

WHO IS HENRI MATISSE?

Bright colours and simple shapes...enjoy
the wonderful world of [Matisse](#)



Henri Matisse
The Snail 1953

Tate

© Succession Henri Matisse/DACS 2020

This artwork is called *The Snail*. Does it look like a snail's spiralling shell to you? (Pssst there is also a secret tiny snail hidden in the picture – can you see it? If you look very, very closely you might just spot a tiny snail shape on top of the purple square).

The Snail shows Matisse's interest in bright colour. He has arranged complementary colours alongside each other to **create** a vibrant effect. For example the green touches the red, and the blue is next to the orange. This makes the picture extra zingy and really attracts your eye's attention!

The Snail is a collage made from pieces of brightly painted paper that have been cut out and stuck onto a canvas. But Matisse also made paintings and sculptures.



Henri Matisse

The Inattentive Reader 1919

Tate

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This painting was made much earlier in Matisse's life. It more realistic than *The Snail*, and the colours are definitely not as bright. But like his later collages, he has also used quite simple shapes in this painting.

Do you like this painting? The woman looks very deep in thought, I wonder what she is thinking?

Matisse began to use collage as he got older. He used brightly coloured paper and scissors to cut out shapes, animals, leaves, dancers and flowers and then arrange them



Henri Matisse *The Horse, the Rider and the Clown* 1943–4 © Succession H. Matisse / DACS 2014 Photo: Centre Pompidou, MNAM-CCI, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Jean-Claude Planchet

This collage shows the different ways Matisse cut out paper: from larger shapes such as the purple horse, to more careful and detailed cutting involved in the yellow, white and black shapes.

Here, Matisse has created lots of shapes that look similar to each other, but each one is a unique leaf. You can see how he has repeated these similar shapes, almost filling the entire picture with leaves.



Henri Matisse *The Sheaf* 1953 Collection University of California, Los Angeles. Hammer Museum © Succession Henri Matisse / DACS 2013

The shapes and colours that Matisse uses look as if they are jumping and dancing. They seem to reflect his approach to life. This is something he said:

He [or she!] who loves, flies, runs, and rejoices...is free and nothing holds them back

What do you feel when you look at Henri Matisse's art? Do his pictures make you feel happy?

Why not have a go at creating your own cut out collages? Use simple shapes and bright colours. This photograph shows Charlie and Finn with their collages inspired by Matisse.



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