Matisse at Tate Modern, Matisse at MoMA, Matisse at the MET

Matisse’s Fauvist paintings were first exhibited in 1905 at the Salon d’Automne in Paris alongside similar paintings by André Derain (1880-1954). Art critic Louis Vauxcelles called the works fauves (“wild beasts”).

Matisse met Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) around 1906 and the two artists were friends and rivals throughout their careers. In 2003, the Museum of Modern Art in New York installed Matisse and Picasso inspired by Picasso’s remark: “You have got to be able to picture side by side everything Matisse and I were doing at that time. No one has ever looked at Matisse’s painting more carefully than I; and no one has looked at mine more carefully than he.”

The Matisse Chapelle de Vence remains an active Dominican-order convent. Visit the chapel with BBC reporter Alastair Sooke.

The Matisse Museum in Le Cateau, France was founded by the artist in 1952. The museum is dedicated to the display of Matisse’s work and others from the artist’s personal collection.

In 2014, the Tate Modern’s blockbuster exhibition Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs was “the largest, most extensive presentation of the cut-outs ever mounted.” The exhibition travelled to the Museum of Modern Art and was documented in the “Exhibitions on Screen” film series.

See a video of Matisse making a “cut-out” and learn about the artist’s use of a bamboo stick when making large-scale murals later in his career.

Matisse’s work was victim to Nazi seizures during World War II and restitution claims are ongoing. In 2015, Seated Woman (1941) was returned to descendants of Jewish art dealer Paul Rosenberg.


Watch the BBC’s 2020 documentary, Becoming Matisse, narrated by the artist’s great-granddaughter Sophie Matisse.

The Centre Pompidou recently celebrated Matisse’s 150th birthday with an exhibition. See a mini-tour with curator Aurélie Verdier and learn about ten works that were on display.
Henri Matisse (French, 1869-1954)

**Woman on a Sofa, Yellow and Blue**, 1936
Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:61.1

Henri Matisse is widely regarded as a foundational modernist of the early twentieth century. As a leader of the Fauvist movement, Matisse embraced bright, contrasting, and often unnatural color pallets to express emotion. The artist once said: “I do not literally paint the table, but the emotion it produces upon me.” Unlike the work of his contemporary, Pablo Picasso, Matisse often situated portraits in domestic settings. In **Woman on a Sofa, Yellow and Blue**, the figure comfortably lounges on a black and teal striped sofa, framed by a deep blue checkered floor and bright yellow wall. In contrast to the woman’s translucent gray robe and pale skin, the color and pattern of her surroundings set the figure apart. It is her accessories – bright blue heels, ring, and necklace – that draw attention to the woman’s reclining body.

*On view June 9 – September 12, 2021*