

GrandPalais
Rmn



Musée d'Orsay

Musée
de l'Orangerie



Centre Pompidou

Cezanne and Us

Paul Cezanne (1839-1906) is often regarded as an artist's artist. His painting, with its emphasis on form over subject matter, is perhaps best appreciated by fellow artists.

In fact, as early as the late 19th century, artists were among the first to recognise his significance. Even before his death in 1906, his work was discussed in studios and held up as an example to follow. Within a decade, avant-garde artists from Moscow to New York were drawing on his example, embracing his spirit of freedom to invent new ways of depicting the world. After the Second World War, he inspired a new wave of abstract art and painting that questioned the illusion of reality.

The "Cezanne and Us" exhibition traces this rich history from the 1880s to the present day. It explores how generations of artists have laid claim to Cezanne, his work and his spirit. At first a marginal figure, Cezanne became an undisputed authority, the ultimate example of the isolated, brilliant modern artist. For those who looked to his example, Cezanne embodied a symbolic ideal: the possibility of an art capable of reaching a form of truth beyond words.

Cezanne – with or without an accent?

When signing his letters and paintings, Paul Cezanne wrote his name without an accent. We use this spelling here. However, the accented form "Cézanne" was soon adopted by the art world. We retain this spelling when quoting.

Key dates

1839

Paul Cezanne was born in Aix-en-Provence

Although fascinated by the fine arts from an early age, Cezanne was advised by his father, a banker, to study law.

1861

Cezanne arrived in Paris

He failed to gain admission to the École nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He trained at the Académie Suisse and by copying works in the Louvre. His submissions to the Salon de peinture et de sculpture were rejected.

1872

The influence of Impressionism

Cezanne painted from nature with Camille Pissarro in Pontoise and Auvers-sur-Oise, adopting a more colourful palette and looser brushwork.

1874

Exhibiting with the Impressionists

Cezanne showed his work in the first Impressionist exhibition. He participated again three years later, although he never truly identified with the movement.

1882

Conquering Sainte-Victoire

Cezanne returned to live in Aix-en-Provence. Mount Sainte-Victoire became one of his favourite subjects. His repeated studies of this landscape led him to develop a more luminous and structured style.

1891

First article on his work

Émile Bernard, the leading figure of a new generation of artists who admired Cezanne, wrote the first laudatory article about his paintings.

"At times of doubt, when I was still searching for myself, and sometimes frightened of my own discoveries, I would think: 'If Cézanne is right, then I am right'"

Henri Matisse

1895

First exhibition with Ambroise Vollard

The Parisian art dealer successfully promoted Cezanne's work, helping establish the artist's reputation among young painters.

1901

Modernity finally recognised

At the Salon des Indépendants, Maurice Denis's painting *Homage to Cezanne* confirmed Cezanne's status as a master. His influence was increasingly evident in the paintings of a new generation of artists.

1906

Cezanne painted until the end of his life

Aged 67, Cezanne died of pulmonary congestion a few days after being caught in a storm while painting from nature near Aix-en-Provence.

1907

Posthumous retrospective

The Salon d'Automne at the Grand Palais devoted a retrospective to Cezanne, establishing him as a pioneer of modern painting.

"To see in order to paint. To paint in order to see. Cézanne moves within this circle. With no satisfaction, no resting point."

Etel Adnan

Key words

"An artist must strive to produce works that convey a lesson."

Paul Cezanne

The Cezanne myth

During his lifetime, Cezanne was already a legendary figure for some young artists, who admired his bold and radical style. His distance from the Parisian artistic circles only added to his mystique. He soon came to embody the archetype of the brilliant but misunderstood artist, who devoted his life to his work. Motifs such as the apple and Mont Sainte-Victoire became closely associated with him and were repeatedly referenced and reinterpreted by artists throughout the twentieth century.

Still lifes

A still life is a work depicting inanimate objects. Though regarded as a minor genre, it became a central focus of Cezanne's work, allowing him to explore how form and colour convey the sensation of reality. In his studio, Cezanne carefully arranged fruit, particularly apples, which he painted so often that they became one of his defining motifs and were later revisited by Pop artists in the 1960s.

