

French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945

The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Editor



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Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, December 1942

Artist	Henri Matisse, French, 1869–1954
Title	<i>Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace</i>
Object Date	December 1942
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>Monette au collier d'ambre</i> ; <i>Woman Seated before a Black Background (Femme assise sur fond noir)</i> ; <i>Robe persane, collier d'ambre</i>
Medium	Oil on canvas
Dimensions (Unframed)	21 3/4 x 18 1/4 in. (55.3 x 46.4 cm)
Signature	Signed and dated lower left: Henri Matisse / 12/42
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Gift of Henry W. and Marion H. Bloch, 2015.13.13
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In *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*,¹ Henri Matisse tackled various binary oppositions that structured his art and modern French painting in the early 1940s. On June 7, 1942, the former Fauve told his son, the art dealer Pierre Matisse, that he wanted to achieve in painting what he had accomplished in drawing "without contradiction."² While the artist felt that his freely rendered drawings, such as those in his recently completed *Thèmes et variations* (1941–42),³ captured his sensations and emotions, he worried that his paintings' expressiveness was hampered by their carefully calibrated, flat areas of color.⁴ Matisse hoped to resolve this dilemma in works like the Nelson-Atkins picture. Executed on a white ground that the artist used to cover a previous paint application,⁵ this composition was made mostly with thinned pigments and gestural brushwork. The model's blonde curls, for example, were built up with strokes of yellow paint mixed with an

underlying green block-in layer and the black pigment of the painting's dark background. Painting this and other sections of the picture in an *alla prima* (Italian for "at first attempt") fashion, the artist created colorful equivalents to his swiftly made drawings in the medium of oil on canvas.



Fig. 1. Lydia Delectorskaya, Matisse's Hôtel Régina studio with a selection of paintings that includes *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* and the five works from the *Fenêtres* (Windows) series, late 1942–early 1943, gelatin silver print, Fonds Hélène Adant, Archives de la Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Pompidou, Paris, no. M5050_X0031_ADA_3_524

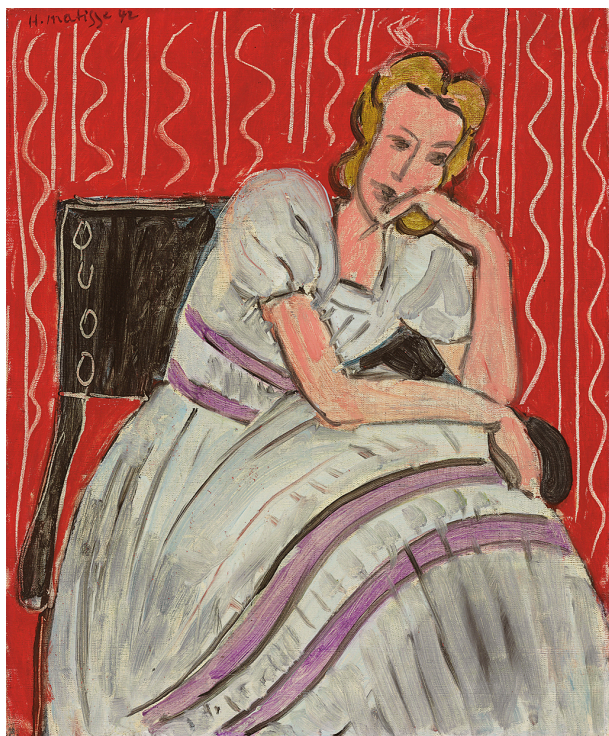


Fig. 2. Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman in a Gray Dress*, 1942, oil on canvas, 18 1/4 x 15 in. (46.3 x 38.2 cm), The Nahmad Collection, Monaco. Photo: Christie's Images / Bridgeman Images. © 2024 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Squaring painting with drawing in *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, Matisse also deconstructed the differences between shades and colors. He depicted the sitter's robe with bars of red and yellow, using his paintbrush as if it were a pen or a piece of charcoal to describe her dress with long and short stripes of black and cobalt violet.⁶ Because these marks are thin and curvilinear, they resonate with the pattern of arabesques the artist inscribed into the painting's black backdrop with either a palette knife or the handle of a paintbrush.⁷ Transforming that dark field into something that resembles one of his linocuts,⁸ Matisse not only likened painting to a graphic medium but lightened the weight of the black plane and brought it optically forward, enabling it to snap into a flattened, decorative unity with the composition's other painted elements. Not a shadowed area marginal to the picture but instead what Matisse in a 1941 interview called a coloristic "force" that contributes to the painting's overall chromatic harmony, the large black background of *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* is a source of warmth and luminosity in the composition.⁹ By treating black not as a shade but as a shimmering chroma, Matisse upends traditional understandings of light and dark in the Nelson-Atkins picture.¹⁰

In *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, Matisse also challenges the assumption that works of art produced in series cannot be generators of original aesthetic responses. A late 1942–early 1943 photograph taken by Matisse's studio manager and model Lydia Delectorskaya (Russian, 1910–1998) shows the Nelson-Atkins picture leaning on a cabinet on the floor of the artist's studio at the Hôtel Régina in Nice, in the South of France (Fig. 1). Hanging on the wall behind it are several of Matisse's other recent paintings, including five canvases the artist made between September 28 and October 23, 1942, that portray a model seated in an armchair near a set of windows.¹¹ Juxtaposing these paintings in a nonlinear and nonsequential fashion, Matisse, in an oblique reference to his 1942 displays of his *Thèmes et variations* drawings, acknowledged that while all five canvases are part of the same series—scholars today call them the *Fenêtres* (Windows)¹²—their different pigments and slight changes to the setting and model also make them individual works of art with unique characteristics. Matisse called these characteristics a "certain color of ideas" in a September 1, 1942, letter to the surrealist poet Louis Aragon (1897–1982),¹³ who understood Matisse's phrase to mean a fleeting, ineffable "feeling" prompted by a "deep-seated

correspondence” between the artist and his immediate physical surroundings.¹⁴



Fig. 3. Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress*, 1942, oil on canvas, 17 1/8 x 22 1/4 in. (43.5 x 56.5 cm), Musée National Picasso-Paris, no. MP2017-27. Photo: Mathieu Rabeau / Art Resource, NY. © 2024 Succession H. Matisse / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



Fig. 4. Hélène Adant, *Three carved wooden armchairs in Matisse's studio, Vence, ca. 1946*, gelatin silver print, Fonds Hélène Adant, Archives de la Bibliothèque Kandinsky, Centre Pompidou, Paris, no. M5050_X0031_ADA_3_580

An original work of art that is also part of series, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* produces its own “certain color of ideas” despite its strong formal relationships with other canvases. Made on December 1–2, 1942,¹⁵ it is the second of three paintings the artist created in quick succession that depict a seated woman in three-quarters profile. The first is *Seated Young Woman*

in a Gray Dress (Fig. 2), a work Matisse labored over for two weeks from November 16 to November 30;¹⁶ the third and final work in the sequence is *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress*, realized on December 3 (Fig. 3).¹⁷ While the long, purple curves in the foreground of *Seated Young Woman in a Gray Dress* amplify the brooding intensity of its pensively posed sitter, the quivering undulations and warm hues of the Nelson-Atkins picture augment the feeling of empathy evoked by its model's gentle smile and slight tilt of the head. Rendered on a horizontal canvas, *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress* is an altogether different picture. Dominated by a slightly garish green and purple color chord, it portrays a self-possessed woman who stares directly at the viewer. Although all three paintings use similar methods of cropping to create intimate portraits of the same model sitting in the same armchair at relatively the same forty-five-degree angle, they are each works of art that, to paraphrase Matisse's June 7, 1942, letter to his son Pierre, were as novel to the artist as they are to the present-day spectator.¹⁸



