

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ETCHINGS BY MATISSE, with introduction by William S. Lieberman; 27 pages; 24 plates; paper bound; \$1.50. Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York (distributed by Simon & Schuster).

ETCHINGS BY MATISSE, with an introduction by William S. Lieberman, Curator of Prints at the Museum of Modern Art, will be published by the Museum on March 18. The book includes 24 prints by the famous French master who died last year. The etchings are reproduced in their original size. Except for the frontispiece, Self Portrait as an Etcher, reproduced through the courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Zigrosser, all the prints are from the collection of the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room of the Museum of Modern Art.

Three early works dating from 1903 open the book. The rest, however, except for a 1918 nude, were done in either 1914 or 1929, the two periods when Matisse took up etching with enthusiasm, Mr. Lieberman points out, "as if he deliberately sought temporary refreshment from easel painting in the chemistry of a minor medium."

The 1914 group are mostly portraits of friends and family. "The portraits were finished with astonishing speed after careful consideration of the sitter," Mr. Lieberman says. "The drawing is at once spontaneous and disciplined. Like all Matisse's etchings, each is distinguished by its economy of means. Individual characteristics are concentrated into a few vivid details and often the contours of the face fill the rectangular format of the copper plate itself."

In 1929, Matisse again turned to etching. Mr. Lieberman says,

"These are studies of professional models: nudes, odalisques, girls gazing at goldfish. Again, as in 1914, Matisse worked directly on the plate from the model. Purely for his own personal satisfaction, Matisse plays variations on certain themes. Sometimes the etchings repeat or anticipate motifs in his painting but most often they remain distinct. At first the etchings may seem incidental but freshly examined, the series appears as a brilliant sequence of quick and informal statements. The most successful variations offer daring reductions of a pose or movement into an abbreviated essential of lines."

The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Print Room owns more than 400 prints by Matisse which can be seen by the public Mondays through Fridays, 2 to 5 p.m. Mr. Lieberman is author of The Artist's Studio, Redon and Picasso, Jacques Villon: His Graphic Art and numerous articles on prints and printmakers.

Review copies and glossy photographs available from Elizabeth Shaw, Publicity Director
Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street.