

The Twentieth Century Modern Art

In the twentieth century, art was aggressively **convulsive**, with movements replacing each other as fast as styles changed in the fashion world.

Twentieth century art provided the sharpest **break with the past** in the whole evolution of Western art. It took to an extreme what Courbet and Manet began in the nineteenth century- portraying **contemporary life** rather than historical events.

At the core of this philosophy of rejecting the past, called “**Modernism**”, was a relentless quest for ***radical freedom of expression***.

Fauvism

Exploding Colour

*“Fauvism isn’t everything,” Matisse remarked,
“only the beginning of everything.”*

LOCALE: France

PERIOD: 1904-8

NOTABLES: Matisse, Derain,
Vlaminck

CHARACTERISTICS:

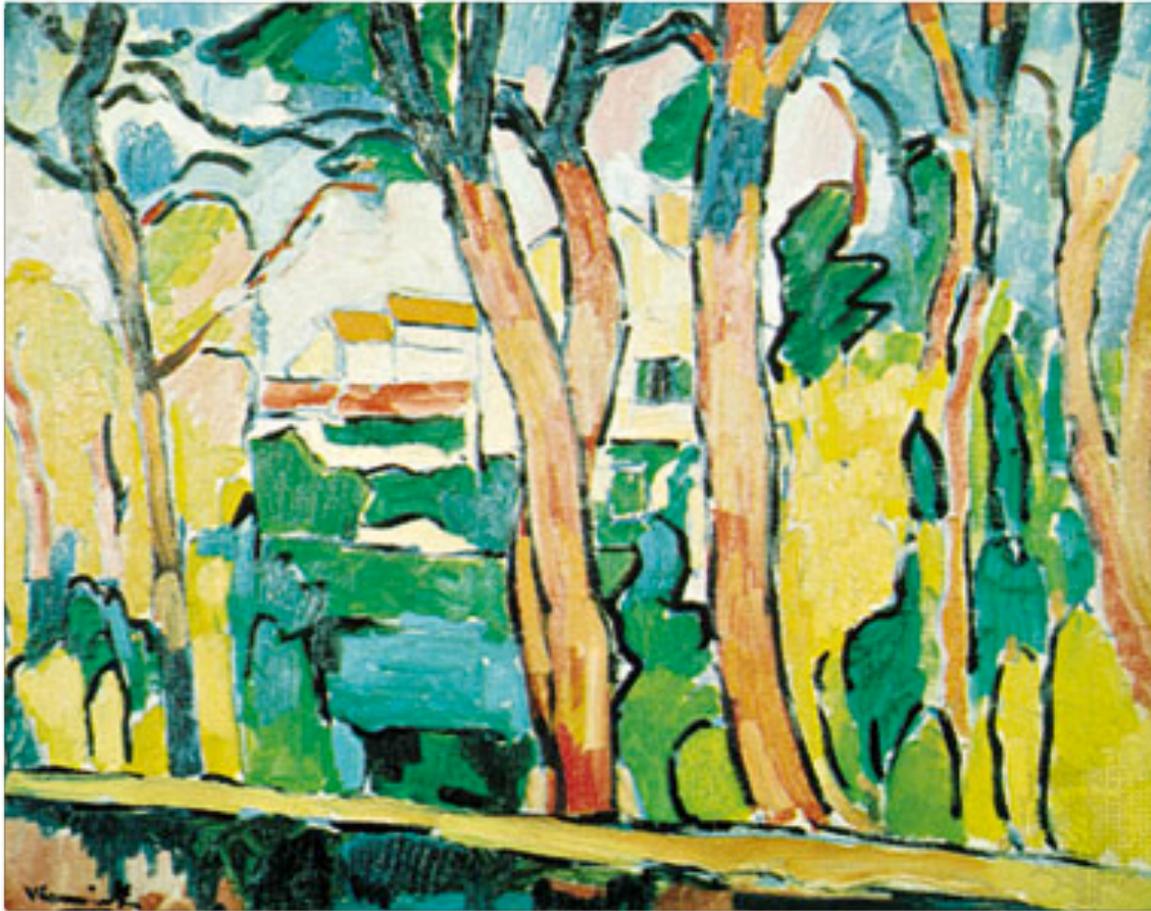
- Intense, bright, clashing colours
- Distorted forms and perspective
- Vigorous brush strokes
- Flat, linear patterns
- Bare canvas as part of the overall design

TRANSLATION: “Wild Beast”



Henri Matisse. *The Dance*, 1909-10, oil on canvas.

