



Henri Matisse, *Nu bleu II*, 1952
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PRESS RELEASE | EXHIBITION

MATISSE, 1941-1954

24.03 → 26.07.26

Grand Palais, Galleries 3 and 4

Exhibition coproduced by Centre Pompidou
 and the GrandPalaisRmn

Curated by

Department of Graphic Arts, Musée national d'art
 moderne – Centre Pompidou
 Claudine Grammont, Head of Department

"Matisse, 1941-1954" highlights the artist's final years of creation, between 1941 and 1954, through an exhibition of unprecedented scope in France. It reveals the multidisciplinary nature of his practice during this period, bringing together in particular an exceptional ensemble of gouache cut-outs. The exhibition also presents paintings, drawings, illustrated books, textiles and stained glass, all embodying this new dynamic. Never before in his artistic practice had Matisse been so prolific in the variety of techniques and media he used.

At nearly 80 years old, Henri Matisse reinvented himself through the medium of gouache cut-outs. These proved to be an autonomous visual language, able to attain the universal through its simplicity. The technique was well-suited both to reproduction and the requirements of monumental commissions, lending itself to multiple applications and allowing the artist to fully express the decorative dimension of his work. The exhibition shows this underlying transformation, which gives everything it touches a sense of breadth and breath, from the smallest works, which seem to spring out of nowhere with a snip of Matisse's scissors, to vast, more elaborate compositions.

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The exhibition further demonstrates that, far from having “replaced painting with cut-outs,” as is often mistakenly written, painting remained at the heart of his work, becoming ever more expansive in its space and generous in its colours.

The circuit brings together over 230 works from the rich collection of Centre Pompidou, private collections and national and international institutions, including loans never or very rarely seen in France (Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, MoMA, the MET, National Gallery of Art in Washington, the Barnes Foundation, Fondation Beyeler, and more).

It features key ensembles of this period, including the masterful and final series of paintings titled *Intérieurs de Vence* from 1947-1948, and the *Jazz* album, a radically modern work inspired by music, which is one of the greatest examples of an artist's book, and will be presented for comparison alongside its mock-up, which is conserved in the collection of the Musée National d'Art Moderne. The exhibition will also feature the *Thèmes et variations* series along with ink and brush drawings, the main pieces from the Chapelle de Vence, the monumental panels of *La Gerbe* and *Acanthes*, and the highlight of the exhibition, huge gouache cut-out figures exceptionally presented together, including *La Tristesse du roi*, *Zulma*, *La Danseuse créole* and the *Nus bleus* series.

This final creative period for Matisse was characterised by an ever-greater symbiosis between the space in the studio and the space in the work. Working directly on the walls in his Régina apartment, making the pieces mobile by their very nature, they contribute to the dynamic vegetalisation of the space: as in a bestiary, acrobats, swimmers, mascarons, and floral and vegetal motifs mix freely in fertile transports, one proceeding from the other as if by prolific cloning. The exhibition seeks to replicate this place in constant metamorphosis, giving visitors access to this “garden” by Matisse through a space that grows and expands as you move through each room.

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