

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

## ADVANCE FACT SHEET

Exhibition: Henri Matisse Paper Cut-Outs

Dates: September 10 through October 23, 1977

Scope: Demonstrating the evolution of the paper cut-outs of the French artist Henri Matisse (1869-1954) over a twenty-year period, the exhibition will start with his early experiments in the 1930s and conclude with his mature style in the 1950s. His late works in this medium are considered by many to be the culminating achievement of one of the most significant artists of the twentieth century.

This will be the first fully representative exhibition of this aspect of Matisse's work. Previous Matisse exhibitions have concentrated on his paintings, sculpture and drawings; until recently, the cut-outs have not been catalogued or studied in depth.

Content: The exhibition will include a selection of fifty-eight cut-outs relating to book illustrations, window maquettes, vestments, decorative works, chromatic studies, textiles, and ceramic tile mural projects as well as purely independent compositions. The works have been lent from public and private collections in the United States, Europe and Japan.

For the first time since they were acquired in 1973, five Matisse cut-outs from the National Gallery's collection will be exhibited at the Gallery: Vénus, La Nègresse, Femme à L'Amphore et Grenades, Grande Décoration aux Masques and Les Bêtes de la Mer... The group will be among the highlights of the Gallery's new East Building, scheduled to open in June, 1978.

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Major works never before seen in the United States will include two large (79" x 124") tapestry maquettes, Polynésie, Le Ciel and Polynésie, La Mer, lent by the recently opened Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou (Beaubourg) in Paris and Composition (Les Velours), lent by the Kunstmuseum Basel in Switzerland. Other important loans will include Les Mille et Une Nuits lent by Carnegie Institute's Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, and the paper maquettes, entitled L'Arbre de Vie, for the three stained glass windows designed by Matisse in 1949 for the Vence Chapel. Lent by The Vatican Museums' Collection of Modern Religious Art in Rome, these works, about seventeen feet high, are among the largest in the exhibition.

In size the cut-outs range from a number of small whimsical works to room-size projects of his last years, including La Piscine, a recent acquisition of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Organization:

Organized by The St. Louis Art Museum and The Detroit Institute of Arts, the preparation of the exhibition and catalogue were initiated and supervised by Jack Cowart, Curator of 19th and 20th Century Art, St. Louis, assisted by John Hallmark Neff, Curator of Modern Art, Detroit.

Publication:

An extensive reference catalogue with more than twenty color plates and 250 black-and-white illustrations will be available. It will contain entries on 218 of Matisse's cut-outs and essays by Dominique Fourcade (who edited "Henri Matisse, Ecrits et Propos sur l'Art"), John Hallmark Neff, Jack Flam (whose "Matisse on Art" was recently published by Phaidon), and Jack Cowart. John Haletsky, a graduate student at New York University, is writing on the iconography of Matisse's Vence chasuble designs and the history of their commission. Of special note is a conservation appendix, by Antoinette King (Senior Paper Conservator at the Museum of Modern Art), with the first published records of past conservation and restoration plus guidelines and studies on safe exposure, storage, and color preservation for the paper cut-outs.

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Funding:

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Itinerary:

National Gallery of Art, Washington  
September 10 through October 23, 1977

The Detroit Institute of Arts  
November 23 through January 8, 1978

The St. Louis Art Museum  
January 29 through March 12, 1978

END

June 6, 1977

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Pamela Jenkinson, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.