



Vase of Flowers and Cup, 1887-1888

Collected by Theo and Vincent van Gogh

# Vase of Flowers and Cup

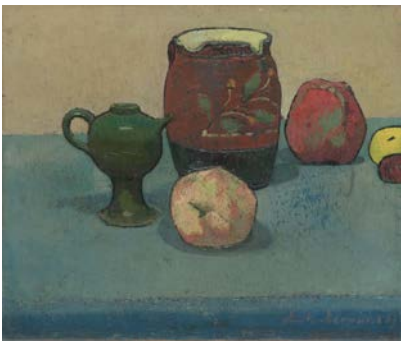
## Emile Bernard

In 1887 and 1888, Emile Bernard (1868–1941) painted a substantial number still lifes in which he simplified the objects he depicted. Looking back later, he called these paintings his *synthèses géométriques* (geometric syntheses).<sup>01</sup> Of these works, nineteen are now known, including *Vase of Flowers and Cup*.<sup>02</sup> The objective of these still lifes was to seek the true essence of objects by reducing them to pure, elemental shapes and bright, unsaturated colours. The artist, Bernard posited, ‘sees the style rather than the object, that is to say, draws out its character and spirit [...] The result was more decorative than pictorial.’<sup>03</sup> In his view, details were a distracting ‘spectacle’ that hindered the true understanding of an object.<sup>04</sup> He believed that simplifying and synthesizing the elements into a decorative tableau provided deeper insight than a detailed representation. According to Bernard, ‘Every form is like a word in a language, composed of the assemblage of the objects, represented in their distinctiveness.’<sup>05</sup>

## Bernard's writings

Bernard wrote numerous articles delving into the art-theoretical foundations of stylistic experiments, including his still lifes.<sup>06</sup> They are part of a broader written body of work, ranging from his views on art to treatises on literature and religion, among other subjects. However, the vast majority of the discourses on the avant-garde years at the outset of his career were not recorded contemporaneously but rather decades later. By that time, Bernard no longer played a prominent role within modern art and was painting in a more traditional style. In his articles, he nevertheless repeatedly revisited the part he played in the avant-garde movements of the 1880s, possibly with the intention of swaying their historiography in his favour. After years of reflection, Bernard was able to vividly capture the essence of his art during that period. Despite the temporal gap between the creation of works such as *Vase of Flowers and Cup* and the artist's retrospective descriptions, their content is no less valuable.

Bernard's later writings thus provide valuable insights into the theoretical underpinnings of a work like *Vase of Flowers and Cup*. The simplified forms he chose for the bouquet and vase and the clear outlines of the objects take on meaning within this context. The bright, unsaturated colours as well as the uncomplicated, balanced composition Bernard chose served the purpose indicated above. The art critic Edouard Dujardin dubbed this simplifying approach to painting 'cloisonnism' in 1888.<sup>07</sup>



Emile Bernard, *Stoneware Jar and Apples*, 1887, oil on canvas, 46.2 × 55.2 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

# Stylization

The distinct pentimenti in the blue background of the work indicate that Bernard did not have a predetermined composition in mind when he began working on this still life. Initially, he planned to paint a window at the right, with the bouquet positioned in front of it. However, he eventually decided on a plain blue background and opted for only two objects on a small table. As a result of subsequent overpainting, the surface is noticeably thick and in raking light reveals a rich texture. Bernard was apparently experimenting with his composition while painting, ultimately arriving at a simple and balanced composition.

In some of his abstracted still lifes from 1887–88, Bernard took his stylization even further than in *Vase of Flowers and Cup*, as exemplified by the painting *Stoneware Jar and Apples* (fig. 1). In the latter composition, he depicted the objects as flat geometric shapes with bold black outlines. By presenting the table frontally, Bernard eliminated the diagonal that creates a sense of depth. The focus is solely on the essence of the forms, allowing the interplay of lines and areas of colour to take centre stage. Bernard later wrote on the back of that work: 'Premier essai de Synthétisme et de Simplification 1887' (First attempt at Syntheticism and Simplification 1887). [08](#)

