



CÉZANNE IN THE STUDIO
Still Life in Watercolors

Carol Armstrong







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THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM, LOS ANGELES

This publication is issued in conjunction with the exhibition *Cézanne in the Studio: Still Life in Watercolors*, held at the J. Paul Getty Museum, October 12, 2004–January 2, 2005.



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Cover: Paul Cézanne. *Still Life with Blue Pot* (detail). (See plate 1.)

Frontispiece, right: Details from the *Atelier des Lauves*, c. 1953.





Notes to the Reader

Objects in the exhibition are illustrated as plates. Detail images of the Getty's *Still Life with Blue Pot* are numbered consecutively throughout the book. Their exact location on the watercolor can be found by referring to the keys to the details, located on pages 141–43.

For further information on the Getty's *Still Life with Blue Pot*—including provenance, bibliography, and exhibition history—see George R. Goldner, with the assistance of Lee Hendrix and Gloria Williams, *European Drawings 1: Catalogue of the Collections* (Malibu, Calif.: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1988), 150.





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Foreword

Paul Cézanne's role as the heroic progenitor of modernism stems largely from the achievement of his monumental paintings in oil. But another part of his oeuvre reveals an artistic personality that, while less lionized in the annals of art and its history, is more human and approachable than the Cézanne we think we know. These qualities emerge in the medium of watercolor, where the brilliant white of the paper surface, the silvery line of sharpened graphite, and the translucent brilliance of liquid color seem to imbue his famously struggling temperament with a lighter sense of being.

Cézanne's celebration of the kaleidoscopic interaction of the ethereal elements of color, line, and light finds pure expression in his monumental late watercolor *Still Life with Blue Pot* in the Getty Museum. It is a work of such brilliance that we decided to make it the focus of a book. As the project developed, however, it became clear that Cézanne's watercolor still lifes were at once so profound and glorious that they merited an exhibition. *Cézanne in the Studio: Still Life in Watercolors* explores the intersection of the genre of still life and the medium of watercolor. The significance of the studio is crucial, since it was in this controlled, familiar environment that Cézanne painted his still lifes. Anyone who has visited his final studio at Les Lauves, just outside the old town of Aix-en-Provence, cannot fail to be moved by the contrast between the humble, simple surviving still-life objects and the splendid, profound watercolors

that they inspired. In his studio—filled with faience, tapestries, and furniture from his beloved Provence—this spartan individual composed still lifes of unabated sensual attraction. It was at Les Lauves that Cézanne painted his late still lifes in watercolor, among the masterpieces of his oeuvre.

The exhibition and accompanying publication bring together an extraordinary artist and a scholar of exceptional insight and eloquence, Carol Armstrong. I am grateful to her for writing the book and curating the exhibition, and to her friend and colleague Lee Hendrix, the Getty's curator of drawings, for inviting her to undertake the project and for overseeing it.

Professor Armstrong's text leads readers through an intensive exploration of the wonders of Cézanne's dazzling watercolors. From the outset, it was acknowledged that the design of the book would play a crucial role in this process. I offer warm thanks to editor John Harris, designer Jeffrey Cohen, production coordinator Anita Keys, the Getty's excellent publications team, Carol Hernandez and Michael Smith in Imaging Services, and Anthony Peres and Jack Ross in Photographic Services for producing a book that astounds and delights.

I am especially grateful to the lenders for sharing their precious works of art. The responsibility of preserving Cézanne's fragile, light-sensitive watercolors for future generations makes lending them a weighty decision indeed. Satisfied that the exhibition and book will be a revelation to our visitors

as well as an enduring scholarly contribution, I extend heartfelt thanks to the lenders for their support and generosity, which allow today's audiences to be drawn into the orbit of Cézanne's genius.

This exhibition marks the launch of a new corporate sponsorship program at the Getty, and I take great pleasure in welcoming Merrill Lynch as our inaugural sponsor.

DEBORAH GRIBBON

*Director, J. Paul Getty Museum
Vice President, J. Paul Getty Trust*

Acknowledgments

More than ten years ago my friend Carol Armstrong came to the Getty to lecture on Paul Cézanne's *Still Life with Blue Pot*, and it was then that we began to plan a book devoted to this great watercolor. The book was conceived as hinging on the interdependency of words and images in order to lead the reader-viewer into an ever more intensive investigation of this watercolor, peeling away its layers of meaning until arriving inside Cézanne's dynamic sense of process. We felt that it was important that the book also consider the import, from a variety of perspectives, of the entire body of Cézanne's still lifes in watercolor. As we contemplated this highly important and spectacularly beautiful subset of his oeuvre, it became clear that it deserved to be the subject of an exhibition.

It has been a privilege from beginning to end to work with the many individuals who have brought *Cézanne in the Studio: Still Life in Watercolors* into being. Most of all, I wish to thank Carol Armstrong, with whom it has been an honor and supreme pleasure to collaborate. She has written a luminous text that leads us through the beauties and complexities of Cézanne's art with consummate eloquence and persuasive understanding of the artist's process.

The exhibition would not have taken place without the continued support of Deborah Gribbon and William Griswold, director and associate director of the Getty Museum, respectively. Quincy Houghton, Amber Keller, and the rest of the staff in the Exhibitions Department shepherded its progress and, as always, lent their invaluable

organizational skills with unflagging good cheer. This is equally true of Sally Hibbard, Amy Linker, and the excellent team in the Registrar's Office, whose vigilance and hard work kept us on course.

The book was a thrill to work on, since we intended the design to play a key role in guiding its readers through an intensive visual as well as intellectual journey through Cézanne's watercolor still lifes. Designer Jeffrey Cohen played a key role in making this vision become a glorious reality, as did project editor John Harris and production coordinator Anita Keys. In addition, I extend my warmest thanks to other colleagues in Getty Publications: Patrick Callahan, Mark Greenberg, Chris Hudson, Karen Schmidt, and Deenie Yudell. I've been fortunate to collaborate on yet another book with editor Karen Jacobson, whose sensitivity and good judgment were an asset as always. The book is dependent on stunning photography, and the inspired efforts of Carol Hernandez and Michael Smith in Imaging Services and Anthony Peres and Jack Ross in Photographic Services made this come to pass.

Christine Giviskos, Katie Hanson, and David McCormick of the Drawings Department were invaluable in countless respects. They worked tirelessly on the book and exhibition in a wide range of capacities, and the project would not have come to fruition without them. We are joined at the hip to Paper Conservation, and I am deeply grateful to Nancy Yocco, who led us through the technical examination of Cézanne's watercolors and helped in many other ways.

The beautiful installation design can be credited to Merritt Price, Leon Rodriguez, and Hillary Spencer of the Exhibition Design Department. As always, I am tremendously grateful to the team of preparators at the Getty, who carry out installations with exemplary dedication and care.

We received help and advice from many individuals and would like to express particular appreciation to William and Eleanor Acquavella, Joseph Baillio, Katrin Bellinger, Cara Denison, Albert Elen, Walter and Maria Feilchenfeldt, Laura Giles, Dorothy Konsinski, Suzanne Folds McCullagh, Griselda Pollock, Joseph Rishel, Andrew Robison, Marie-Pierre Salé, Scott Schaefer, Friederike Steckling, Margret Stuffmann, and Françoise Viatte.

Finally, supreme thanks go to the lenders, who generously agreed to part with their works for the duration of the exhibition. (Their names are listed on the following page.) Without their support this project would never have been possible.

LEE HENDRIX

*Curator of Drawings
J. Paul Getty Museum*

Lenders to the Exhibition

Our thanks are extended to all those who have kindly lent works to the exhibition.

Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago

Dallas, Dallas Museum of Art

London, Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery

New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, Thaw Collection

Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques,

Fonds du Musée d'Orsay

Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Museum of Art

Princeton, The Henry and Rose Pearlman Foundation, Inc.

Riehen/Basel, Fondation Beyeler

Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

Washington, D.C., The National Gallery of Art

A number of generous private lenders



Plate 1

Paul Cézanne
(French, 1839–1906)
Still Life with Blue Pot,
c. 1900–1906
Watercolor and graphite
on white wove paper,
48.1 × 63.2 cm
(18¹/₁₆ × 24⁷/₁₆ in.)
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty
Museum 83.cc.221

Opening Lines

*L*ike many a still life, Paul Cézanne's Still Life with Blue Pot (pl. 1) gets its name from among its inventory of objects, in this case the blue enamel pot that forms the summit of the composition. Its objects are plain and simple, remarkably unremarkable when seen in their diminished reality in Cézanne's last studio in Aix-en-Provence, where many of them still dwell.¹ Yet the still life that these simple objects compose is a magnificent thing: executed in graphite and watercolor but large in dimensions for its medium, it is of the size and spaciousness of a landscape, complex in both its arrangement of volumes and patterns and in its layering of watercolor tints and touches, gorgeous in its raiment of stained-glass effects. Much more than a study, it is a full-fledged picture, carefully plotted and elaborately crafted, as finished as any of the painter's late works ever were, and more sensuously satisfactory than many of his oils. Indeed, though it resides in the drawings collection of the J. Paul Getty Museum, and

though it has pencil lines sewn through its translucent cobalts, reds, ochers, and greens, it is a painting at least as much as it is a drawing.

As memorable as it is, however, Cézanne's Still Life with Blue Pot is lowly on two counts: its genre and its medium. A still life in watercolors, after all, is hardly the stuff of momentous art as it is usually conceived. Still life is the category of painterly subject matter that occupies the lowest rung on the ladder of the old hierarchy of genres: devoted to inanimate things and abject matter, thought to be devoid of invention and narrative import, tied to the humble activities of the home or the quotidian exercises of the studio, it is to history and mythological painting and all subjects based in the human body as guttersnipe is to hero, scullery maid to king. Likewise, watercolor on paper is to oil on canvas as holiday gear is to formal wear: the sketchbook materials of the student, the amateur, and the dilettante, of the artist's private note taking, the English hobbyist's



Figure 1
 Maurice Denis
 (French, 1870–1943)
Homage to Cézanne, 1900
 Oil on canvas,
 180 × 240 cm
 (70⁷/₈ × 94¹/₂ in.)
 Paris, Musée d'Orsay
 R.F. 1977-137

*leisurely pursuit, the lady's flower or landscape jotting, not the matter of high value, public esteem, complex craft and finish.² Usually dependent on immediacy, brevity, and a quick, sure touch, watercolor defies the layered labor of oil painting. Like still life, it tends to be relatively small in size. Like still life, it has something of the feminine about it. As with still life, moreover, its subjects are generally of low standing. And as with still life, so with watercolor: it is neither that genre nor that medium that we think of when we think of Cézanne as the titanic figure who inaugurated the great and storied struggles of the modernist tradition. We are more apt to think of works like his late, great Bathers, executed in oil on canvas, huge in size, redolent of myth and history, an obvious premonition of such pathbreaking modernist masterpieces as Pablo Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* and an equally obvious inspiration*

for Cubism, the next step after Post-Impressionism in the modernist lineage.³

*And this in spite of the many modern admirers of Cézanne's watercolors, not to mention the evident descent of Picasso's and Georges Braque's early Cubist still lifes straight out of Cézanne's work in that genre.⁴ And in spite of the fact that the work chosen to represent Cézanne's genius and celebrate his status as a modernist saint in Maurice Denis's 1900 *Homage to Cézanne* (fig. 1) was precisely a still life, *Still Life with Compotier* of 1880 (fig. 2), which figures as well at the center of Roger Fry's pivotal 1927 monograph on Cézanne. Fry, indeed, argued for the centrality of still life as a genre, devoting a fifteen-page chapter to the subject, some nine pages of which were spent on *Still Life with Compotier* itself.⁵ Fry the Bloomsbury formalist saw still life as the keystone of Cézanne's work precisely because of its inconsequential subject matter: he argued for the "purely plastic significance of still-life," the greater evidence of the artist's "handwriting" in the painting of unpretentious objects, and the unconscious but telling "deformations" that show up in this lowly genre more than in others. "In still life," he said, "the ideas and emotions associated with the objects represented are, for the most part, so utterly commonplace and insignificant that neither artist nor spectator need consider them. It is this fact that makes the still-life so valuable to the critic as a gauge of the artist's personality."⁶ For Fry, paradoxically, it was the very insignificance of still life's world of modest things that made it signify so purely in the way that mattered most.⁷*

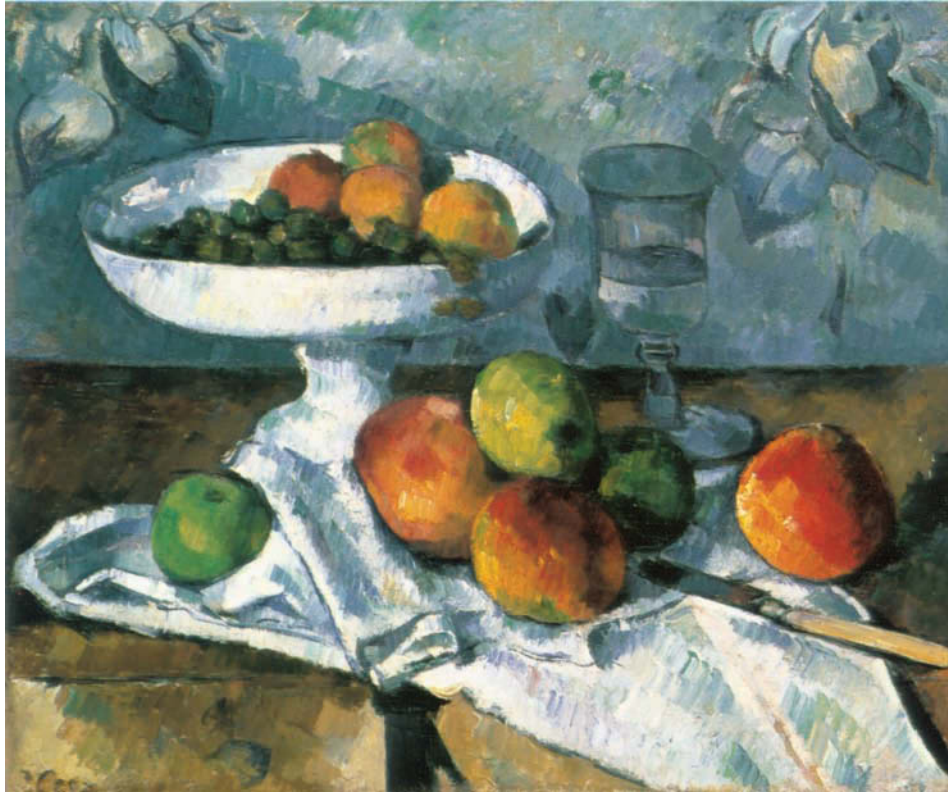


Figure 2
Paul Cézanne
Still Life with Compotier, 1880
Oil on canvas, 46 × 55 cm
(18½ × 21½ in.)
Private collection

Cézanne's objects were more modest than most still-life paraphernalia: thus, according to Fry's formalist reasoning, the forms that they made were all the more directly expressive of the artist's interior life, and that made them all the more meaningful.

A later art historian argued for the significance of still life in Cézanne's oeuvre too, but from a contrary point of view: Meyer Schapiro thought the subject matter of the "apples of Cézanne" all important, finding in them "a latent erotic sense, an unconscious symbolizing of a repressed desire," which made them the displaced embodiment of the painter's sexuality, as expressed in the pastoral poetry of his early letters and his continuing obsession with body-crowded images of bathers, bacchanalia, and "battles of love."⁸ For Schapiro the social art historian with the long view, the iconography of still life—of Cézanne's still lifes in particular—was as important as that of mythological, religious, or history painting; indeed in Cézanne's case the topics of high painting were latent in still life, which was laden with the psychological weight of the humanist narrative. As paradoxical a view as Fry's, Schapiro's account of Cézanne's painting also accorded high standing to the artist's work in still life.

There are ways, then, of giving a splendid thing like the Getty's *Still Life with Blue Pot* its due, despite or even because of its humble object world, and in this study I mean to do just that. My terms will be a little different from those of either Fry or Schapiro, or perhaps it is better to say that I will combine and alter them. Like Fry, I am interested in the

"handwriting" and the "deformations" of this particular still life, and in the way that it is saturated with Cézanne's human peculiarity. And a bit like Schapiro, I find the bodily (though not necessarily the sexual) imprint of Cézanne in the Still Life. At the same time, again somewhat like Schapiro, I consider it a kind of paysage historique, framing its realm of things as if it had the breadth, human heft, and space of the old narrative landscape, as if the human being could wend his way through it on his life journey, expressing what heretofore had been the concern of high history painting and historical landscape in the up-close, low-life "manual space," as Braque would call it, of still-life painting.

*In Cézanne's still-life painting, however, the human journey is charted, not in ancient Rome, but on the tabletop, along with the floors, furnishings, chairs, and walls surrounding it, not on Mount Olympus but at the intersection between domestic and studio life, between the painter's eye and hand. The space of Still Life with Blue Pot and others of its genre and medium is a biographical space, certainly, only not in the high, heroic sense, nor in the potboiler sense of the tortured-artist romance that Cézanne's friend Emile Zola made famous with *The Masterpiece* in 1886, but in this strictly still-life sense: its rustic objects and the relationships among them speak intimately and familiarly of the painter's home away from home in his Provençal studio, and of the nature of the relationship between the painter's art and his life. Thus my story of the Cézanne of Still Life with Blue Pot will not be the Olympian myth of modernism with its herculean struggles*

and godly genealogies. It will be instead the more particular, poignant story of the human gravitas of a still life in watercolors.

Still life is the subject of the first part of this study. Watercolor is the subject of the second. So then what is the place of watercolor in this tale? Cézanne's watercolors, much as they may have been valued, have had no champions of the likes of Fry or Schapiro; among others Lawrence Gowing has written about them with an artist's eye but without making the large claims for their centrality that Fry and Schapiro made for still life. And though he sent a share of watercolors to his first one-artist show at Ambroise Vollard's gallery in 1895 and then ten years later agreed to let Vollard put on an exhibition devoted exclusively to his watercolors, Cézanne himself was inclined to write them off as things of little substance, less than earth-shatteringly important. It is precisely because of watercolor's insubstantiality, its lightness of being, and in Cézanne's case the greater ease and airiness of the watercolors relative to the oils, that this is so: for in them Cézanne's legendary struggles at "realization" weigh less heavily, and his famous turbulence is quieted. So it is, again, less possible to tell the story of his watercolors as a mighty modernist battle.

Nevertheless, Cézanne's work in watercolor and pencil is often unusually complex for the medium, particularly in highly developed pictures like Still Life with Blue Pot, in which the artist made the most of what is most difficult about watercolor painting. What is plotted in them—and that is the other part of the tale that I want to tell

here—is the story of the artist's very process. For that process—tied up as it is with the artist's "handwriting" and "deformations," his manual orchestration of the still-life arrangement, and his corporeal investment in its space—is put on display in watercolor on paper in a way that it is not in oil on canvas. In some of Cézanne's simpler watercolors, the process of designing and coloring is laid bare; in complex pieces like Still Life with Blue Pot, it submerges and then surfaces, fascinating the viewer into sharing the dialogue between eye and hand that is the very life of drawing and painting.

Most of Cézanne's best watercolors date from the last years of his life, the period in which he executed Still Life with Blue Pot in his last studio at Les Lauves. This was also the period in which he was at work on the more famous series of the great Bathers, and in which he continued to labor on the now-familiar shape of Mont Sainte-Victoire in oil and in watercolor. And it was the period in which he had garnered a reputation for himself, with avant-garde group shows in Paris and elsewhere, one-artist exhibitions with his dealer Vollard, and the growing adulation of young painters like Maurice Denis and Emile Bernard, who deified Cézanne and left us his apocrypha. But Cézanne had drawn and painted in watercolors well before he became modernism's grand old man, and we will have occasion to look across his career and see how his process changed from his early to his late efforts. We will see also how he used the delicate veils that watercolor allows and even demands, sometimes to simple and sometimes to complex effect, sometimes with and

sometimes against the grain of the medium, oscillating constantly between the spare and barely there and layered webs of stroke upon stroke, between the faintest whisper of tint, exquisite in its restraint, and a full concert of color, rich in baroque sensuality. And between the pencil and the palette, for *Still Life with Blue Pot* and its companions also engage the viewer in the duet of color and line, playing upon and yet undermining the traditional distinction between the two while confusing and complicating the linear sequence from drawn armature to the fleshing-out of a work in paint that goes with that distinction.

Recently it has been argued that the Fauve painter Henri Matisse took the artistic and philosophical distinction between the drawn conception and the colored realization of a work of art and inverted it in his mature oeuvre: something of the same may be said of Cézanne's late work in still life and watercolor.⁹ Thus the second half of this study will involve us in a close examination and even collaboration in the process of drawing and painting and the colloquy between them that Cézanne's watercolors such as *Still Life with Blue Pot* increasingly engage in. And like the story of still life, the process of watercolor will spin a yarn rather more humanly interesting, and certainly more subtle, than the legend of Cézanne the golden calf of modernism.

An exhibition of still lifes in watercolor and graphite has grown up around *Still Life with Blue Pot*. Called *Cézanne in the Studio*, the exhibition examines two aspects of Cézanne's relation to the atelier: first, the

evocation of the studio in the content, composition, and genre of still life; second, the artist's process of painting and drawing, which takes place in the studio. Indeed, it looks at Cézanne's work in light of the two meanings of the word studio, of which the English word study is a variation: study, as in working space (with all that is found within it), and study, as in act of working; studying; producing études, sketches, or studies. Thus this exhibition attempts to show how both the contents and the procedures of the studio were confronted in the space of the studio and how the studio mattered as much to Cézanne as the *plein air* motif. It includes examples from all three periods—early, middle, and late—of Cézanne's watercolor career, in order to show how his attitude toward the objects and processes of the studio changed, loosened, and fundamentally shifted over time. At the same time it focuses on the last, *Les Lauves*, period of Cézanne's production, between 1902 and 1906, when his watercolor output was the richest and his still lifes in the medium the most numerous, the most adventurous, and the most "studious," according to the double meanings suggested above. This was also the period when, most people agree, Cézanne came into his own in oil and in landscape and achieved, not a dissolute old-age style, but rather his very best work, without which he would not have garnered the status of grand (if peculiar) old master of modernism that has been granted him.¹⁰ It is the more poignant, distaff side of that late labor, the part of it that took place indoors and in watercolors, and without regard for posterity, that this exhibition will

put on display. For all of his centrality to the modernist tradition, Cézanne's project has always been extraordinarily difficult to characterize: this study, and the exhibition that goes with it, will undertake to do so, not from on high, but from an up-close, interior vantage point. It will start with and return to its centerpiece, *Still Life with Blue Pot*, setting it in relation to other still lifes and other subjects, to oils and to watercolors, and working in and out of it in four close-study campaigns: first, the biography of objects; second, the landscape of still life; then, picture and sketch; and finally, pencil lines and watercolors. These are its opening lines; we will end with Cézanne's finishing touches.

NOTES

1. For inventories of the objects found in Cézanne's last studio, see Michel Fraissset, *Les Vies silencieuses de Cézanne: Texte et illustrations des conférences données par Michel Fraissset, directeur de l'Atelier Cézanne à Tokyo, Atlanta, Harbin, Pékin en 1999* (Aix-en-Provence: Office du Tourisme d'Aix-en-Provence, 1999); Michel Fraissset, *Atelier de Cézanne* (Aix-en-Provence: Editions aux arts, n.d.). Of the objects in *Still Life with Blue Pot*, the octagonal pitcher is listed in *Les vies silencieuses de Cézanne* as among the "objets perdus" of the studio, but the metal pot and sugar bowl are not and must have rusted away. They are not the most commonly found objects in Cézanne's still lifes; indeed, they are even cheaper and simpler than those that do recur more often.
2. On the history of watercolor, particularly in England, with which the medium was closely associated since the eighteenth century, see Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art* (New Haven: Published for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art by Yale University Press, 2000). On watercolor practice more generally, see Marjorie B. Cohn, *Wash and Gouache: A Study of the Development of the Materials of Watercolor* (Cambridge: Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1977); Jean Leymarie, *Watercolor from Dürer to Bathus* (New York: Skira/Rizzoli, 1984); and Walter Koschatzky, *Watercolor History and Technique*, trans. Mary Whittall (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970). On the French tradition, see Alain de Leiris and Carol Hynning Smith, *From Delacroix to Cézanne: French Watercolor Landscapes of the Nineteenth Century* (College Park: Art Department Gallery, University of Maryland, 1977); Louis Réau, *Un Siècle d'aquarelle de Géricault à nos jours* (Paris: Charpentier, 1942); François Daulte, *French Watercolors of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Frances Bap and David Joyce (New York: Viking, 1969).
3. The late Bathers culminate decades of oils and drawings of groups of nude figures, male and female. None of them was done from life, though all recall the practice of studying from the model in the studio, and most were likely done in the studio. The late Bathers were too large to be taken outdoors, and thus Cézanne must have been at work on them all the while that he was producing his late studio watercolors of still-life subjects. The Bathers, unlike the still lifes, however, have always been at the forefront of discussions of Cézanne's importance to the modernist line—they figure in all discussions of Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon*, for instance, and whether or not it was a Cubist work. See, for example, J. M. Nash, *Cubism, Futurism, and Constructivism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974), 10–11: "There were two artists of the nineteenth century who, by 1906, were at once heroic in their genius and inevitably associated with compositions of nudes. The one whose influence on Cubism is unmistakable is Paul Cézanne. His late paintings of women bathing, often thought to be the climax of his career, have been taken to be important influences on Picasso when he was creating the *Demoiselles*. Cézanne died in 1906, and his achievement was widely recognized as the greatest in contemporary art." See also William Rubin, "Cézannisme and the Beginnings of Cubism," in *Cézanne: The Late Work* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977), 151–202. For recent discussions of the Bathers, which take their centrality to modern art and to Cézanne's art for granted, see T. J. Clark, "Freud's Cézanne," in *Farewell to an Idea* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 139–67; and Tamar Garb, "Cézanne's Late Bathers: Modernism and Sexual Difference," in *Bodies of Modernity: Figure and Flesh in Fin-de-Siècle France* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 197–218. See also Griselda Pollock, "What Can We Say about Cézanne These Days?" *Oxford Art Journal* 13, no. 1 (1990): 95–101.
4. Cézanne had several watercolors in the Impressionist exhibition of 1877, including *Still Life: Flowers and Fruit on a Table* (pl. 21); see John Rewald, *Paul Cézanne: The Watercolors, a Catalogue Raisonné* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983), 84. At his first solo exhibition at Vollard's gallery in Paris in 1895, he included some watercolors, and then in 1905 he had an exhibition of watercolors alone at Vollard's. And then in 1907, the year following Cézanne's death, an exhibition of seventy-nine watercolors was held at Bernheim-Jeune, coinciding with the extremely influential retrospective of fifty-six paintings at the fifth Salon d'Automne. His watercolors were admired by Edgar Degas (who bought *Three Pears* [pl. 21]), Emile Bernard, Maurice Denis, Rainer Maria Rilke, Robert Delaunay, and many others, who saw in them immense skill and the beginnings of abstraction. On Cézanne's watercolors and their reception, see Felix Baumann et al., *Cézanne: Finished-Unfinished* (Vienna: Kunstforum Wien, 2000); Götz Adriani, *Cézanne Watercolors*, trans. Russell M. Stockman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983); William Rubin, *Cézanne Watercolors* (New York: Acquavella Galleries, 1999); Antoine

Terrasse, *Les aquarelles de Cézanne* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995); John Coplans, *Cézanne Watercolors* (Pasadena: Pasadena Art Museum; Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1967); Lawrence Gowing, *Watercolour and Pencil Drawings by Cézanne* (London: Northern Arts and the Arts Council of Great Britain, 1973); and Laura M. Giles and Carol Armstrong, eds., *Cézanne in Focus: Watercolors from the Henry and Rose Pearlman Collection* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Art Museum, 2002). See also Adrien Chappuis, *The Drawings of Paul Cézanne: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1973).

5. Roger Fry, *Cézanne: A Study of His Development* (1927; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 37–52.

6. *Ibid.*, 39.

7. On Fry, the Bloomsbury school of formalism, and its derivation from Bernard Berenson's art historical usage of Giovanni Morelli's notions of the physiognomic significance of the rendering of apparently insignificant features such as ears and hair, see Christopher Reed, *A Roger Fry Reader* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Beverly H. Twitchell, *Cézanne and Formalism in Bloomsbury* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press,

1987); and Richard Wollheim, "Giovanni Morelli and the Origins of Scientific Connoisseurship," in *On Art and Mind* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 177–201. Fry's discussion of the unconscious meaningfulness of insignificant subject matter, and his notion of "handwriting," ultimately descends from such Morellian ideas.

8. Meyer Schapiro, "The Apples of Cézanne: An Essay on the Meaning of Still-Life" (1968), in *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), 1–38, esp. 12.

9. See Yve-Alain Bois, "Matisse and 'Arche-Drawing,'" in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1990), 3–63.

10. For Cézanne's status as the old master or "primitive" of modernism, discovered by the new generation of the fin-de-siècle, see Emile Bernard, *Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne, et lettres* (Paris: R. G. Michel, 1925) (first published in *Mercure de France* in 1905 and 1907, and as a book in 1912); and Maurice Denis, "Cézanne," in *Théories, 1890–1910: Du symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique* (Paris: L. Rouart et J. Watelin, 1920), 2461 (first published in *L'Occident* in 1907 and in *Burlington Magazine*, translated by Roger Fry, in 1910).



The Biography of Objects

*A*n inventory of Still Life with Blue Pot yields, from left to right: a heap of flowered tapestry, with green, blue, red, and gold patterns woven through it, which makes a mound toward the left, disappears behind the still life's objects at the center, and reemerges to make a fall at the right edge of the composition; an angular white porcelain pitcher with a faint blue design at the leftmost part of the arrangement of objects; the blue pot of the title, made of enameled metal, replete with lid and swinging handle, set behind and slightly above the pitcher toward the center; another metal pot, this one of white enamel, squatter and smaller, but otherwise rather like the blue pot with its lid and handle, set just below and to the right of it; what appear to be seven apples, red and gold globes encircling the squat white pot and then half-sinking into the folds of tapestry behind it and at the right; and finally a piece of white table linen with a red stripe on which the pitcher, white lidded pot, and three of the seven apples sit, and beneath which a bit of

the tapestry is seen, with a piece of gold border at its edge. It might be a tabletop on which the arrangement is piled, or it might not: the entire surface is covered, so it is hard to know. But the shape of the tapestry mound and fall and the bit of contrasting gold border at the bottom center together suggest the possibility of a curving-backed sofa or armchair, without offering anything definite to confirm that possibility. A glimpse of wall and floor is given at the top and right side of the composition, replete with a thin strip to mark the wainscoted division of the wall between green-tinged and brown-toned areas, and a thicker strip of molding to mark the meeting between wall and floor. Otherwise nothing of or in the room is seen: nothing to say whether it is kitchen, dining room, nook or cranny, or other living space, or simply atelier.

Many of the same objects are found, rearranged, within a still life in watercolors of the period (fig. 3) that appears to be an alternative or companion to Still Life with Blue Pot. A melon is added to that composition,



Figure 3

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Milk Pot,
Melon, and Sugar Bowl*,
1900–1906
Watercolor and graphite
on white paper, 45.7 ×
63.5 cm (18 × 25 in.)
Crosse Pointe Shores,
Michigan, Edsel & Eleanor
Ford House 1986.2



Figure 4
Cézanne's studio at Les Lauves

the apples appear to be fewer in number, and the handle of the blue pot is lifted in a halo-like arc above its lid, but otherwise the objects and even the indeterminate corner space are the same. And then one gradually realizes what is missing from both of them: they have none of the porcelain compotiers, glass bottles, carafes and glasses, plates, flowered pitchers and sugar bowls, or rough-glazed ginger pots and ceramic wares that are found throughout Cézanne's still lifes and that— together with plaster cupid, écorché, and skulls— still line the various shelves and surfaces of the studio at Les Lauves today (fig. 4). Only their tapestry, red-striped white linen and fruit, and the pitcher show up in other still lifes. Moreover, as simple and crude as the objects that remain in Cézanne's studio are, they are at least more permanent than the two metal pots at the center of these two compositions, which, judging from some of the metal items that are still found in the atelier, have long since rusted away (detail 1).

But permanent or not, what one can say about the three main items at the center of Still Life with Blue Pot is that they form a sort of family trio, made up of the dominant blue pot, the helpmeet milk pitcher and the hemmed-in, dominated little white pot, genetically similar to the larger blue one behind it, trying vainly to assert itself. Father, mother, son? (Or is it mother, father, son?) Perhaps, but it surely suggests, along with the flowering rusticity of Cézanne's Provençal world and the spartan simplicity of his hermit's retreat, something else that was common to his still lifes in oil and watercolor: the anthropomorphism of object relations.

* * *

CÉZANNE PAINTED STILL LIVES from the very beginning of his career, and from the beginning he was interested in the simplest of objects, tinged in one way or another with an Aixois rusticity. One of his earliest still lifes in oil is the little Aixois *Still Life: Sugar Bowl, Pears, and Blue Cup* (fig. 5), painted around 1866, hanging unframed over the head of his father enthroned in chintz, his home his castle, in a portrait Cézanne painted the same year (fig. 6), thus suggesting the early importance of still life to the space of domestic relations and the family romance.¹ It is small, crude, and dense, and like his coarse *Bread and Eggs* and lugubrious *Skull and Candlestick* of the same period, it is painted in his notorious *couillarde* manner. (Translated approximately as “ballsy,” this term—used by Cézanne himself to describe his thick way of handling paint in the 1860s, often with the palette knife as well as the brush—manages to convey at once the roughness of a provincial identity and the earthiness of sexual slang.²) It is, moreover, a site in which he early on began to work through the factual options handed down to him through Gustave Courbet and Edouard Manet in particular: between the sculptural, proto-facet dab and material buildup of the palette knife (the small pear, the sugar bowl, and the large, fat pear in front of it) and the proto-Expressionist scribble of the brush (the pear to the right) found in his



Figure 5

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life: Sugar Bowl,
Pears, and Blue Cup*,
c. 1866
Oil on canvas, 30 × 41 cm
(11³/₁₆ × 16¹/₈ in.)
Aix-en-Provence, Musée
Granet

Figure 6

Paul Cézanne
The Artist's Father, 1866
Oil on canvas, 198.5 ×
119.3 cm (78 1/8 × 47 in.)
Washington, D.C., National
Gallery of Art, Collection
of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon



fantasy paintings of the same years, in this still life put side by side in competition and comparison. Thus this oil is also a marker of the importance of the still-life genre to Cézanne as a place in which to study process and signature technique.

Its blue cup, striking a note similar to that of the blue pot in the *Getty Still Life*, is the only thing with much delicacy in the composition, but its gilt-edged elegance is lost in the gluey working of the painting's surface. The sugar bowl is one often found in Cézanne's later still-life compositions: the relationship among it, the blue cup, and the fruit—three simple pears, rather than apples—is not unlike the more complex spacing and impinging of objects one upon the other found in *Still Life with Blue Pot*. But for all its dark, almost claustrophobic narrowness, *Still Life: Sugar Bowl, Pears, and Blue Cup* suggests something more of human use—that someone might sugar the tea and drink it—than the *Getty Still Life* or many of its late cohorts in oil or watercolor. But what many of those late still lifes have that the *couillarde* little oil has none of is the suggestion of a space that expands outward from, around, and beyond the arrangement of objects and the picture frame that houses it.

Classic still lifes from Cézanne's middle period, such as the 1880 *Still Life with Compotier* (fig. 2), which both Maurice Denis and Roger Fry chose as the centerpiece of their celebrations of Cézanne the patron saint of modern painting, substitute a screen of regularized paint strokes and an Impressionist-inflected, lightened-up

palette for the dark density of the earlier work. They also begin to open up the space around their narrow shelves of objects to a degree, by the traditional means of projecting knife and drawer handles. The leafy blue-green wallpaper in the 1880 still life evokes the air and verdure of the outdoors. Meanwhile, a half-full glass of water still suggests that someone might pick it up and drink it, while the knife suggests that someone might cut one of the apples, and the dark, outward-projecting drawer handle, with its peculiarly diminished prong of shadow, suggests that we ourselves might be tempted to stretch out a hand, pull it, and look inside. For his part, Fry saw that black handle and its shadow as a flaw in Cézanne's composition, a defect (something like a facial tic) that marred the obviously consistent "handwriting" of the rest and thus impugned the expressionist logic of the still life's "deformations"—namely, its diagonal brushwork and the stretched-out contours of its objects, most obviously the warped ellipse of the compotier and the conical apex of the rightmost apple, signatures of Cézanne's special way of feeling and painting, as Fry saw it. Indeed, instead of wanting to stretch out his hand and open up the drawer, Fry expressed a desire to "cover this part of the canvas with an indiscreet finger," thus simultaneously emphasizing its literal surface over its fictive space, wishing away any fantasized bodily encounter with that space, and yet willy-nilly interjecting a piece of himself, his own digit, into, onto, and over it.³ No matter, somehow *Still Life with Compotier* solicits some sort of physical reaction from its viewer—some response of the hand as well as the eye.

Roughly a decade later, at the end of the eighties and into the nineties, Cézanne was painting still-life pictures in oil that widened the space of the tabletop out to implications of a room beyond, sometimes the kitchen, sometimes the atelier, sometimes both, sometimes neither, or neither very clearly. Most complexly, *Still Life with Basket; or, The Kitchen Table* of 1888–90 (fig. 7) takes a crowded wooden table with napkin, pears, ginger jar, matching pitcher and sugar bowl (the same sugar bowl as in the little 1866 oil), and picnic basket of fruit and linen balancing on the table's upper-right corner—replete with the "deformations" of the basket's distension, the teetering of the porcelain ware, and the jogging of the table edge—and sets it flat within a furniture-crowded space that includes floor and wall, one chair or stool leg at the right edge of the picture, one straw-bottomed chair whose top disappears beyond the upper-left corner of the painting, a piece of screen (painted by Cézanne himself) and a piece of painting canvas or portfolio on the floor, and a bureau or sideboard at the left edge of the painting on which sit a satchel, a palette, and possibly an inkwell.

