

# TOWARDS THE NEW AND THE EXOTIC

## ❖INTRODUCTION❖

Fascinated by the vivid colors and thick application of paint of artworks, I've selected the oil painting *We Hail Thee Mary* of Paul Gauguin along with two of Henri Matisse's artworks *Odalisque With Grey Pants* and *Polynesia, the Sky* for my comparative study.

The first reason why I picked Paul Gauguin is because I was impressed by his bold move of going to Tahiti to pursue a life as an artist, leaving his family and life behind. His unique style of depicting exotic culture with lively colors and stage set-up like background is another reason for my choice. When I was going through his paintings, *We Hail Thee Mary* caught my attention with its abundant colors. This work was also an allegorical painting depicting the Virgin Mary and Jesus as Tahitians. The combination of the exotic culture of Tahiti and the religious content reminds me of magic realism in literature as both of them combine the fantasies and curiosities with realistic structures.

In addition, I am attracted by the energetic colors and rich patterns used in the artworks of the fauvist artist Henri Matisse. Matisse has always been a big name in the art world and I have been influenced by his drawings for a long time. I admire his way of using lines effortlessly. His artworks are often vigorous. As I have recently completed a painting with the theme of female figure, I chose *Odalisque With Grey Pants* by Matisse to compare with Gauguin's work and my own work. The main subject matter of this painting is, of course, a woman. Similar to *We Hail Thee Mary*, it is an artwork looking at exotic culture, though it is the oriental culture of Morocco that the work depicts.

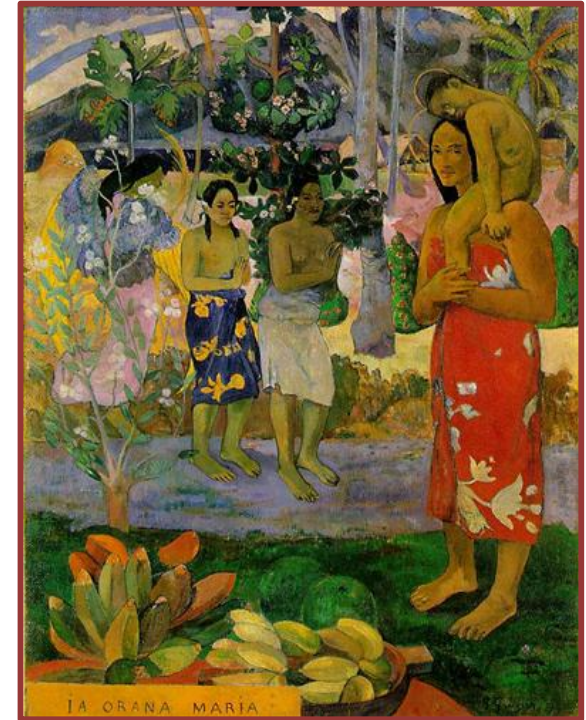


Image: Paul Gauguin, *We Hail Thee Mary*, 1891 Oil on canvas, 113.7 x 87.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/g/gauguin/maria.jpg.html>

The last work that I chose is the paper cutout *Polynesia, the Sky* made by Henri Matisse in his late years. The occurrence of such radical changes in the media used of the same artist from oil painting to paper cutout at that time is quite rare. The artwork depicts the sky of Polynesia with white birds and plants. The exotic content is similar to the two other works chosen. Rich patterns, another interesting feature that all three works share, and this increase my interest in comparing them as well.



