

## Still-life with Fruit Basket by Paul Cezanne

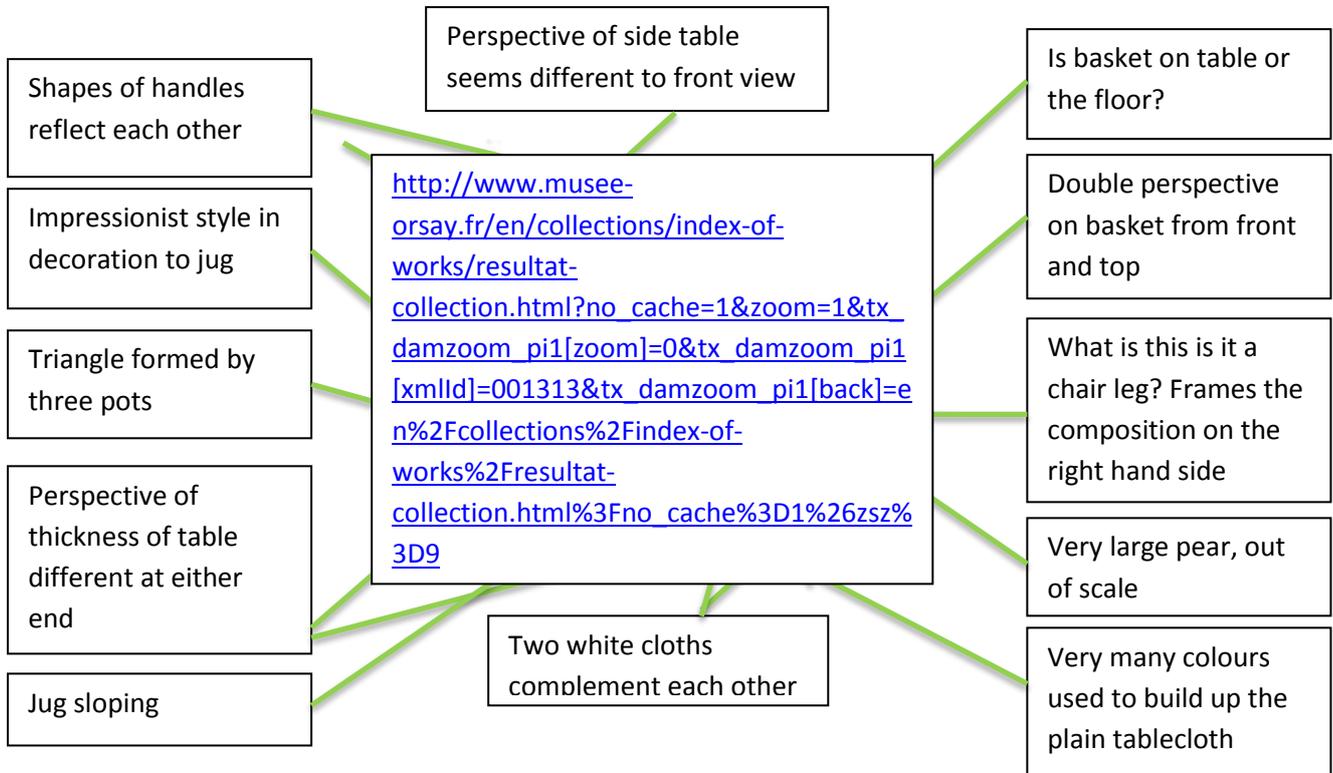


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*oil on canvas, 1888-90, 65.0 (h) x 80.0 (w) cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris*

- Basket seems out of scale
- Looking from different perspectives at the same time
- Paint built up in many layers
- Brush strokes used to give texture
- Table cloth folded and draped on table, not used to cover the table
- Each item seems meticulously arranged
- Scene seems to fill the room

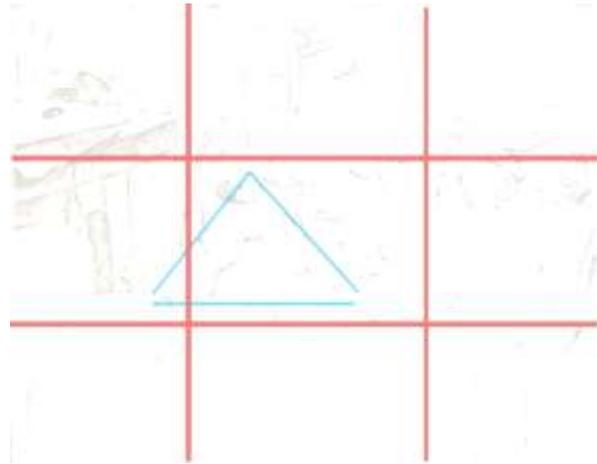
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### Description

This painting portrays fruit, jugs and a basket on a table. The sense of perspective from which you view the scene seems to vary depending on which part of the painting you are examining e.g. the perspective of the side table is very different to that of the main table. The pear on the far right seems very large in comparison to the jugs to its left, almost as if you are viewing it separately rather than as part of an overall scene.

The paint has been built up in many layers and the shapes of the objects determined as much by brush strokes as by the use of colour. Even the white tablecloth is a very complex mix of colours.

The jugs form a triangle towards the centre of the composition. The top of the fruit basket is placed at the top right thirds intersection, the large pear just off the lower right intersection.



The two front jugs are sloping slightly to the left and this with the different perspectival elements gives a sense of movement to the scene, drawing the viewer's eyes around the different elements.

The warm colours of the wood, basket and ripe fruit contrast with the cooler whites of the two cloths.

## Interpretation

It is interesting to study the composition in detail as I think that there is a great sense of movement in this painting. The composition gives the impression of being random but I feel that if just one element was moved, or removed, the balance would be destroyed. BECKS-MALORNY (2006 p57) states "What might seem like a random selection of objects is in fact a balanced and carefully thought-out composition. Each object is painted the size which it needs to be to create equilibrium within the painting".

On the National Gallery of Australia website Dixon comments on the loops of the pot handles and the rounded forms of the fruit "All these circular forms cascade diagonally down the canvas, through the folds of the two white cloths which double and then unify the composition".

As well as the composition, the angle of view is important. The painting seems to combine many viewpoints at the same time. Not to the degree that early cubist paintings do, but using the same principle. What BERNABEI (2013 p74) considers extraordinary about this painting is "the multiplicity of angles combined in this painting. They allow the viewer to perceive a slightly altered, distorted reality".

SCHRODER ET AL (2000 p51) points out that "the objects are not developed solely from colour but are also defined by brush marks, which suggest and outline them at least to some extent".

## Evaluation

Cezanne painted a considerable number of still-lives in his career, usually including fruit, as well as landscapes and portraits. I think that this painting illustrates quite clearly his contribution to the

development of art. You can see the foundations being laid for the artistic movements to follow. Cezanne provides the link from impressionism to cubism.

As HUGHES (1991 p124) puts it “He was one of those rare artists who influenced almost everyone”.

## References

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## Image Reference

[http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no\\_cache=1&zoom=1&tx\\_damzoom\\_pi1\[zoom\]=0&tx\\_damzoom\\_pi1\[xmlld\]=001313&tx\\_damzoom\\_pi1\[back\]=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno\\_cache%3D1%26zsz%3D9](http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/index-of-works/resultat-collection.html?no_cache=1&zoom=1&tx_damzoom_pi1[zoom]=0&tx_damzoom_pi1[xmlld]=001313&tx_damzoom_pi1[back]=en%2Fcollections%2Findex-of-works%2Fresultat-collection.html%3Fno_cache%3D1%26zsz%3D9)