



Royal Academy of Arts

Matisse in the Studio

The Sackler Wing of Galleries

5 August – 12 November 2017

Matisse in the Studio is the first exhibition to consider how the personal collection of treasured objects of Henri Matisse (1869-1954) were both subject matter and inspiration for his work. To reveal the working processes by which these pieces were transformed in his *oeuvre*, around 35 objects are displayed alongside 65 of Matisse's paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and cut-outs.

Matisse's eclectic collection ranged from a Roman torso, African masks and Chinese porcelain to intricate North African textiles from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He selected these objects primarily for their aesthetic appeal and although not generally rare or the finest examples of the traditions to which they belonged, they were of profound significance to Matisse's creative process. Most of the objects are on loan from the Musée Matisse, Nice, and several others are from private collections, which have been publicly exhibited outside France for the first time.

The exhibition explores how Matisse continuously returned to his collection throughout his working life and how the objects were reconsidered, depending on the pictorial environment into which they were placed. In 1951 he said, "I have worked all my life before the same objects.... The object is an actor. A good actor can have a part in ten different plays; an object can play a role in ten different pictures." Matisse's objects were vital creative stimulus, so much so that he travelled with them, even to temporary residences, and letters to family members often included requests for objects to be moved from Paris to Nice.

Matisse in the Studio is arranged around five thematic sections. **The Object as an Actor** shows how Matisse reconceived elements of his collection in different works over various periods throughout his career. A simple Pewter Jug, 1917 (Private collection), an Andalusian glass vase (Musée Matisse, Nice), and a chocolate pot given to Matisse as a wedding present (Private collection) reappear under varying guises in several works created over an extended period of time, including *Safrano Roses at the Window*, 1925 (Private collection) and *Still Life with Shell*, 1940 (Private collection).

The Nude primarily focuses on Matisse's collection of African sculpture and the ways in which these works led him to radical innovations in portraying the human figure. A number of Matisse's sculptures will be included, such as *Two Women*, modelled 1907-8, cast 1908 (Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C). Works representing the nude from other cultural traditions were also important to Matisse, including Bamana figural sculptures from Mali (Private collection) and a statue of the goddess Nang Thorani from Thailand (Musée Matisse, Nice), as well as contemporary photography.

The Face explores how he conveyed the character of his sitters without resorting to physical likeness. Many of Matisse's portraits borrow motifs and ideas from traditions emphasising the simplification of

human features, particularly from the African masks that he owned. Paintings by Matisse including *The Italian Woman*, 1916 (The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York) and *Marguerite*, 1906-7 (Musée Picasso, Paris) will be hung alongside objects such as an African Pende mask (Private collection), a small bronze bust of the Buddha from Thailand, and a French medieval head of a saint (both from Musée Matisse, Nice).

The Studio as Theatre centres around the Nice interiors from the 1920s, in which Matisse increasingly relied on studio props from the Islamic world, such as North African furniture, wall hangings and Middle Eastern metalwork, accentuating the importance of pattern and design in his continuing search for an alternative to the western tradition of imitation. Highlights by Matisse within this gallery include *The Moorish Screen*, 1921 (Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia).

The final section, **The Language of Signs** features Matisse's late works and the inventive language of simplified signs in his cut-outs. Objects from his collection, including a Chinese calligraphy panel and African kuba textiles, are exhibited alongside the artist's cut-outs exemplified by *Panel with Mask*, 1947 (Designmuseum Danmark, Copenhagen), illustrating how, in his own words, "The briefest possible indication of the character of a thing. A sign."

Matisse in the Studio offers an intimate insight into Matisse's studio life and artistic practice, exploring how the collage of patterns and rhythms, which he found in the world of objects, played a pivotal role in the development of his masterful vision of colour and form.

Organisation

Matisse in the Studio is organised by the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, in partnership with the Musée Matisse, Nice. The exhibition is curated by Ann Dumas, Royal Academy of Arts, Helen Burnham, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and Ellen McBreen, Associate Professor of Art History, Wheaton College, Massachusetts.

Catalogue

Matisse in the Studio is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue. Authors include Suzanne Preston Blier, Jack Flam, Claudine Grammont, Hélène Ivanoff and Marie-Thérèse Pulvenis de Seligny.

Dates and Opening Hours

Open to public:	Saturday 5 August – Sunday 12 November 2017 10am – 6pm daily (last admission 5.30pm)
Late night opening:	Fridays until 10pm (last admission 9.30pm)

Admission

£15.50 full price (£14 without Gift Aid donation); concessions available; children under 16 and Friends of the RA go free.

Tickets

Tickets for *Matisse in the Studio* are available online at www.royalacademy.org.uk or telephone 020 7300 8090.

Images

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The RA is undergoing a transformative redevelopment which will be completed in time for its 250th anniversary in 2018. Led by the internationally-acclaimed architect Sir David Chipperfield RA and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), the plans will link Burlington House on Piccadilly and Burlington Gardens for the first time, uniting the two-acre site. The redevelopment will also reveal the elements that make the RA unique, sharing with the public the historic treasures in its Collection, the work of its Academicians and the RA Schools, alongside its world-class exhibitions programme. For more information on the RA visit www.royalacademy.org.uk/ra250#video

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