

CÉZANNE

AND THE MODERN

Masterpieces of European Art
from the Pearlman Collection

13 March–22 June 2014

PRESS INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

Henry Pearlman (1895–1974) was a New York City businessman who founded his company, Eastern Cold Storage, in 1919. He began collecting art in the early-1940s, buying a handful of realist paintings, but it was the purchase of Chaïm Soutine's *Village Square, Céret* (1921–22) that started what would become one of the great American private collections of Impressionist and particularly Post-Impressionist art.

During the few years previous to 1943, I had purchased a few early Italian, French, and American paintings, mostly of the genre school – realistic type. I found them decorative but neither provocative nor moving, and used them more or less as wall coverings. One day in 1945, while passing the American Art - Anderson Galleries in New York (later Parke Bernet), I saw a very colorful painting by Chaïm Soutine, titled *Village Square*, in blue, yellow, and golden colors slashed on as if by a trowel. When this painting came up for sale, I was the high bidder, and happily carted the painting out to my home in the country. The painting was hung over the mantelpiece, some thirty feet from the entrance hall, and when I came home in the evenings and saw it I would get a lift, similar to the experience of listening to a symphony orchestration of a piece well known and liked. I haven't spent a boring evening since that first purchase.

Henry Pearlman, *Reminiscences of a Collector*



Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980)
Portrait of Henry Pearlman, 1948



Paul Cézanne (1839–1906)
Mont Sainte-Victoire, c.1902

In the following thirty years, until the end of his life, Pearlman was a passionate collector, acquiring further works by Soutine and adding pictures and sculptures by Gauguin, Lipchitz, Manet, Modigliani, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Van Gogh, amongst other lesser-known Modernist artists.

In the early-1950s, Pearlman began collecting Cézanne, making annual trips to visit dealers in Paris, and attending auctions in the US. Of one notable opportunity he wrote:

...luck plays an important part in collecting. I happened to be at a gallery when Cézanne's great *La Montagne Sainte-Victoire* was offered to a New York collector. The price was set, but the collector insisted on the dealer taking back an early painting by Cézanne as part of the payment, which the dealer refused to do. He then offered me the painting at the same price if I would pay him the money, without any trades, which I did. This painting is one of the most important, if not the most important, in my collection.

Pearlman's particular focus in these years was Cézanne watercolours which became the cornerstone of his collection and now constitute one of the finest and best preserved groups of Cézanne watercolours in the world.



Paul Cézanne (1839–1906)
Three Pears, c. 1888–90

Despite the artist's known disregard for his watercolours, the Pearlman pictures show Cézanne's extraordinary ability with the medium – a mastery which was highly regarded by his contemporaries. A particularly fine example is *Three Pears* (late-1880s) which Edgar Degas won in a bidding war with August Renoir in 1895.

The Pearlman watercolours span the whole of Cézanne's career, beginning with a version of *Aeneas Meeting Dido at Carthage* (c. 1875), up to the monumental *Still Life with Carafe, Bottle, and Fruit*, made shortly before his death in 1906. The watercolours feature characteristic Cézanne motifs - Provençal landscapes, a human skull - and show him developing a new pictorial language.

After his death in 1974, Henry Pearlman's collection was managed by his wife, Rose, who died in 1994, and has, since the mid-1970s, been on long-term loan to the Princeton University Art Museum, New Jersey. While individual pieces from the collection have been lent to monographic exhibitions over the years, the collection has not been toured in its entirety since 1974. The last major exhibitions, of selected Pearlman works, were held in 1986 in New York at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Brooklyn Museum. The collection has never before been shown in Europe.

BIOGRAPHIES

Mr Colin Harrison
Senior Curator of European Art, Ashmolean

Colin Harrison was educated at Oxford, and has been Curator of French and British Art at the Ashmolean Museum since 1995.

He has curated exhibitions at the Ashmolean including *John Malchair of Oxford, Artist and Musician* (1998); *Turner's Oxford* (2000); and *The Pre-Raphaelites and Italy* (2010). In 2005-6 he was co-curator of the bicentenary exhibition of Samuel Palmer at the British Museum and Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

SUPPORTERS

The exhibition has been organized by the Princeton University Art Museum in cooperation with the Henry and Rose Pearlman Foundation.

The exhibition has been supported by:

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The Patrons of the Ashmolean

CATALOGUE

The catalogue is published by Princeton University Press, featuring essays by Henry Pearlman and Professor Rachael Z DeLue, University of Princeton.

Hardback: £45
Paperback: £30

TICKETS

Full price: £9
Concessions: £7
Free to under-12s

www.ashmolean.org/exhibitions/cezanne



ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

Founded in 1683, the Ashmolean Museum is the most significant museum of art and archaeology in the heart of Britain, and the finest university museum in the world. Its collections are large, rich and unusually diverse, ranging from archaeology to fine and decorative arts, and from numismatics to casts of classical sculpture from the great museums of Europe. The Ashmolean is home to the best collection of Predynastic Egyptian material in Europe; the only great collection of Minoan antiquities outside Greece; the largest and most important group of Raphael drawings in the world; the greatest Anglo-Saxon collections outside the British Museum; a world-renowned collection of coins and medals; and outstanding holdings of Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Islamic art. The works and objects in these remarkable collections tell the story of civilisation and the aspirations of mankind from Nineveh and ancient Egypt, to the Renaissance, right up to the triumphs of twentieth century Europe. Admission to the Museum is free.

Open: Tue–Sun & Bank Holiday Mondays
10am–5pm

Closed: Mondays

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