

Matisse towards Expressionism - Seminar 1

***The influence of South France and in particular Collioure
had upon Matisse's art away from divisionism to fauvism***

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WAHG

Lecture Notes

Matisse towards Expressionism Lectures given by Beth Taylor, MA

MATISSE TIMELINE TO 1910

- 1869 Born. 31st December at Le Cateau-Cambresis (Nord), France
- 1880 Pupil at lycée in St Quentin
- 1887 Studies law in Paris
- 1889 Clerk in law firm in St Quentin
- 1890 Begins painting when recovering from illness.
Attends art school in St Quentin – drawing from casts
- 1892 Becomes student at Académie Julian in Paris.
Attends evening classes at the École des Arts Décoratif
- 1893 Leaves Académie Julian
- 1894 Continues drawing from the antique
- 1895 Admitted to Gustave Moreau's class at École des Beaux-Arts
Begins painting outdoors in Paris
Paints in Brittany during summer
- 1897 Views Impressionist paintings in the Luxembourg.
Dinner Table exhibited at the Salon de la National
Works in Brittany with John Russell who gave him
two drawings by Van Gogh

- 1898 Marries Amelie Parayre.
Visits London to study Turner
Spends twelve months in Corsica and Toulouse
- 1899 Returns to Paris but is asked to leave class at the École de Beaux-Arts
Meets André Derain
Buys Cezanne's *Trois baigneuses*, a plaster bust by Rodin, and a head of a boy by Gauguin
- 1900 Continued financial hardship.
Paints exhibition decorations for Grand Palais.
- 1901 Exhibits at Salon des Indépendants
- 1902 Poverty and depression continue into 1903
Room under the Eaves
Visits exhibition of Islamic Art
- 1904 First one man exhibition at Vollard's gallery in Paris.
Spends summer at St Tropez
- 1905 *Luxe, calme et volupté* exhibited at the Independents and bought by Signac
Spends summer at Collioure with Derain.
Causes sensation when he exhibits at the Salon d'Automne
Matisse and his associates dubbed *Les Fauves*
Portrait of *Andre Derain*
Woman with the Hat
Madame Matisse, "*The Green Line*"
Stein family begins to buy his work

- 1906 **Bonheur de Vivre** exhibited at independents and bought by Leo Stein
La Joie de Vivre
One man exhibition at Galerie Drouet
Visits Biskra in Algeria
Blue Nude (Souvenir of Biskra)
Spends summer at Collioure
Cone sisters of Baltimore begin to collect his paintings
- 1907 Teaches at art school established by admirers including Sarah Stein
Exchanges paintings with Picasso
Visits Umbria
Article on Matisse published by Apollinaire
- 1908 Shchukin begins to collect his work
Notes of a Painter by Matisse published.
Harmony in Red
- 1909 Moves to Issy les Moulineaux near Paris
Completes full sized sketch of ***La danse***. This and ***La musique*** commissioned by Shchukin
Spends summer near St Tropez
- 1910 Visits exhibition of Islamic Art in Munich
Visits Spain
La danse and ***La musique*** exhibited at the Salon d'automne causing a sensation.

EARLY PATRONS

The Stein family

Gertrude Stein (1874-1946), her brother Leo (1892-1947), her brother Michael and his wife Sarah were collectors of avant-garde art in Paris before the First World War. Gertrude and Leo bought Matisse's *Woman in a Hat* at a time when Matisse's work was being ridiculed by the public. It was Sarah Stein who was a particular supporter of Matisse, not only buying his work herself (at one point she and her husband owned over forty works by Matisse) but also encouraging visiting American friends, like Etta Cone, to invest in it. Etta Cone became the most important collector of Matisse's sculpture, owning 26 pieces. It was Sarah Stein who persuaded Matisse to set up as a teacher of art in 1907.

Shchukin, Sergei (1851-1936)

Head of a large Russian textile company, Shchukin began collecting at the age of 40.

He bought his first painting from Matisse in 1908 *Harmony in Blue* which was reworked by Matisse to become *Harmony in Red* by 1909. In that year Shchukin commissioned two large murals from Matisse, *La Danse* and *La Musique*

ART TERMS

Neo-impressionism

The term is used to describe the post-impressionist work of Georges Seurat, Paul Signac and their followers. Neo-impressionism is characterised by the use of the **divisionist** technique (often called pointillism). Instead of mixing colours on the palette, which reduces intensity, the primary colour components of each colour were placed

separately on the canvas in tiny dabs so that they would mix in the spectator's eye. Optically mixed colours move towards white so this method gave greater luminosity.

The technique was based on the colour theories of M E Chevreul, Director of Dyeing at the Gobelins tapestry works. His scientific theories, published as *De la loi du contraste simultanée des couleurs* (1839) had an impact on the impressionists and the post-impressionists as well as the neo-impressionists.

Working with Signac in St Tropez in 1904, Matisse experimented with Signac's formula of pure colours, built up according to the law of contrasts, in separate or divided brushstrokes to produce brilliant luminosity.

