



Henri Matisse, *La Blouse roumaine*, 1940, Huile sur toile, 92 x 73 x 2,5cm.
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PRESS RELEASE | EXHIBITION

CHEZ MATISSE *.

MASTERPIECES FROM CENTRE POMPIDOU

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* At home with Matisse

H•ART
 MUSEUM

H'Art Museum, Amsterdam

Exhibition organised by Centre Pompidou and H'ART
 Museum

Curated by

Curator, Modern Collection, Musée national d'art
 moderne - Centre Pompidou
 Aurélie Verdier

“*Chez Matisse - Masterpieces from Centre Pompidou*” (At home with Matisse) is the third exhibition born out of the partnership between Centre Pompidou and H'ART Museum. Following Wassily Kandinsky and Constantin Brancusi, this one is devoted to Henri Matisse, structured around a selection of major works from Centre Pompidou's collection. The exhibition seeks to highlight the breadth of Matisse's body of work, while retracing part of the dialogue between Matisse and several 20th-century artists.

The art of Henri Matisse (Cateau-Cambrésis, 1968 - Nice, 1954) stubbornly embodies the idea of work to be accomplished, a path to be followed. It invites us to recreate a journey that questions the very conditions of painting, its materiality and its space, but also its situation beyond the canvas: its emotional and political dimension.

“Modern art is a rush from the heart,” said Henri Matisse at the end of his life. However, this consummate artist and leading figure of modernity had a slow, difficult start, far removed from that of a precocious virtuoso like Picasso. Born into a family of textile workers and ironmongers from Picardy, he would often highlight the unrelenting work required to achieve mastery, complexity and simplicity. As Pierre Schneider wrote so well, “Matisse felt the need to touch earth before setting off, to feel the weight of things before giving them wings”¹.

This exhibition seeks to retrace the development of his work, from Matisse's first self-portrait dating from 1900 to the last paintings and gouache cut-outs created at the end of his life in the greatest freedom – the very freedom afforded by his complete mastery. "I do not paint things, I paint the relationships between things," said Matisse.

In the same way, the theme of 'a fresh start for painting' reveals this gap by revisiting part of the immense artistic dialogue that developed in the 20th century around the name of Matisse. His entirely innovative conception of colour and his critical reformulation of the canvas as a pure pictorial surface resonated very early on with the German "fauves" and the Russian neo-primitivists, as well as with North American painters from the 1940s onwards.

Women artists also contributed a different perspective to Matiss's work: the art of Sonia Delaunay, Natalia Goncharova, Baya, Anna-Eva Bergmann and Zoulikha Bouabdellah all show reflexive approaches to the decorative style, the limitations of painting, and the role of the model and the feminine.

Matisse's work is an art of optical sensation that invites a multitude of responses, expressive and conceptual in turn, for anyone who wishes to reflect on the revolutionary equation formulated by the artist in 1907: "one square centimetre of blue is not as blue as one square metre of the same blue".

*(P. Schneider, « Matisse peintre de l'émotion », in *Le droit à la beauté*, Paris, Hazan, 2017, p. 53)

This retrospective is one of Centre Pompidou's travelling exhibitions on key figures of 20th-century art who are either French or lived in France: Wassily Kandinsky, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Constantin Brancusi, and Robert and Sonia Delaunay, to name a few. Each stop is the chance to create a unique project, in line with the philosophy of the partner venue, the audience and the cultural context. The Constellation program also offers the opportunity to circulate works from the permanent collection, which are rarely exhibited outside of Centre Pompidou in Paris, like *La Blouse roumaine* (The Romanian Blouse) by Matisse.

**Centre Pompidou
Communication and Media
Department**

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Director
Geneviève Paire

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Head of the Press Unit
Dorothee Mireux

Press Officer
Mia Fierberg
01 44 78 48 56
mia.fierberg@centrepompidou.fr

**H'Art Museum
Press and Marketing
communications department**
Madeline van Vliet
+316 128 488 04
m.vanvliet@hartmuseum.nl