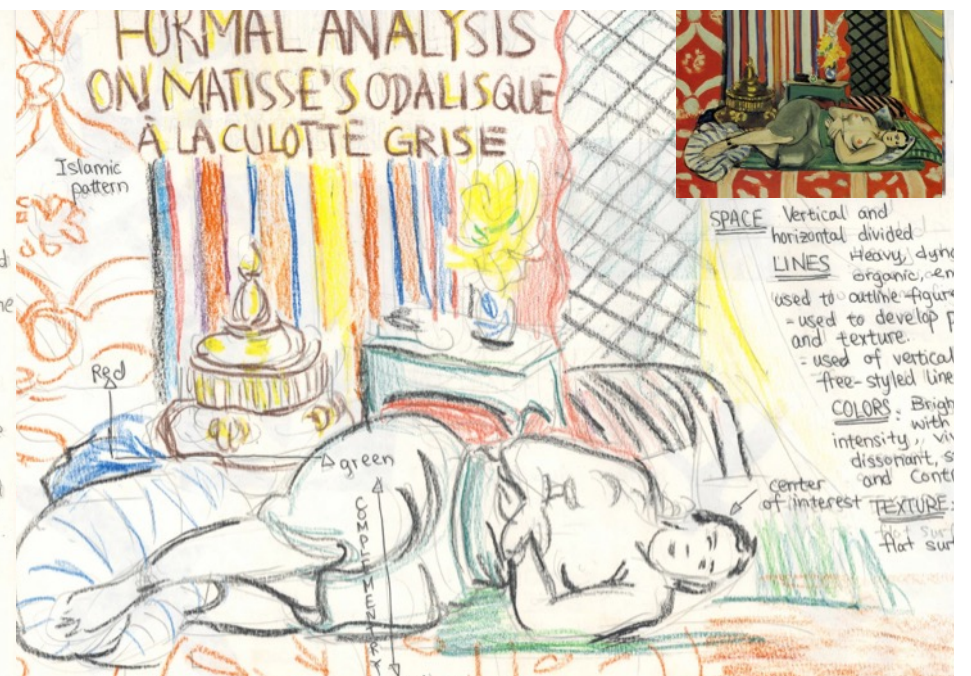
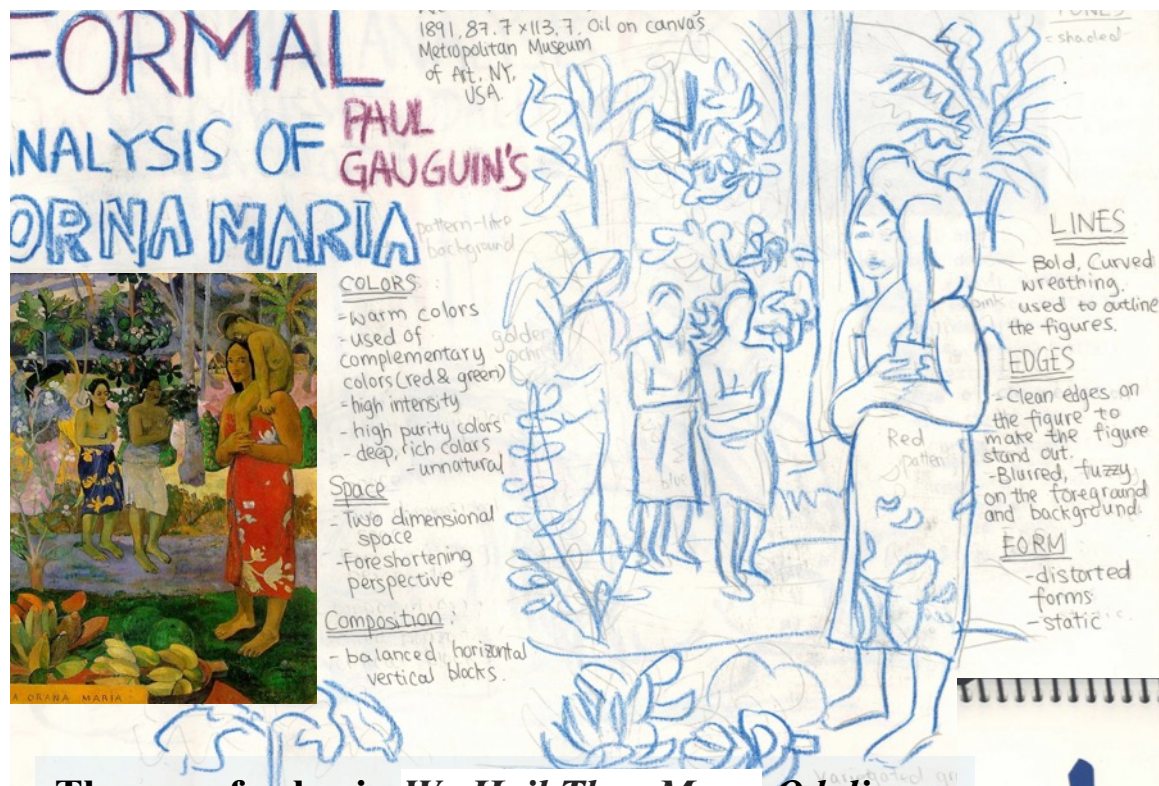
Henri Matisse, *Polynesia, the Sky*, 1946, 196 x 312 cm, paper cutout  
<http://www.wikiart.org/en/henri-matisse/polynesia-the-sky-1946>



Henri Matisse, *Odalisque in Grey Pants* 1927, 54 x 65 cm,  
oil on canvas, [www.henri-matisse.net](http://www.henri-matisse.net)

Gauguin and Matisse are both the first generation of artists that have seen and felt the other side of the planet. These three works are part of the first sparks created when the Western art meets with the distant cultures of Polynesia and North Africa.