Fig. 5. Turkish *entari* (woman's robe), 19th century, silk, 63 x 21 5/8 in. (160 x 55 cm), private collection, reproduced in *Matisse, His Art and His Textiles: The Fabric of Dreams*, ed. Hilary Spurling and Ann Dumas, exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy, 2004), 103. Photo by Todd May Photography

Matisse experienced something new every time he painted one of his canvases, because he had a

meticulous knowledge of and obsessive relationship with his many studio props. So attached was Matisse to the pieces of furniture and household accessories that appear in his early 1940s artworks that he called them his “palette of objects” in a May 4, 1946, letter to Aragon.¹⁹ Less than two weeks later, Matisse sent Aragon several photographs to show the poet his “complete collection” of treasured objects; in one of these, on the right, is the armchair depicted in the Nelson-Atkins picture (Fig. 4).²⁰ Another one of Matisse’s cherished items was the robe worn by the sitter in *Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*. This sumptuous garment, which resembles a nineteenth-century Turkish *entari* (Fig. 5),²¹ would have been stored in the “costume room”²² of the Hôtel Régina studio, where Matisse’s models changed before posing sessions with the artist.



Fig. 6. Photograph of Simone “Monette” Vincent, ca. 1942, in Lydia Delectorskaya, *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées: Peinture et livres illustrés de 1939 à 1943* (Paris: Irus et Vincent Hansma, 1996), 354

Animating the world of hand-picked objects and curiosities Matisse created for himself in the Hôtel Régina were models such as Simone “Monette” Vincent (French, b. Switzerland, 1919–2016) (Fig. 6).²³ Scouted by Delectorskaya on a bus in Nice at the end of winter

1942,²⁴ Vincent is the young woman with a pert nose and reddish-blond hair who sat for approximately ten paintings Matisse realized in late 1942 and early 1943, including the five *Fenêtres* and the series of three pictures of which the Nelson-Atkins painting is a part.²⁵ Even when Matisse spent a significant amount of time working with one of his models, none of them ever became static sources of “information” for him.²⁶ Describing his sitters as “springboard[s],” Matisse treated them as starting points from which he launched himself on unpredictable sensorial trajectories that he strived to encapsulate in each of his pictures.²⁷ That these journeys are always unique is evident in *Seated Young Woman in a Gray Dress* (see Fig. 2), *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, and *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress* (see Fig. 3), where Vincent, with her different costumes and poses, arouses distinct energies and emotions.

Equally transformative was Matisse’s ability to make a sale feel like a gift when he transferred *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* to the Parisian banker Max Pellequer (before 1903–after 1973)²⁸ on June 12, 1943.²⁹ This, at least, is how Pellequer interpreted the exchange. Twelve days after his purchase, Pellequer wrote to thank the artist for the “delicacy” and “chic” with which he offered the painting. “You wanted to give me the impression that I had bought it from you, whereas I still have the pleasant feeling that you gave me a real gift,” he effused.³⁰ Pellequer also gave an account of his recent visit, with the painter Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973), to the studio of the publisher André Lejard, who was photographing a group of Matisse’s paintings for an upcoming publication.³¹ Pellequer began by telling Matisse that Picasso, who for several decades was Matisse’s friend and artistic rival, was delighted with the painting Matisse had recently given to him.³² Pellequer then explained that Picasso, as Matisse had authorized, decided to substitute that work for one of the other pictures at Lejard’s: *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress*, the third canvas in the series that includes the Nelson-Atkins picture. According to painter Françoise Gilot (1921–2023), Picasso’s lover and muse from 1943 to 1953, the picture’s gaudy colors attracted the artist. When Picasso collected the painting at Lejard’s, he openly wondered if he would ever be able to replicate the painting’s bold matching of “such a mauve with such a green.”³³



Fig. 7. Pablo Picasso, *Woman with a Book*, 1932, oil on canvas, 51 3/8 x 38 1/2 in. (130.5 x 97.8 cm), Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena, CA, F.1969.38.10.P. © 2024 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Picasso likewise might have wondered if *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress* and *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* were Matisse's belated responses to his own 1932 *Woman with a Book* (Fig. 7), a painting featuring Marie-Thérèse Walter. In addition to juxtaposing mauve and green on Walter's left cheek, Picasso depicts her resting her right cheek on her right hand, a gesture lifted from Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres's (1780–1867) *Madame Moitessier* (1856; National Gallery, London) that Matisse repeats, albeit in a slightly modified manner, in *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress*.³⁴ Matisse would have had ample opportunity to study Picasso's *Woman with a Book*. Exhibited in Paris in 1936 at the Galerie Rosenberg and in 1937 at the Petit Palais,³⁵ it was also reproduced in black and white in a 1935 issue of *Cahiers d'Art* as well as in that journal's special 1936 issue dedicated to Picasso.³⁶ One compelling point of comparison between *Woman with a Book* and *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* are the red and yellow pieces of jewelry adorning the necks of the two sitters. Another would be the paired white circles on each of the sitters' chests. In Picasso's

painting they signify both Walter's breasts and the testicles of a what appears to be an upside-down penis.³⁷ The Surrealist-inspired, sexual associations of these rounded shapes are toned down in Matisse's far less eroticized picture, where they simultaneously evoke the round beads of Vincent's amber necklace and the sitter's clothed breasts. One other aspect of *Woman with a Book* that Matisse tempers in his composition is Picasso's arbitrary use of non-naturalistic, intensified colors, such as the sea green of Walter's hair.³⁸ While Matisse, in a nod to Picasso, utilized a glowing wash of green to block in Vincent's blond curls, he blended it with touches of yellow and the black pigment of the background, bringing it more in line with its naturalistic appearance and the less abrasive colors of his considerably more subdued composition.



Fig. 8. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, *Portrait of Madame de Senonnes, née Marie-Geneviève-Marguerite Marcoz, later Vicomtesse de Senonnes*, 1814, oil on canvas, 41 3/4 x 33 1/8 in. (106 x 84 cm), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, France, no. 1028. Photo: Bridgeman Images

Incorporating aspects of Picasso's avant-garde practice into *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, Matisse—as he had in *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress*—also cited tradition, specifically Ingres's celebrated 1814 masterpiece *Portrait of Madame de*

Senonnes, née Marie-Geneviève-Marguerite Marcoz, later Vicomtesse de Senonnes (Fig. 8).³⁹ According to Aragon, who spent a considerable amount of time with Matisse in Nice in 1941–42, the artist was obsessed with Ingres’s 1814 picture in the early to mid-1940s.⁴⁰ In the Nelson-Atkins painting, Matisse not only recreates the overall color harmony of Ingres’s portrait, including the broad black plane of the picture’s background; he has Vincent assume Mme Senonnes’s relaxed but slightly stilted pose, although Matisse places Vincent’s right hand under her left elbow and aligns her shoulders more with the picture plane. He also uses Ingres’s serpentine contours to describe Vincent’s torso and modest smile. Referencing Ingres in his December 1942 picture, Matisse was not just fueling the dialectic of avant-gardism and tradition that drove modernist art from the late-nineteenth century forward. Working during one of his country’s darkest and most frightening hours, he was defiantly defending and preserving the legacy of Gallic painting after the Nazis, in violation of the 1940 armistice agreement, moved to occupy all of Vichy France on November 11, 1942.⁴¹ In his own particular way, Matisse—without contradiction—fought the Nazis and waged other battles in *Seated Woman with an Amber Necklace*, addressing a whole set of binary oppositions that informed his art and modern French painting in the early 1940s. As Aragon, a proud member of the antifascist Resistance movement, declared in his 1942 text on the artist, Matisse in his “work has achieved a balance of opposites, it is France.”⁴²

