

PRESS KIT EXHIBITION

“The Overwhelming Power of Colour¹”

A dialogue with Yves Klein in the collection of the Nice Matisse Museum

From 23 October 2024 to 14 April 2025

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Located just a few steps away from Henri Matisse's last studio in the former hotel Régina in Nice, where the artist worked for over thirty years, the Nice Matisse Museum is dedicated to exploring the reception of his work. It regularly proposes dossier exhibitions and dialogues with other artists within its permanent displays, such as *The Overwhelming Power of Colour*, currently dedicated to Yves Klein and presented on the first floor of the museum.

Until the end of his life, Matisse has been searching for “something beyond real space”, challenging the conventions of traditional painting. With his paper cut-outs, he embraces an artistic radicalism that transcends all pre-existing frameworks during a time when technical progress in aviation “led to a new understanding of the sky, perspectives, and space.” This appropriation of space and this quest for “something beyond real space” resonate with Yves Klein (1928-1962). As early as 1946, Klein “signed the back of the sky with his name, claiming this infinite space as one of his canvases”. Known for his monochrome propositions and “zones of pictorial sensitivity”, Yves Klein shares an approach close to that of Matisse's, whose work extends far beyond the traditional concept of easel painting. For Matisse, colour invades space in works without limits, blurring the edges as pure gouache overtakes the surface.

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Yves Klein, *Untitled Anthropometry (ANT 84)*, 1960
Pure pigment and synthetic resin on paper mounted on canvas, 155 × 359 cm
Collection MAMAC, Nice

The Nice Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMAC) being currently closed for redevelopment, the Nice Matisse Museum shows eight works by Yves Klein. This loan, part of the MAMAC's off-site exhibition programme, highlights the dynamic collaborative research between the two museums.

¹ Marie Raymond, “Matisse contre les abstraits”, *Mizue*, n° 571, mars 1953, Musée Matisse Nice, Documentation Center.

Both Henri Matisse and Yves Klein revisited ancient aesthetic practices, particularly those of the Byzantine tradition and early Italian primitives, whose influence on their works is evident. Notable examples include the invaluable insights they gained from encountering Giotto's frescoes in Padua and Assisi. Both artists sought to provide the viewer with a spiritual experience. In his monumental composition *The Dance* (1930–1933), a vast mural commissioned by Albert Barnes, Matisse changed scale to express the idea of immensity within a limited space. This architectural approach to painting questions the unity of an individual and his environment, a concern also central to Yves Klein's work. Klein broke with tradition through architectural manifestos such as the *Sponge Reliefs* for the Gelsenkirchen Opera House in Germany (1958–1959).

The two artists indeed share a common desire to expand the surface. Klein used his signature IKB (International Klein Blue) pigment to soften the contours of his monochromes— a striking echo to a fundamental idea expressed by Matisse and that the newspaper *Le Monde* recalls during Yves Klein's exhibition at Iris Clert in 1957: "One square metre of blue is bluer than one square centimetre of the same blue."

Both explored the limitations of line through three-dimensionality and engaged with sculpture in a comparable way, drawing inspiration from ancient works and distant artistic traditions. Klein's *Michelangelo's Slave* (S20) was directly inspired by *The Dying Slave* by Michelangelo, a work also significant for Matisse. Classical culture draws Klein toward the earliest forms of human arts. The imprint of his hand, and later those of the Anthropometries created with his "living brushes", evoke the prehistoric and callipygian figures of Venus. Like Matisse's *Blue Nude IV*, these works encourage the exploration of the ideal positioning of the figure through "states-moments".



Henri Matisse, *Blue Nude IV*, Nice, 1952
Cut-outs, pasted on paper, mounted on canvas, 103 × 74 cm
Gift of Madame Jean Matisse to the French State on deposit at
the Musée Matisse, Nice, 1978, Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Yves Klein explores reliefs in works like *Untitled Sponge Sculpture* (SE 90), housed in the collection of the Nice Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMAC). We also find references to the simplicity of this natural element in Matisse's work, still inspired by his time in the Pacific fifteen years earlier: "corals, fish, birds, jellyfish, sponges... the enchantments of the sky and sea." These "haunting images" inspired numerous works, including *Polynesia*, *The Sea*.

Finally, the stained-glass windows of the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence, which Klein first saw in December 1950 during their installation, serve as vibrant witnesses to the emergence of a new visual culture that would influence the 20th century. The transcendent dimension of art, which was dear to Yves Klein, finds its true meaning in this building, where Matisse endeavoured, as he put it, to “imprint, just as [he] had done previously in paintings of fifty centimetres or one metre, a spiritual space, or so to speak, a space not limited by the physical dimensions of the objects represented.”

***A display curated by Hélène Guenin, Director of the MAMAC, and Aymeric Jeudy,
Director of the Matisse Museum***

Graphic design by Studio Matters



Henri Matisse working on *La Danse* in the studio on Rue Désiré-Niel,
April 16, 1932
Photogram by Agnes Mitchell Sattler
Henri Matisse Archives



Yves Klein working on his monumental *Sponge Reliefs* for
the hall of the Gelsenkirchen Opera House, 1958-1959
Photograph by Charles Paul Wilp

MATISSE NICE MUSEUM

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

musee-matisse-nice.org

Open every day
except Tuesdays
From November 1st to
March 31th: open from
10 am to 5 pm
From April 1st to October
31st: open from 10 am
to 6 pm

ONLINE TICKETING



MUSEUM SHOP ARTEUM

The museum shop offers
a wide selection of books
and items inspired by
Matisse and the French
Riviera. To be discovered
on site or online:
arteum.com



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A Museum Set Within a Major Heritage Site

Inaugurated in 1963, the Matisse Museum in Nice is located at the heart of the Cimiez Hill, the former Roman city of Cemenelum, which became a winter resort in the 19th and 20th centuries and is now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Housed in a historic 17th-century villa, redeveloped by architect Jean-François Bodin who added an underground contemporary wing to it between 1987 and 1993, the museum harmoniously stands within its surroundings.

