
Musée Marmottan Monet

Press dossier – September 2011

C Henri Edmond CROSS

and Neo-Impressionism

From Seurat to Matisse

20 October 2011 – 19 February 2012

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MUSÉE MARMOTTAN MONET
PARIS

► PRESS RELEASE

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From 20 October 2011 to 19 February 2012, the Musée Marmottan Monet presents a new exhibition: **Henri Edmond Cross and Neo-Impressionism. From Seurat to Matisse.**

The exhibition traces the evolution of the work of Henri Edmond Cross (1856-1910) in the context of work by other members of the Neo-Impressionist movement, highlighting Cross's network of friends, influences and followers from his Paris years with Seurat, Signac and the other 'Neos', to the last 20 years of his life (1892-1910), when he settled in Saint-Clair, near his friend Signac in Saint-Tropez – the rallying point for a new generation of artists, where Matisse and the future Fauves discovered and experimented with the principles of 'divisionism'.

The exhibition gathers some one hundred oil paintings and watercolours from private collections and museums worldwide (Germany, Belgium, Japan, the USA...), including pivotal works in the history of Neo-impressionism, never before seen in public.

The first part of the exhibition presents paintings by members of the first Neo-Impressionist group (Cross, Signac, Dubois-Pillet, Pissarro, Luce, Van Rysselberghe), pioneers of the movement's painstaking 'divisionist' technique, based on the optical blending of small strokes of pure prismatic colour, contrasting tones, and the use of colour complementaries. The exhibition continues with an exploration of the parallel careers of Cross, Signac and Van Rysselberghe – and the revelation of colour witnessed in their paintings – as the starting point for the 'second' Neo-Impressionist movement, featuring thicker touches of colour, and a more strident palette. The final section highlights the links between Cross and a younger generation of painters – including Camoin, Manguin and Henri Matisse – establishing him as a unique, essential link between Seurat's Divisionism and the Fauvist movement pioneered by Matisse and Derain. The exhibition also highlights Cross's watercolour paintings, an important feature of his work throughout his career.

Organised in association with the Musée Départemental Matisse in Cateau-Cambrésis, part of the exhibition at the Musée Marmottan Monet will transfer to Matisse's home town, from 12 March to 10 June, 2012.

The partner exhibitions each feature the same core body of work, together with their own selections of paintings, many on public show for the first time, shedding new light on Cross's work and (re)introducing the artist to a wider international audience. By comparing Cross's paintings with those of his contemporaries – Seurat, Signac, Luce, Van Rysselberghe, Camoin, Matisse and others – both exhibitions will highlight the distinctive, poetic quality of his work, and demonstrate his importance and decisive influence in the context of modern art as a whole.

► **FOREWORD**

BY JACQUES TADDEI

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The current exhibition owes its genesis to an earlier exhibition of watercolours by Henri Edmond Cross, organised by Paris gallerist Françoise Chibret in 2008. I was immediately fascinated by the work of this comparatively little-known artist, and decided to organize an exhibition of his paintings, in the context of the other Neo-Impressionists, some of whom – like Paul Signac – were among his closest friends and associates: a chance to discover Cross’s work, for many, or to revisit it in a new light, for some. And an opportunity, I hope, to establish this key figure and his harmonious, colourful mosaics, in their rightful place in the mainstream of the history of modern art.

Landscape was one of Cross’s favourite subjects, closely linked to his exploration of light and colour. The exhibition presents almost one hundred of his landscape works, in oils and watercolour – a technique that sheds interesting new light, in my view, on Cross’s approach to the inheritance and lessons of the Impressionists. Cross was one of the first painters to seek to capture the distinctive atmosphere of the Midi: his paintings immerse the viewer in the sun-drenched landscapes he discovered in the south of France, at Le Lavandou. We sense the importance of his work in the history of modern art: from 1905 onwards, Cross’s compositions of dazzling, contrasted colours were a key influence on the Fauves, and particularly Matisse, to whom he taught the techniques of Neo-Impressionism.

Organised jointly by the Musée Marmottan Monet and the Musée Départemental Matisse in the latter’s home town of Cateau-Cambrésis, this touring exhibition features artists including Charles Camoin, Cross himself, André Derain, Albert Dubois-Pillet, Henri Matisse, Théo van Rysselberghe,

Georges Seurat and Paul Signac – all of whom continually strove to create harmonious, decorative compositions drawing on a new palette derived from their experiments with chromatic vibration and the effects of light on colour, as the key to their distinctive artistic identity and style.

In light of the Musée Marmottan Monet's world-renowned collection of Impressionist works – and their one overriding subject, the exploration of the nature of human perception – this exhibition of paintings by Henri Edmond Cross and the Neo-Impressionists, from Seurat to Matisse, highlights the natural continuity between their work and that of the founder and leader of the Impressionist movement, Claude Monet, in his lifelong quest to capture and render the effects of colour and light. In the words of Félix Fénéon, an ardent supporter of the Neo-Impressionist movement (who also coined the group's name in 1886): 'the Neo-Impressionists' method demands an exceptionally sensitive eye.' (*L'Art moderne*, 'L'Impressionnisme aux Tuileries', 19 September, 1886, pp 300-302). A sensitivity and vision that is apparent in every painting presented here.

