



NOVEMBER 2009

## Cézanne's Mountain

Paul Cézanne

*Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from the Bibémus Quarry*



### VISIT THE BMA

and see more of  
Cézanne's work  
in the special  
exhibition *Cézanne  
and American  
Modernism*,  
February 14-  
May 23, 2010

Paul Cézanne (French 1839-1906).  
*Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from the Bibémus  
Quarry*. c. 1897. Oil on canvas. 25 1/8 x 31 1/2  
inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The  
Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone  
and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland,  
BMA 1950.196

Paul Cézanne was a solitary man, more comfortable with his paint-brushes than with a crowd of people. On a good day, he would strap his canvas to his back and hike out into the countryside to paint the great mountain called Sainte-Victoire in southern France. Cézanne knew the mountain well. As a boy, he had spent many summer days climbing on its rocky slopes. Now as an artist, he returned to the mountain again and again, painting it as many as 60 times, never the same way twice.

One of Cézanne's favorite views of the mountain was from an abandoned sandstone quarry where slabs of ochre-colored rock were intermixed with the rich greens of pine and olive trees. He rented a small cottage nearby so that he could store his painting supplies and enjoy a simple lunch of bread and cheese before going out to capture the grandeur of the mountain on his canvas.

Cézanne's beloved mountain looks taller and mightier in paint than it would appear through the lens of a camera. He purposely increased its height and gave it a firm outline to make it stand out against the bright blue sky. He even tipped the mountain forward so that it would seem to rise upwards instead of sloping backwards as real mountains do. Although about nine miles separated the mountain from the quarry, Cézanne managed to make the mountain appear quite close. Patchy brushstrokes on the highest peak are no smaller or blurrier than the brushstrokes of foliage on the closest tree. By painting Mont Sainte-Victoire as if it were just beyond the quarry, Cézanne reveals how important the mountain was to him.

### CHALLENGE FOR STUDENTS

Mont Sainte-Victoire rises 3,000 feet above the plain near Aix-en-Provence in southern France. Find a photograph of the mountain at [www.panoramio.com/photo/513960](http://www.panoramio.com/photo/513960) Cézanne said, "...there are endless themes, for one subject may be viewed from different angles..." Compare Cézanne's paintings from various vantage points (Google "Cézanne Mont Sainte-Victoire" and click on Images.) Draw or paint a rural or urban landmark near your school from several distances or points of view.

**PRINT THE IMAGE ON PAGE 2 FOR YOUR STUDENTS.**



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Paul Cézanne. *Mont Sainte-Victoire Seen from the Bibémus Quarry.*

c.1897. Oil on canvas. 25 1/8 x 31 1/2 inches. The Baltimore Museum of Art: The Cone Collection, formed by Dr. Claribel Cone and Miss Etta Cone of Baltimore, Maryland, BMA 1950.196