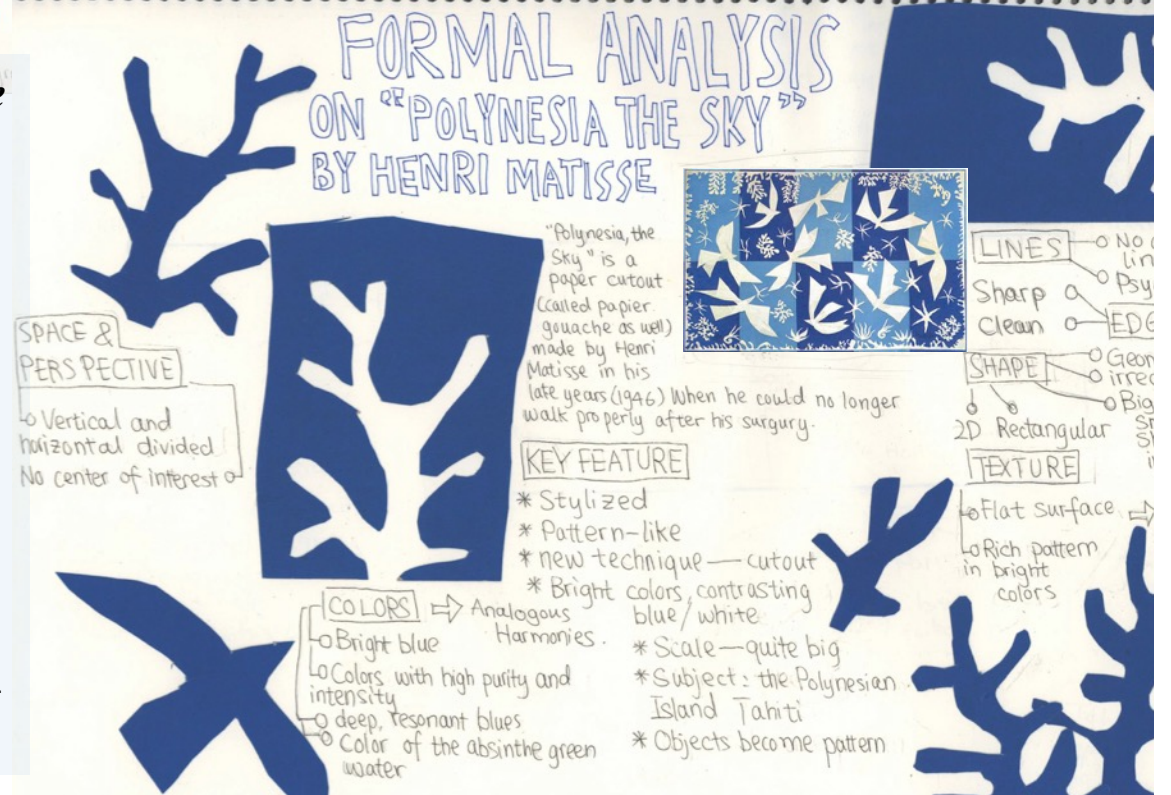




The use of color in *We Hail Thee Mary, Odalisque in Grey Pants, Polynesia, the Sky* is one of the remarkable elements that the three works share.

Gauguin had not chosen realistic colors to depict Tahiti. In the *Tahiti* painting, it is as if the grass were glowing bright green, the landscape in the background were pink whereas the skin of the figures were a combination of yellowish brown, green and many other colors.

Gauguin gives this kind of approach to art his own explanation: "I do not paint by copying nature. Everything I do springs from my wild imagination" (In a letter to Ambroise Vollard, 1900, <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2015/impressionist-modern-art-evening-sale-115006/lot.11.html>)





# THE USE OF COLOR

Though the color use in Matisse's works seems to be a bit more realistic than Gauguin's, they still show the same kind of brightness and intensity. Complementary colors were used in both the Tahiti painting and the *Odalisque* painting. While Gauguin emphasizes the role of imagination, Matisse stresses how emotion is crucial in his art. The function of the expressive colors in the *Odalisque* painting is the same as in many of his other works: to maximize the emotional effect of the painting, resulting in the astonishing liveliness of the work. The liveliness of the Tahitian painting, in comparison, is greatly reduced through using bold and rough outlines, resulting in the rawness of the work. The other work of Matisse, *Polynesia, the Sky*, is less rich in terms of color, as there were only three colors used. The dark blue perhaps represents the color of the sea whereas the lighter blue represents the sky. The combination of the colors and creatures from both sea and sky creates a feeling that the sky and the sea are a whole. The arrangement of the shapes in different sizes together with the colors gives out a burst of energy, creating an ebullient mood to the viewer. The birds in the cut-out seem to be not only flying in circles but also going to fly out of the painting and reach the viewer.