A half-dozen years after that, Cézanne painted *Still Life with Plaster Cast* (c. 1894; fig. 32), for which a number of studies in watercolor were done as well. There he added onions to his tabletop apples, a plaster cupid that still sits in his studio (whose original was once thought to be by the seventeenth-century Provençal sculptor Pierre Puget), a fold of blue tapestry with two apples in it at left, and a steeply inclined floor walled by stacked canvases (by Cézanne), culminating, in the upper-right corner of the picture, in a cropped canvas depicting the bottom of a sculpture

Figure 7

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Basket; or,
The Kitchen Table*, 1888–90
Oil on canvas, 65 × 80 cm
(25 3/4 × 31 1/2 in.)
Paris, Musée d'Orsay
R.F. 2819



by Michelangelo—or rather a plaster cast after that sculpture, which also still sits in the studio. A loose piece of green fruit, indeterminately an apple, sits at the base of that canvas-cum-sculpture-cum-cast. Where *Still Life with Basket; or, The Kitchen Table* situated its still life in the space named in its title, insinuating art making into that space with its palette, inkwell, screen, and portfolio, and hinting at expeditions outside into the landscape with the picnic basket and the satchel, *Still Life with Plaster Cast*, in contrast, clearly situates the still life in the atelier, while playing on the relationship between dimensions (two and three), media (painting within painting and sculpture within painting), and copies (a painting within a painting after a copy of a sculpture). That is pure studio play; no food preparation takes place in *Still Life with Plaster Cast*, not even the preparing of a painter's picnic basket for an outing to paint Mont Sainte-Victoire, perhaps. But a relationship to the kitchen is at least intimated by the inclusion of homely onions among the painting's studio apples.⁴

Both paintings suggest two things that are important to our understanding of the Getty *Still Life with Blue Pot*. The first is the tying of the surface of the canvas and the top of the still-life table to a physical space in which one is not only invited to handle things but is also offered chairs in which to sit and floors on which to stand or walk. The second is this: that the space of the atelier stands in relation to the domestic

Figure 8

Paul Cézanne
Still Life with Apples, 1893–94
Oil on canvas, 65.4 × 81.6 cm
(25¾ × 32¼ in.)
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty
Museum 96.PA.8



realm as well as to the world beyond the confines of both the studio and the home, and that relationship is one of imbrication, off-stage allusion, and substitution, all at once. Which is to say that studio, home, and landscape are related in these still lifes by the hinted inclusion of one in the other, by the suggestion that the atelier, like the canvas itself, is hinged to another world whose edge we are given a glimpse of, and by one standing in place of the other: the studio replaces the kitchen and the larger domestic world of which it is part, just as it stands in for the even larger outer world into which we know the painter ventured, as a painter if not as a person with a private life warranting a biography.

Other still lifes of the period—roughly a decade before *Still Life with Blue Pot*—are less spatially expansive, but their Provençal habitat is nonetheless as clear as can be. Such is the case, for instance, with the Getty's own *Still Life with Apples* of

1893–94 (fig. 8). That canvas has a two-toned blue wall behind its tabletop arrangement—a peculiarly accordion-like wall that seems to have at least one extra corner crease and thus threatens to reverse the inward recession of the wall into outward projection—but it has no floors or room corners or extra furnishings to suggest walking, sitting, movement, or connection between one space and the next. What it does have—besides the familiar sugar bowl, the ubiquitous apples, and a red-striped cloth similar to the one in the Getty watercolor—is a world of provincial faience and fabric found throughout Cézanne’s still lifes. That world is Provence through and through, from its Marseilles olive jar, to its decorated sugar bowl, to its straw-wrapped ginger pot and rum bottle, to its blue tapestry.⁵ Thus the rustic objects found in this and many similar still lifes tie the signature “handwriting” of Cézanne to the signature of Provence, and thus despite their insignificance, indeed in their very humbleness, they are significant indeed; they signify a locality, a life lived in a particular place. In that simple way at least, they are “biographical.” And although the watercolor *Still Life with Blue Pot* has none of the pottery of the Getty oil, save for the little pitcher whose decoration is not clearly inscribed, it too is signed with a Provençal signature—nowhere more clearly than in the mounded tapestry rising up at the left like the hump of Mont Sainte-Victoire and falling down and around to embrace the rest and determine the palette of the whole, a blue-, green-, red-, and ochre-dominated palette that is pure Provence. These were the colors, as Denis put it, of “ancient faïences,” but they were also those of the earth, sky, sea, verdure, and red roofs of Cézanne’s native landscape.⁶

* * *

IF THE GETTY STILL LIFE is Provence through and through, so was Cézanne himself, who of the painters attached to the Impressionist group traveled the least; was most identified with a single local landscape, that of and around Aix-en-Provence; and was least attached to the movable feast and touristic world of Paris and its suburbs and their transient population and lifestyle. Born (out of wedlock) in Aix in 1839 to a hatter and his mistress and soon-to-be-wife (Louis-Auguste Cézanne and Anne Elizabeth Honorine Aubert, a native of Aix), Cézanne grew up, went to public school and then *lycée*, befriended the Aixois Emile Zola and Henri Gasquet, enrolled in the Ecole Gratuite de Dessin (free school of drawing), and went to law school at his father’s insistence, all in the good provincial town of Aix-en-Provence. (By that time his father had become a banker and property owner, a *bon bourgeois* of Aix.) Cézanne first left Aix for Paris in 1861, at Zola’s urging. Thereafter, he went back and forth between Paris and Aix, first returning to Aix in September of 1861, six months after having left for Paris, to do a stint in his father’s bank. He returned to Paris a little over a year later, in November of 1862, and remained until July of 1864. He was back in Paris the next year, only to return to Aix in the winter. The year 1866 saw him returning to Paris and then to Aix again, and then back to Paris. It

went on like this, with sojourns in Auvers and Pontoise and other places and longer periods of residence in L'Estaque, on the bay of Marseilles, through the seventies—including the siege of Paris, during which he dodged the draft, and the Commune of 1870–71—and into the eighties, though Cézanne's stays in Aix and L'Estaque grew longer and longer and his intervals in Paris shorter and shorter. By the time his father died, in December of 1886, and the family's Jas de Bouffan property on the western outskirts of Aix was bequeathed to his children (Paul, Marie, and Rose Honorine—the two sisters were two and fifteen years younger than Paul, respectively), Cézanne had resettled in Aix, although he continued to make trips to Paris and elsewhere. By the nineties and the rise of Cézanne's fame, painters were making pilgrimages to Aix to see him, and from then until the end of his life, in 1906, he was the hermit painter and master of Aix.

Cézanne himself remarked on his ties to Aix, "When I was in Aix, it seemed to me that I would be better elsewhere; now when I'm elsewhere I miss Aix."⁷ Many a provincial boy with high ambitions must have felt similar ambivalence, but in Cézanne's case there was a particular Aixois flavor to the love/hate feeling about his provincial birthplace: while in one breath he complained bitterly of the "steppes of the good city of Aix" and its provincial population, in the next he said, "I wouldn't be here if it weren't for the fact that I love the configuration of my countryside so deeply."⁸ Speaking of Zola and Gasquet as well as himself, he wrote: "In us the vibration of sensations reverberating from the good Provençal sun have never died, our old souvenirs of youth, of those horizons, those landscapes, those unexpected lines have left in us so many profound impressions."⁹ But many other provincial boys stayed away. Zola, for one, became a confirmed Parisian, but not Cézanne, who said that in spite of all of his complaints about Aix old and new: "I was born there, and it is there that I will die. Today everything in reality changes, but not for me, I live in the town of my childhood, and it's under the eyes of people of my own age and place that I revisit the past."¹⁰ And indeed it was in Aix that he was born and in Aix that he died.

Although it was the landscape of Aix for which Cézanne expressed his yearning, the Aixois feeling permeates his still lifes at least as much as his landscapes: not only by looking a bit like landscapes, some of them (we will have occasion to return to this theme with regard to *Still Life with Blue Pot*), but also in the ways that I have enumerated—the pots and glassware, the fabrics, the rough-hewn furnishings, the palette. Even his "handwriting" had an Aixois feel to it: from the crude *couillarde* facture of the early years to the distensions and crookednesses and even the tilt and pitch of space and brush stroke of the later years. One thinks of these things as Cézanne's personal peculiarities—and indeed they were—but experience of the geological and vegetal growth patterns of the Provençal countryside begins to corroborate the Aixois inflection of those peculiarities and the importance of Cézanne's immersion in Aix. There was, in short, a kind of Provençal accent to Cézanne's still lifes as much as to his landscapes. And that accent was one that Cézanne cultivated in life as well as in art, nowhere more so than in Paris. There, caricaturing the model

of Courbet, he exaggerated his provincial identity by playing the country bumpkin to the hilt, often burlesquing the southern twang of his Provençal French, deliberately affecting coarse language and insisting on uncouth clothing and manners. In short, quite as much as the painting style he adopted early on, the identity he wore was a *couillarde* one.

Of course Paris was important to Cézanne: its artistic society, its exhibition culture, and its museums, not to mention the contrast it provided to Aix, the impetus to return there that it gave him, and the reinforcement of his outsider status that it furnished. Indeed it intensified his identification with Aix and Provence. In Paris he attended the Académie Suisse (the Parisian free school of drawing where so many of the new generation of painters met), where he met other Aixois refugees (such as the dwarf painter Achille Emperaire, whom he painted at the end of the sixties) as well as other outsiders, such as Camille Pissarro. (Meanwhile he also reenrolled in the Ecole Gratuite de Dessin in Aix. Unlike others of the Impressionists-to-be, he never enrolled in an academic studio in Paris.) There in Paris he attended Zola's Thursday evening soirées, visited Manet's studio, copied in the Louvre, submitted paintings to the annual Salons, and was rejected with a consistency that exceeded the experience of all of the other "new painters."¹¹ There he got his paints from Père Tanguy and others and eventually began to sell paintings and watercolors to Victor Chocquet (see pl. 20) and other interested parties. There he went to the Café Guerbois and later the Nouvelle-Athènes to discuss the "new painting" and other subjects with Manet, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, and others, and it was there that Monet recalled that Cézanne "pushed his jacket aside with a movement of the hips worthy of a zinc-worker, pulled up his pants, and openly readjusted the red belt to the side. After that he shook everyone's hand. But in Manet's presence he removed his hat and smiling, said through his nose: 'I won't give you my hand, Monsieur Manet, I haven't washed for eight days.'"¹²

And there in Paris the "curious Provençal," as Pissarro called him,¹³ joined the Impressionist group for its first exhibitions, contributing three works to the inaugural exhibition of 1874 (one of which was *A Modern Olympia*, Cézanne's caricatural response to Manet's famous painting), and sixteen works to the third exhibition, in 1877, including some watercolors and still lifes (pl. 20), some bathers, and above all landscapes. Although he bowed out of the second show, in 1876, and after 1877 never again participated in the exhibitions himself, he remained tied to the group that became known as the Impressionists. Later, after becoming for a while the "forgotten painter" of the new art,¹⁴ it was in Paris that he began to be recognized by critics, younger artists, and the dealer Ambroise Vollard, who gave him his first solo exhibition in Paris in 1895 (while Cézanne himself remained in Aix). It was finally in Paris that a room at the Salon d'Automne was devoted to Cézanne's work in 1904; in Paris that another ten paintings were exhibited in the Salon d'Automne of the next year, with a show of watercolors up at Vollard's earlier the same year (1905); and in Paris that there were two rooms full of Cézanne's paintings, again at the Salon d'Automne, in 1907, the year after his death in Aix.

It was also in Paris that the other side of Cézanne's life began to take shape: a private life so private that it was for a long while a secret—a private life, moreover, that was eventually separate from his painting life, as private as that was too. For it was in Paris, in 1869, that Cézanne first met the Jura-born model and seamstress Emélie Hortense Fiquet, who became first his mistress; then the mother of his only son, Paul, born out of wedlock in 1872; and finally his wife in 1886, just before the death of his father that year. This was in some ways a repetition of his own parents' story, as they too did not marry until after Cézanne's birth. In other ways it was a tremendous source of anxiety for Cézanne, who, requiring his father's support and already worried about his disapproval, was forced to keep the relationship with Hortense hidden from his family. Indeed he went to great lengths to do so; part of the reason for his choice of L'Estaque rather than Aix on many of his southern sojourns was to keep his father unaware of Hortense's existence. (His father, having been elected to the city council of Aix in 1870, was all the more conscious of his good bourgeois reputation and undoubtedly all the more desirous of forgetting aspects of his own earlier life with Cézanne's mother.) The threesome lived together in Auvers in 1873, but more often Hortense and then Paul as well were hidden in L'Estaque, while Cézanne journeyed from there to visit his family at Jas de Bouffan in Aix. Sometimes they were sequestered in Marseilles; sometimes they were stowed away in Paris. Hortense herself chose to live apart from Cézanne in Paris.

Cézanne wrote to his mother about the birth of his son, Paul, in 1872 but with her help kept it a secret from his father. Rather than go to his father for additional money to support his family, he sought help from Zola, who had become a respectable married man himself in 1870, the year after Cézanne met Hortense. Meanwhile Cézanne continued to communicate with his mother, but not his father, about Hortense and Paul. In 1878, however, his father began to read his letters and suspect that something was up. First Louis-Auguste threatened to cut off his son's allowance, but then he seemed to come to terms with the fact of his son's ménage. Ultimately both of Cézanne's parents attended the marriage ceremony in 1886 that legitimized Paul and regularized Cézanne's personal life. It was this "sentimental journey" that Zola immortalized so luridly in *The Masterpiece* of 1886, the famous story of a failed modern artist and his irregular household, which blended Cézanne's life story with those of Manet and Monet and gave it a tragic ending that was contradicted, perhaps deliberately, by Cézanne's neatening of his domestic arrangement later that year. But so clearly did the novel lean on Zola's knowledge of Cézanne's situation, his awareness of Cézanne's notorious uneasiness around women and anxieties about the female model (awkward and anxious, he alternated between intense fear of physical contact and sudden submission to fierce and clumsy desires where women were concerned), and his feelings about Cézanne's art, that it resulted in a permanent parting of ways between the two old Aixois friends.¹⁵

The marriage of Cézanne and Hortense, the death of his father, the availability of the property of Jas de Bouffan to the painter and his friends (Pierre-Auguste Renoir came to visit him there): this confluence of events settled Cézanne's life in

Aix. But, curiously, it did not end the seclusion of Hortense and Paul or the segregation of Cézanne's painting from his private life. Indeed, for all intents and purposes, it would appear that the Cézanne marriage increasingly became a kind of inconvenient marriage of convenience. Vincent van Gogh described it enviously as a "middle class marriage" that allowed him to get a "hard-on" in his work rather than in real-life "debauchery."¹⁶ Although Cézanne was scrupulous about his responsibility to Hortense and Paul, they continued to live apart from him, going to Paris while he went back to Aix after an unsatisfactory family trip to Switzerland in 1890; after that he had to force them to return to Aix, but when they did so, they lived in an apartment while he lived with his mother at Jas de Bouffan. There was trouble between Cézanne *mère* and Cézanne's wife; that was part of the reason why the couple so often lived apart. At the same time it is clear that Cézanne and Hortense, both extremely difficult people by all accounts—Cézanne all but schizophrenic and Hortense apparently dull, recalcitrant, and unpleasant—were more or less estranged from fairly early on, although Cézanne continued obsessively to paint the woman his friends disparagingly called "la boule," and she repeatedly sat still to be painted.¹⁷ As for his son, Paul, Cézanne called him "the brat" when he was a child but clearly felt growing affection for him as he grew to manhood.

After the 1890 trip the family sometimes traveled together but were more often than not to be found in separate places, even when they were all in Aix, and especially as Paul grew up and Cézanne began constructing studios for himself apart from his domicile—the first in 1900, the second and final one at Les Lauves, on the northern outskirts of Aix, which he bought in 1901 and whose construction was completed the following year (fig. 9). Although the latter was owned in common by



Figure 9
Exterior of Cézanne's studio
at Les Lauves, 1902

Cézanne and his wife, it became a home away from home for Cézanne, and after his death it passed, along with his inheritance, to Paul, not to Hortense, who gave up her share of it. Meanwhile, when Hortense fell sick, Cézanne instructed his son to take care of her; when he himself became ill, he was cared for first by a housekeeper and then by his gardener, and indeed on October 22, 1906, Hortense and Paul arrived at the Les Lauves studio too late to be with Cézanne as he died. In short, even after his marriage, Cézanne continued to live apart from his household and increasingly lived his painting apart from his private life.

* * *

WHEN CÉZANNE PAINTED HIS SON AND WIFE over the years, he most often did so in a way that suggested no particular intimacy with them and gave them no special status. As for his other subjects—landscape, genre, nudes, and still life—they seem, for the most part, devoid of familial resonance. In the neighborhood of still life, however, there are some early exceptions to this rule in the media of pencil and watercolor. On one sketchbook sheet from about 1878 (fig. 10), Cézanne penciled two views of his then six-year-old son: oriented differently on the page, like two views of an apple, one faces outward with a shadow behind his head, while the other sinks diagonally into the surface of the page as if it were a pillow, one in the upper-right and the other in the lower-left corner, depending on the orientation of the page. Those views of his son's head, detached from the rest of his body, share space with one partial view of a classical female figure (lower right); one complete view in a very different "handwriting"—heavy, awkward, and recursive in its lines—of a male nude with his arms outstretched (upper left); and one rendering of a drinking glass spreading its shadow or reflection on the surface of the sheet of paper (middle left). The latter is the only still-life item on the page, and it shares space with disparate subject matter in the manner of sketchbook notes jotted down as they came to the painter, possibly at different times, and as he moved the sheet around to find room for his jottings.¹⁸ Yet, no doubt unintentionally, their companionship on the same sheet of paper links the seemingly impersonal to the personal—the studio study of the glass to the tender rendering of his child. And the glass mediates formally between the two views of Paul, one more intimate than the other: the deadpan portrait gaze, with its foursquareness and its shadow, of the one and the sleepy sidelong look and diagonal disposition of the other are somehow combined in the lines of the simple glass.

In the exhibition there are some related sketchbook drawings of Paul at the age of ten (pls. 2, 3). Cézanne drew his son this way numerous times. Part of a sketchbook owned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art that opens with several pages of drawings of Paul asleep, this particular series of pages begins with a partial view of the boy's wide-awake face set next to a drawing of his relaxed, partly uncurled hand lying palm up.¹⁹ On the verso of that page, overlapping parts of a bed frame and chair

Figure 10

Paul Cézanne
Sketchbook Page with Two
Studies of Paul Cézanne
(Son), a Female Half-Figure
Study, a Bather, and a Glass
(recto), c. 1878
Graphite, with ink blot,
on paper, 24.8 × 30.8 cm
(9¾ × 12¼ in.)
Vienna, Albertina 24088



back are penciled in, followed on the next page by another view of the sleeping Paul, shown half lost to the blank of the page like a swimmer half submerged in water. The verso of that page, in turn, shows another view of the head and hand of Cézanne *filis*. This time the hand is to the left and the head to the right, the hand is shown from the side, palm side down but in a similar gesture as before, and the head, eye closed and mouth half open, is again shown half drowned in pillows as if they were ripples of water. Curiously, the hand, which is probably the hand of the sleeping son, is presented as if it might be a drawing (or writing) hand, with the index finger curled over a gently flexed thumb. (Something of the same gesture is found in the supine hand on the first of these four pages.) Thus the hand movements of drawing, the unconscious gestures of sleep, the intimate relations of the family, and the sequence of notebook pages are linked to one another in a somatic chain.



Plate 2

Paul Cézanne
Head of a Child and Hand
(recto) / *Bedpost and Chair*
Back (verso)
Graphite and graphite offset,
11.6 × 18.2 cm (4⁵/₁₆ × 7³/₁₆ in.)
Philadelphia, Philadelphia
Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and
Mrs. Walter H. Annenberg,
1987-53-8a,b

Through the subconscious logic of notebook sequencing and the recto/verso alternation of sketchbook folios, Cézanne made links between the intimacy of the family, the furnishings of the studio and the house, and the space of still life. A sketchbook owned by the Philadelphia Museum of Art includes several pages of drawings from around 1882 that show Cézanne's son, Paul.

This particular series of pages begins with a partial view of Paul's wide-awake face set next to a drawing of his hand lying palm up. On the verso of the page, Cézanne penciled in overlapping parts of a bed frame and chair back.

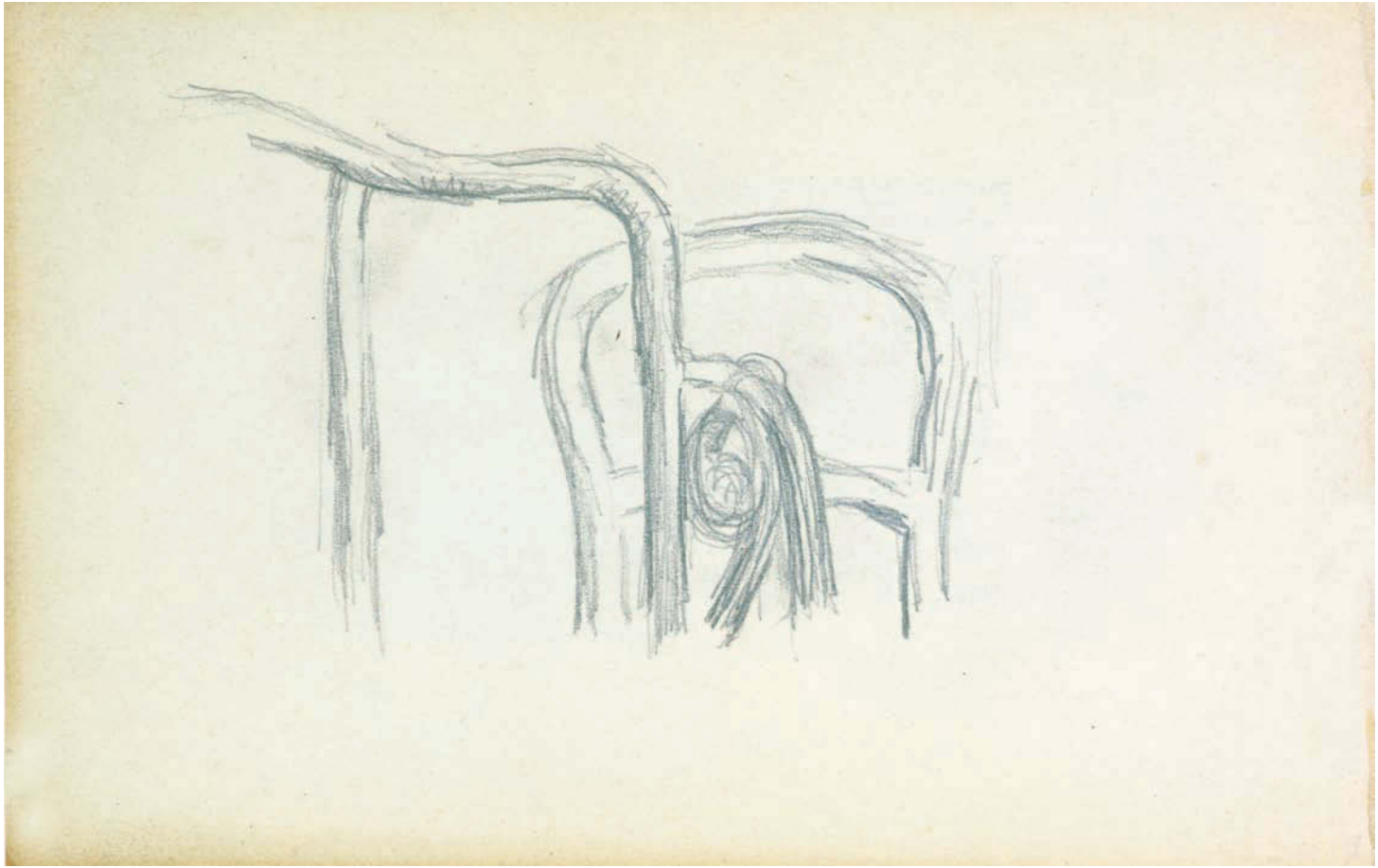




Plate 3

Paul Cézanne
The Artist's Son Asleep
 (recto) / *Head and Hand of*
the Artist's Son Asleep (verso)
 Graphite and graphite
 offset, 11.6 × 18.2 cm
 (4⁹/₁₆ × 7³/₁₆ in.)
 Philadelphia, Philadelphia
 Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and
 Mrs. Walter H. Annenberg,
 1987-53-9a,b

This sketchbook page, which follows the one discussed previously (pl. 2), displays a view of the sleeping Paul. Its verso, in turn, shows another view of the head and hand of Cézanne *filis*: this time the hand is shown from the side, palm side down but in a similar gesture as before, and the head is again shown half drowned in pillows. The hand, which is probably the hand of the sleeping son, is presented as if it might be

a drawing (or writing) hand. (Something of the same gesture is found in the supine hand on the recto of the previous page [pl. 2].) Thus the hand movements of drawing, the unconscious gestures of sleep, the intimate relations of the family, and the sequence of notebook pages are linked to one another in a somatic chain.



But what have these to do with still life? A larger, watercolored page from a different, slightly later notebook (mid-1880s), also in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (figs. 11, 12), helps to provide the answer. It has a still life with knife and carafe on the recto of the page and a bed and bedside table (which looks remarkably like the table Cézanne used in his studio) on the verso, so that studio and bedroom are literally flip sides of each other. It is one of many such conjunctions in Cézanne's pencil and watercolor notebook work, and it points back to the bed and chair backs in the sequence of pages just described. Not still life in the traditional sense, they are just that in the literal meaning of the phrase: inanimate objects that do not move. They are like the furnishings in some of the still lifes proper, such as *Still Life with Basket*; or, *The Kitchen Table*, and they provide the missing link between still life and other spaces of domestic use and human habitation. They are also tied to the renderings of Cézanne's son: awake, perhaps sitting up in a chair in one, asleep and immersed in a bed in the two others, his detached hand in a sleeping position that recalls the waking body language of sitting at a table and drawing or writing. And they suggest one of the prime thought processes of the studio, in which the genre of still life and the medium of pencil and watercolor on paper participate equally: the note-taking linkage of disparate spaces and subjects in the unconscious logic of notebook sequencing and recto/verso alternation. Elsewhere Cézanne would tie bodies to apples and oranges on single sheets, and in this notebook and others he runs through the entire range of subjects that used to make up the old academic hierarchy of genres: history painting and the nude, genre imagery, portraiture, landscape, still life. But in certain sequences the relationships among the furnishings of the studio and the house, the space of still life, and human intimacy are more direct and poignant.

In 1885 Cézanne sketched his wife, as he had done earlier with his son, with her head sinking diagonally into a pillow (upper right), on the same page with a more fully rendered hydrangea blossom (left), again oriented differently, requiring the turning of the page (horizontal for Hortense's head, vertical for the flower) or the viewer's head to see each in its proper orientation (fig. 13). As in the pages on which Paul is shown sleeping, Hortense's head seems to sink sleepily into the paper as if it were a pillow from which she gazes half-awake, not quite at her viewer, with pillow folds, wisps of hair, and crease in the neck all caught with a delicate pencil that then produces, as if automatically, a hovering, caressing set of hatch marks, detached from their referent, just barely attaching her to the cream surface of the paper. Unlike the page with the two views of his son's head, and despite the fact that one is filled in with watercolor and the other not, the drawings on this sheet must have been done at the same time, for there is a conscious punning of names between Hortense and the French word for hydrangea, *hortensia*, as if the sketch sheet were a natural place for wordplay to join hands with the working out of visual ideas, where linguistic play can be tried out as a visual analogy (which is discovered to yield as much difference as similarity).²⁰ Here there seems little to link the two sketches but the names of their subject matter—except perhaps the feminine connotations of the flower, not to mention

Figure 11

Paul Cézanne
Carafe and Knife (recto),
c. 1882
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 21.9 × 27.3 cm
(8 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)
Philadelphia, Philadelphia
Museum of Art,
A. E. Gallatin Collection,
1952-61-11

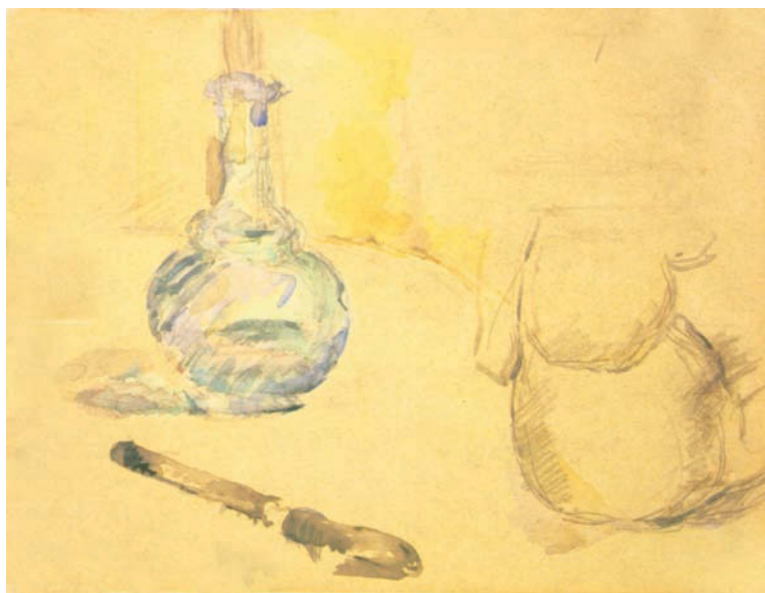


Figure 12

Paul Cézanne
Bed and Table (verso),
c. 1882
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 27.3 × 21.9 cm
(10 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.)
Philadelphia, Philadelphia
Museum of Art,
A. E. Gallatin Collection,
1952-61-11



the flower drawing, and the self-evident femininity of Hortense's face, which is in fact more "feminine" here than in any of the oil portraits of her and is rendered with such an uncharacteristic delicacy, intimacy, and poignant grace as to endow the rendering itself with a kind of femininity.

At the same time, Cézanne's wife is like the penciled inside-out of the water-colored flower: the folds of the pillow on which she rests are like inverted versions of the complex lines of the leaves enframing the blossom of the *hortensia*, so that each is like the verso of the other. Finally, with the folds of the pillow embracing Hortense's cheek, this sketch suggests, even more intensely than before, in the drawing of Paul, that the sheet of paper is a space of drowsy softness shared by Cézanne as he looks from his pillow and his low vantage point to hers, a somatic space in



Figure 13
Paul Cézanne
*Madame Cézanne with
Hortensias*, c. 1885
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 30.5 ×
46 cm (12 × 18½ in.)
Private collection

which a connection between the biographical and the still-life subject occurs. This drawing-and-watercolor page is not a still life per se, but it brings the subjects of portrait and floral still life in conjunction with each other. Drawn and painted just prior to the time that Cézanne's home life was regularized by marriage, legitimization of his son, the death of his father, and his coming into property, it suggests the missing link between the processes of the studio and the familiarities of the house, the greenhouse, and the bed, as well as the relationship between intimate and dispassionate observation. Unusually, it looks like a kind of tribute or love letter, although of course it may have been nothing of the sort. The diminution of Hortense's head in relation

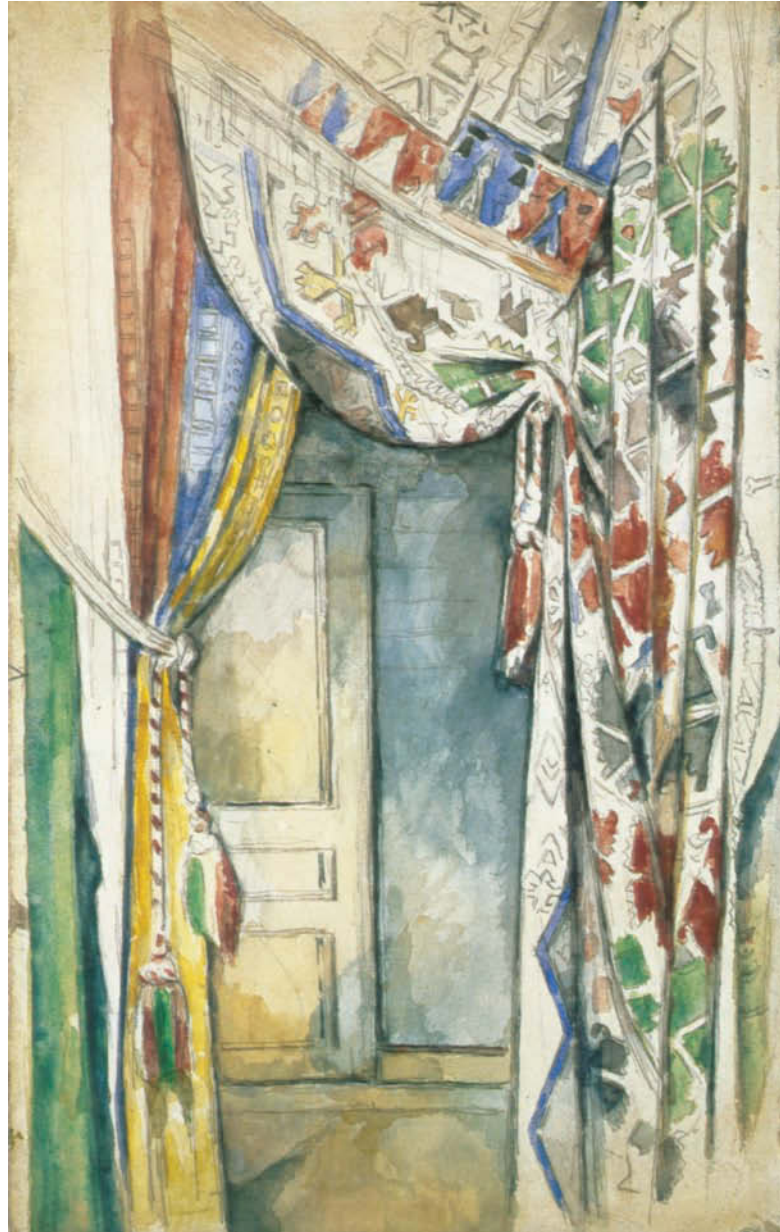
to the *hortensia* bloom, and its lack of color, also suggests some distanciation, as if in memory. Either way, this drawing-cum-watercolor speaks to the way such associations are produced, in the studio, out of a half-conscious web in which language and vision, drawing and coloring, eye and hand, objective and intimate relations are intimately yet differentially related.

But these sketches are very rare intimations of intimacy within the zone of still life. None of Cézanne's other bathers, or portrait heads, or even florals in either oil or watercolor suggests the relationships between different subject material or the connections between biography and the studio that these do so directly. The glass in one sketch, the flower in the other, and the bits of bed, chair, plate, and knife in the others do, however, say something about how that connection operated elsewhere in still life: by formal substitutions and reversals, inflections and off-page intimations. As we have already seen, Cézanne could inflect the studio with the kitchen—the space of art with that of domesticity—and vice versa in his still lifes, as if, indeed, still life were the place to work out, ever so elusively, the disconnect between art and household that marked his life. As we have also seen, within his still lifes he could intimate an offstage space that might just be the studio's absent home. He could include furnishings that suggested bodily inhabitation but that gaped with the absence of actual bodies or of people with whom he was familiar. And he could, as he did in *Still Life with Blue Pot*, deploy the physical and formal associations between objects as substitutes for the social and affective ties between people: I, for one, have only to look at the triangular relationship between blue pot, slender white pitcher, and smaller white pot, in which the blue pot lords it over the others, the white pitcher stands aside, and the little white pot both mimics and tries to hold its own against the blue pot above and behind it, jostling slightly with it, to start thinking of the family triangle of father, mother, and son, and more generally of the jockeying for power and the play of dominion and submission that mark human relations. These connections are all in the imagination, of course, which is where Cézanne left them; they depend upon still life's innate joining of the atelier and the domicile, to which we will return in the next section.

