

# The Blanton

## Museum of Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Kathleen Brady (512) 475-6784, [kathleen.brady@blantonmuseum.org](mailto:kathleen.brady@blantonmuseum.org)  
Brady Dyer (512) 232-5171, [brady.dyer@blantonmuseum.org](mailto:brady.dyer@blantonmuseum.org)

*MATISSE AS PRINTMAKER*  
*WORKS FROM THE PIERRE AND TANA MATISSE FOUNDATION*  
May 23- August 23, 2010



Austin, Texas (March 20, 2010)—The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin and The American Federation of Arts (AFA) are pleased to present *Matisse as Printmaker: Works from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation*, on view May 23 – August 23, 2010. Comprised of 63 prints by Henri Matisse (1869-1954) ranging in date from 1900 to 1951, the exhibition is the first to be drawn entirely from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation, and includes works bequeathed by the artist to his younger son Pierre, an eminent dealer of modern art.

Organized by Jay McKean Fisher (Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs, Baltimore Museum of Art), the works on view represent the extraordinary range of processes Matisse used to create his prints: etching, aquatint, monotype, lithography, woodcut and linoleum cut. With its rich variety of techniques and subject matter, *Matisse as Printmaker* sheds new light on an under-studied aspect of Matisse's oeuvre and underscores the importance of printmaking as a means for the artist to produce repeated imagery.

Recognized foremost as a painter and sculptor, Henri Matisse was also deeply engaged in exploring other mediums and the unique possibilities they offered for creative expression. Matisse saw printmaking as an extension of drawing, which was integral to the whole of his art. As Jay Fisher writes in the exhibition's catalogue, "Printmaking was Matisse's primary means of demonstrating to his audience his working process, the character of his vision, and the way his drawing transformed what he observed." Matisse's involvement with printmaking was both intense and innovative as he moved from one technique to the next, adopting new approaches to reflect the evolution of his artistic ideas. Almost all of his prints involve repeated imagery, such as the development of a reclining or seated pose, the integration of models within interiors, the study of facial expressions and features, and the transformation of a subject from a straight representation to something more abstract or developed. For Matisse, printmaking captured the steps in a process of seeing that was unique to his artistic vision.

Printmaking for Matisse was also a practical means of disseminating his art among the many avid collectors of his work. Despite their relatively wide distribution, his prints are remarkable for the aura of intimacy and immediacy they communicate. Matisse was mostly faithful to the

tradition of black-and-white prints, but he made two prints in color — both of which are included in the exhibition—as well as book illustrations in his last years. Moving from one medium to another—as single images or in books—Matisse made prints fairly consistently from 1900 until his death in 1954. During the course of his career, he produced more than 800 images apart from those in his illustrated books, often in editions of 25 or 50. This great profusion of graphic work expanded the reach of his art and has helped to augment his position as one of the preeminent artists of the twentieth century.

While Matisse was clearly deeply engaged in the practice of printmaking, most of the exhibitions and research on the artist's work to date have focused on his paintings and sculpture. With its diverse selection of works from different periods in Matisse's career, *Matisse as Printmaker: Works from the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation* provides a comprehensive examination of the artist's relationship with printmaking and the role it played in the evolution of his visual ideas. The exhibition advances the scholarship and public awareness of this underappreciated part of Matisse's oeuvre, offering a persuasive argument that Matisse prints merit consideration not merely in relation to the artist's paintings but in their own right.

As part of the exhibition's many public programs, two special lectures have been developed:

Saturday, May 22 at 2 PM

**Jay McKean Fisher**, curator of *Matisse as Printmaker* and deputy director for curatorial affairs at The Baltimore Museum of Art, discusses the importance of printmaking to Matisse's artistic development, in the context of his other work.

Saturday, June 12 at 2 PM

**John Elderfield**, Chief Curator Emeritus of Painting and Sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art and Matisse expert, presents "Why Matisse Matters."

*Matisse as Printmaker* is organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.

Major support for the exhibition at The Blanton is provided through a generous challenge grant from Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long and by RBC Wealth Management.

Support also is provided by Mr. and Mrs. Jack S. Blanton, Sr., the Booth Heritage Foundation, the Elva J. Johnston Foundation, Eliza and Stuart Stedman, Carolyn and John H. Young, and the many other donors who contributed to meet the Long Challenge.

#### **Guest Curator**

Jay McKean Fisher is the Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs and Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photography at the Baltimore Museum of Art. Among his recent exhibitions are *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* (2007-08) and *Matisse: Jazz* (2006). He is the author of numerous publications, including *Matisse: Painter as Sculptor* (2007) and *The Essence of Line: French Drawings from Ingres to Degas* (2005), as well as earlier catalogues on the prints of Theodore Chasseriau, Edouard Manet, and Felix Buhot.

#### **Publication**

A single flexi-bind edition of the exhibition catalogue, published by the AFA, is available in The Blanton Museum Shop. This fully illustrated catalogue contains an essay by Guest Curator Jay McKean Fisher titled "Henri Matisse—But Why Printmaking?" which examines the role of printmaking within Matisse's body of work. Also included is a reprint of seminal essay from

*Matisse: 50 years of His Graphic Art* (1956) by the late William S. Lieberman, former chairman of modern art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

### **THE BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART**

Encompassing over 17,000 works of art, The Blanton's permanent collection spans the history of Western civilization, from antiquity to the present, with strong holdings of European art from the 14th through the 18th centuries, 19th- and 20th-century American art, modern and contemporary Latin American art, and the finest collection of prints and drawings in the South and Southwest.

With the 2006 opening of the Blanton's 180,000-square-foot facility, the museum's mission expanded from primarily serving the university community to also serving the entire Austin and Central Texas region as its major art museum. All of the Blanton's exhibitions and programs are now developed with the overarching goal of connecting to both university and community audiences through a common ground of intellectual and emotional curiosity about art.

Located at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Congress Avenue, the museum is across the street from the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum and is adjacent to downtown Austin. The museum is open Tuesday – Friday from 10-5, Saturday 11-5, and Sunday from 1-5. Thursday is free admission day and the museum is open until 9 PM on the Third Thursday of each month. Admission is free to members, all current UT ID-holders and children under 12, \$9 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for college students with ID, and \$5 for youth (13-25). For information call (512) 471-7324 or visit [www.blantonmuseum.org](http://www.blantonmuseum.org).

### **American Federation of Arts**

Celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009, the AFA is a nonprofit institution that organizes art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishes exhibition catalogues, and develops educational materials and programs for children and adults. The AFA's mission is to enrich the public's experience of art and understanding of culture by organizing and touring a diverse offering of exhibitions embracing all aspects of art history. Over the years, millions of visitors in more than 100 museums worldwide have experienced more than 1,000 AFA exhibitions. For more information about the federation's exhibitions, publications, artist talks (ArtTalks), membership, cultural travel program (ArtScapes), and online resources, including family guides and podcasts, see [www.afaweb.org](http://www.afaweb.org).

Image caption:

*Seated Nude, Viewed from Behind*, 1913

Crayon transfer lithograph

Image: 16 5/8 x 9 1/2 in.

Sheet: 19 3/5 x 13 in.

Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation (1491 - 101011)

© 2009 Succession H. Matisse/Artists

Rights Society (ARS), New York

Courtesy American Federation of Arts

###

