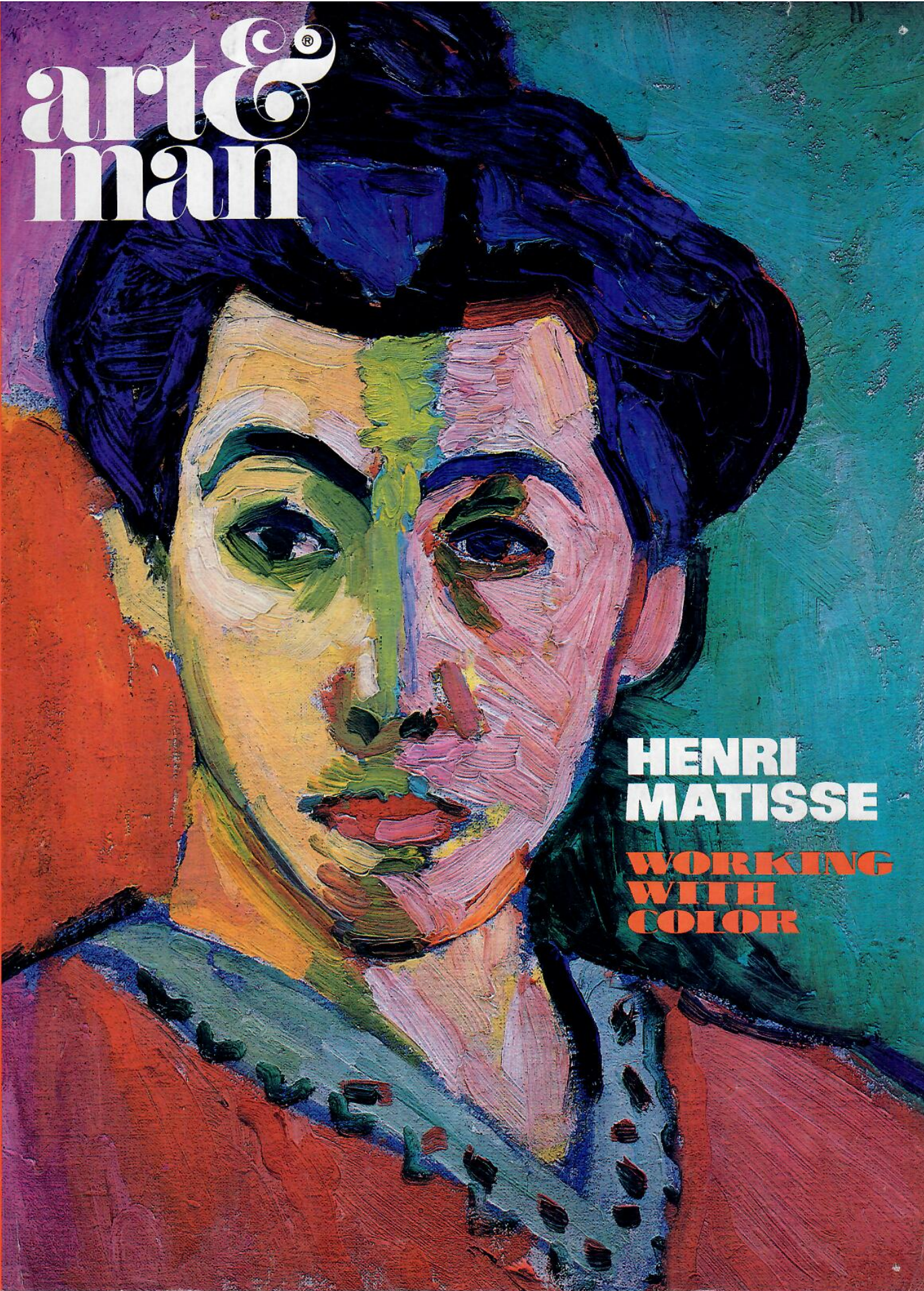


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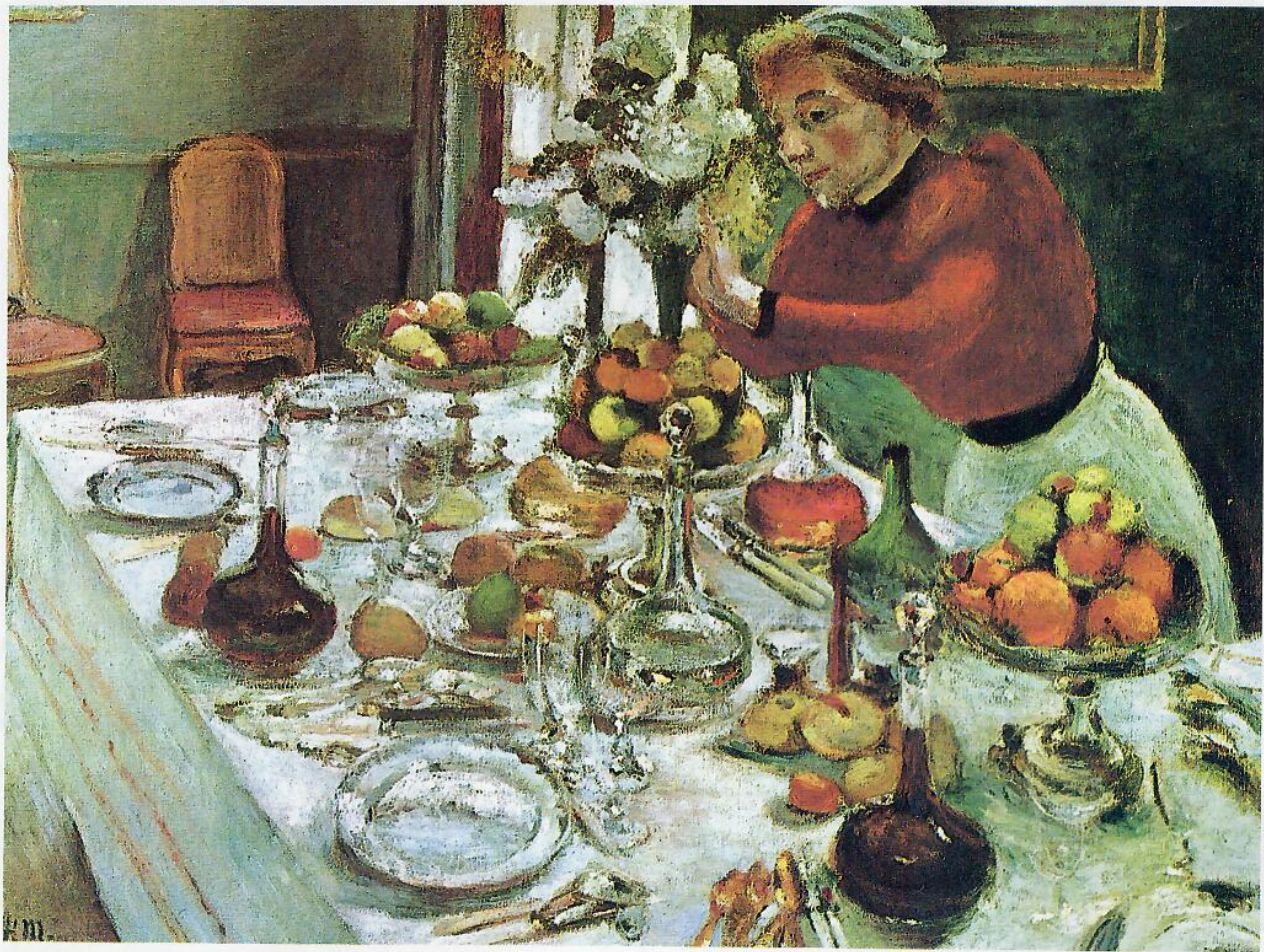
# art & man