## Experiments in Brittany

Bernard's memory failed him here, however, because instead of *Stoneware Jar and Apples*, it is likely that *Bouquet of Lilacs* (fig. 2) was the first still life in this series. That work is also from 1887, but it must have been painted as early as May, when lilacs are in bloom.<sup>09</sup> Bernard was in Brittany at the time. *Stoneware Jar and Apples*, however, like most of his *synthèses géométriques*, were painted at Bernard's parents' house in Asnières following his return from Brittany in late September 1887. Contrary to previous assumptions, *Vase of Flowers and Cup*, along with *Bouquet of Lilacs*, was actually painted in Brittany, specifically in the coastal town of Saint-Briac, where Bernard resided from early June to early August.<sup>10</sup>

The key clue is the presence of the blue vase depicted in the still life. Interestingly, this vase reappears in two later paintings, both of which were created in Saint-Briac: *Still Life* (fig. 3) and *Portrait of Madame Lemasson* (fig. 4).<sup>11</sup> The latter work was made in 1891 and portrays the owner of the inn in which he stayed in Saint-Briac, to which Bernard returned annually after 1887.<sup>12</sup> He included the notable inscription 'Saint-Briac '91' in the upper right corner of the work.<sup>13</sup> What is striking is that the bouquet in the portrait is almost identical to the one in *Still Life*, from which it may be deduced that the two works were made in close succession and feature the same bouquet.<sup>14</sup> The problem with this hypothesis is that Bernard dated *Still Life* in 1889 while *Portrait of Madame Lemasson* is indeed (correctly) dated to 1891.<sup>15</sup> Considering Bernard's tendency to date his paintings long after their completion and often too early, it may well have been painted in 1891. The still life must have been antedated, especially since it corresponds stylistically and shares a similar palette with *Portrait of Madame Lemasson*. This then suggests that both works featuring the blue vase were indeed created in Saint-Briac, and hence the same applies to *Vase of Flowers and Cup*. Additionally, the field bouquet in *Vase of Flowers and Cup* must have been picked in summer, when Bernard was in Brittany. The later still lifes produced in Asnières in 1887–88 were painted after the wildflower season, explaining the absence of bouquets in them.



Emile Bernard, *Portrait of Madame Lemasson*, 1891, oil on canvas, 46 × 55 cm, The Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, Acquired by the Clark, 2016.<sup>3</sup>

# The example of Cézanne

Bernard's examples for *Vase of Flowers and Cup* and the rest of his *synthèses géométriques* included Japanese prints and medieval stained-glass windows.<sup>16</sup> However, his main source of inspiration was the work of Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), which he later referred to as 'truly the greatest progress to emerge from modern apperceptions'.<sup>17</sup> Cézanne's still lifes are characterized by simple forms, clear contours, uncluttered compositions and brushwork applied in parallel strokes. Bernard described Cézanne's objects as 'apples rounded as if drawn by compass, triangular pears, lopsided fruit bowls, napkins folded in a rage'.<sup>18</sup> Cézanne's artistic method involved a meticulous and contemplative approach whereby he deconstructed objects by breaking them down into basic forms through mindfully placed touches of colour.<sup>19</sup> In a 1904 article, Bernard described Cézanne's painting process, praising the result as 'an imposing and lively synthesis'.<sup>20</sup>

It is notable that while Bernard commended all aspects of Cézanne's painting in his later articles, his own still lifes from 1887–88 reveal that he primarily adopted Cézanne's stylization, pronounced contours and simple compositions and largely disregarded the master's all-important rhythmic brushwork. Cézanne demonstrated with his brushwork that for him process and craft were central, while for Bernard the focus was on creating a decorative composition with plain shapes and unsaturated colours.<sup>21</sup> *Vase of Flowers and Cup* exemplifies Bernard's preference for simplicity, colour and decorative combination of forms, with pronounced brushwork playing a lesser role. Nevertheless, individual, albeit very subtle, brushstrokes can be discerned in the blue background.

