Henri Matisse’s portrait of his wife introduced the art world to surprising new ways of using color.


This portrait of Henri Matisse — the most important of the Fauvist artists — was painted in complementary blues and oranges by Fauvist André Derain. Cool blues and greens contrast with warm oranges and reds.


W}

hen the work on our cover was first exhibited in Paris in 1905, it was described as “the nastiest smear of paint I have ever seen.” Its creator, Henri Matisse (on-REE mat-TEECE) and the other French artists whose works you’ll see were referred to by many as “barbaric children,” “madmen,” and “wild beasts” (or “faux in French). Why would critics and the public be so outraged at works that today are thought of as masterpieces?

For many years Paris — then considered the art world’s center — had been ruled by a powerful art organization that favored huge, dark, realistic studio paintings. At the start of the 20th century, Parisians were just getting used to the work of a radical group called the Impressionists. A few years earlier, these painters had taken their canvases outside to work from nature. But the Impressionists used their bright colors and loose brushstrokes to capture the realistic effects of light.

The Fauvists used color in an entirely different way. Traditional artists nearly always began their paintings with a subject’s form. They would then work with the natural hues (or colors) of that form. The Fauvists began their paintings with color. They used it to express their feelings, rather than

> Titled The Green Line, this picture of Madame Matisse shocked viewers when it was first shown in 1905.


* Art collector Leo Stiedl, 1905.
Color

“STRONG EMOTIONS CALL FOR VIVID BLUES, REDS, YELLOWSS—COLORS TO STIR THE SENSES.” —HENRI MATISSE

To describe the subject before them. In works like Woman with the Hat (cover), Matisse simplified his shapes and arranged his colors to convey his model’s essence. Clashing, complementary color pairs (an orange face against a blue-green background; a purple hat beside a yellow tint) pull the eye around the painting. To viewers of the time, these unrealistic color fragments made this work seem sketchy and unfinished. But even worse, in many people’s opinion, were the distortions and unnatural green slash running down the center of the face in Matisse’s The Green Line (left).

Later Matisse paintings were even more abstract. In both Conversations (above) and Harmony in Red (pp. 8-9), the colors and shapes are more important than the subjects.

Everything has been simplified and flattened into broad areas of brilliant color; the elements are all on the same plane. Conversation is almost a blue monochrome (one color), with small related green areas and complementary orange color accents. The red room in Harmony in Red seems even warmer and brighter when contrasted with the complementary green rectangle of the window. The curves in the trees are repeated in the wallpaper and the woman’s hair. The yellow dots on the table and grass further link “inside” and “outside.”

The cool blues of this work symbolize an argument between Matisse and his wife. The window grill forms the French word for “no.”

"WE WERE INTOXICATED WITH COLOR, WITH THE SUN THAT MAKES COLORS LIVE."
—ANDRÉ DERAIN

In the summer of 1905, Matisse left Paris for the south of France. There he was joined by a friend he had met in art school, fellow painter André Derain (duh-RAN). In the small fishing port of Collioure (co-LURE), the two artists created many of the works that were to so shock the French art establishment later that year.

You’ve seen Derain’s colorful portrait of Matisse (page 2). Using thick strokes and arbitrary (unrelated to nature) color, Matisse presents Derain (top, left) in bright sunlight. A green shadow defines one side of his face. Active diagonals and contrasting color pairs (red/green, blue/orange) suggest Derain’s elegant, high-strung personality.

Derain’s Mountains at Collioure (above, right) is a typical Fauvist painting. The subject is an ordinary landscape. But the brushwork and unnatural color were startlingly different from traditional landscapes. Instead of a foreground and a background, this flat work has a top and a bottom. The trees and grass below are made up of short strokes of paint, many squeezed right from the tube. The colors—blues, greens, yellows—are related, or next to each other on the color wheel (see page 14). The colors—orange, red, blue—of the washes in the mountains and sky at the top, are also related to each other. Derain has created visual tension by contrasting the overall red-orange hue of the top with the complementary (opposites on the color wheel) blue-green of the bottom. Color accents of green in the sky and the orange branches below visually unify both halves of the painting.