**HENRI  
MATISSE**

**WORKING  
WITH  
COLOR**





HENRI MATISSE (1869-1954) THE DINNER TABLE, 1897. OIL. 39 1/2" X 51 1/2". PRIVATE COLLECTION, PARIS.

# A NEW WORLD OF COLOR

Have you ever seen a face that looks like the one on the cover? Eighty years ago, when this portrait was painted, hardly anyone had seen anything like it before, and even fewer liked what they saw. One critic called it, "The nastiest smear of paint I have ever seen," while another thought it, "the work of an insane person." What these critics most objected to was the artist's use of color. They had never seen a pink and yellow face with a green stripe in the center, and they didn't understand that the artist — Henri Matisse — was using color in a completely new and revolutionary way. Today this work and the other paintings you'll see in this issue are considered among the greatest masterpieces of 20th-century art.

Henri Matisse was born in 1869 in a small town in the north of France. He went through school with no particular interest in art, and when he graduated from high school his father, a businessman, sent him to law school in Paris. At the end of that time, he received his degree and began working as a law clerk. Matisse might have spent the rest of his life writing

out legal documents if something completely unexpected hadn't happened. In 1890, when he was 21, Matisse suddenly became ill and had to go into the hospital. His mother, who liked to paint, brought him a paintbox to help him pass the time. Matisse began copying book illustrations and as he later said, "It was as if I had been called — somehow I knew I had finally found my true path."

As soon as he was well, Matisse told his father he was going to be a painter, then entered art school. At that time, Paris was the per-

French artist Henri Matisse, who lived and worked early in this century, is considered to be one of the first "modern" artists.



SELF-PORTRAIT, C. 1929. PENCIL. MATISSE MUSEUM, NICE.





HOW DID HENRI MATISSE TRANSFORM AN ORDINARY DINING ROOM INTO A TIMELESS MASTERPIECE?

Matisse first developed his revolutionary color style in paintings such as the famous one shown above, called *Harmony in Red*.

fect place to be an artist. The Impressionists Monet and Renoir had invented new ways of using color and light, and Vincent Van Gogh, Paul Cézanne, and a young artist named Pablo Picasso were developing new and controversial painting styles. At first, Matisse did paintings like *The Dinner Table* (above, left), using lifelike colors and modelling his objects with light and shade so they would appear solid. But even this painting is not completely realistic. Does the table seem to go back into space, or does it appear to tilt forward? Can you find at least three “unnaturally” bright red objects? What about the blue in all the shadows? And where on the table is the woman putting the bouquet of flowers?

A little while after finishing this painting, Matisse married and soon had a family. His pictures weren’t selling, so he worked for a decorator and his wife opened a hat shop. Still Matisse kept painting, using the bright colors of the Impressionists. But as he said, “mere color sensations” weren’t enough; he wanted his paintings to do more. He simplified his shapes and lines and began to carefully arrange his colors in order to capture the essence of his subject. Soon the results were no longer very “realistic.” *Portrait with*

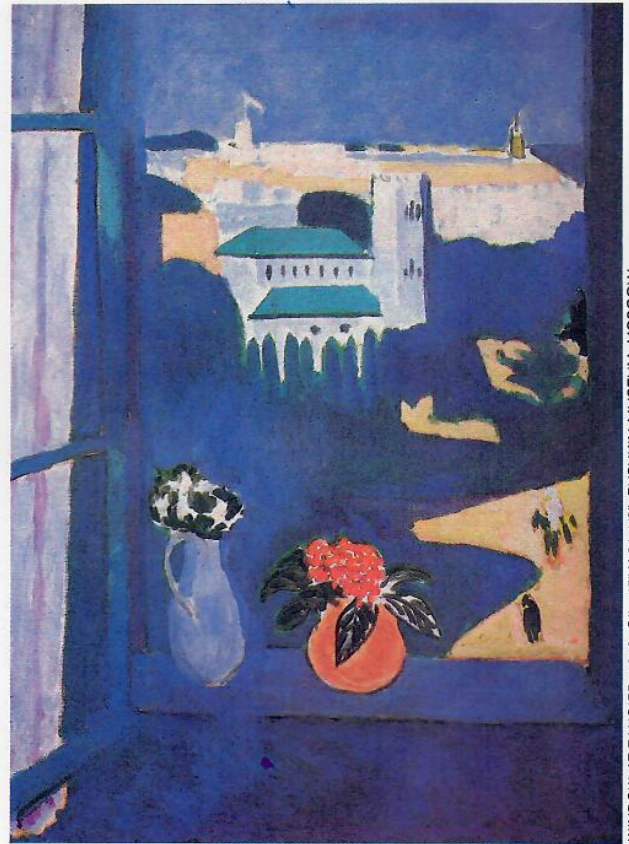
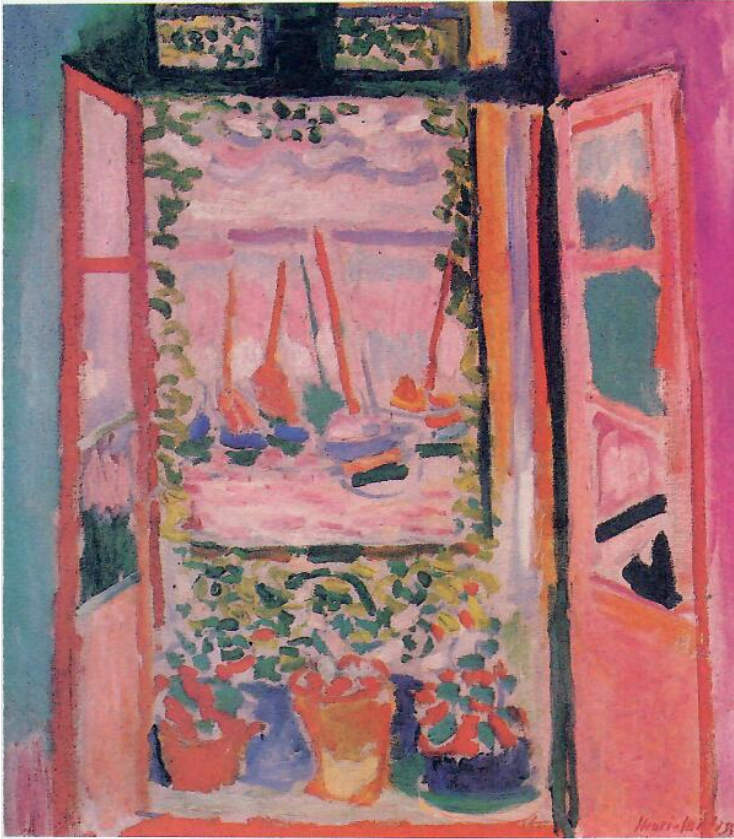
*Green Stripe*, shown on the cover, (Matisse’s wife posed for the picture) is considered to be one of the first modern **abstract** paintings. In this work, the colors and shapes the artist has used have become more important than the features of his model.