Maurice de Vlaminck

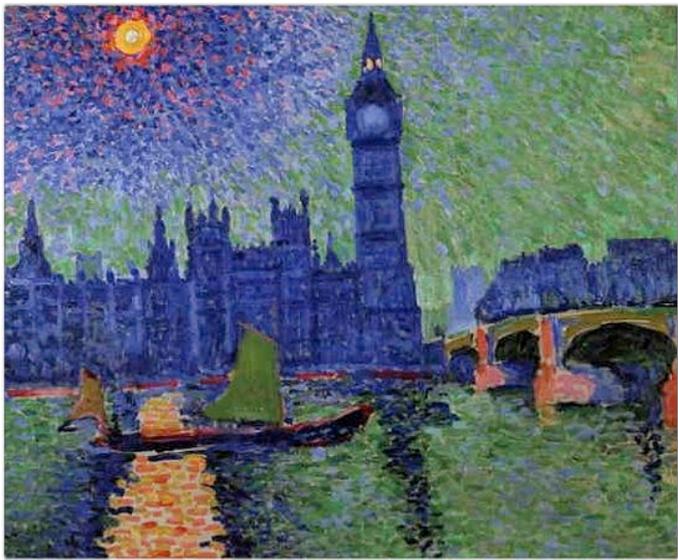


Maurice de Vlaminck, *Landscape with Red Trees*, 1906, oil on canvas.

- Vlaminck did everything in extreme, he was the most “**wild**” of the Fauves
- He often squeezed paint on the canvas straight from the tube, smearing colours with a **palette knife**
- He placed **daubs of clashing colours** side by side, to intensify the effect, making his exuberant landscapes seem to **vibrate with motion**

André Derain

- Derain was the **creator of Fauvism** .
- He reduced his brushstrokes to **dots and dashes of primary colours**.
- His bold directional brush strokes **eliminated lines** and the distinction between **light and shade**.
- Derain called his exploration of colour '**deliberate harmonies**'. All naturalistic effects are abandoned. Colour is freed from its traditional **descriptive role** in representation, and instead is used as an expressive end in itself.



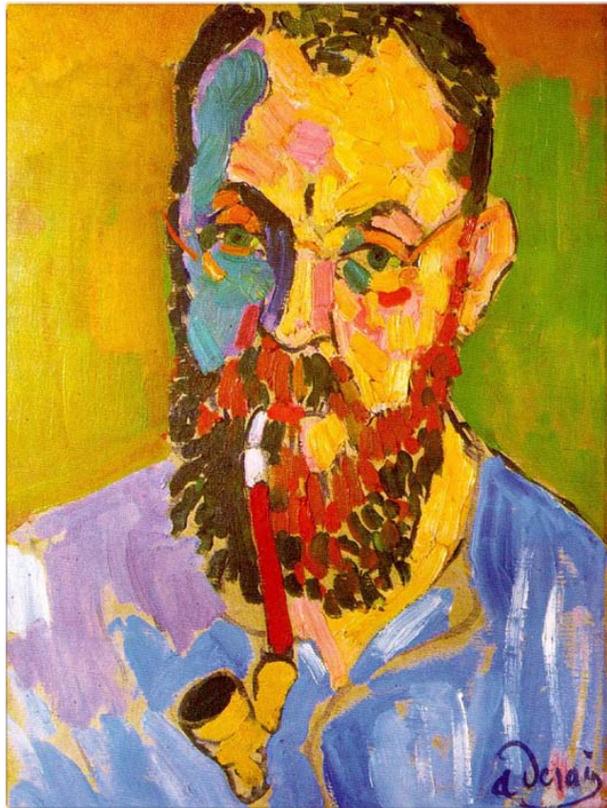
André Derain, *Big Ben*. 1905, oil on canvas.



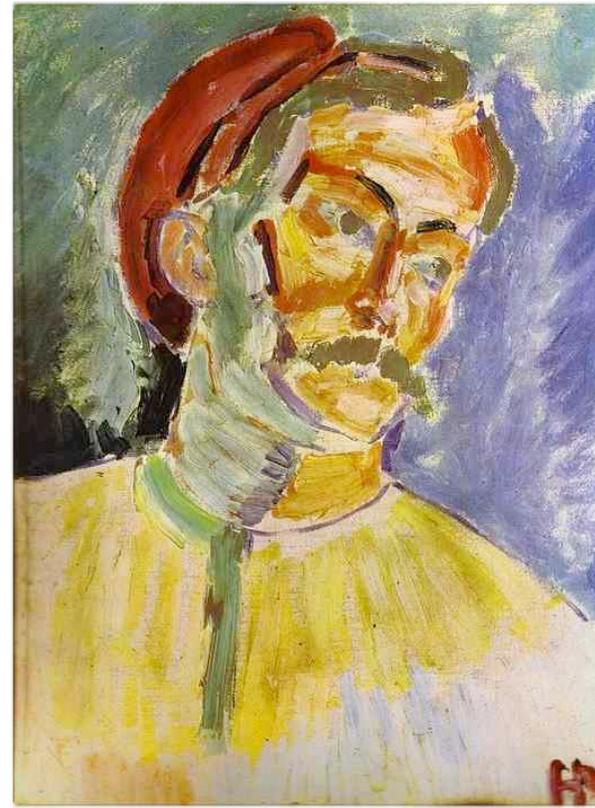
André Derain, *The Pool of London*. 1906, oil on canvas.

