

Studio under the Eaves

Bohain-en-Vermandois, 1903

Oil on canvas

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK

Studio under the Eaves was made during one of the most trying periods of Matisse's early career, when personal and financial troubles caused the artist to return with his young family to his hometown in northeastern France. This painting shows the small attic space that Matisse rented to use as a studio. The somber interior features a dynamic ensemble of rectangles: the table with a vase of flowers, the canvas on its stretcher, the wooden crate beneath the palette, and the window framed by open shutters. All send the eye to the vibrant landscape outside. This view leads beyond the grim attic in terms of time as well as space: within a couple of years, that joyous color would entirely transform Matisse's painting.

Corsica, the Old Mill Ajaccio, 1898

Oil on canvas

Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation
Corboud, Cologne

Henri and Amélie Matisse spent the first six months of their married life in Ajaccio, Corsica, where Matisse encountered the Mediterranean sun and sea for the first time. In a letter to a friend, he described the ocean as “blue, blue, so blue you could eat it.” The experience transformed his painting and palette, with realistic description giving way to compositions built primarily on color. The parklike property of this former olive farm was one of Matisse’s favorite sites in Ajaccio; here, his representation of light dissolves details such as the trunks of the olive trees and the door at the top of the stairway.

Nude with White Scarf Paris, 1909

Oil on canvas

SMK – National Gallery of Denmark,
Copenhagen. Johannes Rump Collection,
1928

Matisse painted *Nude with White Scarf* in spring 1909 at his studio in the Couvent du Sacré-Cœur. The work was based on life studies of the professional model Loulou Brouty, who posed for several of Matisse’s 1909 paintings. Here she is joined by an animated length of white fabric draped alongside and across her head and body. Matisse extensively modified the figure, shifting its position multiple times while making this painting. Traces of the former stages remain visible on the finished canvas, especially evident as dark areas around the model’s legs and left arm.

Young Sailor (II) Collioure, 1906
Oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection,
1998

One of few portraits of a male figure in Matisse's work, this painting depicts a teenage fisherman in Collioure, a coastal town where Matisse spent many long stays between 1905 and 1914. It was there that he and his friends first introduced the bright palette and free brushwork that led them to be denounced as *fauves* (wild beasts) in 1905. This portrait's simplified areas of flat color and the masklike face of the figure present a bold stylization that Matisse knew would take his admirers by surprise: his friend and collector Leo Stein recalled that Matisse initially told him the local postman in Collioure had painted it.

Female Nude Asnières, 1907
Tin-glazed earthenware

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Purchase, 2001

This painted ceramic plate was made during a fruitful period of collaboration between Matisse and the ceramist André Metthey (1871–1920). Metthey, who worked in Asnières, a town just northwest of Paris, dedicated himself to reviving the lost art of hand-painted ceramics. He invited many artists to decorate his earthenware, which was made from local clays and glazed to provide a stable surface for painting. Matisse produced some forty ceramic pieces with Metthey in 1907–08. He chose to keep most of these for himself, and they were long known chiefly through their frequent depiction in his paintings.

Upright Nude with Arched Back Collioure,
1906–07

Terracotta

Private collection

Upright Nude with Arched Back is one of several small statuettes of female nudes that Matisse made during his Fauve period. The original source for the sculpture was a photograph of an unnamed model, published in one of several contemporary magazines that provided such photos for artists' use. The mannered pose is typical of the images in these publications, which were more explicitly erotic than the poses of live models in a classroom or studio setting.

This terracotta sculpture, which is missing its head and forearms, was recently rediscovered among the belongings of Matisse's son Jean.

Bathers Collioure, 1907

Oil on canvas

SMK – National Gallery of Denmark,
Copenhagen. Gift of the Augustinus
Foundation and the New Carlsberg
Foundation, 2018

Matisse's painting *Bathers* directly relates to Paul Cézanne's exploration of this subject, pursued throughout his career in scores of paintings and works on paper. Cézanne was the French artist who mattered most to Matisse. In 1899, with barely enough money for food or rent, he purchased Cézanne's painting *Three Bathers* (1879–82), and in 1908 he purchased six Cézanne watercolors. In this 1907 painting, Matisse adopts Cézanne's strategy of leaving certain areas of the canvas unpainted, producing a strong sense of unfinishedness.

