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## Masterpiece: Henri Matisse

\*\*\*Multiple art print options for this lesson.

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**Pronounced:** Ahn-Ree Ma-Teese

**Keywords:** COLLAGE

Geometric & Organic Shape

Positive/ Negative Space

**Grade:** 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>

**Activity:** Paper Collage

**ART PRINT:** A variety of Matisse's artworks can be used for this lesson. See your school coordinator to find out which print your school will be featuring. Possible prints may include the titles: "Interior with Dog"; "Interior with Eggplant"; "Man with Purple Robe".

### Meet The Artist:

- Henri Matisse was born in France in 1869, around the time the telephone was invented. He lived until he was 84 (he died of a heart attack). His father was a prosperous grain merchant and his mother was an artistic woman who made hats and painted on china. When Henri was young he wanted to be a lawyer so he went to law school.
- At age 21 Henri had appendicitis and while he was bed ridden his mother gave him a paint set. His life changed from that day on. He gave up the idea of being a lawyer and decided to be an artist.

- Matisse went to art school in Paris but didn't like the realistic way he was being taught to paint.
- By 1900 Matisse was known as the leader of the Post-Impressionists. He was also called an Expressionist. Expressionists painted their emotions. He was known for his use of bold bright colors. His approach in his art had not been seen before.
- His critics named him the "King of the Wild Beasts" because of his expressive artwork. He responded by wearing a sheepskin-lined coat inside out to look more "beastly".
- He was very poor as a young artist, eating only rice, having to resist eating the fruit he bought for his still life paintings. He married and had 3 children. His wife owned a hat shop, and she supported him, making it possible for him to remain an artist. He warmed up his fingers everyday by playing the violin for hours.
- In his later life he made a lot of money as an artist, which was rare in his day.
- He kept tropical birds, letting them fly free in his house.
- In 1941 Matisse underwent a serious operation and was later confined to a wheel chair. Instead of painting he took a pair of scissors and began making his now famous cutouts. With his scissor he carved out shapes like a sculpture. Using bright colors and unusual shapes, the paper shapes he cut out were called the "Positives" and the leftover scraps were called the "Negatives". He used both in his collage.
- Even though Matisse's collages were abstract you can see recognizable objects if you look closely. He would repeat similar shapes to create patterns. Or repetition.
  - Matisse liked to collect pieces of patterned fabric when he traveled and would look at the fabric while he painted his pictures.
  - Matisse died in 1954 at the age of 84.

**Ask the following questions about your featured Art Print:**

- What do you see in this picture? ( shapes and color )
- Are the shapes recognizable?
- **Explain that in art SHAPE is described as GEOMETRIC or ORGANIC.**
  - Define **Geometric** as: a design based on simple shapes such as circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles. Shapes we learn in the early years of elementary school.
  - Define **Organic** as: a design based on shapes and forms that are related to or developed from plant and animal forms.
- Find both Geometric and Organic shapes in the featured artwork.

- **Explain that SPACE can be described as Positive or Negative.**
  - Define **Positive Space** as a work of art that is filled with something, such as lines, shapes, colors or designs.
  - Define **Negative Space** as the empty space surrounding shapes or forms in a work of art.
- Find examples of both Positive and Negative examples of space.

Point out that certain shapes appear that the artist removed them from the artwork, which allows the background color to create the shape. The background becomes part of the design!

What style of art does this represent? (**ABSTRACT**)

**Abstract** – a style of art in which shapes, designs, textures and colors are represented in a way that may look unrealistic or unrecognizable but they emphasize a mood or feeling. Abstract art is characterized by the use of geometric lines and shapes and bright, bold colors.

This artwork is a **COLLAGE**. A collage is a work of art created by gluing bits of paper, fabric, scraps, photographs or other material to a flat surface.

- Why do you think Matisse liked these patterns so much? (He loved explosive color and shape. He was not afraid to use both in excess.)
- How did Henri's mother affect her son's future in art? (He discovered his love for art while recuperating from an appendectomy. His mother gave him a paint set to occupy his time.)
- How did his health affect him again as an artist? Did he give up on art?

## **Project: A Paper COLLAGE**

### **Materials Used:**

Large (12 x 18) BLACK construction paper (1 per student)

Assortment of colored construction paper in various sizes. (scraps work great for this)

Scissors

Glue

**Optional:** Add patterned scrap book paper.

\*Remnants of bold patterned fabrics for inspiration.

**Before you begin:**

Ask the students, what things in their house have patterns on them. (Sheets, Curtains, Wallpaper, Blankets, Clothing etc.) Mention again how Matisse collected fabric for inspiration when creating his artwork. Show fabric.

Tell the students that today's art project will involve them carving out paper shapes to create a collage of organic and geometric patterns. Their artwork will be in the same Art style as Matisse. Abstract/COLLAGE.

**Process:**

1. Hand out black construction paper (this is the background that will be filled in with colored patterns) and an assortment of colored pieces.
2. Direct students to set aside the black paper. They are NOT to cut the black paper.
3. Student will select various pieces of colored papers to create their collage. They need to include both ORGANIC and GEOMETRIC Shapes. Students can create these quickly by folding a piece of paper in half, draw half a shape on the fold and then cut out. DEMONSTRATE.
4. Working with both the shapes that they cut out along with the pieces of paper that the shape was cut from... Instruct students to start laying them on the black paper back ground. Solid pieces of paper can be added as well.
5. Encourage them to try several designs/layouts.  
Stress that a good abstract design takes trial and error. Experiment.

**\*\*\*\*Students should be encouraged to trade shapes with one another.**

6. Once they are content with the design they will glue the select pieces onto the black paper.
7. Ask students to take notice how new shapes emerged as the black background appears through some of the cut-outs.
8. Have students sign their artwork.



Chandler Unified School District Art Masterpiece

## Parent Letter

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