Image: Matisse drawing in his apartment in Nice with his model dressed in odalisque fashion, 1927-1928, photographed by Man Ray, <http://www.henri-matisse.net/photographs.html>

Image in the background: La Gerbe, Henri Matisse, Paper Cutout, 294 x 350 cm, 1953



## *Ornamental Quality*

*Somehow through the use of colors, the Odalisque painting and the Polynesia cutout have demonstrated ornamental quality. Though the Tahitian painting is heavily decorative as well, Matisse's works show a much stronger decorativeness. Matisse's fondness towards patterns is shown in the Odalisque painting and the Polynesia cutout, the Odalisque painting with its rich fabrics and tapestries and the cutout with its shapes arranged in a way which resembles a pattern painting. The crowded composition of the Odalisque painting has contributed in the pattern-like quality of the painting. All of these reflect the artist's textile hometown background.*



**“AN ART WHICH ISN'T  
BASED ON FEELING ISN'T  
AN ART AT ALL...  
FEELING IS THE  
PRINCIPLE, THE  
BEGINNING AND THE  
END; CRAFT, OBJECTIVE,  
TECHNIQUE – ALL THESE  
ARE IN THE MIDDLE.”  
-PAUL CÉZANNE,**

<http://www.paulcezanne.org/quotes.jsp>

Both Matisse and Gauguin had common interest in Paul Cezanne. In fact they were both influenced by him. Perhaps they were simultaneously aware that Cezanne was unconsciously redefining the very purpose of painting long before Picasso and Braque's Cubism movement.

Gauguin, as a predecessor, has shown Matisse a different approach to art. This influence of Gauguin is demonstrated in the bright color chosen in Matisse's work. Both Gauguin and Matisse were the pioneers of the great liberation of color, Gauguin did started to use strong, contrasting colors first, while Matisse took the liberation further and further at different stages of his life. Both Gauguin and Matisse deeply believed the notion of emotion being the founding principle in art, as Paul Cézanne did.

Paul Gauguin, Tahitian pastorals, 1892,

[http://www.mattingandframing.net/ia/gauguin/Pau  
lGauguinTahitianPastorals.1892\\_jpg.html](http://www.mattingandframing.net/ia/gauguin/PaulGauguinTahitianPastorals.1892_jpg.html)



Mont Sainte-Victoire, 1900, Oil on canvas,  
78 x 99 cm, Hermitage, St. Petersburg



A Nude Standing Before An Open Door, Henri Matisse,

Private Collection, New York, 61 x 38 cm. 1936



"An angel with yellow wings reveals Mary and Jesus, both Tahitians, to two Tahitian women, nudes dressed in pareus, a sort of cotton cloth printed with flowers that can be draped from the waist. Very somber, mountainous background and flowering trees . . . a dark violet path and an emerald green foreground, with bananas on the left. I'm rather happy with it."

Paul Gauguin's description of *We Hail Thee Mary* in a letter he wrote in March 1892

*We Hail Thee Mary* is the first painting Paul Gauguin produced after arriving the island of Tahiti. The quote by Gauguin himself denotes the content of the work, the Tahitian Virgin Mary and Tahitian Jesus. Halo, the Christian symbol, is used to highlight the identity of the Tahitian in red dress and the baby on her shoulders. Matisse's *Odalisque* in grey pants, on the other hand, depicts a half-nude female figure in greyish-green Arabic-style pants lying on green tapestries with elaborate patterns covering the painting. The subject matter of the painting is a concubine, or odalisque.

*Odalisque* was a common subject in Matisse's artworks. The term 'odalisque' is from 'Odalik', a Turkish word, referring to female member of the harem slave or chambermaid. Fascinated by the exoticism and eroticism of the harems during his trip to Morocco in 1912-13, Matisse started painting odalisques. These experiences in Morocco and Matisse's passion toward patterns had resulted in his series of paintings showing recumbent and semi-nude woman in luxurious, decorated interior.

*Polynesia, the Sky* (1946) was one of the cut-outs made during Matisse's late years. Different from the two other works, this cutout depicts scenery instead of figures. Matisse has made this cutout out of Tahiti, where he visited 16 years before creating the piece. "The color of the Tahiti sky is in my memory", said the artist. The reefs, seaweeds, starfish and the sea birds in the cutout merely presented drops of his Tahitian visit.

### *The Island of Tahiti*

*At that time, the Western world was under the impression that Tahiti was the paradise on earth, or a Utopian land, famous for its beautiful scenery and handsome indigenous people. Bougainville, an earlier explorer of Tahiti, even named Tahiti New Cythera<sup>1</sup>. Poverty was said to be unknown to Tahitians. The idyllic and uncivilized beauty of Tahiti was initially spread widely in Europe by explorers and sailors, and then became well known after Bougainville published his book. Tahiti became known as the 'perfect exotic island' in Europe. This myth of the paradise of Tahiti is very likely part of the drives of Gauguin and Matisse to visit there.*

[iboomerangviajes.tur.ar](http://iboomerangviajes.tur.ar)





**Matisse stressed that the fabrics "play a role equivalent to the female nude."**

<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/489223>

The fact that the *Odalisque* was almost reduced into ornaments and the bright background give an impression that Matisse managed to distance the sexual content of odalisque from the artwork. The tapestries serving as the foreground in the *Odalisque* work detracts the sexualisation of the odalisques, as Elderfield<sup>1</sup> argued. Therefore, the background and foreground of the painting are particularly important in Matisse's artwork. This is why the artist put such an effort in setting up the background for the painting. Photographs showed Matisse's studio during the 1920s with North African textiles draped over furniture, hanging on the walls and rigged into theatrical sets.

