

# Henri Matisse

## 1869-1954

Ideas of things to bring to class with you:

- Elements of Art Board
- Henri Matisse Presentation cd and script
  - Take Home Sheets

(please make copies a day or two in advance)

Points to reinforce: French painter, color, line, pattern and collage.

Much of the material here was found  
at the Baltimore Museum of Art website ([www.artmba.org](http://www.artmba.org))  
the Metropolitan Museum of Art ([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)) and  
the National Gallery of Art ([www.nga.gov](http://www.nga.gov))

Bonjour, class! I am (name) and I am here for Art in the Classroom today. Bonjour means “Hello” in French. The artist we are going to talk about today is French, but before we talk about him, can anyone tell me briefly what you remember from the last visit (try to limit to 2-3 minutes)?

Before we talk about today’s artist let’s remember the tools that every artist uses when creating his or her work. These are called the Elements of Art.

*(Elements of Art slide – line, shape, color, light, shape, texture and space)*

Slide 1

Let’s look at a painting by today’s artist Henri Matisse:



Slide 2

Please take a moment to look at this painting and tell me what you see.

*Boats, sails, masts, sea, water, sky, potted plants, window, vine, leaves, balcony, walls.*

How did Matisse use color in this painting?

*Bold color; purple, violets, green, orange. Blocks of color on the interior of the room, short wavy lines of color outside the window.*

Would you see water this color in nature?

Would you see sky this color in nature?

Do you think that the walls really were painted those colors?

Does this look like a photograph?

*No, it is Matisse’s idea of the view.*

This style of painting was new 100 years ago, when Matisse painted it. Some people thought that a scene of boats outside a window should look like it does in real life. What do you think? Matisse said that he was painting pictures not things. “When I put on a green, it is not grass. When I put on a blue, it is not sky.” (You can have some fun and use a French accent here). He added his imagination to what he saw in nature and then painted. Sounds like fun, huh?

This painting is really a painting within a painting. The window frames the outside view.

How does an artist put paint on a canvas?

Matisse put the paint on his canvas with a brush. Let's look at a close up of the painting and see what kind of brushstrokes he used in different parts of the painting



Slide 3

Here is a section that frames the window. Can you see the brushstrokes?

*Long, blending brushstrokes.*

Do you notice that writing in the corner? *That is the artist's signature: Henri Matisse*



Slide 4

Here are the potted plants on the window sill. What kind of brushstrokes do you think that Matisse used to make these? *A flurry of short, squiggly marks.*



## Slide 5

Here is a view of the harbor. What kind of brushstrokes do you see?  
*Longer strokes, some curved, some sideways, some up and down for the sea and sky.*

Let's put all the parts together and look at the painting one more time.



Matisse lived in France. He painted this scene in the South of France in a town called Coullioure. He named this work "Open window, Coullioure"

## Slide 6



Slide 7

Here is a painting of Madame Matisse. Madame means “Mrs.” In French. Can you describe the colors that Matisse used?

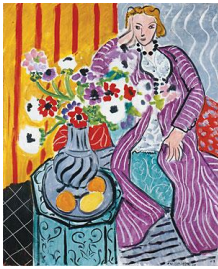
*Bright, vibrant blocks of colors.*

Some people call this painting “Green line.” Why do you think they call it that?

*There appears to be a green line down her face.*

How do you think that Madame Matisse felt about this portrait of her? Do you think that her skin was really this color? How would you feel if you were painted in this style?

Matisse did not know that he wanted to be an artist until he was grown up. He went to school to learn about law and was working in a law office when he got sick and had to stay in bed a long time to get better. His mother gave him a box of paints and it was then that he knew he wanted to learn about art. He said: “It was as if I had been called.” He was 21 years old.



## Slide 8

We have looked at how Matisse used color and how he made lines with his brushstrokes. Now let's look at how he used patterns in his work. Can anyone tell me what a pattern is? *Whenever a line, shape or color repeats, that is a pattern.*

Take a moment and look at this painting and tell me where you see patterns? What kind of patterns? *Listen to the children point out the various patterns. In fact, the only things in this work that does not have pattern are the fruit and the woman's face and hands.*

What was your reaction when you first looked at this painting? Did you look at one thing or did you look all around the canvas? *Matisse's patterns make the eye jump. That's because patterns have rhythm. They move our eyes around through a painting.*

Does the lady look flat or rounded? *He flattened the model's body and changed its shape, making it seem a part of the flat canvas.*

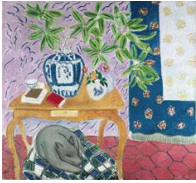
In 1937, Matisse asked his model Lydia Delectorskaya to pose in a purple robe, but he did not want to paint a portrait that looked like a photograph. He explained, "I do not create a woman, I make a picture." Do the colors that Matisse used in this painting seem dull or lively? He made the colors strong and used the patterns, making the stripes, checks, and wavy lines bigger and bolder than we would expect.

