

Exhibition: HENRI MATISSE
IVAM Centre Julio González
October 21st 2003 to January 11th 2004

Curator: Martine Soria

Organised by: Institut Valencià d'Art Modern IVAM

This exhibition and the catalogue that accompanies it are designed as an homage to Henri Émile Benoît Matisse (1869–1954), undoubtedly one of the central figures in 20th century art. Exhibitions dedicated to the works of Henri Matisse are not very frequent in Spain, so that this one, held by the IVAM in its gallery 7, is an extraordinary opportunity for the visitor to discover the close relationship connecting the artist's delicate bronze sculptures with his paintings, engravings and drawings. The 58 sculptures presented date from 1901 to 1949, and together with the 20 engravings and 15 drawings, they depict the distinct periods characterising the creative work of Henri Matisse.

In the presented sculptures, some topics characteristic of Matisse's own work as well as of contemporary sculpture can be detected. These topics include the subordination of the detail to a dominant rhythm, as in the lineal and continuous arabesque of *Nu Couché I* (1907), *Aurore* (1907) or *La Serpentine* (1909), as well as expressive deformations reminding of primitive sculptures, or the process of simplification expressed in his monumental series *Nu de Dos*.

Matisse's sculptures correspond to some reasonably precise periods in his career: The first one covers his time in Paris from 1900 to 1906 and in Collioure in 1907; back in Paris in 1908, his approach to the third dimension continues until 1915, when he lived in Issy-les-Moulineaux. Later, in Nice (1918 to 1932), Matisse simultaneously works with paint and volume. Throughout his creative life, he adopts influences from the various artistic movements shaping the 19th and 20th centuries. In his sculptures he unites the elegance and grandiosity of Neoclassicism with the scientific research of light, shadow and contrast typical of Impressionism, including elements of Realism and Postimpressionism.

Each of his sculptures, which are few compared to the great number of drawings, paintings and engravings he produced, plays an important role in a plastic trajectory in which the exploration of light was central.