

PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION Fall-Winter 2025

Henri Matisse. The Stations of the Cross – Drawing the Passion

From 1 October 2025 to 19 January 2026

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In collaboration with

**BALTIMORE
MUSEUM OF
ART**

The Musée Matisse Nice and the Baltimore Museum of Art co-organize an exhibition devoted to the *Stations of the Cross* created by Henri Matisse for the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence.

Curators:

Yve-Alain Bois, Professor Emeritus, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, USA

Assisted by Alix Agret, art historian and researcher

This exhibition aims to shed new light on the *Stations of the Cross* (1948-51), created by Henri Matisse for the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence, and to explore the genesis of this work. Although substantial literature exists on the Chapel of the Rosary, it tends to offer only limited insight into the *Stations of the Cross* which has received very few scholarly studies.

This is both understandable and surprising. *Understandable*, because Matisse conceived his chapel as a cohesive whole. Nevertheless, why is this monumental ceramic panel so rarely mentioned, especially in comparison with the considerable attention given to the stained-glass windows? *Surprising*, because stylistically the *Stations of the Cross* starkly contrasts with the chapel's two other mural works –and indeed with nearly all of Matisse's pictorial œuvre. These two observations are actually closely related for the artist appears to have produced more sketches and preparatory studies for this final large-scale composition than for any other work in his career.

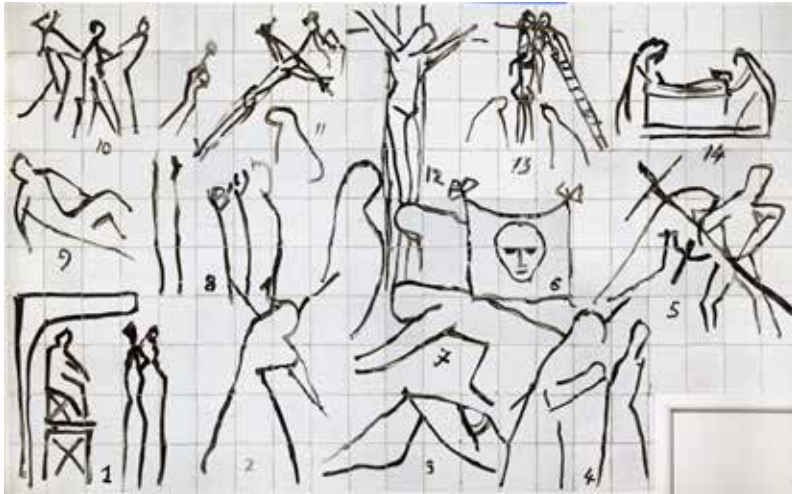
Three groups of drawings form the core of the exhibition: those held by the Musée Matisse Nice, those in the collection of the Chapel of the Rosary, and those held by private collectors. These 84 drawings related to the *Stations of the Cross* will be complemented by archival material documenting the evolution of the project, from the initial concept to its final realization.

This exhibition will travel to the Baltimore Museum of Art (USA), where it will be on view from 29 March until 28 June 2026 (as *Matisse in Vence: The Stations of the Cross*).

Organized under the direction of Aymeric Jeudy, Director of the Musée Matisse Nice, and Asma Naeem, Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director of the Baltimore Museum of Art



Henri Matisse, *Study for the first station (Jesus standing)*, 1949
Brush and Indian ink on paper, 65 × 50 cm
Musée Matisse Nice
Gift of Matisse's heirs, 1960



Henri Matisse, *The Stations of the Cross*, Chapel of Vence, 1951
Black enamel brushwork on ceramic panel
© Photo : DR

Saint Dominic, “a pillar”

Running concurrently, an exhibition devoted to Saint Dominic is being held at the Matisse Chapel in Vence

From 5 September 2025 to 4 July 2026

To make the exhibition at the Musée Matisse Nice and the Baltimore Museum of Art possible, the Dominican Sisters of Vence have generously loaned the complete collection of preparatory drawings for the *Stations of the Cross* in their care – a rare opportunity to showcase Matisse’s priceless bequest. In return, the Musée Matisse Nice is lending the Chapel of the Rosary a group of preparatory drawings for the ceramic of Saint Dominic. Rarely seen together, these studies shed new light on the creation of another of the chapel’s major ceramic works.

