

# bernard jacobson gallery

Henri Matisse

Painting, Sculpture, Drawing, Prints

2<sup>nd</sup> June – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017

Bernard Jacobson Gallery is delighted to announce 'Matisse', an exhibition of more than a dozen original works by one of the greatest masters of the 20th Century, to include paintings, works on paper and sculptures, as well as a selection of prints. The exhibition is timed to coincide with the forthcoming Royal Academy exhibition, 'Matisse in the studio' which will open this August.

One of the most significant paintings on display will be *L'artiste et le modèle nu* (1921), a work which has been featured in numerous monographs and exhibitions of the artist's work, including The National Gallery of Art, Washington, The Guggenheim, New York, MoMA NY and most recently, The Matisse Museum in Nice (2015). Self-portraiture is a relatively rare form for Matisse and in *L'artiste et le modèle nu*, we are playfully invited to witness the act of creation set within the rich tapestry of colour and light of his studio in Nice.

*L'artiste et le modèle nu* captures the relaxed intimacy of the working relationship between Matisse and one of his most important models; Antoinette Arnoud, with Matisse depicted in his pajamas at work in the fore-front of the painting. Whilst the composition immediately calls to mind Velazquez and *Las Meninas*, heavy formality is here replaced by the verdant colours of the South of France and a knowing theatricality, which acknowledges the artifice of the painted image. This painting is widely believed to be his last portrait of Arnoud and *L'artiste et le modèle nu* was deemed such a success that Matisse immediately sent a sketch of the work to his wife and daughter the day after the painting was completed.\*

The seductive painting *Nu aux jambes croisées* (1936) depicts another favourite muse, his studio assistant, Lydia Delektorskaya – a major presence in the life of Matisse for more than 2 decades, beginning with this crucial period of innovation during the mid-1930s. An attempt by Matisse to, 'do a nude in the classic manner', as Delektorskaya relates in her detailed daily notes from each sitting, this work was deemed so significant by the artist that he took the unusual and rare decision to document the pose with a photograph.

What we see in the final work can hardly be conveyed in words, however. *Nu aux jambes croisées* is a work of consummate sensual and almost tactile virtuosity with our attention held

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both by the lush organic form of the plants and the fleshy contours of Delektorskaya. This painting was previously in the possession of the artist's son, Jean Matisse and has only rarely been exhibited in public.

Two exceptional works in bronze give witness to the remarkable range of Matisse as an artist and include, *Tête de Marguerite* (1915 – cast 1954); an enigmatic portrait bust of the artist's daughter, Marguerite Matisse and *Nu Accroupi* (1916 – cast 1949) which captures with startling economy the crouching nude form of an un-named sitter.

The stunning, economically drawn, aquatint *Patitcha* from 1947 exhibits the paring down to essentials of Matisse's later works. This surety and simplicity of line would prove highly influential to many later artists.

All works will be available for sale.

\*This event is related in Hilary Spurling's book, *Matisse the Master: A Life of Henri Matisse: The Conquest of Colour, 1909-1954*, London, 2005

## **PRESS ENQUIRIES**

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