Revisioning Cézanne

Revisioning Cézanne: Dissolving a Narrative of Failure.

Mandziuk, Natalie Marie, author
Weingarden, Lauren S., professor directing thesis
Jolles, Adam, committee member
Leitch, Stephanie, committee member
Department of Art History, degree granting department
Florida State University, degree granting institution

Type of Resource: text
Genre: Text
Issuance: monographic
Date Issued: 2013
Publisher: Florida State University

147 views
69 downloads
Modern scholarship's conception of Paul Cézanne as an artistic failure tortured by sexual and social anxieties stems from sensationalized narrative rather than historical fact. Through an examination of primary evidence, my thesis refutes the conception of failure to normalize Cézanne amongst independent artists of his time. Émile Zola's unflattering fictional representation of Cézanne in The Masterpiece (1885), Émile Bernard and Ambroise Vollard's exaggerated biographies of the artist, and the twentieth-century critical emphasis on psychoanalysis cemented Cézanne's negative legacy. Rather than follow the tradition of Cézanne's as a failure, I promote formalist critic Roger Fry and structuralist scholar Richard Shiff's analyses. While I concede that Cézanne's reclusive personality and lack of public exhibitions furthered the public's misconception of him as a failure, I disagree with modern scholars' portrayal of Cézanne as a victim of his own insecurities. An investigation of Cézanne's refusals by the Salon des Beaux-arts and his lack of gallery exhibition does not evidence technical failure, but rather individual artistic vision. Cézanne dismissed academic convention to focus on a tangible connection between the artist's eye, his hand, and his creation. In this thesis, Cézanne's late bather paintings provide a case study to disprove assumptions of failure. The three Large Bathers paintings are not manifestations of Cézanne's fear of women and discomfort with nude models, but studies in composition and figural abstraction. Referencing the 2012 Gauguin, Cézanne, Matisse: Visions of Arcadia exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Arts, I counter the presence of Arcadian myth within Cézanne's late work. Ultimately, my thesis argues that Cézanne's legacy should not be shrouded in a myth of rejection, but rather should emphasize the artist's revolutionary focus on plasticity, materiality, and experiential act of painting.
Definition of revisioning - The action of "revision"; an instance of this. Home British & World English revisioning. Definition of revisioning in English: revisioning. noun. The action of "revision"; an instance of this.