Cézanne's late watercolors, like *Still Life with Blue Pot*, mostly belong to the period of the Les Lauves studio, when an ill and cantankerous Cézanne had definitively separated the two sides of his life. Yet the late watercolor still lifes, as a group, are also the more suggestive of various kinds of relationships to a world beyond the studio than any of his other work of the period, including the still lifes in oil. Earlier sketches, such as those in which Cézanne tried out homely ruffled beds and hanging towels as still-life subjects, had intimated that relationship in some of the ways just outlined. A curtained doorway (fig. 14) suggests the relation between studio property and serviceable fabric, not to mention the threshold of a world beyond the studio: the house and family of Cézanne? A little green jug in watercolor and pencil, also from the mid-eighties (pl. 4), suggests some sort of human bravado in its lone stance against a studio shelf or wall: its roundness, its strange effect of small monumentality, and its two handles—one atop its lip, the other curving from its mouth

Figure 14

Paul Cézanne
Curtains, 1885
Watercolor, gouache,
and graphite on
white paper, 49 ×
30.7 cm (19 × 12 in.)
Paris, Musée du
Louvre, Fonds Orsay



past its neck to its hip—are irresistible in suggesting a fat little complacent figure, body replete with belly outthrust, head erect, and arm akimbo. Thus it suggests some of the human affect proposed above for the central triangle of objects in the Getty still life. And *Jacket on a Chair* (pl. 5) from the early 1890s, rendered in pencil with a hint of watercolor, suggests human habitation by dint of its very absence. With its empty, crumpled jacket, it is even more blatant in that suggestion than Cézanne's sketches of empty chairs, and at the same time it situates its uncanny effect of

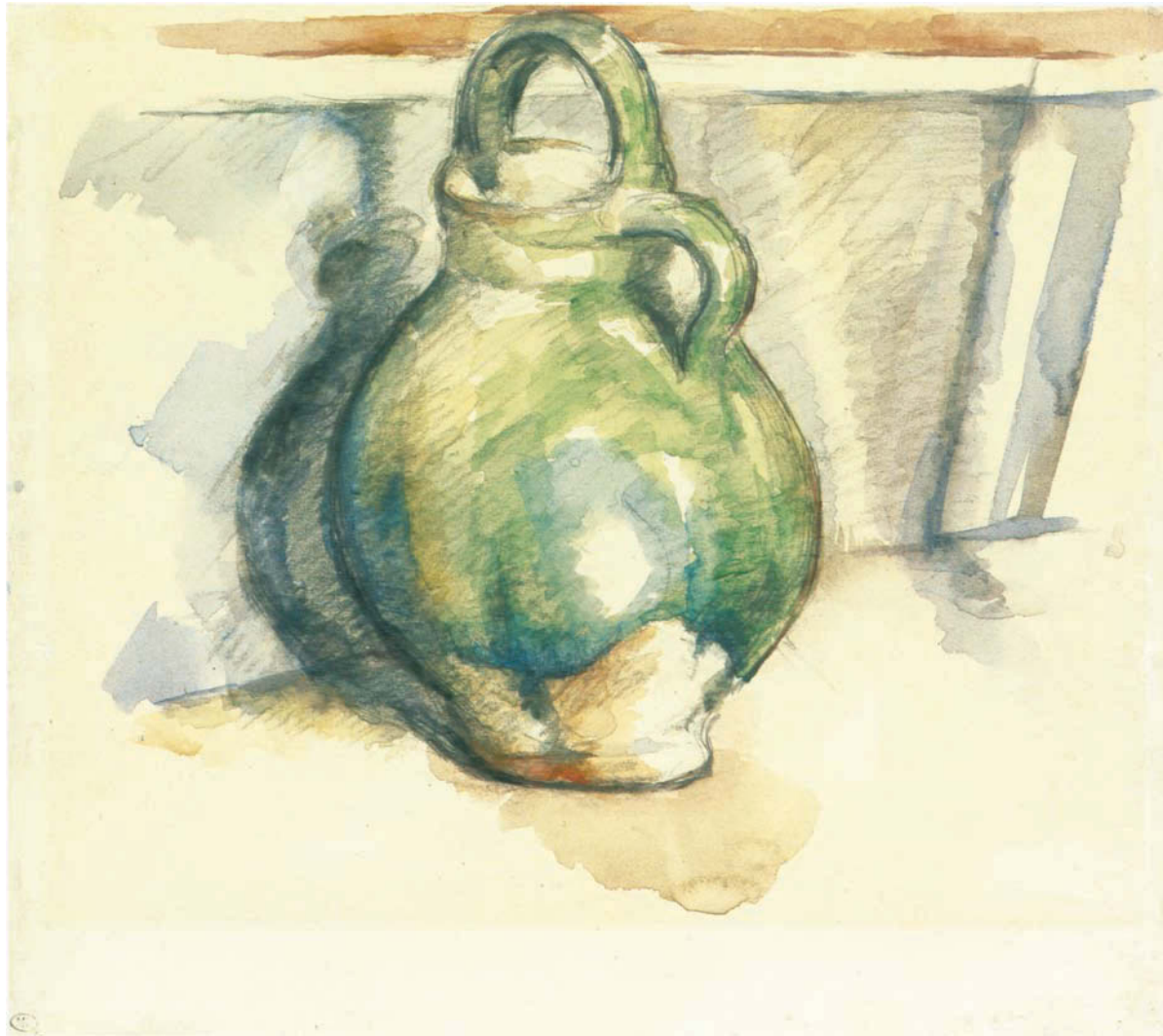


Plate 4

Paul Cézanne
The Green Pot, 1885–87
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 22 × 24.7 cm
(8¹¹/₁₆ × 9³/₄ in.)
Paris, Musée du Louvre

This famous watercolor from the mid-1880s of a little green-glazed Provençal jug suggests some of the anthropomorphism, in this case a kind of human bravado, that animates even Cézanne's most modest still-life subjects. Its roundness and the configuration of its two handles suggest a complacent little figure,

with belly outthrust and arm akimbo, standing singularly against the studio wall for all the world like a human model. Further, it represents Cézanne's earlier, more traditional method of penciling and modeling an object and then filling out its volume in watercolor.

Plate 5

Paul Cézanne
Jacket on a Chair, 1890–92
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 47.5 × 30.5 cm
(18¹¹/₁₆ × 12 in.)
Private collection

With its empty, crumpled garment, *Jacket on a Chair* is even more blatant in suggesting human inhabitation by dint of its very absence than Cézanne's sketches of empty chairs. At the same time it situates that uncanny effect of human presence-in-absence in the studio, as a studio exercise. It consists mostly of reiterated pencil line and shading, supplemented and colored in with faint washes of watercolor.



Figure 15

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Apples,
Pears, and a Pot*, 1900–1904
Watercolor and graphite
on white paper, 28.1 ×
47.8 cm (11 × 18¾ in.)
Paris, Musée du Louvre,
Fonds Orsay



human presence-in-absence in the studio, as a studio exercise. In short, watercolor sketches had long been the site of experimentation with still life's possibilities of biographical intimation.

It was in the late watercolor still lifes, however, that Cézanne made full-blown pictures out of such experimentation. There is, for instance, a watercolor of 1900–1904 that inserts the black handle of a humdrum cooking pot disconcertingly into an eye-level shelf of fruit whose row of blood-ripened, buttocklike roundnesses thoroughly justifies Meyer Schapiro's claims for the sexuality of Cézanne's fruit (fig. 15). Does that pot handle truly speak of the kitchen anymore? It does so only to index its *removal* from the kitchen and the transformation of its function from cooking utensil to studio prop and from there to bodily and sexual displacement: never was a pot handle atop a couple of pears so preposterously phallic, and never was the row of fruit in the midst of which it erects itself so fleshy, so cleft, so bloody, and so luscious. Never, that is to say, were the "apples [pears] of Cézanne" so overtly sexual, so exaggeratedly corporeal, as in this kitchen-table-which-is-not-a-kitchen-table. The same pot, by the way, sits more unobtrusively next to a cleft, red-slashed watermelon and projecting knife handle in another watercolor of the same period (pl. 6). There it is the watermelon that is sexualized, becoming, as Rainer Maria Rilke would describe the livid mouth of a vaginal conch in a more famous still life by Cézanne, a "smooth red orifice" whose "inward carmine bulg[es] out into brightness."²¹ But if Cézanne's



Plate 6

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Cut
 Watermelon*, c. 1900
 Watercolor and
 graphite on white paper,
 31.5 × 47.5 cm
 (12⁵/₈ × 18³/₄ in.)
 Riehen/Basel,
 Fondation Beyeler 78.1

A kitchen pot sits unobtrusively next to a cleft, red-slashed watermelon and projecting knife handle in this late watercolor. Here the watermelon is sexualized, becoming, as Rainer Maria Rilke would describe the livid mouth of a vaginal conch in a more famous still life by Cézanne, a "smooth red orifice" whose "inward carmine bulg[es] out into brightness." Both

this and the Louvre *Still Life with Apples, Pears, and a Pot* (fig. 15) suggest the much more open-ended relation between pencil contouring and the pigmented liquidity of watercolor, as well as the more indeterminate position of the study between sketch and *tableau*, which characterizes Cézanne's late works in watercolor.

Figure 16

Paul Cézanne
*Bottles, Pot, Alcohol
Stove, and Apples,*
c. 1900–1906
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 47 × 56 cm
(18½ × 22 in.)
Private collection



“kitchen tables” leave the kitchen behind to assert the context of the studio as the space of art and its ability to make things into bodies, at the same time they point to the kitchen offstage—and to the space of the house beyond—by its very absence, always marking its possible though invisible contiguity with the realm of the studio. And, paradoxically, they do so more insistently than any other still-life oeuvre that I can think of.

There is, for instance, from the same period (1900–1906), the table overflowing with kitchen items, obviously removed from the kitchen to make a studio still life, but nevertheless suggesting the kitchen to such a point of excess and overload that overdetermination and obsession rear their heads (fig. 16). The kitchen is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere in the atelier; it is colonized by the atelier, and it is the atelier’s other. Indeed, this “kitchen table” is so chock full of kitchen implements—bottles, pitchers, pots, burners, sugar casters, and of course fruit—that it gives new meaning to the expression “everything but the kitchen sink.” Yet they look like such objects look on moving day, gathered together in surplus, not in use, as if for an inventory of all the kitchen items that had been stolen for studio purposes. Thus this kitchen table too, in its very excess of kitchenness, marks the replacement of the kitchen by the studio.



Plate 7

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Apples and
Chair Back*, c. 1904–6
Watercolor and graphite
on white paper, 44.5 ×
59 cm (17½ × 23¼ in.)
London, Courtauld
Institute of Art Gallery,
The Samuel Courtauld Trust,
D.1948.SC.111

This baroque still life returns to the empty chair back of earlier sketches and sets it behind a richly colored table full of fruit, a bottle, and an empty glass, suggesting with uncharacteristic directness the scene of dining that is still life's traditional fare but remarkably absent from the rest of Cézanne's still-life oeuvre. The studio has suddenly become festive, like a pared-down banquet left over from Cézanne's wild early years, when he painted orgiastic banquets. It is as if someone has finally been invited for dinner

or dessert in the studio and even been offered a seat at table rather more elegant than the studio's usual rustic chairs. And yet, poignantly, there is nobody there after all. As loosely rendered as it is, this is a richly complete watercolor *tableau*.



Plate 8

Paul Cézanne
The Dessert, 1900–1906
Watercolor and
graphite on white paper,
47 × 61 cm
(18½ × 24 in.)
Private collection

In *The Dessert*, a late, exceptional still life in watercolors, the space that is so often implied beyond the frame of Cézanne's still lifes is actually glimpsed around the corner of a wall and the far edge of the expansive table, with its compotier and flute glass, the same one that sits waiting in *Still Life with Apples and Chair Back* (pl. 7). That space might be the kitchen or a surface in the studio improvised for food preparation and presentation. In among the hasty, partial indications of things to be fleshed out

later—a piece of fruit on the table? the edge of a curtain? the edge of another counter surface?—there is the hallucination of a sort of profile: a bit of a nose and nostril, an eye, even an ear (just to the right of the curtain of watercolor and beneath the beginnings of the wavy-lipped plate). A figment of the studio imagination, this spectral profile signals the watercolor's state of incompleteness and its experimental thinking, not to mention the human absences that animate it.

And then there is the baroque still life of 1904–6 that returns to the empty chair back of other earlier sketches and sets it behind a richly colored table full of fruit, a bottle, and an empty glass, for the first time suggesting the scene of dining, which is still life's traditional fare but remarkably absent from the rest of Cézanne's still-life oeuvre (pl. 7). The studio has suddenly become festive, like a pared-down banquet left over from Cézanne's wild early years, just before he met Hortense.²² It is as if someone—Hortense? Paul?—has finally been invited for dinner or dessert in the studio and even been offered a seat at table rather more elegant than the studio's usual rustic chairs. And yet there is nobody there after all.

In one other late, and even more exceptional, still life in watercolors, *The Dessert* (pl. 8), the space that is so often implied beyond the frame is actually glimpsed around the corner of a wall and the far edge of the expansive table, with its compotier of edible offerings—pears and grapes and perhaps apples or oranges—and its half-empty (half-full) flute glass, the same one that sits waiting in the still life just described. That space has a quickly sketched-in countertop, wavy-edged plate, and some other vessel just begun: it might be the kitchen or a surface in the studio improvised for food preparation and presentation. In among the hasty, partial indications of things to be fleshed out later—a piece of fruit on the table? the edge of a curtain? the edge of another counter surface?—there is the hallucination of a sort of profile: a bit of a nose and nostril, an eye, even an ear (just to the right of the curtain of watercolor and beneath the beginnings of the wavy-lipped plate). A self-portrait? A watcher, waiting for inhabitation? For guests to arrive? For the picture to be finished? Or is it nobody and nothing at all—just a figment of the studio imagination, of the pentimenti that are part of a wildly unfinished process, signaling its own state of incompleteness and experimental thinking, the unlikelihood of really taking up this subject, its distance from the fullness of a picture like the Getty *Still Life with Blue Pot*? And of course it is a signature specter of absence in the studio—of all the biographical absences that hover there.

From the earliest moment of Cézanne's still-life practice there had been a connection between still life and biography. But from that moment to the period of *Still Life with Blue Pot*, the biographical aspect of still life, its studio space and its objects, had become more and more elusive as Cézanne withdrew from the family as defined by his father and entered into his life of first secret and then separate non-cohabitation with Hortense and their son, Paul. In their different ways these exceptional late watercolors sign the spectral, off-frame, displaced aspect of the studio's intimations of intimacy, animacy, and domestic life.

NOTES

1. In the portrait, Cézanne's father is shown reading the issue of the newspaper *L'Événement* in which Emile Zola had published one of his most scandalous defenses of Manet and the "new painters" in 1866. Since Cézanne was then in the midst of a struggle between the different directions represented by his father—staying at home and following his father's bidding to enter the bank or the law—and Zola—going to Paris and devoting himself to the "new painting"—the placement of the still life above his father's head in the portrait suggests its function as an indeterminate biographical signifier—domesticity and the home of the father, on the one hand, breakaway painting, on the other hand. Together its Biedermeier proportions and its thick, palette-knifed handling imply the same struggle. Thus its inclusion in the paternal portrait points directly to its biographical status. See Françoise Cachin and Joseph J. Rishel, *Cézanne* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1996), 84. See also John Rewald, *Cézanne et Zola* (Paris: A. Sedrowski, 1936); Rewald, *Cézanne—a Biography* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1986); Rewald, "Cézanne and His Father," *Studies in the History of Art* [4] (1971–72): 38–62; Theodore Reff, "The Pictures within Cézanne's Pictures," *Arts Magazine* 53 (June 1979): 91; Sophie Monneret, *Cézanne, Zola . . . La fraternité du génie* (Paris: Denoël, 1978); and Sidney Geist, "Father, Father," in *Interpreting Cézanne* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 30–48.
Sugar Bowl, Pears, and Blue Cup currently hangs in the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence along with other work by Cézanne, mostly in pencil and watercolor, reminding us of its Aixois heritage, and indeed of Cézanne's Aixois formation. The collection of the Musée Granet, presently the municipal art museum of the town of Aix, is based on the 1849 gift, largely of his own landscape watercolors of the 1840s, given by the classical landscape painter François Marius Granet, born and raised in Aix and a student of J. B. Constantin of the Aixois Ecole Gratuite de Dessin, to the school in 1849. This school was where Cézanne first studied; he no doubt saw and was shaped by Granet's Provençal watercolors, although their technique is very different from his. See *Cézanne au Musée d'Aix* (Aix-en-Provence: Musée Granet, 1984); *Granet: Paysages de l'Île de France* (Aix-en-Provence: Musée Granet, 1984); *Granet: Paysages de Provence* (Aix-en-Provence: Musée Granet, 1988); Isabelle Néto-Daguerre and Denis Coutagne, *Granet, peintre de Rome* (Aix-en-Provence: Association des Amis du Musée Granet, 1992).
2. On Cézanne's "couillarde" style, see Jean-Claude Lebensztejn, *Les couilles de Cézanne* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Séguier, 1995). The adjective, which Cézanne adopted with gusto in his early stay in Paris in the 1860s, lends some support to Meyer Schapiro's conception of the displacement of sexuality onto objects—such that the "apples of Cézanne" become the "couilles de Cézanne"—while also bearing out Fry's emphasis on the unconscious significance of Cézanne's "handwriting." It referred to the wild, dark and pasty, and often palette-knifed handling deliberately cultivated by Cézanne in his early period—a kind of cartoon exaggeration of Courbet's signature palette-knife work and its caricaturing as untutored and bohemian in the Parisian press of the 1850s. Yet Cézanne apparently also used the term in conversation later in life to distinguish the boldness of his painting from that of others, suggesting that it did not necessarily refer only to one period of his painting, but to his signature style more generally.
3. Roger Fry, *Cézanne: A Study of His Development* (1927; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 47. This painting, copied by Denis both in his group portrait and in a freestanding oil that he called "Cézanne's still life," is a prime example of the transformation of Cézanne's *couillarde* style into the "constructive stroke" that would mark his work from the late 1870s and early 1880s onward. See Theodore Reff, "Cézanne's Constructive Stroke," *Art Quarterly* 25 (autumn 1962): 214–26.
4. This, of course, is not the only still life with onions in it; there are many others, and onions are among the perishables that are set out at the atelier of Les Lauves to remind us of the impermanent objects that were included among Cézanne's homely studio properties. Indeed, onions were a kind of signature feature of Cézanne's still-life practice.
5. On Cézanne's Provençal context, see Nina Maria Athanassoglou-Kallmyer, *Cézanne and Provence: The Painter in His Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003). See also Mary Tomkins Lewis, *Cézanne's Early Imagery* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1989), esp. "Poetic Soil: The Background of Provence," 9–22.
6. See Maurice Denis, "La Peinture," *L'Hermitage*, November 15, 1905, 314; cited in Matthew Simms, "Painting on Drawing: Cézanne's Watercolors," in *Cézanne in Focus: Watercolors from the Henry and Rose Pearlman Collection*, ed. Laura M. Giles and

Carol Armstrong (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 2002), 13–25, esp. 14; also in Götz Adriani, *Cézanne Watercolors*, trans. Russell M. Stockman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983), 21.

7. “Quand j’étais à Aix, il me semblait que je serais mieux autre part, maintenant que je suis ici, je regrette Aix” (Cézanne to Solari, Talloires, July 23, 1896, cited in Denis Coutagne and Bruno Ely, *Les Sites cézanniennes du pays d’Aix: Hommage à John Rewald* [Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1996], 197).

8. “Et n’eût été que j’aime énormément la configuration de mon pays, je ne serai pas ici.” What he complained of were “les prétensions des intellectuels de mon pays, tas d’enculés, de crétins et de drôles—les steppes de la bonne ville d’Aix” (ibid., 228).

9. “En nous ne s’est pas endormie la vibration de sensations répercutées de ce bon soleil de Provence, nos vieux souvenirs de jeunesse, de ces horizons, de ces paysages, de ces lignes inouïes, qui laissent en nous tant d’impressions profondes” (Cézanne to Henri Gasquet, June 1899, cited ibid., 198).

10. Complaining about the old Aix, Cézanne also bemoaned the efforts to modernize it, concluding, “J’y suis né; j’y mourrai. . . . Aujourd’hui tout change en réalité, mais non pour moi, je vis dans la ville de mon enfance, et c’est dans le regard des gens de mon âge que je revois le passé” (ibid., 228).

11. Cézanne tried twice to get into the Ecole des Beaux Arts in the early sixties, without success. After that, he submitted works to the Salon in 1863, 1865, 1866, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1870, 1872, 1876, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1884. He had a still life in the Salon des Refusés of 1863 and a portrait accepted into the Salon of 1882, but only because he got around the jury by listing himself as a student of another painter, a loophole that was rescinded the following year. Otherwise none of his Salon submissions was accepted. He did not participate in any of the Impressionist exhibitions after 1877 but did begin exhibiting with Les Vingt in Brussels in 1889. Thereafter he had other exhibition opportunities, he began to acquire a critical following, and he was financially independent because of the inheritance he received after the death of his father in 1886. But up until then he was alone among the “new painters” in his utter lack of Salon success and his persistence in spite of it.

12. Théodore Duret, *Histoire d’Edouard Manet et son oeuvre* (Paris: H. Floury, 1902), 63–64; Adolphe Tabarant, *Manet et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947), 117; cited in Cachin and Rishel, *Cézanne*,

534. Clearly Cézanne’s provincial persona was modeled on that of Courbet, who had deliberately fashioned himself as a rural outsider in the Parisian art world in the 1840s and 1850s. See T. J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

13. Pissarro to his son Lucien, December 4, 1895, in Janine Bailly-Herzberg, ed., *Correspondance de Camille Pissarro* (Paris: Presses universitaires de Paris, 1980–91), vol. 4, no. 1181, 128, cited in Cachin and Rishel, *Cézanne*, 531.

14. “Ce peintre trop oublié, M. Cézanne” (J. K. Huysmans, “Cézanne” [1888], in *Certains*, in *L’art moderne/Certains* [Paris: Union générale d’éditions, 1975], 271).

15. *L’Oeuvre*, or *The Masterpiece*, came out early in 1886, and Cézanne wrote to Zola for the last time in March of that year, thanking him coldly and speaking of their friendship in the past tense. Zola’s novel was an updating of two artist stories that Cézanne admired, Balzac’s *Le Chef d’oeuvre inconnu* and the Goncourt brothers’ *Manette Salomon*, but it also represented an indictment of modern art and a slanderous characterization of Cézanne, whose irregular relationship with Hortense and soon-to-be-famous anxieties about women, not to mention his black moods and ill-controlled temper, were thinly veiled and combined with the figures of Manet and Monet in the failed, suicidal protagonist Claude Lantier. *The Masterpiece* amounted to a reversal of Zola’s earlier championing of Manet and the “new painting” and, in Cézanne’s view, a betrayal of their childhood friendship. See Robert J. Niess, *Zola, Cézanne, and Manet: A Study of “L’Oeuvre”* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1968); J. Berg, *The Visual Novel: Emile Zola and the Art of His Times* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992); and my *Manet Manette* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 64–68.

16. Van Gogh to Bernard, August 1888, in Vincent van Gogh, *Correspondance générale*, trans. Maurice Beerblock and Louis Roëlandt (Paris, 1990), vol. 3, 236–40; cited in Cachin and Rishel, *Cézanne*, 548.

17. Cézanne’s friends and family disliked Hortense, and following the fine old tradition of the wife as the impediment to the genius, most accounts of Cézanne’s life have been unsympathetic to her and laid the blame for the difficulties between the couple at her door. But Cézanne himself cannot have been easy to live with. Indeed, there is at least one suggestion that he may have been all but schizophrenic; see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt,” in *Sense and Non-sense*, trans. Hubert L.

Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 9–25. (Merleau-Ponty takes the opportunity to critique the tradition of the biography and to invert the usual determining relationship between a hypothesis such as Cézanne's "schizoid" temperament and the oddities of his art, such that it is the art that gives meaning to that temperament rather than the other way around.)

18. It is possible that the drawings on this page were done at different times: the bather with outstretched arms relates to a painting that has been dated to 1885 (see Cachin and Rishel, *Cézanne*, 178).

19. See Theodore Reff and Innis Howe Shoemaker, *Paul Cézanne: Two Sketchbooks* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1989). See also Wayne Andersen, *Cézanne's Portrait Drawings* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1970).

20. Cézanne was classically educated, very interested in language and literature, and tried his hand at poetry early on. The language play involved in this

watercolor is a subtler version of the sort of word game that crops up in his youthful letters to Zola. See Paul Cézanne, *Correspondance*, ed. John Rewald (Paris: Editions Grasset et Fasquelle, 1978), 17–42, 45–61 (1858–59). See also Meyer Schapiro, "The Apples of Cézanne: An Essay on the Meaning of Still-Life" (1968), in *Modern Art: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), 1–38.

21. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Lettres sur Cézanne*, trans. Philippe Jacottet (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991), 77. It was Cézanne's uncanny *Still Life with a Black Clock* (1869–70), which he gave as a gift to Zola and which depicted some of Zola's possessions, that Rilke described this way: "tout à gauche un grand coquillage baroque du genre triton—étrange avec son embouchure rouge et lisse tournée vers nous. Son carmin intérieur, qui va s'éclaircissant sur la courbure."

22. Here I refer to his *Banquet* (also known as the *Feast* and the *Orgy*) of 1867–72 and the set of images related to it, some of which put elaborate, baroque still lifes in the foreground.



The Landscape of Still Life

Let us look again at Still Life with Blue Pot, this time without regard for the possible personal meanings, biographical resonances, iconography, or inventory of its objects. This time let us read its formal logic, its spatial relations, its passages from object to object. This time let us take quite a bit longer and exercise more patience. And this time let us journey through it as if it were a kind of geography, a still life that invites the viewer's imaginative entrance into it like a landscape with a road winding its way from front to back and soliciting the vicarious traveler's wandering eye. Let us understand it as a landscape that plots its course, again, through the painter's studio while suggesting another opening onto the world outside, another kind of association with the *plein air* motif.

Seven apples, or perhaps eight, are arranged before, behind, and around a white pot, found roughly in the center of the composition. There are seven or perhaps eight red-gold, roughly spherical objects, three of

which are placed right next to the base of the white pot, sitting atop the white cloth with its red stripe. Two of those three apples sit right in front of the white pot, and one of them is placed at its side, forming a sort of bridge or stepping stone between white pot and milk jug, a kind of boulder in the little ravine that is opened up between those two objects (detail 2). On the other side of the white pot, the unguarded side open to the space at the right edge of the image, at a slightly, but only slightly, greater distance, we find a fourth apple, this one nestled in the multicolored tapestry, right at the juncture between the napkin and the tapestry, opening up a sort of valley out of which issues a waterfall of white cloth.

Together these four simple apples serve several not-so-simple purposes. First, they double the volume of the white pot with their own volumes, marking, with their own roundnesses, the imaginary passage from side to front to side that describes the white pot in the round, indexing its projection with their

projecting movement around it. Then, they graph the symmetry of that central object, with two apples in front and one apple on each side of the white pot. At the same time—with each of their slightly different distances from the center point of the white pot—they serve to indicate the departures from symmetry that accompany any act of perception, any movement of the eye across and around objects, no matter how smooth and perfectly formed: the departures from symmetry that distinguish between the inanimacy of ideal, Platonic shapes and the animate bodiliness of real, sensate entities, between abstract concepts and material things that one sees, grasps, and eats—or at least wants to see, grasp, and eat—and that Cézanne drew with a trembling, bodily hand, warping perfection with desire. The four apples also serve to map out relations between positive and negative spaces—between the convex and the concave, between masses and crevices, hills and hollows, the space that describes objects and the space between and around objects, between, in short, the presence and absence of objects.

Further, the four apples help to diagram the difference between different degrees of overlap and separation, between rectilinearity (the milk jug) and the curve, between the two-dimensional (the napkin) and the three-dimensional, between the blank white of the paper and the volumetric illusion that is created upon it and that is condensed in the apples' white highlights, between warm and cool coloration, as well as between simple sphere and more complicated shape. Without names attached to them, these four dimple-



Detail 2

less, navel-less, stemless apples are barely distinguishable from peaches, oranges, plums, or even onions. They are barely apples, but rather spheres, ever so slightly distended, and in that too they chart the territory between the general idea and the particular sensation of the apple.

The handle of the white pot appears just barely to touch the third of those four apples (just as the handle of the blue kettle behind it appears just barely to touch the very tip of the hilt of the white pot's lid—of its apex or its nipple, depending on whether one wants to think of it as a geometry or a body), thus marking a confrontation between an arc that is empty, slicing through air and shadow, and an arc that is full, full of the flesh and skin of an apple, as well as between the cold of blue and the warm of gold, and between optical and tactile sensations. And finally, those four apples stake out the threshold between stillness and movement, balance and imbalance. Look at the two foremost apples, whose repeated contours appear to move

them closer and closer together, filling the gap between them, until they almost touch each other. And now look at the other two apples, the leftmost one nestled securely in its bed of white cloth, cradled between the two other objects, while the one at the right is more subtly balanced, ready to roll off the flowered tapestry at the slightest twitch of its imaginary folds. There is even an arcing fold in the tapestry just beneath that apple, which suggests the trajectory of its future fall.

But there are seven—or even eight—apples: what of the other three—or four? Paler and more distant, they are harder to see—placed at the fictive back of the composition, it is as if they are unripe, in the painterly sense. Without much color—they are almost all white ground, so that it is hard to describe that white as a highlight anymore—suffused in some sort of still-life version of atmospheric perspective, they seem not fully painted and therefore not quite ready to be seen yet, certainly not ready to

be touched and grasped (detail 3). The two—or three—apples at the rightmost edge of the tapestry-covered surface are found soon enough, even though they are bled of much of the color that makes them painterly fruit, and even though, for all their smallness of number, they are hard to count. Because of the second arc in what at first appears to be the left-hand one of them, it is hard to determine whether it is single or double and therefore whether the group that it makes is a duo or a trio, a simple pair or the bare minimum needed to form a cluster, replete with the barest indication of overlap. Bracketed off from the larger composition of which it is a part, this little group of indeterminate-numbered apples functions as a study of the least means needed to manufacture the distinction between one object and another, to unfold the plural out of the singular, composition out of counting, the art of complicated arrangement out of the simplicity of pointing and showing. But whether

two or three, once they are found, these apples of Cézanne's are seen to indicate one of the side and back limits of the still life, finishing the passage from foreground to middle ground to background, as well as marking the transition from sphere to warped ovoid ellipsis, and the confrontation, once again, between blue and gold, though here that confrontation is faded, a mere echo of what happens in the foreground, and here it is condensed in the two sides of one sphere, the hedged-in and the open, the lit and the shadowed sides, like a model of the world as it turns on its axis, showing its sunlit and its darkened halves.

The last apple is the hardest to find. Finishing the circuit around the white pot, it is hidden just behind it, sandwiched in the no-space between the little pot and the blue kettle, mimicking the curve of the pot's metal handle, whose empty segment seems to contain an excess of apple pigment. It is mimicked in turn by the blue lump of cloth

behind it and camouflaged by the surrounding blue and gold folds of the tapestry, which is much more vivid and present than the washed-out apple that nestles within it. That apple is the least ready to be seen and touched, the most fragile in its watercolor wash of palest blue and gold, the most doubtful as to its own separate existence, the most hesitant about its difference from the paper space and textile surfaces from which it is supposed to emerge. That is the apple, somewhat drained of convexity by that which surrounds it, that describes the condition of being behind—that is, the condition of being at the utmost distance from Cézanne's "concentric" point of view, and therefore not yet present to his "prehensile eye," not yet part of his curved-out world of "culminating points," nor yet separate from its own ground or available to the illusions either of visibility or of tactility, let alone to that of edibility.¹

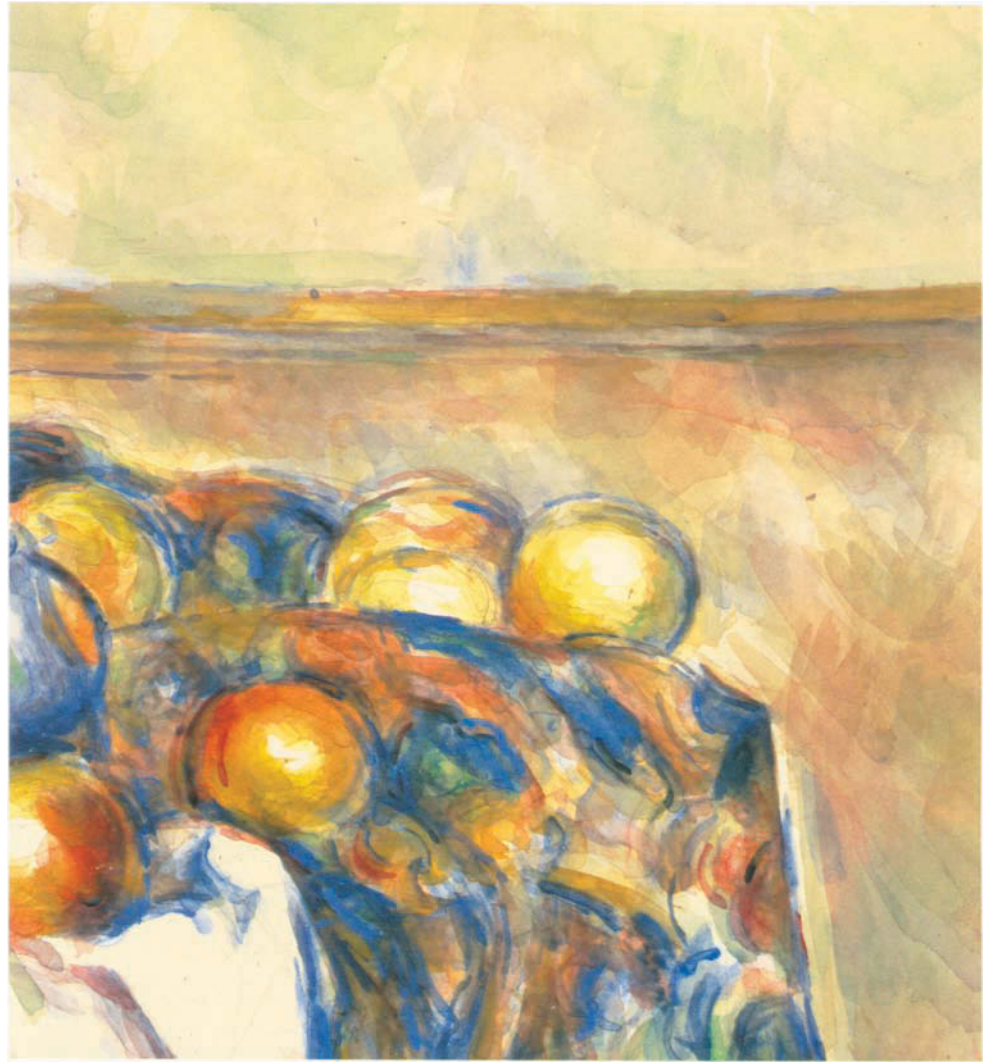
Most of the concerns that I have so far suggested are specific to still-life painting:



Detail 3

questions of volume and overlap and balance; of before and behind and between; of singling out, clustering, and numbering one, two, three, or more; encounters between the optical and tactile aspects of the object world; the charting of objective space by the subjective eye.² Yet there are nonetheless landscapelike things about this still life. Horizon and distance; foreground, middle ground, and background; atmospheric perspective; ravines, crevices, and valleys; mountains, boulders, and bridges; hills, hollows, and waterfalls: these are words that describe the space of landscape. They are also words that describe this as well as other still lifes by Cézanne, with their hallucinatory indeterminacy of scale and bodily address.

A horizon line is surely evoked by the wainscoting course that slices through *Still Life with Blue Pot*, about two-thirds of the way up from the bottom of the image (detail 4). The coloration is more or less green-blue, like sky, above that line, and more or less red-brown, like earth, below it. Both above and below that line, the coloration is mixed with greens and reddish tints, in Cézanne's habitual tessera-shaped brush strokes and his equally habitual manner of unifying his composition by means of the nonlocal distribution of the colors of his palette across the space of the paper. Nonetheless, that line does mark a general shift in coloration as well as a shift toward the top in degree of transparency, suggesting the lightness of air above the line where the land ends. It is significant, also, that that line belongs to the background wall rather than to a table or ledge and thus to enframing architecture, and the vertical



Detail 4

planes of pictorial support and perspectival distance, rather than the close-up horizontality of the object world and its ground. It is significant, as well, that that line is a bit irregular, especially toward the left, with its dip downward, and that it is interrupted, also toward the left, by the hill of flowered tapestry (detail 5), just as *Mont Sainte-Victoire* typically erupts from the left-hand side of the horizon line of the flat Provençal plain of Cézanne's native Aix (fig. 17), or a hill cascades down past a road on the way to the

studio at Les Lauves (fig. 18). Horizon lines are fundamental to the space of landscape painting, constituting it as such, defining its back limits as well as the meeting between above and below, sky and land, and describing the profile of the land that is so crucial to it, that makes a landscape recognizable as a landscape even when abstracted from its local landmarks and its illusion of three-dimensionality. (One might think ahead to Helen Frankenthaler's and Richard Diebenkorn's landscapelike abstractions.)



Detail 5



Figure 17
Paul Cézanne
Mont Sainte-Victoire,
c. 1901–6
Watercolor and graphite
on pale buff wove paper,
31.9 × 47.6 cm
(12³/₁₆ × 18³/₄ in.)
The Henry and Rose Pearlman
Foundation, Inc., L.1988.62.44



Figure 18
Paul Cézanne
*Chemin des Lauves: The
Turn in the Road*, c. 1904–6
Watercolor and graphite
on cream wove paper,
47.9 × 58.6 cm
(18⁷/₈ × 23 in.)
The Henry and Rose Pearlman
Foundation, Inc., L.1988.62.42

Figure 19

Nicolas Poussin
(French, 1594–1665)
*Landscape with the
Body of Phocion Carried
out of Athens*, 1648
Oil on canvas, 114 × 175 cm
(44⁷/₈ × 68⁷/₈ in.)
Cardiff, National Museum of
Wales. Lent by the Earl
of Plymouth, NMW A (L) 480



Foreground, middle ground, and background: as schematic divisions of the space seen through an illusory window or behind a fictive proscenium arch, these sectors are as important as the horizon line to the space of landscape painting. And they are particularly characteristic of the French classical landscape, from that of Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain down to late eighteenth- and early-to-mid-nineteenth-century inheritors of the tradition of the paysage historique, such as Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, Achille-Etna Michallon, Jean-Victor Bertin, and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot.³ This was the tradition to which Cézanne felt himself to belong. To show how this worked, one would usually pair a Mont Sainte-Victoire with Poussin's most canonical heroic landscape, that showing the burial of Phocion (fig. 19).

But it is a still life like the Getty watercolor whose navigation of foreground, middle ground, and background stands up to comparison with something like Poussin's famous landscape and does so much better than any of Cézanne's actual landscapes. For just as

Poussin cut a winding path from front to back of his composition so that the viewer could follow the narrative course of the movement of the burial, so the apples of this still life move us carefully and windingly from front to middle to back, only this time the meandering movement they trace is the circuit of the eye around a little pot and back through the folds of a piece of tapestry, rather than a funeral's solemn traversal of space. Hollowing out the mound of fruit that was the staple of the still-life tradition, so that all that is left of its single, mounded mass are its points of dispersal, and inverting the massing of solids that continued to be so central to still life into the point-by-point plotting of a course that is more familiar in landscape painting, it is as if Cézanne had declared the genre of still life to be the proper place for the transformation of the classical narrative of the hero's journey through life into the itinerary of the viewing subject's encounter with objective space.

