

Henri Matisse cut out art

w/c 8th June 2020

As part of this current writing task, you'll be finding out a lot of information about the French artist Henri Matisse. He was talented in the use of many different media, but is most well-known for his ground-breaking painting style from the early 20th Century and for his cut outs from his later life.

Our inspiration for this art task is Matisse's work "La Piscine" (The Swimming Pool"). As he became more frail, Henri was less able to get outside into the strong southern-French sunshine and enjoy sitting by the pool in Nice, watching the bathers swimming and diving.

So, in the dining room of the hotel where he was living, he constructed his own 'pool', using white and bright-blue paper;



The pictures above show the art work in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The picture below shows the work in the hotel dining room. It's big!



Here we can see La Piscine in the dining room along with other pieces of Matisse's work.

His style of art was seen as a challenge to more conventional 'impressionism' where a 'realistic' depiction of the subject was considered more appropriate by many.

Henri's art is probably better described as 'abstract' or more 'imaginary'.

Which neatly brings us on to our creative task.

La Piscine came about as the result of Matisse wanting to be somewhere that he couldn't. Using similar methods, we are going to create a place that we would like to be. In the spirit of abstract art, it's not going to be a precise image, but an idea in the form of simple shapes and colours...

My place is a beach and I'm going to use blocks of the colours white, dark blue, light blue and yellow. It includes a palm tree, a boat, birds, breaking waves and the sun.

I started with a plan. Then I drew shapes onto coloured card and cut them out. Finally, I laid out the cut outs to decide where I wanted them to be on my picture and stuck them down.



There's a YouTube video, which describes this in more detail. Look for the link on the blog.

If you don't have the coloured card, don't panic – Matisse often painted card to the colour he wanted (actually, he got an assistant to paint it for him!) You could use paint or crayons.

My beach idea is just that – an idea. Yours could be something completely different – under the sea, a cityscape, mountains, a forest, a favourite room. If you're feeling adventurous, make it as BIG as you can!

Wherever you decide, have fun using your imagination to create it!