge of the hill from the mountain.
- On the extreme left side of the painting, the lack of a shadow makes the hill indistinguishable from the mountain.