In a famous remark, Cézanne said that he wanted to paint Balzac's "tablecloth white

as a layer of newly fallen snow, upon which the place-settings rise symmetrically, crowned with blond rolls," so that "if I really balance and shade my place-settings and rolls as they are in nature, then you can be sure that the crowns, the snow, and all the excitement will be there too."⁴ Thus he not only spoke to the relationship between the literary and the pictorial, the objective and the subjective, but also articulated the relay between landscape and still life. Indeed, he suggested that he wanted still life to do the job of landscape, if not that of history painting as well. If the apocrypha are true, and Cézanne really wanted to redo Poussin "after nature," then still life, more than any of the other genres he practiced, was the one in which he truly attempted to carry out that project.⁵

* * *

THESE DAYS SOMEONE STILL LEAVES APPLES TO ROT on the windowsill of the studio, as if in double testimony to one of the most permanent features of Cézanne's still lifes and its impermanence in life. For the apples of *Still Life with Blue Pot*, at least, are everywhere throughout Cézanne's work, from simple early pieces like *Still Life with Apples* (c. 1877–78; fig. 20)—in which seven apples, one shadow, and nothing else make up the painting—to the late *Still Life with Apples and Oranges* (c. 1895–1900; fig. 21)—in which an array of apples and oranges, not so easily distinguishable from one another but adding up to approximately twenty pieces of fruit in all, is contained by and arranged around a familiar plate, compotier, and flowered, generously curved pitcher. There those apples and oranges spread their twentyfold abundance across a piece of white linen and a flowered tapestry, possibly two, one of which might be the same one found in *Still Life with Blue Pot*. There that tapestry tops off a drastically tilted surface that seems unequivocally a sofa—witness its carved lower edge peeking out beneath the expansive white napkin—until one comes up short against what looks like a makeshift table leg at the right edge of the picture. There, because of the expansion of the napkin into a waterfall of a tablecloth and the hazardous tilting of the supporting surface, whatever it is, the fruit gives the appearance of a baroque spill, in spite of the fact of its precariously stable containment



Figure 20
Paul Cézanne
Still Life with Apples,
c. 1877–78
Oil on canvas,
19 × 26.7 cm
(7½ × 10½ in.)
Cambridge,
Fitzwilliam Museum

Figure 21

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Apples and
Oranges*, c. 1895–1900
Oil on canvas, 74 × 93 cm
(29½ × 36¾ in.)
Paris, Musée d'Orsay



toward the center of the composition. And there apple is all but indistinguishable from orange, though it is safe to say, because of coloration, that the oranges sit in the compotier and the apples in the plate, and a mix of the two is found loose around them and the pitcher.

The fruits of the earlier *Still Life with Apples* turn themselves around from dimpled top to bottom, exploring in their countable simplicity the relationship between curved volume and flat picture surface, the ability to attach the names of objects to their painted representations—how can we be sure they are apples?—and the capacity to identify and distinguish the aspects of simple things with continuous spherical surfaces—what is the difference between the front and back of an apple, say, and where does one draw the dividing line between them? *Still Life with Apples and Oranges*, in contrast, complicates those questions by the numerousness of its fruits and the indeterminacy of their numbers and by the multiplicity and resulting complexity of their surfaces, not to mention their precariousness and their patterning and the consequent difficulty of distinguishing object from ground or, for that matter, of naming and identifying that ground. *Still Life with Blue Pot* belongs to the period that followed on the heels of *Still Life with Apples and Oranges*, and its complexity is similar to that of the latter. But *Still Life with Blue Pot* continues to puzzle out some of the simpler questions of *Still Life with Apples* too.

Three general observations that derive from the spectrum running from *Apples* to *Apples and Oranges* are important to the Getty still life. First, from one to the other there is the movement between a little and a lot, the spare and the bountiful, the simple and the complex, the foursquare and the baroque. Second, there is among all three the preoccupation with defining the space of things, either delimiting and confining them as much as possible in the rectangular frame of the picture, carving their convexity out of flatness as simply as possible, or hinting at a world of other surfaces and spaces besides and beyond those of either the tabletop or the studio, as well as the painting that represents and substitutes for both. And third, there is the preoccupation with indeterminate counting, and the relation between the mass or the group and the loose item. One sees this in the Getty *Still Life with Blue Pot*, though it has no container full of fruit: indeed, the container of fruit is inverted, so that it is fruit that seems to contain a bowl and frame its shape, rather than the other way around. Yet still there is that opposition between grouped and dispersed items, and a variation on the opposition between the single item, clearly delineated and separated from its neighbors, and those items that blend into their surrounds, as in the background apples that half sink into their tapestried ground. These are all still-life preoccupations, inherited from a still-life tradition.

For of course, despite our landscape journey through it, *Still Life with Blue Pot* is still a still life. Its space, if only elliptically biographical, is fully and clearly the generic space of still life. And if it shades into landscape in some of the ways I have suggested above, its genre is recognizably that of still-life painting. It clearly belongs to a tradition going all the way back to the golden age of still life of the Dutch seventeenth century.⁶ Cézanne's corner space, table edge, mound of tapestry, and white waterfall of cloth, fruit, bowls, and pitchers look back to the tradition that includes still lifes like the Getty's *Still Life with Ewer, Vessels, and Pomegranate* of the mid-1640s by Willem Kalf (fig. 22), although the luxury objects—the silver and gold ware, the wine and the elegant crystal, even the pomegranate—that qualify Kalf's painting as a *pronkstilleven* couldn't be at a further remove from the rustic plainness that Cézanne insisted on in life and in still life.⁷ (Nor, for that matter, could the finely finished, glassy-surfaced optical effects of Kalf's way of painting, at least in this instance, be at a further remove from Cézanne's manner of facture, always rough-hewn, be it *couillarde* or crudely "faceted.") But it was the still lifes of the eighteenth-century French painter Jean-Siméon Chardin, such as the Getty's little picture of a mound of fruit (fig. 23), that lay at the root of so many of Cézanne's still lifes, from the simplest of his arrangements to the most complex. The same could be said for most French still-life and genre painters of the nineteenth century, from the strict interpreters Eugène Boudin and Philippe Rousseau to the looser variations of Edouard Manet, Henri Fantin-Latour, and of course Cézanne: together they made a "Chardin revival" that gave their own work in the lower genres an ancien régime French pedigree.⁸ But for Cézanne, whose invoking of Chardin was fed through the nineteenth-century filter of painters such as Gustave Courbet, Manet, and Fantin-Latour, who themselves invoked Chardin in their compositions, the Chardin model worked in a very particular way.



Figure 22

Willem Kalf
 (Dutch, 1619–1693)
*Still Life with Ewer, Vessels,
 and Pomegranate*, mid-1640s
 Oil on canvas, 103.5 ×
 81.3 cm (40¾ × 32 in.)
 Los Angeles, J. Paul
 Getty Museum 54.PA.1

Figure 23

Jean-Siméon Chardin
 (French, 1699–1779)
*Still Life with Peaches,
 a Silver Goblet, Grapes,
 and Walnuts*, c. 1760
 Oil on canvas, 37.8 × 46.7 cm
 (14⅞ × 18⅜ in.)
 Los Angeles, J. Paul
 Getty Museum 86.PA.544

Chardin himself was heir to a still-life tradition that he modified and made his own: among other things, he took the aristocratic supper—with its huge, festive cones of sweets and fruit—and whittled it down to size, so that, as in Chardin's still life in the Getty, we are left with a humble and diminutive pyramidal mass of peaches or plums (probably numbering five; one can count four and deduce a fifth in the back to hold up the pyramid), sitting next to a plain pewter flagon, three walnuts, one of them shelled, and a couple of sprigs of grapes, one green and one purple, with a stray murky green pearl of a grape in the center, all disposed on an uneven stone shelf, plainest of plain, directly abutting the picture plane, with a dark, undisclosed background whose subtly modulated colors sometimes hint at rough stone walls. But for the little pyramid of the fruit and the reflective glossiness of the pewter cup, none of the elegance or luxury of the aristocratic supper remains: Chardin brought the courtly French still life down-market and made it middle class—his own artisanal middle class.⁹ And as he did so, he also found remarkably subtle ways to deploy plain things to point to material relations between the made and the natural, as in the crafted pewter next to the artificially mounded peaches, and even to suggest social relations between the group and the individual, as in the grape that strays from its cluster, like a sly metaphor for the emergent value of the individual as against the social mass. (This device was repeatedly used by the eighteenth-century master.) These are all contrivances and qualities that must have appealed to Cézanne like no

other, though few of his compositions look as obviously Chardinian as those of the diehard Chardin revivalists of his day.

There were other types of still life that Chardin took up that Cézanne did not. Significantly, Cézanne never pursued the scene of cooking as Chardin did, despite his allusions to the kitchen. But in addition to leaning on the modern examples of Courbet and Manet, some of his earliest still lifes, like *Still Life: Sugar Bowl, Pears, and Blue Cup* (fig. 5), declare their Chardin credentials quite overtly. His focus on simple, spherical fruit, apples in particular, as the core of his still-life practice, has a Chardinian cast to it. Moreover, his propensity to explore the relationship between masses and containers of fruit and stray and strewn items represents an expansion and complication of the same signature theme in Chardin's work. Although Cézanne gave it a different spin from Chardin's prerevolutionary still-life meditations on the individual versus the mass, that opposition was everywhere structured into his still lifes as well. But for Cézanne, the hermit painter, there did not seem to be any possibility of social metaphor involved; rather it was a kind of perceptual test for the solitary eye of the viewer: how to distinguish one thing from another, how to distinguish the figure from its ground, how to read the circuit and invisible back of an object from what is given on the flat plane of the paper. Cézanne, in other words, took for granted the value of the individual, which Chardin's age was just beginning to construct, and transformed any and all social drama into the perceptual drama of the lone subject.

One of the other aspects of the Chardinian still life that must have left its mark on Cézanne was its down-market trend, which Cézanne seems to have caricatured with his inventory of plain Aixois and Marseillais ware. Nothing *pronk* about his *stillevens*, nothing *haut bourgeois*, let alone aristocratic, about his tables of fruit and ceramic: unlike his Impressionist contemporaries, who often celebrated the high bourgeois art of the table, the meal, and its manners, Cézanne stuck as closely as he could to the low artisanal end of middle-class life that Chardin before him had so repeatedly represented. Indeed, as with Chardin so with Cézanne: his still lifes were dedicated to identifying the world of painting with the world of simple craft. Cézanne simply added a provincial dimension to that identification with his Provençal pottery and textiles, equating them over and over again with the rough-crafted surface of his paintings, hewn like clay out of a pattern of sculptural strokes. But perhaps more than any other characteristic of Chardin's work in still life, the one that held sway over Cézanne was the sense of a geometry given to the world of things, not by the chef of the table, but by the painter disposing his simple objects into "the cylinder, the sphere, the cone," as Cézanne famously said. Chardin's reduction of the artifice of food to a pared-down geometry surely lurks behind Cézanne's own well-known interest in the geometric aspect of things.¹⁰

Cézanne's interest in "the cylinder, the sphere, the cone" often underlies a proto-Cubist reading of his work.¹¹ But let us listen to what Cézanne actually said: "Treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone, with everything put in perspective so that each side of an object or a plane is directed toward a central

point." In another famous dictum, he remarked: "The eye becomes concentric by looking and working. I mean to say that in an orange, an apple, a ball, a head, there's a culminating point; and this point is always . . . closest to our eye; the edges of objects flee toward a center placed on our horizon."¹² What these remarks suggest is not so much Cubism—if anything it should be "spherism," because Cézanne's emphasis is upon a round, not an angular, geometry—not so much a new and abstract system of post-Euclidean geometry as an emphasis on rounded still-life objects—"an orange, an apple, a ball, a head"—taken up-close and one by one. There is also an inversion of the old perspectival space of the painting-as-window, so that "central" and "culminating points," of which there are as many as there are objects, push outward, toward us, rather than inward, toward a single vanishing point; the "horizon" is here where we are, rather than at the back of or behind the painting, and the bodily screen upon which that horizon lies—our eye—is curved ("concentric"), not flat, corporeal, not abstract.

The still-life tradition had always courted the eye with the display of optical effects to which its arrays of glassware and metalware set against the differentiated texture and sheen of fruit and cloth lent themselves. And certainly Cézanne's remarks emphasize the eye (his *and* the viewer's) and its relation to the painted world. Yet even more than Chardin's still-life paintings, which solicit the hand as well as the eye in a variety of ways, Cézanne's still lifes suggest a "manual space." That is the phrase of a Cubist, Georges Braque, and it is entirely applicable to Cézanne's still lifes, though not in any Cubist way. In fact, Braque spoke about still life: "Then above all I began to make still lifes, because in nature there is a tactile space, I would say almost a manual space. Moreover, I have written: 'When a still life is no longer within reach of the hand, it ceases to be a still life.' For me this corresponds to the desire that I have always had to touch the thing and not only to see it."¹³ We will have occasion later to look closely at the eye-hand coordination that Cézanne explored in his very process of drawing and painting; for the moment, let us consider the ways in which the peculiar, "concentric" spatiality of his still lifes and their objects appeals to the hand as well as to the eye—indeed, more than that, suggests a bodily and not just an optical realm.

Certainly simple early works like the *Still Life with Apples* of around 1877–78 (fig. 20) illustrate Braque's notion of still life's "manual space" as well as the idea of a "prehensile eye" that tries to grasp what it sees.¹⁴ I have already touched on Roger Fry's "manual" response to Cézanne's *Still Life with Compotier* (fig. 2), which pertains to Cézanne's adaptation of a Chardinian device, the drawer handle that asks to be pulled. (Moreover, that still life has the projecting knife that abounds in the still-life tradition and that also solicits the hand.) Then there is the later *Still Life with Apples* (fig. 8), which seems to want to invert itself and push forward toward the viewer's eye and hand, as if swelling from a purely optical background into a tactile foreground. And I have dwelt at length on the expanded spaces of some of Cézanne's still lifes, such as *Still Life with Basket; or, The Kitchen Table* and *Still Life with Plaster Cast* (figs. 7, 32), in which room to walk and sit surrounds and inflects the tabletop



Figure 24

Gustave Courbet
(French, 1819–1877)
Still Life with Apples, 1872
Oil on canvas, 59.4 × 73.5 cm
(23³/₈ × 28¹⁵/₁₆ in.)
The Hague, Museum Mesdag

Figure 25

Edouard Manet
(French, 1832–1883)
Two Apples, 1880
Watercolor over graphite on
wove paper, 18.8 × 13.9 cm
(7³/₈ × 5¹/₂ in.)
Washington, D.C., National
Gallery of Art, Collection
of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

surface and thus challenges the eye to attach itself not only to the hand but to the body of which it is a part as well. Let us look now at some of Cézanne's still-life cohorts of the nineteenth century, through whose work he filtered the lesson of Chardin.

Courbet was certainly one such. With his famous tankard of ale and rustic bowl of lush red apples, he took the Chardinian model and gave it his own particular provincial-peasant twist. With his apples scattered on the ground beneath a tree (fig. 24), he took that model and expanded it well beyond its narrow purview, associating still life with landscape, fruit to look at and eat with the ground on which one walks—surely Cézanne thought of Courbet's example when he scattered his apples about and enlarged the purview of still-life space to include the ground he walked on. Then, of course, there was Manet, to whom Chardin was also extremely important: Cézanne was very conscious of Manet, relied on the example of Manet's still-life compositions in his early, dark still lifes in oil, and trumped Manet in the first Impressionist exhibition with his caricatural *Modern Olympia*. And if he saw them, Cézanne must surely have been moved by Manet's simple oils and watercolors of the early 1880s, not only of flowers but also of peaches, plums, apples, almonds, and the like (fig. 25).¹⁵ Done with the utmost discretion and exquisitely simple elegance, these watercolor items—sometimes just one, sometimes a pair, sometimes a trio—sit on the bare page with just a hint of shadow to give them some illusionistic weight.

Figure 26

Gustave Caillebotte
(French, 1848–1894)
*Still Life with Glasses,
Carafes, and Compotiers
of Fruit*, 1879
Oil on canvas, 50 × 60 cm
(19 1/16 × 23 5/8 in.)
Collection of Candy and
Aaron Spelling



It is hard not to think of them when one looks at some of Cézanne's watercolor notes from the eighties and later, with the barest hint of watercolor to flesh out their minimally penciled forms on the surface of the paper. In such still-life notes, there is no question of the larger bodily space that characterizes the more complex still lifes in oil; rather, they inhabit the spatial degree zero of paper and show off the slightest sleight of hand needed to raise objects off that paper with the delicate means of pencil and watercolor. They suggest the other end of the Chardinian spectrum that was so crucial to Cézanne: the simplicity of individual pieces of spherical fruit and the means of crafting them on a flat surface, whether canvas, watercolor, or writing paper.

Gustave Caillebotte, the financier of the Impressionist group, might also have been important to Cézanne, though the setting and social caste of the former's still lifes (fig. 26) couldn't be at a further remove from Courbet's rustic world, and certainly from Cézanne's. Caillebotte was not the only "Impressionist" painter to take up still life, nor was he alone in suggesting the bourgeois supper with all its luxury appointments and its art of cooking—Claude Monet too occasionally produced that kind of still life—but Caillebotte was the most elaborate in opening up his still lifes to a wider context, be it the marketplace in which the cook went to buy the family's food or the dining room in which the family sat down to eat its breakfast, lunch, or

dinner, replete with crystal ware, place settings, and chairs offered to the viewer. Indeed, often his still lifes open onto the populated spaces of genre painting and are indistinguishable from them. But the most important painter of expanded-space bourgeois still lifes was Fantin-Latour, and where the example set by Chardin is not felt in Caillebotte's luxury tabletops, it still underlies the work of Fantin-Latour, both in his simple fruit pieces and in his more complex flower-piece table corners, whose containers contrasted to loose fruit are reminiscent of the same device in Chardin's work, and in his signature facture, which has something of the feel of Chardin's handling, though much refined and muted. And Fantin-Latour was extremely important for Cézanne, particularly for his flower pieces.¹⁶



Figure 27

Henri Fantin-Latour
(French, 1836–1904)
*Still Life with Torso and
Flowers*, 1874
Oil on canvas, 116 × 90 cm
(45⁵/₈ × 35⁷/₁₆ in.)
Göteborg, Sweden,
Göteborgs Konstmuseum

But the still life by Fantin-Latour that I adduce here is a rare one, related to Chardin only in the theme of the arts of painting and sculpture, another of Chardin's still-life topics to which Cézanne was not much given. Fantin-Latour's 1874 *Still Life with Torso and Flowers* (fig. 27), however, bears strongly on the one notable exception to Cézanne's apparent lack of interest in that still-life topic, *Still Life with Plaster Cast* (fig. 32), whose theme is after all just that—the competition between the arts of painting and sculpture. The two are worth looking at in relation to each other, then, as a way of considering not only Cézanne's filtering of the Chardin model through the work of his contemporaries but also, and more importantly, his expansion of the “manual space” of traditional still-life painting out to the larger bodily spaces of other genres, and at the same time their collapsing together. We will return to the centerpiece of our discussion, *Still Life with Blue Pot*, but for the moment, let us take another, longer trip through the strange, tilted space of *Still Life with Plaster Cast*, this time in relation to Fantin-Latour's example.

In *Still Life with Torso and Flowers* Fantin-Latour defined his own art as floralist in relation to the other arts and their objects—including pictures (specifically landscapes), sculptures, and Japonizing decorative objects such as fans—and positioned still life in relation to various schools and modes: the Greco-Roman classical, the oriental decorative, the Euro-realist. At the same time he referenced the most evidently self-reflexive of Chardin's still-life subcategories, the still life of artist's attributes, in order to reflect on the special self-reflexivity of still life: the way it is always about painting itself. But above all Fantin-Latour indicated two signature features of his own still-life practice that very evidently interested Cézanne and that he reduplicated and revised in several of his own fruit-and-flower still lifes: first, the deployment of objects to mark and also to expand the fore and aft of the still-life composition—its front (which was usual in still-life painting) and its back (which was not so usual, before Fantin-Latour); second, the persistent use of the genre of still life to map out a series of complicatedly Chardinian relations, at once material and spatial, between edges and corners, picture plane, table surface, wall, and sometimes hinted-at floor, not to mention the competing vectors of grouped and dispersed objects, some planar in different degrees (books, trays, plates, knives), others rounded out of the picture's planarity (fruit, pots, vases, flowers, and in this case a sculpted and cast female body, or fragment thereof).

For his part Cézanne, troping on Fantin-Latour, defined still life in terms of a more binary contrast between the classical and the realist, and in this case homes in on fruit and vegetables, rather than flowers, as the representative objects of his own still-life practice. In *Still Life with Plaster Cast*, onions and apples are the objects to pair with a classical statuette, with which to state the relationship of still life to another art, and with it to the representation of the body. Onions and apples are now the objects with which to triangulate the spatiality of still life, which here consists of the matrix of relationships between cornered and tip-tilted table surface, implied but hidden chair surface (covered by the patterned and folded blue drapery at left), upswung floor surface—floor rather than wall—leaning canvas surfaces and the literal

surface of the painting itself. In this canvas, as in the Getty watercolor, Cézanne's pared-down fruit and vegetable shapes are the objects used to plot the movement from foreground to middle ground to background: from a Fantin-Latour-like tabletop in the foreground with its plate of *three* apples (or peaches) and its scattered onions and apples, to the middle ground of blue drapery on the left, replete with *two* pieces of fruit or vegetable, past the diagonals of picture canvases to the background on the right, with its *one* apple or orange or peach. Three-two-one, one may count those apples-onions-oranges, from front to middle to back, imaginatively harvesting them as one gropes one's way haltingly through the close-to-hand spatial maze of the still life, like Galatea interrupting her winged trajectory, thickening and fragmenting sight into touch, full-body motion into the stop-and-start action of the arm and hand.¹⁷

Thus *Still Life with Plaster Cast* charts the transformation, not so much of two-dimensional surface into three-dimensional space as the reverse: perspectival penetration into surface scansion, transparency into opacity, the eye into the hand, the vanishing-point imago of the whole body into the body as an occluded array of parts, and the all-at-once *now*, the transcendental instant of the aesthetic first impression into a kinesthetic series of sensations, sometimes combined and continuous, sometimes separate and disjunct. These are none other than Cézanne's famous "passages," his painted junctures between objects, writ large. Fallen from instantaneity, they require an itinerary, just as in the Getty *Still Life with Blue Pot*. With its complicating of the Chardinian ledge—its opening up of the tabletop to the floor, the wall, and the chair, not to mention other disjunct surfaces—*Still Life with Plaster Cast* proposes an entanglement of different bodily spaces and an involution of the geographical and the manual, much like that found in the landscape-evoking *Still Life with Blue Pot*. Indeed, *Still Life with Plaster Cast* justifies the comparison between still life and the Poussinian landscape tradition to which I have alluded, for its middle ground and background are reminiscent of the self-portrait by Poussin in the Louvre with an array of canvases stacked against the wall behind the painter, as if *Still Life with Plaster Cast* indexes Cézanne's sense of still life as the Poussinian domain par excellence. It also underlines the fact that *Still Life with Plaster Cast* is a picture of the artist's studio (minus the artist's features) and that for Cézanne still life was always a way of picturing the operations of the studio. It finally suggests the crossing of the classical mode represented by Poussin with the low realist mode represented by Chardin filtered through Fantin-Latour.

What Fantin-Latour's still lifes did for Cézanne's, in general, was to propose that this lowly genre was the space in which to try to imagine the backs and the fronts of things as if they were bodies, to render the transitions, not only from one object to another, but from ground to object to surrounding space as well, and to expand that space outward and inward from the tabletop to the larger architectural space of the house, with its walls and floors and other furnishings, which the viewer's body recognizes as its inhabitation.¹⁸ Thus the confrontation that *Still Life with Plaster Cast* might be understood as staging between Fantin-Latour and Poussin is the contest between the embodied space of the domicile and the domain of the studio

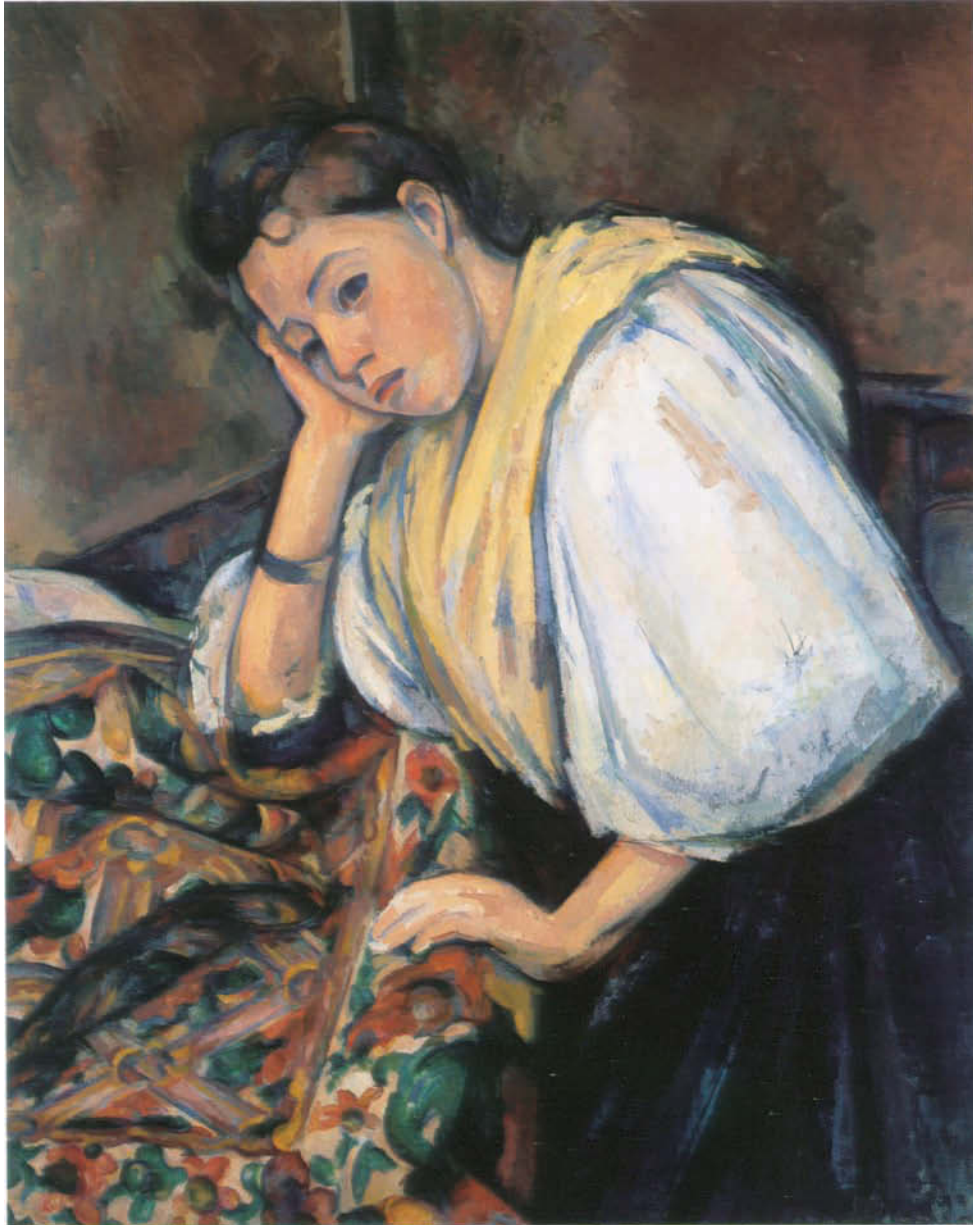
as the site of classical ideation and the classical conception of the body. That contest is signified most succinctly in the conjunction of humble onions and high-art, apple-cheeked, apple-bellied cupid (substituting for the cast of an adult female body in Fantin-Latour's painting), which is elaborated in the complex spatiality in which they are found together, and mediated by the apples, at once comestible and abstract *corps* ("body" in the general, geometric sense of the word), that move from one to the other and from front to back of the canvas. (The onions, by contrast, announce their particularity as objects and refuse to be abstract bodies.) What that contest ultimately comes down to is an encounter between and entwining of the "manual space" of still life and the larger bodily realm suggested by the classical studio and the classical body. Moreover, it represents a meeting between two opposed perspectival systems, between the vanishing point of classical perspective, here thickened and warped, and the cylinder, cone, and sphere, the "culminating points," and the concentricity of the eye—the rounded-out, anamorphic world of the viewer's eye and body here in front of the canvas suggested by Cézanne.

This and other still lifes, thickly mediated as they are through the still-life tradition running from the Dutch through Chardin to Fantin-Latour, also propose something a little different from the high modernist definition of the self-reflexivity of painting, as given by the famous American formalist Clement Greenberg with regard to Cézanne: "Every brushstroke that followed a fictive plane into fictive depth harked back . . . to the physical fact of the medium; the shape and placing of that mark recalled the shape and position of the flat rectangle that was the original canvas."¹⁹ This is the mode of self-reflexivity that is the hallmark of Greenbergian modernism, but it is a little too abstract and disembodied for what Cézanne actually gives us, especially in highly self-reflexive works like *Still Life with Plaster Cast*. The canvas, as spelled out in that painting, is surely to be understood as a physical object with a front face and a back side, physically tilted on the easel or against the wall (rather than a mathematical plane occupying mental space, seen in its ideal totality in the mind's eye), something that one can imagine laying one's hands on, holding and flipping, something that can even be warped and bent (or tossed on the ground or thrown out the window to land in a tree, as Cézanne was known to do in a temper)—not an abstract rectilinearity, in other words, but something that frames, yields, and belongs to the world of rounded corporeality, like that of the cupid and the apples in the "manual" foreground of the still life, and to which we as bodies also belong.

Though less overtly self-reflexive, *Still Life with Blue Pot* spells out some of the same things in its pseudolandscape way. I finish this section by comparing the watercolor with Cézanne's *Young Italian Woman at a Table* (fig. 28), done in oil in the nineties, for the latter shows us a body, rounded out of its pictorial space, seated at a table with the same tapestry found in *Still Life with Blue Pot*, grasping that table with one hand and leaning heavily upon it with the other elbow. The tabletop, in other words, is something one sits at, holds with one's hand(s), and leans upon with the weight of one's body; it is not merely a surface of optical display. It is, moreover, a table whose rectilinearity is confounded by the tapestry, with its patterning,

Figure 28

Paul Cézanne
*Young Italian Woman
at a Table*, 1895–1900
Oil on canvas, 91.8 × 73.3 cm
(36 1/8 × 28 7/8 in)
Los Angeles, J. Paul
Getty Museum 99.PA.40



mounding, and folding. Looking back to *Still Life with Blue Pot* now—minus any human figure or invitation to sit, grasp, and lean—we find that the tapestry here has a function similar to that in *Young Italian Woman at a Table*. It rounds out the table into something else, not just something that one might handle as well as look at, but something that might be a seat as much as a table, that one might sink into and dispose one's arms and legs around, were it not for the still life sitting upon that good

old sign of the still-life tradition, the white linen. The watercolor's rounded objects, then, sit in for us and our bodiliness. But at the same time the patterned tapestry with its hump reminds us of landscape too, set at an optical distance, while the horizon on the wall in the back and the tenting of blue-green marks above the still-life arrangement and above the earthen part of the background wall, the most planar aspect of the image, reinforce the landscape aura of the still life. Thus it represents the meeting between two different spatial conceptions of the picture, each belonging to a different genre: the optical planes and distance of landscape, and the concentric "manual space" of still life. They meet at the tabletop, which might also be a sofa, and the hinted-at floor at the bottom right.

* * *

WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN HOW some of Cézanne's sketches in watercolor and pencil suggest intersections between different genres: the pages with images of Cézanne's son, Paul, and his wife, Hortense, not only introduce rare notes of the intimacy of a private life into the working processes of the studio; they also suggest meetings between the genres of the portrait, the nude (the classical body that is the basis of all the higher genres, from mythological to history painting), and the still life. Sketching allows for such note taking to bring diverse, unrelated subject matter together onto the same surface and into the same image space. But it also suggests that for Cézanne the sketch page, and indeed the combined media of pencil and watercolor, was a realm in which to think about different genres, their spaces, and their meanings together.

Of all the painters of his generation, Cézanne was perhaps most preoccupied with the genre divisions as they had existed since the classical hierarchy of the seventeenth-century academic system. He painted the nude, with related forays into religious and mythological painting; he undertook genre painting, in the form of his repeated Cardplayers; he excelled at the portrait and the self-portrait; and he devoted himself to landscape and still life. (These would also be the quite traditional genre divisions of Cézanne's Cubist descendants, Picasso and Braque.) Unlike the Impressionist group with which he was associated, Cézanne took on these genre divisions in a conventional way and maintained them fairly strictly. He did not—as his cohorts Monet, Renoir, and Degas did—depart from them to invent new subjects, in which the traces of old subject-matter categories can only dimly be felt in their mutation into "modern life" motifs (like the city, the café, the railroad, and suburban leisure, motifs that Cézanne almost never took up and never took up straight when he did). Ultimately the old system of genres is dispensed with in the paintings of modern life by the group with which Cézanne had exhibited, who in their calls for a "new painting" constantly opposed the representation of the world's scenes to the value system and studio practices of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.²⁰ In contrast, the old genre system structured Cézanne's output quite overtly, providing him with the basic

framework for again and again learning painting, and what painting can do, from the ground up. The leveled lineaments of the genre hierarchy are felt over and over again in his work, as if pointing to the system as such, except that, rather than a vertical ladder of values, Cézanne configured it as a horizontal logic of distinctions, opening onto a lateral dialogue among the genres, in which the function and meaning of each genre begins to resonate in the other. Paintings of nudes begin to feel like grand still lifes, for instance, while still lifes feel like bodies and geographies.

Cézanne's watercolor still lifes, whether in the mode of the sketch or that of the full-fledged picture, clearly inhabit the spatial zone of their genre—ledge, counter, tabletop, corner. Because of their more informal character, fewer of them implicate larger spaces in the ways that some of the oils do, with the exceptions noted above, and the Getty *Still Life with Blue Pot*, a picture in its own right rather than an unfinished study of a still-life motif, is notable among those exceptions. So let us conclude this meditation on Cézanne's generic spaces by looking at four other exceptional watercolors from the late period, three of them still lifes in the exhibition, the fourth a landscape study that approaches the spatial register of still life. All help to reinforce the Getty watercolor's departures from the normal confined space of still life, its address to the human body, and its hinted opening of the indoor world of the studio to a world beyond.

One of the still-life subjects that Cézanne took up repeatedly was the human skull—in groups of one, two, or three. (There are three currently displayed in the studio at Les Lauves.) With its clear Vanitas association, this still-life theme defies Roger Fry's rule that the subject matter of still life is insignificant; the pull of its morbidity cannot have escaped Cézanne, the aging and curmudgeonly loner. Yet at the same time Cézanne disposed his skulls like so many apples, and indeed *Three Skulls* (pl. 9), from the same years as the Getty watercolor, has a composition very close to that of *Still Life with Blue Pot*, replete with the floral tapestry, the central pile of rounded things, and the background line of wall. (There is an oil version of the same subject that even has the swatch of gold border at the bottom that we find in *Still Life with Blue Pot*.)²¹ It is as if the subject of the skull(s) was one more spheroid body to arrange and rearrange, to pull forward out of the flatness of the paper with pencil and watercolor, to question the relation between figure and ground, line and color—monochrome, hollowed skull and colorful floral patterning—to single out and group en masse. Massed together on the tapestry the way the skulls are, there is less rather than more uncanniness about them than when alone or paired and set against an austere wall-and-table ground, as some of them are.

At the same time the overt bodiliness of the skull and its hollow-eyed stare out at the viewer—like an object looking blindly back—declares what haunts the other still lifes: that the objective world of still life is itself, more than purely optical or even manual, a corporeal world, and that it looks and hinges upon the equally corporeal space of the viewer. And it suggests that Cézanne's world of cylinders, spheres, and cones is precisely, and literally, anthropomorphic. This is *nature morte* indeed, but it demands recognition of the two-way relation between the inanimate objects of



Plate 9

Paul Cézanne
Three Skulls, 1902–6
Watercolor, with graphite
and touches of gouache,
on ivory wove paper,
48 × 62.8 cm (18 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)
The Art Institute of Chicago,
Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Larned
Coburn Memorial Collection,
1954.183

One of the still-life subjects that Cézanne took up repeatedly was the human skull—in groups of one, two, or three. With its clear Vanitas association, this still-life theme defies Roger Fry's assertion that it was the very insignificance of still life's subject matter that made its forms so significant. It is true that Cézanne disposed his skulls like so many apples, and indeed the fully rendered pictorial composition of *Three Skulls* is very close to that of the Getty *Still Life with Blue Pot*, which is from the same period. At the same time, however, the overt bodiliness of the skull, with its hollow-

eyed stare out at the viewer, declares what haunts the other still lifes: that the objective world of still life is a corporeal world, in which Cézanne's world of cylinders, spheres, and cones is quite literally anthropomorphic. This is *nature morte* indeed, but it demands recognition of the two-way relation between the inanimate objects of the genre and the animate world of the human subject looking at them, of the set of exchanges, substitutions, and affinities that take place in the studio between the human body and the world of things.

the genre and the animate world of the human subject looking at them, of the bodiliness of both sides of the subject-object divide, and of the corporeality this side of the pictorial surface. This clearly was what Cézanne's studio was all about: a place for studying the bodily relations—exchanges, substitutions, and affinities—between the human subject and the world of inanimate objects. For us, Cézanne's studio, and the objects placed within it, can also be a site to understand the curious changing of places, across his work, between animacy and inanimacy: in which the human body and face are stilled and crystalline like geological formations, while objects begin to vibrate with anthropomorphic life.

One in particular of Cézanne's still lifes in watercolor, however, presses outside the studio: in *Hortensia* of around 1895–1900 (pl. 10), the potted hydrangea (or more likely geranium) seems to seek escape from the confines of the studio in order to bridge the spaces between indoors and outdoors, still life and landscape. Painted at least a decade later than the sketchbook page discussed above (fig. 13), this *Hortensia* plays no word games and shares no intimate space with the face of Cézanne's wife; indeed it seems to brook neither intimacy nor enclosure, as it has even escaped the pot to which it belongs (a second, unfinished stem is found next to it, pentimento-like, within the pot), and leans with human fervor toward the window, whose diagonal line of curtain opposes the sweep of its yearning slant. Like a romantic woman at the window (its floral character suggests its femininity, even without any association with one particular woman in Cézanne's life), it seems bent on release from its confinement to the interior, its stillness, its very condition of plantedness. And with its straining stem it is more alive than any portrait of Hortense (or anyone else) that Cézanne ever painted, as powerful as those portraits are.