Le Luxe (II) Collioure, 1907–08

Distemper on canvas

SMK – National Gallery of Denmark,
Copenhagen. Johannes Rump Collection,
1928

The subject of *Le Luxe (II)* falls within a centuries-long tradition in European painting of depicting groups of figures relaxing in a natural setting. Matisse altered the original colors of *Le Luxe (II)* in its portrayal in *The Red Studio*: he initially painted the three women closer in tone to those seen in this painting. But when he added the layer of Venetian red paint to the floor and walls, he also repainted these figures, who thus could be read as dark-skinned. During the early twentieth century, many avant-garde artists portrayed racial difference in a purposeful challenge to European ideals of beauty.

Matisse:
The Red Studio

Cyclamen Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1911

Oil on canvas

Private collection. Courtesy Andrew Strauss,
Paris

Matisse's move to Issy-les-Moulineaux in 1909 provided many opportunities for creating floral still-life paintings. Geraniums, nasturtiums, tulips, violets, lilacs, cyclamens, and much more could be found in the abundant gardens surrounding the house and studio and in the greenhouse on the property. This painting appears to have been executed very quickly: color was applied thinly and with rapid strokes, and areas of canvas around the cyclamen's leaves and the corner foliage were left unpainted. The small round table is known from other paintings to have been located in the greenhouse, and it may well be that Matisse made this painting there.

Decorative Figure Paris, 1908
Bronze (cast 1/10, 1908)

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Gift of Sam
and Ayala Zacks, 1970

Decorative Figure was created in the Couvent du Sacré-Cœur in Paris, a government-owned former convent where, from early 1908 to mid-1909, Matisse lived, worked, and led an art academy. During this period, Matisse worked prolifically in sculpture, always with the female nude as the subject. Here the body is tautly composed as a form both sinuous and upright, curving and geometric. It is defined not just by its masses but by the negative spaces between them. A shift in viewing angle to the side or the back reveals entirely new configurations.

Jeannette (IV) Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1911
Bronze (cast 1/10, 1912)

Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel.
Sammlung Beyeler

Matisse began his series of five *Jeannette* sculptures in early 1910. He made *Jeannette (I)* in clay as he worked directly from the model, an Issy-les-Moulineaux acquaintance named Jeanne Vaderin. The succeeding iterations of the portrait gradually left naturalistic resemblance behind and instead developed according to their own formal logic. By the time Matisse made *Jeannette (IV)*, the highly stylized forms of her hairdo and facial features had taken on a life of their own.

Jeannette (IV) made its public debut as the bronze displayed here. The plaster version represented in *The Red Studio* was never exhibited and was eventually destroyed.

Large Nude is now known only through photographs and its depiction in *The Red Studio*. It was painted in Collioure in late summer 1911. Matisse portrayed a reclining nude woman against a background of the five-petaled flower designs seen on the ceramic pieces he decorated in 1907. Painted in distemper, *Large Nude* measured roughly six by eight feet and occupied a handmade red frame decorated with stylized flowers echoing those on the canvas. Although *Large Nude* is a horizontal painting, perspectival foreshortening in *The Red Studio* converts it into a vertical one. The figure's position is therefore transformed as well: she seems no longer to be reclining but is instead poised on a diagonal.

Large Nude was never exhibited or sold, and according to Matisse's daughter, Marguerite Duthuit, he considered the painting unfinished and asked that it be destroyed after his death.

These are the five known drawings that relate to *Large Nude*. Two depict Matisse's daughter, Marguerite, who posed for the painting, in relatively naturalistic terms and with both knees raised. The other three set a schematized figure in a closely framed space, with left leg tucked under right. Matisse variously referred to *Large Nude* as "Night" or "Dawn," which echo the names of Michelangelo's sculptures of reclining female nudes on two tombs in the Medici Chapels in Florence.

