**HENRI-EDMOND CROSS**

French, 1856–1910

Landscape, ca. 1896/99Oil on canvas; 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ × 32 in. (65.4 × 81.3 cm.)

Purchase, 1974 (42251)

Henri-Edmond Cross (born Delacroix, he changed his name to an English equivalent) and Paul Signac were followers of Georges Seurat, who, in response to impressionism, formulated a scientific theory of painting called neo-impressionism. Under Seurat's intellectual leadership, the neo-impressionists attempted to solidify form, which had been disintegrated by the impressionists, by dividing it into its basic components (divisionism) and applying color in dots or dabs of uniform size (pointillism). This formula tended to reduce objects to geometric shapes and to emphasize their silhouettes.

Known for his rectangular brushstrokes and high-value colors, Cross used pastel yellows, blues, pinks, and greens in the Academy's *Landscape*, which probably depicts a scene in the south of France. The horizontal pattern created by the field, dark forest, sloping mountain, and sky combines with the soft colors to give the work a strong decorative feeling. Indeed, Cross and some of the other neo-impressionists were precursors of fauvism, the first artistic revolution of the twentieth century. In the summer of 1904 Henri Matisse worked with Cross and Signac in the south of France. This contact probably led to the explosion of pure color and the overall decorative sense that marked the fauve movement. RAD

"Landscape," #4225.1
Academy Purchase (1974)
H. 25 3/4"; W. 32"

Henri-Edmond Cross, French, 1856-1911
painted 1896-99
Gallery 1

Artist: Henri-Edmond Cross was born in 1856 at Douai in northern France. His real name was Henri-Edmond Delacroix. In 1884, Cross, along with Seurat, Signac and other Neo-Impressionist painters, founded the Societe des Artists Independents. The function of this institution was to organize exhibitions that had neither juries nor prizes and was the first permanent organization which took a stand against the power of the jury and welcomed all artists without discrimination. Henri-Edmond Cross died in 1910 at Saint-Clair.

Subject: Landscape painting divided into four planes; pastures of wheat and grass cover the foreground, a flowering tree, split-rail fence and cluster of tall trees form the mid-ground which is followed by a dark, shadowed forest area and distant mountains. Colors are soft pastels of yellow, pink, green and blue.

Medium and Technique: Oil on canvas painted in methodical "dotting" technique used by the Pointillists.

Style: Henri-Edmond Cross is generally considered a Neo-Impressionist painter. Neo-Impressionism arose within Impressionism but attempted to systematize its limits. Neo-Impressionist artists, like Georges Seurat and Henri-Edmond Cross, attempted to solidify the disintegrating forms of the Impressionist painters by following a scientific, methodical formula. This formula first simplified all forms to silhouettes and reduced them to their geometrical equivalents. These forms were then assembled into a pleasing composition. Finally, the painting was executed in a technique referred to as "pointillism" or "divisionism" which, it should be noted are marked by a fine distinction in that "divisionism" refers to the breaking-up of color into its component parts and "pointillism" refers to the actual application of this color in dots of uniform size

(muddy color mixtures were eliminated, instead, pure colors were used). As a result of this systemization, Neo-Impressionism differed from Impressionism since it no longer attempted to capture a fleeting moment in fact, aside from preliminary sketching, the entire painting could be done inside the studio instead of out-of-doors. Neo-Impressionists were also more interested in pattern and formal arrangement and their concentration on this latter aspect can be likened to that of artists working within the academic norm. The painting style of Henri-Edmond Cross, while clearly associated with that of the Neo-Impressionists, manifests many individual qualities. Out of all the Neo-Impressionist painters, Cross used the brightest scale of colors and his Pointillist technique was of almost abstract quality. Cross also strove to achieve a certain independence of nature. This, linked with his strong feeling for color and decorative sense makes him a precursor of Fauvism (in fact, Matisse studied with Cross and Signac in 1904 in southern France).