In between studio and open air, indoors and outdoors, are the potted plants that inhabit the garden—or the greenhouse—but make it into a close-up, walled-off space of confinement, an extension of the interior of house and studio, rather than something exterior to them. Such is the case of the potted geranium series (pl. 11) of a decade earlier than the so-called *Hortensia*, as well as of the series of trellis roses of the 1890s. These begin to provide a scrim of foliage that mediates between horizontal and vertical surface, figure and ground, singular object and tapestry-like patterning, worked and unworked areas of paper—as if the earth on which the pot rests and the wall that separates the garden from the house or the world beyond the painter's property together have mutated into the flat surface of the paper on which the painter draws and paints. Such intermediate subjects had been taken up earlier by the gardening painters Monet, Renoir (fig. 29), and Caillebotte as well, as “modern life” variations on the old subject of the flower piece, in which the flowers were now rooted in the nineteenth-century middle-class garden. But in Cézanne's case, the up-to-date context is missing; instead the subject asserts its in-betweenness, between indoor and outdoor study, still life subject and foliate sketch.

Once fully outside, Cézanne, as we know, painted his landscapes and made landscape studies, few of which have anything interior about them, though anthropomorphism is everywhere in the air. Some of his landscape studies, however, are

Plate 10

Paul Cézanne
Hortensia, c. 1895–1900
Watercolor and
graphite on paper,
49 × 31 cm
(19¼ × 12¾ in.)
New York, private collection

On occasion Cézanne's still lifes in watercolor press outside the studio. Here the potted hydrangea (or perhaps it is a geranium) seems to seek escape from the confines of the studio in order to bridge the spaces between indoors and outdoors, still life and landscape. *Hortensia* (French for "hydrangea") seems to brook neither intimacy nor enclosure, as it has even escaped the pot to which it belongs (a second, unfinished stem is found next to it, pentimento-like, within the pot) and leans with human fervor toward the window, whose diagonal line of curtain opposes the sweep of its yearning slant. Like a romantic woman at the window (its floral character suggests its femininity), it seems bent on release from its confinement to the interior, as well as from its stillness and from its very condition of plantedness. With its straining stem, it is more alive than any portrait that Cézanne ever painted.



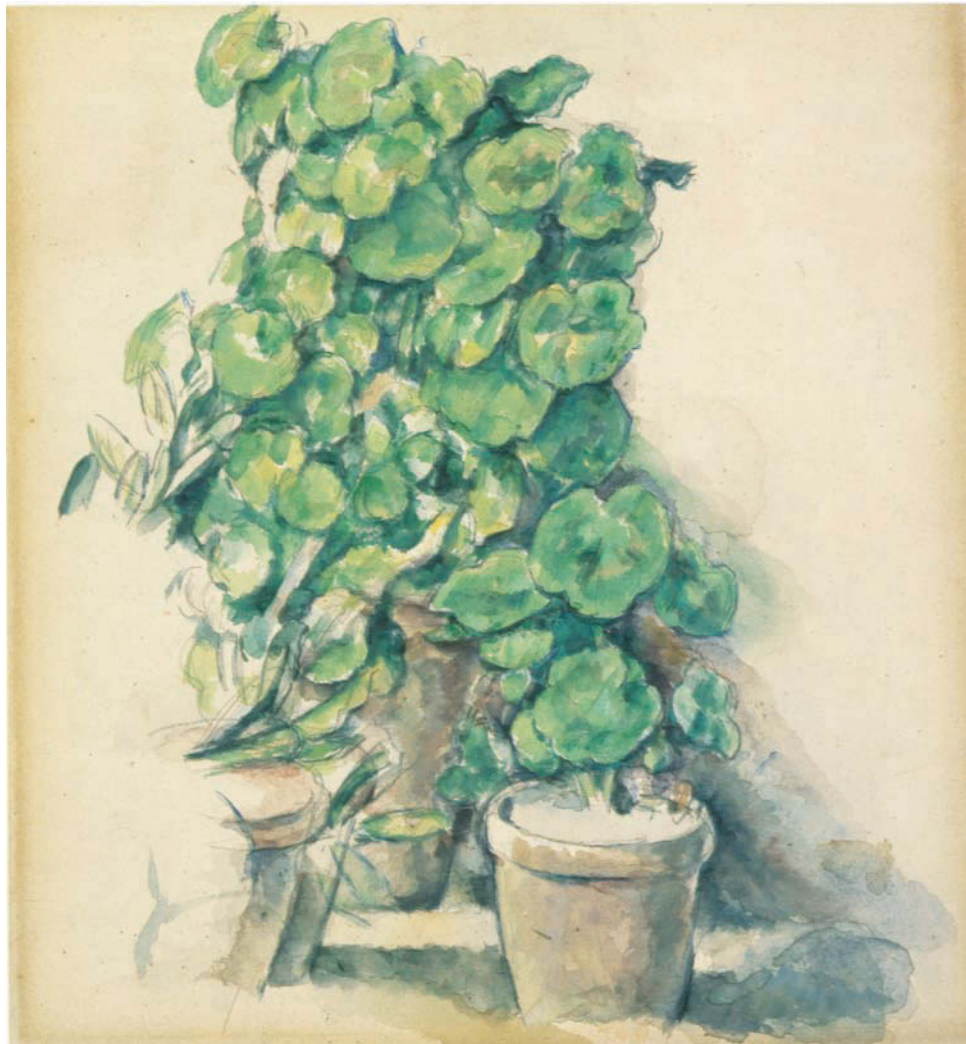


Plate 11

Paul Cézanne
Geraniums, 1888–90
Watercolor and graphite
on buff paper, 31 × 27 cm
(12¼ × 10¾ in.)
Washington, D.C., National
Gallery of Art, Collection
of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

In between studio and open air are the potted plants that inhabit the garden—or the greenhouse—but make it into a walled-off extension of the interior of house and studio. Such is the case with *Geraniums*. It presents a scrim of foliage that mediates between figure and ground, singular object and tapestry-like patterning, worked and unworked areas of paper—as if the wall that separates the garden from the house or the world beyond the painter's property has mutated into the flat surface of the paper on which the painter draws and paints.

Such intermediate subjects had been taken up earlier by the gardening painters Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and Gustave Caillebotte as well, as "modern life" variations on the old subject of the flower piece, in which the flowers were now rooted in the nineteenth-century middle-class garden. But in Cézanne's case, the up-to-date context is missing; instead the subject asserts its in-betweenness, between indoor and outdoor study, still-life subject and foliate sketch.



Figure 29

Pierre-Auguste Renoir
(French, 1841–1919)
*Calla Lily and Greenhouse
Plants*, 1864
Oil on canvas, 130 × 196 cm
(51³/₁₆ × 77³/₁₆ in.)
Winterthur, Switzerland,
Oskar Reinhart Collection
“Am Römerholz” 1927.4

Figure 30

Paul Cézanne
Foliage, c. 1895–1900
Watercolor and
graphite on paper
44.8 × 56.8 cm
(17³/₁₆ × 22³/₁₆ in.)
New York, The Museum
of Modern Art,
Lillie P. Bliss Bequest

close enough to still lifes in their spatiality to straddle the boundary between one genre and the other, or at least to pose the question of what distinguishes one kind of study from the other, the indoors from the outdoors. *Foliage* of around 1895–1900 (fig. 30), for instance, has none of the distance of a landscape, and its close-up screen of leaves—with its almost abstract web of pencil and brown, green, and blue watercolor marks—seems to bring the optical world of the outdoors all to the foreground, to cancel out any residual atmospheric perspective and carry it into the “manual space” more usually inhabited by still life. (This is true, too, of Cézanne’s remarkable watercolor studies of rock clefts.) Its patterned leafiness is reminiscent of the tapestries of Cézanne’s still lifes (and sometimes of their background walls). Yet its flat verticality, its screenlike quality, and the bareness of the page to the left, which sets the patterned marks afloat, counter the materiality, the horizontal plane (whether tabletop, ledge, or other surface), and the separated objecthood that characterize the genre of still life. It hinges on still life, but only, ultimately, to define what still life usually is not, for it offers up a scrim in which the pure sensations of distantiated sight and close-at-hand touch converge and try to turn into each other, and in which mark making begins to lose sight of, and touch with, objects in the world. That mark making turns back on itself and offers itself up as a study of its own processes of eye-hand coordination: its world of eye and hand is no longer that of objects soliciting gaze and touch, but rather that of the draftsman drawing, the painter painting, and the surface on which he does so. It is ultimately more abstract, flat, and disembodied

than anything Cézanne ever did inside the studio, with its simple, familiar, insistent objects, their equally insistent corporeality, and their insistence upon the concentricity of the eye. As a landscape study it comes close to the up-close zone of the still life so masterfully landscaped in *Still Life with Blue Pot*, in particular to the web of overlaid foliate marks that makes up the tapestry that surrounds its central array of objects. But as a study, too, it could not be further from the pictorial completion of *Still Life with Blue Pot*, and as such it opens onto the next studio question to concern us: that of sketch and finished picture.

NOTES

1. On Cézanne's "prehensile eye," see Lawrence Gowing, "The Logic of Organized Sensations," in *Cézanne: The Late Work* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977), 56.
2. This is Norman Bryson's contention regarding the function of still life as an abject, "feminine" genre: not only that it brings the human subject low but also that it articulates, highlights, and plays upon the division between the subject and its objects. See Bryson's *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still-Life Painting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), in particular "Still Life and 'Feminine' Space," 136–78. On still life, see also Jeannene Pryzbyski, "Le Parti pris des choses: French Still Life and Modern Painting, 1848–1876" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1995); Eliza B. Rathbone and George T. Shackelford, *Impressionist Still Life* (Washington, D.C.: Phillips Collection; New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002); and the last chapter of my *Manet Manette* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), esp. 269–81. See also Charles Sterling, *Still Life Painting from Antiquity to the Present Time*, trans. James Emmons (New York: Universe Books, 1959).
3. On the subject of the "paysage historique," see Peter Galassi, *Corot in Italy: Open-Air Painting and the Classical-Landscape Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991).
4. Quote from Balzac's *Peau de chagrin*, cited, among other places, in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *Sense and Non-sense*, trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 16.
5. The notion is an apocryphal one; it is nowhere to be found in Cézanne's letters. Both Emile Bernard and Joachim Gasquet claimed that Cézanne, explaining what he meant when he advised his generation to "become classic again, but through nature" ("Il nous faut redevenir des classiques par la nature"), said the following: "Imagine Poussin redone entirely after nature, that's the classic that I intend" ("Imaginez Poussin refait entièrement sur nature, voilà le classique que j'entends"). See Emile Bernard, "Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne et lettres inédites," pts. 1 and 2, *Mercur de France*, October 1, 1907, 385–404, October 15, 1907, 606–27, cited in P. M. Doran, *Conversations avec Cézanne* (Paris: Editions Macula, 1978), 80. Gasquet's remark is found in his *Cézanne* (Paris, 1921), cited in Doran, *Conversations avec Cézanne*, 150. Francis Jourdain, in *Cézanne* (Paris: Braun, 1950), declared that Cézanne "always tried to revivify Poussin in front of nature" ("il avait toujours essayé de revivifier le Poussin devant la nature"), cited in Doran, *Conversations avec Cézanne*, 84. And Maurice Denis declared him the "Poussin of Impressionism" ("C'est le Poussin de l'impressionnisme"), in "Cézanne," in *Théories, 1890–1910: Du symbolisme et de Gauguin vers un nouvel ordre classique* (Paris: L. Rouart and J. Watelin, 1920), 260. See also Richard Schiff, "The Poussin Legend," in *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 175–84; Richard Kendall, *Cézanne and Poussin: A Symposium* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), in particular the essays by Richard Verdi ("The Reputation of Poussin's Landscape Paintings in France from Félibien to Cézanne," 13–29), Richard Schiff ("Cézanne and Poussin: How the Modern Claims the Classic," 51–68), Michel Hoog ("The

Elegant Mountain in Poussin and Cézanne," 109–12), and John House ("Cézanne and Poussin: Myth and History," 129–49); and Richard Verdi, *Cézanne and Poussin: The Classical Vision of Landscape* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland; London: Lund Humphries, 1990).

6. As did other French still-life painters of the nineteenth century, such as Manet and Fantin-Latour, Cézanne also looked back to the Spanish *bodegone*, particularly in the series of still lifes that include melons.

7. Cézanne, however, did paint still lifes with pomegranates, though in the Provençal context the pomegranate no longer had the connotations of exoticism and luxury, and Cézanne did not emphasize the glisten of the fruit's seeded interior in the way that Kalf and others had.

8. On Cézanne and Chardin, see Theodore Reff, "Cézanne and Chardin," in *Cézanne aujourd'hui*, ed. Françoise Cachin, Henri Loyrette, and Stéphane Guégan (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1997), 11–28. Reff quotes Rilke on Cézanne—"Chardin is still the intermediary" ("C'est encore là Chardin l'intermédiaire," 11; Rilke, *Lettres sur Cézanne*, 37–38); and Gasquet, who apparently took the remark from Bernard, claiming to cite Cézanne: "Objects are penetrated by and among each other. . . . They do not cease to live, you understand. . . . Insensibly they spread about themselves intimate reflections, as we do with our glances and our words. . . . It was Chardin, the first to glimpse this, who nuanced the atmosphere of things" ("Les objets se pénètrent entre eux. . . . Ils ne cessent pas de vivre, comprenez vous. . . . Ils se répandent insensiblement autour d'eux d'intimes reflets, comme nous par nos regards et par nos paroles. . . . C'est Chardin, le premier qui a entrevu ça, a nuancé l'atmosphère des choses" [28; from Gasquet, *Chardin*, 122]). And Maurice Denis remarked, "We sense that this art is closer to Chardin than to Manet and Gauguin" ("Nous sentons que cet art-là est plus près de Chardin que de Manet et de Gauguin" [Denis, *Théories*, 247]). On the Chardin revival, see John McCoubrey, "The Revival of Chardin in French Still-Life Painting, 1850–1870," *Art Bulletin* 46 (March 1964): 39–53; and Gabriel P. Weisberg (with William S. Talbot), *Chardin and the Still-Life Tradition in France* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1979).

9. See Pierre Rosenberg, *Chardin* (London: Royal Academy of Arts; New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000).

10. For two different accounts of Chardin as representative of eighteenth-century epistemology, see

Michael Baxandall, "Pictures and Ideas: Chardin's *A Lady Taking Tea*," in *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 74–104; and Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 62–66.

11. On Cézanne and Cubism, see William Rubin, "Cézannisme and the Beginnings of Cubism," in *Cézanne: The Late Work*, 151–202. One of the obvious sources in Cézanne's own remarks for the Cubist view of his work is his famous saying about "the cylinder, the sphere, the cone." While Denis was emphatic about the rounded volumetricness thematized in this quote, Bernard got it wrong at least once, and spoke of "le cône, le cube, le cylindre, la sphère" (Emile Bernard, *Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne, et lettres* [Paris: R. G. Michel, 1925] 116; elsewhere [37], he got the quote right).

12. Letters to Emile Bernard, April 15 and July 25, 1904, given in Emile Bernard, "Paul Cézanne," *L'Occident* 6 (July 1904): 17–30; and cited in Françoise Cachin and Joseph J. Rishel, *Cézanne* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1996), 18–19. On the relation between Cézanne's practice and his curious theoretical pronouncements, see Yve-Alain Bois, "Cézanne: Words and Deeds," *October* 84 (spring 1998): 31–43.

13. "Alors je commençai à faire surtout des natures mortes, parce que dans la nature il y a une espace tactile, je dirais presque manuel. Je l'ai écrit du reste: 'Quand une nature morte n'est plus à la portée de la main, elle cesse d'être une nature morte.' Cela répondait pour moi du désir que j'ai toujours eu du toucher la chose et non seulement de la voir." See Dora Vallier, "Braque, la peinture et nous: Propos de l'artiste," *Cahiers d'art* 29 (October 1954): 16; also cited in Vallier, *L'Intérieur de l'art* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1982), 32; and Christine Poggi, "Braque's Early Papiers Collés: The Certainties of Faux Bois," in *Picasso and Braque: A Symposium* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992), 138n31, 138n54, 146, 148.

14. Cézanne's "prehensile eye" evokes the category of the tactile or the haptic, as defined by Alois Riegl and Heinrich Wölfflin. There are two kinds of "haptic" space that two-dimensional images can suggest. The first has to do with the contents of perspectival space and rests on the illusion of volumes that the hand can grasp ("cubic," or sculptural, space), as opposed to a purely optical surface, or retinal screen. (That is its meaning in the work of Riegl, and it is synonymous with the "linear" mode in Wölfflin's writing.) The second is in a sense the

opposite of the first, having to do with a fascination with the materiality of a textured surface and a nonvolumetric solicitation to touch, which does not yield visual comprehension, and which in fact verges on a kind of blindness: close-up rather than distanced, somatic rather than epistemological, this is touch at odds with sight rather than sight extending and sublimating touch. Cézanne's painting and drawing lie closer to the former sense of tactile, "haptic," or "manual" space, while also complicating it. See Alois Riegl, "Excerpts from *The Dutch Group Portrait*," trans. Benjamin Binstock, *October* 74 (fall 1995): 3–35; and Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* (1915), trans. M. D. Hottinger (New York: Dover Publications, 1950).

15. On these still lifes, see Robert Gordon and Andrew Forge, *The Last Flowers of Manet*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Abradale Press, 1986); and George Mauner, *Manet: The Still-Life Paintings* (New York: Harry N. Abrams in association with American Federation of Arts, 2000).

16. For his part, Fantin-Latour could not stand Cézanne's work; see Ambroise Vollard, *En écoutant Cézanne, Degas, Renoir* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1938), 50.

17. On this painting, see Bois, "Cézanne: Words and Deeds"; he treats many of the issues of phenomenological and corporeal space that I address here.

18. On Fantin-Latour (and Manet), see Pryzbyski, "Le Parti pris des choses," 161–227. See also Douglas Druick and Michel Hoog, *Fantin-Latour* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada/National Museums of Canada, 1983), esp. 132–34, no. 37, on the Toledo *Hydrangeas, Ranunculus, and Fruit* of 1866, which was one of a pair of still lifes commissioned by an English patron, and shown at the Royal Academy but not at the Salon (it is, however, like many others that Fantin-Latour painted and showed during these years); and 263–65, no. 97bis, on *Still Life with Torso and Flowers* of 1874, which was shown at the Salon of that year.

19. Clement Greenberg, "Cézanne and the Unity of Modern Art" (1951), in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), vol. 3, 90. See also Greenberg, "Cézanne: Gateway to Contemporary Painting" (1952), *ibid.*, 113–18.

20. This is the case, for example, in Edmond Duranty's contrast between the closed themes of the academic studio and the opened-up world of motifs undertaken *en plein air*, in "La Nouvelle Peinture" of 1876, the pamphlet that accompanied the second Impressionist exhibition. See Charles S. Moffett, ed., *The New Painting: Impressionism, 1874–1886* (San Francisco: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1986), 37–49.

21. See Cachin and Rishel, *Cézanne*, 492, no. 213.



Picture and Sketch

I turn now to the process of painting, drawing, and studying that takes place in the studio. Thus we move outside in, from what the picture represents to how it represents it, inverting the direction of the artist's progress from mark to composition to picture. Unlike the artist, the viewer sees it the other way around, moving from the entire picture and its arrangement of subject matter to the way it is put together, and then back out again. I hope to show that Cézanne's work in watercolor and pencil, even more than his work in oil, involves an invitation to see the artist's process at work; more than that, it seeks to turn the viewer's expectations about seeing the picture as a picture inside out, so that we too begin to look with the artist back and forth between the motif that he rendered and the means of rendering it. Another way of saying this would be to suggest that rather than agreeing in advance to see as the viewer of the completed painting does, Cézanne asks his viewers to see as the painter does in the process of painting

things, which is to say, to see as if with the hand, to imagine the movement back and forth between eye and hand, process and finished product. In order to see this, however, we must work contrary-wise, from the macro level of the completed watercolor and its subject, viewed from the outside, to the micro level of its inner workings. In other words, we must proceed in an order of looking that is complementary to Cézanne's process.

To start, we must consider the picture's status as a picture. Still Life with Blue Pot is what the French call a tableau, a full-fledged, finished picture in its own right, as distinct from a sketch (croquis) or a study (étude), which was more usually the function and status of the combined media of pencil and watercolor. At the same time, it has no separate preparatory sketch (ébauche and/or esquisse) in which Cézanne might have worked out the final composition beforehand: its first conception, its changes of mind, and its final state coexist in one

layered surface, whose many strata are available to the eye.¹ Rather than a sketch for *Still Life with Blue Pot, Still Life with Milk Pot, Melon, and Sugar Bowl* (fig. 3), which is so like it, was probably executed during the same still-life campaign, either directly before or after the Getty watercolor and thus is a companion piece and/or alternative to the latter, just as much a tableau as it is.² In its status as a picture, then, in its process, and even in its genre—watercolors were also more commonly devoted to the study of landscape, as in the English tradition that was so important for the Impressionist group with which Cézanne was associated—*Still Life with Blue Pot* is an unusual watercolor.

How can we tell that it is a “finished” picture, a tableau? Those are two questions, not one, and the second is easier to answer than the first. The size of the watercolor alone suggests its pictorial status: this is no mere note taking. The complexly worked-out composition is another key factor: Cézanne had to carefully arrange his tapestry, linen, milk pitcher, and blue and white pots beforehand—every still life is a composition twice over, first on the tabletop (or whatever surface Cézanne chose) and then in the picture of it—he had to heap the tapestry, and place and balance everything else so that it would stay put, and then leave it there until he was done. He had to do the same thing for *Still Life with Milk Pot, Melon, and Sugar Bowl*, which means that since he was using many of the same objects, he couldn’t have worked on it simultaneously with the Getty watercolor, but only just prior or subsequent to it. He had to choose a point of view that included the

wall and bit of floor, and stick with it. And the point of view that he chose is another indication of the picture’s tableau status; its enlarged purview, which adds to the spatial complexity of the composition, is never found in Cézanne’s more informal sketches, though it is sometimes hinted at.

Finally, the very layeredness of the picture suggests its standing as a complete thought and a fully realized image; it is also one of Cézanne’s prime divergences from normal watercolor technique and tradition. His characteristic procedure of working touch by touch, allowing each touch to dry rather than pool and mix, and then laying on more touches in other colors, allowing them to dry, and so on, until he achieved the effect of translucent patches, is a particularly laborious way of working with watercolor; indeed it goes against the grain of watercolor’s quickness, evoking the more painstaking campaigns of oil painting, not to mention Cézanne’s particular way of working—touch by touch, color by color—in oil.³ That slow, against-the-grain method of working was never more evident in a watercolor than in this one, particularly in the area of the tapestry, where reds, greens, yellows, and blues hover kaleidoscopically over and under one another rather than blending (detail 6). We will come back to the question of Cézanne’s method later on; for the moment, suffice it to say that it is the complexity of the visible layers that leads us to designate this tableau and a “finished” picture as well, in spite of the visible pencil marks and changes of mind and the areas of paper left blank (though *Still Life with Blue Pot* is in fact

covered all over with watercolor, except in the area of the linen, which is another index of its completion as a picture). Thus perhaps what we ought to say is that *Still Life with Blue Pot* is a finished tableau built up out of layers of sketch.



* * *

THE *ÉTUDE*, THE *CROQUIS* OR *ESQUISSE*, AND THE *ÉBAUCHE* were categories of the French academic system of sketching, working up a composition, arriving at a pictorial conception and then producing a finished picture. Parts of a classical tradition inherited from Italy, they were clearly demarcated stages in a linear movement from the artist's initial idea to his final execution of it, in which that idea was the a priori from which the *tableau* was deduced, and the "realization" of a picture was simply a fleshing out of the original mental concept, first through drawing of various kinds, which corresponded directly to the artist's intention or "design," and then through the filling in of color. These categories were also linked to the academic hierarchy of subject matter, for the belief was that the higher genres demanded more ideation in the first place, relegating the later steps in the procedure to the status of mere supplementary layers, while the lower genres demanded less ideation, more coloration. And those artists who were thought to privilege color, or *coloris*, over drawing, or *dessin*, were thought to—and did—work in a less rational, less orderly, more "feminine" way, groping their way to their conception through their execution.⁴

As we will see, Cézanne, with his famous struggle to "realize" his "sensations," was both a colorist and a designer who worked in constant dialogue between the two procedures: neither wholly an Impressionist given over to recording in colored patches what his eyes saw before him, nor yet a Symbolist desiring a return to symbols, ideas, and designerly order given in advance, he was caught between two systems.⁵ For to "realize" a "sensation" was something quite different from the realization of a prior, predetermining concept. And to work in the lower genres, such as landscape and still life, in which the hierarchy of subject matter and the hierarchy of procedure were increasingly leveled, meant that the *étude* after nature began to take pride of place over the idea, or *concetto*, undermining the distinction between sketch and finished picture, and even privileging the former over the latter. Yet Cézanne was not as committed as his Impressionist colleagues were to throwing the baby out with the bathwater; his work in the studio, in particular—which is to say, his work in still life—shows traces of the old system of procedural categories, as much as the old division of subject matter into genres. And this is true especially of his work in the sketch medium of watercolor.

In the academic system the *étude* was a freestanding study after a model or after nature; it was part of a process of training that served to sharpen the artist's observational and representational skills. It was never meant to have exhibition value outside the studio. In the nineteenth century the outdoor *étude* gained in importance as part and parcel of academic procedure, but again it was part of a pedagogical process, to be distinguished from the making, completing, and formalities of a composed, exhibitable picture.⁶ Increasingly, however, artists outside the academic system—landscape artists in particular—took the *étude* and elevated it to the status

of exhibitable work: the Impressionist exhibitions were the prime site for the display of such painting. For the Impressionists, the *esquisse* and the *croquis*—notes toward, first steps in the outlining of, a pictorial idea—and especially the *ébauche*—a more fully worked-out compositional sketch preliminary to the work itself, to the laying down and filling in of the design on the final canvas—became increasingly moot, since their *études* after nature were their *tableaux*, and since, at least conceptually, they left the studio behind. For Cézanne, it was a more complicated matter: he never really left the studio behind, for all of his attachment to painting *en plein air, sur le motif*. He had begun as a painter of *concetti*, or images of the mind, and though his subject matter, his style, and even his approach underwent a revolution through his association with Pissarro and the Impressionists, he nevertheless re-created the old world of the studio in his private atelier and hung onto it throughout his life as a place to learn and relearn his method and as a complement to, even a necessary grounding of, his work out of doors.⁷ Again, this is clearest in his still lifes, which are by definition studio compositions, and in his watercolors, which formed a running parallel to his work in oil and as such evoke the old sketch-versus-finished-picture dichotomy.

Many of Cézanne's watercolors, indoors and out, are very clearly *études*, distinguishable from *tableaux* not so much in their status as exhibitable pictures as in their focus on single items or isolated patches of nature: *Foliage* (fig. 30) and many of his watercolor studies of rocks, branches, and forest undergrowth are clearly *études*, whereas other watercolor sketches, such as those of Mont Sainte-Victoire (for example, fig. 17), look more like *ébauches* in their compositional function and their correspondence to oils of the same motif, though it is not clear that they were preparatory to the oils in which he repeated the motif so compulsively.⁸ (In any case, the landscape *ébauche* is a bit of redundancy, since the compositional motif is given in nature: perhaps Cézanne's watercolor versions of the motif were ways of trying out the motif's relationship to different formats and hence different framings in a medium associated with informality rather than finality.) Studio studies found in this exhibition of items such as the green jug and the jacket on the chair also inhabit the status of the *étude* fairly clearly in their isolation, their lack of compositional complexity, and their one-to-one equation between piece of penciled and watercolored paper and the item in the studio that it represents.

Similarly, Cézanne's slightly more complex still-life studies of the early and middle years are clearly just that. His simple *Decanter and Bowl* of around 1879–82 (pl. 12), the single item multiplied by two, was evidently never meant to become a realized pictorial composition, either in itself or in the medium of oil. Its simple ledge with two items side by side, their forms laid in clearly and then just barely supplemented by color notes in watercolor, is an *étude* of this object and that, each of which would show up in grander, fully realized compositions in watercolor and oil, but which correspond to no more fully rendered version of the same arrangement. Their side-by-side-ness and the twosome that they make are too simple to qualify as a composition. Slightly later, a further multiplication is seen in *Apples and Pears* of the mid-1880s (pl. 13) and *Apples, Bottle, and Glass* of around 1895–98 (pl. 14), whose

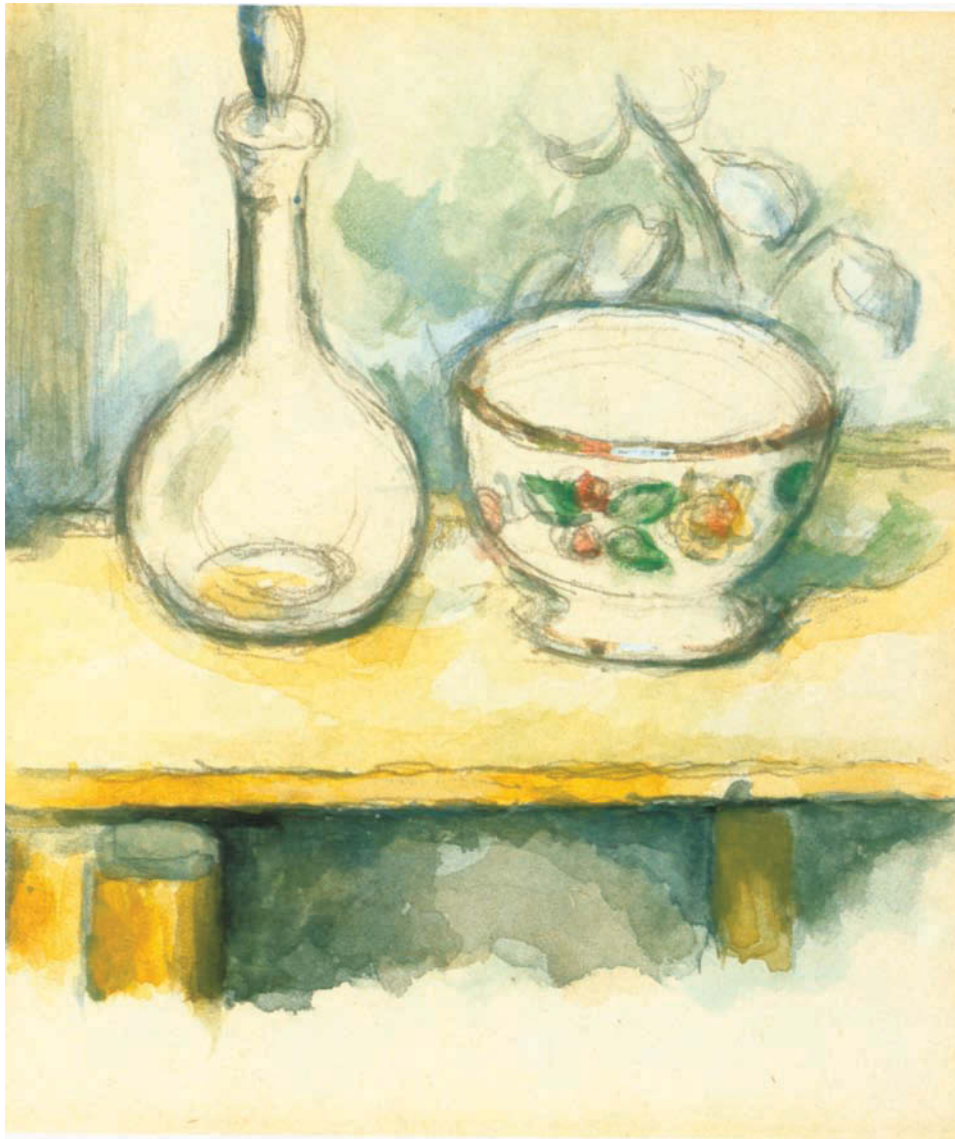


Plate 12

Paul Cézanne
Decanter and Bowl,
c. 1879–82
Watercolor and graphite on
white paper, 13.3 × 12 cm
(5¼ × 4¾ in.)
Private collection

Cézanne's diminutive *Decanter and Bowl* of 1879–82 was evidently never meant to become a realized pictorial composition, either in itself or in the medium of oil. Its simple ledge with two items side by side, their forms laid in clearly and then just barely supplemented by color notes in watercolor, is an *étude* of this object and that, each of which would show up

in other, grander, fully realized compositions in watercolor and oil but which together correspond to no more fully rendered version of the same arrangement. Their side-by-side-ness and the twosome that they make are too simple for this to qualify as the more elaborate composition of a *tableau*.

fruits have escaped their containers, with one pear remaining behind in the former. No table or ledge is indicated in *Apples and Pears*—the paper is left blank—but some such still-life surface is implied as coequal with the surface of the drawing sheet. In *Apples, Bottle, and Glass*, a foreground edge, a surface, and a background have begun to be fleshed in, pencil lines to be masked by watercolor, and the drawing sheet covered from top to bottom. But that process has only just begun; the way to completion is only hinted at. These are *études* of the kind that might have been developed further, into compositions reminiscent of some of Cézanne's simpler Chardinian oils of spherical fruit on a surface, like *Still Life with Apples* of the previous decade (fig. 20) and many others. But they did not; they remained in the state of fruit outlines penciled in in fairly firm relation to one another and then just barely fleshed out with watercolor. In another subset of the still-life genre, *Vase of Flowers* (fig. 31), delicate in its spatial and coloristic minimalism, is an *étude* complete unto itself. There is just enough penciling and coloring in of the corner, the glass, and the



Figure 31
Paul Cézanne
Vase of Flowers, 1890
Watercolor and graphite on
white paper, 46.6 × 30 cm
(18⁵/₁₆ × 11¹³/₁₆ in.)
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam
Museum PD.6-1966v



Plate 13

Paul Cézanne
Apples and Pears, 1882–85
Watercolor and graphite
on white paper, 25 × 32 cm
(9 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.)
Private collection

Apples and pears have multiplied to escape their container, which sits holding one remaining pear. No table or ledge is indicated—the paper is left blank—but some still-life surface is implied as coequal with the surface of the drawing sheet. This is the kind of *étude* that might have developed further, into a composition reminiscent of some of Cézanne's simpler Chardinian oils of spherical fruit on a surface.

But it did not; it remained in the state of fruit outlines penciled in in fairly firm relation to one another and then just barely fleshed out in watercolor.



Plate 14

Paul Cézanne
Apples, Bottle, and Glass,
 1895–98
 Pencil and watercolor
 31 × 48 cm
 (12¼ × 18⅞ in.)
 Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Apples, *Bottle, and Glass* (1895–98) is an example, from early in the last decade of Cézanne's life, of the beginning lineaments of a *tableau* in pencil and watercolor that was never completed or even fully conceived. In it, the painter has sketched a ledge surface replete with horizontal edge and a hint of drawer or other vertical seam, ten apples (and perhaps the beginning of an eleventh, to the left), the beginnings of a glass and a wine bottle to the right, the slight suggestion of a pot lid or other such item at the left, and the first indications of a curtained or

windowed background. Cézanne then started to model and fill in some of the apples—along with the left edge of the bottle, and the interstice between the bottle and the goblet—with watercolor. But that is as far as he went; in varying degrees, the apples are left open to the white of the paper they barely inhabit, while the glass and bottle disappear into the thin air above them. Here Cézanne's working process, still more or less linear in its order of pencil conception and watercolor realization, displays itself with a lovely economy of means.

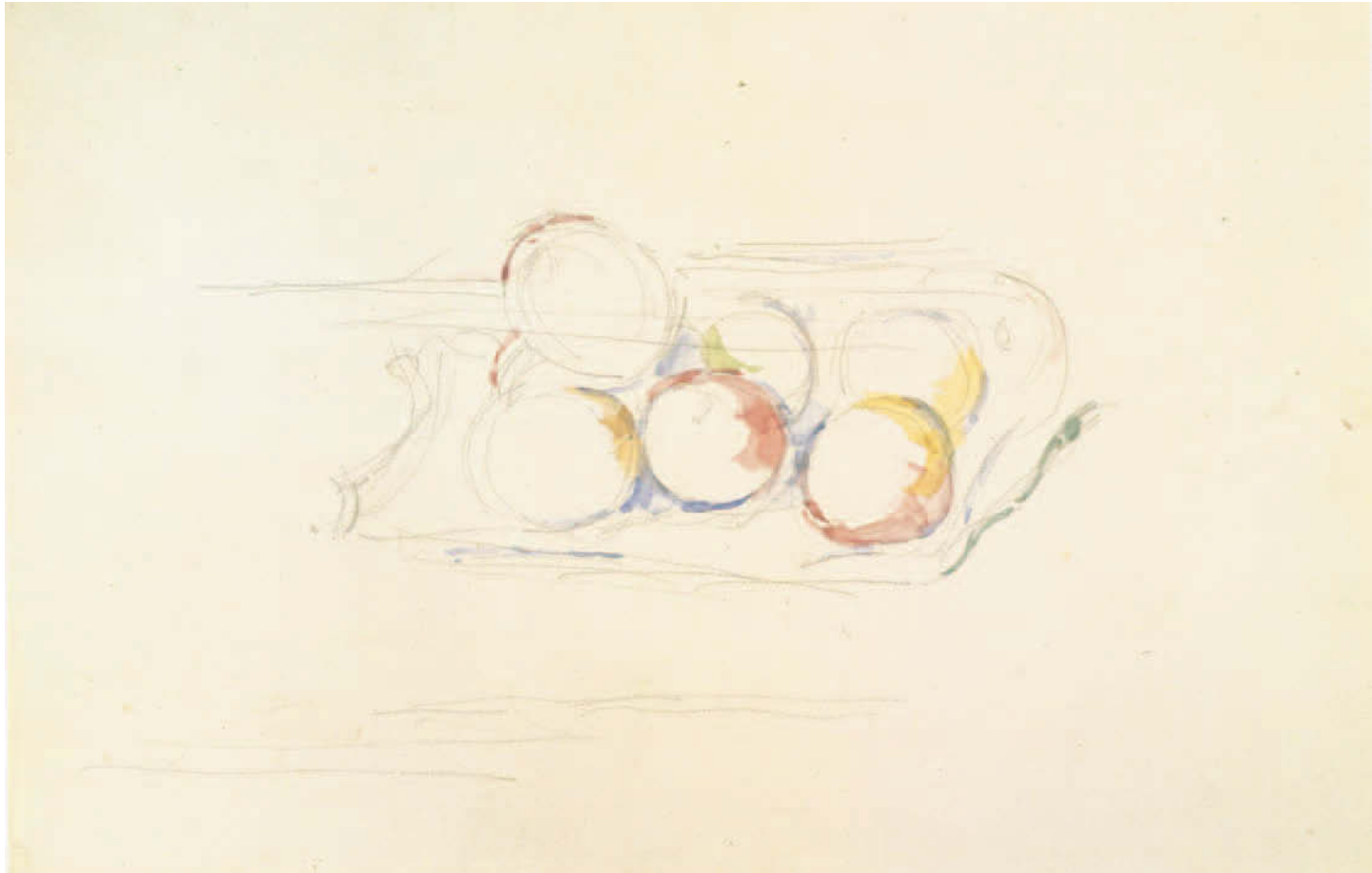


Plate 15

Paul Cézanne
Apples on a Plate, 1902–6
 Watercolor and graphite on
 white paper, 31.5 × 47.9 cm
 (12³/₈ × 18⁷/₈ in.)
 Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans
 Van Beuningen F 11 121

From the last years of Cézanne's life, *Apples on a Plate* is related to earlier, relatively simple arrays of fruit on or off plates. Its six or so apples are grouped together, more or less on or in a plate, and without any spatial elaboration to give them a compositional context, so that together they constitute a single study motif. *Apples on a Plate* lacks the wider context, the fuller fleshing out in color, and indeed the competition between the registers of pencil and watercolor of Cézanne's watercolor *tableaux*. Its ratio of watercolor to pencil is similar to that

of the 1880s studies, yet the pencil lines that course over and under its slight color speak of neither a linear process nor a state of pictorial completion. This is a study that Cézanne simply stopped working on, perhaps adding a few pencil lines for good measure under the motif just before he stopped. Here the evident lack of completion—its unnecessariness—spells *étude*, but the equally evident antilinearity of the process of drawing and watercoloring is one shared, in this period of Cézanne's work, by *étude* and *tableau* alike.

posy to indicate its existence and remove any doubt about its where and what and its belonging to the floral category of still-life drawing and painting. It needs nothing else; it would lose all of its rare quality—all of its poignant airiness, insubstantiality, and lightness of touch—were more pencil or color to be added, were the space of the paper to be more filled in, were it to become something more complex, or something worked out in the heavy medium of oil. This is the *étude* valued in itself, reminiscent of some of Manet's sparest, most elegant watercolor haikus of just ten years earlier.

