



Henri Matisse
(French, 1869 - 1954)

Biography

Henri Matisse was born on 31 December 1869 in Le Cateau-Cambrésis. In keeping with his bourgeois background, Matisse went to study law in Paris, where he graduated in 1888. After an acute appendicitis Matisse began copying prints and around 1890 he painted his first still lifes. It is only in 1892 however, that his father, who had little faith in the artistic ambitions of his son, gives him permission to go to Paris to learn painting. He enrolled at the Ecole des Arts Décoratifs, where he met Albert Marquet, with whom he became lifelong friends.

Through the Académie Julian, he took up classes at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, where he was taught by Yvon. Eventually in 1865 he was officially admitted to Gustave Moreau's studio, seriously starting his study of painting at 26 years of age. Matisse becomes particularly interested in the rendering of light and space. He learns a lot from Moreau and John Russell, a friend of the Impressionists and a great admirer of van Gogh, whom Matisse met at Belle-Ile.

Matisse married in 1898 and traveled to London on the advice of Pissarro to study the work of John William Turner, because of their shared fascination with light. While staying on Corsica and successively near Toulouse Matisse slowly manages to free himself from the yoke of scholasticism and finds space to convey his strong emotions, with which his color intensifies. Matisse then ventures into Pointillism and is strongly influenced by Cézanne in his efforts to achieve a more disciplined structure based on fields of contrasting colours. His paintings from this period are a clear harbinger of the later Fauvism Matisse championed.

Completely shut out by the official artistic circles of the time Matisse saw little chance to sell his work and he had to take on a job in the studio of Jambon, a decorator who worked for the Universal Exposition in order to make a living. Matisse's first major success comes with his pointillist work titled *Luxe, calme et volupté*. He was appointed chairman of Des Indépendants and the piece was purchased by Paul Signac.

Quickly after that, Matisse gave up Neo-Impressionism and again thoroughly reexamines his approach. During a stay in French Catalonia with Derain, he started working with a broader brushstroke, and even more expressive colors. When some of these pieces were exhibited at the Salon d'Automne in Paris, they caused outrage, and the exhibitors, including Derain, Marquet and Vlaminck were mockingly called Fauves, or wild beasts which marked the beginning of Fauvism, with Matisse as its spiritual father.

The years that followed were Matisse's most artistically creative and most interesting period, he painted his best known and most spectacular pieces including *The Red Room*, *The Dance* and *The Music*. He internationally recognized and said works were bought by prominent collectors Ivan Morozov and Sergei Shchukin.

In 1917 Matisse exchanged buzzing Paris for much quieter Mediterranean Nice and in the following ten years his work became more moderate and 'classic'. After an unsuccessful surgery in 1941, Matisse ended up in a wheelchair. This greatly limited him in his work and freedom of movement. Since he could not paint the way he was used to, he started making colourful collages of cut paper, he also made prints and book illustrations. In the following years he designed the Chapelle du Rosaire in Vence and took charge of the furnishing and decoration. Matisse worked until his death in 1954.

Selected Exhibitions

2018

Colour of Gobelins: Contemporary Gobelins from the 'Mobilier National' Collection in France, Museum of Decorative Arts and Design, Riga, Latvia

2015

De oase van Matisse, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2014

Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs, Tate Modern, London, UK; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, USA

2012

Matisse Paires et séries, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

2010

Matisse tot Malevich Pioniers van de moderne kunst uit de Hermitage, Hermitage Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

2009/2010

Matisse – Rodin, une rencontre entre deux maîtres de l'art moderne, Musée Matisse, Nice; Musée Rodin, Paris, France

2008/2009

Matisse – Menschen Masken Modelle, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany; Bucerius Kunst Forum, Hamburg, Germany

2002

Matisse – Picasso, Tate Modern, London, UK; Les Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, France; Museum of Modern Art, New York, USA

1963

Opening, Musée Matisse, Nice, France

1953

Exhibition, Gallery Berggruen, Paris, France; London, UK

1952

Opening Musée Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France

1945

Retrospective: Duo Exhibition with Picasso, Salon d'Automne, London, UK

1949

Exhibition, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France

1934/35

Various Exhibitions, New York Gallery Pierre Matisse, New York, USA

1931–1933

Retrospectives, Berlin, Germany; Paris, France; Basel, Switzerland; New York, USA

1919/1920

Various Exhibitions, Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, France

1910

Exhibition, Bernheim-Jeune, Paris, France

1905

Group Exhibition, Salon d'Automne, Paris, France

1904

First Solo Exhibition Ambroise Vollard, Paris, France

Selected Collections

The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York, USA

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France

Tate Modern, London, UK

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., USA

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, USA

Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden, Washington DC., USA

Hammer Museum, Hasloch, Germany

Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, USA

Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, USA,

Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, USA

Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden

Musée Matisse, Nice, France

Musée Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France

Museum Berggruen, Berlin, Germany