

## DETRITUS & ART / A personal point of view on Environment and Art by Rainer Stegmann

*Artists seldom provide an interpretation of their own work; they leave this to the observer. Each of us will have his/her own individual view of a specific piece of art, seeing different contents and experiencing a range of own feelings and emotions. Bearing this in mind, I created this page where you will find regularly selected masterpieces from different epochs and I express my thoughts on what the work conveys to me personally. My interpretation will refer specifically to the theme "Environment". Any comments or suggestions regarding this column should be addressed to [stegmann@tuhh.de](mailto:stegmann@tuhh.de).*



PAUL CÉZANNE / Auvers du Cote´du Valhermeil (1882)

Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) is one of the most influencing artists of his time. He represents the art genre impressionism in its last phase and is a pioneer of expressionism. The beautiful painting of the landscape was created near Auvers, a village north of Paris.

Living in peace with nature is an answer to anthropocentric life and a pre-requisite for a sustainable society. I selected this painting because I think it gives us an idea what it means, "living in peace with nature". The painting by Cézanne shows a cultural landscape with a small village, meadows, agricultural land and forests. The houses "hide" in the landscape and do not look like foreign bodies. Nature and human made fields merge into one unit. The painting conveys a calm, peaceful atmosphere in all its beauty. We may have seen similar landscapes and have enjoyed it, but probably did not "see" it in that intensity as Cézanne is presenting it. He encourages us to look at landscape and nature more intensively.

This work of art was created in 1882 when the world was quite different. We find landscapes like the one on the painting less and less often and we may have to search for them. Today most people live in cities and many villages

urbanize. Agriculture has changed being more mechanized and optimised for effectiveness; many forests, shrubs and bushes disappeared.

So what does this art- work may tell us? It can give us an impression of a direction in which agriculture should be transformed, how it may become more "natural". This would also satisfy our wish for more nature in life. With so many more people on earth we cannot turn back time and farm as in the old days, but we can try to make agriculture more ecological. Implementing natural bio-tops as ecological islands in the fields and shrubs around them, using crop rotation and more natural fertilizer may be the way to go. We should make cities greener also by practising urban farming. These changes would help to increase biodiversity, to produce healthier food, reduce emissions and to slow down climate change. In addition ecological farming makes the landscape more beautiful.

*Next issue: in my next column I will present a painting from Hubert Robert. Hubert Robert (1733-1808 ) was a French landscape painter who painted preferably architectural subjects. He is also well known for his drawings.*

*He travelled with Jean-Honoré Fragonard through Italy where he painted many Roman ruins.*



HUBERT ROBERT / Demolition of houses on The Pont au Change (1788).