Due to the sensation created by this and his other Fauvist works, Derain was hired to paint a series of London cityscapes. The 30 paintings he created included Charing Cross Bridge, London (below, left). This simplified, distorted, brilliantly colored painting is a high-angle view of the Thames (TEMS), the large river that runs through London. Boats, barges, and smokestacks suggest a busy industrial area. A blue diagonal bridge divides the picture into thirds. Bright green buildings clash with green’s complement, the blood red water below. Green towers stand out against a pink (tint of red) sky.

But much of the visual tension in this work comes from the different ways in which the water is treated. The left side of the river is a broad, flat area of intense (bright) red, broken up by a few strokes of bright blue. The water on the right is made up of two complementary areas—one orange, the other blue. Short strokes form both these expanses of water. Cool shades and tints of blue define the bridge’s shadow. Choppy orange and yellow brushstrokes suggest a ray of sunlight reflecting on the water under the bridge. The white canvas showing through the widely spaced dots in this area makes the water seem to shimmer.

Derain’s friend Matisse continued to use bright color, reinventing his style throughout his long career. But Derain soon began painting traditionally again. His colors became more realistic, his forms almost geometric. But during his brief, brilliantly colored Fauvist period, André Derain created some of the most important paintings of the time.

△ “The visible world is a great deal less interesting than the world re-imagined through color.”
—André Derain

André Derain has used related, high-intensity reds and oranges to capture the energy and strong personality of Fauvist painter Maurice de Vlaminck.


You've seen how Matisse brought André Derain into the Fauvist movement. Derain in turn, recruited his old friend—Maurice de Vlaminck (vlà-MINK). A self-taught artist, Vlaminck was the wildest of the wild beasts. He took great pride in never having set foot inside the Louvre (LOO-vruh), one of the greatest museums in the world. And he felt that painting should not be taught, but should just come naturally. Vlaminck's energetic, outgoing, and somewhat outrageous personality is represented in Derain's portrait (above, left). The bright red face, glaring eyes, and slashing lines Derain used also resemble Vlaminck's painting style.

Both Vlaminck and Derain had grown up in the Parisian suburb of Chatou (sha-TOO). The two artists began painting together, and soon shared a studio. In 1901, the works of Vincent Van Gogh (van GO) were shown in Paris for the first time. The Dutch artist's brilliant, arbitrary colors, thick swirling brushstrokes, and emotional painting style stunned the Fauves, especially Vlaminck. In works like Houses at Chatou (above, center), Vlaminck began combining bright primary colors (reds, yellows, and blues). The alternating strokes of yellow and blue at the bottom of this picture form an optical mix (the colors seem to combine in the viewer's eye). This gives the impression of the secondary color green. Vlaminck added green from the tube to this area, sometimes squeezing the paint directly on the canvas. Thick, black, curved and broken outlines define each subject in the picture, giving the scene a restless sense of movement.

When Derain and Matisse returned from the south of France with their new paintings in 1905, Vlaminck's colors became even brighter. Matisse encouraged the younger
“I WANTED TO BURN DOWN THE ÉCOLE DES BEAUX-ARTS* WITH MY COBALTS AND VERMILIONS.” — MAURICE DE VLAMINCK

«‘I try to paint with my heart and my guts without worrying about style.’ — Maurice de Vlaminck


artist, arranging for his works to be exhibited with that of the other Fauvists. One of these paintings was Landscape near Chatou (top, right). A description of the subject—red-roofed houses seen behind an area of fields and trees—might sound very calm and stable. But the hurried, almost violent brushstrokes, dark, thick lines, and swooping, intersecting diagonals give Vlaminck’s canvas a nearly frantic sense of agitation. The greens, yellows, and blues used by the artist are related to each other on the color wheel, but the effect is far from harmonious. The fragmented black lines and splashes of bright red complementary color outlines contribute to the feeling of restless frenzy.

Vlaminck’s choice of colors could make even the most ordinary objects exciting. The brilliant red-orange of the table cloth complements the blue hues of the coffee pots in Still Life with Oranges (above, right). The diagonals of the table edge and the cast shadows bring attention to the composition’s focal point, the two juicy oranges.