An Engaging Encounter with Henri Matisse's Work

The collection, which comprises works donated to the city by the artist and his heirs, is displayed in a 1 200-square-meter exhibition space. Its presentation offers an insightful experience into the œuvre of one of the greatest artists of the 20th century.

Located in close proximity to the studios where Matisse created most of his work, the museum holds a large collection of his personal object. These are made accessible to everyone through a chronological and multidisciplinary curatorial approach which sparks stimulating dialogues between art movements, techniques, and civilisations.

A Dynamic Programme

Each year, major temporary exhibitions of international significance offer a fresh perspective on the museum's collections, allowing works from around the world to take centre stage in the Matisse Museum. Recent programmes have explored Henri Matisse's works from various and unprecedented angles in relation to the art history of the 20th century. Supported by a strong scientific network and loans from prestigious institutions, these exhibitions combine cultural excellence with accessibility for a broad audience.

Through high-quality publications and an innovative and varied educational programme, the museum's mission is to deliver a comprehensive artistic experience. This is further enhanced by the museum's resource centre, library, and lecture theatre, as well as a range of activities that make the Matisse Museum in Nice a key location for interactions.



Photo © François Fernandez

MAMAC, NICE

**The MAMAC is preparing for the future.
It is closed for renovation work, but its programme continues beyond its walls!**

The MAMAC closed its doors on 7 January 2024 to undergo renovation work as part of the Promenade du Paillon season 2 project.

Upon completion, the museum will stand at the heart of a 20-hectare green space that will actively contribute to combat climate change and enhance the well-being of residents and visitors alike.

The works at MAMAC will last four years. The museum will benefit from an in-depth renovation campaign to meet the challenges of a 21st-century museum and enhance its international reputation.

“During this period of closure, I want the people of Nice to be able to continue to enjoy the MAMAC’s rich collections. This temporary closure for renovation and embellishment work marks the beginning of a new chapter: experiencing the MAMAC in a different way. Some works never or rarely seen before will be exhibited in other municipal museums and throughout the city. The MAMAC will be reaching out to the people of Nice, the Metropolitan area and beyond! Additionally, Niki de Saint Phalle will be exhibited in the United States. I’d like to express my warmest thanks to Hélène Guenin for this ambitious program, which is accessible to all audiences and will ensure the reputation of the museum continues to grow.”

*Christian Estrosi, Mayor of Nice, President of the Métropole Nice Côte d’Azur
Deputy President of the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur*

Musée d’Art Moderne et d’Art Contemporain

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Closed for renovation, but programming continues offsite.



Find out more about our backstage and off-site events

on our official Instagram page: [mamacnice_officielle](https://www.instagram.com/mamacnice_officielle)

And all the latest museum news: www.mamac-nice.org

Contact us: mamac@ville-nice.fr



- **MAMAC près de chez vous**

MAMAC collaborates with museums in Nice, the metropolitan area and the South of France, allowing the public to rediscover the museum's works in a different way and present previously unseen treasures...



- **MAMAC nomade**

The museum continues its inclusive policy and actions towards all audiences: schools, the associative sector, prisons and hospitals. The team provides educational continuity with schools through off-site workshops, Artistic and Cultural Education projects, events, travelling educational kits, sound and digital creations for the museum of the future...



- **MAMAC online**

Follow MAMAC's activities on social media, YouTube and the website. Find new content such as "Tell me about a work", "Words of the artists" and the "MAMAC behind the scenes" sections to discover the museum and its collection in a different way!



- **MAMAC en voyage**

The museum's collection extends its reach around the world, a unique opportunity to enhance its visibility and foster collaborations with international institutions.

VISUALS FOR THE PRESS



Henri Matisse, *Nu bleu IV*, Nice, 1952, cut-outs, pasted on paper, mounted on canvas, 103 x 74 cm
Gift of Madame Jean Matisse to the French State on deposit at the Musée Matisse, Nice, 1978, Musée d'Orsay, Paris
Photo © François Fernandez



Yves Klein, *Untitled Anthropometry (ANT 84)*, 1960
Pure pigment and synthetic resin on paper mounted on canvas, 155 x 359 cm
Collection MAMAC, Nice
Photo © Succession Yves Klein – Adagp, Paris 2025



Henri Matisse working on *La Danse* in the studio on Rue Désiré-Niel, April 16, 1932
Photogram by Agnes Mitchell Sattler
Archives Henri Matisse
Photo © Archives Henri Matisse



Yves Klein working on his monumental *Sponge Reliefs* for the hall of the Gelsenkirchen Opera House, 1958-1959
Photograph by Charles Paul Wilp
© Succession Yves Klein c/o Adagp Paris, 2025
Photo © BPK, Berlin, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn/Charles Wilp



Stained glass windows created by Henri Matisse for the Chapel of the Rosary, Vence.
Photo © François Fernandez



Yves Klein, *Monochrome jaune (M56)*, ca. 1954-1955
Pure pigment and synthetic resin on paper mounted on canvas, 98 x 40 cm
Private collection
On deposit at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MAMAC), Nice inv. D992.8.3
© Succession Yves Klein c/o Adagp Paris, 2025

VISUALS FOR THE PRESS

Views of the exhibition "The Overwhelming Power of Colour" at the Musée Matisse Nice
Photo : VDN/Julien Véran © Yves Klein / ADAGP, Paris, 2025



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