

**THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ACQUIRES MAJOR LATE PAINTING
BY HENRI MATISSE**

***Plum Blossoms, Ochre Background* to Go on View This Month at MoMA**

New York, September 8, 2005 – The Museum of Modern Art has acquired *Plum Blossoms, Ochre Background* (*La Branche de Prunier, fond ocre*, 1948), a major painting by Henri Matisse (French, 1869-1954), Museum Director Glenn D. Lowry announced today. The work is a promised and fractional gift from Marie-Josée and Henry R. Kravis; Mrs. Kravis is a longtime Museum Trustee who was appointed President of the Museum's Board in June.

Mr. Lowry said, "The Museum is deeply grateful for the generosity of Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis in donating this extraordinary work to the Museum, thereby making it available to a wide public for the first time in more than 30 years. It will be a magnificent addition to the Museum's significant collection of works by the artist."

Plum Blossoms, Ochre Background will go on view in MoMA's fifth-floor galleries this month. It was last publicly exhibited in the 1970 Matisse retrospective at the Grand Palais, Paris. Among the last of Matisse's major accomplishments as a painter, the work was created as one in a series of seven large paintings made in 1947 and 1948 depicting the interior of the artist's working space, in Vence, in southern France. After completing the Vence interiors, Matisse made only two unfinished paintings; making paper cut-outs was his main artistic activity in his last years. The remaining six works in the Vence interiors series are held by public collections or foundations.

John Elderfield, the Museum's Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, noted, "*Plum Blossoms, Ochre Background* is a landmark acquisition for MoMA. Because of the strength of MoMA's holdings of work by Matisse, any new acquisitions must be of the highest caliber. The Vence interiors are justly celebrated as the crowning achievement of Matisse's superb contribution as a painter."

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