But what of "studies" like *Apples on a Plate* (pl. 15) from the last years of Cézanne's life, the Les Lauves period? Related to earlier, relatively simple arrays of fruit on or off plates, it represents more than one object. But its six or so apples are grouped together, more or less on or in a plate, and without any spatial elaboration to give them a compositional context, together they constitute a single study motif. Like other works of its time with still-life items gathered together in a container, *Apples on a Plate* is distinguished from them in lacking their wider context, their fuller fleshing out in color, and indeed their competition between the registers of pencil and watercolor. In this work, the ratio of watercolor to pencil is similar to that of the 1880s studies, yet though the color is slightly more complex—less one-to-one in its referentiality—the pencil lines that course over and under and through that color speak of neither a linear process nor a state of pictorial completion. This a study that Cézanne simply stopped working on, I feel fairly sure, perhaps adding a few pencil lines under the motif for good measure, just before he stopped, to punctuate the expanse of white paper left bare around the apples, eating into the barely indicated fruit and its even more minimally limned plate, substituting for a frame around a composition. Here the evident lack of completion—its unnecessariness—spells *étude*, but the equally evident antilinearity of the process of drawing and watercoloring is one shared, in this period of Cézanne's work, by *étude* and *tableau* alike.

Among Cézanne's drawings and watercolors, as late as the 1890s, there are studies that seem to function as *esquisses* toward or after a composition in oil as well. Such is the case with one of the graphite drawings that Cézanne made of the plaster cupid from the front (fig. 33) some years before painting the oil in the Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, London (fig. 32), which itself is a *tableau* on the theme of studying in the studio. A suite of faintly watercolored drawings of other aspects of the cupid, seen from the side and the back (pl. 16) date to well after the Courtauld oil. Thus, in the painting of this one picture, Cézanne first worked from drawing to picture, *esquisse* to *tableau*, in the traditional, linear order, and then he complicated and reversed the procedure by doing *esquisses* after the *tableau* or the subject of the *tableau* (which itself raises the question of the relationship between plaster copies, painted copies of those copies, and original paintings). There is no question but that the Courtauld *Still Life with Plaster Cast* is a *tableau* and the earlier graphite drawing an *esquisse* toward it (or perhaps an *étude* that turned into an *esquisse* when Cézanne decided to make a full-fledged *tableau* of the subject), but all the steps in between and afterward both allude to and undo that clarity of procedure, just as the multiple

Figure 32

Paul Cézanne
Still Life with Plaster Cast,
c. 1894
Oil on paper mounted
on panel, 70.6 × 57.3 cm
(27¹³/₁₆ × 22⁹/₁₆ in.)
London, Courtauld Institute
of Art Gallery, The Samuel
Courtauld Trust, P.1948.SC.59

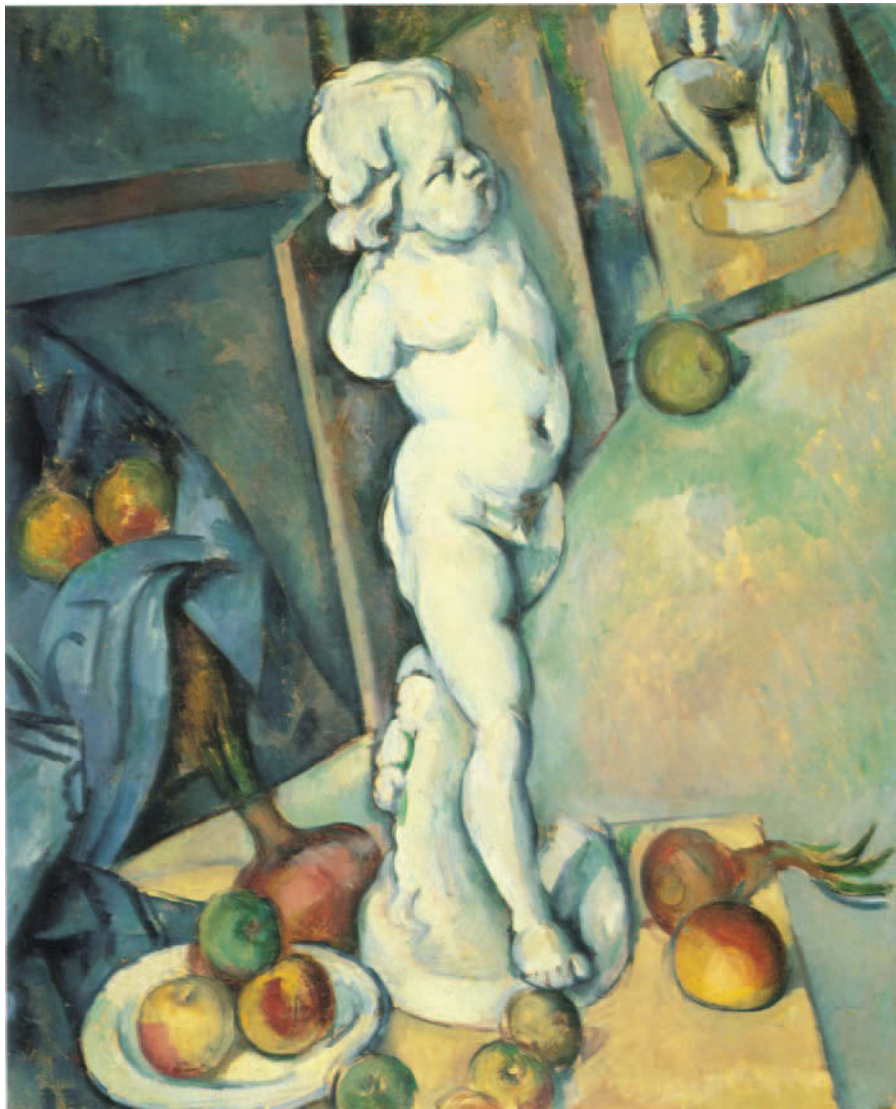


Figure 33

Paul Cézanne
Plaster Cupid, c. 1890
Graphite on paper,
49.7 × 32.2 cm
(19⁹/₁₆ × 12¹¹/₁₆ in.)
London, The British Museum
1935.4.13.2



Plate 16

Paul Cézanne
Plaster Cupid, c. 1900–1904
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 47 × 22 cm
(18 ½ × 8 ⅞ in.)
New York, The Pierpont
Morgan Library,
Thaw Collection

Cézanne's drawings and watercolors include studies that seem to function as *esquisses* either preparatory or subsequent to a composition in oil. Such is the case with his many pencil and watercolor studies of a plaster cupid that both predate and postdate the oil painting in the Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery (fig. 32), which itself is a *tableau* on the theme of studying in the studio. The present *Plaster Cupid* belongs to a group of faintly watercolored drawings showing various aspects of the statuette, seen from the side and the back, dating well after the Courtauld oil. Thus, in the painting of this one picture, Cézanne first worked from drawing to picture, *esquisse* to *tableau*, in the traditional, linear order, and then he complicated and reversed the procedure by doing *esquisses* after the *tableau*, or the subject of the *tableau* (which itself raises the question of the relationship between plaster copies, painted copies of those copies, and original paintings). This set of studies both alludes to and undoes the clarity of studio procedure, just as the multiple contours of *Plaster Cupid* refute their own clarity of line by repeating, rehearsing, and reinforcing it. Yet, at the same time, those repeated lines reiterate the studio process of working in the round and studying a plaster cast from all sides.





Figure 34
Paul Cézanne
Eternal Feminine, c. 1877
Watercolor, gouache,
and graphite on white
paper, 17.4 × 22.8 cm
(6 7/8 × 9 in.)
Private collection



Figure 35
Paul Cézanne
Eternal Feminine, c. 1877
Oil on canvas, 43.2 × 53 cm
(17 × 20 7/8 in.)
Los Angeles, J. Paul
Getty Museum 87.PA.79

contours of the later pencil and watercolor studies refute their own clarity of line by repeating, rehearsing, and reinforcing it. (The earlier graphite study is more traditionally drawn and shaded, its incomplete contours mimicking the incompleteness of the body of the plaster.) Yet, at the same time, those repeated lines reiterate the studio process of working in the round and studying a plaster cast from all sides, and with it the distinction between sketch (watercolor) and finished picture (oil).

Much earlier in his career, Cézanne had produced compositional *ébauches* in the old manner, working out a concept on paper before translating it into oil and finishing it on canvas. Such is the case of the fully worked-out watercolor study for *Eternal Feminine*, painted around 1877 (figs. 34, 35). This was done during a period in which Cézanne was shifting from an earlier emphasis on fantasy pictures to his focus on the plein air motif, with the intertwined problems of “sensation” and “realization” that it raised for him. The shift was not then, and never would be, complete, for *Eternal Feminine* was part of a larger set of variations on the theme of the nude done from the imagination rather than the model. This theme, which began with subjects like the Temptation of Saint Anthony and variations on Manet’s *Olympia* and *Déjeuner sur l’herbe*, continued to preoccupy Cézanne until the end of his life, in his great studio productions, the Large Bathers in the Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania; the National Gallery, London; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. But one thing did change fairly markedly, and that was what had been the development of a theme in a watercolor *ébauche* and its translation into a finished oil: in the realm of an imaginative concept, an allegory in this case, that lent itself to and even required such development.⁹ The bathers, male and female, that Cézanne worked on throughout his life may have had oil and watercolor variations, but the progress from one to the other was never clearly linear, nor was the distinction between sketch

Figure 36

Paul Cézanne
*Seated Woman (Madame
Cézanne)*, c. 1902–4
Watercolor and graphite on
white paper, 48 × 36 cm
(18⁷/₈ × 14³/₈ in.)
Collection Jan and Marie-Ann
Krugier-Poniatowski



and picture so evident. The Large Bathers, for instance, are clearly *tableaux*, yet they are as marked by a *nonfinito* process as any of the smaller variations in oil and watercolor. They also complicate the division between plein air study and in-studio production, for their outdoor settings invoke the world of landscape, while their generalizations of the body evoke the classical atelier. (Most of them had to be done in the studio, for no other reason than that they were too large to take outside.)

In his portraiture and genre painting, Cézanne worked between watercolor and oil, but rarely did his watercolors serve as sketches toward his oils. One exception might be *Seated Woman (Madame Cézanne)* of around 1902–4 (fig. 36), which relates both to works like *Young Italian Woman at a Table* in the Getty Museum (fig. 28) and to many of Cézanne's seated portraits of this period—all works that confirm his interest in the body that sits at and leans upon the still-life table. The watercolor study—with its reiterated blue contours of that body, its clothes, the chair back against which it rests, and the table leg under which it bends its knees—relates even more loosely to those oils, however, than the cupids sketched from several sides after the fact of the Courtauld picture.

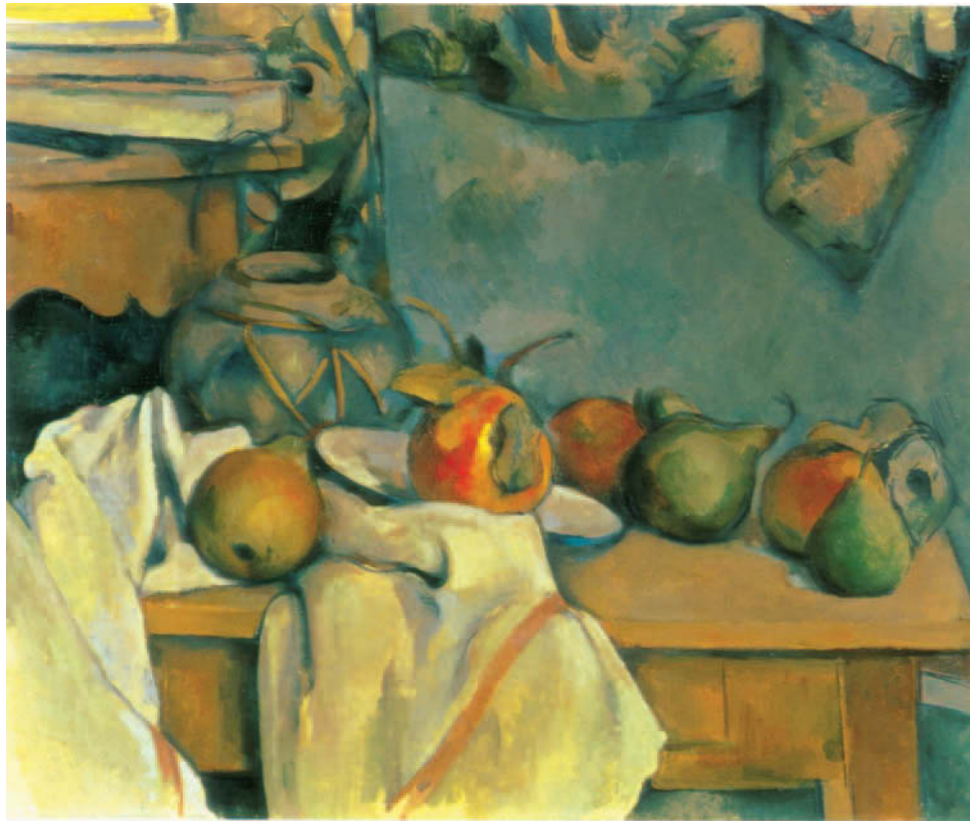
Every now and then Cézanne produced what might be seen as a pencil and watercolor *ébauche* of a still-life subject. At the end of his life, *Three Skulls* (pl. 9), for example, yielded an oil not only of the same subject but also with the very same composition. Or perhaps it was the other way around, and the oil yielded the watercolor, which is to say that though the watercolor looks like a sketch for the oil, they might be variations of each other in different media rather than preliminary study and final picture. A bit earlier, however, in the 1888–90 *Ginger Jar with Fruit on a Table* (fig. 37),



Figure 37
Paul Cézanne
*Ginger Jar with Fruit on
a Table*, 1888–90
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 24 × 36 cm
(9 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 14 in.)
Private collection

Figure 38

Paul Cézanne
*Ginger Pot with Pomegranate
and Pears*, 1893
Oil on canvas, 46.4 × 55.6 cm
(18¼ × 21⅞ in.)
Washington, D.C., The Phillips
Collection, Gift of Gifford
Phillips in memory of his father,
James Laughlin Phillips, 1939



Cézanne made an exception to his usual practice and began a still-life composition in oil (fig. 38) by working out its main lineaments in pencil and watercolor. Indeed, he did two watercolor *ébauches* for that composition, rearranging the foreground and the background a little as he went. As he did so, he experimented with different ways of using the paper support of the *ébauche* to indicate a context not yet filled in, and hence the definitionally incomplete status of the study, and/or to stand for the white of the napkin (whereas in the final oil-on-canvas composition the napkin is painted in, in white pigment). Here is another midcareer example of watercolor serving a secondary and supplementary role in relation to pencil contours, filling them in or at least beginning to do so with just an indication of how they might be filled out further. The final fleshing out, however, the termination of the work by filling in all of its contours, is in this instance left to the oil.

But that was an exception to the rule, one that served as a kind of control on the experiment by pointing to the traditional studio procedures of studying, sketching, and finishing, of drawing and then coloring in, which Cézanne was already then in a constant process of complicating, revising, and inverting. There are a few other instances of watercolors that might have ended up functioning as something like

Figure 39

Paul Cézanne
Apples, Carafe, and Sugar Bowl,
1900–1902
Watercolor and graphite on
white paper, 48 × 63 cm
(18¾ × 24¾ in.)
Vienna, Belvedere Museum,
öG 1941



ébauches, but for more “realized” watercolor compositions rather than for oils. Such is the case of the late, hesitantly painted *Apples, Carafe, and Sugar Bowl* (fig. 39) in relation to the more confidently rendered and fully fleshed-out *Still Life with Apples on a Sideboard* (pl. 17), to which a bottle, pitcher, and knife have been added and in which the blue metal pot of the Getty still life has replaced the ceramic sugar bowl. But there the movement is from watercolor to watercolor, and again the distinction between preliminary workup and variations on a watercolor theme is suggested only by the difference in complexity of composition and relative fullness of handling. By this time, when he drew and painted *Still Life with Blue Pot*, it was much more usual for Cézanne to alternate between finished and unfinished compositions in watercolor and pencil that had no preliminary relation to compositions done in oil, except that in the studio context of still life, the medium of watercolor retained closer ties to the *nonfinito*—allowing Cézanne some breathing room and relaxation from his struggles at “realization” so that he could explore minimally worked-out and barely filled-in compositions—whereas the oils tended, if anything, in the direction of dense overwork. So while he worked on full-fledged watercolor *tableaux* like the Getty still life, he also worked on more hesitant studies like *Still Life with Blue Pot and Bottle of Wine* (fig. 40), with its wavering, incomplete contours and its blank-page table foreground.



Plate 17

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Apples on
a Sideboard*, 1902–6
Watercolor on white paper,
47.9 × 62.9 cm
(18 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.)
Dallas, Dallas Museum of Art,
The Wendy and Emery
Reves Collection, 1985.R.12

Executed in the last years of Cézanne's life, *Still Life with Apples on a Sideboard* is one of the fullest and richest still lifes of that vibrant period. In addition to the same blue enamel pot found in the Getty watercolor, an array of other familiar objects are laid out on its humble, single-drawer sideboard: wine bottle; fat, flowered, wavy-lipped pitcher; platter; projecting knife handle; and approximately fifteen apples, four within the plate and the rest grouped to either side of it, at the bases of the bottle

and the pot. A full-fledged tableau, it renders enough of the surrounding space to give those objects a wider context. Yet this still life's objects are not really available for everyday use and consumption. They are too prolific and crowded for eating or cooking and thus evoke the studio, rather than the kitchen or dining room.

Vividly colored and fleshed out in the widest range of that palette, this still life is as "finished"—in the sense of being complete—as any of the watercolors of this period.

SOME OF CÉZANNE'S WATERCOLOR STILL LIVES are very clearly *tableaux*, for the same reasons that the Getty watercolor is. Such is the case of late works such as the still life on a sideboard just mentioned, *Bottles, Pot, Alcohol Stove, and Apples* (fig. 16), and *Still Life with Apples and Chair Back* (pl. 8). *Three Skulls* (pl. 9) and some of the related works of the same subject with one or two skulls look like completed compositions, though there are related works in oil. The status of other late watercolor still lifes is less clear, partly because, although they are complex, one-off works, their quality of *nonfinito* is more pronounced. Those include *Still Life with Apples, Pears, and a Pot*, *Still Life with Cut Watermelon*, *The Dessert*, *Still Life with Blue Pot and Bottle of Wine*, *Still Life with Fruit, Carafe, Sugar Bowl, and Bottle*, and *Still Life with Green Melon* (fig. 15; pls. 6, 8; fig. 40; pls. 18, 19).

It is in still-life studies like these that Cézanne must have come to understand the concept of the *tableau non fini*, the unfinished picture whose unfinish was a sign not of an incomplete linear procedure, of an idea not fully realized, but rather of a new conception of the picture and, along with it, a fundamentally revised process toward it. It was here too that he must have begun to understand the possibility of transforming the study proceedings of the studio into the notion of the variation on the study theme. Cézanne's variations on a theme were related to but also fundamentally unlike the Impressionist series: namely, the temporal, optical, or gestural series in which Monet and Degas in their different ways began to specialize, in which the time, light and palette, and/or the motion of the body changed the look of the same motif. The Impressionist notion of the series was an essentially photographic or cinematic conception, in which the series as a whole rather than individual parts of it eventually became the work of art.

Cézanne's variations were otherwise: in them the processes of the studio were studied from one picture to the next; no temporal, optical, or gestural change motivated the movement from one to the other; none was part of a larger whole. Instead, each represented a world unto itself that incorporated into itself temporal, optical, and gestural changes, and within them the only movement that occurred was the movement in the studio, in the picture itself, and in the eye and body of the draftsman as he drew, of the painter as he painted, and then of the viewers as they view. That is to say, objects were moved and reordered, brought in or left out, put in different parts of the studio; the artist's eye and hand then moved around the space of the picture and the objects within it, drawing and redrawing, painting and repainting them, and then the viewer is asked to do the same, vicariously. Each picture was a rehearsing of the time, optical space, and gestures of the studio. And each picture was a testing ground for pushing at the boundary between study and picture, and determining where and when to begin and where and when to finish—since there was no longer a predetermined place to start and to stop, as there had been in

Figure 40

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Blue Pot and
Bottle of Wine*, 1902–6
Watercolor and graphite on
yellowish paper, 47.6 ×
59.7 cm (18¾ × 23½ in.)
New York, The Pierpont
Morgan Library, 2002.61



the old movement from study to sketch to workup in a study medium to the beginning and ending of a finished *tableau*.

Of the examples in the exhibition of watercolor still lifes that hover between the condition of the study and the status of the picture and come to occupy the new category of the *tableau non fini*, perhaps *Still Life with Fruit, Carafe, Sugar Bowl, and Bottle* and *Still Life with Green Melon* (pls. 18, 19) are the best ones to examine somewhat more closely. They belong to a larger set of variations on a theme, including *Still Life with Cut Watermelon* (pl. 6), which refers back through Manet and Fantin-Latour to the Spanish tradition of the *bodegone*, in which melons were prominently featured.¹⁰ From one to the other, they show the principal motif of the watermelon cut and whole; in the front, the side, and the back of the composition; turned one way and the other so that the long, distended side and the shorter, more spherical side are turned toward the viewer; and in relation to different objects, which themselves change from study to study, picture to picture. If I were forced to determine



Plate 18

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Fruit, Carafe,
 Sugar Bowl, and Bottle*,
 1900–1906
 Watercolor and graphite on
 white paper, 31.5 × 43.1 cm
 (12 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 17 in.)
 Paris, Musée du Louvre,
 Fonds Orsay R.F. 38979

The late *Still Life with Fruit, Carafe, Sugar Bowl, and Bottle* is among Cézanne's watercolor still lifes that hover between the condition of the study and the status of the picture, occupying the new category of the *tableau non fini*. It belongs to a larger set of variations on a theme, including *Still Life with Cut Watermelon* (pl. 6) and *Still Life with Green Melon* (pl. 19), which refer back through Edouard Manet and Henri Fantin-Latour to the Spanish tradition of the *bodegone*, in which melons were prominently featured. From one to the other, they show the principal motif of the watermelon cut and whole; in the

front, the side, and the back of the composition; turned one way and the other so that the long, distended side and the shorter, more spherical side are turned toward the viewer; and shown in relation to different objects, which themselves change from study to study, picture to picture. This variation on the theme is one of the more tightly packed, overlapped, and watercolor-layered of the set; it is also more fully contextualized than most, with its side view of the watermelon and its table corner giving onto a bit of implied wall and floor space.



Plate 19

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Green
Melon*, 1900–1906
Watercolor and graphite
on paper, 30.5 × 48.3 cm
(12 × 19 in.)
Private collection

S*till Life with Green Melon* presents another variation on the southern theme of the watermelon grouped with other objects. If *Still Life with Fruit, Carafe, Sugar Bowl, and Bottle* (pl. 18) falls closer to a *tableau*, *Still Life with Green Melon* is a virtuosic study in deliberate incompleteness of the sort found in *Still Life with Blue Pot and Bottle of Wine* (fig. 40). Indeed the

"culminating-point" end of the melon becomes the fulcrum of a welter of brushwork and color whose kaleidoscopic vibrancy epitomizes the special bravura of Cézanne's late mastery of the medium of watercolor.

which was the study and which was the picture, I would choose *Still Life with Green Melon* as the former and *Still Life with Fruit, Carafe, Sugar Bowl, and Bottle* as the latter, if only because the first, with its repeatedly contoured end-view of the melon, has fewer objects, put side by side, and is less fully fleshed out than the second; more tightly packed, overlapped, and watercolor-layered; and more fully contextualized, with its side view of the watermelon and its table corner giving onto a bit of implied wall and floor space.

At this point, however, the reader may feel that these distinctions between *étude* and *tableau* have become so slight and so complicated as to no longer matter. Yet though that is essentially right—they certainly no longer matter much to us—they were distinctions of the studio that had mattered to Cézanne and out of which he developed a different order of conception and execution, and a different logic of pictorial completeness. They haunt his work in the studio, set up as a kind of theater for exercising and confounding such distinctions. They also help to define the process and pictoriality of the Getty *Still Life with Blue Pot*, a consummate demonstration of the full realization of the possibilities of Cézanne's new order and logic of the watercolor picture: densely layered, built up the way an oil painting might be; water-colored from corner to corner (except at the center, where the white linen lies); complexly composed out of a multitude of objects whose simplicity is turned into a kind of monumental grandeur; possessing an expanded space that runs from back wall to the foreground of the table/sofa to the hint of a seam between wall and floor, producing a kind of geography; and unified by a tapestry that moves behind, around, and under the composition and offers all the opportunities for layering, peacock coloring, spatial unfolding, and bravura studio demonstration that in this instance Cézanne decided to seize.

NOTES

1. See Peter Galassi, *Corot in Italy: Open-Air Painting and the Classical-Landscape Tradition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), esp. 11–12, on this set of distinctions. See also Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Phaidon, 1971).
2. John Rewald (*Paul Cézanne: The Watercolors, a Catalogue Raisonné* [Boston: Little, Brown, 1983], 232–33, nos. 571, 572) proposes that the Getty watercolor is a second, more accomplished version of the Michigan work, which he understands as a kind of preliminary working out of the composition, or *ébauche* (though he does not use that word). While I agree that the two watercolors are intimately related, and that the Getty watercolor is the more satisfying of the two, I believe them to be variations on a theme, rather than a sequence of preliminary and final efforts.
3. The medium of watercolor, however, also seems to have provided Cézanne with a model for painting more lightly in oil, for allowing the ground to show through and using its white or cream as a color in itself. All who write about Cézanne's work in watercolor suggest its importance to his late work in oil.
4. See Jennifer L. Shaw, "The Figure of Venus: Rhetoric of the Ideal and the Salon of 1863," *Art History* 14 (December 1991): 540–57, on the nineteenth-century maintenance of the link between drawing and masculinity versus color and femininity. Shaw's argument rests in large part on Charles Blanc's *Grammaire des arts du dessin* (Paris: H. Renouard, 1876) and its elaboration of the older association between color and femininity, going back at least to Roger de Piles in the seventeenth century, who defined *coloris* as the "difference of painting," that which distinguishes painting from the other visual arts: "le Coloris est non seulement une partie essentielle de la Peinture; mais encore qu'il est la différence; . . . le Dessin soit le genre de la Peinture, et la Couleur sa différence" (Roger de Piles, *Dialogue sur le coloris* [Paris: Langlois, 1673], 25–26). See Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *La Couleur éloquente: Rhétorique et peinture à l'âge classique* (Paris: Flammarion, 1989); and "Making Up Representation: The Risks of Femininity," *Representations* 20 (Fall 1987): 77–87. *Coloris* is to be distinguished from *couleur*; *coloris* means the illusionism and harmonic system of colors, while *couleur* simply signifies this or that pigment or local color.
5. See Richard Shiff, *Cézanne and the End of Impressionism: A Study of the Theory, Technique, and Critical Evaluation of Modern Art* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), on the relationship between Impressionism, Symbolism, and Cézanne. Of course, no artist, Impressionist or otherwise, ever really records what he sees passively, as if he were a camera lens. For example, Monet, who Cézanne said was "just an eye" ("but what an eye"), worked hard, deliberately, and very complexly on creating the *impression* of a passive recording of the light that entered his retina. On this subject, see Robert Herbert, "Method and Meaning in Monet," *Art in America* 67, no. 5 (1979): 90–108; and James Elkins, *What Painting Is* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 9–39.
6. Which is not to say that they were not collectible and exhibitable as *études*. See Galassi, *Corot in Italy*, 83–129.
7. Cézanne was converted to a lightened palette and an emphasis upon working *sur le motif* instead of from fantasy (which characterized his work of the 1860s) or upon copying the old masters (which he nonetheless continued to do throughout his life), through his close association with Camille Pissarro, particularly his campaign at Pontoise and Auvers in 1872 and 1873.
8. A prime example of the landscape *ébauche*, which corresponds to a finished oil of the same subject and composition, is the watercolor *Mont Sainte-Victoire with Large Pine* of 1886–87, in the Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., which is probably a preliminary version of the oil painting of the same name in the Courtauld Institute Galleries, dated to approximately 1887.
9. The nude was a studio tradition, predicated on the study of the male model—called the *académie*—as the basis of history-painting pedagogy and composition in the academic atelier and, increasingly, on the study of the female model in the private studio. The so-called *Eternal Feminine* may be understood as a kind of allegory of the studio, looking back to such precedents as Courbet's *Atelier: A Real Allegory of Seven Years of My Life as a Painter* of 1855, which was also such an allegory.
10. An uncharacteristic earlier study (c. 1885) of two whole watermelons with their stems still attached, overlapped and seen from the side, is clearly an *étude*; there are no other variations on this theme, nor are there any oils of this subject. See Rewald, *The Watercolors*, 133, no. 200.



Pencil Lines and Watercolors

Yellows:

*Brilliant yellow. — Naples yellow. — Chrome yellow.
— Ocher. — Natural sienna.*

Reds:

*Vermilion. — Red ocher. — Burnt sienna. — Red lacquer.
— Carmine lacquer. — Burnt lacquer.*

Greens:

Veronese green. — Emerald green. — Green terra.

Blues:

Cobalt blue. — Ocean blue. — Prussian blue. — Black.¹



Figure 41
Computer-enhanced infrared
digital capture of *Still Life with
Blue Pot* (pl. 1)

We now embark on a fourth and final trip through the Getty's Still Life with Blue Pot: this time in depth, into and through the layers of pencil and watercolor and back out again. Once again this trip will require patience, for this time we shall look at the watercolor still life archaeologically: digging with our eyes into the artist's working process, from the top level of reinforcing Prussian blue down through the thinner colors and through the tangle of lines laid over and under those colors to the paper beneath. This is an imaginative excavation, however, rather than an art detective's fact-finding mission; it will not reconstitute Cézanne's procedure step by step in any exact or linear way, for his way of working in his late years, especially in fully orchestrated compositions like this one, pits itself against such a reconstruction. Rather, this "dig" will try to re-create what Cézanne might have done according to what the viewer's eye is encouraged to see in different parts of the drawing-painting (it is a mix of both) and in different kinds of viewing campaigns. For this is a still life in watercolor that solicits from the viewer a comprehensive and empathic engagement in the artist's eye-and-hand



Detail 8

dialogue among paper, pencil, watercolor, and objects in space. It offers a journey through the studio in microcosm: through its objects but also through its means, as those means create and at the same time search unceasingly for their ends. And so the state-of-the-art conservator's and photographer's technology to which we have subjected this work, available neither to Cézanne himself nor to the layman viewer of our time, will be used only to enhance what the naked eye sees, feels, and gropes toward, what it senses lying beneath its imagined fingertips, its

hypothesized pencil point and watercolor brush and the strata of graphite and pigment left by them.

We cannot look only in depth, of course, or localize that looking in one area of the drawing, one part of the watercolor. Indeed, we will have to circle around and retrace our steps to and from a starting point. And different parts of Still Life with Blue Pot suggest different kinds of in-depth looking. We are encouraged, by habit as much as by Cézanne, to look first at the rough center of the large, uncut sheet of machine-made Montgolfier



Detail 7

Saint Marcel les Annonay paper (detail 7),² where beneath the eyes the artist's process reverses itself and we see white linen turn back into the unpigmented white of the paper itself, laid bare here, as in a little bit of the upper left-hand corner of the sheet, and glimpsed here and there elsewhere, but whiter in effect in the center (detail 8).³

It is here that the discrepancy between subjective optical effect and objective observation and comparison shows itself: the white at the center is no whiter in reality than the white of other untouched areas of paper, yet its effect is that of the clean, bright white of table linen in contrast to the dimmer beige effect of the "background" whites. That enhanced sense of whiteness is due to several factors at once: first, our reading the center white as white cloth and as foreground rather than as background white and, second, our seeing it in relation to the bright rather than faded colors that enframe and punch up its whiteness. There is a third factor as well, and that is the sheer central breadth and weight of its whiteness—as Cézanne is reputed to have said about green, a kilogram of white is whiter than half a kilo, or a gram, of the same color.⁴ And, one might add, a large patch of white at the center is worth a good deal more than a small patch of white in a corner or at an edge; its placement matters as much as its amount and its context.

Thus, paradoxically, it is where the paper has least upon it that it carries most optical weight and illusionistic charge. And it is to where the paper is flattest and barest, and facture and color all but nonexistent, that our eye is drawn first, to look at what lies

"under": to discover the hints of the very first lineaments of the pencil drawing that laid in the composition, in tandem with tiny, accidental splatters of pigment and possibly the last dashes of graphite, finishing touches here and there, leading me, at least, to imagine a painter holding a brush loaded with blue in one hand and a pencil stub in the other, working ambidextrously between one and the other in a manner never seen before and still all but inconceivable to the eye and mind trained in centuries of drawing practice.

Here as well as elsewhere it is difficult to ascertain what was last; even the microscope fails to settle the bet once and for all. We are relatively secure about what came first—a tangle of lines laying out the central composition above the white linen (which shows up in an infrared scan [fig. 41] and is hinted at in certain places upon close inspection)—and

what came last—the drawing in blue that reinforces most of the outlines—but in between we lose our certainty in a kaleidoscopic mix of paint and pencil marks that dares us to sort it out while cheating us of our conclusions. The maze starts here, at the center, where there is least to see through, where the work and material buildup is least dense, where the trap is set and the game of hide-and-seek begun. From there we hunt in vain for the exit, as the painter himself must have done, getting himself in and out of the woods and in again, trying not to paint himself into a corner, endeavoring not to paint too much or too little, attempting to find a balance easier to achieve in a less-worked étude, looking to know when and where to stop but never knowing in advance.

If we scan around the edges of the cloth at the center, we begin to see beginning and



Detail 9



Detail 10

ending marks as well as mistakes that must have been accepted thereafter as a given of the unfolding composition: the watery patch of thinned olive green at the lower left suggests itself as one such (detail 9), a pooled bit of stray color that had to remain, like other stray marks of the same or similar color, at the bottom edge of the conflated surfaces of table linen and sheet of paper, along the edge of the red stripe on the linen to the right, beneath the third apple diagonally above it (detail 10). The white cloth is a bit like a palette in that regard, with traces of paint upon it, a red side by side with that dun green, divided by a slight touch of blue, topped by a bit of eggplant purple-brown, on the edge of golden yellow. Near those stray marks, exposed pencil marks trail off, underneath the blue-edged fold to the left, dragging along more or less parallel to the edge of the linen above, under and over the loops of blue just beneath the pitcher, alternating with one another rather than matching up, threaded on top of one layer of diaphanous paint and beneath another. Meanwhile, down and over to the right, two lines cross over the descending diagonal of the red stripe: an afterthought, punctuating the end of the drawing perhaps, or perhaps the index of a pencil picked up, yielding to impulse and then to second thoughts, and put down again—a pentimento, of a peculiarly Cézannian kind, over rather than under the “finished” work, marking the openness of a process never finally closed, the aleatory fragility of the decision to stop. And then, around the periphery of that peculiar shape of off-white with its pencil tracks, brush



Detail 11

splatters, and subtle faux pas, veil upon veil of color gathers—emerald green, ocher orange, sunflower yellow, red turning to wine, and Prussian blue—all hedged in and held at bay by a boundary, reinforced repeatedly, of the same blue.

It is underneath that blue boundary—that blue-upon-blue demarcation between the linen’s tabula rasa and the tapestry’s bright, complicated films of color—that we begin to sense the presence of the very first steps of the drawing, the roughing in of the composition in the loosest of looping graphite lines. Upon closer inspection, and then technology-aided examination, we find pencil lines swirling in a scribble—sometimes continuous, sometimes broken—that meanders from apple to apple to white pot to milk pitcher to folds in the linen and then partial edges, and finally to the fragmentary contours of the tapestry on the right, and in



Detail 12



Detail 13

the upper left we find straight structuring lines that indicate a heavy horizontal fold and the vicinity of the curved edge and fall of the heaped tapestry. The dimmest of lines are to be found beneath the layered blue of the eponymous blue pot—thin veins of graphite mined from within a sediment of cobaltlike blue so thick as to become almost opaque (detail 11): perhaps the blue pot was the first thing to be roughed in. A repeated curve—

almost all of Cézanne's outlines are reiterated several times over, in pencil and later in watercolor, thus undercutting in one of several ways the long-standing opposition between line and color—runs from the second lump of apple on the right to the apple behind the white pot, forming both the edge of a small hillock of tapestry and a large span within which several smaller arcs are embraced (detail 12). Those several lines also

mark hesitations and changes of mind—about the size and number of apples, for instance, as well as the relation of apples one, two, and three to tapestry—and those pentimenti are allowed to show through to become an integral part of the final work.

