

# Press release

The Hague, 2 October 2009

## **Cézanne – Picasso – Mondrian A new perspective**

**17 October 2009 – 24 January 2010  
Gemeentemuseum Den Haag**

**Cézanne is the ‘father of modern art’. Ironically, the painter who frequently found himself turned down for the Paris salons is now regarded as one of the most important artists of his day. Picasso and Mondrian followed the lead he set and the three of them were responsible for what is perhaps the most decisive development in all art history: the inception of abstract art. These three revolutionary artists are now the subject of a major international exhibition opening this autumn at the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag. The exhibits will reveal in spectacular fashion how advances in painting suddenly gathered pace around 1900. The result is a thrilling story that takes the viewer from the sumptuous palette of Cézanne via the brilliantly coloured – and sometimes humorous – paintings of Picasso to the extremely subtle compositions of Mondrian.**

No other artist of the late nineteenth century had a heavier and more lasting influence on his successors than Paul Cézanne: with his subtle sense of colour and daring compositions, he broke a lance for future generations. The exhibition will include the sensual, world-famous *Bathers* and the Provençal landscapes featuring Mont Sainte-Victoire, near the small village of Vauvenargues.

From the time he arrived in Paris, when he was barely twenty, right to the end of his life, Pablo Picasso hugely admired Cézanne. He liked to regard himself as the older man’s (artistic) heir and was so keen to follow in his footsteps that he eventually took up residence in the Château de Vauvenargues, at the very foot of Mont Sainte-Victoire. He wanted not just to follow in Cézanne’s footsteps in an artistic sense, but actually to occupy the same physical landscape as him. Later still, it was there that Picasso was interred after his death in 1973.

Mondrian’s quest for the ideal work of art was virtually concurrent with Picasso’s experiments. Although he emerged from the Dutch tradition at a time when the Hague School was the height of fashion, he had been interested in international developments in painting from an early age. His earliest ideas about Cubism were derived from the press. It took an exhibition about Cubism held in the Stedelijk Museum in 1911 to open his eyes once and for all. It was only then that he saw what Cubism was really about and that he discovered the line that began with Cézanne and continued through Picasso’s work. Mondrian decided to visit Paris to witness contemporary developments in art at first hand. What he saw there took him a step closer to the essence of colour and form. This will be the first time that Mondrian’s relationship with Picasso and Cézanne is examined in such detail.

This autumn exhibition at the Gemeentemuseum offers a unique insight into the evolution of modern Western art – an evolution in which each of these three great painters played a pioneering role. With outstanding items on loan from around the world – from Washington (The National Gallery of Art), New York (The Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art) and Paris (Centre Georges Pompidou) – this promises to be a show of exceptional quality.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a lavishly illustrated catalogue containing contributions (in Dutch) by Elizabeth Cowling, Hans Janssen, Franz-W. Kaiser, Brigitte Leal, Sylvie Patin, Anne Roquebert and Benno Tempel.

This exhibition is part of Holland Art Cities and is supported by Shell Nederland B.V.

### **Note to editors:**

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