Bernard had access to Cézanne's work through Julien Tanguy's (1925–1894) art supplies shop in Montmartre.<sup>22</sup> Tanguy boasted an extensive collection, including several still lifes. Bernard might have seen some of them while visiting Tanguy's shop, including Cézanne's *Still Life in Blue with Lemon* and *Milk Can and Apples* (fig. 5 and fig. 6 ).<sup>23</sup> This type of uncomplicated composition with a limited number of objects seems to have been an important model for Bernard's approach to still life. This influence is indeed well illustrated in *Vase of Flowers and Cup*. Perhaps not entirely coincidentally, Bernard's still life includes a faience earthenware cup, as is also found in *Still Life in Blue with Lemon*.<sup>24</sup>

## Van Gogh and Bernard's still lifes

Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890) came into possession of *Vase of Flowers and Cup* when, just before leaving Paris for Arles on 19 February 1888, he exchanged several works with Bernard.<sup>25</sup> The two artists had already met in 1886, initially in Fernand Cormon's atelier and later through Tanguy's shop. However, it was mainly after Bernard's return from Brittany at the end of September 1887 that they spent much time together.<sup>26</sup> They engaged in discussions about modern painting and often worked side by side. This frequently took place in the studio that Bernard's parents had built for him in the garden of their Asnières home. There Van Gogh must have seen the paintings Bernard had brought with him from Brittany, as well as the still lifes he was working on that autumn. In later letters, Van Gogh expressed admiration for Bernard's still lifes, although he did not specifically mention *Vase of Flowers and Cup*. One painting that particularly impressed Van Gogh was *The Blue Coffeepot* (fig. 7), which Bernard was still working on when Van Gogh last saw him shortly before his departure for Arles. In a letter to his brother Theo (1857–1891), Van Gogh described it as 'superb'.<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting that in May 1888 he painted his own *Still Life with Coffeepot* (fig. 8), which was most likely inspired by Bernard's *The Blue Coffeepot*.



Emile Bernard, *The Blue Coffeepot*, 1888, oil on canvas, 55.2 × 45.8 cm, Kunsthalle Bremen – Der Kunstverein in Bremen. Photo: Lars Lohrisch

In August 1888, Van Gogh addressed his compliments to Bernard by letter. He praised two of his still lifes in addition to the portraits of his grandmother: 'Have you ever done better, have you ever been more *yourself*, and someone? Not in my opinion. Profound study of the first thing to come to hand, of the first person to come along, was enough to really *create* something. Do you know what made me like these 3 or 4 studies so much? That *je ne sais quoi* of something deliberate, very wise, that *je ne sais quoi* of something steady and firm and sure of oneself, which they show.'<sup>28</sup> It is not entirely clear exactly which still lifes Van Gogh was referring to. While it is likely that he primarily wrote about *The Blue Coffeepot*, it is entirely possible that the second still life he mentioned was *Vase of Flowers and Cup*.<sup>29</sup>

Van Gogh recognized Bernard's still lifes as fully-fledged works of art in which simple objects were elevated into personal, expressive ensembles. Van Gogh praised the works as 'tight, powerful and confident' ('fixe et ferme et sûr de soi'), aptly pointing to Bernard's use of geometric shapes and intense colours.<sup>30</sup>

Remarkably, Van Gogh did not share Bernard's appreciation of Cézanne's work. Years later, Bernard reflected on this difference of opinion and wrote that: 'Vincent didn't understand Cézanne's style at all [...] no matter how much he looked at his paintings, he found nothing of what he wanted in their experimentations.'<sup>31</sup> While Vincent admired Bernard's still lifes, he disliked Cézanne's studious and attentive examples. He seems to have preferred the visual means by which Bernard distanced himself from Cézanne, such as sharp contrasts and bright colours. Van Gogh perceived the brushwork in Cézanne's work as being 'almost diffident and conscientious'.<sup>32</sup> In contrast, he found vigour and potency in that of Bernard.

