

Henri Matisse

A R E T R O S P E C T I V E

SEPTEMBER 24, 1992 - JANUARY 12, 1993

MAJOR PUBLICATION ACCOMPANIES HENRI MATISSE: A RETROSPECTIVE

The Museum of Modern Art is publishing a major book in conjunction with the exhibition **HENRI MATISSE: A RETROSPECTIVE**. Written by John Elderfield, director of the Museum's Department of Drawings, curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, and organizer of the exhibition, the fully illustrated volume comprises a thought-provoking essay by Mr. Elderfield, followed by a complete catalogue section, chronology, and bibliographic note.

In his essay, Mr. Elderfield examines the range and depth of Matisse's achievement and explores the pivotal issues surrounding his art, leading to new and sometimes surprising interpretations of its intentions and meanings. He outlines the history of critical opinion of Matisse's work as it has contributed to our understanding of modern art as a whole and explores Matisse's own conception of his purposes. In tracing the path through which Matisse achieved maturity as an artist, Mr. Elderfield reconciles many of the complexities and seeming contradictions of a long career.

The catalogue section, prepared in collaboration with Beatrice Kernan, associate curator, Department of Drawings, comprises more than 400 works. Like the exhibition, it is divided into seven chronological sections. Each of these is supported by an illustrated documentary chronology of the artist's life and work, compiled with Judith Cousins, curator for research, Department of Painting and Sculpture.

The exhibition is sponsored by Philip Morris Companies Inc.

The first section, *1890-1904: Discovering Modern Art*, covers Matisse's early academic painting and tonal still lifes of the 1890s and his responses to Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. This is followed by *1905-1907: The Fauvist Epoch*, which documents Matisse's invention of an art of pure color. *1908-1913: Art and Decoration* examines the period during which Matisse established the use of brilliant, flat color and decorative pattern for which his art is best known. *1913-17: Abstraction and Experimentation* treats the extraordinary experimental work, which extended through World War I, more fully than ever before. Following this, a period of light-filled, often profusely decorated interiors, of exotic odalisques and unabashed sensuality, is the subject of *1917-1930: The Early Years at Nice*. In *1930-1943: Themes and Variations*, Matisse is seen returning to a formal simplicity comparable to that of the decorative period twenty years earlier. *1943-1954: The Final Years* is devoted to Matisse's dazzling last paintings and the still more surprising paper cutouts that supplanted painting at the end of the artist's career.

Funded in part by Philip Morris Companies Inc., *Henri Matisse: A Retrospective* contains 480 pages, with 320 color and 272 black-and-white illustrations, 180 of which are reference photographs. Both the hardbound edition (\$75.00), which is distributed in the United States and Canada by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, and the paperbound edition (\$37.50) are available at The MoMA Book Store.

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