Kenneth Brummel
October 2024

Notes

1. Ever since the painting was exhibited at Galerie Beyeler, Basel, in 1980 as *Femme assise sur fond noir* (Woman seated before a black background), it has retained some variant of that title. See *Matisse: Huiles, gouaches, découpées, dessins, sculptures*, exh. cat. (Basel: Galerie Beyeler, 1980), unpaginated. Most recently, Saul Nelson, in *Never Ending: Modernist Painting Past and Future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2024), called the painting *Woman Seated before a Black Background* (180). However, Matisse, in a journal entry dated June 12, 1943, referred to the picture as “Monette au collier d’ambre”; Archives Matisse, Issy-les-Moulineaux, France. Lydia Delectorskaya, Matisse’s model and studio manager, titles the

work *Robe persane, gros collier d’ambre* (Persian dress, large amber necklace) in *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées: Peinture et livres illustrés de 1939 à 1943* (Paris: Irus et Vincent Hansma, 1996), 429, which is currently the most comprehensive catalogue for Matisse’s work for 1939–43. Because the two other paintings in the series to which the Nelson-Atkins painting belongs are titled *Seated Young Woman in a Gray Dress* (Fig. 2) and *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress* (Fig. 3), the Nelson-Atkins has chosen the title *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*. Describing the model’s pose and distinguishing costume element, this title is consistent with the titles of the other works in the series and with the focus of Matisse and Delectorskaya on the sitter’s necklace.

2. “. . . faire en peinture ce que j’ai fait en dessin—rentrer dans la peinture sans contradiction comme dans les dahlias—dans le bouquet de fleurs dont tu m’as envoyé la photographie—et qui a besoin de la forte personnalité du peintre pour que la bataille laisse des restes intéressants.” Henri Matisse to Pierre Matisse, June 7, 1942, quoted in *First Papers of Surrealism*, exh. cat. (New York: Coordinating Council of French Relief Societies, Inc., 1942), [26]. Jack Flam translates this passage as: “. . . to do in painting what I have done in drawing—return to painting without contradiction as in the dahlias—in the bouquet of flowers that you sent me a photograph of—and which needs the strong personality of the painter in order for the battle to leave interesting remains.” Flam, “On Transformations, 1942,” in *Matisse on Art*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 143.

3. *Thèmes et variations* is a set of 158 drawings Matisse rendered in 1941–42 that were published as a portfolio in 1943 as Henri Matisse, *Dessins: Thèmes et variations* (Paris: Martin Fabiani, 1943). Beginning with a charcoal drawing, or one of his “thèmes,” Matisse then explored “variations” on that theme in pen and India ink, black Conté crayon, or pencil. The set contains seventeen themes, lettered A to P, with each theme consisting of three to nineteen variations. One example of a drawing from this set is *Thèmes et variations (Série L, variation 9)* (1942; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art).

4. For the most relevant example of this articulated concern, see Henri Matisse to Pierre Bonnard, January 13, 1940, in *Bonnard/Matisse: Letters between Friends*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Abrams, 1992), 58.
5. See accompanying technical essay by Diana M. Jaskierny.
6. John Twilley identifies the purple pigment in the sitter's dress as cobalt violet in his "Scientific Studies of Matisse's Woman Seated, 1942, no. 2015-13-13," unpublished scientific report, October 2, 2024, NAMA conservation file.
7. See accompanying technical essay by Jaskierny.
8. According to Delectorskaya, Matisse became intensely interested in the medium of linocut in the summer of 1938; Delectorskaya, *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 156. Alfred Barr, citing a linocut of a "girl's head" printed in *XX^e siècle* in 1938, states that Matisse first began to experiment with the "linoleum engraving medium" in 1937; Alfred Barr, *Matisse: His Art and His Public* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1951), 271, 548n4.
9. "Instinctivement. J'ai fini par considérer les couleurs comme des forces qu'il fallait assembler selon son inspiration. Les couleurs sont transformables par les rapports, c'est-à-dire qu'on noir deviant tantôt noir-rouge si on le met près d'une couleur un peu froide comme le bleu de Prusse, tantôt noir-bleu si on le met près d'une couleur qui a un froid extrêmement chaud: orangé par exemple" (Instinctively. I finally came to consider colors as forces, to be assembled as inspiration dictates. Colors can be transformed by relation; a black becomes black-red if you put it next to a rather cold color like Prussian blue, blue-black if you put it alongside a color that has an extremely hot basis: orange, for example). "Neuvième Conversation," in Henri Matisse with Pierre Courthion, *Chatting with Henri Matisse: The Lost 1941 Interview*, ed. Serge Guilbaut, trans. Chris Miller (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 139, 333. Matisse made similar remarks in 1945 and 1946, which were published in Galerie Maeght's catalogue for an exhibition titled *Le noir est une couleur* in *Derrière le Miroir*, no. 1 (December 1946), unpaginated. For analyses of these remarks, see Dominique Fourcade, *Henri Matisse: Écrits et propos sur l'art*, rev. ed. (Paris: Hermann, éditeurs des sciences et des arts, 1972), 202, 202n64; and Flam, *Matisse on Art*, 165–66, 291n5.
10. Yve-Alain Bois offers a similar analysis of *Tulips and Oysters on a Black Background* (February 11–12, 1943; Musée National Picasso-Paris), another painting by Matisse with a black, scratched background, in Yve-Alain Bois, *Matisse and Picasso*, exh. cat. (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 142, 149. Delectorskaya assigns exact dates to this picture in *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 469.
11. Moving counterclockwise from the painting hanging above the cabinet next to the door, these five works are: *Jeune fille en robe blanche, porte noire* (Young woman in a white dress, black door) (September 30, 1942; Private collection); *Robe orientale violette sur la robe blanche, à la fenêtre* (Purple oriental robe over the white dress, at the window) (October 2, 1942; Private collection); *Jeune fille en rose dans un intérieur* (Young woman in pink in an interior) (October 5, 1942; ISE Cultural Foundation, Tokyo); *Jeune fille en robe blanche* (Young woman in white dress) (September 28, 1942; Private collection); and *Intérieur aux barres du soleil* (Interior with bars of sun) (October 22–23, 1942; Musée Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis). For a thorough analysis of this series, see Patrice Deparpe, "La floraison," in *Matisse: Paires et séries*, ed. Cécile Debray, exh. cat. (Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 2012), 221–29. Deparpe uses the same dates Delectorskaya assigns to these paintings in *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 392–97, 406–7, 414–15.
12. Claudine Grammont calls these five paintings the *Fenêtres* in her entry on Monette Vincent, in Claudine Grammont, ed., *Tout Matisse* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 2018), 881.
13. "Je me suis engagé dans une certaine couleur des idées depuis longtemps—si elle supprime beaucoup de mois dans la finesse, l'exquis elle est remplie d'air pur. En somme j'ai commencé à labourer" (For a long time now I have been involved with a certain color of ideas—though it suppresses much of myself as regards delicacy and refinement, it is full of fresh air. In short, I am breaking new ground). Henri Matisse to Louis Aragon, September 1, 1942, quoted in Louis Aragon, "La Grande Songerie ou le retour de Thulé" (1945–1946), in his *Henri Matisse, roman*

