

## ***The Red Studio Shows the Way* - Lesson 2**

**Developed by:** Susan Sellers

**Suggested Grade Levels:** 7-9; with some teacher modifications, Gr.10

**Suggested Length of Class Time:** 4 to 5 classes of an hour each

**Subject Areas:** ELA, Social Studies, Visual Arts

### **Rationale:**

Focusing on a single masterpiece such as *L'Atelier Rouge* offers Middle School aged students a unique way of knowing and belonging to the global community. This year (2011) marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of a landmark painting that forever changed our notions of color and perspective. Students enjoy being drawn into other historical eras and learn much about their culture from knowing what came before. They appreciate the hands on, creative approach that encourages their literacy while helping to instill the concept that all knowledge is connected. As well, students learn to value the arts as a record of human experience and become receptive to different viewpoints.

### **Logistics:**

#### *Classroom setup and materials*

- individual or small group
- posters of art work by Matisse on the wall
- access to computers, art books, French-English language dictionaries
- pen, pencil
- response journal or scribbler

#### *Suggested resources/images*

- worksheets and copies of images found in the **appendix**
- [www.moma.org/collection/browse](http://www.moma.org/collection/browse)
- [www.moodbook.com/history/modernism/henri-matisse](http://www.moodbook.com/history/modernism/henri-matisse)
- see **Some Resources for Teachers** for more...

### **Suggested Outcomes:**

Students will be expected to:

- appreciate an artistic masterpiece
- develop critical evaluation skills
- share thoughts and ideas about an artist and his work
- explore art as a way of expressing ideas, feelings and points of view
- listen critically to others' points of view

## Introduction:

Henri Matisse lived through two world wars and witnessed many social upheavals and technological changes during his long life. When he died at 85 in November 1954, he was considered one of the world's greatest artists. In 1949, *L'Atelier Rouge* was acquired by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City where it has remained ever since as one of the museum's most beloved and viewed paintings. *(to the right, a photograph of the painting which gives an idea of the canvas's size).*

In Lesson 2, students will place Matisse in historical and cultural context . They will develop their analytical skills and explore art as a way of expressing ideas, feelings and points of view.

## Suggestions for Teaching and Learning:

Invite students to do individual research on Matisse.

Possible questions to consider:

- How did Matisse get started as a painter?
- What were his first paintings like?
- After he became gravely ill and often confined to a wheelchair, how did he create art?
- Why do you think *L'Atelier Rouge* remained with the artist from 1911 until 1926 when it was finally sold?

Suggest a round table discussion with students sharing their research findings.

Engage students in a comparison of *L'Atelier Rouge* with another painting done by Matisse in 1911: *Painter's Family* or *The Pink Studio* ***See appendix for copies of these paintings.*** Students could utilize any number of methods to observe differences and similarities. (eg. Venn diagram, T chart or groups could alternate, describing/critiquing one painting, then the other)

Discuss timelines as an aid in helping us understand chronology and events that are happening at the same time. Timelines also give us a perspective on how and where our own lives fit in the scheme of things.

Distribute: **Events of 1911** and **Timeline Template.**

Encourage students to share while filling in information on the Matisse Timeline

Students may wish to explain how their initial impression of *L'Atelier Rouge* has changed.

### **Extension of ideas:**

#### ***Visual Arts:***

- Invite students to investigate Matisse's cutouts and collages and create one of their own. (see: [www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/michelle-name.htm](http://www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/middle/michelle-name.htm) )
- create an "open window" scene inspired by Matisse paintings. (see, for example *Open Window at Collioure*, 1905)

#### ***Social Studies:***

- Geography - On a map of Europe, have students locate and label Paris, Cateau-Cambresis ( Matisse birthplace), Issy-le-Moulineaux, Nice, Provence, Vence: places where Matisse lived.
- On a world map, find Germany, St. Petersburg, Russia, Spain, Morocco, Tahiti, the USA: places Matisse visited – for inspiration or on invitation.

#### ***Social history***

- Investigate the rivalry and friendship between Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, the two titans of 20<sup>th</sup> art. How did they influence each other in positive ways?([www.matisse-picasso.org](http://www.matisse-picasso.org) is helpful on this.)
- Ask students to consider why most people disliked Matisse's early work, including *L'Atelier Rouge*.

#### ***English Language Arts***

- Invite students to write a poem about *L'Atelier Rouge* or any other painting by Matisse.

### **Suggestions for Assessment:**

Ask students to give either an oral or written critique of *L'Atelier Rouge*. Where would you go if you wanted to see the original painting? What is the painting about? Why is it considered a milestone in art history?

Have students reflect about the difficulties and successes they found in completing this lesson in their response journals.