



100
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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS
PRESS RELEASE

Matisse as Printmaker
Works from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation

National Tour Begins October 2009 at Baltimore Museum of Art



Reclining Nude with Bowl of Fruit, 1926. Crayon transfer lithograph, 17 1/4 x 21 3/8 inches (image).
Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation. © 2009 Succession H. Matisse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

New York, NY (April 20, 2009)—The American Federation of Arts (AFA), a nonprofit arts organization celebrating its centennial year, is pleased to announce a new exhibition: *Matisse as Printmaker: Works from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation*. Comprised of 63 prints by Henri Matisse ranging in date from 1900 to 1951, the exhibition is the first to be drawn entirely from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, which includes works bequeathed by Henri Matisse to his younger son Pierre (1900–1989), the eminent dealer of modern art. Beginning its tour at the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) on October 25, 2009—along with a selection of complementary works

from the BMA's collection—the exhibition will travel to three additional venues throughout 2010, including the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin.

Selected by Guest Curator Jay McKean Fisher, the works on view represent the extraordinary range of processes Matisse used to create his prints: etching, aquatint, monotype, lithography, woodcut, and linoleum cut. With its rich variety of media and subject matter, *Matisse as Printmaker* sheds new light on an under-studied aspect of Matisse's oeuvre and underscores the importance of printmaking as a means for the artist to produce images in series.

Exhibition Schedule

The Baltimore Museum of Art
Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas at Austin, Texas
Two other venues TBA

October 25, 2009 – January 3, 2010
May 23, 2010 – July 25, 2010

About the Exhibition

Recognized foremost as a painter and sculptor, Henri Matisse (1869–1954) was also deeply engaged throughout his career in exploring other mediums and the unique possibilities they offered for creative expression. Matisse saw printmaking as an extension of drawing, which was integral to the whole of his art. As Jay Fisher writes in the exhibition’s catalogue, “Printmaking was Matisse’s primary means of demonstrating to his audience his working process, the character of his vision, and the way his drawing transformed what he observed.” Matisse’s involvement with printmaking was both intense and innovative as he moved from one technique to the next, adopting new approaches to reflect the evolution of his artistic ideas. Almost all of his prints involve serial imagery, such as the development of a reclining or seated pose, the integration of models within interiors, the study of facial expressions and features, and the transformation of a subject from a straight representation to something more abstract or developed. For Matisse, printmaking captured the steps in a process of seeing that was unique to his artistic vision—a process that could result in a refined image of his subject.



Young Girl Leaning on Her Elbows in Front of Flowered Screen, 1923.
Crayon lithograph with scraping, 7 3/16 x 10 5/16 inches (image).
Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation. © 2009 Succession H. Matisse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Printmaking for Matisse was also a practical means of disseminating his art among the many avid collectors of his work. Despite their relatively wide distribution, Matisse prints are remarkable for the aura of intimacy and immediacy they communicate. The ease with which the prints could be produced enabled Matisse to work freely and spontaneously, often creating casual portraits of family members and friends in his studio, where he had installed his own printing press. Apart from his book illustrations, Matisse was mostly faithful to the tradition of black-and-white prints; but in his last years, he made two prints in color, both of which are included in the exhibition. Moving from one medium to another—as single images or in books—Matisse made prints fairly consistently from 1900 until his death in 1954. During the course of his career, he produced more than 800 images apart from those in his illustrated books, often in editions of 25 or 50. This great profusion of images expanded the reach of his art and has helped cement his position as one of the preeminent artists of the twentieth century.



Henri Matisse Engraving, 1900–03. Drypoint, 5 7/8 x 7 7/8 inches (image). Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, © 2009 Succession H. Matisse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

While Matisse was clearly deeply engaged in the practice of printmaking, most of the exhibitions and research on the artist’s work to date have focused on his paintings and sculpture. With its diverse selection of works from different periods in Matisse’s career, *Matisse as Printmaker: Works from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation* provides a comprehensive examination of the artist’s relationship with the printmaking medium and the role it played in the evolution of his visual ideas. The exhibition advances the scholarship and public awareness of this understudied part of Matisse’s oeuvre, offering a persuasive argument that Matisse prints merit consideration not merely in relation to the artist’s painting but in their own right.

Exhibition Credit Line

The exhibition is organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.

Guest Curator

Jay McKean Fisher is the Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photography at the Baltimore Museum of Art. Among his recent exhibitions are *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* (2007–08) and *Matisse: Jazz* (2006). He is the author of numerous publications, including *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* (2007) and *The Essence of Line: French Drawings from Ingres to Degas* (2005), as well as earlier catalogues on the prints of Théodore Chassériau, Edouard Manet, and Félix Buhot.

Publication

A single flexi-bind edition (\$25) of the exhibition catalogue, published by the AFA, will be available in October 2009, in conjunction with the exhibition's opening. This fully illustrated 88-page catalogue contains an essay by Guest Curator Jay McKean Fisher titled "Henri Matisse—But Why Printmaking?" which examines the role of printmaking within Matisse's body of work. Also included is a reprint of the seminal essay from *Matisse: 50 Years of His Graphic Art* (1956) by the late William S. Lieberman, former Chairman of Modern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

American Federation of Arts

Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2009, the AFA is a nonprofit institution that organizes art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishes exhibition catalogues, and develops educational materials and programs for children and adults. The AFA's mission is to enrich the public's experience of art and understanding of culture by organizing and touring a diverse offering of exhibitions embracing all aspects of art history. Over the years, millions of visitors in more than 100 museums worldwide have experienced more than 1,000 AFA exhibitions. For more information about its exhibitions, publications, artist talks (ArtTalks), membership, cultural travel program (ArtScapes), and online resources, including family guides and podcasts, see www.afaweb.org

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Head of a Woman, Mascarón, 1938. Color linoleum cut, 7 9/16 x 6 13/16 inches (image). Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation. © 2009 Succession H. Matisse/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York