Other hesitations and changes of mind are evident to the naked eye as it searches amid the morass of watercolor hemming in the open area of white at the center: in the pitcher handle, in the third apple from the left, in the white pot. It is in the latter especially that we see repeated loops delineating the right contour, the handle, and especially the lid and left contour: there several lines swing through the interstitial tapestry between the pitcher handle and the little pot, until they hit the blue-veiled left edge of that pot (detail 13). In his later years Cézanne was never content with a single outline for any one object, and this little patch between two objects is an excellent example of that discontent. It is as if he wished to make objects and the spaces between them vibrate, and to make those in-between regions count as materially existent zones— not empty “negative” space, neither flat nor neutral, but an undulant fabric that catches the greater densities of objects within it, pushing and pulling at them, creating them out of and reabsorbing them into its own material weave. It is also as if he wanted to rehearse the gestures, the eye-hand intersections, the very process of constituting objects in space through drawing repeatedly, gradually ascertaining and firming up their edges yet at the same time constantly putting them in doubt, coming to a resolution through a process of



Detail 14

irresolution while unsettling every act of object definition. There was no pictorial product finally free of process for Cézanne in his late years, no objective world free of subjective interaction with it, no visual perception free of imagined tactile apprehension or the very real physical touching of hand and pencil to paper: one comes into fragile being through the other while constantly verging on dissolution—as if the kinetic state of matter were all tangled up with the equally kinetic and equally entangled acts of perception and delineation.

The pencil lines beneath the light and darker blues of the white pot lie uncovered for a moment in two crisscrossing lines in the free white zone of the pot's lid, between the two peaked points of left rim and lid tip, reinforced as they are by blue darkening to black (detail 14). Those pencil marks, like the quick X over the red stripe at the right edge of the linen, are freer and darker than the others. Such marks call into question the underdrawing status of the graphite, and while they provide no certainty as to whether they were either final or later than the fainter marks located beneath areas of watercolor, they do propose a different kind of relation between drawing and painting than the linear trajectory from initial conception in pencil

to the filling in, layering over, and finishing off by watercolor: instead of separate layers, they suggest a threading of pencil through and through, and a reiterative, intricately dialogic relation between graphite lines and watercolor veils. Such a relation is suggested as well in the two swoops of pencil left partially evident in the folds beneath the pitcher, partly bolstered and partly countermanded in the parentheses of blue and the veils of rose laid over it (detail 15). It is suggested as well in the loose, blunt-pencil scribble of graphite below and perhaps also over the fold in the very center of the linen, just below the second apple from the left. And it is indicated in the quick swirl of pencil that escapes from beneath the red stripe to the left.

There are many areas in the watercolor where no pencil lines at all are to be found, whether visible or buried beneath color: the

red stripes on the cloth, much of the brightly colored design of the tapestry, and all of the wall, including the horizon line of wainscoting, the double line of molding where the wall meets the floor, and the two large zones of wall surface, light and dark, that they demarcate. Indeed, the archaeology of Still Life with Blue Pot reveals that whereas graphite congregates in the center of the composition, next to a large zone of mostly empty white paper, it thins out and disappears toward the perimeter of the work. This is not to say that the peripheral regions of the still life were unimportant to Cézanne or insignificant to the viewer. On the contrary, they allow for a dialogue between object composition and free surface that reads as open space, between densely and thinly worked areas; they provide relief and breathing room, encouraging the to-and-fro of



Detail 15



Detail 16

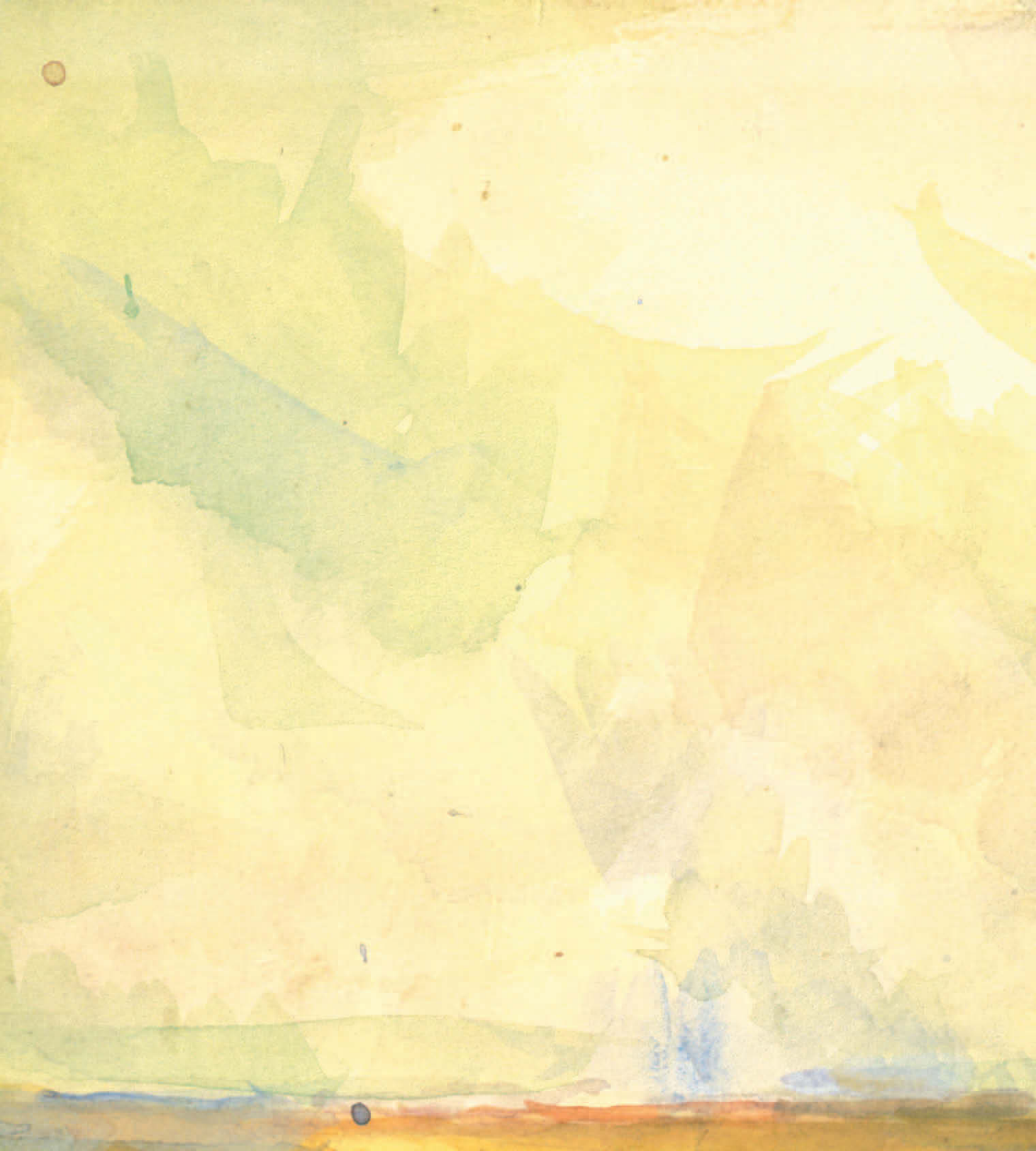
scansion and up-close inspection of different ways of working, snarled and reinforced at the center, diaphanously veiled at the outskirts. We shall begin with the latter, and move back in through the forest of tapestried taches, or patches, at the boundary of the central arrangement of objects, and in from there to the composition's node, the blue pot that is both starting and culminating point, that is layered with invisible graphite and gradations of blue running from thin to thick, translucent to opaque, from watery binder to richly pigmented mineral deposit, the two constitutive elements of the watercolor medium.

In the watercolor's northern suburbs we find the shallowest, most diluted of its districts, the band of translucent brown and green above the line of the uppermost course of the wainscoting (detail 16). There Cézanne's unusual manner of working in watercolor—laying down a patch of thin, relatively unmixed color, allowing it to dry, and then layering over it other patches, often stroked in different directions, of other colors, similarly thin, and similarly pure—can be parsed by the eye with relative ease. Because of the openness of this strip, its aeration by

bare white paper, and its lack of concentrated pigment or dense complication, it is easier to see through one layer to the next, from the palest of rose to a wash of blue to a slightly, but only slightly, denser accumulation of dun green, not necessarily in that order. (It is a pool of the same dun green that seems to have escaped its bounds to lie stranded at the bottom left edge of the white linen, perhaps initially in an effort to balance the pale green with the brilliantly multicolored with the bare white areas of the composition.) Also available to the eye here as nowhere else in the still life is the characteristic watercolor "handwriting" of Cézanne, the way he feathered the watery pigment out from its original pool in thinner, fingerlike strokes that simulate the hatch marks of his drawing (not to mention the diagonally laid "constructive strokes" of his oil painting) while amorphously evoking the very hand and even the brush(es) with which he worked (detail 17).

In the ribbon that divides the upper region of wall from the lower (this skyline is the largest threshold on the sheet of paper, a kind of frame within a frame), we can see the complementary way in which Cézanne worked with macroboundaries and large

Overleaf: detail 17







Detail 18

horizons that were not established first in pencil. Building broad and narrow strips of color on top of one another, repeating the horizontal line of the course in small, its golden color in violet and rose and pale blue—including, toward the conclusion of the process, a long patch of pale blue smudged over the wainscoting band just to the right of the blue pot (detail 18), and several horizontal marks beneath it a longer, subtly wavering line of purple broken off and briefly begun again at the end—Cézanne worked from the horizontal patch to the thin line of color, rather than the other way around. In other words, he quite literally blurred the boundary between color tache and draftsmanly line, laying them side by side and over one another so that the difference between one and the other is seen as a matter of thickness and thinness, translucency and opacity, the slightest distinction in emphasis between the faintest of light refraction (pigment) and the most basic graphism (line).

At the same time he reversed the order of line and color that the roughing in and

covering over of the objects at the center of the sheet initially suggest. Much the same happens, with different colors and different degrees of complexity, in the horizontal courses of the bit of lower molding, where the wall meets the floor in the southeast portion of the composition's geography—there the dominant harmony is provided by a somewhat darker, thicker overlay of rose on ocher with touches of blue and maroon; in the border of the tapestry (or is it the sculpted molding of a chair or sofa?) at the bottom center, where banding borders on curvilinear patterning and gold perforated by white leads into the denser polychromy of the tapestry (detail 19); and in the red stripe in the cloth in the western region of the paper, where opaque red is laid over transparent red, grows a bit of blue line beneath it, and is finally touched by a pale mark similar to the one found next to the blue pot (detail 20). None of these thickened lines, stripes, and bands has pencil lines beneath it; all have partial colored lines laid over them.

Between the two strips at the right lies a region of layered, crosshatched, fringed



Detail 19



Detail 20

patches of color, similar to those above the topmost course, but denser, browner and rosier in tonality, and darker—a kind of earthen median between the tapestry's complicated Provençal color patterning and the faintly brushed surface of the upper zone of wall (detail 21). At the left limit of that lower section of wall, where the wall behind the tapestry seeks to meet the contour of the tapestry's fall off the table, there is a curiously negative edge, a halo effect where the pale overlay of strokes forming the wall stops just short of the right edge of the tapestry's expanse of densely figurative, many-hued marks, forming a line of descent that runs

just parallel to it. The veiled demesne of the watercolor as a whole is writ large there; at the same time it is as if Cézanne wanted to mark the distance of the surface of the wall from that of the textile, as well as from the surface of the paper.

And perhaps he may have wanted to mark in some fashion the turning inside out of line and color, so that each is seen as an inversion of the other and the opposite of itself in its usual incarnation. Thus, the halving of the tapestry by a kind of interstice, the transformation of its edge into an extended threshold that is made partly of bare paper, produces an understanding of line, not as a



visibly definite contour containing a positive content and distinguishing it from the negative space around it, but as the place where color stops for a moment, where there is an interruption or gap in the color field, a kind of invisible vibration. Meanwhile the downward course that it follows highlights the way the edge of the falling fabric is broken into a series of colored marks, ocher followed by blue followed by vermilion and so on, like so many threads of color that make up the woven field of tapestried marks. Line, we see at that boundary where the action of limning turns into liminal area, is at once made of color, an interval within color, and a relative absence of color, while color itself is spun into line, and every color mark is seen to have a linelike edge. We can see that clearly in the strokes of watercolor to the right of the fabric's fall, many of which have visible shapes and contours through which we look to see other contoured shapes of color. The nimbus of the falling tapestry stands as a macromarker of the micrometamorphosis of line into color and color into line across the length and breadth of the watercolor.

The tapestry itself is woven out of a more intricate warp and woof of color-as-line and line-as-color. Again, it is important to realize that except for the odd fold, scribble, and bit of contour, there is hardly any graphite to be mined from this terrain: the colored patterning of the fabric has no pencil underpinning. Indeed, the tapestry in its various areas—heaped into a hill at the upper left, falling into a cathedral-like fold at the bottom left, and descending with a curved interior fold at the bottom right—offers an



Detail 22



Detail 23

exceptionally intense demonstration of Cézanne's realization of some of Baudelaire's most abstractionist remarks about modern art and color: the modern artist acts as a kaleidoscope, said Baudelaire; color is relational and plural in its effects, while working on the eye and imagination of the viewer like a prism or faceted jewel.⁵ The vibrant translucency of the textile's weave of color marks calls to mind the very metaphors that

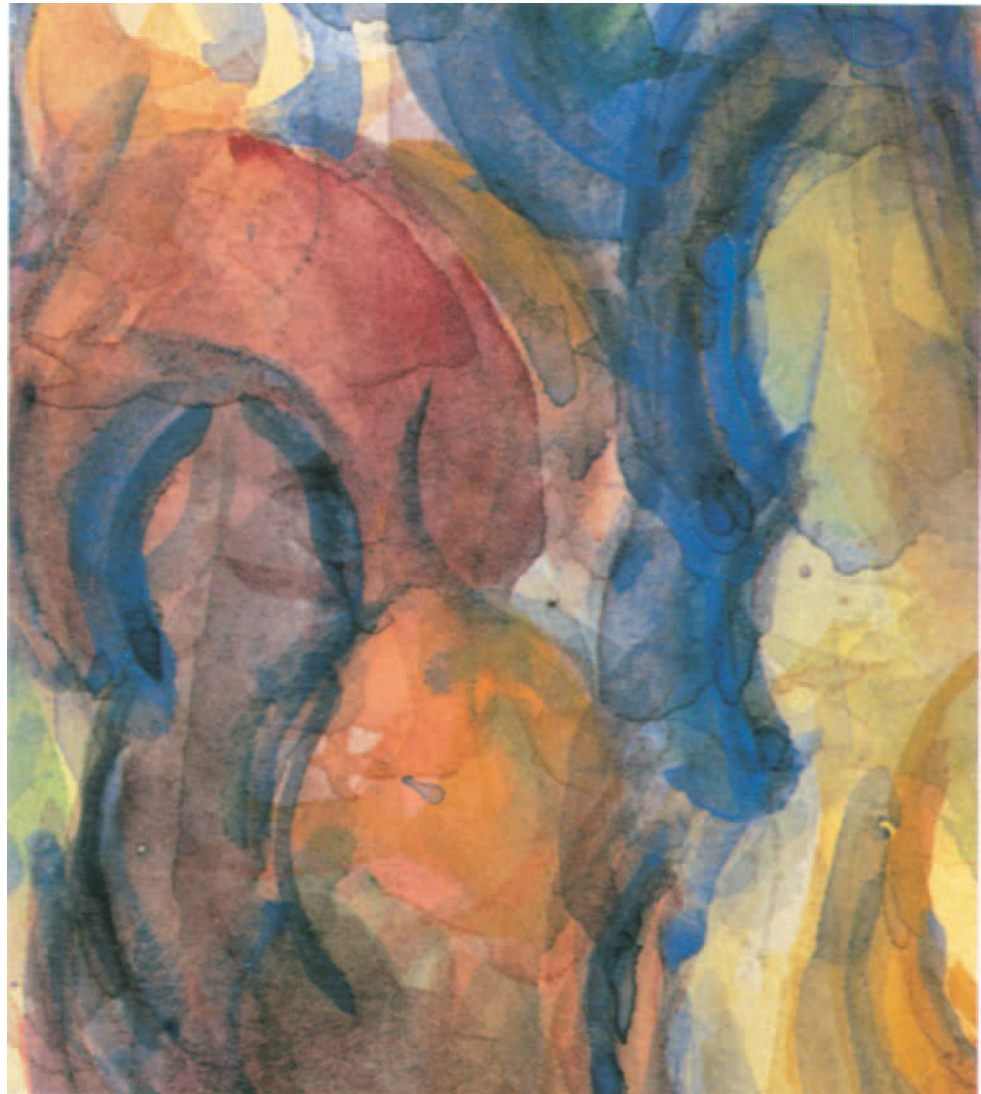
Baudelaire favored and then some: kaleidoscope, prism, jewel, not to mention stained glass, veil, and film (details 22, 23). That is, Cézanne worked with the medium of watercolor in such a way as to emphasize its properties of translucency and prismatic refraction. Moreover, instead of blending his color in water on the palette or the paper, he chose to work with brilliant, unblended, close-to-primary colors—red, blue, green, ocher, and



sometimes a deep purple and brown—
laid one on top of the other and left to dry
between applications so that at their inter-
section one color shows through the other
and produces an optical mixture that way:
as in veils of transparent fabric of different
hues, layers of colored film, or glass painted
with one color on one side and another on
the other side (detail 23).

Look at any patch of the tapestry, and
you will see approximately how this works.
Cézanne chose a fruited, flowered, and foliate
tapestry with yellow-gold bands running
through it (seen primarily in the upper-left
corner), whose richly colored pattern lent
itself to the color play produced in the
watercolor (detail 24). But he heaped it so
that its flat surface is all but indecipherable
as such, with folds crossing over folds so that
the patterning of the tapestry is everywhere
interrupted by itself. Which is to say that the
patterning of figure and ground that makes
up the tapestry—and in itself complicates
the volumetric-object-versus-flat-back-
ground reading of the still life—is already
layered over itself in a self-obfuscating way,
such that the eye searches constantly for
figurative legibility amid convoluted color
patches, and between piled design, dense
matter, and tangled, overlaid color mark.

Up close, the intrication of color and
pattern overlap becomes particularly laby-
rithine. Take, for instance, the lobed red
and gold and blue and green pattern at the
right edge of the falling fabric, where it
is most legible as pattern: that is where the
figured shapes of the textile are most dis-
cernible, producing a curvilinear field of red,



Detail 25

gold, and blue marks interlaced with green
between them (detail 25). There it is pos-
sible to see how the curving marks of the
watercolor brush, especially the bit of ogive-
arched red lined with blue next to the blue-
limned, gold-lobed shape at the very edge of
the tapestry at the lower right, follow the
shapes provided by the tapestry's patterning

—in this way too Cézanne inverts the order
of representation, so that figurative touch
yields abstract mark as much as the reverse.
At the same time we can see how a red lay-
ered on top of gold and a hint of green and
blue produces a color that shades from
brown to wine and orange and purple, and we
can see the edges of two different marks of



Detail 26

red, one building the translucency of the other into a density that begins to approach opacity. Next to it we can see how a loaded C-curve of ochre is built on top of a dilute ochre with veils of pale green and lavender beneath, topped off by dense Prussian blue contour strokes above. Above those two interlocked shapes we can see how green under blue layered with a touch of red produces a variegated blue ranging from sky and cornflower to lavender. Above that and slightly to the left, the maze of marks and colors becomes more complicated, and the figurative basis of the color layers is increasingly buried: an orange is made of red built on top of yellow, lying next to a green that is glimpsed through blue and eggplant next to layers of ochre, next to veils of ochre, wine, and blue. Commas of blue, dark red, and black finish it all off—again, line completes color as much as the other way around. Again, figuration lies buried beneath kaleidoscopic color.

In the heap of tapestry in the upper left, the complication just described is acute and almost indescribable. Here the large dividing

lines of the gold banding within the tapestry provide the gross indication of surface design and the only road map to its pattern; they also suggest a kind of structuring armature within which color runs riot. And here the heaping of the tapestry into a massive, almost geological fold that seems heaviest just above the bent horizontal of the gold banding accrues out of the dense, lapidary accretion of color marks one on top of another, with some aeration by white, as if it were literally the amassing of pigment layers that accounts for the amassing of the material weight of the fabric. Or is it that the folding of color upon color to the point that its figurative underpinning is lost to sight was suggested by the folding of the fabric over itself upon the studio table? The morass of colors both next to and beneath and over one another is undecidable, literally stunning in its effect of rainbow hue and peacock splendor—all we can do is inventory its oranges, reds, ochers, greens, blues, and purples, and guess at which lies under and over which (sometimes one and sometimes the other—for instance, a green lies under blue and purple in one

place, and seems to lie over them in another); the order is never fixed (detail 26). The layering is densest at the very center of that mountain of tapestry, where the two bands of gold intersect and lose their way, and where the edges of a multitude of once-watery color patches crowd ten- and twentyfold. At the inner edge of that heap, where those colors array themselves at the limit of the bare-paper area of white, they pile atop a buried line of graphite, dense blue atop maroon atop green, probably atop an underlayer of paler blue. There density of pigment confronts absence of pigment in a kind of meeting of opposed forces. Meanwhile the upper-left contour of the heap of fabric is gone over in broken, repeated threads of red, ochre, blue, and maroon, while interior folds are reinforced by blue, maroon, and black commas, dashes, and S-marks (detail 24).

Below, where the fabric falls on the left, there is one final confrontation between the figurative use of color and a dense color layering that suggests abstraction—the gothic fold of tapestry layered with blue and violet that lies between lobed and outlined shapes of gold, green, and red, clearly evoking the fruit and flowers of the tapestry design (detail 27). Here Cézanne worked his colors almost too heavily, for the greens, yellows, and wines that lie below the blue and milky violet begin to grow muddy, and the reinforcement by blue—everywhere blue—red, and black lines begins to acquire the look and feel of an unwanted pentimento—an effort to correct that began to go too far. Pull back, however, and it has the advantage of weighting the sheet, balancing the vivid blue note



struck by the blue pot that gives the still life its name, and offsetting the volumetric drama of the centerpiece of blue pot, pitcher, white pot, and apples atop an apparently brilliant white cloth.

And here ends our archaeological journey through the still life, our excavation of its site of drawing and watercolor, at the place

where the composition began and where the finishing touches are most evident. Here color—red and gold for the apples, blue and white for the vessels—is used representationally. The veiling of dark red and ocher in the apples works much the same as elsewhere in the still life, except that here it rounds and models the forms of the fruit and



Detail 28

denotes the colored flesh of their surfaces. White shows through—with a squiggle of red-brown in the leftmost apple (detail 28), with traces of graphite visible in the third apple from the left—but it shows through to provide highlights and “culminating points”: those volumetric prominences that were so crucial for Cézanne, reversing perspectival diminution and vanishing-point convergence and organizing space around multiple nodes. White paper makes the porcelain of the pitcher and the enamel of the white pot, while repeated blue with a bit of purplish red and a touch of green provides a hint of patterning on the former and the modeling of the latter, as well as the multiple curving lines of its metal swing handle. Blue upon blue upon blue and violet forms the blue pot, which has almost no free white in it; instead, its highlight / “culminating point” is made out of a pale wash of blue glimpsed through thickened, opaque layers of richer, darker blue (detail 29); instead, one looks through blue to see more blue, and slightly different shades of blue. Finishing it all off are the blue and black and violet—and sometimes red—but mostly blue reinforcing lines that repeatedly demarcate the contours and the interstices between objects, causing them to resonate, vibrate, and hover between line and color, growing the two together. As we watch, the still life comes into being “out of the blue” and goes on coming into being constantly, forever, on the studio table, on the sheet of paper, before our eyes, under Cézanne’s imagined pencil and brush.



* * *

JF *STILL LIFE WITH BLUE POT* IS UNUSUAL in its many-layered, multicolored complexity and labor-intensiveness and in the way most of its pencil disappears beneath its color work, it is typical of the late watercolors in all genres in its highlighting of its own means, method, and medium; its antilinearity and open-endedness of process; and its questioning of the concept of finish, the opposition between line and color, and the old distinction between intention and execution. There are other still lifes in pencil and watercolor from the late period, when Cézanne had moved into his studio at Les Lauves, that are highly worked and densely colored. But none combines monumental composition with complexity of color effect in quite the way that *Still Life with Blue Pot* does, not even the still life that is closest to it in subject matter (fig. 3).⁶ And most are much more *étude*-like in their compositions, they are thinner and more transparent in their layerings, and thus their reiterated pencil lines are more evident and the interaction between graphite and watercolor more directly available to the eye. Nevertheless, the Getty still life partakes of the late project of probing the very process of “realization” that so preoccupied its author both indoors and out. Usually this has been understood as a struggle with the open-air landscape motif in the weightier medium of oil on canvas. But it was more delicately and self-reflexively rehearsed in the studio domain of the still life and the sketch-suited, see-through medium of watercolor and pencil on paper.

A trajectory may be traced from Cézanne’s early and middle years to the last half-decade of his life in these regards. Most of his still lifes in watercolor date from the latter period, perhaps because he was ailing and more housebound than theretofore and so probably spent more time in his atelier, working between his large canvases of nudes and his smaller watercolors of studio objects—between what have so often been considered the greatest and the least of his works, the human body in oil and the “colored drawing” of the *nature morte*. There are only a few such experiments in the 1870s, a period during which he produced very little in the way of still life in any medium and few watercolors of any subject. The 1880s and 1890s mark the real beginning of his watercolor practice in this domain, but though there is the beginning of a watercolor efflorescence in the outdoor study, his watercolors of still objects indoors remained relatively sparse and consistent in their method during these years. It was not until after he had built the Les Lauves studio and moved into it in 1902 that his still-life practice in this medium really took off. And then, in an oscillation between the minimally and the richly worked that characterized his outdoor production as well, his studio still lifes began to show off the new method that had developed in his outdoor watercolors, with their attention to air as a palpable medium, their seeking after effects of shimmer, prismatic light, foliate vibration, and the translucent overlapping of leaves; and their exposed use of pencil, not only for underdrawing and contour definition and reinforcement but also to vie with color,



Figure 42

Paul Cézanne
Forest Path, c. 1904–6
 Watercolor and graphite
 on off-white wove paper,
 45.5 × 63 cm
 (17¹⁵/₁₆ × 24¹³/₁₆ in.)
 The Henry and Rose
 Pearlman Foundation, Inc.,
 L.1988.62.46

Figure 43

Paul Cézanne
Rocks at Bibémus,
 c. 1887–90
 Watercolor and graphite
 on off-white laid paper,
 45.9 × 31.8 cm
 (18¹/₈ × 12¹/₂ in.)
 The Henry and Rose
 Pearlman Foundation, Inc.,
 L.1988.62.35.

in the form of patches of loose graphite that weave themselves into the warp and woof of Cézanne's multicolored overlay of watercolor *taches*. An excellent example of this is to be found in the late *Forest Path* (c. 1904–6; fig. 42), but it is evident much earlier as well, in studies such as *Rocks at Bibémus* of around 1887–90 (fig. 43).

In his earliest era of still-life production, the 1860s, Cézanne painted one tiny, unusual flower piece in watercolor (pl. 20), heavily touched with gouache and scribbled with the same expressionist dabs and flourishes found in the rightmost pear of *Still Life: Sugar Bowl, Pears, and Blue Cup* (fig. 5).⁷ This was a fully developed floral composition similar to Henri Fantin-Latour's by then signature flower pieces in its tabletop array of bouquet, fruit, plate, and other dining-room vessels, and at the same time a kind of baroque caricature of Eugène Delacroix's effusive florals in its swirling manner. Thus it mapped the epitome of romantic handling onto what might be seen as its opposite, the quintessence of bourgeois painting.⁸ With its dark background and liberal application of opaque whites, it has the look of a miniature version of Cézanne's roiling oils of the same period, and it couldn't be more different from his late work in watercolor in the genre of still life. Like *Sugar Bowl, Pears, and Blue Cup*, and in its very rarity, it too is a kind of marker: of Cézanne's strategy of caricaturing his forebears and adopting an exaggeratedly expressionist facture to signal a kind of hyper-romanticism—a kind of late-coming *sign* of the romantic manner; of a concept



Plate 20

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life: Flowers and Fruit
 on a Table, c. 1865–70*
 Watercolor and gouache
 on cardboard, 15.9 ×
 12.7 cm (6¼ × 5 in.)
 California, private collection

Cézanne's earliest known watercolor still life, this singular flower piece once belonged to the artist's patron Victor Chocquet. It is heavily touched with gouache and scribbled with the same expressionist dabs and flourishes found in the rightmost pear of *Still Life: Sugar Bowl, Pears, and Blue Cup* (fig. 5). With its dark background and liberal application of opaque whites, it has the look of a miniature version of Cézanne's roiling oils of the same period, and it

couldn't be more different from his late work in watercolor in the genre of still life. It is a kind of marker: of a concept of process as direct, unmediated gesture in a fluid material medium and of Cézanne's strategy of caricaturing his forebears and adopting an exaggeratedly expressionist facture to signal a kind of late-coming hyper-Romanticism. He considered it important enough to include in the third Impressionist exhibition, in 1877.

of process as direct, unmediated gesture in a fluid, material medium; and of watercolor as a place to quickly render an effect that might then be worked out more carefully in oil (though Cézanne did not really begin to produce oil florals until later). There was nothing particularly new about any of this, except perhaps the overtness of Cézanne's consciousness of facture, and his deliberate overstatement of the romantic posture of gestural colorism, in which ideation and execution are one and the same, rather than the latter following the former in a linear sequence.

That was a foretaste; the real work in still life and watercolor, and the transformation of Cézanne's understanding of studio process in those domains, was still to come. There are two still lifes in particular that exemplify the trajectory from Cézanne's middle to his late method of working between pencil and watercolor in the studio genre of still life: *Three Pears* of around 1888–90 (pl. 21) and *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* of 1906 (pl. 22).⁹ In the former, the deceptively simple composition of three fruits on a plate against a patterned background is brought into being by means of the relatively traditional filling in of pencil outline and shading by color and gouache. In this watercolor it is safe to say that almost all of the pencil work is underdrawing, creating the rounded contours of the three pears, the slightly warped ellipsis of the plate, and the background pattern, and then shading the right edge of the rightmost pear, the area beneath the pears on the plate, the passage from the flat to the lip of the plate on the left, and the left edge of the plate. In all of these places the graphite is left visible, and toward the upper-left part of the composition, there is a long diagonal patch of pencil hatching to suggest a cast shadow, perhaps: that patch of hatching is the sort of thing that might come in later watercolors, that might be laid over pigment and transform itself into a kind of color work, responding to and weaving itself into the layers of color *taches*. Here it appears to be painted over, and to be followed by a wash of light blue above.

In this little *tableau* Cézanne used a quarter sheet of weightier laid paper and a dark, blunt, heavily applied pencil, so that the filling in of his lines by color is all the more evident: we see it in the yellow, green, and orange pigment that fleshes in the pears, in the black that goes over the design of the blue and black fabric, in the bits of wash in the bowl of the plate, above it to the left and below it to the right, and in the final application of strokes of gouache beneath the plate to the left and highlighting bits of the tapestry just above the pears. The novelty of procedure in this still-life picture lies in the way Cézanne went over his contour lines repeatedly, and particularly in the way he left much of the paper bare, not only the framing corners of the image but its content as well, rendering the plate and the volumes of the pears through the cream of the paper itself. Those areas of bare paper serve to make the very simplicity of the still life complex, by folding positive and negative shape into an intricate, Escher-like pattern of inversion—shape into interstice, volume into space and ground and vice versa. At the same time they underline the linear process of working from underdrawing to shading, to filling in with color, reinforcing with black and finishing off with bits of opaque white to produce a final product that is solidly *there*. Already the process by which the image is formed on the paper is left



Plate 21

Paul Cézanne
Three Pears, c. 1888–90
Watercolor, gouache,
and graphite on cream laid
paper, 24.2 × 31 cm
(9 5/16 × 12 1/4 in.)
The Henry and Rose
Pearlman Foundation, Inc.,
L.1988.62.32

The deceptively simple composition of *Three Pears* is brought into being by means of the relatively traditional filling in of pencil outline and shading by watercolor and gouache. Here it is safe to say that almost all of the pencil work is underdrawing, even though the graphite is left visible beneath the watercolor. Toward the upper-left part of the composition, there is a long diagonal patch of pencil hatching to suggest a cast shadow, perhaps: that patch of hatching is the sort of thing that might come in later watercolors, that might be laid over pigment and transform itself into a kind of penciled color

work, responding to and weaving itself into the layers of color *taches*. Other novelties of procedure include heavy, repeated contour lines and the abundant use of bare paper, not only in the framing corners of the image but also in the plate and the volumes of the pears where the cream of the heavy laid paper shows through. Already the process by which the image is formed on the paper is left evident, but that process is methodical and linear, and the relation between start and finish, line and color that it enacts is clearly sequential.



Plate 22

Paul Cézanne
*Still Life with Carafe,
Bottle, and Fruit*, 1906
Watercolor and soft
graphite on pale buff
wove paper, 48 × 62.5 cm
(18 $\frac{7}{8}$ × 24 $\frac{5}{8}$ in.)
The Henry and Rose
Pearlman Foundation, Inc.,
L.1988.62.47

The late *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* offers a beautiful demonstration of how much distance Cézanne had traveled within his still-life and watercolor process. This still life is clearly devoted to showing its own compulsive process of making—of drawing with the pencil and painting with the watercolor brush and then drawing and painting and drawing again—thus indexing what goes on in the studio as well as what goes into it. Never before did the making of three different glass vessels out of the ingredients of white paper, graphite lines, and watercolor layers reiterate itself so evidently, showing how the concert of painting and drawing could mimic

the craft of glassblowing, bringing light and dark, transparent and translucent forms into being, as in this late still life. Never before did any of Cézanne's still lifes in watercolor set side by side so demonstratively the different degrees of rendering and the different ratios of watercolor to pencil needed to bring a set of objects into existence on the surface of a sheet of paper. The act of making carafe, bottle, and fruit by means of pencil and watercolor is as much the subject matter of the still life as the carafe, bottle, and fruit themselves, arranged in the studio for painting.

evident, but that process is methodical and linear, and the relation between start and finish, line and color that it enacts is clearly sequential.

Not so in the late period. *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* offers a beautiful demonstration of how much distance Cézanne had traveled within his still-life and watercolor process. This still life is clearly devoted to showing its own compulsive process of making—of drawing with the pencil and painting with the watercolor brush and then drawing and painting and drawing again—thus indexing what goes on in the studio as well as what goes into it. Never before did the making of three different glass vessels out of the ingredients of white paper, graphite lines, and watercolor layers reiterate itself so evidently, showing how the concert of painting and drawing could mimic the craft of glassblowing, bringing light and dark, transparent and translucent forms into being, as in this late still life. Never before did any of Cézanne's still lifes in watercolor put side by side so demonstratively the different degrees of rendering and the different ratios of watercolor to pencil needed to bring a group of objects into existence on the surface of a sheet of paper: very little of either (the glass), a superabundance of watercolor in relation to graphite line (the wine bottle), the predominance of line over color and a surfeit of graphite (the carafe). Thus the act of making carafe, bottle, and fruit by means of pencil and watercolor is as much the subject matter of the still life as the carafe, bottle, and fruit themselves, arranged in the studio for painting. At the same time the process of making that *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* shows off takes the incipient novelties of earlier works like *Three Pears*—the use of repeated contours, the employment of white paper as both figure and ground, volume and space, and the floating free of patches of pencil hatching—and pushes them to the point that the old linear sequence from line and shade to coloring in is, if not inverted, stretched and opened up into a circle, the unidirectional movement between original concept and its fleshing out converted into a dialogue without fixed conclusion between graphite and watercolor.

Much more than in the Getty still life, it is clear that Cézanne meant to let his pencil work be everywhere evident, as a crucial part of the factual effect of *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit*. It is by no means underdrawing anymore, though clearly Cézanne began by penciling in the composition, and it is more than likely that he made his final touches in watercolor. But the pencil is everywhere available to the eye; no infrared scanning is necessary to tease it out. It is to be seen in the line of wall molding, the back and front lines of the ledge on which the objects sit. It repeatedly marks the outlines of fruit—seven or eight apples and a bunch of grapes; the glass that stands behind them; the tall, dark wine bottle; and the transparent, wide-bellied carafe, replete with two different options as to where its neck ends, at the line of wall molding or in the lip that rises above it. It can be seen in the label of the wine bottle, and in the scribbled and curving marks on the wall surface behind the still life (or is it a balcony railing?—probably not, but it recalls those views out open windows with the rail and curving ironwork of a balcony in the foreground, such as the one on the verso of another late landscape).¹⁰ It is those marks, particularly the scribbling to the right, that most suggest the loosing of graphite from its moorings

in contour and shading and its use as atmospheric and color patch that we find in the late landscapes and which very possibly was applied after the first campaigns of drawing and watercoloring. But most of all it is the repeated contouring, found especially in the water carafe, that signals and reiterates the transformation of drawing from linear sequence to open process, from first idea to constant rehearsal of the gesture of making and reaction to the physical action of drawing, and from line to color too—shown best in the interlacing of graphite with blue and other colors of contouring, likely to have come at the very end.

