



## BMA Presents Trio of Matisse Exhibitions in March 2026 with Rare Drawings of *The Stations of the Cross* and Paintings by Contemporary Artist Louis Fratino

This is the first thorough examination of *The Stations of the Cross* mural Matisse created for his architectural masterpiece in Vence, France

Maryland native Louis Fratino's celebrated paintings of male figures are presented in compelling dialogue with Matisse's renowned paintings of female models

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BALTIMORE, MD (October 8, 2025)—In March 2026, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) will present a suite of three exhibitions that capture the enduring influence of French artist Henri Matisse—one of the 20th-century's most iconic artists—and reveal rarely seen works and aspects of his career. The BMA is home to the world's largest public collection of works by Matisse, and the forthcoming exhibitions reflect the museum's commitment to producing new scholarship and engaging the public with his extraordinary work.

***Fratino and Matisse: To See This Light Again*** opens on March 11 with approximately 30 luminous figure studies, interiors, still-lives, and self-portraits by Matisse and contemporary artist Louis Fratino, celebrated for his expressive and intimate portrayals of the male figure. The exhibition includes new paintings by Fratino—a Maryland native—and explores the aesthetic and conceptual interplay between the two artists across generations. ***Matisse and Martinique: Portraits and Poetry*** opens on March 18 and focuses on one of Matisse's least-known series of book illustrations, which was inspired by the artist's 1930 visit to Martinique and created for his friend John-Antoine Nau's book *Poésies Antillaises (Antillean Poetry)*. ***Matisse in Vence: The Stations of the Cross***, co-organized with the Musée Matisse in Nice, France, opens on March 29 with approximately 85 rarely shown or previously unseen works on paper created by Matisse for his powerful mural of Christ's journey to Calvary in the Chapel of the Rosary in Vence, France—the artist's only architectural project. This exhibition marks the first thorough examination of the mural and encompasses numerous loans from public and private collections.

The BMA's renowned Matisse collection was first established in the early 20th century with a gift of 600 works from Baltimore sisters Claribel and Etta Cone. Since then, the BMA has more than doubled the size of the collection, including with gifts from the Matisse family. The BMA has organized many acclaimed exhibitions on the artist and dedicated the Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies in 2021 to improve access to and advance scholarship of his work. This suite of exhibitions draws on the museum's collection, as well as loans from public and private collections to create a series of exceptional experiences for visitors.

“Matisse’s extensive oeuvre continues to offer fertile ground for exploration and remains a source of deep inspiration for generations of artists across the globe,” said Asma Naeem, the BMA’s Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director. “Through the foresight of two incredible philanthropists and many BMA leaders, the museum has been able to establish one of the most important repositories of his work, placing us in the extraordinary position to create new and compelling ways for audiences to experience the beauty and power of his art. Our forthcoming exhibitions provide truly remarkable opportunities to view both iconic and little-known works and connect with the artist through both historical contexts and the vision of a rising contemporary artist in Louis Fratino.”

### **Fratino and Matisse: To See This Light Again**

**March 11–September 6, 2026**

*Fratino and Matisse: To See This Light Again* is a dynamic, intergenerational dialogue that brings together approximately 30 paintings and works on paper by Henri Matisse (French, 1869-1954) and Louis Fratino (b. 1993), a celebrated painter reshaping the language of figuration today. Fratino was born in Annapolis, Maryland, and was educated at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, where he became familiar with the strengths and depths of the BMA’s Matisse collection. He was influenced by the French artist and others to focus his work on domestic spaces and intimate portraits. Through luminous figure studies, interiors, still-lives, and self-portraits, the exhibition juxtaposes his depictions of the male figure with Matisse’s portrayals of female models while highlighting the individuality of each artist’s point of view. Examples include Matisse’s *The Blue Eyes* (1935), which shows the artist’s seemingly spontaneous approach to rendering the model, who rests her head on crossed arms while looking distantly out at the viewer. A similar sense of intimacy, touch, and languor is seen in Fratino’s *Ochre Alessandro* (2023), which features his male subject in repose. The sense of closeness seen in Matisse’s example—where the female model does not quite make eye contact with the viewer—is shared by Fratino’s sleeping figure. The exhibition features several new paintings by Fratino produced especially for this presentation.