In 1909, Matisse again painted his dining room table. Compare *Harmony in Red* (above, right) with the earlier painting to its left. The subject in both works is almost exactly the same — a bending figure, a table, a chair, wine bottles, a window in back — but do the two paintings look at all alike? On the right, everything is simplified and flattened into areas of bright color. The table is no longer seen as being in *front* of the wall. Here both are on the same **plane** and seen together as one flat red and blue area. The brilliant reds and oranges in the room are heightened by the greens in the spring landscape outside. The sweeping blue curves in the wallpaper and the curves in the woman’s orange hair echo those of the blossoming fruit trees. Matisse’s *Harmony in Red* shows how the artist, through his use of color, was able to visually recreate the feelings of joy and pleasure.

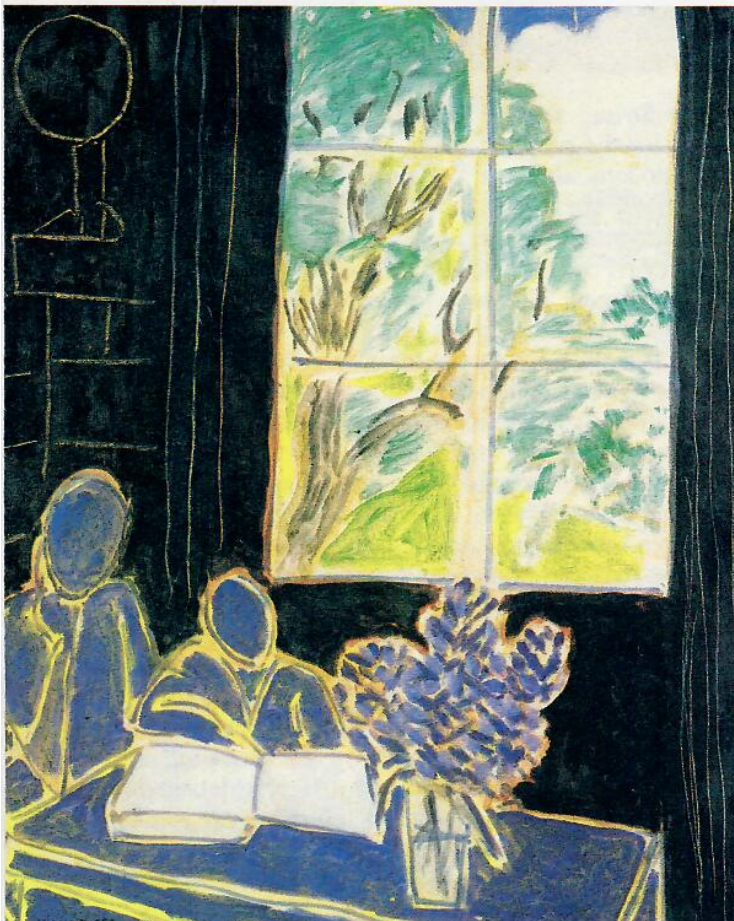
In this issue, you will see why Henri Matisse is considered one of the greatest of all colorists, you’ll meet some modern American artists who also work with color, and finally you’ll have a chance to create a colorful work of your own. □



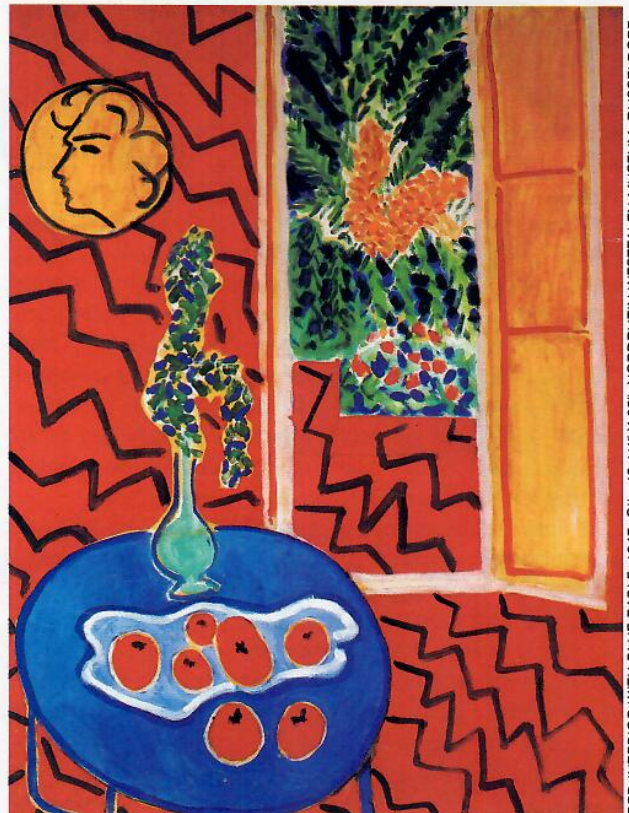
THE OPEN WINDOW, COLLIJURE, 1905. OIL. 20 3/4" X 18".



WINDOW AT TANGIER, 1912. OIL. 45" X 31 1/2". PUSHKIN MUSEUM, MOSCOW.



THE LIVED-IN SILENCE OF HOUSES, 1947. OIL. 21 1/2" X 18".



RED INTERIOR WITH BLUE TABLE, 1947. OIL. 45 1/4" X 35". NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN MUSEUM, DUSSELDORF.

Which is the most important element in each one of these paintings — the view through the window or what is going on inside the room?



# A ROOM WITH A VIEW

"WHEN I FIRST LOOKED OUT THE WINDOW I SAID TO MYSELF, 'THIS IS ALL MINE.'"

—HENRI MATISSE

Henri Matisse lived through two world wars and experienced many hardships and illnesses. He also travelled a good deal — to Russia, the South Seas, Africa, even the United States — and he did paintings and drawings of many of these places. But Matisse wasn't interested in politics, social commentary, or religion. He wanted to create an ideal universe — a happy, peaceful world presented through an art "available to everyone." In his paintings he kept returning to the same few subjects — his family, his garden, beautiful women. One of his favorite themes was the view through his window, looking out on a world where it was always summer and the sun was always shining. The four paintings on the left were all done from different windows, but in them Matisse isn't describing the particular places he was looking at. He is reinterpreting one subject over and over to express his own current thoughts and feelings. And he does this mainly through his use of color.