The Fauvist movement began in 1905. It lasted only a few years. By 1908, Vlaminck and most of the Fauves had moved on to other painting styles. Only Matisse—who went on to become one of the most celebrated artists of the modern era—continued to work with the brilliant color combinations first used by these artists. Today, Fauvism is considered a turning point in the history of 20th-century art. The Fauvists had freed the element of color. No longer limited by the imitation of nature, color could now become a vital tool of modern creative expression.

Harmony in Red

BY HENRI MATISSE

“COLOR WAS NOT GIVEN TO US TO IMITATE NATURE. IT WAS GIVEN TO US TO EXPRESS OUR OWN EMOTIONS.”

—HENRI MATISSE


SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006
SCHOLASTIC ART 8-9
ART SPOTLIGHT

Brilliant Colorists

FOUR MODERN ARTISTS EXPLORE THE POWER OF COLOR

"LITTLE DABS OF COLOR THAT SPREAD OUT VERY FREE... THAT'S HOW IT ALL BEGAN." —ALMA THOMAS

CONTRASTING COLORS, CONTRASTING STYLES

Can you guess what the two very different paintings on this page have in common? Twentieth-century African-American artist Alma Thomas painted the vibrant abstraction on the right. Thomas's portrait (below, right) was done by African-American painter Laura Wheeler Waring. Both artists used the same complementary color pair of red and green.

The differences between these two works are more immediately obvious: Waring’s portrait is painted in a highly realistic style, while only the title of Thomas’s abstract painting offers a clue about its subject matter. Wheeler largely limited her palette to dark values of maroon and green, which give the portrait a sense of visual harmony. Thomas, on the other hand, created a high-intensity, dramatic contrast by working with vivid hues of red and green. Against the bright green background, the brilliant red leaves seem to pop off the painting. The dabs of radiant color scattered across the canvas create a visual rhythm not unlike music. Thomas hints at this connection in the painting’s imaginative title, Falling Leaves Love Wind Orchestra.


“COLOR ALONE MEANS NOTHING, BUT RELATE A PARTICULAR BROWN TO A CHILD’S EYES AND YOU’VE OPENED UP A WORLD OF MEANING.”
—BYRON KIM

PAINT-CHIP PORTRAIT

The grid of colored panels on the left might remind you of paint chips from the hardware store, or the pixels that make up a digital photo. Would it surprise you to know that this work is actually a portrait of the artist’s son?

Each of the 25 panels in this abstract work by Korean-American artist Byron Kim is painted in a different color. Each hue corresponds to a specific spot on the body of Emmett, the artist’s then-infant son. In this abstract mosaic, various values of peach and beige represent skin, white suggests eyes, black refers to hair, and so on.

Kim’s approach to portraiture seems almost scientific, yet every color used in this work has an emotional meaning. By reducing a child to swatches of pigment, the artist calls attention to the foolishness of defining people by skin color. In Emmett at Twelve Months, Kim demonstrates that a person’s entire identity cannot be defined by only one small feature.

THE ONLY WAY TO DISCOVER HOW THE SENSES WORK IS TO RAISE QUESTIONS.”
—OLAFUR ELIASSON

VIVID AFTERIMAGES

Stepping into Your colour memory, an installation by the Danish/Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson (OH-la-fur EL-ee-uh-son), is a bit like standing inside a sunrise. A continually changing spectrum of glowing primary and secondary colors surrounds you. Computer-controlled lights inside the walls produce a sequence of brilliant hues. These colors morph seamlessly from one into the next. The light shifts from quiet, cool greens and blues to warm yellows and magentas. These hues vibrate with such intensity that they drown out all thought, transforming color into a physical presence.

A second room in the installation is completely dark. Inside the blackness, a magical visual effect happens: complementary afterimages flash before your eyes. (Staring at a single intense hue can cause the part of the eye that perceives color to become so tired that it “sees” the complement of the original hue, even in the dark.)