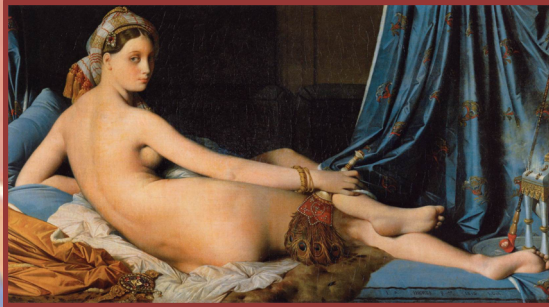
Gauguin's composition stands out in the three works chosen. The painting is constituted with two-dimensional arrangement of simplified forms and figures with emphasized contours. He had based much of the composition on a photograph of a bas-relief in the Javanese

Temple of Borobudur. The repeated verticals of trees and figures give the painting a sense of balance. Gauguin created a painting of different layers of narrative scenes from the foreground to the background, providing shifts in perspectives. The painting is occupied by dominated busy areas with few calm areas. It is almost like a theatre set-up but the artist somehow managed to include different centres of interests in the painting. The compositions of the *Odalisque* painting and the *Polynesia* cutout are less complicated compared to the *Tahiti* painting. The composition of the *Odalisque* painting is mainly constituted of the overlapping tapestries and ornaments with patterns, showing Matisse's ability of arranging various surfaces into a vivid composition. Matisse's work satisfied the bourgeois' new interest for interior design, as his *Odalisque* series were quite popular at that time. Though some contemporary critics considered these works shallow, Matisse worked with his time in a way to document and record the tastes of the increasing diaspora-driven aesthetically oriented society.



Image: Bas-relief from the Javanese Temple of Borobudur, <http://www.featurepics.com/FI/Thumb300/20090425/Bas-Relief-Borobudur-Temple-Indonesia-1161668.jpg>





Jean August Dominique Ingres, *Grand Odalisque*, 1814, Oil on Canvas, 88.9 cm x 162.56 cm,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande\\_Odalisque](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grande_Odalisque)

Matisse was not the only one intrigued by the concept of harem woman. It was a tradition of the French Orientalist painting from the early 1800s. Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres and Eugène Delacroix were two of the big names among this group of artists. The fact that Ingres and Delacroix have painted the subject before enabled Matisse to deliver the familiar subject with a different purpose relatively easier.

## Differences in size

It is also noticeable that there is a strong difference in size between these works. The cutout is almost three times bigger in size comparing to the Odalisque painting. The mural-like presence of the cutout combines with its vibrant color might contribute in making the visual effect of the cutout even



<http://www.50contemporaryart.com/gallery2/gallery/v/2007-artist-pat-whitehead/Floating+The+Centre+Pompidou+Paris+-+Henri+Matisse+Polynesia+The+Sea+Polynesia+The+Sky+oc+36x24.jpg.html>



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-31183733>

## Rousseau & Gauguin

One can see a link between Gauguin and Henri Rousseau's artwork not only because of the resemblance in the primitivist subject but also because of the compositions with different layers and the simplistic perspectives.

Henri Rousseau, *The Dream*, 1910, Oil on canvas, 204.5 cm x 298.5 cm

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/ce/Henri\\_Rousseau\\_-\\_Il\\_sogno.jpg/1280px-Henri\\_Rousseau\\_-\\_Il\\_sogno.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/ce/Henri_Rousseau_-_Il_sogno.jpg/1280px-Henri_Rousseau_-_Il_sogno.jpg)



# Difference in media

The most important characteristic of *Polynesia, the sky* compare to the two other pieces is the media used in this work. At the age of 72, Matisse had an operation which cost him the ability to walk, making it difficult for him to paint, as he had to stay in his wheelchair. From then on, he had switched his media from oil paints and sculpture to paper cut out. Matisse had his assistants cover paper with bright, resonant gouaches and cut the shapes out



Matisse making paper cutouts, retrieved from [www.henri-matisse.net](http://www.henri-matisse.net)

from the paper with scissors. Then he would arrange the cut out shapes and the remaining scraps of paper until the compositions satisfied him. The results were a series of beautiful and joyous works that make him enter a second life.