- (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), 258. Translation from Aragon, *Henri Matisse: A Novel*, trans. Jean Stewart (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1972), 1:207. All subsequent translations from Aragon's *Henri Matisse, roman* are from this source.
14. "Quand il a poussé la porte, et à l'improviste *surprise* la chambre, le fauteuil, c'est une profonde correspondance entre lui-même et ce lieu, qui seule peut expliquer l'enthousiasme qui le prend, le retient. . . . Par des moyens qui sont ceux de la peinture, Matisse exprime un sentiment qui ne pourrait être autrement exprimé; et comme il est peintre, c'est un pas en avant dans la connaissance de soi-même, de ce qu'il cherche. Bref, c'est une porte ouverte sur le monde matisseien" (Only some deep-seated correspondance between himself and this place can explain the enthusiasm that seized and held him when he opened the door and caught the room, the armchair, *unawares*. . . . By means which are those of painting, Matisse expresses a feeling which could not be expressed otherwise; and since he is a painter, this is a step forward in the knowledge of himself, of what he is searching for. In brief, it is a door opening on to Matisse's world). Aragon, "La Grande Songerie ou le retour de Thulé," 278, 280, emphasis original. In an annotation to this passage, Aragon notes, "Matisse disait *une certain couleur*" (Matisse said *a certain color*), not "une certaine lumière des idées" (a certain light of ideas), as is indicated in the main text (278n2), emphasis original (trans. Stewart, 1:225).
 15. Delectorskaya assigns this date to the painting in *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 429.
 16. For an analysis of this picture, see the catalogue entry by Claudine Grammont in Claudine Grammont, ed., *Matisse: Collection Nahmad*, exh. cat. (Paris: LienArt, 2020), 59. Grammont uses the same date Delectorskaya assigns to the picture in *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 428.
 17. Delectorskaya assigns this date to the painting in *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 431.
 18. "Le tableau n'est pas une glace qui reflète ce qui j'ai vécu en le faisant mais un objet puissant, fort, expressif qui est nouveau pour moi autant que pour quiconque." Henri Matisse to Pierre Matisse, June 7, 1942, quoted in *First Papers of Surrealism*, 26. Flam translates this text as: "The painting is not a mirror reflecting what I experienced while creating it, but a powerful object, strong and expressive, which is as novel for me as for anyone else." Flam, "On Transformations, 1942," 143.
 19. "Cher ami, je remasse les différentes photos que me demande la liste au sujet de la palette-d'objets, que vous avez faite il y a quatre ans" (My dear friend, I am collecting the various photos asked for in the list you made four years ago, referring to the palette of objects). Henri Matisse to Louis Aragon, May 4, 1946, quoted in the marginal annotation to Aragon, "La Grande Songerie ou le retour de Thulé," 282n1 (trans. Stewart, 1:227).
 20. "Cher Louis Aragon, j'ai pour vous une collection complète de 'palette-d'objets.' Vous serez satisfait" (Dear Louis Aragon, I have made a complete collection of the 'palette of objects' for you. You'll be satisfied). Henri Matisse to Louis Aragon, May 16, 1946, quoted in the marginal annotation to Aragon, "La Grande Songerie ou le retour de Thulé," 282n1 (trans. Stewart, 1:227).
 21. While the curators who reproduced two views of this garment in *Matisse: His Art and His Textiles: The Fabric of Dreams*, ed. Hilary Spurling and Ann Dumas, exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2004), 103, do not tie it to any specific painting, its materials, striping, braiding, cut, and silhouette resemble those of the red-and-yellow robe in the Nelson-Atkins picture.
 22. Sister Jacques-Marie (née Monique Bourgeois), who posed for Matisse in 1942–44, puts this term in quotation marks in her account of working in Matisse's studio; Soeur Jacques-Marie, "Henri Matisse," in "Models," special issue, *Grand Street*, no. 50 (autumn 1994): 83.

23. Grammont is unable to assign a birth date to Vincent in her entry on the sitter in *Tout Matisse*, 881. However, see “Simone Monette Martin, 2016,” from the “United States, Residence Database, 1970–2024,” *FamilySearch*, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:6YJM-BXPD>. She was born in September 1919 and died in January 2016. In a passenger list for the SS *Washington* sailing from Le Havre in 1946, Vincent is listed as working as “Sectr. UNO” in Washington, DC; see “List or Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States,” July 19, 1946, from the “New York, New York Passenger and Crew Lists, 1909, 1925–1957” database, *FamilySearch*, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L94V-7452>, citing National Archives and Records Administration microfilm publication T715. In 1950, she married Georges-Henri Martin, who had been a journalist in Washington since 1941. See “Georges Henri Martin,” in the New York, U.S., Marriage License Indexes, 1907–2018, license no. 36412, December 29, 1950, digitized on Ancestry.com; and Alain Clavien, “Martin, Georges-Henri,” in *Dictionnaire historique de la Suisse (DHS)*, July 31, 2007, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/fr/articles/046088/2007-07-31>. The author wishes to thank Meghan Gray, NAMA, for this research.
24. According to Vincent, Delectorskaya approached her on a bus on the hill in Cimiez in Nice toward the end of winter 1942. Vincent had been working for Matisse’s doctor at the time. See Monique Martin-Vincent, “Je continuerai à me souvenir avec tendresse,” in *Hommage à Lydia Delectorskaya*, exh. cat. (Le Cateau-Cambrésis: Musée Matisse, 1999), 23–27. This text is reproduced in Irina Antanova et al., *Lydia D: Lydia Delectorskaya, muse et modèle de Matisse* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2010), 200–201. In Matisse’s oeuvre, Vincent first appears in drawings dated July 1942. Three of these are reproduced in Delectorskaya, *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 355.
25. The other is *The Lute* (former collection of Sidney Brody), which the artist painted on February 22 and 25, 1943. Delectorskaya assigns this date to the painting in *Henri Matisse: Contre vents et marées*, 475.
26. “Le modèle, pour les autres, c’est un renseignement. Moi, c’est quelque chose qui m’arrête” (The model, for other people, is a source of information. For me, it’s something that arrests me). Quoted in Aragon, “Matisse-en-France” (1942), in Louis Aragon, *Henri Matisse, roman*, 110 (trans. Stewart, 1:85).
27. “Ce modèle est pour moi un tremplin—c’est une porte que je dois enforcer pour accéder au jardin dans lequel je suis seul et si bien—même le modèle n’existe que pour ce qu’il me sert” (The model is a springboard for me—it’s a door which I must break down to reach the garden in which I am alone and so happy—even the model exists only for the use I can make of it). Quoted in a marginal annotation to Aragon, “La Grande Songerie ou le retour de Thulé,” 292n3 (trans. Stewart, 1:235).
28. While Grammont assigned the life dates of “(?–1974)” to the collector (entry on Pellequer, in Grammont, *Tout Matisse*, 881), Anna Jozefacka provides the life dates as “before 1903–after 1973”; Anna Jozefacka, “Pellequer, Max,” *The Modern Art Index Project*, January 2015, revised by Lauren Rosati, December 2019, Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://doi.org/10.57011/ZXYW6521>.
29. Matisse recorded the exchange in a journal entry dated June 12, 1943, Archives Matisse, Issy-les-Moulineaux, France: “Remis à Max Pellequer son tableau (‘Monette au collier d’ambre’)” (Given to Max Pellequer his painting [“Monette with the Amber Necklace”). Translation by Kenneth Brummel. The author wishes to thank Anne Théry, Archives Henri Matisse, and MacKenzie Mallon, NAMA, for their assistance with this research.
30. “Vous m’avez permis d’acquérir un splendide tableau et vous l’avez fait avec une belle délicatesse, un tel chic qui vous avez voulu me donner l’impression que je vous l’avais acheté alors que je garde la sensation agréable que vous m’avez fait un véritable cadeau” (You enabled me to acquire a splendid painting, and you did it with such delicacy and chic, you wanted to give me the impression that I had bought it from you, whereas I still have the pleasant feeling that you gave me a real gift). Max Pellequer to Henri Matisse, June 24, 1943, Archives Matisse, Issy-les-Moulineaux,

