

Shapes and Shadows with Matisse



Henri Matisse, *The Circus from Jazz*, 1947

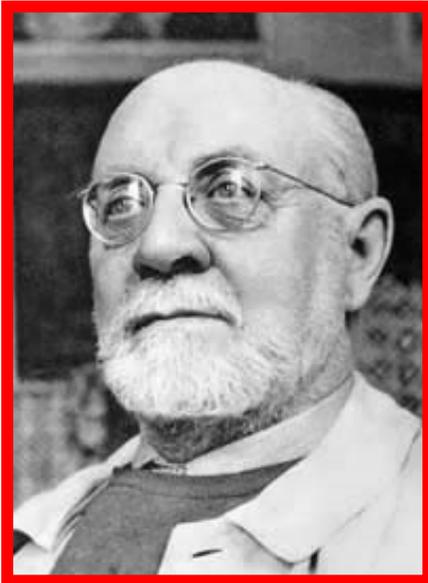
Meet the Artist

Henri Matisse

1869-1954

“There are always flowers for those who want to see them..”

– Henri Matisse



Henri Matisse was born in France, the oldest son of a wealthy grain merchant. In 1887 he went to Paris to study law but after he fell ill with appendicitis and his mom bought him art supplies to pass the time, he found a new passion and set out to be an artists. Initially he painted still lifes and landscapes in a traditional style but after being introduced to Impressionism and the work of van Gogh, his style changed completely.

Around 1900 Matisse was part of the **FAUVISM** movement, where the artists’ work focused on strong color choices and emotion. Later he was influenced by Pablo Picasso, yet he still drew his inspiration from nature, unlike Picasso who worked mostly from his imagination. In 1941, after being diagnosed with cancer, Matisse became bedridden and later wheelchair confined. Painting and sculpture became physical challenges so he developed a new style of art from **CUT PAPER COLLAGE**. These works of art began small but eventually filled entire rooms. Created with boldly colored paper and expressive shapes, Matisse’s cut-outs are some of his most recognized works of art.



Some of Matisse's most vibrant work was for a book he created called **JAZZ** in 1947. Many of the prints in Jazz take their theme from the **theatre** or **circus**. There were 20 plates in all and the images were accompanied by text written in a beautiful calligraphy. Each image was originally created from hand painted paper that was cut out and collaged. Only 250 copies of the book were produced.



Icarus, from Jazz



The Toboggan, from Jazz

Notice how the people in Matisse' cut-outs are silhouettes or **SHADOWS** of figures, lacking the detail of a painted version. These shadow-like figures are collaged with **geometric** and **organic** shapes to make up the composition.



The Swimmer in the Tank, from Jazz



The Circus, from Jazz



The Knife Thrower, from Jazz

For our Matisse inspired collages we are going to create silhouettes of figures using the science of **SHADOWS**.

THE SCIENCE OF SHADOWS

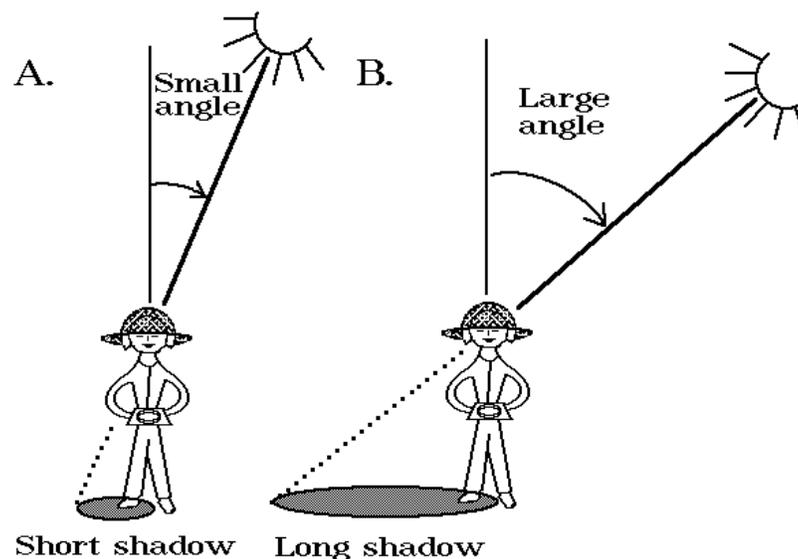
An object that does not let light through is called **OPAQUE**.