The exhibition is co-curated by Virginia Anderson, Senior Curator of American Art and Department Head, American Painting & Sculpture and Decorative Arts, and Katy Rothkopf, the Anne and Ben Cone Memorial Director of the Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies and Senior Curator of European Painting and Sculpture. The exhibition is supported by The Pierre & Tana Matisse Foundation and Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff.

### **Matisse and Martinique: Portraits and Poetry**

**March 18–October 25, 2026**

This focus exhibition of 20 works is primarily drawn from 28 lithographs Matisse created for the book *Poésies Antillaises (Antillean Poetry)* (1946 to 1953) by John-Antoine Nau (born Eugène Léon Édouard Torquet, 1860–1918). It was published posthumously in 1972 and remains one of the artist’s least-known illustrated books. The images were inspired by the artist’s visit to Martinique in 1930 and comprise a visual representation of Nau’s poems, which address female companions who inspire reveries of travel, music, and oceanic landscapes. Studio records detailing the identities of the models for several *Poésies* illustrations reveal Matisse’s extensive working relationships with notable Caribbean and other international models. *Matisse and Martinique* presents these portrayals alongside works by two of the period’s leading artists from Martinique and Guadeloupe, illuminating some of the transatlantic artistic circles that contributed to the development of early modern art.

This exhibition is guest curated by Dr. Denise Murrell, Merryl H. and James S. Tisch Curator at Large, Office of the Director, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Inaugural Fellow of the Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies at the BMA (2022–2025). The exhibition is supported by Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff.

### **Matisse in Vence: The Stations of the Cross**

**March 29–June 28, 2026**

Co-organized by the Musée Matisse in Nice and the BMA, this exhibition is the first thorough consideration of the powerful mural Henri Matisse created for The Chapelle du Rosaire (Chapel of the Rosary) (1947–1951), the artist’s only large-scale architectural project and a highlight of his late career. Matisse moved from Nice to nearby Vence, France in 1943 to escape the threat of bombardment during World War II. He then renewed ties with a former model who had been his nurse and was in the process of becoming a Dominican nun under the name of Sister Jacques-Marie. Their reconnection led to a four-year commission to design the interior and exterior of a chapel in the town. Matisse designed every detail of the building—from its remarkable stained-glass windows to the priest’s vestments and three large-scale black-and-white ceramic murals. The final mural depicts the 14 stations of the cross, which represents Christ’s journey to Calvary. It is unique among Matisse’s works for its “rough” style, narrative storytelling, and Christian iconography. Matisse created an extraordinary number of drawings for *The Stations of the Cross* and yet, until now, it remains his least studied work. *Matisse in Vence: The Stations of the Cross* features approximately 85 sketches and preparatory drawings will include many drawings from private collections that have never been shown. This exhibition is also accompanied by a comprehensive catalog published in both English and French.

*Matisse in Vence: The Stations of the Cross* is guest curated by the distinguished scholar Yve-Alain Bois, Professor Emeritus, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, with assistance from Alix Agret, art historian and researcher. The BMA presentation is supported by Katy Rothkopf, the Anne and Ben Cone Memorial Director of the Ruth R. Marder Center for Matisse Studies and Senior Curator of European Painting and Sculpture. The exhibition is co-organized by the Musée Matisse Nice and the Baltimore Museum of Art. The exhibition is on view at Musée Matisse Nice from October 1, 2025, through January 19, 2026 (as *Henri Matisse. The Stations of the Cross—Drawing the Passion*). The Baltimore presentation is supported by Nancy Dorman and Stanley Mazaroff, The Pierre & Tana Matisse Foundation, and the Estate of Carolyn Lee Smith.

### **Baltimore Museum of Art**

Founded in 1914, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) inspires people of all ages and backgrounds through exhibitions, programs, and collections that tell an expansive story of art—challenging long-held narratives and embracing new voices. Our outstanding collection of more than 97,000 objects spans many eras and cultures and includes the world’s largest public holding of works by Henri Matisse; one of the nation’s finest collections of prints, drawings, and photographs; and a rapidly growing number of works by contemporary artists of diverse backgrounds. The museum is also distinguished by a neoclassical building designed by American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of modern and contemporary sculpture. The BMA is located three miles north

of the Inner Harbor, adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University, and has a community branch at Lexington Market. General admission is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

### **Visitor Information**

General admission to the BMA is free. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with extended hours on Thursdays until 9 p.m. The Sculpture Gardens are open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to dusk. The museum and gardens are closed New Year's Day, Juneteenth, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit [artbma.org](http://artbma.org).

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