- France; translation by Kenneth Brummel. According to Grammont, the painting mentioned in this passage is the Nelson-Atkins picture. Claudine Grammont to MacKenzie Mallon, NAMA, February 22, 2023, NAMA curatorial files. The author wishes to thank MacKenzie Mallon and Claudine Grammont, Musée Matisse, Nice, for their assistance with this research.
31. Max Pellequer to Henri Matisse, June 24, 1943, Archives Matisse. For two other discussions of this section of Pellequer's letter, see Hélène Seckel-Klein's entry on Henri Matisse in *Picasso collectionneur*, exh. cat. (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1998), 172; and Bois, *Matisse and Picasso*, 133, 136. Lejard's publication was *Matisse: Seize peintures, 1939-1943* (Paris: Éditions du Chêne, 1943).
 32. To date, scholars do not know which picture this is. For a discussion about this particular picture, see Bois, *Matisse and Picasso*, 133.
 33. See Françoise Gilot, *Matisse and Picasso: A Friendship in Art* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 29.
 34. Matisse also repeats the gesture of Mme Moitessier's hand in *Woman in Blue* (1937; Philadelphia Museum of Art). For a recent discussion of Matisse's 1937 response to Picasso's citation of Ingres in *Woman with a Book*, see Emily Talbot, "Ingres as Creative Catalyst: Picasso's *Woman with a Book*," in Christopher Riopelle, Emily Talbot, and Susan L. Siegfried, *Picasso Ingres: Face to Face*, exh. cat. (London: National Gallery Global, 2022), 40-41.
 35. See *Exposition d'oeuvres récentes de Picasso*, exh. cat. (Paris: Paul Rosenberg, 1936), unpaginated, as no. 6, *Femme assise tenant un livre*; and *Les maîtres de l'Art Indépendant 1895-1937*, exh. cat. (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1937), 106, as no. 4, *Femme assise tenant un livre*.
 36. See Christian Zervos, "Fait social et vision comique," *Cahiers d'Art* 10, nos. 7-10 (1935): 147; and *Picasso, 1930-1935* (Paris: Éditions "Cahiers d'Art," 1936), 11.
 37. *Girl before a Mirror* (March 14, 1932; Museum of Modern Art, New York) is another 1932 painting in which Picasso transforms the breasts and abdomen of a female subject into a testicle and penis. For a recent discussion of Picasso's fusion of male and female signifiers in the distorted anatomies of figures in his 1932 paintings, see Achim Borchardt-Hume, "The Painter of Today," in Achim Borchardt-Hume and Nancy Ireson, eds., *Picasso 1932: Love Fame Tragedy*, exh. cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 2018), 21.
 38. For three discussions that outline the differences in the 1920s and 1930s between Matisse's carefully harmonized color system, based on how objects appear in the natural world, and Picasso's more intellectualized, non-naturalistic approach to color, see Linda Nochlin, "Picasso's Color: Schemes and Gambits," in "Picasso," special issue, *Art in America* 68, no. 10 (December 1980): 106-7; Bois, *Matisse and Picasso*, 72, 74; and Rosalind Krauss, "Color War: Picasso's Matisse Period," in *Self and History: A Tribute to Linda Nochlin*, ed. Aruna D'Souza (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 147-49, 151.
 39. According to Philip Conisbee, *Portrait de Madame Senonnes, née Marie-Geneviève-Marguerite Marcoz, later Vicomtesse de Senonnes*, is one of Ingres's greatest portraits. See his catalogue entry on the painting in Gary Tinterow and Philip Conisbee, *Portraits by Ingres: Image of an Epoch*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999), 150.
 40. See, for example, Aragon, "Matisse-en-France," 116n3, 133n1, 151n3 (trans. Stewart, 1:89n1, 1:125n1, as well as a marginal annotation and a 1968 note by Aragon on 1:105), and Aragon, "La Grande Songerie ou le retour de Thulé," 277n1, 297n1 (trans. Stewart, see Aragon's 1946 annotation, reinserted in 1966, on 1:223; and his 1967 annotation on 1:239).
 41. Aragon articulates this argument in different passages of "Matisse-en-France," 98-99, 143-44, 176 (trans. Stewart, 1:72-73, 1:115-16, 1:144), and "La Grande Songerie ou le retour de Thulé," 298, 302 (trans. Stewart, 1:240, 1:242, 1:244).
 42. "Ainsi se fait en lui la synthèse de la France. . . . Le Nord et le Midi. La raison et la déraison. L'imitation et l'invention. La brume et le soleil. L'inspiration et la réalité. Mais les contrastes sont dans l'homme, son attitude, ce qu'il dit: l'oeuvre déjà est équilibre des contraires, la France" (And so he embodies the synthesis of France, North and

South. Reason and unreason. Imitation and invention. Sunlight and mist. Inspiration and reality. But these contrasts are in the man, in his attitude, in what he says: his work has achieved a balance of opposites, it is France). See Aragon, "Matisse-en-France," 110 (trans. Stewart, 1:116).

Technical Entry

Citation

Chicago:

Diana M. Jaskierny and John Twilley, "Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, December 1942," technical entry in *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, ed. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.802.2088>.

MLA:

Jaskierny, Diana M. and John Twilley. "Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, December 1942," technical entry. *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, edited by Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2024. doi: 10.37764/78973.5.802.2088.

With blocks of color and scumbled modeling, Henri Matisse's *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* stylistically bridges the artist's earlier portraiture and the collages or "cut-outs" created at the end of his life. The painting was executed on a plain-weave canvas, corresponding in size to a French standard canvas no. 10 figure,¹ and retains its original dimensions, with pronounced secondary cusping along the left and right sides.² The painting is mounted to a commercially made, five-member wooden stretcher, possibly original to the painting. The commercially prepared canvas has a thin and even, white or slightly off-white ground layer of lead white that extends over the tacking margins. A second lead white ground layer of similar color, likely put on by the artist, appears to have been applied across the majority of the picture plane but is not present on the tacking margins. This upper ground layer remains visible in many areas of the painting and may have been added to cover an earlier paint application that was painted directly on the first ground layer. In the sitter's face, the upper ground layer and lower layers appear to have been abraded or scraped away prior to the painting's

completion, evident by canvas weave caps visible through the thin paint application (Fig. 9).