Born in a weaver's cottage, Matisse was confident in using scissors. Since the papers with color were all prepared before cutting, no tones or shadows could be created. This allows Matisse to maximize the effect of pure color, instead of painting the outline first than filling with color like he would have done in works such as the *Odalisques*, Matisse turned this on its head by using cutout, he called it “cutting into color”, during which no draft is necessary. There is a kind of immediacy in the process of cutting. The objects were all reduced to flat and simplified forms, and the shapes and sharp lines were emphasized in the cutout.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-2590862/Henri-Matisse-Guns-Girls-Gestapo-The-wild-final-years-Henri-Matisse.htm>





# Difference in media

The cutout demonstrates lightness as it was made with flat paper sheets, whereas it still appears to be expressive. The fluidity, sharpness and cleanness in the lines of the shapes contribute in the expressive quality of the cutout. Matisse's exploration and experimentation in art is similar to the 'journey' of just about any abstract artist. Matisse have continually reduced and focused upon simpler and simpler visual elements.

The difference in media leads to significant contrast in the three works. Oil paints and brushstrokes gave the two other painting a more realistic touch compare to the cutout. The use of oil painting also make it possible for the tones, blending and shadow, giving the viewer a sense of space. The flatness and the shapes of the cutout demonstrate an abstract-like simplicity. Such lightness of the cutout could not be achieved through using a brush. The process of cutout provides new possibilities in determining the composition. It is easier and faster to try out different compositions while making a cutout than oil painting.

## Matisse's Journey as an artist

**1900**



Nude Man, Oil on canvas,  
99.3 x 72.7 cm, Museum of  
Modern Art NY, 1900

**1905**



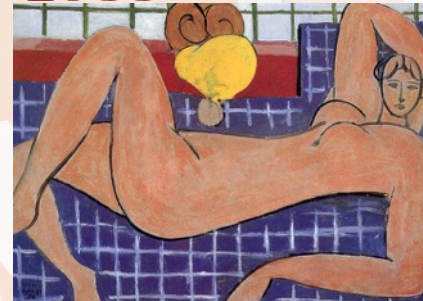
Madam Matisse, Oil on  
canvas, 81 x 65 cm, Private  
Collection, 1905

**1910**



Dance II, Oil on canvas, 260 x 389 cm,  
Hermitage, Saint Petersburg

**1935**



Large Reclining Nude, Oil on canvas, 66 x  
92 cm, Baltimore Museum of Art, 1935

**1952**



Nude Man, Oil on canvas,  
99.3 x 72.7 cm, Museum of  
Modern Art NY, 1900



## COMPARISONS ON CONTEXTS

In my opinion, the two artists' intention has led to most of the contrasts in their works, as they have chosen their media based on the message they tried to convey. Gauguin's detestation towards the Western civilization and pursuit of finding the simplistic life of 'the noble savages' led him to depict a primitive society. Matisse, however, deeply rooted in the French society, strives to paint colors, express emotion and to provide comforts to his viewers through his works. Despite their differences, the sense of peace and ease achieved from the balance arrangement of forms and colors is similar to the pure sensation and balanced satisfaction coming from Matisse's work.

One could say that out of the two artists Matisse remained more concerned with the expressionistic value portrayed in his works. "The Liberation of Colour" in Matisse's works is perhaps the first signs of the Expressionist movement in Europe which follows. However, Gauguin may still be caught up with Symbolism in color as well as motif. Maybe Gauguin is more conservative in his use of colour? Perhaps Matisse is more forward-looking, or more of a risk-taker? Still, Gauguin was living in a time when the impressionists dominated the art world, whereas Matisse was at a time of numerous great artistic movements including expressionism, cubism, and surrealism. It might be easier for an artist to have breakthroughs in a more diverse, energetic and open-minded artistic environment. Also, Matisse was already a well-established artist while Gauguin was descended into poverty and debt. Relatively, Matisse was luckier compared to Gauguin, perhaps Matisse was the one who made smarter, 'savvier' life decisions.

### Looking at the artists' self portraits.....

Even when looking at the self portraits of the two artists, the differences are visible. Matisse portrayed himself as an artist with suit and glasses on. The look indicates strongly his close ties with the civilized society. On the other hand, Gauguin depicted himself with casual clothing and a straw hat.