Matisse thought of color not in terms of paint but as *light*. In mixing paint, the three primary colors are

red, blue, and yellow (see page 14). But the three primary colors of *light* are red, blue, and green. Since Matisse believed he could get more intense effects using the colors of light — red, blue, and green were his favorites. He did *The Open Window* (top, far left) in southern France in 1905 using these colors. Here, Matisse was influenced by the Impressionists who used small brushstrokes of pure color to give the effect of light. Solid panels of blue, green, and red describe the interior of his cool, seaside room overlooking the harbor beyond. Bright dots of the same colors suggest the sparkling water, rustling leaves and sailboats swaying in the sun outside. The white of the canvas glows through the thin paint, heightening the feeling of a warm summer day.

In *Tangier Window* (top left) done in 1912, Matisse captures the intense heat of the African desert by simplifying, flattening, and contrasting the areas of light and shade. The cool, dark blues and greens in the shadows make the yellow patches of sun seem even hotter. And the single red bunch of flowers serves as a color accent.

*The Lived-in Silence of Houses* (bottom, far left) painted in 1947, is one of Matisse's few pictures in which the mood is melancholy. It is the end of the day and the light is going. A yellow glow forms around the figures, blurring them just before they disappear into the darkness. A simple, head-like shape is scratched out of the black paint in the upper left corner. Could it be a ghostly symbol or perhaps the artist's self-portrait?

In *Red Interior with Blue Table* (bottom left) the subject has been simplified until it is almost abstract. The floor, wall, and part of the scene outside have become a solid, flat red background with the smaller shapes set against it. The flickering green palm branches outside balance the flat blue table at the bottom. To tie the table into the composition, the red is repeated in the round fruit shapes on the table.

In paintings like these, Matisse was always trying to create his own private paradise. He actually succeeded in doing this when, at the age of 73 and bedridden, he began working in a new medium — cut paper. He cut fantastic, brightly colored shapes out of painted paper and attached them to the walls, ceiling, and floor of his sick room, finally surrounding himself with a universe of his own creation. He said just before he died in 1954, "I am never alone." □

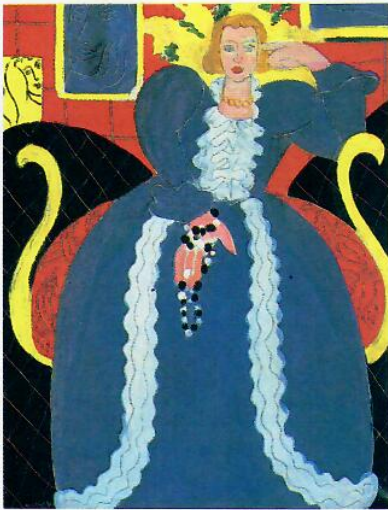
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COVER: HENRI MATISSE (1869-1954). PORTRAIT WITH GREEN STRIPE, 1905. OIL. 16" X 12 3/4". THE ROYAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, COPENHAGEN. RUMP COLLECTION.



HENRI MATISSE (1869-1954). LADY IN BLUE, 1937. OIL, 36 1/2" X 28". PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART. GIFT OF MRS. JOHN WINTERSTEEN



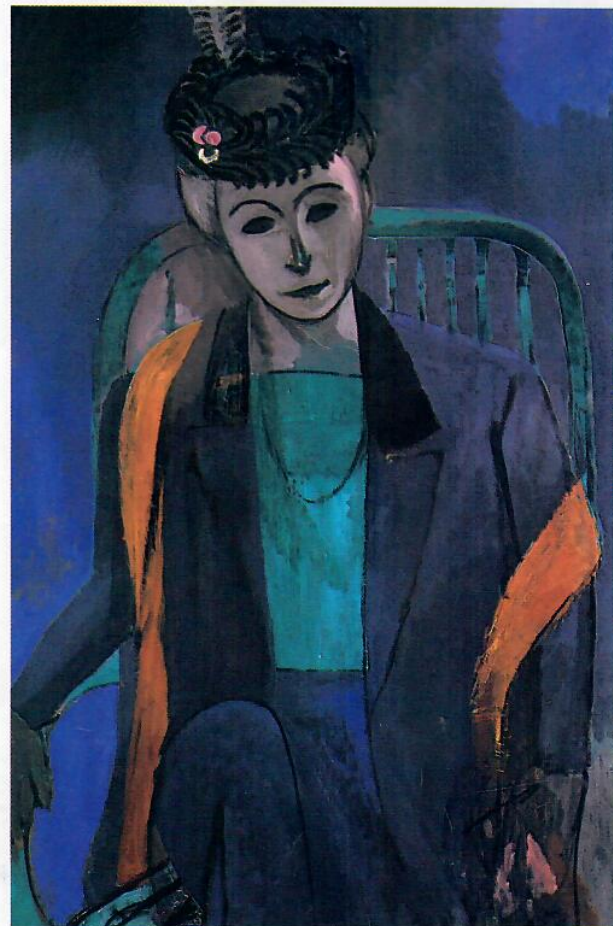
"WHAT INTERESTS ME MOST IS THE HUMAN FIGURE."  
— HENRI MATISSE

Matisse loved to paint people, and he is perhaps best known for his paintings of women. He didn't do portraits — look at the faces of each of the models on these two pages. Do any of them appear to be particular individuals with recognizable features? In fact, some of the women in Matisse's paintings don't even look as if they could possibly have existed. Their arms or legs are too short or long, they are sitting in an impossible way, or they have no features at all. But when someone complained to Matisse that he had never seen women like those the artist painted, Matisse replied, "I don't paint women, I paint pictures." And, as usual, one of the most important elements in Matisse's pictures of women was color.

# THEME AND VARIATIONS

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: PREVIEW

*Lady in Blue* (above left and pages 8-9) this month's masterpiece, is perhaps one of the artist's most famous figure paintings. Matisse began by posing his model conventionally on a sofa. But does she appear to be an ordinary woman sitting on an ordinary couch in a conventional room? Red, blue, and yellow are **primaries**, the most basic and intense of all colors. All other **hues** can be mixed by using these three colors:

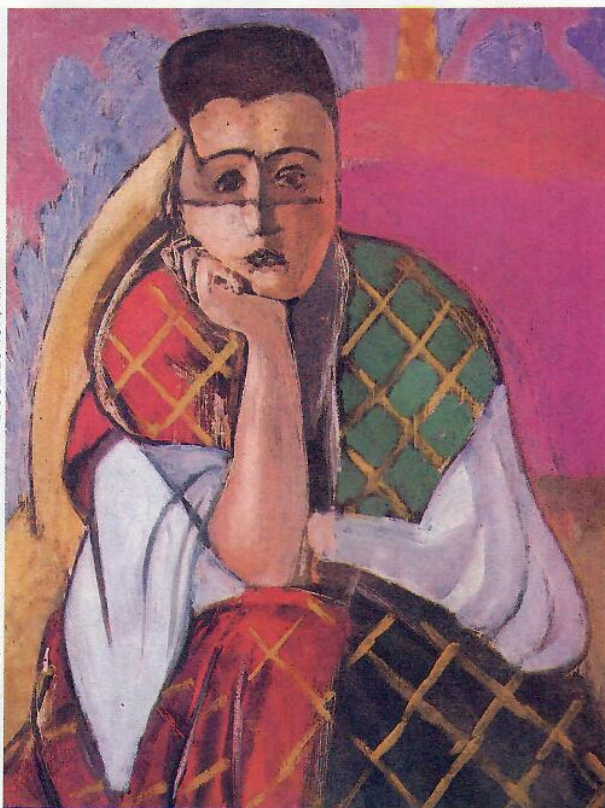


PORTRAIT OF MADAME MATISSE, 1913. OIL, 57" X 38". HERMITAGE MUSEUM, LENINGRAD.

