
Masterpiece: *The Purple Robe*, 1937 by Henri Matisse

Pronounced: Ahn Ree Ma Tees

Keywords: Pattern, Color, Shape,
Interior, Rhythm and
Repetition

Grade: 1st Grade

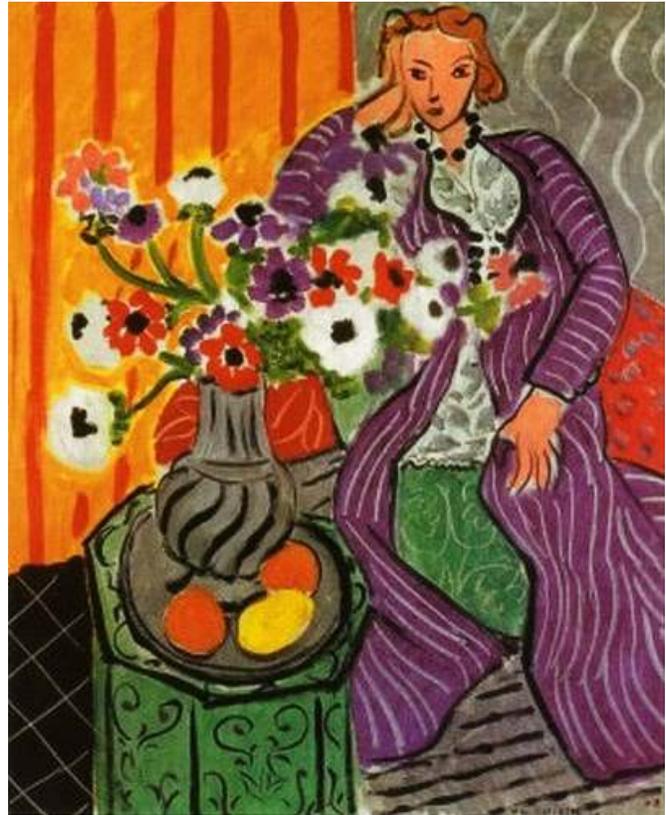
Month: November

Activity: Matisse Cats

TIME: 1.25 hours

Meet the Artist:

- Henri Matisse was born in France in 1869, around the time the telephone was invented and died in 1954 at the age of 84.
- His parents owned a general store and his dad wanted Henri to be a lawyer. At the age of 25, he became a lawyer but found it boring.
- While recovering from appendicitis, his mother gave him a paint set and from that day forward, his life was focused on being an artist.
- Matisse went to art school but didn't like the realistic way he was being taught to paint. He wanted to use bolder and brighter colors to be more expressive.
- He is considered the father of the "Fauvism" movement; an art style that lasted only four years, beginning in 1905. The word Fauvism is French for "wild beasts" because the paintings had bright, wild and unusual colors and patterns and the subjects in the paintings were shown in a simple way. Matisse responded to his critics by wearing a sheepskin lined coat inside out to look more "beastly".
- He was extremely 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 was a milliner (hat maker) and she supported him so he can remain an artist.
- He warmed up his fingers every day before painting by playing the violin for hours.



- His paintings were ultimately accepted by art collectors and buyers during his lifetime (which was unusual) and he ultimately made a great deal of money to buy his beloved home in Giverny. He kept tropical birds, letting them fly free in his home.
- Matisse liked to collect pieces of patterned fabric when he traveled and would use the designs of the fabric in many of his paintings.
- When he became too old to paint, he started making brightly colored cut-outs with scissors.

Possible Questions:

- What items do you see in this painting?
- What is first item in the painting that your eye attracted to? (the answers should draw attention to the fact that every part of the painting is equally important and attractive)
- What do you think of the lady in this painting? Is she standing, sitting? Does she look comfortable? How can you tell?
- Is this an unusual room? If so what makes it unusual?
- Have you ever been in a room like this?
- Would you like to live in a room like this? Why or why not?
- How many patterns do you see? Where do you see these patterns?
- With so many patterns, what holds this painting together?
- List the colors you see in this painting. Do these colors make you feel calm and thoughtful or excited and happy?
- Why do you think the artist called this painting "The Purple Robe"?
- Do think the artist enjoyed painting this?

Activity: Matisse Cats

Materials Needed: 9"x12" colored construction paper; white drawing paper; colored markers, black markers; gluestick; scissors.

Process:

1. Have each child choose a piece of the colored construction paper. Label back of paper with student name.
2. Using the colored markers, have the students draw one large, repeating pattern on the entire piece of colored paper. When finished, set this piece aside.
3. Give each child a piece of the white drawing paper and a black marker.
4. On the board, demonstrate a step-by-step on how to draw a simple cat form....small circle for the head, larger oval for the body, two triangles for each ear, small shapes for feet, a tail.



5. Once they draw the cat, have students draw several lines to break the cat up into several sections....like a puzzle...with the black marker. These lines can be straight or wavy.
6. In each section of the cat, have students draw patterns to make it pop out from their background piece.
7. When patterning is complete, cut out the cat and glue it on the colored construction paper.

