

The Drawings of

Henri Matisse

February 28-
May 14, 1985

The Museum of Modern Art
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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART PUBLISHES VOLUME ON
HENRI MATISSE'S DRAWINGS

The Drawings of Henri Matisse, the first definitive study of this important aspect of the artist's work, has been published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name that opens at The Museum of Modern Art on February 28, 1985. The 312-page volume features an informative and clearly written analysis of Matisse's draftsmanship by John Elderfield, Director of the Museum's Department of Drawings and co-organizer of the exhibition. In his essay Elderfield traces the various phases of the artist's long career, from his early academic studies to the bold large-scale works of his last years. British art historian John Golding, who collaborated with John Elderfield in the organization of the exhibition, has provided an introduction to the text. In addition, Magdalena Dabrowski, Assistant Curator in the Museum's Department of Drawings, has contributed detailed commentaries on all the works in the exhibition. Reproductions of the nearly 150 works on view figure among the volume's 220 black-and-white illustrations.

Included among the topics discussed are the artist's rare Fauve ink drawings of 1905-06, the compositionally daring works of his so-called Cubist years (1914-18), his return to naturalistic charcoal renderings in the 1920s, as well as his simplified line drawings of the 1930s. Elderfield concludes with an examination of Matisse's increasingly bold compositions from the 1940s and 1950s, which reached their fullest expression in his paper cut-outs and his designs for The Chapel of the Rosary at Vence, completed when the artist was in his eighties.

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Meredith Corporation is the sponsor of the exhibition. Additional support has been provided by the Bohen Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. An indemnity for the exhibition has been provided by the Federal Council on the Arts and Humanities.

Henri Matisse

The Museum of Modern Art

The Drawings of Henri Matisse has been published by The Museum of Modern Art in a softcover edition that will sell for \$15.00 until June 15, \$17.50 thereafter. A clothbound version will be published and distributed by Thames and Hudson, Inc. in February 1985 and will sell for \$29.95.

EXHIBITION:

THE DRAWINGS OF HENRI MATISSE

DATES:

February 28 - May 14, 1985

DIRECTOR:

The exhibition was directed, for the Arts Council of Great Britain, by art historian John Gering with the assistance of Catherine Lampert of the Arts Council, in collaboration with John Elderfield, Director of The Museum of Modern Art's Department of Drawings, with the assistance of Magdalena Schwaner, Assistant Curator in the same department.

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CONTENTS:

This is the first comprehensive survey of the drawings of Henri Matisse ever to be presented in New York. Approximately 100 works on paper are featured, nearly a third of which have never been on public view before. The exhibition's many masterpieces, some in combination with works only recently discovered or previously inaccessible until now, confirm that the drawings of Henri Matisse are among the greatest in modern art.

Conceived historically, the exhibition traces the development of Matisse's drawings, from his early academic studies to the audacious large-scale compositions of his last years. Within the chronological arrangement of the exhibition, groups of thematically related works illustrate how the artist explored particular motifs, such as the Figure in a Hat series of 1919 and the decorative still lifes of 1947-50.

Major examples of the artist's rare large drawings of 1905-06 are included in the exhibition, along with the artist's so-called Cubist works from the period of 1910-12, which are among his most daring compositions. As Matisse began to conceive of drawing as a way of creating abstract form for drawing, his enduring charcoal challenges he drew in the 1920s gave way to the soft and fluid line drawings and portraits of the 1930s. The exhibition presents a number of remarkable works produced from the 1940s and 1950s, including a 1954 work characterized by an increasing reliance on calligraphic line. One of the artist's finest paper cut-out compositions from this period, a combination of charcoal drawing and drawing with scissors, completes this rare view of the work of a master draftsman.

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