The luminous colors of this work generate different memories, moods, and afterimages for each viewer. Eliasson wants to make visitors conscious of the act of seeing, to remind us that our experience of vision and color is highly individual.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2006 • SCHOLASTIC ART 11
Expressive Hues

Even since she can remember, Jalisa Woods has been attracted to color, especially bright hues. “My love of color probably comes from my mom,” says Jalisa, 14. “She often wears clothes that have pink, red, blue, or orange in them. Our home is colorful, and so is my room. I also like to wear brightly colored clothing and collect colorful purses. My favorite one is red, pink, blue, black, and purple. It’s really neat.”

Jalisa’s passion for color applies to her artwork too, as you can see from her award-winning piece on the opposite page. “I’m always throwing colors onto my paper to see how I can grab the viewer’s attention,” says the eighth grader at Carroll Middle School in Fort Wayne, Indiana. “Finding just the right combination of colors that will make my picture stand out is my favorite part of creating art.” As she gets older, Jalisa knows art will always be a part of her life. “When I put the right colors together, it makes me feel like I accomplished something. It’s a great feeling.”

How did you first get involved in art?
When I was little, I watched my older brother make art and thought it was fun. I would get chalk and try to draw on the sidewalk.

How did you think up this award-winning piece?
We had to create an abstract work using glue and pastels for my eighth-grade art class. Our subject had to be something you’d see at home or outside in nature. We also had to use small, medium, and large shapes in our picture and repeat them in a pattern.

How did you get your idea?
I was inspired by a picture of a vase of flowers that was hanging in my sister’s room. The picture wasn’t very colorful, but I loved the leaves coming off the long stems. I knew I could create a visually interesting drawing by working with different shapes in the background and being careful about my color choices.

JALISA WOODS

“I struggled to find the right combination of colors—dark shades and light tints—to create the effect I wanted.”

Why did you choose the colors that you did?
I started with pink because it was really bright and set a focal point. At first, I was going to put orange next to the pink, but it didn’t look right. I switched to white instead, which definitely looked better.

As I worked, I used my color sense, and if a color didn’t relate well to the others, I’d erase it and start over with a new shade. I avoided using any color as bright as the pink so that it would remain the focal point. For example, I chose deeper colors like olive and purple to contrast with the pot and leaves and to give the background a sense of depth.

How did you go about creating this piece?
First, I sketched a rough outline. When I was satisfied with that, I drew my picture on a piece of blue construction paper. Next, I outlined the pot using a bottle of glue with a fine tip. Then I outlined the leaves in glue and created shapes in the background. The glue would bead up into little dots as I poured out the lines. I liked how that gave my picture added texture. I kept adding more open areas to fill in with color, especially in the background. I thought it would make my piece more abstract and visually interesting. Once the glue dried, I started coloring with pastels. I started with the pink, and worked my way down the pot with white, purple, and orange. Next, I worked on the leaves. I filled in the background last. I smeared extra glue behind the leaves for a hazy effect, which made them stand out more and had an interesting look.
What’s your favorite part of this piece?
I like the pot the best. It has the brightest color in it. The hot colors work nicely against the cool blues and greens in the background. My next favorite part is the leaves, because of their shapes and colors.

Were you satisfied with the results of your work?
I was very happy, because my work was unique. My colors were brighter and the piece didn’t look like anyone else’s in my class. When I create art, I try to be different from everyone else. I like being myself. I love to do my own thing.

What did creating this piece teach you about art?
You can’t just throw any colors together. You need to pick just the right ones to get just the right look. I wanted my picture to have a happy, upbeat feel. I struggled to find the right combination of colors—dark shades and light tints—to create the effect I wanted.

What advice do you have for other aspiring artists?
Keep taking art classes, and learn as much as you can from your teachers. Listen to what they tell you, but don’t be afraid to take risks and follow your own heart. Keep doing art. If you do, you’ll keep getting better at it.

To find out more about The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, ask your teacher to write to The Alliance for Young Artists & Writers, Inc., 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012-3999, phone 212-343-6892, or go to www.scholastic.com/artandwriting.
In Liz’s portrait, the complementary color pair of yellow and purple was used to contrast the highlights and shadows on the model’s face. Liz selected dark values of red and green—another complementary pair—for the clothing.

Adam used warm, related tones of red and orange to indicate highlights, and cool blue tints for the shadows. His confident and expressionistic brushstrokes add visual texture. An additional contrasting color—green—provides a bold background.