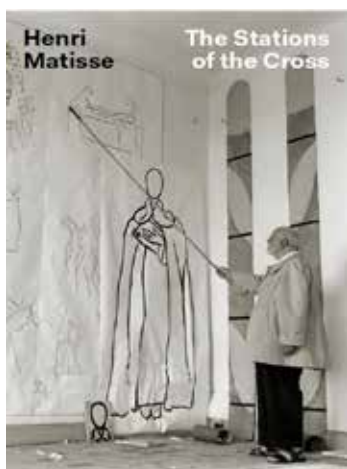
The chapel’s large drawings on ceramic never fail to amaze visitors with their striking simplicity. The graffiti-like fine black lines drawn onto white-glazed terracotta tiles form a kind of visual script that resonates with the stained-glass windows. Created for the sanctuary, Saint Dominic held Matisse’s attention for many months. The saint’s tall figure, notably inspired by Father Couturier, occupies a spectacular vertical space, recalling Matisse’s remark upon arriving in New York that he wished to “draw on the skyscrapers”.

The series of drawings exhibited in the chapel’s museum shows the many studies focusing in turn on the hood, the folds of Saint Dominic’s garment, his head, his hand, and his book.

Another group of works relates to Matisse’s creation of a Saint Dominic for another religious building: the Church of Notre-Dame-de-Toute-Grâce on the Plateau d’Assy in Haute-Savoie.



Chapel of the Rosary
466 avenue Henri Matisse - Vence
chapellematisse.com



Exhibition catalogue

On the occasion of the exhibition “Henri Matisse: The Stations of the Cross – Drawing the Passion”, a comprehensive catalogue will be published in both French and English.

Under the direction of Yve-Alain Bois
With contributions from Alix Agret
and Aymeric Jeudy
Two editions, French and English

Published by Éditions Bernard Chauveau
Paperback with flaps, 192 pages
Over 160 illustrations
Publication date: October 2025

Exhibition and graphic design

Studio Matters, Charenton-le-Pont

MUSÉE MATISSE NICE

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

musee-matisse-nice.org

Open every day
except Tuesdays
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

Located on top of a hill, the Musée Matisse is part of the vast heritage complex of Cimiez, the former Roman city of Cemenelum which became the central feature of Nice's development into a winter resort in the 19th and 20th centuries. The city is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The museum, inaugurated in 1963, consists of a 17th-century villa that was revamped and extended with a new wing by architect Jean-François Bodin between 1987 and 1993.

Nestled within a public garden, it stands in harmony with the surrounding area, offering visitors an engaging experience of Henri Matisse's work.

A unique collection

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 provides an insightful exploration into the œuvre of one of the greatest artists of the 20th century.

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



Exterior view of the Musée Matisse Nice
Photo © François Fernandez



VISUALS FOR THE PRESS



Henri Matisse, *Study for the Stations of the Cross*, 1948
Ink, pencil and coloured pencil on paper
17.3 × 24.5 cm
Private collection

Henri Matisse, *Study for the first station (Jesus standing)*, 1948
Brush and Indian ink on paper,
65 × 50 cm
Musée Matisse Nice
Gift of Matisse's heirs, 1960



Henri Matisse, *Study for the 2^d station (Jésus holds his cross)*, 1948
Brush and Indian ink on paper
26.8 × 20.3 cm
Collection Ahrenberg, Switzerland

Henri Matisse, *Study for the 9th Station (Jesus falls for the third time)*, 1948
Charcoal on Canson et Montgolfier watermarked laid paper Ingres
48.2 × 63.3 cm
Musée Matisse Nice
Gift of Matisse's heirs, 1960



Henri Matisse, *Study for the 11th station (Jesus is nailed to the cross)*, 1949
Charcoal on wove paper
94.5 × 60.5 cm
Chapel of the Dominican Sisters, Vence

Henri Matisse, *Study for the 13th station after Rubens (Jesus is taken down from the cross and given back to his mother)*, 1948
Pencil, brush ink on paper
26.4 × 20.2 cm
Private collection





Interior view of the Chapel of the Rosary, in Vence
Photo © François Fernandez

View of Matisse's studio at the Regina, in Nice, circa 1949
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du Musée Matisse Nice, rights reserved



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