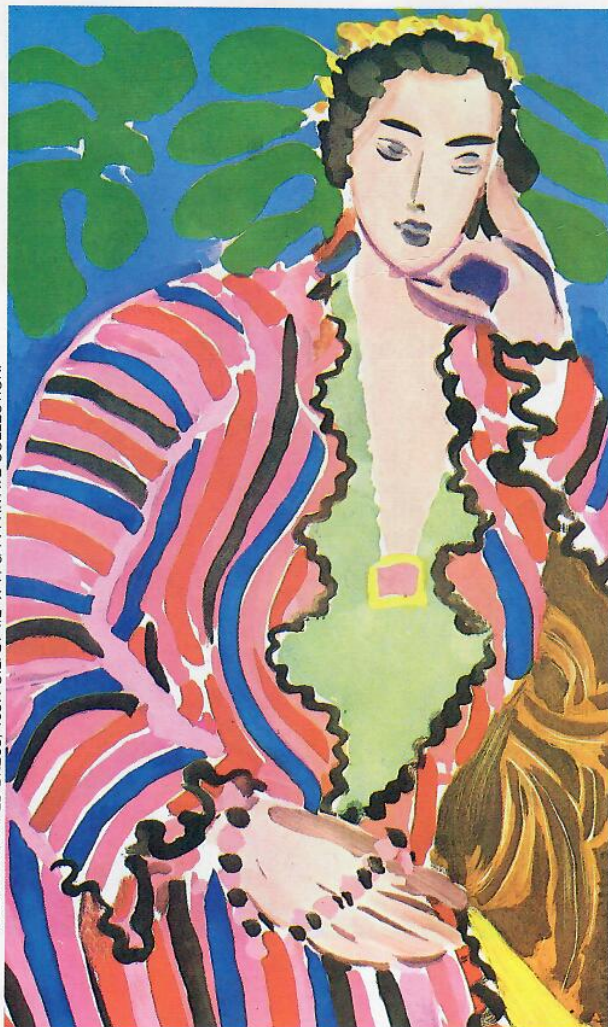
As you can see in the five figure paintings on these pages, Matisse could work in completely different styles. Which works would you call *realistic*; which *flat*; *geometric*; *stylized*; *abstract*? Which are a combination of all of these styles?



WOMAN WITH A VEIL, 1927. OIL. 24 1/4" X 20". PRIVATE COLLECTION, N.Y.



JAZZ: PLATE XII: THE SWIMMER IN A POOL, 1947. PRINT MADE FROM CUT PAPER. NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART, WASHINGTON, DC. GIFT OF MR. AND MRS. ANDREW S. KECK.  
ELENA IN STRIPED DRESS, 1937. OIL. 21 1/2" X 11 3/4". PRIVATE COLLECTION.



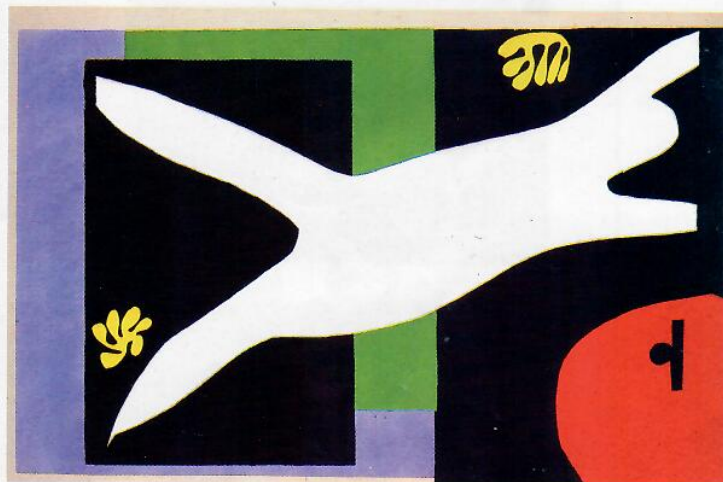
red plus yellow equals orange; red plus blue equals purple; blue plus yellow equals green. This painting of a woman in puffed sleeves, frills, and a flowing robe might have been fussy, frilly, and decorative. But by flattening and simplifying the figure and background and using intense, energetic primary colors, Matisse has turned *Lady in Blue* into a powerful abstract design with a strong, regal queen-like figure at the center of it.

In the painting of *Madame Matisse* (bottom, page 6), done 25 years earlier, Matisse has also simplified his forms. But here the figure seems heavier, almost geometric. The face is calm, serene, and the colors — blue and blue-green — are **analogous**, or closely related (see page 14) with two bright orange accents to direct your eye around the composition.

In *Woman with Veil* (page 7, top left) the figure dominates the work, filling the canvas. In this painting, does the woman seem to be more solid than the other figures on these pages? Here Matisse has **modelled** the forms, shading and highlighting them to make them appear round. And the contrast of the **complementaries** (or opposites on the color wheel — see page 14) red and green seems to give her figure great weight and strength.

Compare *Elena in Striped Dress* (page 7, bottom left) with *Woman with Veil*. Both figures fill the canvas and the dominant colors in each are the opposites red and green. But otherwise, do these two paintings look at all alike? Where *Woman with Veil* is solid and heavy, *Elena* is spontaneous and airy. The colors are bright, the patterns are brushed on quickly, and the white canvas glows through.

And, does *Swimmer in the Tank* (below) look like any of the other Matisse figures on these pages? In this work, Matisse has used pieces of painted cut paper to create a background in which the cut-out white, or “negative,” space becomes the **abstract** shape of a person. The simplicity and almost primitive energy of the figure is heightened by Matisse’s use of two sets of **complementary** colors in the background — red and green; yellow and violet. □







HENRI MATISSE (1869-1954) LADY IN BLUE, 1937. OIL, 36 1/2" X 28". PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART. GIFT OF MRS. JOHN WINTERSTEEN

# LADY IN BLUE

"WHEN I CHOOSE A COLOR IT IS NOT BECAUSE OF ANY SCIENTIFIC THEORY. IT COMES FROM FEELING, FROM THE INNERMOST NATURE OF THE EXPERIENCE. STRONG EMOTIONS CALL FOR VIVID BLUES, REDS, YELLOWS — COLORS TO STIR THE SENSES."