Cézanne's earliest work—such as the flower piece discussed above (pl. 20)—declared its allegiance to romantic gesturalism, in which the directly evident gesture of the painter's color-loaded brush was the mark of self-expression *in process* and in medium, which is to say worked through *in* and carried *by* the movement and color of paint, rather than established prior to it. Cézanne's relation to that gesturalism was caricatural and thus paradoxically at a slight remove from it, and he famously had pulled back from it by the mid-1870s, when he entered the period of his calculated, uniform, "constructive" stroke and began his effort to curb his neo-Romantic excesses and rationalize his process of "realization." (At the same time, it is possible to trace his difficulties with the process of "realizing his sensations" to that shift.) The exaggerated romanticism of his late adolescent temperament never entirely disappeared, however, but was woven dialectically into the constructive aspect of his facture, in the form of the "deformations" of his "handwriting," and into his subject matter in the sensual displacements and anthropomorphisms of his still-life objects and in the form of his nudes, painted not "from life" but from fantasy. By the late period of his work, he had returned fully to a process-bound gesturalism, but by then it no longer purported to be immediately demonstrative or direct in its phantasmatic expressiveness; quite the contrary. This is clear in works like *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit*, with its repeated demonstration of the "how" of its own making. Rather than the feelings of its author toward the subject matter of fruit and glassware, its topic is itself and how it came into being in the studio, in the continual negotiation among eye and hand; paper, pencil, and watercolor; and objects in the world, in this case on a studio shelf that suggests another of those Cézannian openings onto a wider, if not a plein air, space.

The color patches and repeated contours found particularly in Cézanne's late works have often been understood as representing the flux and temporality of the world perceived and of the process of perception. Indeed, if for no other reason than that he was the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty's artist of choice, Cézanne has been understood as the quintessential representative of a phenomenological way of seeing, in which the world seen, though we know that it preexists us and we are a part of its preexisting fabric, comes into being in the living act of seeing and is all bound up with the temporal, physical, and kinesthetic subjectivity of the person doing the seeing.¹¹ What these accounts have always left out, however, is the physical act of drawing and painting itself—the fact that for the artist especially, there is no act of seeing free from or prior to the bodily act of representing. And that,

in my view, is what Cézanne's late watercolors in particular, and especially his late watercolor still lifes, argue repeatedly: the artist sees and learns to see by drawing and by painting as much as the other way around. His eye looking at objects is negotiated by his hand making marks on paper; his drawing and painting are educated by drawing and painting and more drawing and painting as much as by seeing itself, and in tandem with seeing; he never stops learning how to draw and to paint and indeed repeatedly learns it from the ground up in the very act of drawing and painting. As much as the seeing with which they are imbricated, drawing and painting are acts that take place in bodily time, and they need the studio for their constant rehearsal. Finally, drawing and painting respond to each other in an intricate material dance that seeks out the very boundaries, both physical and metaphysical, between line and color in order to probe and question them.¹²

Merleau-Ponty himself often characterized the living phenomenon of perception as a form of "drawing": "definite qualities only *draw themselves* [*se dessinent*] in the confused mass of our impressions if it is put in perspective and coordinated by space";¹³ "sound and color . . . *draw* an object, an ashtray or a violin."¹⁴ And one of Merleau-Ponty's prime demonstrations of phenomenological experience concerns a drawinglike action of the arm, hand, and pencil:

If I pass a pencil rapidly in front of a sheet of paper where I have marked a point of reference, at no moment am I conscious that the pencil lies above that reference point, I do not see any of the intermediate positions but nevertheless I have the experience of movement. Reciprocally, if I slow down the movement so that I keep the pencil in sight at all times, at this point the impression of movement disappears. Movement disappears at the very moment when it conforms most to the definition which objective thought gives to it. Thus one can have phenomena in which a moving thing only appears when taken in movement. To be aware of moving is not to pass step by step through an indefinite series of positions, it is only given in starting, continuing and achieving its movement.¹⁵

Comparing this experience of movement with that of watching the moving arms of workers unloading a truck, Merleau-Ponty goes on to elaborate this contrast between the geometrical plotting of movement in "objective thought" and the phenomenological feeling of movement in space. We might apply his statement to Cézanne's rehearsal of the action of drawing in both line and color in his late watercolors, as in *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit*, in which it is not so much the point-by-point geometry of the carafe that his repeated contour captures for the "objective" eye once and for all, as the experience of drawing recapitulated for the empathic eye over and over again (fig. 44). Merleau-Ponty also attempted to describe the kinesthetic properties of colors such as blue, and perhaps the blues, greens, purples, and rose reds that run over and under the graphite lines (which at the same time run over and

Figure 44
Detail of *Still Life with
Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit*
(pl. 22)



under the watercolors) can be experienced in just that way—not only as enhancing and confirming the outside edge of the carafe and other objects but also as redoubling the kinesthesia of drawing.

Inasmuch as *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* rehearses the action of drawing that brings its glassware into being, it also lays out the liquid properties of watercolor, as well as its quality of translucency and finally its ability to allow pencil to show through—or not—depending on the material saturation of pigment and the buildup of layers to the point of opacity, depending, that is, on the proportion of

water to pigment, and the watercolor medium's ability to oscillate between dematerialization and materiality. That each of the pieces of glassware in this still life is at least potentially liquid-bearing—empty or nearly so in the case of the glass; full and colored in the case of the wine bottle, with its darkly colored glass; half full and transparent in the case of the carafe—is germane to this still life's self-reflexive self-scrutiny, its deployment of the “what” of the studio still life to explore the “how” of watercolor process. And, in the beautiful logic of that process, in which the relation of form to content, medium to topic, is turned inside out, the emptiness and fullness of each vessel correspond exactly to the range of minimum to maximum rendering: the barely-there of the all-but-empty drinking glass, the material fullness and almost-too-much of the full wine bottle, and the in-betweenness—part repeated line, part color—of the half-full carafe.

This still life also uses its vessels to explore the degrees of transparency possible in the medium of watercolor, ignoring the opaque end of that spectrum that *Still Life with Blue Pot* shows to be a possibility of the water-suspended pigment, when layer upon layer of the same color is laid down with a saturated brush. Indeed, where all of the Getty watercolor's vessels are opaque, none of the three vessels in *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* is: where the former stresses the different kinds of solid materiality—those of metal, porcelain, and enamel, not to mention linen, tapestry, and apple—that can be yielded by the combination of pigment and paper, the latter focuses the eye not only on the liquidity of the solution that makes the medium but also on the property that makes it like glass—namely, that of light passing through its substance to refract into colored rays, so that color appears as light rather than matter. Thus the colored bottle of wine, with its colored liquid within, sitting between the two colorless, transparent crafts, the cruet and the goblet, points directly to the mysterious, strangely disembodied materiality of the medium—to its suspension of color in liquid and its translucency (light passing *through*)—as well as to the way color as such hovers indeterminately between its status as a chemical property of mineral matter and its status as a changeable property of light itself. (Hence the philosophical doubts and metaphysical worries about color in the Western tradition—the feeling that it has no essence and takes no secure or decisive form—not to mention the alchemical history and modern mysticism of color. Hence color's traditional relegation to secondary, supplemental status and its frequent characterization as “feminine.”)¹⁶

Anyone who has seen colored glass being blown—watched it transform from a hot, almost liquid, unformed glob of matter with mineral particles suspended in it into a hard but insubstantial, fragile shape that evanescently catches the light and passes from nothingness to brilliance and back again in a play of utter fascination—has seen the undecidability of color for themselves and therefore might understand quite immediately how Cézanne's glassware speaks directly of watercolor, the color *in* watercolor, and color per se: *couleur* (as in pigment) and *coloris* (as in color effect). Perhaps such a person may appreciate as well how delicately Cézanne maneuvered between color as material and line as gesture—the glass coming into being through

breath rather than the final, crystallized form of it—and how he sought to have each—color and line, line and color—continually exchange places with the other.

As with *Still Life with Blue Pot*, so with *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit*: the white ground of the sheet of drawing paper remains visible and is used to represent both itself, the support surface, and the object surfaces within the still-life arrangement. Here it is the paper label of the bottle that the white of the paper sheet represents: which is to say, the uppermost surface is represented by the undermost surface—paper glued on top of the glass of the bottle is represented by the paper underneath the whole arrangement. At the same time, the white of the paper surrounds and frames the arrangement, constitutes its literal materiality, and interacts with pencil and watercolor to produce its subject, which is at once the still-life objects and the process of representing them, at once the volumes and “culminating points” of bottles and fruit and the site of transformation of paper into glass, water into wine, graphite and pigment into vessel and flesh. In this sense as well *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* addresses the process and materials of its medium. In this sense as well it shares its attitude toward drawing and watercoloring with the Getty still life while standing at the other end of the range of coverage and completion found overall in Cézanne’s late watercolor work.

Whereas *Still Life with Blue Pot* is so unusual in its covering of almost all of the sheet of paper with watercolor and its buildup of pigment at the center so that most of its pencil is finally under cover of color, *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit* allows its paper and its pencil to show through and through, everywhere, again with the exception of the wine bottle at the center, so that no matter which technically came first and last, the line of graphite or the touch of color, each is seen to interact with the other as circularly as the curving strokes that grope toward the contours of the apples at the right over and over again. Up close, and even under the microscope, it is impossible to tell whether the gray sparkle of graphite dust sits atop the watery stain of color that has sunk into the weave of the paper because it was laid down last, or only because its dry materiality and method of application allow it to float to the top. No matter, Cézanne made sure to leave both visible, so that he and we could see the dialogue between them for ourselves.

The same dialogue takes place in *Still Life with Blue Pot*, except that for once Cézanne chose to work his composition in the manner of a grand old oil painting, going over it laboriously until it had, if not the method, then the look, when he stood back (as do we), of a finished masterpiece. But it was a masterpiece, a still life with the breadth and grandeur of a monumental landscape, that inverted the old relationship between its opening lines and its final glazes, for it began with its most transparent washes and ended with its most opaque blue lines, going over the tangled pencil submerged beneath, now all but invisible except here and there, where a thread of graphite emerges, like the end of a skein of yarn left dangling to be picked up and followed into the heart of the maze. For all of its air of finish, then, *Still Life with Blue Pot* is all of a piece with Cézanne’s late still-life work in watercolor, such as *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit*, in which the studio was repeatedly the site of

a fundamental rethinking of the structure of artistic work and pictorial thought, and of the relationship between drawing and painting, *dessin* and *coloris*.

That site was an experimental space, in which objects could be counted on to stay still, could be arranged and rearranged at will, could recapitulate the atelier of old that the Impressionists had rejected and make it over into a new kind of working room, could safely evoke more intimate human spaces and relations while at the same time setting them quite literally aside. And it was also a control on the experiment that took place outdoors, a place of refuge, greater ease, and homely familiarity, in which Promethean struggle could be made over into more modest play, a grand mission into a more subtle project, and in which the severe and pompous burden of posterity could be traded in, for a while, for the repeated *now* of the gesture of rendering intertwined with the ongoingness of the act of seeing, the haptics of drawing locked in an embrace with the optics of color, and vice versa. It was something like an artisanal space remade, in which the making and grouping of the simplest of Provençal objects could be over and over again analogized to the intertwined processes of drawing and painting, and vice versa. It was a space in which to learn, and learn again, how to draw lines and how to touch paint to paper, and in which order. And now it is a space, on paper, into which we as viewers are invited, and invited to learn, as never before or since.

NOTES

1. Emile Bernard's inventory of Cézanne's (oil) palette, in *Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne, et lettres* (Paris: R. G. Michel, 1925), 46, on the occasion of the two of them painting a still life together that Cézanne had arranged in a downstairs room of his Les Lauves studio: "Les Jaunes. / Jaune brillant.—Jaune de Naples.—Jaune de chrôme.—Ocre jaune.—Terre de Sienne naturelle. / Les Rouges / Vermillon.—Ocre rouge.—Terre de Sienne brûlée.—Laque de garance.—Laque carminée fine.—Laque brûlée. / Les Verts. / Vert véronèse.—Vert émeraude.—Terre verte. / Les Bleus. / Bleu de cobalt.—Bleu d'outremer.—Bleu de prusse.—Noir de pêche."
2. On Cézanne's pigments and paper, see Faith Zieske, "Technical Observations," in *Cézanne in Focus: Watercolors from the Henry and Rose Pearlman Collection*, ed. Laura M. Giles and Carol Armstrong (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 2002), 27–29; and Zieske, "Paul Cézanne's Watercolors: His Choice of Pigments and Papers," in *The Broad Spectrum: Studies in the Materials, Techniques, and Conservation of Color on Paper*, ed. Harriet K. Stratis and Brit Slavesen (London: Archetype, 2002), 89–100.
3. There is actually some very faint watercolor wash in the upper-left corner of *Still Life with Blue Pot*, so there is less bare paper than apparent at first glance.
4. See Yve-Alain Bois, "Matisse and 'Arche-Drawing,'" in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1990), 36–38: Gauguin attributed this remark to Cézanne, but Edmond Duranty also put these words in the mouth of the main character in his 1867 story "Le Peintre Marsabiel." Vollard tells the story as a visit by Duranty to Cézanne's studio, which became disguised as that of painter "Maillobert," who remarked "qu'un kilogramme de vert était plus vert qu'un gramme de la même couleur" (Ambroise Vollard, *En écoutant Cézanne, Degas, Renoir* [Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1938], 33).
5. See Charles Baudelaire, "Salon de 1846: III: De la couleur" and "Le peintre de la vie moderne" (*Le Figaro*, November 26 and 29, and December 3, 1863), in *Curiosités esthétiques, L'Art romantique et autres oeuvres critiques de Baudelaire*, ed. Henri Lemaître (Paris: Garnier, 1962), 107–12, 360–404 (esp.

365–72, 394–97). Cézanne himself clearly read Baudelaire's writing and expressed his admiration for it: see letters to his son of September 13 and 28, 1906, in Paul Cézanne, *Correspondance recueillie, annotée et prefacée par John Rewald* (Paris: B. Grasset, 1978), 326, 329.

6. John Rewald, *Paul Cézanne: The Watercolors: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983), 233, fig. 572, believed that there was no pencil work in the Getty watercolor. (This was the reason he gave for seeing the Michigan version, in which he saw the pencil work, as a preliminary effort, and the *Still Life with Blue Pot* as the final painting.) Although he tended to agree with Rewald's proposed sequencing of the Michigan and Getty drawings, George Goldner, under whose tenure as drawings curator the J. Paul Getty Museum acquired the watercolor, understood Rewald's assumption about the lack of pencil to be wrong (George R. Goldner, with the assistance of Lee Hendrix and Gloria Williams, *European Drawings 1: Catalogue of the Collections* [Malibu, Calif.: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1988], 150). As Goldner saw, pencil marks are immediately available to the eye, which suggests that there are quite a few more to be found underneath the layers of watercolor. Microscopic examination and infrared photography confirm this hunch, leading one to see much more pencil with the naked eye than the first impression suggests.

7. In addition to being one of three watercolors shown in the 1877 Impressionist exhibition, this gouache was bought by one of Cézanne's earliest patrons, Victor Chocquet.

8. On the importance of Delacroix to Cézanne, see Vollard, *En écoutant Cézanne, Degas, Renoir*, 62–63, in which he recounts Cézanne's admiration for a watercolor of flowers by Delacroix (1849) on sale at Victor Chocquet's in the 1890s. See also Götze Adriani, *Cézanne Watercolors*, trans. Russell M. Stockman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983), 28ff.

9. Both of these works are in the Pearlman collection, on long-term loan to Princeton. They are excellent examples of earlier and later drawing and watercolor technique that I had many opportunities to study up close when Laura Giles, a team of graduate students, and I were working on the 2002 exhibition *Cézanne in Focus*. They provided an excellent occasion for microscopic examination as well, which revealed just how much interplay there was between pencil and watercolor, and how often pencil lay on top of watercolor as well as watercolor on top of pencil. This was my hunch, from having seen them with the unaided eye, and it was borne out.

10. One watercolor with a balcony, depicting roofs seen through an open window, probably in Aix, is found on the verso of the Pearlman *Trees Forming an Arch* of 1904–5; another one, titled *The Balcony* and dated c. 1900, is located in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. See Giles and Armstrong, *Cézanne in Focus*, 117–20.

11. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), esp. 300ff.; and the title essay of Merleau-Ponty, *L'Oeil et l'esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964). See Jonathan Crary, "1900: Reinventing Synthesis," in *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999), 280–359, for a view of Cézanne that is critical of the phenomenological perspective while also putting it in the historical context of the vitalist movement of the turn of the century and the work of Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, and others.

12. For some of the best new thinking on the art of drawing, see Catherine de Zegher and Avis Newman, *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act: Selected from the Tate Collection* (New York: Tate Publishing and the Drawing Center, 2003).

13. "Des qualités définies ne se dessinent dans la masse confuse des impressions que si elle est mise en perspective et coordonnée par l'espace" (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 251 [emphasis added]).


14. "Le son et la couleur . . . dessinent un objet, le cendrier, le violon" (ibid., 263 [emphasis added]).

15. "Si je fais passer rapidement un crayon devant une feuille de papier où j'ai marqué un point de repère, je n'ai à aucun moment conscience que le crayon se trouve au-dessus du point de repère, je ne vois aucune des positions intermédiaires et cependant j'ai l'expérience du mouvement. Réciproquement si je ralentis le mouvement et que je parvienne à ne pas perdre de vu le crayon, à ce moment même l'impression de mouvement disparaît. Le mouvement disparaît au moment même où il est le plus conforme à la définition qu'en donne la pensée objective. Ainsi on peut obtenir des phénomènes où le mobile n'apparaît que pris dans le mouvement. Se mouvoir n'est pas pour lui passer tour à tour par une série indéfinie de positions, il n'est donné que commençant, poursuivant ou achevant son mouvement" (ibid., 312).

16. See James Elkins, *What Painting Is* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), on the alchemical history of color in oil painting.



Finishing Touches

n the side of the octagonal pitcher, where the handle begins its arc off the vessel's body, there lies a stroke of green that strays onto the inner part of the handle (opposite). It is likely that that one long, tapering patch of emerald green was among those marks that came last, that were added as finishing touches in order to satisfy Cézanne, somehow, that he was done, that he could stop, that he should add no more. It is nothing like the top and final layer of a traditional picture, either as it was taught at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts or as it was practiced by other "new" painters, such as Monet or Degas. There a glaze, a bit of local color, or a unifying layer of oil or pastel would complete, cover, or even out what had begun as an idea first sketched in pencil or painted in roughly to establish the composition's main lines. Here, instead, it is a long scrap of color that picks up the bits of green found elsewhere, under and over other colors—in the tapestry, particularly the patch that encroaches upon the pointed lip of the

pitcher, toward the left, and the patch just to the right of the blue pot; and in a paler, more washed and transparent version of the color, in the patch of green left of the base of the pitcher and on the side of the white pot.

That strip of green on the pitcher's handle complements the reds of the tapestry and the apples that lie around the pitcher—like the bit of washed red that has escaped the leftmost apple to curve onto the pitcher's base as a piece of colored shadow. It punctuates the preponderance of blues everywhere in the still life, congregating around the pitcher, loaded thickly and opaquely into the long ellipse of interstitial space opened up by the pitcher's handle, particularly in the lower curve, which it appears to fill up like liquid, or like a bit of blue flame whose tapering shape resembles that of the green patch. It marks the white of the pitcher in a manner that clearly has nothing to do with the briefly indicated faint blue design upon its surface. It lies atop several veils of blue and rose, a bit of opacity on top of their transparency

thickening into translucency, instead of the reverse. It signposts the stain of rose that spreads onto the upper arc of the handle and the faint, crisscrossing lines of graphite that emerge from beneath it and trail onto the downward trend of the outer part of the handle. And it competes with the thick black line that Cézanne applied, also toward the end, to reinforce the inner contour of the opening made by the pitcher's handle. Cézanne could have stopped before adding that touch of green, but he did not. He could have added further touches of green here and there after the one that drifts from the body to the handle of the pitcher, but he didn't. He stopped just there; he must have felt that it was just right, or as close to it as he was going to get.

Inspired by Cézanne filtered through Chardin, Rilke remarked that he wanted to write a "history of blue."¹ And others remarked on the blue drawing that is found everywhere in the composition, reinforcing the contours of the objects at the center, overlaying their underlying graphite with Prussian blue, as if to bring the underdrawing to the surface (fig. 45). When he saw the show at Ambroise Vollard's gallery in 1905, Maurice Denis remarked that the watercolors were "built out of vibrant contrasts on preparatory washes of Prussian blue; the definitive color of these sketches, as composed and constructed as pictures, has been raised to a powerful and admirable resonance. One would have said they were ancient faïences."² Denis might have added that the blue also lay over both the "preparatory washes" and the "vibrant contrasts" as a finalizing, reinforcing armature, a kind of bright exoskeleton,

drawing made of color on top of color upon color, on top of drawing made of graphite. But he did understand the importance of blue—it provided the keynote and, in this particular watercolor, the central blue object. Denis also saw that these "sketches" were "pictures"—none more so than this one—and like others he felt that there was something ceramic (and Provençal) about them—again, none more than Still Life with Blue Pot, with its overall Provençal palette and its porcelain pitcher, made of white paper, blue marks, hints of rose, touch of green, and reinforcing black and blue.

André Fontainas, for one, spoke of the effect of "painted porcelain" produced by the watercolors. He too spoke of the overlay of colors: "The master amuses himself. But his diversions are wondrous marvels and beautifully instructive. They make play with bold blues, pure whites, clear yellows . . . and they sometimes give the illusion of painted porcelain, of delicate, iridescent opals. Others, with only a few touches of color, are admirable drawings."³ Pointing to the oscillation between drawing and color, the bare minimum and the spectacular deployment of brilliant primary colors, with "bold blues" leading the way, Fontainas obviously delighted in the lightness of the watercolors and nevertheless took them seriously; he found them "instructive." In 1907 Rilke loved the lightness of the watercolors too; he wrote in a letter that he had seen the show at Bernheim-Jeune and had found the watercolors "extremely beautiful. They are just as assured as the paintings, and as insubstantial as the paintings are solid. . . . Very faint pencil outlines, upon which only here and there, almost as

emphasis and confirmation, an accidental bit of color falls, a row of spots of pigments wonderfully arranged and as sure in their touch as if they were reflecting a melody."⁴ Perhaps that green touch on the white pitcher in Still Life with Blue Pot was one of those final "accidental bit[s] of color" that became an "emphasis" and a "confirmation."

Others, such as Robert Delaunay, saw the "colored planes" of the watercolors as the "precursor . . . of Cubism."⁵ But though all those that loved the watercolors clearly took them seriously, perhaps more seriously than Cézanne himself intended them, they tended to emphasize, not their avant-gardism, but their delicacy, their airy insubstantiality, their play with process.⁶ Indeed, it was Cézanne's young admirer Emile Bernard, most immediately responsible for crafting Cézanne's mythic status as the old man of modernism, who described his watercolor process, having seen him execute a landscape in the medium: "His method was remarkable, totally different from traditional procedures and extremely complicated. He began with a single patch, which he then overlapped with a second, and a third, until these patches, which produced screens, modeled the object by means of color."⁷ According to Bernard, Cézanne began with "a patch": did he also end with a patch—of a different color than the one with which he began? It seems likely—though where the graphite drawing fits in is uncertain in this account. And what significance a green had in relation to all the blue—this time a milligram instead of a kilo of green—well, that is for us to determine.

This watercolor, of course, is a still life, not a landscape, and so its air of "faïence"



is germane to its objects as well as its effects. Its objects sit still; its process is that of the studio, not the open air; its pictoriality is immense and grand, in spite of its low genre; and its evocation of landscape has to do with its rich, bright colorism and expansive, bodily spatiality. That touch of green punctuates all of that. It also punctuates the process of watercoloring, both for the painter himself and for all the viewers who come after. It points to the overlay of colors and graphite that makes up each object in the watercolor. It points to the bits of red and black that else-

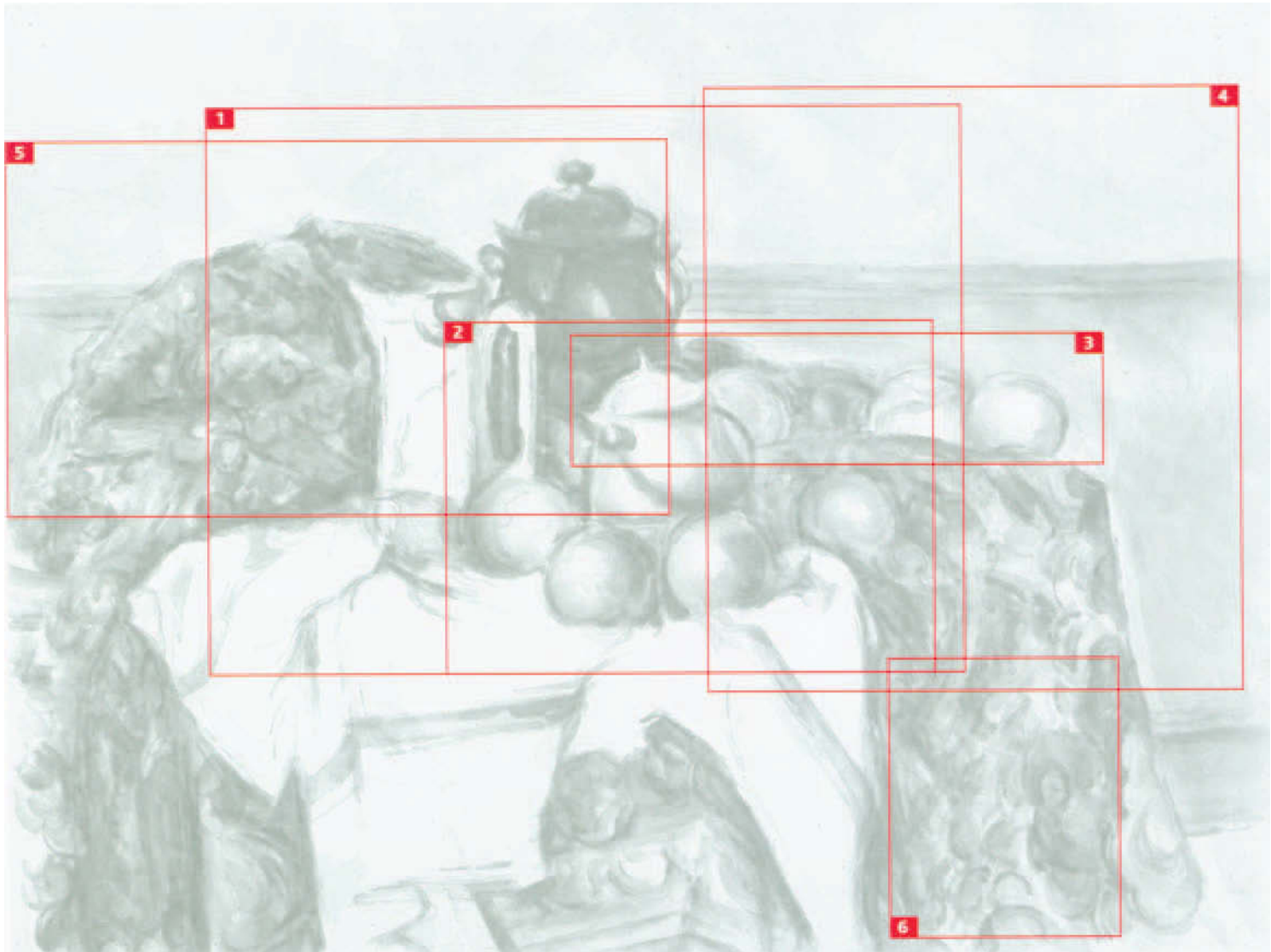
where finalize the composition and relieve the blue that so dominates the arrangement in its perfect conflation of drawing and color, its inversion of dessin into coloris, color into design. It points as well to the interest of interstitial spaces for Cézanne—the interest, for instance, of that handle that could be gripped by a hand, fingertips curling through its opening, just as the painter's hand drew, redrew, painted, and repainted its inner and outer contours, like a potter shaping his pot. And it highlights the white pitcher's struggle to emerge from white paper, its sidelined

combination of "feminine" slimness and recessiveness and "masculine" rectilinearity, and its effort to stand up to the fat blue swagger of the blue pot, to side with and come closer to the hesitation of the teetering little white pot, with its genetic mixture of pitcher and pot, white and blue, recession and projection. Finally, it terminates. Not a culminating point—the pitcher appears to have none—that green mark is a point of culmination. It puts a green period to Still Life with Blue Pot. Full stop.

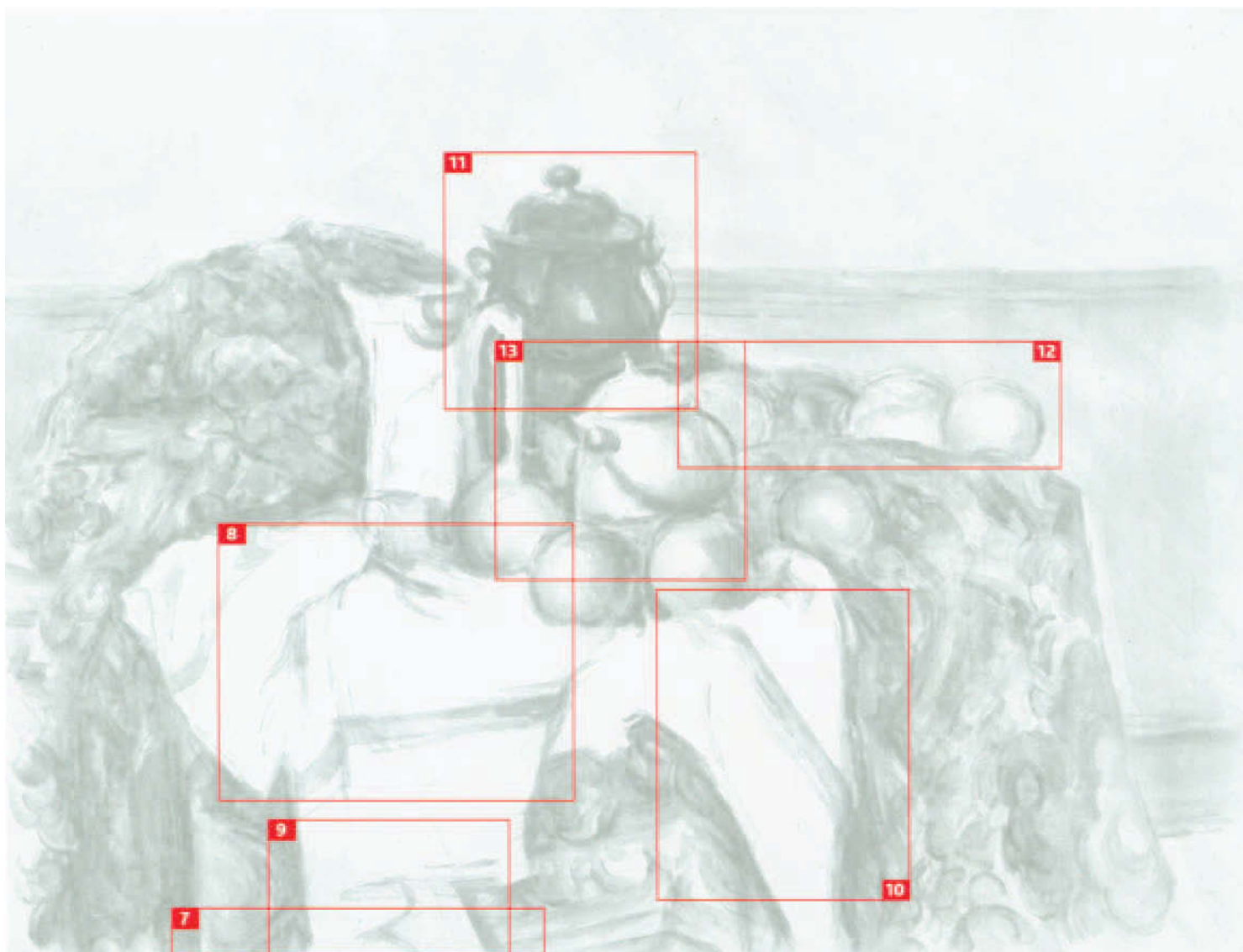
NOTES

1. "(On pourrait imaginer que quelqu'un écrivit une histoire du bleu; depuis le bleu dense, cireux, des peintures pompéiennes, jusqu'à Chardin, jusqu'à Cézanne: quelle biographie!) Là est en effet l'origine du bleu très particulier de Cézanne" (Rainer Maria Rilke, *Lettres sur Cézanne*, trans. Philippe Jacottet [Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1991], 37). Such a "history" has since been written; see Michel Pastoureau, *Blue: The History of a Color* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
2. Maurice Denis, "La Peinture," *L'Hermitage*, November 15, 1905, 314; cited in Matthew Simms, "Painting on Drawing: Cézanne's Watercolors," in *Cézanne in Focus: Watercolors from the Henry and Rose Pearlman Collection*, ed. Laura M. Giles and Carol Armstrong (Princeton: Princeton University Art Museum, 2002), 14. Simms's essay is remarkable in its attention to process and medium, aspects of Cézanne's work that we have discussed together. We part company in our understanding of the relationship between drawing and color in Cézanne's watercolors—he understands them as two separate layers, with drawing always underlying color as it does in the Western pictorial tradition; I see it quite otherwise, as I have argued in this monograph. Moreover, his phenomenological emphasis is on perceptual process, whereas it is my view that what is so remarkable about Cézanne's watercolors, in particular, is their dramatization of the manual process of making, or rather the eye-hand relay of the thoroughly interwoven acts of drawing and painting.
3. André Fontainas, "Les Aquarelles de Cézanne," *Mercure de France* 16 (July 1, 1905): 133–34, cited in Simms, "Painting on Drawing," 23–24.
4. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Briefe über Cézanne*, ed. Clara Rilke (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1977), 97, cited in Götz Adriani, *Cézanne Watercolors*, trans. Russell M. Stockman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1983), 21.
5. Robert Delaunay, *The New Art of Color: The Writings of Robert and Sonia Delaunay*, ed. Arthur A. Cohen, trans. David Shapiro and Arthur A. Cohen (New York: Viking, 1978), 20; cited in Adriani, *Cézanne Watercolors*, 21.
6. Cézanne apparently left his watercolors lying around on the floor of his studio and outside, "sur le motif"; he gave them away as careless gifts; and he threw them into the fire in fits of temper. He also did this with his oils, however, including a still life that he is said to have thrown into a cherry tree in another rage. See Ambroise Vollard, *En écoutant Cézanne, Degas, Renoir* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1938), 47, 77, cited in Adriani, *Cézanne Watercolors*, 71.
7. Emile Bernard, "Souvenirs sur Paul Cézanne" (1907), in *Propos sur l'art*, vol. 1, ed. Anne Rivière (Paris: Séguier, 1994), 137, cited in Simms, "Painting on Drawing," 14.

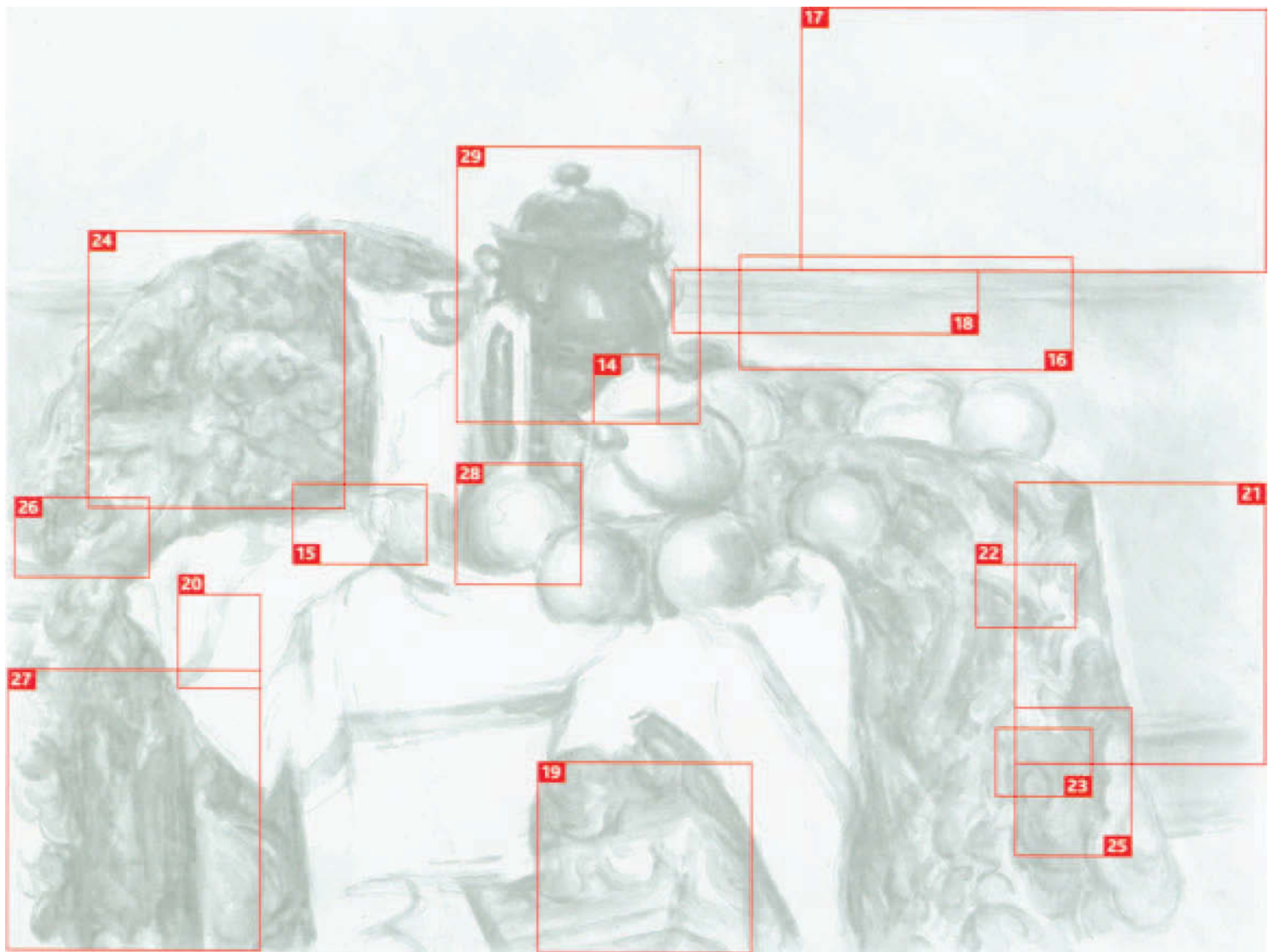
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