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**The Cover**

Hortense Fiquet met Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) sometime around 1869 in Paris, when she was 19 and he was 30. Three years later, Mlle Fiquet bore their only child, a son who was christened Paul Cézanne. Though they apparently did not get on well, the liaison continued until 1886, when Paul and Hortense were finally married in both civil and religious ceremonies in the presence of his family in Aix-en-Provence. The regularization of their status did little to improve their relationship, however, and Hortense, now Mme Cézanne, continued to spend most of her time in Paris with their son Paul, now 14, while Cézanne continued to live mostly in Aix with his aged mother and spinster sister. Of Hortense he said, "My wife likes only Switzerland [she had been born in the Jura] and lemonade." Nevertheless, in spite of their temperamental incompatibilities, Hortense was her husband's most faithful model; some 41 sketches and paintings of her are known. Some of her heroic devotion and fidelity can be surmised from a remark of Ambroise Vollard, whose portrait Cézanne did in 1899. Vollard says that no less than 140 sittings were required for the one portrait! Moreover, Cézanne demanded that his sitters remain still "as an apple," remaining so for long periods of time while he meditated, brush in hand, before every stroke.

*Mme Cézanne in a Yellow Armchair* (cover) is one of three similar paintings, the other two being in New York, one in the Metropolitan Museum and the other in a private collection. As in all of his portraits, Cézanne had no desire to reproduce a photographic likeness, nor even to make a psychological interpretation. Rather, as in his still lifes and landscapes, he is searching out the essential truth of nature and presenting it to those who can see in the wordless language of color. The colors are simple—blues, reds, yellows—but he harmonizes them, much as the composer harmonizes the simple notes of the scale, and shifts from key to key so subtly that the result is not a portrait of Mme Cézanne but of certain abstract qualities: strength, repose, but above all, presence. But if the colors are subtle, the structure, on the other hand, is bold and direct. The sitter is almost in the middle of the canvas and almost faces us directly. The rectangles are prominent: the frame, the chair, the dado, which is refracted as it passes behind the chair. The result is a tension, but a controlled tension, one which, as one writer has noted, pulls all the colored surfaces into a state

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