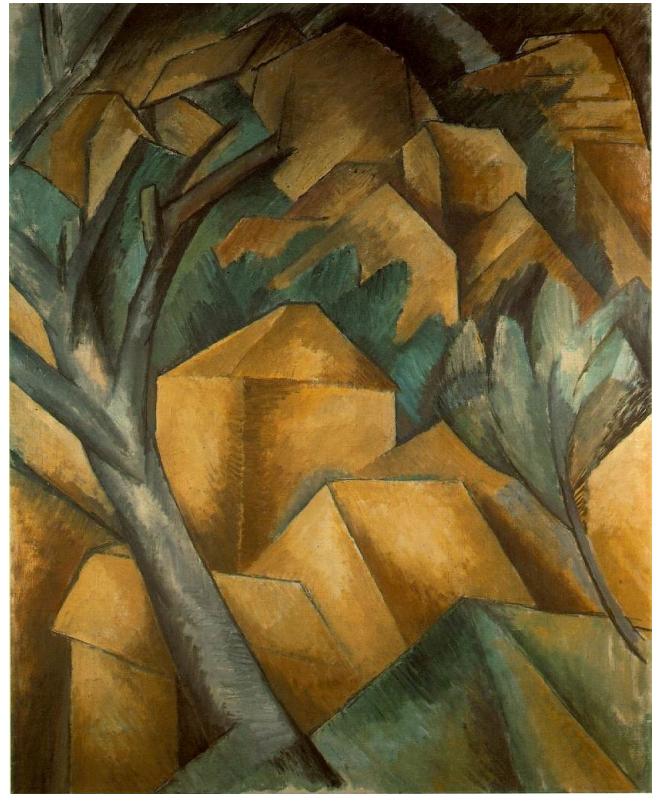


## How is this work associated with Cubism?

Braque's 1908 'Houses at L'Estaque' shows how he has processed the importance of both the Cezanne Retrospective and his first steps towards the new language of Cubism in 'Grand Nude'. Here he revisits the fishing village in the South of France which he had previously painted in a Fauvist style. His earlier spontaneous and colourful vision has been replaced by a carefully worked formal analysis of landscape. The landscape genre is not typical of the overall period of Cubism but is typical of this Early or Facet phase, evidenced by Picasso's similar work 'Houses on the Hill at Horta'. Braque narrows the scope and depth of the scene by abolishing the horizon line and sky. This emphasises the multiple perspectives - a typical Cubist characteristic - of the piece as the viewer looks down on the tree trunk to the left and central roofs but up at the walls of the buildings. Braque's flattened perspective is striking here, embedding Japonist ideas in the cropped tree and eliminating all aerial perspective in the upper half of the picture, here he is in advance of Picasso and anticipating the closer investigations of Analytical Cubism. Forms have been simplified to a level which goes beyond Cezanne and his own earlier experiments. Each shape has been rendered in geometric (but irregular) terms and Braque uses light and tone to establish angles rather than depth in any traditional way. His formal and angular presentation of nature is particularly innovative - and shocking - but the repetition of limited shapes is also rhythmic.



The colour palette is earthy here, possibly to evoke the natural landscape, but the emphasis on muted and limited colours is certainly characteristically Cubist and helps to fulfil their aims of an emphasis on form. The brushwork is much more finely worked than the varied mark making of his earlier Fauvist work - there are no bare patches of canvas or extended Pointillist dashes here - instead the hatching and outlining demonstrates the importance of primitive artefacts to the Cubists. Their fundamental simplicity and raw power was hugely attractive to Kahnweiler's 'Gallery' Cubists as it offered a new path away from traditional conventions and allows Braque to focus fearlessly on his priorities - shape and mass as a way to signify stability and strength in a rapidly changing modern world.