



Media Contacts:

Anne Mannix, amannix@artbma.org
Tarun Bhatnagar, tbatnagar@artbma.org
Sarah Pedroni, spedroni@artbma.org
443-573-1870

***MATISSE AS PRINTMAKER* SHEDS NEW LIGHT ON ONE OF THE GREATEST ARTISTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

BALTIMORE, MD (July 30, 2009)—The Baltimore Museum of Art presents the first comprehensive exhibition on the printmaking of the great French artist Henri Matisse. On view October 25, 2009 – January 3, 2010, *Matisse as Printmaker* unites the BMA's extraordinary collection of Matisse prints with a traveling exhibition organized by the American Federation of Arts, a non-profit arts organization, and the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation. The BMA's exhibition features approximately 170 works of art spanning 50 years of Matisse's career. More than 150 prints, as well as a selection of related paintings, sculpture, drawings, and books are included, providing compelling evidence of the important role printmaking played in the evolution of Matisse's visual ideas. There is no admission charge for this exhibition.

Matisse as Printmaker loosely follows the chronology of Matisse's career, from the artist's earliest print in 1900 to the last in 1951. Examples of every printmaking technique used by Matisse—etchings, monotypes, lithographs, linocuts, aquatints, drypoints, woodcuts, and color prints—are included. Almost all of the prints involve serial imagery with the artist showing the development of a reclining or seated pose, the integration of models within interiors, the study of facial expressions, and the transformation of a subject from a straight representation to something more abstract or developed. Illustrated books such as *Poésies de Stéphane Mallarmé* (c. 1932), *Pasiphaé* (1944), and *Jazz* (1947) demonstrate Matisse's brilliant innovations in the presentation of serial imagery. The artist's brief experimentation with color printmaking is represented with three impressions of the color aquatint *Marie-José en robe jaune* (1950) and a print titled *La Danse* (1935), which captures the composition of his first version of the mural intended for Albert Barnes. Though most of the exhibitions and research to date have focused on Matisse's painting and sculpture, the rich variety of media and subject matter in *Matisse as Printmaker* significantly advance the scholarship and public awareness of this understudied aspect of Matisse's oeuvre.

The exhibition comprises 63 prints from the collection of the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, with artworks bequeathed by Henri Matisse to his younger son Pierre (1900–1989), an eminent dealer of modern art. These prints are complemented with a selection of works from the BMA's world-renowned Cone Collection formed by Baltimore sisters Claribel and Etta Cone. Additionally, many of the later prints in the exhibition are from a recent gift to the BMA from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation and are being shown for the first time. These works are a major addition to the BMA's collection as they bring the Museum's representation of Matisse's prints to more than 400 images, plus all but one of his illustrated books, making it the most important collection of the artist's prints in North America. These works are rarely on view to the public due to their sensitivity to light.

The exhibition is curated by Jay Fisher, BMA Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings & Photographs.

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EXHIBITION TOUR

Following its presentation in Baltimore, the combined AFA and BMA exhibition travels to the Tampa Museum of Art in Florida (February 4–April 18, 2010). The AFA exhibition travels to the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin (May 23–August 1, 2010) and Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton in Canada (October 29, 2010–February 13, 2011).

MATISSE AND PRINTMAKING

Recognized foremost as a painter and sculptor, Henri Matisse (1869–1954) was also deeply engaged throughout his career in exploring other mediums and the unique possibilities they offered for creative expression. Matisse saw printmaking as an extension of drawing, which was integral to his art. As Jay Fisher writes in the exhibition’s catalogue, “Printmaking was Matisse’s primary means of demonstrating to his audience his working process, the character of his vision, and the way his drawing transformed what he observed.” Matisse’s involvement with printmaking was both intense and innovative as he moved from one technique to the next, adopting new approaches to reflect the evolution of his artistic ideas. For Matisse, printmaking captured the steps in a process of seeing that was unique to his artistic vision—a process that could result in a refined image of his subject.

Printmaking was also a practical means of disseminating Matisse’s art among the many avid collectors of his work. Despite their relatively wide distribution, Matisse prints are remarkable for the aura of intimacy and immediacy they communicate. The ease with which the prints could be produced enabled Matisse to work freely and spontaneously, often creating casual portraits of family members and friends in his studio, where he had installed his own printing press. Apart from his book illustrations, Matisse was mostly faithful to the tradition of black-and-white prints, but in his last years he made two prints in color, both of which are included in the exhibition. During the course of his career, he produced more than 800 images often in editions of 25 or 50. This great profusion of prints expanded the reach of his art and has helped cement his position as one of the preeminent artists of the 20th century.