Instructional Aids:

- Have group determine how they would make this painting.
- Compare and contrast with Monet's "Waterlilies," especially in terms of formal structure and treatment of color. Then do the same with Cezanne's "Un Clos."
- Determine whether the artist is attempting to capture a fleeting moment. If not, what is he making a statement about?
- Compare with Matisse for color and pattern.
- Explain "Pointillism" - speculate on the limitations of this technique.

HENRI-EDMOND CROSS

France, 1856–1910

Landscape, ca. 1896–99

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1974 (4225.1)

Henri-Edmond Cross was a follower of Georges Seurat, who, in response to impressionism, formulated a scientific theory of painting called neo-impressionism. Under Seurat's intellectual leadership, the neo-impressionists attempted to solidify form, which had been disintegrated by the impressionists; they carefully divided it into its basic components and applied color in dots or dabs of uniform shape. As here, this approach tended to reduce objects to geometric shapes and to emphasize their silhouettes. Known for his rectangular brushstrokes and high-value colors, Cross used yellows, blues, pinks, and greens in this work which probably depicts a scene in the south of France. The pattern created by the field, dark forest, sloping mountain, and sky combines with the bright colors to give the work a strong decorative feeling.

Henri-Edmond Cross (French, 1856–1910)

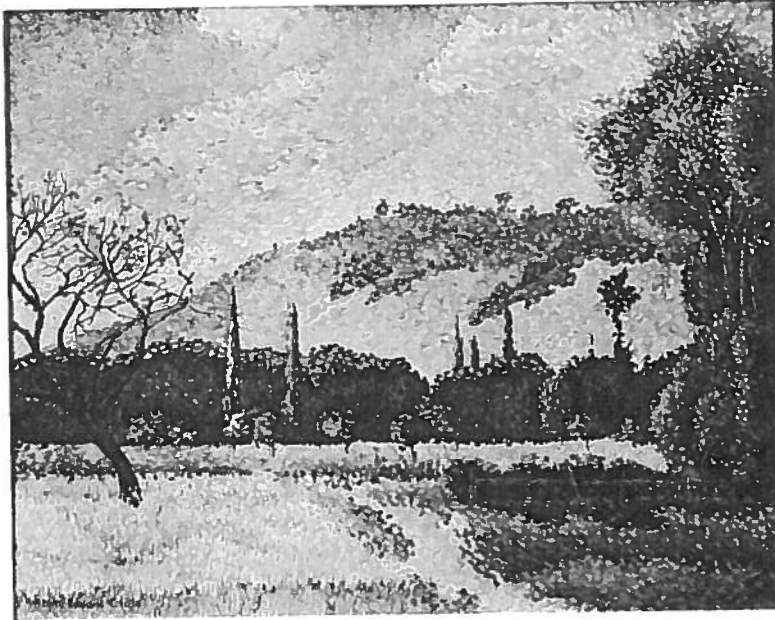
Landscape, c. 1896-99

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1974 (4225.1)

With Georges Seurat, Paul Signac, and Maximilien Luce, Henri-Edmond Cross was a principle exponent of Neo-Impressionism, a scientific response to Impressionism's fugitive nature that theorized the division of surfaces into their basic chromatic components, described in stippled paint strokes of uniform size and shape. Cross is known for his use of high-value colors and rectangular brushwork, both of which he employs in this landscape to capture the vivid light and intense color of the South of France. The pattern created by the field, dark forest, sloping mountain, and sky combines with the bright colors to create a strong decorative effect.

Henri-Edmond Cross, 1856-1910, France
LANDSCAPE, 1896-1899
oil on canvas, h. 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x w. 32"
Purchase, 1974



MAJOR ACQUISITIONS

Two important French paintings have been purchased by the Trustees for the Academy's collection of works highlighting the historical development of modern art. The Neo-Impressionist movement—a reaction to Impressionism's relative spontaneity—is now represented in a shimmering landscape of about 1896 by Henri-Edmond Cross (1856-1910). Along with Seurat and Signac, Cross was one of the chief practitioners of this style having a scientific approach to the use of color for an effect of intense natural light within a classically ordered composition.