Landscapes

Cezanne painted many landscapes in the Île-de-France region and the countryside around Aix-en-Provence, and he was particularly fascinated by Mont Sainte-Victoire. He depicted its force lines and used small, parallel brushstrokes to render volumes and light. In doing so, Cezanne moved away from a purely mimetic representation of reality, profoundly influencing both Cubist and abstract artists.

Portraits

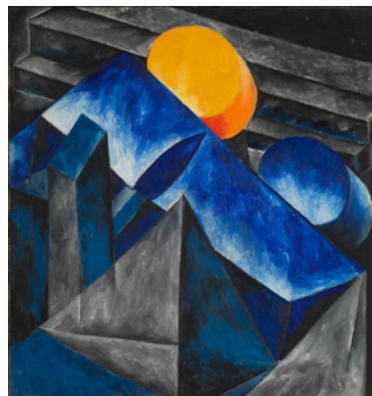
Cezanne also produced many portraits, including of his wife, Hortense Fiquet, which he painted over a series of lengthy sittings. He approached his portraits much like his still lifes. While painting his dealer Ambroise Vollard, he is said to have remarked: "One must pose like an apple. Does an apple move?" Rather than capturing the emotions or personalities of his sitters, Cezanne aimed above all to depict reality through volume.

"Make a painting, that's what Cezanne really did."

Brice Marden



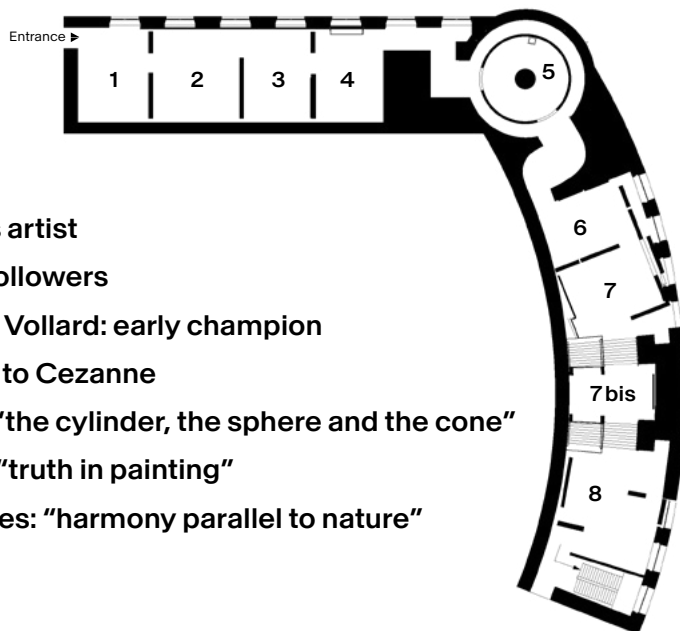
Paul Cezanne, *Portrait de Madame Cézanne*, between 1885 and 1895. Oil on canvas, 81×65 cm. Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris. Domaine public. Photo GrandPalaisRmn (musée de l'Orangerie) / Hervé Lewandowski



Natalia Gontcharova, *Composition*, 1913–1914
Oil on canvas, 104,2×97 cm. Centre Pompidou, MNAM / CCI
© Adagp, Paris, 2026, Paris. Photo Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Philippe Migeat – Christian Bahier

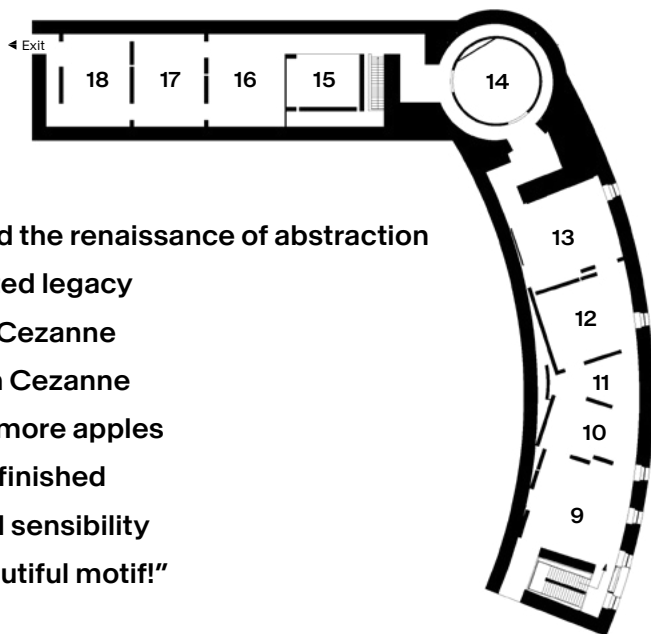
Map of the exhibition

LEVEL 1



1. An artist's artist
2. The first followers
3. Ambroise Vollard: early champion
4. Homages to Cezanne
5. Still lifes: "the cylinder, the sphere and the cone"
6. Portraits: "truth in painting"
7. Landscapes: "harmony parallel to nature"
8. Bathers