Joost van der Hoeven  
November 2023

## Citation

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**Object details**

Vase of Flowers and Cup

**Artist**

Emile Bernard (1868 - 1941)

**Date**

1887-1888

**Medium**

oil on canvas

**Dimensions**

40.5 cm x 32.5 cm

**Inventory Number**

s0255V1962

**Credits**

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



Vase of Flowers and Cup

Front & Back



### Provenance

#### Vase of Flowers and Cup

Probably exchanged by the artist, Paris with Vincent van Gogh, Paris, between late 1886 and 19 February 1888; left by Vincent van Gogh at the apartment of his brother Theo van Gogh, Paris; after his death on 25 January 1891, inherited by his widow, Jo van Gogh-Bonger, and their son, Vincent Willem van Gogh, Paris; administered until her death on 2 September 1925 by Jo van Gogh-Bonger, Bussum/Amsterdam/Laren; transferred by Vincent Willem van Gogh, Laren, to the Vincent van Gogh Foundation, Amsterdam, 10 July 1962; agreement concluded between the Vincent van Gogh Foundation and the State of the Netherlands, in which the preservation and management of the collection, and its placing in the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, to be realized in Amsterdam, is entrusted to the State, 21 July 1962 (as Unknown, Vaasje met bloemen en kom); on permanent loan to the Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh from the opening of the museum on 2 June 1973, and at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, since 1 July 1994.



## Exhibitions

### Vase of Flowers and Cup

The Hague, Museum Mesdag, *Zonder titel [Presentatie in het museum]*, April-May 1926

The Hague, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh. Met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 1953

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh. Met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 1953

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *De verzameling van Theo van Gogh. Met uitzondering van de werken van zijn broer Vincent*, 31 March-11 May 1953

Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, February 1960

Otterlo, Kröller-Müller Museum, *Collectie Theo van Gogh*, April-May 1960

Mannheim, Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim, *Emile Bernard 1868-1941. A Pioneer of Modern Art*, 12 May-5 August 1990, no. 42, *Stilleben: Kleine Blumenvase mit Tasse*

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, *Emile Bernard*, 24 August-4 November 1990, *Still Life: Little Vase of Flowers and Cup*

Kyoto, National Museum of Modern Art (Kyoto), *Vincent van Gogh and Japan*, 18 February-29 March 1992, no. 44, *Still-life, Vase with Flowers and Cup*

Tokyo, Setagaya Art Museum, *Vincent van Gogh and Japan*, 4 April-24 May 1992, no. 44, *Still-life, Vase with Flowers and Cup*



## Literature

### Vase of Flowers and Cup

- Bogomila Welsh-Ovcharov, *Vincent van Gogh and the Birth of Cloisonism*, exh. cat., Toronto (Art Gallery of Ontario) / Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum), Toronto 1981, pp. 290–91
- Jean-Jacques Luthi, *Émile Bernard: catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre peint*, Paris 1982, no. 86, pp. 18–19
- Evert van Uiter and Michael Hoyle (eds.), *The Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh*, Amsterdam 1987, no. I.23, p. 309
- Mary Anne Stevens (ed.), *Emile Bernard, 1868–1941: A Pioneer of Modern Art / Ein Wegbereiter der Moderne*, exh. cat., Mannheim (Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim) / Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum), Zwolle 1990, no. 42, pp. 164, 176, 181
- Ronald de Leeuw *et al.*, *Vincent van Gogh and Japan*, exh. cat., Kyoto (National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto) / Tokyo (Setagaya Museum of Art), Kyoto 1992, no. 44, pp. 146–47, 184
- Ronald de Leeuw, *The Van Gogh Museum: Paintings and Pastels*, Zwolle 1994, pp. 114–15
- Aukje Vergeest, *The French Collection: Nineteenth-Century French Paintings in Dutch Public Collections*, Amsterdam 2000, no. 41, p. 62
- Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Nienke Bakker (eds.), *Vincent van Gogh, Painted with Words: The Letters to Émile Bernard*, exh. cat., New York (The Morgan Library & Museum) 2007, p. 366
- Leo Jansen, Hans Luijten and Nienke Bakker (eds.), *Vincent van Gogh – The Letters: The Complete Illustrated and Annotated Edition*, 6 vols., Amsterdam, The

