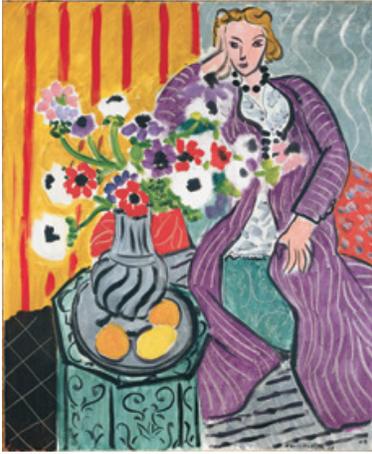


Henri Matisse



The Purple Robe and Anemones, 1937
oil on canvas
Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore

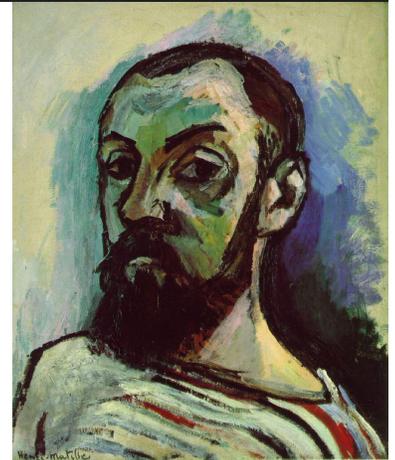


Beasts of the Sea, 1950
paper collage on canvas, 116 5/6 x 60 5/8 in
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

The Artist

Henri Matisse

Born Le Cateau-Cambrésis, France 1869; died Nice, France 1954
Henri Matisse grew up in the North of France and began his education as a lawyer, originally. It was not until the age of 21 that he developed his interest in art. In 1891, he moved to Paris to study art at the Académie Julian and then at École des Beaux-Arts. After his studies, Matisse became the leader of the artists' group called the "Fauves". When he was no longer able to paint because of health reasons, Matisse turned to cutting out paper and collaging on canvases. He is considered one of the greatest modern artists, known for his use of rich, bright colors, fanciful patterns, flattened abstract forms, and graceful lines. He worked in painting, sculpture, drawing, graphic arts, paper cutouts, and book illustrations.



Self Portrait, 1906
55 x 46 cm.
Royal Museum of Fine Arts,
Copenhagen

Art Movement

Fauvism

Fauvism was the first of the avant-garde movements that flourished in France in the early years of the twentieth century. The Fauve painters were the first to break with Impressionism as well as with older, traditional methods of perception. Their spontaneous, often subjective response to nature was expressed in bold, undisguised brushstrokes and high-keyed, vibrant colors directly from the tube. The style of les Fauves "the wild beasts", came from a loose group of early twentieth-century Modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong color over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism.

The Artwork

The Purple Robe and Anemones

In this painting, Matisse used many different kinds of brushstrokes. This creates patterns that lend to the visual rhythms of the piece. In the painting, a woman sits, lounging with a knowing smile, before her is a vase filled with anemones of varying color.

Beasts of the Sea

In the collage, *Beasts of the Sea*, Matisse uses cut out paper on canvas to create an abstract idea of underwater life.

Discussion Suggestions

Discuss the Painting:

- *Does the woman in The Purple Robe and Anemones feel alone?*
- *How many patterns do you see?*
- *Do the shapes look flat or three-dimensional, simple or detailed?*
- *What shapes do you recognize in Beasts of the Sea?*
- *Can you find shapes that remind you of playful fish? a floating seahorse? spiral shells? waving seaweed? sinuous eels? curvy coral?*
- *What about geometric shapes like squares, rectangles, and triangles?*

Activity Idea

Recreating Matisse's *Beasts of the Sea*:

- Using Matisse's *Beasts of the Sea* as their inspiration, students will create their own colorful collage:
- Students will select a theme for their work. Like Matisse, they can choose a memory of a vacation as their inspiration.
- Also, like Matisse, students will make their own colored paper by painting entire sheets of white paper one color. Use heavy cardstock so the paper doesn't curl.
- Using scissors, students will cut the paper into different shapes that remind them of that place.
- Then, they will arrange their cut-out shapes on a large piece of colored paper. Encourage students to move the pieces around, rotate them, and experiment with layering.
- When they are satisfied with the design, glue the shapes in place.

Materials Needed:

- Smart Board or computer with ability to project images from slideshow
- Heavy cardstock (to prevent curling when painted)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Large sized colored paper to attach cut shapes to