

# HENRI MATISSE - AIMÉ MAEGHT: A CORRESPONDANCE FOR A CREATION

**On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Fondation Maeght**

November 1 2014 - January 15 2015

The Musée Matisse of Nice is associated to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Fondation Marguerite et Aimé Maeght by the presentation of letters Henri Matisse and Aimé Maeght wrote to each other, thus evoking the friendship and understanding that linked the artist and the art lover.

In August 1943, Pierre Bonnard spent several days with Marguerite and Aimé Maeght who had just moved to Vence. The painter visited his friend Henri Matisse, who stayed at the Villa Le Rêve nearby, and introduced him to the Maeght couple. From that time, a long-lasting friendship was born between Matisse and the Maeght. In 1944, Henri Matisse drew several portraits of Marguerite Maeght, one of the pose sessions was filmed by Marguerite and Aimé's 14-years-old son, Adrien Maeght.

When Aimé Maeght, on the advice of Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse, bought a gallery in Paris, 13 rue de Téhéran, Henri Matisse suggests to set up the inaugural exhibition *Henri Matisse - Paintings, drawings, sculptures*, which ran from December 7 to 29 1945. A booklet is published in five hundred exemplars, in quarto on "Auvergne handmade paper". A lithograph representing a young woman holding a sheet on which is written "I like this drawing" is chosen as a cover, poster and invitation card.

The exhibition showed a text written by Jacques Kober who poetically evokes his encounter with the world of the painter: "[...]. Drawings throughout which the line shivers, and blooms as a cotton floss escaped from the black seed which runs on paper". Texts from Matisse were also presented: "Colors are forces. Look at these paintings [...]. They are composed of three or four colors at the most, often the same but differing in their relation [...]. In music aren't there only seven notes?" Matisse's work appeared in a new context, in the sources of its creation.

In 1946, for the review *Pierre à Feu* published by Maeght with a title by Jacques Kober, Matisse illustrated the frontispiece of the Cahier *Les Miroirs profonds (The Deep Mirrors)* and created a cut-out work for the cover, whose model is currently on display at the Museum of Modern Art of New York: *Henri Matisse: the Cut-Outs*, a temporary exhibition from October 14 2014 to February 9 2015.

From February 19 to March 10 1946, the Maeght Gallery exhibition was presented in Nice, at the Palais de la Méditerranée under the title *Henri Matisse* on a suggestion of Jean Cassarini, both painter and architect who had met Matisse through Aimé Maeght and will be later secretary of the Mediterranean Union for Modern Art (UMAM). The first exhibition of Matisse in Nice, which the catalogue's cover is the same as the Parisian's booklet, includes thirty-four works and photographs tracing the progression steps of some of them, according to the simple development by which the Master wanted the public to discover his work.

The Musée Matisse of Nice, whose vocation is to promote the knowledge of Matisse's Art, will display the painter's letter exchange with Aimé Maeght as well as some books among the works of the permanent collection, illustrating a moment of friendship shared during the stay

of Matisse in Vence from 1943 to 1949 and setting the focus on regional and international artistic development favored by Marguerite and Aimé Maeght, and perpetuated by their descendants thanks to the Foundation.