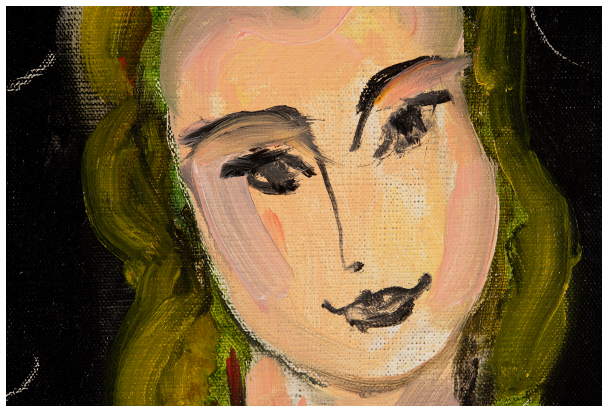


Fig. 9. Detail photograph illustrating the abraded ground layer and the green lower layer of the hair and wet-into-wet paint application in the face, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)



Fig. 10. Photomicrograph of a crack in the recto turnover edge revealing blue and yellow paint beneath a second ground layer, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

Cracks along the recto turnover edge reveal a variety of colors under the microscope. Blue and yellow paint that is unrelated to the existing composition is visible beneath the upper ground layer along the left and right tacking margins (Fig. 10). Analyses of microsamples in the scanning electron microscope confirm ultramarine and cadmium yellow in these colors. With exposures of these pigments on both sides, it is possible that they derive from an early application of a background color. In contrast, the pale gray-blue and vibrant red and yellow of *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* extend over and into the turnover cracks, indicating that enough time had passed for cracks to form on the canvas before the existing composition was completed.³ Considering the absence of underlying paint textures,

the thin applications of subsequent paint to form the existing composition, and no discernable lower layers in the center, it is possible Matisse scraped down or wiped away a lower background paint application that is unrelated to the existing composition before applying the second ground layer used to cover any remaining blue and yellow.^{4,5}



Fig. 11. Photomicrograph of a red, yellow, and blue thinly painted outline along the proper left side of the chair, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

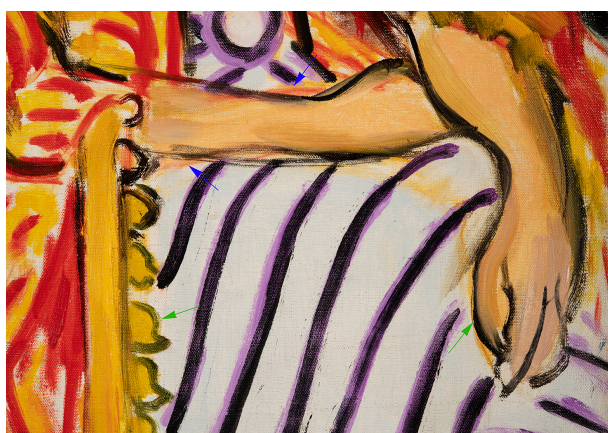


Fig. 12. Detail photograph of sketched red and yellow lines for the forearm (indicated by blue arrows) and wet-over-wet outlines in the outer Persian robe (indicated by green arrows), *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

Once the upper ground layer had been applied, Matisse completed the composition with thin paint and animated brushwork. While no clear underdrawing was detected with infrared reflectography or microscopy, thin red, yellow, and blue paint appear to outline certain elements, such as the proper left side of the chair, to establish their position (Fig. 11). Similarly, the placement of the figure was dryly sketched with yellow and red, which is most visible around the forearms (Fig. 12). An arching yellow line connecting the two arms could be a general mark that was later refined, or it may reveal the original placement of the proper left hand. Washes of color were laid down to further block in the composition, including brown for the chair and lime green for the hair. Painted quickly, the green underpainting of the hair and the black of the background meet and blend in isolated areas with wet-into-wet paint application (see Fig. 9). A second, thicker application of black paint was then added to the background around the figure, and the hair was built up with a thicker yellow-green paint.



Fig. 13. Photomicrograph of wet-over-dry purple and black stripes on the inner gown, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

Working quickly, Matisse appears to have then alternated between painting the chair and the figure, making it difficult to determine the precise order of paint application. While the majority of the composition consists of wet-over-wet brushwork, there are also examples of wet-over-dry. The purple stripes of the inner gown were applied after the lower pale gray-blue color of the gown had dried. Similarly, the black stripes here were applied over the already dried purple stripes (Fig. 13). This differs from many of the other black outlines, such as the those around the arms and outer Persian robe in Figure 12, which were incorporated into the

composition when the surrounding or underlying paint was still wet.

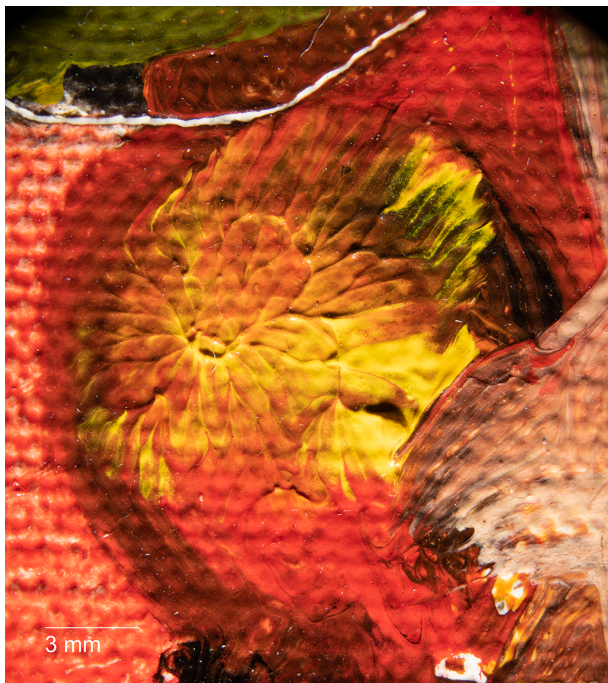


Fig. 14. Photomicrograph of necklace bead in raking light, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

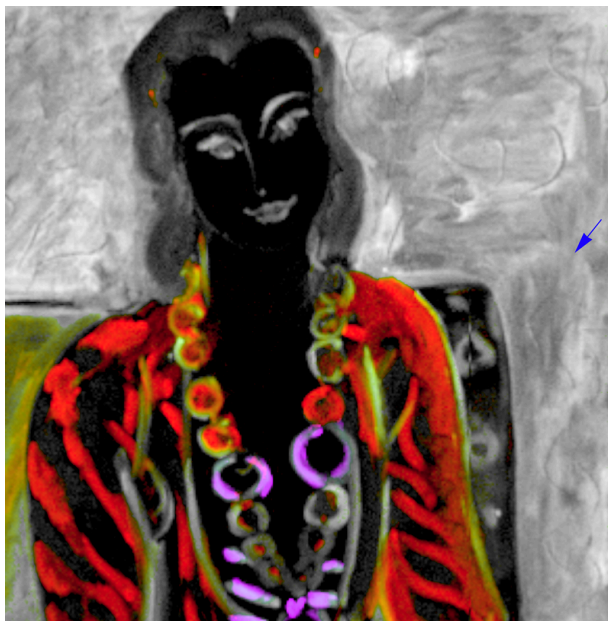


Fig. 15. Detail view of the elemental mapping region, showing the distribution of calcium, in white, in which a roughly outlined chair wing is visible (indicated by blue arrow), along with selenium (cadmium red selenide) in red, and cobalt (cobalt arsenate violet) in violet. The calcium is almost certainly a component of more than one pigment, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942).

