



# Cézanne: The Self-Portraits

*Steven Platzman*

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Cézanne revolutionized the way we see and transcribe the essence of the material world. His position is pivotal: his style is part of the canon of early modernism and his iconic images, his still lifes, and landscapes are associated with a unique analytical approach that changed the face of modern art. But how did Cézanne see and portray himself? His self-portraits are a surprisingly neglected area of study and there has been no extended and in-depth analysis of how Cézanne's signature style was used to fashion his self-image. Steven Platzman's accessible and richly illustrated book fills this gap by examining the stylistic development of Cézanne's self-portraits in an effort to understand how the artist saw himself and others, and how he positioned himself in the art world and French society. Platzman's detailed analysis of the paintings offers new explanations and assessments of significant aspects of Cézanne's career and oeuvre. Abundant and exquisitely reproduced illustrations, including crucial details, make *Cézanne: The Self-Portraits* an essential resource for anyone interested in this French master.

Platzman demonstrates that the expectation of a self- portrait from a master artist goes beyond color and structural analysis. He questions whether a Cézanne self-portrait reveals something of the artist's emotions, or whether it obscures the feelings of the man whose celebrated and groundbreaking style altered the course of the history of art. The author also thoroughly and clearly fleshes out the historical and artistic contexts of mid-nineteenth century France and investigates Cézanne's complex relationship with the avant-garde in the 1860s and early 1870s. He provides a new explanation for Cézanne's flirtation with impressionism and his subsequent adoption of a more personal, idiosyncratic style. He also takes a new and radically different view of Cézanne's so-called "narrative self-portraits," exploring for the first time his relationship with the icon of the femme fatale. Through these close visual analyses, readers will come to a greater understanding of the concerns, ambitions, and relationships that shaped Cézanne's oeuvre.

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