Self Portrait, Henri Matisse, oil on canvas,

65 x 54 cm, 1918, Matisse Museum



Portrait of the artist with a hat, Paul Gauguin, oil

on canvas, 45 x 38 cm, Musée d'Orsay



**“Matisse was working ahead of his time for most of his career and these late cutouts established a new language that artists have been working hard to digest ever since.” – Nicholas Serota, director of Tate Museum**

Matisse: Nicholas Serota on curating a ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ exhibition, *Guadian*. Web. Retrieved 19 Feb. 2016.  
<<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/mar/29/henri-matisse-cutouts-tate-modern-nicholas-serota>>

Some have argued that Gauguin was very tied to the civilization after his arrival in Tahiti and that the ‘primitive paradise’ he depicted was just to meet the needs of his western buyers. Gauguin seems like a paradox because he seemed to remain reliant upon the very western civilization that he rejected in order to fully embrace the ‘primitive’ one that he exiled himself in. Ironically he could not express his message unless he maintained his connection with the society at that time. We could not imagine the kind of conflicting life that Gauguin was having.

Both Gauguin and Matisse have went beyond their times. Gauguin has brought art world the freedom to use colors whereas Matisse liberated colors further and explored the exciting new world of cut-out.

As a Visual Art student, I appreciate *Polynesia the Sky* the most. The cutout changed people’s perception towards this new media which was not considered as ‘serious’ art at that time. Even Matisse’s great rival Picasso thought that the cutouts were some ‘paper jokes’ of a serious artist. Yet Matisse himself considered his cutouts as the peak of his career; for he had found the best way to convey his message, joy and energy. In changing the perception of the media, Matisse maintains the value of art, since he relays his message more efficiently through the cutouts.



<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-25908>

62/Henri-Matisse-Guns-Girls-Gestapo-The-wild-final-years-Henri-Matisse.html





Henri Matisse, 'Vegetables', 1952, in 'Henri

Matisse: Cut-outs' at Tate Modern, London.

The Independent

## Gauguin and Matisse in today's context.....

Living in this information age of ours, we are constantly being exposed to all types of images. For us, there is no exotic Tahiti, as we have access to views all over the world in seconds' time. There are certainly neither much exotic cultural patterns nor clothing that could shock us anymore. Therefore, it is almost impossible for contemporaries to experience the kind of visual strike that our predecessors have experienced. In this case, both Matisse and Gauguin could be considered truly great masters in terms of their ability of creating refreshing visual sensation not only at their times but ours as well. Matisse also talked about the cutout's ability to 'heal', and to 'provide comfort'. Personally, I can feel the incredible upbeat, joyous emotion when confronting Matisse's cutout, even when seeing a reproduction on a computer screen. Matisse's notion of creating works that provides a comfortable 'red arm chair' and 'sun-lamps' around the bed of a sick friend seem exceptionally precious from today's perspective at a time when most contemporary artists are concerned with creating works about traumas, wars, terrors and conflict. The exotic 'paradise' of Tahiti gives out the same sort of sensation in a calm and quiet way. In this modern world of fast-speed development and great changes, the almost escapist comfort that Gauguin and Matisse offer might really be what we need.



## *How Gauguin and Matisse have influenced me.....*



My Cultural Patterns Project, Acrylic on canvas,

### ➤ **Formal Qualities:**

#### Colors:

- Bright, warm colors
- Colors with high intensity
- Deep, rich colors
- Contrasting colors

#### Composition:

- Balanced
- Horizontal and Vertical

#### Tones:

- Rich tones  
concentrating on the  
dress of the figure

#### Edges:

- Sharp, clean edges

#### Space:

- Two dimensional  
space

Among the artworks that I have made during these two years, the Cultural Patterns Project is the one that demonstrated most influences from Gauguin and Matisse. The artwork for the Cultural Patterns Project depicts a female figure with a fan in hand in a Chinese cultural setting with elaborated Chinese patterns in the background. The Chinese cultural setting includes the figure's traditional clothing, a fan as well as Chinese patterns and a Chinese-style window, in the background.



In terms of the composition of the work, I was influenced by Matisse's way of arranging different blocks of patterns. That is why the background of this artwork was constituted with a variation of spaces with different patterns. My use of pattern represents an almost cubist attempt at lack-of-perspective. Such minimal depth and distance in my painting is similar to Matisse's treatment to his *Odalisque* paintings and cutouts. This is achieved by overlaying and overlapping rather than using traditional projection and isometric views.

Though it has to be pointed out that the background in my work serves as the minor part of composition instead of the center. The figure is the centre in my painting. Unlike Matisse's *Odalisque* painting, the flat, pattern-like background in darker colors of my work serve to bring out the figure. Both the figure's solidity as well as strong color contribute in making the contrast even greater.

The use of color, in addition, demonstrates the heavy influences from both Gauguin and Matisse on me. Though I have chosen rather realistic colors for the figure, influences from the two artists can still be seen in terms of the strong, contrasting and bright color used in the painting. This is also a trick that I learned from Gauguin, as Gauguin's use of rich and almost solely primary colors helps to streamline things such as contrast, enhancing the composition as well as creating bolder patterns.