**Letter from Lucien Assire, Compagnie des
Constructions Démontables et Hygiéniques,
to Henri Matisse** June 2, 1909

2 sheets (sketches on verso of page 2)

**Letter from Lucien Assire, Compagnie des
Constructions Démontables et Hygiéniques,
to Henri Matisse** June 16, 1909

3 sheets (inscriptions on verso of pages 2
and 3)

**Letter from Lucien Assire, Compagnie des
Constructions Démontables et Hygiéniques,
to Henri Matisse** September 27, 1909

1 sheet

Private collection. Courtesy Archives
Henri Matisse

The design of the Issy studio was jointly developed by the artist and the Compagnie des Constructions Démontables et Hygiéniques. The letters seen here document decisions reached at meetings between contractor and client. The first letter proposes a prefabricated studio featuring an iron frame, a corrugated sheet metal roof, and a wood-paneled interior. The next confirms the commission and establishes a payment schedule. On the reverse side of a studio plan, Matisse listed several amendments, such as adding a narrow utility door on the back wall and transposing the locations of the main door and the window. Following the delivery and assembly of the structure in late September 1909, a third letter details two additional requests from Matisse: an extension at the front to serve as an entryway and a covered storage area behind the building.

Matisse:
The Red Studio

Henri Manuel

French, 1874–1947

Henri Matisse in his studio in Issy-les-Moulineaux 1909

Gelatin silver print

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. Photographic Archive, Artists and Personalities

Very few photographs of Matisse's Issy studio exist today. During a portrait session in autumn 1909—almost immediately after Matisse had settled into his new workspace—the Parisian photographer Henri Manuel captured the artist sitting in front of *Still Life with "Dance"* and *Dance (I)* (both 1909); Matisse had brought the latter with him from Paris. Here Manuel presents a dashing artist posed at his easel, palette and brush in hand, embarking on a new phase of his career.

WALLPAPER:

Matisse property as shown on a map of Issy-les-Moulineaux 1934

Courtesy Archives Henri Matisse

ON THE WALL, LEFT TO RIGHT:

**Advertisement for Compagnie des
Constructions Démontables et Hygiéniques,
L'Ingénieur constructeur, no. 100 (1915)**

Matisse family home in Issy-les-Moulineaux
n.d.