Hague & Brussels 2009, vol. 4: *Arles, 1888-1889*, no. 640, pp. 174-75

- Fred Leeman, *Émile Bernard (1868-1941)*, Paris 2013, p. 102
- Marije Vellekoop *et al.* (eds.), *Van Gogh's Studio Practice*, Amsterdam & Brussels 2013, p. 368 n. 16, p. 370 n. 36, p. 383 n. 99
- Jean-Jacques Luthi and Armand Israël, *Émile Bernard: instigateur de l'école de Pont-Aven, précurseur de l'art moderne: sa vie, son œuvre: catalogue raisonné*, Paris 2014, no. 107, p. 154



#### Letters

Vase of Flowers and Cup

- Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, Arles, 15 July 1888 [↗ 640](#).



# Figures



**Fig. 1**

Emile Bernard, *Stoneware Jar and Apples*, 1887, oil on canvas, 46.2 × 55.2 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo: RMN-Grand Palais (musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski



**Fig. 2**

Emile Bernard, *Bouquet of Lilacs*, 1887, oil on canvas, 32.2 × 39.3 cm, private collection. Photo: © 2017 Christie's Images Limited



**Fig. 3**

Emile Bernard, *Still Life*, 1891, oil on canvas, 55 × 46 cm, private collection. Photo: © 2021 Christie's Images Limited



**Fig. 4**

Emile Bernard, *Portrait of Madame Lemasson*, 1891, oil on canvas, 46 × 55 cm, The Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, MA, Acquired by the Clark, 2016.3



**Fig. 5**

Paul Cézanne, *Still Life in Blue with Lemon*, c. 1877, oil on canvas, 18.4 × 29.8 cm, Cincinnati Art Museum. Photo: © Cincinnati Art Museum / Bequest of Mary E. Johnston / Bridgeman Images



**Fig. 6**

Paul Cézanne, *Milk Can and Apples*, 1879–80, oil on canvas, 50.2 × 61 cm, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, The William S. Paley Collection. Photo: Digital image, The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Scala, Florence





**Fig. 7**

Emile Bernard, *The Blue Coffeepot*, 1888, oil on canvas, 55.2 × 45.8 cm, Kunsthalle Bremen – Der Kunstverein in Bremen. Photo: Lars Lohrisch



**Fig. 8**

Vincent van Gogh, *Still Life with Coffeepot*, 1888, oil on canvas, 65 × 81 cm, Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation Collection, Athens. Photo: Chris Doulgeris

## Footnotes

- 01 Emile Bernard, 'Souvenirs sur Van Gogh', *L'amour de l'art* (December 1924), in Anne Rivière (ed.), *Émile Bernard: propos sur l'art*, 2 vols., Paris 1994, vol. 1, p. 241.
- 02 There may be more works, because in a by no means complete inventory list from 1893 (INHA MS 374), Bernard includes some still lifes, the description of which cannot be linked to works known today. For the known still lifes, see Jean-Jacques Luthi and Armand Israël, *Émile Bernard: instigateur de l'école de Pont-Aven, précurseur de l'art moderne: sa vie, son œuvre: catalogue raisonné*, Paris 2014, nos. 104 to 114 and 163 to 170.
- 03 Emile Bernard, 'Mémoire pour l'histoire du symbolisme pictural de 1890', *Maintenant*, no. 3 (1919), in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 201: 'voit le style plutôt que l'objet, c'est-à-dire, en dégage le caractère et l'esprit [...] Le résultat fut plus décoratif que pictural.'
- 04 Ibid.: 'You have to simplify the spectacle to draw out its meaning' ('Il faut simplifier le spectacle pour en tirer le sens').
- 05 Emile Bernard, 'Le symbolisme pictural, 1886-1936', *Mercure de France* (May 1936), in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 281: 'Toute forme est le mot d'un langage, composé de l'assemblage des objets, représentés dans leur particularité.'
- 06 The following are just a few of these articles: 'Notes sur l'Ecole dite de "Pont-Aven"', *Mercure de France* (December 1903); 'Paul Cézanne', *L'Occident* (July 1904); 'Mémoire pour l'histoire du symbolisme pictural de 1890', *Maintenant* (1919); and 'Le symbolisme pictural, 1886-1936', *Mercure de France* (May 1936). All these articles are published in Rivière 1994, vol. 1.
- 07 Edouard Dujardin, 'Aux XX et aux Indépendants: le cloisonisme', *Revue indépendante* (March 1888), pp. 487-92.
- 08 See Dorothee Hansen (ed.), *Emile Bernard: Am Puls der Moderne*, exh. cat., Bremen (Kunsthalle Bremen), Cologne 2015, p. 20.
- 09 The artist dated the work in 1887.
- 10 Emile Bernard, letters to his parents, 3 June 1887 and 20 July 1887, both in Laure Harscoët-Maire, 'Lettres d'Émile Bernard (1886): de Cancale à Saint-Briac', *Le pays de Dinan* 17 (1997), pp. 145, 157-58.
- 11 *Still Life* is dated 1889 in Bernard's inventory of paintings from 1893 (Bibliothèque de l'INHA, Paris, BCMN Ms 374). The date 1890 on the painting itself must have been added sometime later, as Bernard was wont to do. He was not in Saint-Briac in 1890. See Mary Anne Stevens (ed.), *Emile Bernard, 1868-1941: A Pioneer of Modern Art / Ein Wegbereiter der Moderne*, exh. cat., Mannheim (Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim) / Amsterdam (Van Gogh Museum), Zwolle 1990, p. 181.
- 12 Bernard sojourned in Saint-Briac in 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889 and 1891.