Henri Matisse loved colors. Colors whisper when they are quiet and dull, Matisse's colors sing.



Slide 9

Here is another painting by Matisse. Can you tell me any patterns that you see? *The wall, the floor, the slats in the window shutters.*  
Do you see bold colors or dull, soft colors?



Slide 10

See how peacefully the dog sleeps on his plaid blanket? The mood of this painting is calm and serene. You would never guess how hard Matisse worked to get the painting just right. He repainted it again and again. He made it look so easy.

Matisse loved patterns and it is one of the things he is famous for. He especially loved to collect fabrics with interesting patterns or designs from around the world and use them in his work. Sometimes he used the same things in many paintings. Let's see if we notice anything from this painting that was in the last one – the girl with the yellow dress.

*Did anyone notice the pattern on the rug?*



Slide 11



Slide 12

What is happening here? *Maybe a little nap after a snack of fruit?*  
Do you see any patterns?

Let's play another game, do you see anything in this painting that Matisse used in another painting or paintings? *The vase*



Slide 13



Slide 14

Here is a photograph of Matisse working with a model. Too bad the photograph is not in color, so we can see the real color of those fabrics!



Slide 15

Here is a painting that Matisse made of his studio. Wow, look at all that color and all those patterns!

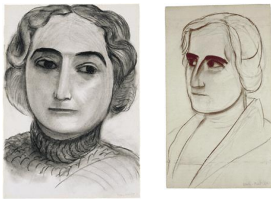




Slide 16

Here is Matisse at home. Can anyone make out the big painting on the wall behind him? It is the painting that we saw before, of the dog sleeping under the table. Matisse looks pretty relaxed as well, doesn't he?

Can you make out the sketches on the canvasses? One is on an easel and one is propped up behind the arm chair Matisse is in.



Slide 17

Here they are. They are sketches of two sisters that were great supporters of Matisse. They purchased and collected many of his paintings. He was very grateful to them for believing in him and he made these as a gift to them.

Towards the end of his life Matisse was in a wheel chair, he could not paint, but he found a way to keep making art. He called it "cutting into color". He cut out shapes of colored paper and glued them onto a white surface.

Does anyone know what it is called when you take pieces of paper and glue them onto another paper? *Collage*.

Has anyone here ever done a collage? *Yes!*

Here are some examples of Matisse's later work.



Slide 18

Does this style look different than the paintings that Matisse did? *They are different styles, but the children may compare the large patches of color and the patterns - in that way they are similar to his other works.*

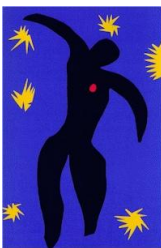
How would you compare the colors in this work to the colors in the other works we have looked at today? *Bold, bright, broad.*



This one is called "Beasts of the Sea."

Do you see any shapes that remind you of the sea?

Slide 19



This is an image from an art book that Matisse made. This book is called "Jazz" – which is a kind of really cool music.

Does it look like the figure may be dancing to the music?

Slide 20

Let's try and remember some of the important things we learned about today's artist:

Henri Matisse (from France)

Colors – Matisse's sang, not whispered

Patterns

Collage

Au revoir! – that's "Good-bye" in French

Note to presenter: If there is time, please look at the following work.



Slide 21

This work is called Pianist and Checker Players. The girl playing the piano was one of Matisse's favorite models. Matisse may have meant this to be his family. He had a daughter and 2 sons.

Look at all those patterns! Can anyone point one out to me?

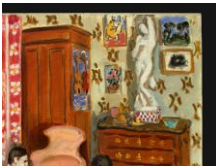
Let's look a little closer at some.



Slide 22

What are the 2 boys doing? *Playing checkers.*

Where do you see patterns? *The cloth on table, the boys' shirts, the rug, the dresser drawer handles.*



Slide 23

What do you see in this part of the painting? Armoire, statue, small painting on wall, design on wallpaper, dresser. Those are Matisse's violins and his own artwork on the wall.



Slide 24

So you remember where this was in the room? *The rug.*

Does anyone remember seeing this pattern before? It was on the floor of Matisse's studio!



Slide 25

Burr PTA  
Art in the Classroom News

For a fun interactive online activity, visit the website of the  
Baltimore Museum of Art at:  
<http://artbma.org/education/index.html>

You will meet Raoudi, artist Henri Matisse's perky schnauzer, in *Matisse for Kids*, an on-line exploration of Matisse's bold, bright paintings. Along the way, you'll earn props, patterns, and colors to use in creating your own Matisse-inspired artwork.



Ask your child to find some of the patterns  
in these images of Matisse' work.

Visit the Baltimore Museum of Art web site to see them in full color!