

The Trinity College Dublin Art Collections

- Artist:** Henri Matisse
- Title:** *Chapelles, Peintures, Dessins, Sculptures*- Exhibition at Maison de la Pensée Française
- Medium:** lithograph exhibition poster
- Notes:** exhibited: The College Gallery: Contemporary Prints and Posters, The Douglas Hyde Gallery, TCD, 18 – 23 October 1982, cat. no. 61.

b. 1869, Cambrai, France d.1954, Nice, France

Despite Matisse's monumental importance to the history of modern art, the painter, sculptor, designer, printmaker and draughtsman had no interest in art until he turned twenty. This contrasts in the development of artists like Picasso, who were consistently interested in art as children; however, whatever Matisse missed out on in childhood, he made up for in later life. His development as an artist has an interesting trajectory. During the first stage of his career he studied at the studio of William-Alphonse Bouguereau, but later joined that of Gustave Moreau, the French Symbolist painter. He obtained a unique education from Moreau, the teacher encouraging him to experiment with colour and the expressionistic power of emotion. Until his experimentation with the avant-garde methods, he was set to become merely a conservative Salon painter.

His exposure to the Impressionists, and then to the post-Impressionists like Van Gogh, Cezanne, Gauguin and Signac impacted his work greatly; this led to the establishment of the Fauvism movement. Acting as leader of the group, he explored the expressive potential of colour with other artists like Vlaminck and Derain. Throughout his career he desired to create work away from the destruction of war and despair of everyday life, remarking that he desired it to have 'a soothing, calming influence on the mind'. Moving on from Fauvism he sought balance through the use of pure colour and increasingly abstract compositions.

After an operation for a tumour in 1941, he was left an invalid and could no longer stand in front of an easel. His great artistic ingenuity can be seen through the varying modes of expression he chose in this later part of his life. He began with drawing, producing great numbers of works in series; this led to the illustration of books through printmaking techniques. A year after his operation he began his paper cut-outs, which were the key pieces in his later artistic production. The act of directly cutting into coloured paper allowed him to unite line and colour to an extent that he had not achieved on canvas. From 1948-51 he worked on the Rosary Chapel at Vence, a surprisingly big challenge for a man who was not in good health. This project of frescoes and stained glass inspired him so much that he could not return to easel painting and continued to work on the grand scale. He created right up until his death and is now represented in most of the major art institutions of the world, including the Tate Gallery in London, the National Gallery of Scotland and in the Matisse Museum, Nice.

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