- 13 Bernard may have chosen the Latin 'sanct' over the French 'saint' to enhance the medieval, 'primitive' character of the work. Since the handwriting of the location and the dating in the upper right corner are consistent with the intention of the work, it may be assumed to have been applied at the time of its making and is therefore correct. See Stevens *et al.* 1990, p. 207.
- 14 The following are two less plausible hypotheses: 1: *Nature morte* is correctly dated and Bernard must have copied the bouquet in Portrait of Madame Lemasson from the still life. This is unlikely because Bernard must have left the still life in Saint-Briac for two years before revisiting it in 1891 as an example for the bouquet; 2: There must have been a drawing that served as an example. Again, this seems improbable because Bernard did not draw but rather painted still lifes. Hardly any drawn still lifes by his hand are known.
- 15 See n. 11.
- 16 Bernard 1903, in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 63: 'The study of Japanese *crépons* [woodblock prints] led us to simplicity' ('L'étude des crépons japonais nous mène vers la simplicité'). And: Bernard 1919, in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 201: 'This is how the tapestries, stained-glass windows, images on wood, the Breton calvaries were impregnated by these interpretations drawn directly from myself' ('C'est ainsi que les tapisseries, les vitraux, les images sur bois, les calvaires bretons s'imprègnèrent par ces interprétations tirées directement de moi-même').
- 17 Bernard 1904, in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 94: These [Cézanne's] syntheses were truly the greatest progress that sprung from modern perceptions' ('Ces [Cézanne's] synthèses ont été en vérité le plus grand progrès jailli des aperceptions modernes').
- 18 Emile Bernard, 'Paul Cézanne', *Les hommes d'aujourd'hui*, no. 387 (1889), in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, pp. 20-21: 'At 14 rue Clauzel, at Tanguy's, in a dark and narrow shop, childlike landscapes: red houses entwined with spindly trees, primitive hedges, still lifes: apples rounded as if drawn by compass, triangular pears, lopsided fruit bowls, napkins folded in a rage; portraits' ('Au quatorze rue Clauzel, chez Tanguy, dans une sombre et étroite boutique, des paysages enfantins: maisons rouges enchevêtrées d'arbres grêles, de haies primitives, natures-mortes: pommes arrondies comme au compas, poires triangulaires, compotiers de guingois, serviettes rageusement pliées; des portraits').
- 19 Paul Smith, 'Cézanne's Color Lab: Not-so-Still Life', in Benedict Leca (ed.), *The World is an Apple: The Still Lifes of Paul Cezanne*, Lewes 2014, pp 110-18.
- 20 Bernard 1904, in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 92: 'Cézanne's expressive syntheses are meticulous and controlled studies. Taking nature as a point of reference, he conforms to the phenomena and transcribes them slowly, attentively, until he has discovered the laws that produce them. Then, with logic, he takes possession of them, and completes his work via an imposing and lively synthesis.' ('Les synthèses expressives de Cézanne sont de minutieuses et soumises études. Prenant la nature comme point d'appui, il se conforme aux phénomènes et les transcrit lentement, attentivement, jusqu'à ce qu'il ait découvert les lois qui les produisent. Alors, avec logique, il s'en empare, et achève son travail par une imposante et vivante synthèse.')
- 21 For a discussion of the difference between Bernard's and Cézanne's still lifes, see Fred Leeman, *Émile Bernard, 1868-1941*, Paris 2013, p. 102.
- 22 Bernard 1903, in Rivière 1994, p. 64.

