

# LACMA

**EXHIBITION: HENRI MATISSE: LA GERBE**

**ON VIEW: APRIL 21–SEPTEMBER 8, 2013**

**LOCATION: AHMANSON BUILDING, LEVEL 2**



(IMAGE CAPTION ON PAGE 3)

(Los Angeles–April 4, 2013) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is pleased to present *Henri Matisse: La Gerbe*, an exhibition highlighting Henri Matisse’s final commissioned artwork, which Frances L. Brody promised to LACMA in honor of the museum’s twenty-fifth anniversary and bequeathed in 2010. In 1952, Los Angeles philanthropists Mr. and Mrs. Sidney F. Brody contacted Matisse and asked that he create an artwork for the patio of their new home designed by A. Quincy Jones. This resulted in a 2,000 lb., 12 x 18 foot ceramic piece titled *La Gerbe (The Sheaf)*, which would be the artist’s last commissioned artwork.

This exhibition marks the first time in which the ceramic artwork will be on display with the rare, full-scale maquette, on loan from the University of California, Los Angeles’ Hammer Museum. Late in his career, Matisse systematically developed a technique in which he cut vibrantly colored papers into organic shapes and then arranged them to his studio’s wall. This method gave the artist the creative freedom to combine his views on

form, color, plane, and space. Matisse reflected on the immediacy of the cut-out medium in 1951: "The cut-out paper allows me to draw in color. It is a simplification....It is not a starting point but a culmination." He later added, "The cut-out is what I have now found the simplest and most direct way to express myself."

The artist's paper cut-out practice is exemplified in the exhibition by some of these late-career works such as the *Madame de Pompadour* (1951) and the historic book *Jazz* (1947), a full series of twenty prints that notably was Matisse's first major project using the paper cut-out technique. Additionally, the entire set of nineteen original color samples of *La Gerbe*, all hand painted by the artist, will also be on view for the first time. The exhibition features a selection of archival materials documenting the story of the artist's final commission, including photos, letters, and instructions regarding the making and acquisition of the work. *Henri Matisse: La Gerbe* is curated by Stephanie Barron, senior curator of modern art at LACMA.

#### **About *La Gerbe (The Sheaf)***

When Matisse received the commission from the Brodys, he created a full scale paper cut-out which he showed them upon their visit in Cimiez (Nice, France) later that year. However, the Brodys rejected this first design but accepted a subsequent proposal. Matisse executed a full-scale paper cut-out version (9.5 x 13 ft.), on loan for this exhibition from UCLA's Hammer Museum. The final ceramic *La Gerbe (The Sheaf)*, created in fifteen sections, was shipped to Los Angeles after the artist died in November 1954 and installed on the Brody's patio wall, where it remained until shortly after Frances Brody's death in 2009. Because the artwork had been promised to the museum on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary, the 2,000 lbs. ceramic was removed from its original installation and brought to LACMA, where it was installed permanently in 2010.

#### **Henri Matisse**

Henri Matisse (1869-1954) is considered to be, along with Pablo Picasso, one of the most influential modern artists of the twentieth century. Throughout his career Matisse divided his time primarily between the south of France and Paris, engaging in painting, sculpture, lithography,

etching, and costume and set design. As he continued to push the boundaries of painting and sculpture, the artist used vibrant color and fluid, expressive lines to investigate the integrity of form when color is applied at its most intense.

In January 1941 the surgical removal of a cancerous tumor from his intestinal tract left Matisse physically limited. While recovering, the artist developed his new technique of paper cut-outs, which allowed him to draw upon various disciplines of painting, drawing, and sculptural process. A few of these late works were translated under the artist's supervision into ceramics, costumes, and illustrated books and posters.

**Credit:** This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

**About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography-and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary art museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art and innovative collaborations with artists, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

**Location and Contact:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

**Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 11 am-5 pm; Friday: 11 am-8 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 10am-7 pm; closed Wednesday

**General Admission:** Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

**Free General Admission:** Members; children 17 and under; after 3 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

**Image:** *La Gerbe* installed in Brody residence. Photo courtesy the archives of Frances Brody, now at LACMA.

**Press Contact:** For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at [press@lacma.org](mailto:press@lacma.org) or 323 857-6522.

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