LEVEL 2



9. Cezanne and the renaissance of abstraction
- 10-11. A multifaceted legacy
12. Reclaiming Cezanne
13. Postmodern Cezanne
14. Apples and more apples
15. Finished/unfinished
16. A geological sensibility
- 17-18. "What a beautiful motif!"

GrandPalais
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Musée d'Orsay

Musée
de l'Orangerie



Centre Pompidou

Throughout the year, the GrandPalaisRmn presents a rich and festive program of exhibitions and events for audiences of all ages at the Grand Palais, an iconic monument that has been modernized since its reopening in 2024.

The Centre Pompidou embarked on a transformation that will allow it to remain active throughout the renovation of the Beaubourg building, slated to reopen in 2030. During this unprecedented period, the spirit of the Centre Pompidou will continue to thrive through its Constellation program, which offers a vast array of exhibitions, live shows, films, meetings and workshops in France and abroad.

Brought together under a single public institution, the Musée d'Orsay – celebrating its 40th anniversary this year with a rich program of events – and the Musée de l'Orangerie – celebrating the 100th anniversary of its *Nymphéas* in 2027 – are delighted to participate in this exceptional exhibition, which unites all their teams around a shared scientific and cultural vision.

Exhibition

Curators:

Claire Bernardi (director, Musée de l'Orangerie);

Michel Gauthier (curator of Contemporary Collections, Musée national d'art moderne /

Centre de création industrielle, Centre Pompidou);

Xavier Rey (director, Musée national d'art moderne / Centre de création industrielle, Centre Pompidou);

Jean-Rémi Touzet (curator of paintings, Musée d'Orsay)

Project Manager, GrandPalaisRmn: Vincent David

Production Manager, Centre Pompidou: Élise Blin

Exhibition Designer: Pauline Phelouzat, assisted by Sol Caride

Graphic Designer: Lacasta Design

An exhibition co-produced by the GrandPalaisRmn, the Centre Pompidou, the Musée d'Orsay and the Musée de l'Orangerie

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Practical information

23 September 2026 – 17 January 2027
Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 7.30pm
Late opening Fridays until 10pm

Grand Palais, entrance on Square Jean Perrin,
Galleries 3 and 4

Admission

Full rate: €19

Reduced rate: €16 (subscription holders,
18-25 year-olds, students up to and including
age 30, large families)

Free: under 18 year-olds, jobseekers, visitors
with a disability, GrandPalais Pass holders,
Carte Pop holders

Catalogue

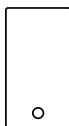


Cezanne et nous

Collective book under the direction
of Claire Bernardi, Michel Gauthier,
Xavier Rey, Jean-Rémi Touzet
Co-published by GrandPalaisRmnÉditions,
Éditions du Centre Pompidou and Éditions
du musée d'Orsay et du musée de l'Orangerie
272 pages, €45
In French

The Grand Palais app

Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#) (in French and English), the Grand Palais app
is an essential tool for keeping abreast of the news, preparing your visit and getting
the most out of exhibitions and events at the Grand Palais. It includes tours of the building
and Grand Palais exhibitions.



Download the Grand Palais app
to access to all the audioguide tours
of the exhibition



Learning resources

Learning resources in connection with the
exhibition are available at www.grandpalais.fr

Visits and workshops

For guided tours and workshop visits organised
by the Grand Palais, go to: www.grandpalais.fr

For guided tours and workshop visits
organised by the Centre Pompidou, go to:
www.centrepompidou.fr/en/

Podcast

In French

Discover more about the exhibition through
a special podcast available for free on the
Centre Pompidou [website](#), all major podcast
platforms and the Grand Palais app.

A free downloadable transcript is also available
on the Centre Pompidou website.



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