

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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THE LAST WORKS OF HENRI MATISSE: LARGE CUT GOUACHES by Monroe Wheeler. 64 pages; 43 plates, 13 in color. Cloth, \$4.50; paper, \$3.50. Published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Distributed to booksellers throughout the country by Doubleday & Co., Inc.

A picture book devoted to the final phase of Matisse's art has been published by the Museum of Modern Art to accompany its current exhibition (through Dec. 3) of the French master's brilliant cut-and-pasted paper compositions. The Last Works of Henri Matisse: Large Cut Gouaches contains an essay by Monroe Wheeler, thirteen color plates and thirty black and white reproductions. The 64-page book is for sale at the Museum, 11 West 53 Street, New York, and in bookstores throughout the country for \$4.50 for the cloth-bound edition; \$3.50 for the paperback. It is also available by mail from the Museum for an additional 25 cents.

During the last four years before his death in 1954 Matisse used a new technique which he called "drawing with scissors." He cut shapes directly from paper which he had first painted with brilliant colors; scissors rather than pencil or pen were his drawing instrument. He then composed and pasted the forms on large sheets of paper or canvas.

In his introductory essay Mr. Wheeler examines the significance of Matisse's gouaches with reference to his earlier achievements in different media. He notes that these final works epitomize three aspects of Matisse's art: brilliant color, precise draftsmanship and illusory three-dimensional form.

Matisse began to work with cut-and-pasted paper as early as 1931, in planning a mural for Dr. Albert C. Barnes' Gallery in Merion, Pennsylvania. In subsequent years he designed posters, book covers, rugs, ballet sets, costumes and tapestries in much the same way. He also used this method to make the picture book, Jazz, (1947) with text in his own handwriting. During the final years of his life when he was too ill to stand at an easel, Matisse further developed the technique, producing increasingly larger works in which he achieved great subtlety and depth of meaning.

Among the works reproduced in color are four "blue nudes" from a series done in 1952, one of Matisse's most productive years; two designs for stained glass windows; the monumental "Sorrows of the King" and details from two of Matisse's largest compositions which were intended for execution in ceramic tile, "Large Decoration with Masks" and "The Swimming Pool." The color plates were printed in France by the master-lithographer, Fernand Mourlot.

The book also includes a bibliography and a catalog of the exhibition which will later be shown at the Art Institute of Chicago and at the San Francisco Art Museum.

Mr. Wheeler, Director of Exhibitions and Publications at the Museum, selected the works for the exhibition. He is author of several Museum publications including Modern Painters and Sculptors as Illustrators and Soutine and edited Textiles and Ornamental Arts of India.

Photographs and review copies are available from Nancy Reed, Assistant Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 St., N.Y.C. 19 CI 5-8900.