THE CONE COLLECTION

In the early 20th century, Baltimore sisters Claribel and Etta Cone visited Matisse’s Paris studios of Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso and began forming one of the world’s greatest art collections. Over the course of nearly 50 years they assembled an exceptional collection of approximately 3,000 objects, which were displayed in their Baltimore apartments. The highlight is a group of 500 works by Matisse, considered the largest and most significant in the world. Etta Cone met Matisse in 1906, and her initial purchase of several drawings marked the beginning of a life-long passion for his art that continued throughout his career. With masterworks such as Matisse’s *Blue Nude* (1907) and *Large Reclining Nude* (1935), competition among museums for The Cone Collection began as early as 1940, but Claribel insisted that it go to The Baltimore Museum of Art if “the spirit of appreciation for modern art in Baltimore became improved.” Thus achieved, the collection came to the BMA upon Etta Cone’s death in 1949, and has been on view since 1957. The collection has been the subject of exhibitions at prestigious museums around the world and celebrated in Baltimore with redesigned and expanded galleries that include a dynamic touch-screen virtual tour of the apartments where the Cone Sisters lived with their remarkable collection. Today the BMA’s collection includes more than 700 works by Matisse, with more than 400 prints, 42 oil paintings, 22 sculptures, 42 drawings, 19 books, two textiles, one ceramic vessel, and 220 drawings, prints, and copper plates from the artist’s first illustrated book, *Poésies de Stéphane Mallarmé*.

EXHIBITION ORGANIZER

This presentation unites works drawn from the collection of The Baltimore Museum of Art with *Matisse as Printmaker; Works from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation*, a traveling exhibition organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.

SPONSOR

The exhibition is generously sponsored by RBC Wealth Management. Additional support provided by the International Fine Print Dealers Association.

CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by the American Federation for the Arts. Included are an essay by Jay McKean Fisher exploring Matisse's use of printmaking throughout his career, as well as a reprint of the seminal essay from *Matisse: 50 Years of His Graphic Art* (1956) by the late William S. Lieberman, former Chairman of Modern Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. 88 pages. \$25. Available at The BMA Shop.

CURATOR

Jay Fisher is the Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photography at The Baltimore Museum of Art. Among his recent exhibitions are *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* (2007–08) and *Matisse: Jazz* (2006). He is the author of numerous publications, including *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* (2007) and *The Essence of Line: French Drawings from Ingres to Degas* (2005), as well as earlier catalogues on the prints of Théodore Chassériau, Edouard Manet, and Félix Buhot.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS

Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2009, the AFA is a nonprofit institution that organizes art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishes exhibition catalogues, and develops educational materials and programs for children and adults. The AFA's mission is to enrich the public's experience of art and understanding of culture by organizing and touring a diverse offering of exhibitions embracing all aspects of art history. Over the years, millions of visitors in more than 100 museums worldwide have experienced more than 1,000 AFA exhibitions. For more information about its exhibitions, publications, artist talks (ArtTalks), membership, cultural travel program (ArtScapes), and online resources, including family guides and podcasts, see afaweb.org

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

The Baltimore Museum of Art is home to an internationally renowned collection of 19th-century, modern, and contemporary art. Founded in 1914, the BMA's outstanding collection encompasses 90,000 works of art, including the largest and most significant holding of works by Henri Matisse in the world, as well as masterpieces by Pablo Picasso, Paul Cézanne, and Vincent van Gogh. An expanding collection of contemporary art features iconic post-1960 works by Andy Warhol and Sol LeWitt, as well as exciting acquisitions by artists such as Kara Walker and Olafur Eliasson. The BMA is also recognized for an internationally acclaimed collection of prints, drawings, and photographs from the 15th-century to the present; grand European painting and sculpture from Old Masters to the 19th-century; distinguished American painting, sculpture, and decorative arts and Maryland period rooms; one of the most important African collections in the country, and notable examples of Asian, ancient American, and Pacific Islands art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free; special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Friday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. (except major holidays). The Museum is closed Mondays, Tuesdays, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located on Art Museum Drive at North Charles and 31st Streets, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general Museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

NOTE: BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2009, THE BMA WILL BEGIN OPENING WEEKDAYS (WEDNESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY) AT 10 A.M. WEEKEND HOURS WILL REMAIN THE SAME.