

**Media release**  
**Zurich, 29 August 2019**

## **Kunsthhaus Zürich presents 'Matisse – Metamorphoses'**

**From 30 August to 8 December 2019 the Kunsthhaus Zürich presents Henri Matisse as sculptor, in an exhibition that brings bronzes in various states together with the sources of his inspiration, including nude photographs and African sculptures. The art education programme is designed to appeal equally to newcomers with an interest in art, specialists and families.**

Over 70 works, accompanied by reproductions of historical photographs, films and music, offer a vivid presentation of Matisse's artistic method. Installed in the large exhibition gallery of the Kunsthhaus, the exhibition opens with sculptures by Rodin, Maillol and Bourdelle whom Matisse – known for his colourful paintings – strove to emulate before breaking free and striking out on his own. His figures undergo a transformation that is akin to a metamorphosis: while the earliest works still bear the influence of naturalistic ideals, later creations and reworkings of the same motif become increasingly abstract.

### FORMAL PROGRESSION IN SCULPTURE, PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS

A formal progression – as in the bronze reliefs 'Nu de dos I–IV' – from a seemingly naturalistic approach to radical stylization can also be seen in reclining nudes ('Nu couché I–III'), graceful figurines ('Madeleine I–II') and voluminous busts ('Jeannette I–V').

There are parallels in the work of Matisse as painter and draughtsman. For the first time this exhibition examines the relationships between the sculptures and his paintings, cut-outs and drawings through the prism of metamorphosis. One striking fact is that Matisse did not simply document the processes of transformation for his own private use, but actually exhibited the documentary photographs together with his paintings (e.g. 'Nature morte au coquillage sur marbre noir', 1940). The Kunsthhaus Zürich explores the rationale behind this public displaying of the creative process – an aspect that no exhibition has examined in detail before.

### INSPIRED BY AFRICAN SCULPTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY

In addition to the artistic method of metamorphosis, the exhibition looks at other key aspects of Matisse's sculptural oeuvre. It shows how he engaged with Rodin

and the art of Antiquity and the Renaissance, and reveals how the creative process was preceded by an intensive engagement with photographs and African sculptures.

### BLURRING OF SEXUAL CHARACTERISTICS

The stylistic devices of the arabesque that are much in evidence in 'La serpentine' (1909) characterize almost all of Matisse's sculptures. The blurring of sexual characteristics, as in the four 'Nus de dos' and the 'Petit torse mince' (1930), is a further distinctive element of his approach.

### MAJOR LOANS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

In the case of the bronze 'Nu de dos' reliefs, it took Matisse 20 years to work through the metamorphosis of a single motif to its ultimate conclusion. The protracted nature of the process tells us that the creation was never intended as a series – whatever the visitor standing before the four larger than life-size reliefs today may think.

Curator Sandra Gianfreda has put together this enlightening presentation with the help of loans from famous collections in Copenhagen, Washington, Baltimore, San Francisco, Paris, Moscow and Nice. As cooperation partner, the Musée Matisse in Nice has contributed the bulk of the loans and will take over the exhibition after it leaves Zurich (7.2.–6.5.2020; co-curator Claudine Grammont). As this exhibition demonstrates, Matisse was an artist who was capable of much more than simply painting. His sculptures are a milestone in modern art.

### AUDIOGUIDES FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Stories about the creative process behind the works offer adults an in-depth insight into Matisse's artistic method, while children aged 5 to 9 can learn about the differences between two-dimensional and three-dimensional art by comparing photographic exhibits with the sculptures. They'll discover why the feline predator devouring a hare is just as caught up in the goings-on as the artist who created it. Meanwhile the youngest kids can try their hand at turning lines into figures with the help of colouring pages.

### ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMME: DANCE, TALK, LECTURE, GUIDED TOUR

#### **Matisse – Metamorphoses. From idea to exhibition**

A conversation between curator Sandra Gianfreda and Christoph Stuehn.

Sun 1.9., 11 a.m. Auditorium. In German.

Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members, otherwise CHF 10 / CHF 8 (concessions).

## **Dancing Matisse**

A dance performance by Karin Minger

Sat 7.9., 9.30 p.m. (during Museums at Night – special ticket); Wed 2.10., 6.30 p.m.;

Wed 30.10., 6.30 p.m.; Sat 16.11., 2 p.m. In the exhibition.

Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members

## **Henri Matisse à Nice: de l'atelier au musée**

Presentation by Claudine Grammont, Director of the Musée Matisse, Nice.

In association with the Alliance française and the French Embassy in Switzerland.

Thu 26.9., 6.30 p.m. Auditorium. In French.

Free with a valid exhibition ticket and for members of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and the Alliance française, otherwise CHF 10 / CHF 8 (concessions)

## **Movements and dances**

Did that statue move? Children from the workshop '1 2 3 .... verwandle dich' present movements and dances inspired by the works of Matisse that they have created together with a dancer from the Tanzhaus Zürich. In the exhibition.

Performance: Fri 18.10., 4.30 p.m. Free with a valid exhibition ticket.

## **Art laboratory for all**

Would you like to work creatively with the theme of metamorphoses or make something of your own inspired by the works of Henri Matisse? Then be sure to drop by our 'art laboratory' in the art education workshop. We've got ideas for all ages and the materials to make them a reality.

Sun 1.9., 6.10., 3.11., 1.12., 10.30 a.m.–4 p.m. Free with a valid exhibition ticket.

## **Learn more with a guided tour**

Public guided tours in German of the exhibition take place at 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays, 3 p.m. on Fridays and 11 a.m. on Sundays (not 2 / 30 October). English: Sat 14.9. at 4 p.m. and Sat 12.10. at 4 p.m. French: Sat 21.9. at 4 p.m. Dates and other languages for private guided tours by arrangement.

## **PUBLICATION**

The exhibition catalogue (Scheidegger & Spiess, 232 pp., 206 ill.) contains contributions by Sandra Gianfreda, Claudine Grammont, Gaku Kondo, Bärbel Küster and Ellen McBreen. It is published in German, English and French and is available from the Kunsthaus shop and bookstores, price CHF 49.

The exhibition has been organized in cooperation with the Musée Matisse, Nice.

Supported by Credit Suisse – Partner Kunsthaus Zürich as well as the Elisabeth Weber Foundation and the Dr. Georg and Josi Guggenheim Foundation.

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich, tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84,  
[www.kunsthaus.ch](http://www.kunsthaus.ch)

Fri–Sun/Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thu 10 a.m.–8 p.m. Closed on Mondays.

Admission to the exhibition: CHF 23 / CHF 18 (concessions and groups).

Combination ticket (exhibition and collection): CHF 26 / CHF 19 (concessions and groups). Admission free for members of the Zürcher Kunstgesellschaft and children/young people up to age 16. Audioguide CHF 3 for adults, free for children.

Advance sales: Zurich Tourism: hotel room reservations and ticket sales. Tourist Service in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, [information@zuerich.com](mailto:information@zuerich.com), [www.zuerich.com](http://www.zuerich.com).

SBB RailAway combination ticket, with discount on travel and admission: at stations and by phoning Rail Service, 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19/min. by land line), [www.sbb.ch/kunsthaus-zuerich](http://www.sbb.ch/kunsthaus-zuerich).

## CONTACTS

Visual materials are available at [www.kunsthaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/](http://www.kunsthaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/).

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