BY **HENRI MATISSE**



# COLORS OF TODAY

Find out how some modern American artists have used color.

## DANCING COLORS

In this work (below) by contemporary American Joan Brown, can you see the flashing lights, imagine the music, and almost feel the floor pound under the feet of these *Dancers in the City*? Joan Brown

paints modern urban life, capturing the fast pace, constant activity, and bright lights of a large city. Her flat, stylized figures symbolize the social rituals people use to communicate with each other. **Intensity** is the brightness or dullness of a color, and the artist uses

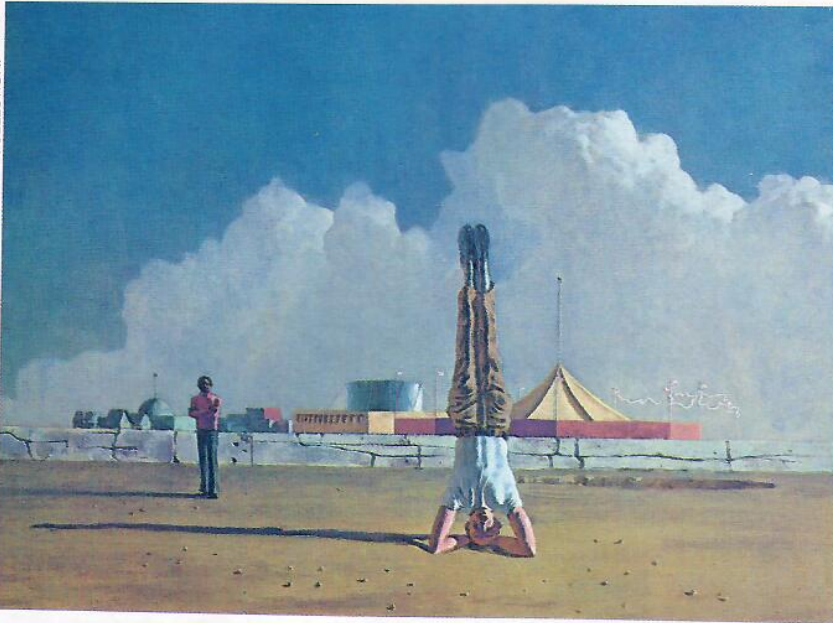
intense, “raw” oils right out of the tube. These colors are placed in **complementary pairs** (see color wheel, page 14) — a blue and orange skyline, yellow and purple figures, the red piano and green floor — to make the colors appear brighter. You can see how pairing complementaries intensifies each color by staring at this painting for a while, then looking at a sheet of white paper. You should see a faint image, with the colors reversed; the red area looks green, etc. This “after-image” produced by a complementary color causes the eye to add an additional “glow” to its opposite color.



JOAN BROWN B.1938. *DANCERS IN THE CITY* #3, 1973. OIL. 8' X 10'. PRIVATE COLLECTION, SAN FRANCISCO.



HUGHIE LEE-SMITH B. 1915.  
MAN STANDING ON HIS HEAD, 1969. OIL, 38" X 46". PRIVATE COLLECTION.



### THE COLOR OF DREAMS

Does this painting (above) by contemporary American artist Hughie Lee-Smith look like a real scene? Two people are standing in a landscape with a city in the back-

ground. Everything is very realistically painted. But why is the man in front standing on his head, what is the man in back doing, and what kind of landscape are they in? In fact, if the colors and forms didn't look so realistic, this scene — set

in a desert, the building in back a combination of factory and circus tent — would be fantastic and dream-like. The many carefully painted details included convey a feeling of reality. And although the combination of objects is puzzling, it is probably supposed to mean something different to each viewer. The light **value** (the lightness or darkness of a color — light values are **tints**) of the colors adds to the painting's dream-like quality. And the subtle harmony of the **analogous**, or related (see page 14) color scheme — mainly blues, violets, and reds — contributes to the uneasy feeling this painting produces.

### THE COLOR OF COLOR

Twentieth-century American artist Marc Rothko was one of the first to deal with color in a totally new way. Rothko gradually reduced and simplified his paintings, eliminating all traces of "memory, history, or geometry." His canvases grew larger and larger until nothing was left but one or two huge rectangular shapes of color. Done in washes of thin paint, the blurred shapes seem to hover in an immense space, producing an almost luminous glow. Rothko's "color-field" paintings could be considered "landscapes of the mind," to which the viewer brings his or her own thoughts and feelings. How many colors can you count in Rothko's *No. 7*, the painting on the right? Can you find three and even four different hues? Actually, the color scheme in *No. 7* is **monochromatic** (only one color is used). The maroon background is a **shade** — a dark value — of red, one of the reds has a little yellow in it, and white is not usually counted as a color. In works like this one, by eliminating all recognizable subject matter, Rothko has taken color painting one step further. Here, he seems to have succeeded in painting color itself.



MARC ROTHKO (1903-1970), NO. 7, 1960. OIL, 8' 9" X 7' 9". PRIVATE COLLECTION.



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## ARTIST OF THE MONTH



# SONNET FAULKNER PORTRAIT IN COLOR

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**S**eventeen-year-old Sonnet Faulkner loves to experiment with color. Even in portraits — such as the one she did of her friend Scott, opposite page, top — she uses surprising colors you might never expect to see in a person's face. Compare the artist's colored pencil drawing of Scott with the small photograph of him shown below it. Can you see a resemblance? In which do you get more of a feeling of Scott's

personality? Look, especially, at the way the artist has done her model's eyes. What makes them even more compelling than in the photograph?

Last spring we visited Sonnet at her home in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to hear more about this Scholastic Art Award-winning work. At that time, she was planning to attend an art school in Philadelphia in preparation for a possible career in illustration or photography.

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**Do you remember when you first got interested in art?**

I always liked art, but I was never very good at it. But in my sophomore year I had a teacher who really brought out my interest in drawing. I was in a class with juniors and seniors, and I was very intimidated. But I could see how much they were learning, and that really pushed me.

**How did you happen to do this portrait of your friend?**

That was sort of a breakthrough for me. I had been doing a lot of realistic pictures from photographs — and this is the first one I did from life. Scott was sitting near me studying for a test, so I just started drawing him. When he noticed what I was doing, he agreed to pose for me. I wanted to use colored pencil and pastel.

**How did you proceed?**

I had my colors all picked out, and I covered the whole paper with lime green pastel. It was really ugly, and I thought if I could make something neat out of this, it would be great. So I took a lime green pencil and sketched in Scott's features. I made his nose extra long and his chin really broad. I was going for more of an aggressive mood, but I let his eyes be kind of reclusive. I remember moving around the whole drawing with the colors. And when I added the reds and blues, that really popped the picture out.