Intentional wet-into-wet painting was used sparingly throughout *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*. The figure's face was succinctly and efficiently painted, with a thin peach base, a few black lines to sketch in the features of the face, and broad strokes of cool-toned pink to shape the hairline and cheeks. Using the black of the eyebrows, Matisse pulled a wide brush across the figure's lids to develop the shadow (see Fig. 9). Playing with texture, the artist blended red and yellow to form some of the pearls or beads of the necklace, pressing a loaded brush into the canvas and lifting it to create peaks and swirls of color (Fig. 14). Matisse's use of red, yellow, green, and purple follow his established color preferences, in which one primary color is removed from the palette.⁶ Here, with blue removed, the complementary color of orange was subsequently eliminated.⁷

Mapping of the chemical elements associated with the pigments was carried out on a detail of the composition covering the sitter's head and upper torso that contains representative examples of all the colors. By this means, a partial list of pigments was identified that includes lead white, zinc white, cadmium red, small amounts of iron-based red possibly from an earth color, chrome yellow, cadmium yellow, and cobalt arsenate violet (possibly of two varieties). A synthetic organic pigment containing chlorine was employed in red-brown passages. Barium sulfate was commonly encountered as a colorless filler. The infrared behavior, observed throughout the near- and shortwave infrared regions of the spectrum, confirms the presence of carbon black. Phosphorous, associated with only part of these blacks, indicates that two varieties are present, one of which is bone black. Many additional pigment species may be present, including blue that was visible with the microscope but not represented by any mappable elements.

The distribution of calcium is particularly interesting because it appears to correspond to variations in application of the background black that are apparent visually and to reveal an alternative form of chair with a rounded wing adjacent to the sitter's proper left shoulder. Figure 15 depicts these features in the distribution of calcium (shown in white), alongside selenium associated with cadmium red and cobalt associated with cobalt violet.

Three forms of evidence argue for the elimination, by the artist, of any prior painting associated with the colors visible through the turnover cracks before the creation of the present work: the absence of additional element

distributions in MA-XRF analysis; the absence of additional radiographic features; and the absence of additional features visible in the infrared by either reflection or transmission imaging.

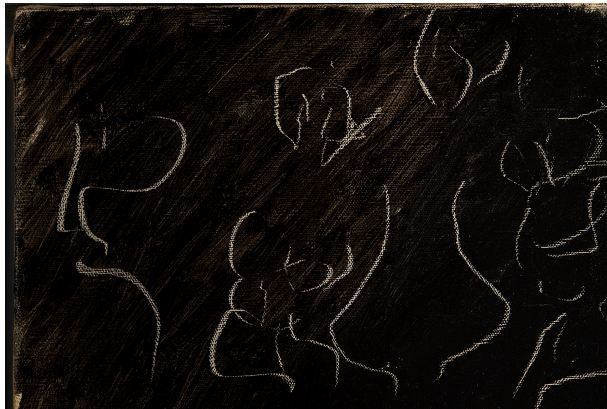


Fig. 16. Detail photograph of sgraffito lines in the upper left background, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

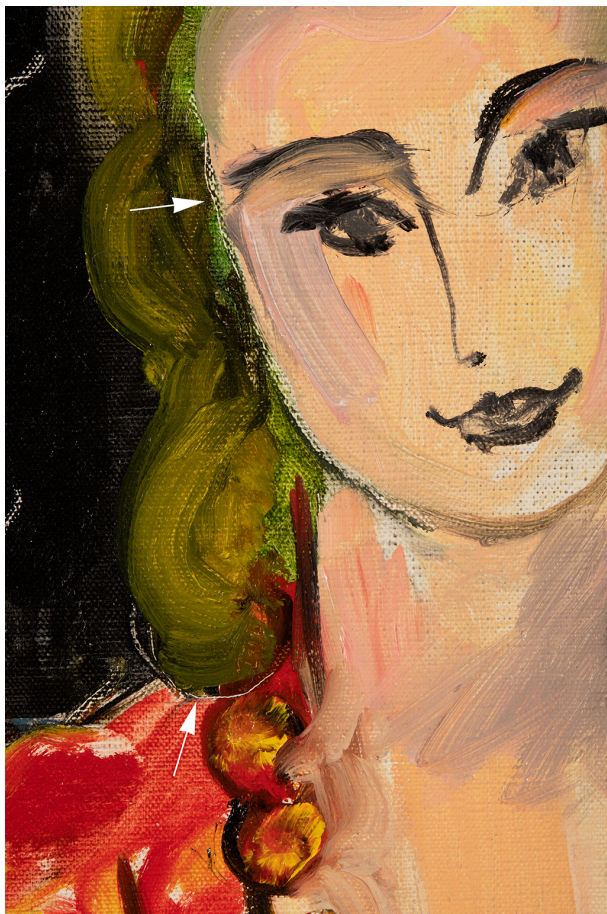


Fig. 17. Detail photograph of sgraffito lines around the figure's face and hair (indicated by white arrows), *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

Sgraffito lines are present throughout the composition, with the majority of them used to create the seemingly floral design in the black background while the paint was still fresh (Fig. 16). While these lines appear to be made with a palette knife or the handle of a paintbrush, thinner sgraffito lines, possibly incised with a needle or other sharp tool, are found in limited locations around the figure, such as around the hair and proper left arm (Fig. 17). While it is tempting to assume that these are part of the planning stage, as much of the painting was blocked in, it appears instead that Matisse used the sgraffito as emphasis for the figure.⁸ Much like the thin lines around the face, the artist signed the piece in the lower left corner with a similar sharp tool (Fig. 18).

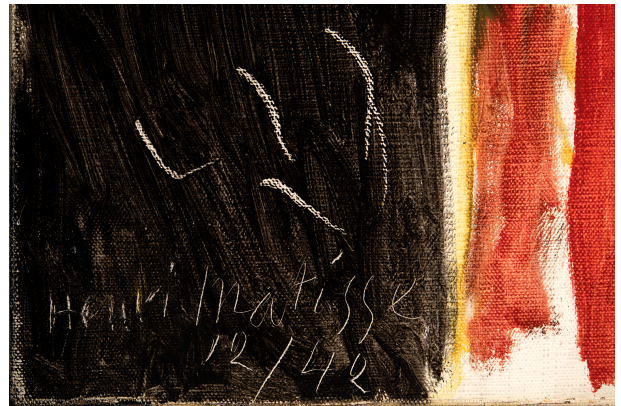


Fig. 18. Detail photograph of sgraffito signature, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace* (1942)

The painting is in excellent condition. It is unlined and has no planar defects or deformations. There is little abrasion or loss to the paint layer, and minimal retouching is present. Before entering the Nelson-Atkins collection, a conservation treatment was completed in which the painting was cleaned and a synthetic varnish was applied.⁹

Diana M. Jaskierny and John Twilley
October 2024

Notes

1. David Bomford, Jo Kirby, John Leighton, and Ashok Roy, *Art in the Making: Impressionism* (London: Yale University Press, 1991), 46.