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The exhibition's central theme is aptly expressed by the nineteenth-century French critic Jean Ajalbert, describing the Neo-Impressionist exhibition of 1886: '[these artists] have, in a manner of speaking, regained their visual virginity, forgetting conventional colour, to find their own way to the perfect note.' The exhibition offers a voyage in colour, through the sensations observed and recreated by a group of artists whose landscapes became, in the words of Michel Draguet, a 'workshop for the eye' (*Signac, Seurat, le néo-impressionnisme*, Editions Hazan 2011, p. 36).

JACQUES TADDEI

MEMBER OF THE INSTITUT DE FRANCE

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSÉE MARMOTTAN MONET

► EXHIBITION GUIDE

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Henri Edmond Cross and Neo-impressionism. From Seurat to Matisse is presented in the Rotonde des Nymphéas, the museum's basement rotunda, specially built to display the water lily paintings of Claude Monet. The chronological hanging traces the evolution of Cross's work in the context of paintings by other Neo-Impressionist artists – a total of one hundred oil paintings and watercolours from private collections and museums worldwide (France, Germany, Belgium, Japan, the USA, Russia, Switzerland).

Seurat and the origins of Neo-Impressionism (1885-1891)

Seurat was the focus for an initial group of artists – Cross, Signac, Angrand, Dubois-Pillet, Pissarro, Luce and Van Rysselberghe – all experimenting with the rigorous Neo-Impressionist technique: the optical blending of colours, divisionism (the application of separate touches of pure colour), tonal contrasts, and the use of complementary colours. Key works of the period include Seurat's *La Seine à la Grande Jatte* (1885) and *Port-en-Bessin* (1888), Signac's canvases in Portrieux (1888) and Cross's *Vendanges* (1891-1892).

The revelation of colour (1892-1903)

In 1891, the year of Seurat's death, Cross left Paris and settled in Saint-Clair, near Le Lavandou. He was followed by Signac, who arrived in Saint-Tropez the following year, aboard his yacht. The two developed a second school of Neo-Impressionism, quite different from the first. Brushstrokes became larger, compositions were filled with dazzling light, colours became more strident. Cross and Signac were soon joined by Van Rysselberghe, and the three friends embarked on a new phase of highly individual creativity. Cross reached the height of his artistic powers in paintings such as *Bords méditerranéens* ('Shores of the Mediterranean', 1895), or *La mer clapotante* ('The lapping waves', 1903); Signac's masterpiece, *Les Tartanes pavoisées* ('Tartanes decked with bunting') was painted in 1893; Van Rysselberghe's *L'Entrée du port de Volendam* ('Harbour entrance, Volendam') in 1896.

The lure of Fauvism (1904-10)

Matisse arrived in Saint-Tropez in 1904, followed by Camoin, Manguin and Valtat; the group met at Signac's and Cross's homes, centres of fertile artistic exchange. Matisse – already a convert to Neo-Impressionism – discovered Cross's exalted use of colour, and applied it to his own work the following year, in *Collioure, Rue du Soleil* (1905). Towards the end of this period, Cross painted alongside the future Fauvists, in a highly imaginative, personal style, notable – like their's – for its increasingly free use of colour: *Le Bois* (1906-1907).

Works on paper

Henri Edmond Cross's works on paper are presented as a pendant to his oil paintings. Cross practiced drawing and watercolour painting throughout his life, finding a spontaneity too often submerged in the rest of his work. As preparatory sketches, or works in their own right, Cross's drawings and watercolours feature throughout his career, from his earliest studies of 1892-3 (*Bords de mer et voiliers* – 'Seashore and sailing boats', a study for the painting *L'Air du soir*), to rapid sketches made during his stay in Venice in 1903. Quick, spontaneous strokes on the white of the paper succeed wonderfully in capturing the brilliant light of the Mediterranean, and Venice.