**Was Scott a good subject?**

Yes — there was something about his personality that I wanted to get. Maybe it's the contrasts — what you see in his eyes. He has a great hairline too. Actually,

though, my mother thinks this drawing is more about the male side of me because it doesn't look so much like Scott. I had been doing a lot of self-portraits around then, and I would always elongate my nose. But I wouldn't use these colors to express my own mood. I usually use pinks and yellows and greens, but not that lime green.

**How did you choose these colors?**

Partly it's instinct. It came to me, and I just picked up the pencil. After this picture I used these colors (red, green, blue, yellow) a lot more. I don't know why, because I wasn't really fond of the picture. But I guess it sunk in that these colors worked. I find that when I start liking a certain color, it goes over into my artwork and also into the clothes I wear. Now I'm starting to paint a lot of oranges.



**What didn't you like about this portrait when it was finished?**

There's always some unsureness when you finish a piece, especially when it's different from anything you've done before. This was the first time I had ever distorted a person's features. It's actually off-balance in the eyes, and the chin is twisted. I wasn't sure if it was any good. Maybe I was even kind of scared of it — all that gloomy lime green. Now I like it better. I'm at a different stage than when I drew it. I've explored more. I've used these colors in other pictures. I've also done more drawings from life. I get a great high drawing like this (from a real person instead of a photograph). You're so much freer to show the person just the way you want.

**How long did it take to do?**

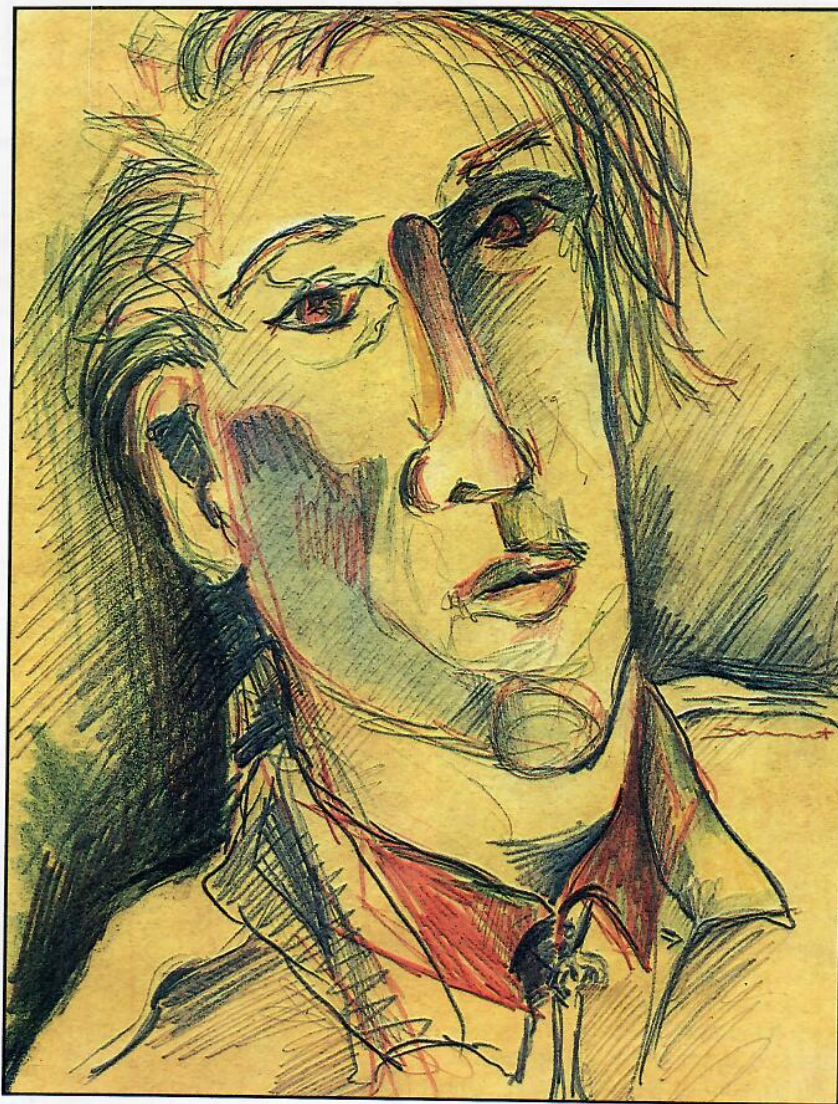
About 45 minutes — one sitting. I tend to get into detail and I wanted to go back and refine it, but my teacher said, "No — leave it."

**What makes you keep doing art?**

It's hard to put into words. It has to do with a side of me that art brings out. There's also the excitement of doing it. When I start a project, I can pretty much imagine what I want it to look like. But it changes midway almost every time. I never know which way it's going, and how I'm going to develop it in the end.

**Do you have any advice about art for our readers?**

Always be ready to learn new things — be ready to experiment. I remember when I was a sophomore, I saw all the older students working big, with bright colors and really interesting subjects. That opened my eyes and step by step I learned to do it too. Now I'm a senior, and I feel I'm doing work that compares with theirs.



PHOTOS BY JANET SODERBERG

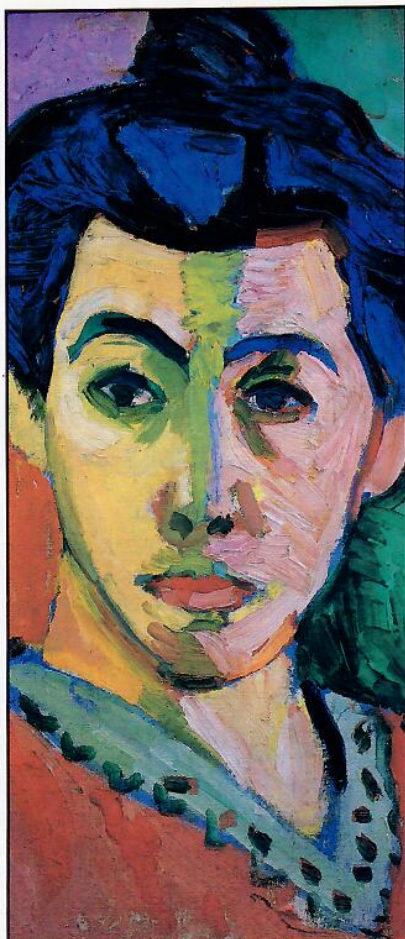
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**"I remember moving  
around the whole drawing  
with the colors.  
And when I added  
the reds and blues,  
that really popped the picture out."**

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# CREATING WITH COLOR



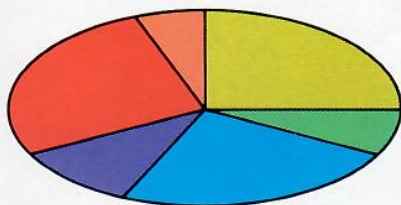
Matisse said, "What I am after is *expression*. But to me expression is not the passion reflected in a human face. It is the whole arrangement of my picture that is expressive."

"Color was not given to us to imitate nature.