2. There is one set of tack holes between the canvas and stretcher. There are a few additional holes on the canvas and stretcher that, based on the cusping, were likely where the tacks were originally placed.
3. In addition to the paint found within the turnover cracks, smudges of similar paint remain visible on the tacking margin.
4. Similarly, the Art Institute of Chicago found that Matisse wiped away or scraped paint as he made alterations. On *Girl in Yellow and Blue with a Guitar*, remnants of the scraped paint remain visible, while in the Nelson-Atkins painting, the second ground layer has covered the earlier paint. Kristin Hoermann Lister, with contributions by Inge Fiedler, "Cat. 46, *Girl in Yellow and Blue with a Guitar*, 1939: Technical Report," in *Matisse Paintings, Works on Paper, Sculpture, and Textiles at the Art Institute of Chicago* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2017), para 8, https://publications.artic.edu/matisse/reader/works/section/86/86_anchor.
5. No lower composition was revealed through infrared reflectography, transmitted infrared photography, transmitted light, or x-radiography, further indicating that any possible past composition was likely removed. Elemental mapping (MA-XRF) and short-wave infrared imaging showed the same absence of features not related to the present scene.
6. "Colors can be transformed by relation; a black becomes red-black if you put it next to a rather cold color like Prussian blue, blue-black if you put it alongside a color that has an extremely hot basis: orange, for example. And from that point on, I began working with a palette especially composed for each painting, while I was working on it, which meant I could eliminate one of the primordial colors, like a red or a yellow or a blue, from my painting. And that goes right against neoimpressionist theory, which is based on optical mixing and color *constraints*, each color having its reaction. For example: if there is red, there has to be a green." "Neuvième Conversation," in Henri Matisse and Pierre Courthion, *Chatting with Henri Matisse: The Lost 1941 Interview*, ed. Serge Guilbaut, trans. Chris Miller (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 139–40.

7. While the inner gown does have a pale gray-blue color, its light tone is nearly imperceptible in standard gallery lighting and prevents it from competing with the composition's predominant primary colors of red and yellow and the predominant secondary colors of green and purple.
8. Similar marks were found on *Girl in Yellow and Blue with a Guitar* (1939; The Art Institute of Chicago). Hoermann Lister, "Cat. 46, *Girl in Yellow and Blue with a Guitar*, 1939: Technical Report," para 35.
9. Forrest R. Bailey, December 13, 1986, treatment report, Nelson-Atkins conservation file, 2015.13.13.

Documentation

Citation

Chicago:

Brigid M. Boyle, with Pegeen Blank, "Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, December 1942," documentation in *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, ed. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan (Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.37764/78973.5.802.4033>.

MLA:

Boyle, Brigid M., with Pegeen Blank, "Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman with an Amber Necklace*, December 1942," documentation. *French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945: The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, edited by Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2024. doi: 10.37764/78973.5.802.4033.

Provenance

Purchased from the artist by Max Pellequer (before 1903–after 1973), Paris, by June 12, 1943–after 1973, as *Monette au collier d'ambre* [1];

Inherited by his nephew, Georges Pellequer (d. 2013), Paris, after 1973–August 30, 1977 [2];

Purchased from Pellequer by Galerie Beyeler, Basel, 1977–November 11, 1980 [3];

Purchased from Beyeler by Giuseppe Nahmad, Geneva, 1980–at least March 1981 [4];

With M. Knoedler Zürich AG, Zürich, stock no. 890K, as *Femme assise sur fond noir* [5];

Fredrik Roos (1951–1991), Stockholm, Paris, London, by November 1984—at least January 6, 1985 [6];

Purchased at *Impressionist and Modern Paintings and Sculpture (Part I)*, Christie's, New York, November 19, 1986, lot 53, by Marion (née Helzberg, 1931–2013) and Henry (1922–2019) Bloch, Shawnee Mission, KS, 1986–June 15, 2015;

Their gift to The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 2015.

Notes

[1] According to a note in Matisse's journal, dated June 12, 1943, "Remis à Max Pellequer son tableau (Monette au collier d'ambre)" (Given to Max Pellequer his painting [Monette with an amber necklace]). See Archives Henri Matisse, Issy les Moulineaux, France. The word "son" (his) indicates that it was purchased by Pellequer ahead of time. In a related letter from Pellequer to Matisse, dated June 24, 1943, also in the Archives Henri Matisse, Pellequer mentioned this painting: "Vous m'avez permis d'acquérir un splendide tableau et vous l'avez fait avec une belle délicatesse, un tel chic qui vous avez voulu me donner l'impression que je vous l'avais achetée alors que je garde la sensation agréable que vous m'avez fait un véritable cadeau" (You enabled me to acquire a splendid painting, and you did it with such delicacy and chic, you wanted to give me the impression that I had bought it from you, whereas I still have the pleasant feeling that you gave me a real gift). With thanks to Anne Théry, Archives Henri Matisse, for assistance with this research, and to Kenneth B. Brummel, Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, Aotearoa New Zealand, for his translations of the letters.

[2] Georges inherited his uncle's collection; see Anna Jozefacka, "Pellequer, Max," *The Modern Art Index Project* (January 2015; revised by Lauren Rosati October 2018, December 2019), Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <https://doi.org/10.57011/ZXYW6521>.

[3] See correspondence from Dr. Simon Crameri, Fondation Beyeler, to MacKenzie Mallon, the Nelson-Atkins, April 29, 2015, NAMA curatorial files.

[4] See *Matisse*, exh. cat. (Tokyo: National Museum of Modern Art, 1981), 115, 213. Giuseppe "Joe" Nahmad (1932–2012) was a dealer specializing in Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Modern art.

[5] According to a label on the back of the painting. No date is indicated.

[6] According to a label on the back of the painting. Fredrik Roos was a collector with apartments in Stockholm, Paris, and London. In 1986, he purchased a building in Malmö and two years later founded a museum, Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, which closed in 2006.

Related Works

Henri Matisse, *Monette*, 1942, charcoal on paper, 20 x 15 5/16 in. (51 x 39 cm), private collection.

Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman in a Persian Dress*, 1942, oil on canvas, 16 15/16 x 22 in. (43 x 56 cm), Musée Picasso-Paris, MP2017-27.

Henri Matisse, *Red Persian Dress with Black Door*, September 30, 1942, oil on canvas, 24 x 14 15/16 in. (61 x 38 cm), location unknown.

Henri Matisse, *Monette Vincent*, November 1942, charcoal and stump on paper, 15 7/10 x 12 in. (40 x 30.5 cm), private collection.

Henri Matisse, *Seated Young Woman in a Gray Dress*, November 1942, oil on canvas, 18 1/4 x 15 in. (46.3 x 38.2 cm), The Nahmad Collection, Monaco.

Henri Matisse, *The Lute*, February 1943, oil on canvas, 23 7/16 x 31.5/16 in. (59.5 x 79.5 cm), private collection.

Exhibitions

Matisse: Huiles, Gouaches, Découpées, Dessins, Sculptures, Galerie Beyeler, Basel, June–September 1980, no. 34, as *Femme assise sur fond noir*.

Matisse: Oleos, Dibujos, Gouaches Découpées, Esculturas y Libros, La Fundación Juan March, Madrid, October–December 1980, no. 35, as *Mujer sentada con fondo negro*.

Matisse, National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo, March 30–May 17, 1981; National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto, May 26–July 19, 1981, no. 90, as *Seated Woman against a Black Background (Femme assise sur fond noir)*.

Henri Matisse, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, November 3, 1984–January 6, 1985, no. 66, as *Femme assise sur fond noir (Sittande kvinna mot svart bakgrund)*.

Manet to Matisse: Impressionist Masters from the Marion and Henry Bloch Collection, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, June 9–September 9, 2007, no. 30,

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