In her portrait, Ashley used primary colors (yellow, red, and blue), as well as tints and shades of those colors to create depth and unity. A rectangle of dark blue frames the model’s head.

SCHOLASTIC ART WORKSHOP

Painting **Colorful Portraits**

EXPERIMENT WITH COLOR TO CREATE A VIBRANT FAUVIST PORTRAIT

MATERIALS

- 18 x 24 in., 80-lb. white sulfite paper
- No. 2 pencil
- Color pencils (primary and secondary)
- Drawing board or 18 x 24 in. heavy piece of cardboard
- Liquid acrylic and/or tempera paint (primary, secondary, black, and white)*
- Variety of flat or round paintbrushes from 1/8 in. to 1 in.
- Containers to hold tempera paint
- Container to hold water
- Palette (old dinner plate or paper plate)
- Plastic wrap (to cover palette)
- Paper towels
- Optional (to thicken paint): Gel medium

* 5250 volume of Blick’s 2cvx and Dick-Blick’s Shadow Tempera was used for this assignment. Very good color, economical, dries quickly, does not smear, dries matte, and overpaints very well.

Can you believe that all six paintings at the top of this page are portraits of the same person? As you’ve learned from studying the Fauvist artworks in this issue, color is one of the many ways in which an artist can take risks and express emotion.

The color wheel above will help you select the colors for your Fauvist-style portrait. Remember that red, yellow, and blue are primary colors. Orange, green, and purple are secondary, and can be mixed from the primaries. Complementary colors are opposite each other. Analogous or related colors are next to each other. Red, yellow, and orange are warm; green, blue, and purple are cool. Adding white makes a tint; adding black creates a shade.
**STEP 1** Using a No. 2 pencil, carefully complete a simple, accurate contour drawing of the model's head and shoulders to serve as a guide for your painting. Pay attention to scale, proportion, placement of facial features, and areas of highlight and shadow. Divide the background into simple shapes.

**STEP 2** With color pencils, add color to your drawing. Choose a warm color to define highlights, a cool color for shadows, and a neutral “skin” tone (orange, tan, brown) for the rest of the face. Outline where the darkest shadows and strongest highlights fall. Lightly color in these shapes. Select a fourth, contrasting color for the background. Limit the number of colors used to achieve unity.

**STEP 3** Begin painting, using thick brushstrokes to create visual texture. To create a background, use the same warm color of the highlights, plus your fourth, contrasting color. Paint clothing using one of the background colors to maintain unity. When painting the figure, experiment with different brushstrokes (jabs, swirls, dots, and dashes) and varying amounts of pressure. Visual texture can be achieved by layering paint in tints (white plus hue) and shades (hue plus a small amount of black), or by changing intensity (add or reduce small amounts of the hue's complementary color). Do not overwork the paint while it's wet—you do not want the colors to blend together. Create focal points by adding broken outlines in black or a shade of the hue. Add final touches of colors related to the flesh for visual accents.

**SOME HELPFUL HINTS**

**BEFORE PAINTING:** When shading the highlights and shadows on your preliminary sketch, draw lightly so the paint will cover the pencil marks.
CRITIC'S CORNER

Fauvist Faces

HOW DID FAUVIST PAINTERS CREATE THEIR STARTLING COLOR EFFECTS?

The art movement called Fauvism lasted only a few years. But the new and inventive ways in which the Fauvists used color would affect the future of modern art. Below are details of some of the works featured in this issue and a list of related color qualities, terms, titles, and artists' names. Next to each word or phrase, write the letter of the image (or images) you feel is most appropriate.

1. The Green Line
2. Complementary colors
3. Unnatural colors
4. Henri Matisse
5. High-intensity colors
6. André Derain
7. Color tints
8. Related colors
9. “Wild Beasts”
10. Cool colors
11. Distorted shapes
12. Thick brushstrokes
13. Fauve painters
14. Maurice de Vlaminck
15. Madame Matisse
16. Warm colors
17. “Nasty smear of paint”
18. Simplified shapes
19. Arbitrary colors
20. More than one complementary color pair