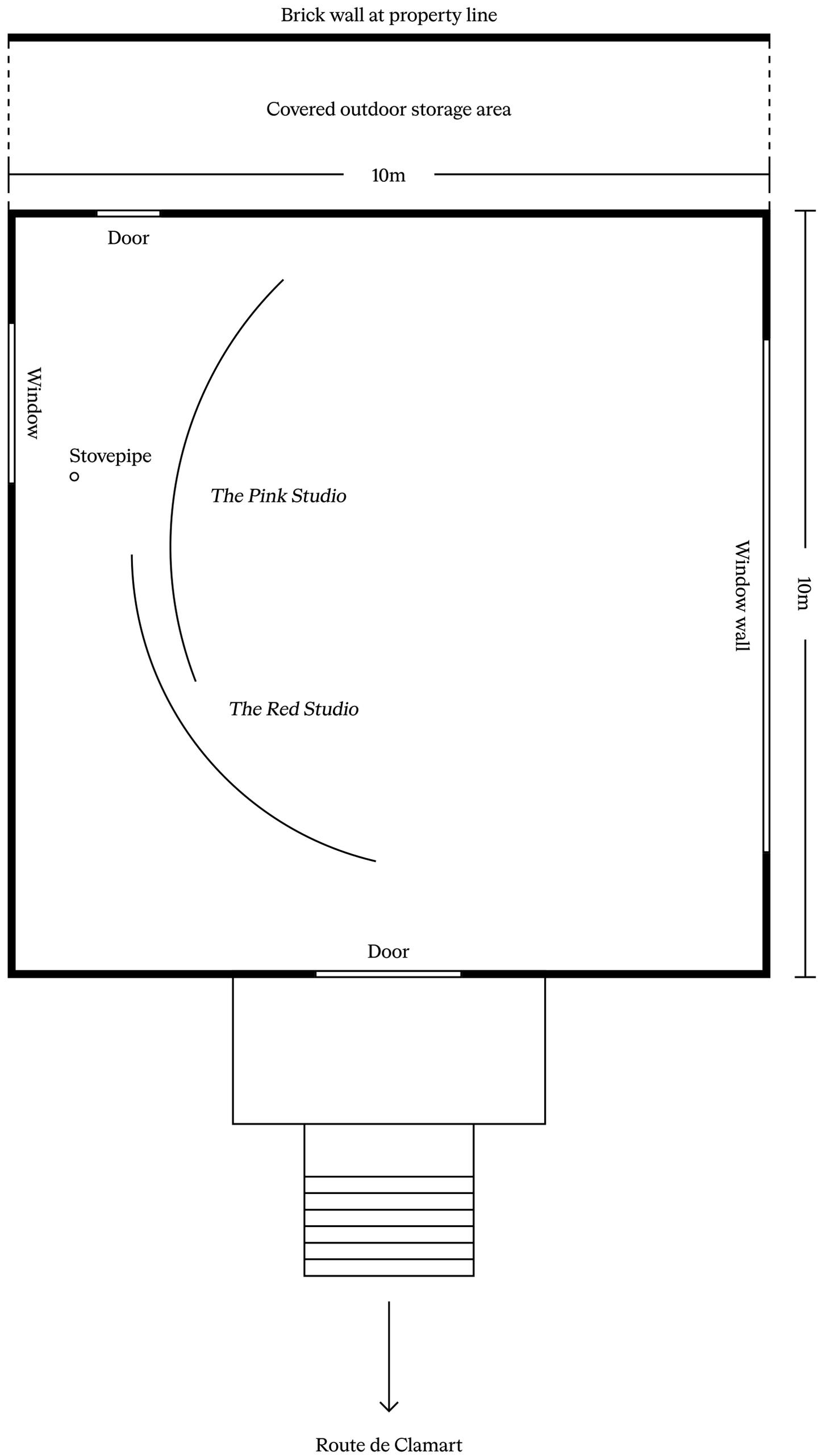
Courtesy Archives Henri Matisse



The Pink Studio, 1911



The Red Studio, 1911



Matisse:
The Red Studio

This diagram of the studio represents the final outcome of Matisse's architectural decisions. The building was simple, utilitarian, and spacious at just over one thousand square feet. The new studio provided the setting for many of Matisse's paintings in the years following its completion in October 1909. When, in January 1911, Sergei Shchukin asked Matisse to create a trio of paintings for a room in his Moscow mansion, on any subject the artist wished, Matisse chose the studio itself. He responded first with *The Pink Studio* (currently owned by the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow) and later *The Red Studio*, both of which represent different but overlapping areas of the studio. By comparing the two compositions alongside the studio plan, it is possible to ascertain the areas covered by each. Whereas *The Pink Studio* is relatively naturalistic and *The Red Studio* appears more as an imagined space, both faithfully hew to the environment they depict.

Portrait of Sergei I. Shchukin

Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1912

Charcoal on paper

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The Pierre and Maria-Gaetana Matisse

Collection, 2002

Matisse created this drawing during a visit Shchukin made to Issy in summer 1912. The collector may well have seen *The Red Studio* on this visit, but he was ready to move on: he focused his purchases on several paintings made during Matisse's recent stay in Tangier. While this drawing is a study for an unrealized painting, it has a pronounced sculptural quality, visible in Matisse's treatment of Shchukin's prominent cheekbones and furrowed brow.

Photograph of the Pink Salon, Trubetskoy Palace, Moscow, with undated ink annotations by Henri Matisse c. 1912

Private collection. Courtesy Archives

Henri Matisse

During Matisse's visit to Moscow in November 1911, he supervised the reinstallation of his paintings in Shchukin's mansion. This photograph shows the results of their efforts, which brought together the majority of Matisse's paintings in an ornately decorated room known as the Pink Salon. Matisse continued to advise Shchukin on the placement of new purchases during the next few years. The artist's annotations on this photograph indicate the suggested positions for four paintings that would arrive in mid-1913.

Still Life with Geraniums

Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1910

Oil on canvas

Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich

This painting was made a few months after Matisse moved into the Issy studio and is his only still-life composition that portrays the wood-paneled walls naturalistically, albeit in blue. A distinctive wooden table occupies the center of the composition (this same table can be seen at the far right in *The Red Studio*). A pot of geraniums and a cloisonné Japanese jar grace the table, across which a floral fabric is draped. The true star of the painting, the flowing textile pulls the real flowers of the geranium and the painted flowers of the ceramic into its own decorative hum.

