

MATISSE

IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

NO. 87
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FACT SHEET

- EXHIBITION: MATISSE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
- DATES: The Museum of Modern Art, New York
October 27, 1978 - January 30, 1979
- SPONSOR: This exhibition is made possible by a generous grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Jr. Charitable Trust.
- DIRECTOR: John Elderfield, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture
- CONTENTS: MATISSE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART will present the world's finest collection of one of the greatest masters of 20th century art. The exhibition will include all the Matisse paintings, drawings, sculptures, and cut-outs from the Museum Collection as well as many promised gifts and life-interest gifts. A generous selection of the design objects by Matisse will also be shown, plus many prints and illustrated books (installed by Riva Castleman, Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books). Together, this body of work constitutes a collection rivalled only by the combined collections of the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad and the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. In addition to affording the public an opportunity to view a Matisse collection unrivalled in its depth and quality, MATISSE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART will initiate the Museum's 50th Anniversary year with an appropriate demonstration of the vision and generosity of its founders and donors, and of the results of half a century of collecting.
- The exhibition, containing 179 works, will display the breadth of Matisse's work in all media and will include major paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, preparatory studies and books, cut-outs, a stained glass window and a set of chasubles. The Museum's collection affords an overview of virtually every period in Matisse's long and varied career, but it highlights the years when Matisse is considered to have been at his zenith, from 1907 to 1917. During this period such highly colored works as Dance and The Red Studio were succeeded by the architectonic, structured style of

The Moroccans and The Piano Lesson. Among the sculptures in the exhibition is Reclining Nude I, one of the artist's personal favorites, a figure that appears in a dozen paintings from 1907 into the teens. Other notable sculptures included are the series of four Back reliefs; The Serf; and the five Jeannette heads. Drawings in the exhibition span fifty years of Matisse's art and include a number of studies that complement works in other media shown. An important representation of prints and illustrated books from the largest Matisse print collection anywhere will demonstrate the full range of Matisse's work in this field.

Large paper cut-out works from the early 1950s include Memory of Oceania, the maquette for the Nuit de Noël stained glass window, and the 54-foot-long environmental mural, The Swimming Pool. Also on view will be the remarkable liturgical vestments designed by Matisse for the Chapel of the Rosary of the Dominican Nuns at Vence in southern France. (The Museum set is the only one of its kind except for the one in use at the Chapel itself.)

In planning this exhibition, the Matisses in the Museum Collection have been thoroughly researched and new knowledge brought to light. The Museum's last major exhibition of Matisse's work in different media was held in 1951-52; it was preceded by an important exhibition in 1931. These shows, however, were not limited to the Museum's collection. More recently, an exhibition of 64 paintings was mounted in 1966, and in 1972 a show of Matisse's sculpture included 93 works. In addition, there have been a number of smaller Matisse exhibitions over the years.

PUBLICATION:

Matisse in the Collection of The Museum of Modern Art. By John Elderfield, Curator of Painting and Sculpture, with commentaries on the drawings by William S. Lieberman, Director of the Department of Drawings, and commentaries on the prints by Riva Castleman, Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books. Every period of the artist's long and varied creative life is represented in this important book. The works discussed extend from turn-of-the-century and proto-Fauve paintings to the remarkable cut-outs of Matisse's last years. All of the paintings, sculptures, drawings, and cut-outs in the Museum's rich collection are reproduced, along with a generous selection of prints and design objects. Commentaries in depth accompany each work. A full catalog of the works follows, with notes and comparative illustrations. The text contains much new information and some revisions of previously accepted chronology, derived from documents and correspondence recently made available. 8 3/8 x 9 1/4"; 240 pp.; 130 illustrations, of which 34 are in color. 144 reference illustrations.

OPENINGS:

Press Preview: October 25
Public Opening: October 27

For further information, please contact Lissa Reisberg, Director of Public Information, (212) 956-2648 or Bruce Wolner (212) 956-7298, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, New York 10019. Photographs available on request.

LECTURES AND
SPECIAL EVENTS:

A series of four lectures by internationally distinguished scholars will provide an overview of the development of Matisse's art in all media with which he worked, from his earliest paintings before the turn of the century to his final works, the paper cut-outs of the 1950s. The lectures will be given on successive Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m.

- November 14 - John Hallmark Neff, Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. "Matisse Before 1914: The Foundations of His Art."
- November 21 - Jack D. Flam, Professor of Art History, Brooklyn College, City University of New York. "Matisse's Paintings 1910-1930: Instinct and Intellect."
- November 28 - William Tucker, Sculptor and Visiting Professor, Columbia University. "The Sculpture of Matisse."
- December 5 - Lawrence Gowing, Director of the Slade School of Fine Art, London. "Matisse: The Method of a Colorist."

A program of films on Matisse will be shown on Thursdays and Fridays at noon for the length of the exhibition and on Mondays and Tuesdays at noon during November.

There will be gallery talks daily at 1:00 p.m. for the length of the exhibition.

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