



Baltimore Museum of Art Presents Stanley Whitney: Dance With Me Henri

Exhibition follows Whitney's celebrated stained-glass window commission for the BMA, featuring never-before-seen preparatory work alongside rare prints by Matisse

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BALTIMORE, MD (August 16, 2022)—On November 20, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will open a focus exhibition of works by acclaimed artist Stanley Whitney that highlights his career-long engagement with the work of Henri Matisse and draws parallels between the two artists' visionary use of color and line. The exhibition follows Whitney's celebrated commission of three stained-glass windows for the BMA's Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies, which debuted with the Center's opening in December 2021. Never-before-seen sketches and studies for the windows are presented alongside a selection of Matisse's prints from the 1930s and 1940s chosen by Whitney. On view through April 23, 2023, *Stanley Whitney: Dance With Me Henri* is curated by Katy Rothkopf, The Anne and Ben Cone Memorial Director of The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies and Senior Curator of European Painting and Sculpture, and Katy Siegel, former BMA Senior Research & Programming Curator and Thaw Chair of Modern Art at Stony Brook University.

Whitney has often cited historic European painting as a source of inspiration, including the work of Matisse and in particular Matisse's glass windows for the Chapelle du Rosaire de Vence in Southern France. Whitney's stained-glass windows for the BMA marked the artist's first museum commission and his first time working in stained glass, translating his interest in expressions of color in a medium naturally suited to it. His process of articulating stacks of color and experimenting with opacity and transparency provided the ideal method to translate the traditional aspects of stained glass into new contemporary possibilities.

The forthcoming exhibition, presented in the Jay McKean Fisher Gallery adjacent to the stained-glass windows, features three of the watercolor and graphite sketches for the commission; one earlier drawing made in explicit homage to Matisse; and five monotypes in watercolor and crayon. These works on paper reveal Whitney's attention to color and light, as well as organic line and a sense of play that resonates with Matisse's legacy. They are paired with seven prints by Matisse that Whitney selected from the BMA's extensive holdings. Rare lithographs from the 1930s depict the movement of an acrobatic dancer that highlight Matisse's interest in line, balance, and poise. Color stencil prints (pochoirs) from Matisse's groundbreaking book *Jazz* (1947) capture his explorations of pure color and improvisation that laid the foundations for his work in glass. This work dovetails with Whitney's own engagement with jazz, which has served as a critical influence since the 1960s.

“*Dance With Me Henri* is grounded in Stanley Whitney’s deep love for Matisse,” said Siegel. “The installation contextualizes Whitney’s remarkable stained-glass windows and highlights the rich layers of connection between the artists’ works and interests. Through Stanley’s eyes, we see Matisse’s saturated color and organic line as utterly contemporary—he brings French modern art into dialogue with a world that includes jazz, architecture, mid-century NYC painting, and the quilts of Gee’s Bend.”

Stanley Whitney

Stanley Whitney has been exploring the formal possibilities of color within ever-shifting grids of multi-hued blocks and all-over fields of gestural marks and passages since the mid-1970s. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX, USA (2017) and Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2015). He has been featured in many prominent group shows, including *Inherent Structure*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2018); Documenta 14 in Athens, Greece and Kassel, Germany (2017); *Nero su Bianco* at the American Academy in Rome, Italy (2015); and *Utopia Station* at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003), among others. Whitney has been awarded the Robert De Niro Sr. Prize in Painting (2011), the American Academy of Arts and Letters Art Award (2010), and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1996). His work is in a range of public collections, including the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, KS; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, NY; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. He holds a BFA from Kansas City Art Institute as well as an MFA from Yale University and is currently Professor emeritus of painting and drawing at Tyler School of Art, Temple University. Whitney was born in Philadelphia in 1946 and lives and works in New York City and Parma, Italy. *Stanley Whitney: The Italian Paintings*, a collateral event to the 59th Venice Biennial, is currently on view at the Palazzo Tiepolo Passi, Venice, through November 27, 2022. A major retrospective surveying his career will be presented in 2024 at the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, NY and will be traveling to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Matisse Collection

The Matisse collection at the BMA was first established in the early 20th century through the vision and philanthropy of sisters Claribel and Etta Cone, whose internationally renowned collection was bequeathed to the museum in 1949 and is the centerpiece of the BMA’s expansive holdings. Among the highlights of the Cone Collection are more than 600 works by Matisse, including paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, and illustrated books. To this incredible group of objects, the BMA has added hundreds of works by the artist, amassing the world’s largest and most comprehensive collection of Matisse works in a public museum. This includes gifts from members of the Matisse family, such as a selection of works from the collection of the artist’s daughter Marguerite Duthuit, and a major donation of prints by The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation in New York. In December 2021, the BMA opened The Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies, an approximately 2,500-square-foot space on the first floor of the museum dedicated to the study of Henri Matisse. The establishment of the center fulfilled the BMA’s long-term strategic goal to increase research and presentation opportunities for the museum’s incomparable collection of works by the artist.

Baltimore Museum of Art

Founded in 1914, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) inspires people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibitions, programs, and collections that tell an expansive story of art—challenging long-held narratives and embracing new voices. Our outstanding collection of more than 95,000 objects spans many eras and cultures and includes the world’s largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse; one of the nation’s finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs; and a rapidly growing number of works by contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds. The museum is also distinguished by a neoclassical building designed by American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of modern and contemporary sculpture. The BMA is located three miles north of the Inner Harbor, adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University, and has a community branch at Lexington Market. General admission is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

Visitor Information

General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours on Thursdays until 9 p.m. Timed reservations are required for all visitors to the galleries. The Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk. The museum and gardens are closed New Year’s Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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