Hugo von Tschudi, a progressive German museum director, commissioned this painting for his private collection. When it was presented to the Neue Staatsgalerie in Munich after his death in 1911, it became the first artwork by Matisse to enter a public museum collection.

The Blue Window Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1913
Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Fund, 1939

This is the sole painting in which Matisse depicted the exterior of his Issy studio. *The Blue Window* was made in Henri and Amélie Matisse's second-floor bedroom in their house on the adjoining lot. The view through the window shows the studio nestled in the surrounding trees (painted blue, like the dressing table, wall, and sky). The studio's distinctive pitched roof and chimney are also reimagined as blue, while the yellow of the building's exterior links it to the objects on the table. In one flat plane, Matisse connects inside and outside, home and work, life and art.

This painting was bought by one of Matisse's German supporters, Karl Ernst Osthaus, for his Museum Folkwang. Removed as "degenerate art" by the Nazis in 1937, *The Blue Window* was acquired by The Museum of Modern Art in 1939.

Photograph of the interior of Matisse's studio in Issy-les-Moulineaux

October/November 1911

Private collection. Courtesy Archives
Henri Matisse

This is the only photograph of Matisse's studio dating from the time that he painted *The Red Studio*. The setting could well be that of a study or sitting room, with artworks and furniture including a book-filled console topped by four of Matisse's ceramics and a sculpture. The painting *Large Nude* (1911) is to the right of the curtained double-door entrance. (*Large Nude* and a portion of one of the curtains are visible at the left in *The Red Studio*.) Matisse's *Interior with Aubergines* (1911) hangs on the other side of the entrance. The blurred figure seated in the chair at left may be Amélie Matisse, the artist's wife.

Photograph of Henri Matisse and his family with *Large Nude* in Matisse's studio in Issy-les-Moulineaux c. 1915

Private collection. Courtesy Archives
Henri Matisse

This family photograph was taken in the Issy studio around 1915. Seated next to Matisse are his wife, Amélie, and their three children: Pierre, Marguerite, and Jean. *Large Nude* occupies the same wall it did in 1911; it had remained a fixture in the studio since then. A canvas on an easel is visible against the wall at right, the wall that is centrally featured in *The Red Studio*.

Roger Fry

British, 1866–1934

A Room in the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition London, 1912

Oil on wood

Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Fittingly, Fry memorialized the public debut of *The Red Studio* in a painting that represents a group of Matisse's artworks arranged in situ. This painting is the only surviving visual documentation of "Panneau rouge" on display at the Grafton Galleries in London in 1912. The gentleman on the leather sofa is probably the artist Duncan Grant, an admirer of Matisse who had been welcomed as a visitor to the studio in Issy. Grant was one of several members of the Bloomsbury Group (a close-knit circle of British artists and writers) who worked with Fry to organize the show.

**Receipt from the Grafton Galleries for
paintings by Henri Matisse 1912**

Private collection. Courtesy Archives
Henri Matisse

This receipt confirms Matisse's titling of *The Red Studio* as "Panneau rouge" for the *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition*. It is second on the list of twelve paintings he lent to the show. Also included on the list are the four paintings seen hanging on the wall in *The Red Studio*: *Nude with White Scarf* (1909), *Young Sailor (II)* (1906), *Cyclamen* (1911), and *Le Luxe (II)* (1907-08), as well as the two 1912 paintings in this gallery, *Goldfish and Sculpture* and *Nasturtiums with the Painting "Dance" (I)*.

Goldfish and Sculpture

Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1912

Oil on canvas

The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney, 1955

This painting, made a few months after *The Red Studio*, shows the back wall of the Issy studio, where there was a narrow door leading to a covered storage area. The door, rendered in ochre, is pulled open to reveal the outdoor scene beyond. A goldfish bowl, a vase of flowers atop a dish, and the terracotta sculpture *Reclining Nude* (1907) rest on a table (the same one seen in *The Red Studio* and in *Still Life with Geraniums* [1910]). The painting echoes *The Red Studio* with its enveloping hue—blue rather than red, thinly applied in brushy passages rather than as an opaque field.

