

Matisse and Marguerite Through Her Father's Eyes

4 April - 24 August 2025



"In my father's time, we lived with his daily drama, which was painting." - Marguerite Duthuit-Matisse, 1970

The Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris is staging a groundbreaking exhibition of works by Henri Matisse (1869-1954), one of the greatest artists of the 20th century. Bringing together more than 110 works - paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures and ceramics - the exhibition shows Matisse's view of his eldest daughter, Marguerite Duthuit-Matisse (1894-1982), an essential but discreet figure in his family circle.

The exhibition features numerous drawings rarely, if ever, shown to the public, as well as major works from American, Swiss and Japanese collections, now on view in France for the first time. Photographs, archival material and paintings by Marguerite herself fill out the portrait of this little-known personality.

From Matisse's images of her childhood to the end of the Second World War, Marguerite remained his most constant model and the only one to have featured in his work over several decades. Remarkably frank and intense, his portraits of her convey an emotion that reflects the depth of the artist's affection for his daughter. Matisse seemed to see in her a kind of mirror of himself, as if in his depictions he was finally achieving the "almost complete identification of painter and model" to which he aspired.

This chronologically organised exhibition bears witness to the strength of the bond between the artist and his daughter. Revealing an immense mutual trust and respect, it also offers an insight into the fascinating destiny of a highly singular woman who played a leading role in her father's career.

PRESS RELEASE

Museum Director

Fabrice Hergott

Curators

Isabelle Monod-Fontaine, Honorary General Heritage Curator

Hélène de Talhouët, PhD in contemporary art history, teacher-researcher

Charlotte Barat-Mabille, curator at the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris

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Henri Matisse Marguerite with a Black Cat Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1910 94 x 64 cm Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne / Centre de création industrielle Gift of Mrs Barbara Duthuit in memory of Claude Duthuit, 2013 Credits: © Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist.GrandPalaisRMN / Georges Meguerditchian

Visitor information

Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris 11 Avenue du Président Wilson 75116 Paris Tel. 01 53 67 40 00 www.mam.paris.fr

Open Tuesday to Sunday 10am to

Late opening: Thursdays until 9.30pm

Cultural activities Information and bookings Tel. 01 53 67 40 80

Admission

Full rate: 17€ Concessions: 15€

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The eldest of Matisse's three children, Marguerite was born in 1894, offspring of a brief relationship between the artist, then a young painting student, and his model Caroline Joblaud. Legally recognised by her father, she grew up alongside Jean (1899-1976) and Pierre (1900-1989), sons of Matisse and his wife Amélie. "We are like the five fingers of one hand", Marguerite would later write of this close-knit family.

Marguerite's childhood was marked by illness and suffering: at the age of seven her first tracheotomy left a scar she long concealed with the black ribbon that is a distinctive feature of many of her portraits. Deprived of a normal schooling because of her fragile health, she became a thoroughgoing "studio child", an attentive daily witness to Matisse's work. "The spirit of the family was entirely focused on father's efforts," she recalled. Her presence meant that her face figured regularly in the experiments of a painter who found in his daughter a patient, good-natured model, open to his most daring formal adventures.

In 1905 Matisse's *Intérieur à la fillette* (The Museum of Modern Art, New York) depicted Marguerite in the vibrant, colourful style characteristic of Fauvism. The following year, the painter's sensitive response to his daughter unfolded in a superb group of paintings and drawings executed in Collioure, in which the wise schoolgirl with downcast eyes of *Marguerite lisant* (Musée de Grenoble) evolved into a teenager proudly confronting the viewer (Musée Picasso, Paris). More defiant still, the masterly *Marguerite au chat noir* of 1910 (Centre Pompidou, Paris) preceded the austerely radical geometrisation of *Tête blanche et rose* (Centre Pompidou, Paris).

The portraits of Marguerite proliferated during the First World War, with her appearing as an elegant young woman, stylishly dressed and wearing elaborate hats. As Matisse spent more and more time in Nice, she was the subject of a major series of balcony portraits, wrapped in a large checked coat, before appearing in the foreground of the monumental *Thé* (LACMA), an evocation of the family garden in Issy-les-Moulineaux.

In 1920, she re-appeared, exhausted and convalescent, in a series of works produced after a painful operation on her trachea. Matisse can be seen here as an anxious father full of tender concern for a daughter finally freed of her scar and her ribbon. Painted in Étretat, in Normandy, these are among the last individual portraits he made of his daughter prior to an interval of twenty-five years. Although Marguerite continued to pose for him in the early 1920s, these paintings and drawings now almost always included a second, professional model, Henriette Darricarrère. The two young women are shown as allies, wearing elaborate ball and carnival outfits in colourful settings in Nice.

Henri Matisse
Marguerite
Collioure, winter 1906-1907 or spring 1907
Oil on canvas
65.1 x 54 cm
Musée national Picasso-Paris
Picasso donation, 1978
Personal collection Pablo Picasso
Credits: Grand Palais RMN (Musée national
Picasso-Paris) / René-Gabriel Ojeda









In 1923, Marguerite married the writer Georges Duthuit and was no longer to be seen in her father's paintings. She nonetheless remained very close to him, acting as intermediary between Matisse, now settled in Nice, and the countless demands from collectors, historians, curators and art dealers. Fiercely meticulous and exacting, she supervised the printing of her father's engravings in Paris. Dedicated to defending his art, she oversaw exhibitions in Berlin and London and went on to direct the catalogue raisonné of his work, a task that was never completed. One room of the exhibition is devoted to her key role in Matisse's career, as well as her own forays into painting and fashion.

"I am made of the stuff of warriors, of the zealous," she wrote in 1943. Her indomitable courage and integrity shone through during the Second World War, when she was arrested and tortured for her part in the Resistance. The last portraits date from 1945, when Matisse discovered the tremendous dangers and suffering she had endured. This final, poignant series of drawings and lithographs echoes a group of equally moving portraits Matisse drew of his grandson Claude, Marguerite's only child, during those dark years.

The video projection by director Elisabeth Kapnist that closes the exhibition uses dozens of archival photographs to trace Marguerite's life alongside her father's art and career. Educational activities will also be offered in a family space where young and old alike can enjoy creative workshops.

With a preface by Barbara Duthuit, whose support was decisive, the catalogue – based on several years' research in the Matisse Archives – complements the exhibition with further in-depth information on Marguerite's life and Matisse's work, as well as previously unpublished extracts from the correspondence between father and daughter. To coincide with the exhibition, the first biography of Marguerite, written by world-renowned Matisse specialist Isabelle Monod-Fontaine and Hélène de Talhouët, will be published by Éditions Grasset.

In addition, a virtual reality experience produced by TSVP and Lucid Realities focuses on Matisse's *La Danse*, a masterpiece from the collection of the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris.

With the backing of Forvis Mazars **forv/s mazars**



Henri Matisse

Portrait of Marguerite

Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1918
Oil on wood
46 x 37.8 cm
West Palm Beach, Florida, Norton Museum of Art
Gift of Jean and Martin Goodman of West Palm Beach, Florida
Credits: Norton Museum of Art