### Patterns in the background

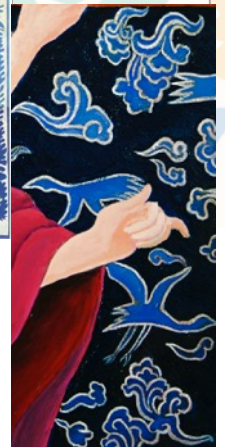
The block of pattern in sky blue and dark blue, which occupied more than half of the background, is actually depicting the sky in simplified Chinese style. The pattern is similar to Matisse's rather abstract cutout, *Polynesia, the Sky*, both in terms of color and content.

However, it is important to point out that the pattern in the background that I used has its own symbolic meaning in Chinese culture. This set of pattern is constituted with auspicious clouds and cranes. In ancient China, auspicious clouds symbolize fortune and luck. Cranes represent an extremely high position that are just below the phoenix. In other words, cranes often represent the officer with the highest position. Cranes also symbolize nobility and longevity. This symbolic pattern denotes the high status of the figure depicted. Such use of symbolic elements in painting is something that I learned from Gauguin as well, just like the symbolic connotations come with the halo on the Tahitian female figure.

Polynesia, the Sky, Henri Matisse



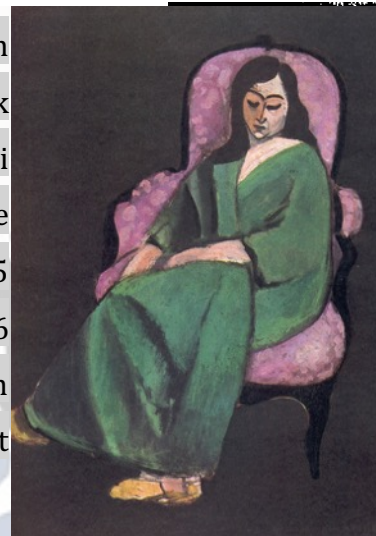
Details of my  
Cultural  
Pattern  
Project





As Matisse and Gauguin had gone for exotic culture back in their days, I have used the patterns of my very own culture. As a young student, I am still at the stage of exploring my own culture, compare to Matisse and Gauguin who seek foreign inspiration in the primes of their life.

Laurette with a Green  
Dress, Black  
Background, Henri  
Matisse, Private  
Collection, 73 x 55  
cm, 1916  
[www.henri-matisse.net](http://www.henri-matisse.net)



These two are my  
sketches.

During the stage of planning this work, I have also looked at Matisse's oil painting *Laurette with a Green Dress, Black Background*, aiming to learn from his way of depicting the dress with heavy lines as well as the stylization of the figure. However, when making the work, I have switched a more realistic way of depicting the figure. Still, traces of such initial influences can still be found in the folds and drapes of the figure in my painting.



Odalisque with a  
Turkish Chair, Henri  
Matisse, Centres  
George Pompidou,  
Paris, France



Details of my Cultural  
Painting Project



### **Comparing the purposes of painting**

Overall, this work for the Cultural Patterns Project demonstrates a strong decorative quality as in the cases of Matisse's *Odalisque* series and cutouts. The purpose of my work is to provide beauty and aesthetic pleasure to my audience through using elements of Chinese culture. In this case, instead of having a general theme of pursuing over the paradise-like world like Gauguin, this work is rather similar to Matisse's idea of achieving balance and creating aesthetic pleasure. As the pieces I created would be hung in the school occasionally, my work also serves to bring elements from the traditional Chinese culture to the international school of mine, promoting the ambiance of an international community grounded with Chinese influences. In a way, the aim of the work also includes reminding fellow Chinese students about their Chinese identity as well as introducing Chinese culture to the international students and staff at school.

### **Comparing the audiences...**

In terms of audience, both Gauguin and Matisse were targeting specific art-buyers and upper-classes of Europe at that time, as ordinary people of the society during early 20<sup>th</sup> century do not have great chance to participate in the appreciation of art. As mentioned before, Matisse was more successful in terms of obtaining popularity from the Parisians at that time. Culturally, I have a very different audience compare to Matisse and Gauguin as most of my audience have Chinese cultural background. Also, as my audience are living in a much different world than Gauguin and Matisse's, a world filled with visual shocks from a large range of sources, I did not expect to 'wow' them with my painting as Gauguin and Matisse intended to with their audience. However, from the economic and social perspective, most of the audience of mine are from Chinese families that are able to afford high tuition fees of international schools, therefore, most of them do come from at least middle-upper classes of China. In this case, they are similar to Matisse and Gauguin's audience to some extent.

Gauguin and Matisse have further influenced me in many other works, some more visible than others. In terms of the use of patterns, I have also look upon Matisse' work when making an abstract pattern painting. Again, I have tried to flatten the patterns.