Goldfish and Sculpture made its debut with *The Red Studio* at the *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* in London and also traveled with it to the Armory Show in New York.

Nasturtiums with the Painting “Dance” (I)

Issy-les-Moulineaux, 1912

Oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Bequest of Scofield Thayer, 1982

Matisse stored *Dance (I)* (1909) on the back wall of the Issy studio, having brought it with him from his previous studio in Paris. In this painting he has staged a complex conversation between the representation of a work of art and the setting it inhabits. The rear leg of the wooden pedestal stands on the green ground of *Dance (I)* rather than on the studio floor. Thus the nasturtiums in their vase seem to occupy an ambiguous space shared between *Dance (I)* and this painting.

Nasturtiums with the Painting “Dance” (I) made its debut with *The Red Studio* at the *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* in London and also traveled with it to the Armory Show in New York.

WALLPAPER:

View of *International Exhibition of Modern Art (The Armory Show)*, Art Institute of Chicago, March 24–April 16, 1913

The Art Institute of Chicago / Art Resource, NY

ON THE WALL, LEFT TO RIGHT:

A Talk with Matisse, Leader of Post-Impressionists, by Clara T. MacChesney
The New York Times, March 9, 1913

Letter from Henri Matisse in Tangier, Morocco, to Walter Pach in New York,
December 6, 1912

Facsimile. Original in the Walter Pach papers, 1857–1980. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Walter Pach was an American artist who served as the Armory Show's European representative. In this response to a request from Pach, Matisse agreed to send to the Armory Show seven paintings he had lent to the Grafton Galleries.

Armory Show entry form for Matisse's "Panneau rouge" c. 1913

Facsimile. Original in the Walt Kuhn Family papers and Armory Show records, 1859–1984. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

Studio, Quai Saint-Michel Paris, 1916–17
Oil on canvas

The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, 1940

In many ways, this composition is the antithesis of *The Red Studio*. Matisse describes the room in clear material details and renders the works of art as virtually blank. In addition to showing a model and a work in progress, it presents a view that vividly brings together indoors and outdoors. Encompassing the full height of the room from the zigzagging floorboards to the scalloped ceiling, *Studio, Quai Saint-Michel* conveys the closeness of Matisse's small quarters during the war years, when he spent winters at his Paris apartment.

**Letter from James Thrall Soby to the
Committee on the Museum Collections**
December 11, 1948

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Museum Collection Files, Department of
Painting and Sculpture

In this 1948 letter to the Committee on the Museum Collections, MoMA trustee James Thrall Soby made an art-historical argument for the Museum to acquire *The Red Studio* (known at the time as "Studio"). He then set reason aside: "Every time I look at it," he wrote, "I get such sheer pleasure out of it that any other reaction comes as an afterthought." Soby concluded his endorsement with a simple directive: "Let's for heaven's sake buy it."

Cover design for *Matisse: His Art and His Public* Nice, 1951

Cut-and-pasted painted paper with ink on paper

Cover design for *Henri Matisse* Nice, 1951
Gouache on paper, cut and pasted

The Museum of Modern Art, New York.
Transferred from the Museum of Modern Art
Publications Department, 1953

In 1951 MoMA published Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s nearly six-hundred-page monograph on Matisse, a book that had been many years in the making. At the same time, the Museum opened a survey exhibition of Matisse's work. The artist made paper cut-outs as designs for the book jackets of both the large monograph and the slim exhibition catalogue. Even at this small scale, their vibrant color and exuberant style vividly exemplify the last chapter of Matisse's career.

Large Red Interior Vence, 1948

Oil on canvas

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre
Pompidou, Paris. State purchase, 1950

Large Red Interior depicts a corner of Matisse's house in Vence, France, where he lived and worked from 1943 to 1949. On the walls are two recently completed works: a large brush-and-ink drawing and the painting *The Pineapple* (1948). *Large Red Interior* shares with *The Red Studio* the art-within-art device that had remained a constant for Matisse throughout the decades. Only now, however, does the radical flatness of the 1911 painting return, in what MoMA director Alfred H. Barr Jr. described as "excitement kept close to the plane of the canvas."