It was given to us to express our own emotions." — HENRI MATISSE

Matisse liked to paint people, but his figure paintings are more of *himself* than they are of his models. When Matisse did figures, he was not concerned with capturing a realistic likeness. He wanted to

express the enjoyment he felt while painting, and he did this mainly through the colors and shapes that he chose. In this workshop, you'll have a chance to express your own feelings through your inventive use of color.



## COLOR WHEEL

Red, yellow, blue are **primary** colors; orange, green, violet are **secondary**. Analogous colors are next to each other; **complementary** colors are opposites.

## MATERIALS

- 18 x 24" white sulfite paper
- Ebony pencils
- Vinyl erasers
- Primary, secondary, black, white tempera paint
- Containers for paint
- Assorted paint brushes
- Palettes (lids) for mixing paint
- Containers for clean water
- Paper towels

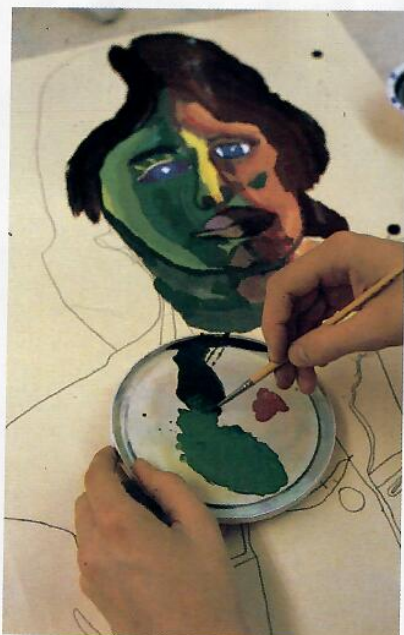
## STARTING OUT

1 Pose a model in front of the class and do a **blind contour** drawing of the head and shoulder area. To do a contour drawing, imagine your pencil is actually touching an edge of the model. *Without looking at the paper*, move your eyes slowly along



the edge, or contour, and move your pencil at the same speed. Draw large; use correct proportion; simplify and avoid small details. See each section of the figure as a flat shape. Draw lightly; your drawing will serve as a guide.

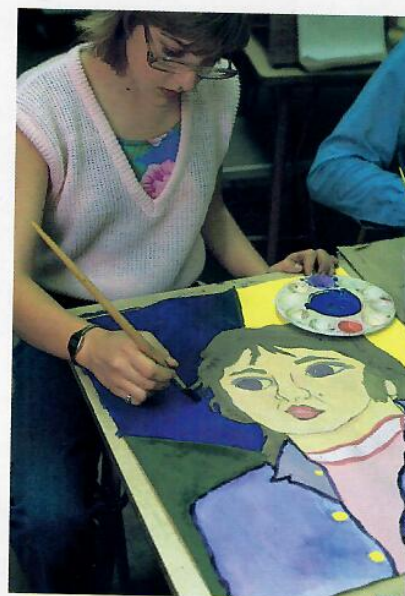




**2** In many of his paintings (like *The Green Line*, opposite page) Matisse used only a few colors, such as red, blue, green, yellow. Develop

your own **limited palette** and paint the model using colors you *feel* work well. Your colors shouldn't be "real," but a combination of realistic and emotional.

**3** Divide the **negative space** (background area) into a number of broad areas using the room environment as a guide. Paint the shapes in the background with colors which **complement, contrast, or harmonize** with those in the figure. What colors did this artist use in her limited color scheme? Which are **tints** (white is added to the color) and **shades** (black is added)?



#### SOME SOLUTIONS

The purpose of this project is to stress color and its emotional effect. Which paintings do you see as being very expressive; which are more realistic? Which emphasize line; which shape? Which artists used only two colors (plus black and white); which more? Did anyone use more than four? Remember each color can have a tint and a shade. Which colors are **analogous**; which are pairs of **complementary** colors? What kind of emotional state did each artist try to convey — calmness, anxiety, happiness, puzzlement, contentment, confusion?



## ARTS ALIVE

Current shows that feature artists who work with color.

### MATISSE TODAY

In this issue, you've seen how Henri Matisse developed new ways of working with color. In the painting on the right, *Piano Lesson*, Matisse has done an **abstraction** of his son playing the piano. The pale, seated figure in back is the artist's wife. Here, Matisse has placed two **complementary** colors against a neutral gray background. A simple *green* triangular shape stands for the garden



outside; a pink (the **tint** of red) triangle represents the piano top. If you are in the Washington, D.C., area in the next few months, you may get a chance to see *Piano Lesson* and 149 other paintings in a large show devoted to the work of Henri Matisse. The exhibition *Matisse: The Early Years in Nice* will be at the National Gallery of Art from Nov. 2, 1986 until March 29, 1987.

### THE COLOR OF POLITICS

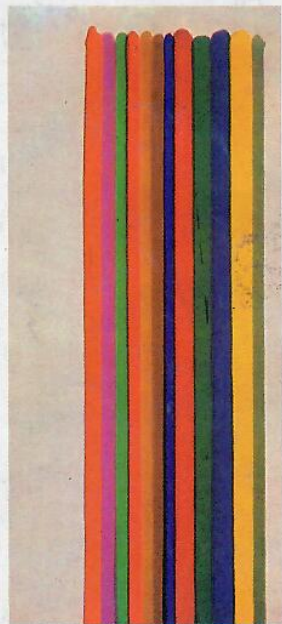
While Matisse used certain colors to express his own feelings of joy and pleasure, other artists use color to convey very different messages. Contem-



porary painter Jacob Lawrence has been working for 50 years, doing series on subjects like civil rights, labor, and poverty in America. Lawrence creates powerful images by using flat, jagged shapes and strong, limited color schemes. A new show, *Jacob Lawrence, American Painter*, featuring over 150 works in color, will be at the Seattle Art Museum until Sept. 7. It will then travel through 1987 to Oakland, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Dallas, and Brooklyn, N.Y.

### RAINBOWS OF PAINT

Contemporary American Morris Louis, like Marc Rothko (see page 11), worked with pure color. By eliminating all recognizable subject matter as well as any brushstrokes, Louis could concentrate completely on the effects made by one hue on another. The artist would use thin, bright paint, then tilt the canvas so the colors would drip down into various patterns. In this work, *Moving In*, Louis has combined every color in the color wheel (page 14) in such a way that they all fight with each other. What is the effect produced by the contrast between the bright, clashing colors and their rigid, geometric arrangement? You can see more works by this important colorist in *Morris Louis* now at the Museum of Modern Art, N.Y., until Jan. 1987. The show will then go to the Fort Worth Museum, and the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.



HENRI MATISSE (1869-1954). *PIANO LESSON*, 1916. OIL. 81 1/2" X 6' 11 3/4". THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, N.Y.  
JACOB LAWRENCE B. 1917. *THE MIGRATION OF THE NEGRO*, 1940-41. OIL. THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, N.Y.  
MORRIS LOUIS (1912-1962). *MOVING IN*, 1961. ACRYLIC. 87 1/2" X 41 1/2". PRIVATE COLLECTION.