Henri Matisse (1869-1954) arrived in the small Catalan port of Collioure, in the south of France, on 16 May 1905. He soon invited André Derain (1880-1954), 11 years his junior, to join him.

During this particular summer, Derain painted **three portraits of Matisse** and Matisse painted **one portrait** of the young Derain

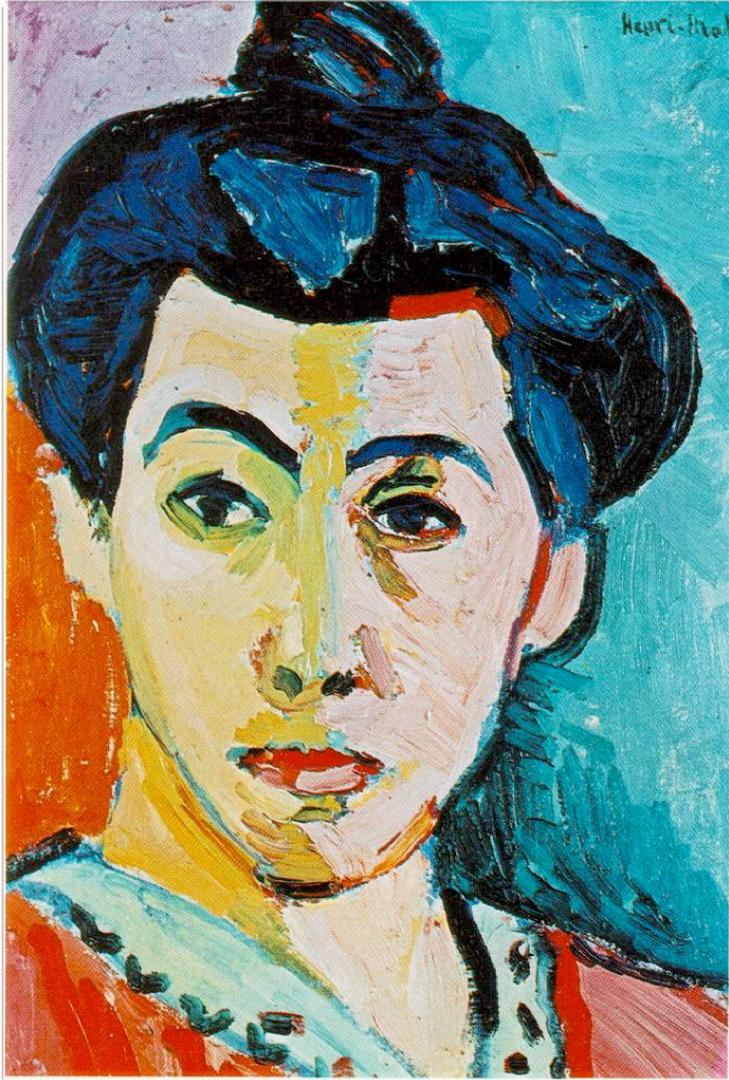


André Derain, *Portrait of Matisse*.
1905, oil on canvas.



Henri Matisse, *Portrait of André Derain*.
1905. Oil on canvas.

Henri Matisse



- By the time Matisse pioneered bright Fauve landscapes until the brilliant cut-outs he created in his old age, he believed *“Colour was not given to use in order that we should imitate nature.”*

“Art does not represent, but reconstructs reality”

- Matisse divides the face of this painting **chromatically**, with a **warm and a cool** side.
- Matisse stressed **surface pattern**, placing equal emphasis on **foreground and background**, and on objects and space around them.

“No point is more important than the other” ~ Matisse

Henri Matisse. *The Green Stripe (Madame Matisse)*. 1905, oil and tempera on canvas.



Henri Matisse. *Le bonheur de vivre* (*The Joy of Life*).
1905-06, oil on canvas.

- Matisse believed painting should not only be beautiful but should **bring pleasure to the viewer**.
- He was the master of the **sinuously curved line** called an “**arabesque**”
- Matisse sought to **eliminate nonessentials** and retain only a subject’s most fundamental qualities
- A minimalist before the term existed, Matisse perfectly evoked sensual **nudes** in line drawings with barely a **dozen strokes**.



Henri Matisse, *The Harmony in Red*. 1908, oil on canvas.

- Matisse lived in trying times. Countless strikes, uprisings, assassinations, and two world wars exploded around him. Yet his paintings **ignored all social or political controversy**.
- Matisse's typical subjects almost persuaded the viewer that **paradise exists on earth**: tables laden with tropical fruit, flowers, and drink; **views out sunny windows**; and female nudes reclining.



Henri Matisse. *Icarus (Jazz)*, 1947, cut paper.

Example of Matisse's later "**cut-out**" artworks (not part of the Fauvism movement).

The Fauves shared an intoxication with **exaggerated, vibrant colour**. After pushing colour to the extreme of **non-representation**, the Fauves became increasingly interested in Cezanne's *(a post-impressionist artist- the period before Fauvism- who was interested in the underlying geometric forms of nature)* emphasis on **underlying structure**, which gave rise to the next

revolution in art: **Cubism.**