Expressionism

A term usually associated with the German Expressionists, particularly the Brücke and the Die Brücke groups. As a general term, refers to art in which the image of reality is distorted in form and colour in order to make it expressive of the artist's inner feelings or ideas about it. Such art can use highly intense colour, non naturalistic colour as well as free, textured brushwork. Artists such as Dürer, Grünewald and Rembrandt in northern Europe and El Greco in Spain used compositional and figurative distortion. In its modern form it may be said to start with Vincent van Gogh and then form a major stream of modern art.

Matisse said "*What I am after above all is expression....The chief aim of colour should be to service expression as well as possible....To paint an autumn landscape I will not try to remember what colour suits the season; I will be inspired only by the sensation the season gives me...*"

Fauvism

The fauve movement is the name given to the painting of Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck and others from 1905 to 1910. They were called *les fauves* because of their use of strident colour and loose brushwork and the simplification of their subjects. Matisse had first realised the potential of colour freed from its traditional descriptive role when he painted with Signac in 1904 and with Derain in Collioure in 1905. The movement was short-lived, reaching its peak in 1905 and 1906. For most of the group it was a temporary phase through which they passed in the development of different styles.

PAINTERS THAT INFLUENCED MATISSE

Moreau, Gustave 1826-98

Leading French Symbolist artist. Became Professor at the École des Beaux-Arts in 1892. An inspiring teacher for whom Matisse was a favoured pupil, despite the difficulty Moreau had with his simplified Brittany paintings. Recalling Moreau, Matisse said that he “*did not set us on the right roads but off the roads..... With him each one could acquire the technique that corresponded to his own temperament*”.

Russell, John Peter 1858 – 1930

Australian born painter who studied at the Slade School in London and at Cormon's Academy in Paris where he befriended Van Gogh. Settled at Belle-Ile in Brittany where he attracted visiting painters. Matisse was influenced by his painting methods – painting in the open air, using a restricted palette of pure colours straight from the tube, basing his work on the Impressionists' theories of light and

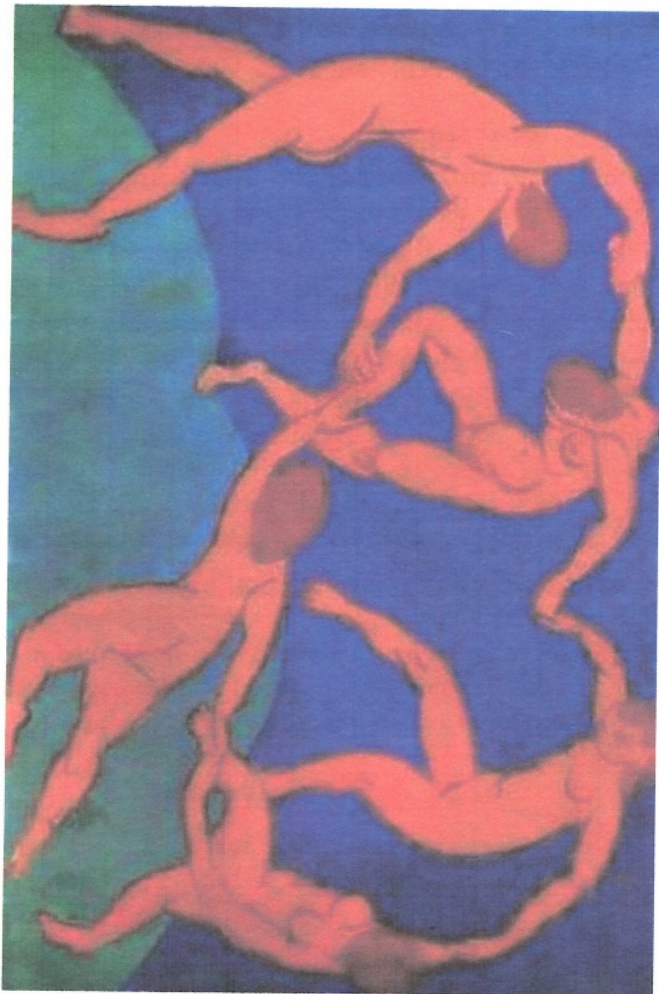
colour. Primacy of colour and the need to be guided solely by individual feeling were his principles.

Derain, Andre 1880 – 1954

French painter, sculptor, graphic artist and theatrical designer. Central figure in avant garde developments in the early twentieth century. One of the key figures in Fauvism, he and Matisse met when enrolled as pupils in the studio of Eugène Carrière. As students, both Derain and Matisse were interested in exploring non traditional painting. Their period of closest collaboration was the summer they spent working together at Collioure in 1905 which was to produce works that were labelled “fauve” (wild).

Signac, Paul 1863-1935

Anarchist, French Neo impressionist painter, disciple of Seurat. Published D'Eugene Delacroix au neo-impressionism in 1899. For Signac, the representation of light was the central task of modern painting but set out the colour theory which provided a scientific basis for Divisionism. He had a strong influence on Matisse who spent the summer of 1904 working with him at St Tropez.



***Dance* Matisse 1910 Oil on canvas; 260 x 391 cm The Hermitage**