

MATISSE

E LA LUCE DEL MEDITERRANEO

MESTRE
CENTRO CULTURALE CANDIANI
28.09.2024 — 4.03.2025

Matisse and the Light of the Mediterranean

curated by Elisabetta Barisoni

Centro Culturale Candiani, Mestre

28 September 2024 - 4 March 2025

A journey through masterpieces and the places that inspired them, amidst the luminous Mediterranean environment, geography and stimuli for the soul, which provided the backgrounds of artistic events that were fundamental for the evolution of modern European art. The new exhibition conceived for the Centro Culturale Candiani is based around the civic collections of modern art conserved at Ca' Pesaro and enriched by prestigious international loans. It is dedicated to another master of the twentieth century avant-garde: **Henri Matisse** (Le Cateau-Cambrésis, 1869 - Nice, 1954).

A **master and progenitor of the Fauves** – the wild beasts, the savages – Matisse is presented in the exhibition in dialogue with other artists with whom he was in touch and whose artistic revolutions; he shared. He was a **painter of joie de vivre**, of profound emotions, translated into strong, vivid, unnatural colours. And, above all, he was an **interpreter of light**: the centre of Matisse's research, like that of those artists who aimed to **capture the dazzling beauty of the Mediterranean Sea**, of the Midi – the South of France – as a physical place and place of artistic creation, the true protagonist of colour liberated from wild Expressionism.

Light and colour thus constitute the fulcrum of the exhibition, together with the importance of drawing, which for Matisse was almost an obsession. **More than fifty works** are on show, starting with the valuable graphic collections of the Galleria Internazionale d'Arte Moderna – which include three important lithographs by the French artist dating from the 1920s and two drawings dating from 1947 – placed alongside others of the artist's masterpieces from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Národní Galerie in Prague, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Bordeaux, the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nancy, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Musée Albert-André in Bagnols-sur-Cèze and the Museo del Novecento in Milan. Seven sections in the exhibition investigate **Modernity Comes from the Sea, The Light of the Mediterranean, The Golden Age, The Mediterranean, a Unique Paradise**, flanked by reflections on decoration and ornament, the fascination of Moorish lines, the languid female figures as odalisques in **Arabesques and Decoration**, up to the perfect synthesis of **Luxury, Calm and Voluptuousness** and the 'drawing of



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pleasure', about which the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy writes. This spontaneously gives rise to a dialogue with various artists who worked on the inner qualities of painting, pursuing their poetics: **Henri Manguin, André Derain, Albert Marquet, Maurice de Vlaminck, Raoul Dufy and Pierre Bonnard**. Their distinct research and production creates a choral narrative: from the friendship between Derain and Matisse, travelling to the Mediterranean coast of France in the summer of 1905, to the centrality of certain locations, such as Nice, Arles and Saint-Tropez, the latter becoming an icon of twentieth-century art and culture.

The exhibition closes with Matisse's last revolutionary creative phase. ***From colour to form*** begins with the production of *papiers découpés*, sheets of coloured paper cut out and glued together, in which the French artist takes the synthesis of expression to its maximum. From the imitators in Venice, such as **Renato Borsato** or **Saverio Barbaro**, to the figurines of **Chris Ofili** and up to the compositions of **Marinella Senatore**, the dignity of decoration, ornament, design and stylisation of the figure emerges in the last section of the exhibition as perhaps Matisse's most important legacy to the contemporary age.

Also part of the exhibition is the ***Come Matisse*** project, the **collective work** realised by the students of the ***Musei in gioco Summer Camp***, a special installation created using the *papier découpé* technique invented by Matisse. During the summer camp, the participants 'drew with scissors' to create their own shapes, inspired by the coloured silhouettes that the French master invented in his maturity; lively, dynamic elements that invade the surrounding space, taking over the walls, covering them with colour. This participatory project was conceived and realised by Muve Education to involve young people in an active and fun way, to 'discover by doing' the work of Matisse, to inspire and experiment, to experience the exhibition together.



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