

Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso are undoubtedly the most influential artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Their influence on each others work has been the focus of countless major exhibitions around the world and looks set to intrigue generations to come.

***“Creativity takes courage.”*** – Matisse



The exhibition of prints at UpDown Gallery is but a small selection from their vast oeuvre. Printmaking formed an integral part in each artist’s development of ideas and style, imagery that is now recognized around the world. Each artist produced 1000’s of prints during their lifetimes, and with paintings now soaring into the increasingly inaccessible 10’s of millions this has created a competitive market for their prints.

***“An opportunity to own a work by 2 of the greatest artists of all time”*** – Kate Smith

The majority of prints in the exhibition are unsigned, a practice common for many artist at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Picasso in particular preferred to sign his works only on the conclusion of a sale. With each artist producing a large number of prints it was quite common practice to leave them unsigned, to sign at a later date, or to initial the works in the plate. Many of the editions were never signed, but they nonetheless are important works by these pioneering artists. Catalogue raisonne’s for each of these artists document all works signed and unsigned. It wasn’t until later in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century that signing became the standard, signed prints by Picasso and Matisse fetch proportionally more.

***“God is really another painter...like me.”*** - Picasso

Henri Matisse was born in 1869, 12 years Pablo Picasso's senior. Matisse was born in France, Picasso was born in Spain, each from different backgrounds with differing artistic training. In 1906 when they were first introduced neither liked the other’s work at first, but they seemed to sense at once the power each had to challenge and stimulate the other. For the rest of their lives each would keep a keen eye on the other’s new work, provoking each other to paint the same subjects, sometimes even with the same title. There are many ways to describe their relationship. It could be called a rivalry, a dialogue, a chess game - Matisse himself once compared it to a boxing match. But it also became the abiding friendship of two titans who, daring to paint the ugly, transformed our sense of beauty in art.

