

CEZANNE - CHATEAU DE MEDAN - 35-53



CAPTION ONE

In 1878 with the royalties from his successful novel, *L'Assommoir*, Zola purchased a small country house in Medan whose gardens ran along the banks of the Seine. His childhood friend Cezanne visited him here often between 1879 and 1885. In June 1880 Cezanne wrote to Zola: 'If I won't put you out too much, write to me and I will come to Medan with pleasure.'

He continued, 'if you are not alarmed at the length of time I risk taking, I shall allow myself to bring a small canvas with me to paint a motif, always providing that you see no objection.' This is the 'small canvas' Cezanne painted during his stay.

CAPTION TWO

Cezanne has unified the whole of the picture surface by carefully applying dense layers of paint using parallel brushstrokes: this is often referred to as a 'constructed' brushstroke. Notice how he places these strokes - he uses a diagonal stroke for the trees, the riverbank and the sky and horizontally placed brushstrokes for the water.

Cezanne might have created the illusion that we are looking at a real landscape. But he destroys that illusion by his deliberately placed brushstrokes and by the way he repeats many horizontal and vertical motifs -the line of tall trees against the edge of the river, the roofs of the buildings and the horizon beyond. He is reminding us that this is a painting, a flat surface covered with oil, not a view through a window.

CAPTION THREE

This painting used to belong to the artist Paul Gauguin, whose landscape *Oestervold Park* is also in the collection of Glasgow Museums. Although Gauguin may have purchased this work directly from Cezanne himself-they first met through Pissarro at Pontoise in 1881 - it is more likely that Gauguin bought the painting from the dealer *pere Tanguy*.

Gauguin took the painting with him to Denmark in 1884 and left it behind when he returned to France in 1885. But, unable to support his wife and children, he soon had to consent to her selling some of the pictures from his Impressionist collection. He told her not to sell this and one other Cezanne as 'they are rare of this type since he made few finished ones and one day they will be very valuable.' Eventually Gauguin's wife had to sell the painting. Gauguin later made an unsuccessful attempt to buy it back.

CAPTION FOUR

The son of a wealthy banker and tradesman, Cezanne abandoned his law studies and went to Paris where he studied painting. His early works were dark, brooding and often violent in their subject-matter. Working with Pissarro at Pontoise in 1872 his palette lightened and he learned to work from nature using an Impressionist technique.

Although he contributed to the first and third Impressionist shows Cezanne differed from the Impressionists in that, unlike them, he was not interested in surface but sought to use colour as a means of modelling and capturing the underlying forms of visible objects. Disillusioned with Impressionism, Cezanne commented 'I want to make of Impressionism something solid like the art of the Museums.' His letters painfully record how he strove to capture and remain true to his sensations in front of nature.