An object that lets some light through is called **TRANSLUCENT**.

An object that lets all of the light through is called **TRANSPARENT**.

Shadows occur when an object blocks light from a light source. The more opaque the object is the darker the shadow will be .

You can also change the size of a shadow by moving the **LIGHT SOURCE**.





For this project, first we will create an aluminum foil figure, then we are going to cast a shadow of it, trace the shadow, and cut it out to make our human forms for our collage.

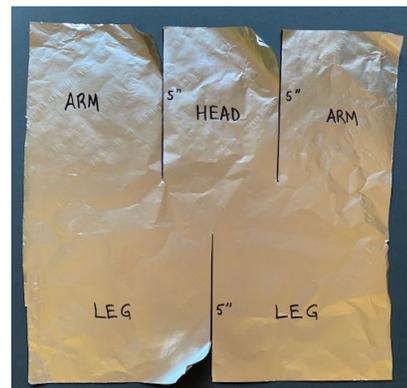
MATERIALS:

12" of aluminum foil, flashlight, pencil, tape, 4-5 pieces of 9x12 colored construction paper, scissors, ruler, glue or glue stick.

PROCEDURES:

Creating the Figure

1. Using a ruler, mark the top edge of the foil at 4" and 8" dividing it into thirds, and mark the bottom edge at 6" dividing it in half.
2. Next, draw and cut a 5" line from each mark that extends towards the middle. This will make the "sections" of the body.



3. Slowly begin to **crumple** the sides together.



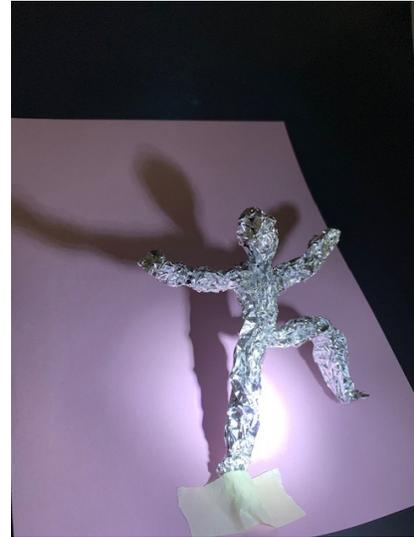
4. Now gently squeeze / crumple the legs and arms, careful not to twist or pull as the foil is fragile.



5. Gently form the top center segment into a head shape. Now you can shape the figure into any pose you would like!



6. Next, tape the figure to the short edge of a piece of colored paper. Shine the flashlight towards the figure so that the shadow falls on the colored paper. Because the aluminum foil is **opaque** you should be able to get a good shadow.



7. Experiment with changing the **distance** and **direction** of the light source until you have created an interesting shadow.



8. Now trace the shadow, then cut it out.



9. Now it is time to make the collage!
Using your colored paper, cut out an
assortment of geometric and organic
shapes.



10. Notice how Matisse used the
leftover paper in some of his collages!
In these reverse images, he has used
the **NEGATIVE SPACE**. You might
want to use some of your leftovers,
too.



9. Arrange your shadow figure and your cut shapes to fill the page with a bold composition. Once you have everything just right, glue it all down using your glue stick.

TIP Be sure to apply the glue to the small piece, not your background.



Now showcase your 2D and 3D works of art!

Watch a free video of this lesson on

You  **Tube**

Search for “Arts Center of Coastal Carolina”



Henri Matisse, Self-portrait, 1918

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