

**HSBC**

HSBC Presents: Beyond the Frame, Episode 4 – *Turn in the Road*, Paul Cezanne (1881)

HSBC Presents: Beyond the Frame, Episode 4 – *Turn in the Road*, Paul Cezanne (1881)

THE ROAD:

Now, if Cezanne could have seen the roads that lay ahead for him, he would be so proud of his career paths. Cezanne took the high road of artistic integrity. He was independently wealthy, so he wasn't into art for the money. No, he was into the form itself and was seeking to continuously develop his skills.

HOST:

HSBC proudly presents Beyond the Frame. A look behind the bigger picture of some of the world's most important impressionist art. In this season, we're looking at the rebellion of the impressionists. It wasn't all dreamy brushwork, but rife with bravery, breaking stereotypes and smashing perceptions. Across this series, we go back 150 years to discover some of the surprising stories behind six iconic impressionist artworks. One classic Impressionist painting in every episode.

Don't take my word for it, you'll hear from the paintings themselves. If you like what you hear in your Beyond the Frame experience, see these renowned artworks for yourself in the National Gallery of Victoria's exhibition, French Impressionism from The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, proudly supported by HSBC. It's open now until October three. For tickets visit ngv.melbourne.

The impressionists were not celebrated when the movement first began, because they took the road less traveled, a road seldom traveled by critics and other art world conservatives of the time. The long and winding road of change is not well paved, especially not 19th century roads. But, the road is not always smooth when it comes to new artistic ideas.

You be the judge of Paul Cezanne's groundbreaking work *Turn In the Road*, painted by the artist in about 1881. You might say that this is a late 1800s version of street art that wants to take over the art world and then did. Paul Cezanne wasn't widely celebrated in his time, but would eventually change art as it was known forever. Paintings equivalent to the comedian who plays to the back of the room. Cezanne's work was revered and collected by his colleagues. One of the first owners of his work was Claude Monet. I dare say it is worth considerably more now though.

Cezanne was a master at rendering complex spaces in a way that draws audience into the scene depicted. Alongside the similarly experimental Camille Pissarro, Cezanne rebelled against the modern ways by painting their works from peculiar vantage points, as is reflected in his depiction of a winding road. You could build an overpass with the money it would cost to purchase it these days. And fortunately, one of his frequent collaborators is with us today. Not Pissarro, not even the easel that supported him through his career. No, we are lucky enough to be joined in the studio today by the painting's namesake and inspiration, the *Turn in the Road*. Welcome *Turn in the Road* to Beyond the Frame.

THE ROAD: Thank you. It's good to be here. Funny isn't it, where all of these roads lead to us sometimes?

HOST: Yeah. Absolutely. And well, Cezanne's story is not quite what you'd expect.

THE ROAD:

You know, when he went to art school he spoke with a Southern French accent, for which he was mercilessly

teased. Despite this cruel bullying, Cezanne's path to artistic glory was not solitary, another student Camille Pissarro, you might have heard of him.

HOST: Mm-hmm.

THE ROAD:

He also had a different way of speaking and these two, they formed a unique bond. They formed a connection from being different at art school.

HOST: Wow.

THE ROAD:

Over many years, they painted together like jazz artists impressing each other with their mastery. These two, they loved painting in doorways from unique vantage points, side by side.

HOST: So, what was it like posing for him?

THE ROAD:

Long and winding, uhhuh (affirmative). I think everyone is familiar with the concept of the long and suffering artist, but with Cezanne his outdoor pursuit of great vistas to paint literally led to his death.

HOST: Oh.

THE ROAD:

In 1906, at 67 he was caught in a storm while painting in a field, which led to his death from pneumonia a few days later. Well, regrettably he didn't realize how much he was loved and his friends put on a show of his work in Paris that was hugely influential. His death raised his profile and elevated him into a new status and he became one of the most important figures in modern art.

HOST:

Oh, so true. Matisse and Picasso were said to have remarked that Cezanne is the father of us all. Did you see him as a father figure as well?

THE ROAD:

More like a radical figure in art. Did you know that the deviation from the true path in Turn in the Road, was the beginning of the inspiration for Cubism?

HOST: Oh, wow.

THE ROAD: Going from right turns to right angles.

HOST: So, was it an experiment in abstraction?

THE ROAD:

Difficult to say. I draw the audience into the complexity of the space of the valley, but the curving road forms a flattened image.

HOST: And many of your counterparts consider themselves 19th century influences, an impression of real life too.

THE ROAD:

They are just following my trail. Now, if Cezanne could have seen the roads that lay ahead for him, he would be so proud of his career path. Cezanne took the high road of artistic integrity. He was independently wealthy, so he

wasn't into art for the money. No, he was into the form itself and was seeking to continuously develop his skills. Cezanne went on to paint hundreds of landscapes, didn't mind a still life, he was quite a prolific painter over his 45 plus years.

HOST:

Yeah. He really was. Now, as much as I am enjoying this stroll down memory lane, the word on the street is that Cezanne had an impact on Australian art. So, are you excited?

THE ROAD:

Oh, but of course. Artists like Tony Tuckson, Bessie Davidson, Roland Wakelin and Grace Cossington Smith were inspired by Cezanne, to name a few. Australia doesn't actually have many Cezanne's in galleries, so it is a real treat to be here. I am very much looking forward to having one or two for the road with my Australian friends, as you might say.

HOST: Yeah. French Impressionism from The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston at the NGV is a real street party for Melbourne's most prestigious road. Thank you Turn in the Road, for showing us what it's like to go Beyond the Frame.

THE ROAD: Thank you very much. It was a pleasure.

HOST:

That's all the time we have for Beyond the Frame, brought to you by HSBC proud partner of the National Gallery of Victoria and French Impressionism from The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. We hope that after hearing this podcast, you've got a greater understanding of these masterpieces. On the next episode of Beyond the Frame, we're back in the studio with Mary Cassatt's, Ellen Mary in a White Coat.

BOOT:

Impression is very much about the moment and in Cassatt's case, the moment was often things in everyday life of women and children in various domestic and urban settings.

HOST:

If you like what you heard here, then extend the Beyond the Frame experience by seeing this piece and more for yourself at the National Gallery of Victoria's exhibition French Impressionism from The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, proudly supported by HSBC. It's open now until October three. For tickets visit ngv.melbourne. Make sure to follow, like and rate this podcast. There's plenty more Beyond the Frame to come. Visit beyondtheframe.com.au for more.