



Pierre Matisse and His Artists

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Pierre Matisse arrived in New York shortly before Christmas 1924 determined to make his mark. At that time, the New York art world was in its formative stages, entirely different from what it was to become by the close of the 20th century. He was to play a significant role in its establishment. In 1925, the time of his first exhibition, which featured lithographs and drawings by his father, Henri Matisse, there were few galleries and no museums exhibiting contemporary art. In October 1931, the Pierre Matisse Gallery opened its doors in the Fuller building on 57th Street, just around the corner from the provisional headquarters of the recently instituted Museum of Modern Art. In addition to shows featuring works by such established artists as Giorgio de Chirico, Andre Derain, Pablo Picasso, Georges Rouault, and, of course, the elder Matisse, numerous exhibitions at the Pierre Matisse Gallery were focused around the works of younger, less-known figures, including Joan Miro, Balthus, Alberto Giacometti, and Jean Dubuffet. Pierre Matisse not only played a major role in introducing American audiences to the works of Marc Chagall, Yves Tanguy, Roberto Matta, Wilfredo Lam, Reg Butler, Raymond Mason, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Francois Rouan, Zao Wou-ki, Manolo Millares, Manuel Rivera, and Antonio Saura but also fostered their critical and popular appreciation. American artists whose work he championed included Alexander Calder, Theodore Roszak, Sam Francis, and Loren MacIver. By the time of his death in 1989, Pierre Matisse had been instrumental in the creation of a community that encompassed not only the leading artists of the 20th century but also an impressive roster of distinguished collectors and institutions. The degree to which he enriched the artistic climate of his adopted country cannot be overestimated. This publication documents many of the outstanding works exhibited at the Pierre Matisse Gallery and - drawing upon the Pierre Matisse Gallery Archives, given to the Morgan Library in 1997 - chronicles, through photographs, correspondence, and ephemera, the history of one of the most significant venues of 20th-century art.

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