- 23 Walter Feilchenfeldt, Jayne Warman and David Nash, 'Collection: Julien-François (Père) Tanguy', in [↗ The Paintings, Watercolors and Drawings of Paul Cézanne: An Online Catalogue Raisonné](#), accessed 12 November 2020.
- 24 Given its plain decoration, the cup may perhaps be identified as Breton Quimper faïence, though this cannot be said with certainty. Courtesy of Herbert van Mierlo, Senior Director and Valuations Specialist at Sotheby's Germany.
- 25 Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, 15 July 1888 [↗ \[640\]](#): 'Then a month later, before I left, I no longer had the money and I'd also given a good many Japanese prints to Bernard, when I made the exchanges with him' ('Or un mois plus tard avant mon départ je n'avais plus l'argent et j'avais encore donné pas mal de japonaiseries à Bernard alors que j'ai fait les échanges avec lui').
- 26 Regarding the meeting of Bernard and Van Gogh, see: Emile Bernard, 'Vincent van Gogh,' *Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui*, no. 390, 1890, in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 26.
- 27 Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo van Gogh, c. 20 April 1888 [↗ \[600\]](#): 'I saw Bernard's still life when he was working on it, and thought it superb' ('J'ai vu la nature morte de Bernard en train, je la trouvais superbe').
- 28 Vincent van Gogh, letter to Emile Bernard, on or about 5 August 1888 [↗ \[655\]](#): 'Il faut d'abord que je te reparle de toi, de deux natures mortes que tu as faites et des deux portraits de ta grand'mère. As tu jamais fait mieux, as tu jamais davantage été *toi* et quelqu'un. Pas à mon avis. L'étude profonde de la première chose tombant sous la main, de la première personne venue, suffisait pour *créer* réellement. Sais tu ce qui me faisait tant aimer ces 3 ou 4 études: Le je ne sais quoi de volontaire, de très sage, le je ne sais quoi de fixe et ferme et sûr de soi dont ils faisaient preuve.' The portraits to which Van Gogh was referring are [Portrait of Bernard's Grandmother](#), 1887, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation), and [The Artist's Grandmother](#), 1887, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
- 29 See [↗ \[655\]](#), n. 2. It is assumed that the second work is *Stoneware Jar and Apples*: however, there is no evidence to support this.
- 30 See n. 28.
- 31 Emile Bernard, 'Julien Tanguy, dit le "Père Tanguy"', *Mercure de France* (16 December 1908), in Rivière 1994, vol. 1, p. 168: 'Vincent ne comprenait aucunement la manière de Cézanne [...] il avait beau regarder ses toiles, il ne trouvait rien de ce qu'il voulait dans leurs tâtonnements.'
- 32 Vincent van Gogh, letter to Emile Bernard, 27 June 1888 [↗ \[633\]](#): 'If you saw my canvases, what would you say about them - you wouldn't find Cézanne's almost diffident and conscientious brushstroke there.' ('Si tu voyais mes toiles qu'en dirais-tu - tu n'y trouverais pas le coup de brosse presque timide et consciencieux de Cézanne.')