

The Museum of Modern Art

MoMA ANNOUNCES AN INSTALLATION OF HENRI MATISSE'S CUT-OUTS, MARKING THE LAST CHANCE TO SEE *THE SWIMMING POOL* BEFORE IT COMES OFF VIEW IN EARLY 2025

The Artist's *Nuit de Noël*/Stained-Glass Window Returns to View for First Time in a Decade

NEW YORK, October 3, 2024—Coinciding with the holiday season, The Museum of Modern Art will present *Matisse's Cut-Outs: A Celebration*, a special installation of Henri Matisse's cut-outs, on view from November 9, 2024, through January 20, 2025, in the fourth-floor collection galleries. The installation will feature 10 key works, including Matisse's *Nuit de Noël (Christmas Eve)* cut-out maquette and stained-glass window, the latter on view for the first time since 2015. This presentation celebrates *The Swimming Pool* (1952), marking the last chance to see this immersive work before it comes off view in early 2025. *Matisse's Cut-Outs: A Celebration* is organized by Samantha Friedman, Curator, with Rachel Rosin, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints.

In the late 1940s, Henri Matisse (1869–1954) turned to cut paper as his primary medium, and scissors as his chief implement, introducing a radically new operation that came to be called a cut-out. His studio assistants painted paper with vibrant gouache; he cut the sheets into forms of varying shapes and sizes; and, using pins, he arranged them into lively compositions that were later mounted. This suite of galleries features works Matisse realized using this method, which he alternately described as “cutting directly into vivid color” or “drawing with scissors.”

As his practice developed, the cut-outs—which began as an expedient method for designing works in other mediums, and soon became the artist's medium of choice—progressed from intimate to expansive, and ranged from the decorative to the abstract. *Matisse's Cut-Outs: A Celebration* will feature most of the major cut-outs in MoMA's collection, alongside two key loans from private collections, including *Acrobats* (1952), an iconic blue-and-white cut-out closely related to *The Swimming Pool*. The presentation will also include samples of paper painted with gouache paints that were recovered from the artist's studio, illustrating the wide range of colors he used for his cut-outs.

Acquired by MoMA in 1975, [*The Swimming Pool*](#) is Matisse's only cut-out composed for a specific room—the artist's dining room in his apartment in Nice, France—fulfilling Matisse's grand ambition to work at the scale of a mural. In a reduced palette of blue and white, it depicts swimmers splashing in water and leaping through air. *The Swimming Pool* was off view for more than 20 years, from 1993 through 2014, at which point it underwent an extensive five-year conservation effort that restored its original color balance, height, and architecture. Subsequently, this monumental cut-out returned to view in MoMA's major

exhibition *Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs* from October 12, 2014, through February 10, 2015, and it has been on continuous view in Gallery 406B since the Museum reopened in 2019. After five years in the galleries, this light-sensitive work on paper will be deinstalled and stored away from exposure for a number of years in order to maintain its vibrance and stability for generations to come—a departure that has sparked this celebratory installation.

In Gallery 406A, adjacent to *The Swimming Pool*, the installation will return Matisse's Christmas Eve-themed stained-glass window—crafted by the glassmaker Paul Bony—to public view for the first time in 10 years, reuniting it with Matisse's cut-paper maquette (both realized in 1952). Commissioned by *Life* magazine in 1952, the window was originally displayed in New York's Time and Life building, before it was donated to MoMA in 1953. Reflecting on the relationship between the paper and glass versions of this work, Matisse noted that “a maquette for a stained-glass window and the window itself are like a musical score and its performance by an orchestra.”

The installation, which is arranged chronologically, will begin with selections from *Jazz* (1947)—one of the 20th century's greatest illustrated books, which Matisse used cut-outs to compose—and conclude with *Memory of Oceania* (summer 1952–early 1953), which demonstrates the increasingly abstract and expansive compositions Matisse achieved at the end of his career.

MoMA DESIGN STORE:

In conjunction with *Matisse's Cut-Outs: A Celebration*, MoMA Design Store will offer several exclusive products inspired by the cut-outs, including special-edition Matisse for MoMA Subu Slippers (\$85 each) in three styles, all based on works in the Museum's collection, including *Maquette for Nuit de Noël*. Another MoMA exclusive, a set of eight *Nuit de Noël* holiday cards (\$21.95), features a reproduction of the stained-glass window that will be on view and will be available in early November. These products will be available at MoMA Design Stores in New York and online at store.moma.org.

Framed prints of two beloved late works by Matisse, *Blue Nude II* (24.5 × 21", \$200) and *The Codomas* from *Jazz* (17.5 × 24.5", \$200), will also be available online only at store.moma.org in early November.

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