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► SEURAT AND THE ORIGINS OF NEO-IMPRESSIONISM

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Birth of the group

“[...] The new Salon des Artistes Indépendants was a modern milieu composed of artists rejecting the meritocracy of the official exhibitions. Its principle was clear: no jury and no awards. Seurat met Paul Signac there, a young self-taught artist with a sturdy character, keenly interested in Impressionism and painting views of Paris and the suburbs. He also met Henri Edmond Cross, whose *Monaco* (cat. 5), shown in May 1884, had clearly positioned him as an advocate of outdoor painting. This new clique included Odilon Redon, a slightly older Symbolist painter, and other artists opposed to anaemic academicism. The public regarded these ‘intransigents’, as the critics dubbed those who showed at the Salon des Indépendants, as a band of amateur eccentrics, viewing them with distrust, hostility and even outright mockery. The critic Claude Roger-Marx, writing in *Le Voltaire*, suggested quite simply ‘sending some of these so-called painters unaware of the elementary rules of drawing back to school’. In his view, only a handful – Seurat, Signac, Guillaumin and Angrand, all of whom had come from Impressionism via different paths and admired Monet – could seriously claim to call themselves artists. The group’s meetings forged friendships, and advice was exchanged. Signac invited Seurat to clean his palette, using only pure colours like the most out-and-out Impressionists. He introduced him to Camille Pissarro, a painter of the previous generation who fully supported his successors and even became one of the pioneers of the new tendency. The divisionist technique, based on fragmentary, stippled brushstrokes and in-depth knowledge of the sciences of optics and colour, took shape during 1885. Pissarro’s *Briqueterie* (cat. 6) is a testimony to this evolution, showing his adaptation of this still-experimental technique to one of his pet rural themes, rooted in outdoor Impressionist painting. A few years later, Albert Aurier recalled that Pissarro’s first divisionist experiments hadn’t failed to ‘disconcert the critics, appal the public and outrage conformist painters’.

‘Old man’ Pissarro, who had shown with the Impressionist group since 1874, suggested that Seurat and Signac be included in the emblematic collective’s eighth exhibition, organised by Berthe Morisot and Eugène Manet in May 1886. The presence of these newcomers sparked acrimonious dissent in a group whose ranks had already thinned – Monet and Renoir were no longer showing with them – and

Seurat showed *La Grande Jatte* in this oppressive atmosphere. Regarded either as archaic or Japanese-inspired, the picture instantaneously generated a mixed critical reception whose ripples spread well beyond France's borders. Although rejected by the majority, *La Grande Jatte* was regarded by some as the work of a 'messiah' heralding a new art capable of rivaling Gauguin. In Félix Fénéon's view, the time had come in 1886 to take stock of Impressionism and evaluate the new, resolutely scientific and modern aesthetic revealed by the next generation: Neo-Impressionism..."

A definition of Neo-Impressionism

"...To regard Neo-Impressionism merely as the continuation or end of Impressionism would be unfair. This movement's probably ambivalent continuities and rifts with its predecessor should be seen rather as the surpassing of certain problems linked to the question of realism. Neo-Impressionism advocated the notion of harmony instead of that of resemblance, and sought equivalencies with the immaterial art of music. Spontaneity, immediacy and intuition had no part to play in it. Neo-Impressionism showed a capacity for abstraction – in the sense of 'to subtract from' – that was a constituent element of its modernity. From the world it extracted formal qualities, universal archetypes, colour sensations and lines that would be the departure points for many modernist experiments. Thanks to it, signs (such as the dot itself) made their entry into the world of painting, and opened up a new phase in the western iconographic universe totally dominated by the symbol..."

CLAIRE MAINGON

EXTRACT FROM THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

► IN SEARCH OF HARMONY

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“...In *Plage de la Vignasse* (cat. 31), Cross’s experimentation came closer to Signac’s, his slender, regular brushstrokes emphasising the flatness of the picture plane. The three main areas of colour, separated by the horizontals of the beach and sea, heighten the impression of serenity, in accordance with Charles Henry’s dynamogenic theories. The mid-afternoon light reverberates in the warm ochres in the foreground, punctuated with blues and violets, and dissolves the mauve of the sea merging with the orange sky. In the much more contrasted *Calanque des Antibois* (cat. 27), painted in the harsh midday sun, Cross applied Neo-Impressionist theories to the letter. He confessed his uncertainty to Signac: ‘Yes, I know, the contrasts, I’m well aware of their primordial importance, but it’s getting the balance right that I’m finding so incredibly difficult.’ The plunging viewpoint looks out over an immense stretch of water, cut off by the silhouette of Mont Faron beyond. The entire picture plays on the contrast between the rocks, a myriad of orange dots speckled with touches of blue in the shade and yellow in the light, and the oily expanse of blue and white sea, flecked with round touches of yellow echoing the rocks. The sole subject of this scene devoid of human presence: the torpor of the beach in the midday sun [...]

In 1892–93, Cross and Signac adapted the divisionist method to their own aspirations. For both, light and shade became a major consideration. Cross, who sought his subject matter in the countryside and country life inland, painted two pictures of the same subject, *La Ferme, matin* (cat. 34) and *La Ferme, soir* (cat. 35), the first showing distillers at work in the cold morning light, the second a peasant woman carrying a basket at dusk. The artist used the same setting, a farm, and the same theme, peasant life, to study the chromatic changes wrought by different times of the day: the cool greens and violets, largely infused with white, of early morning, and the blazing oranges and purples of sunset. In both pictures, Cross, influenced by Japonisme, accentuated the picture’s decorative aspect in the sinuous lines of the boughs of the trees. There is the same serenity in a contemporary work by Signac, *Place des Lices, Saint-Tropez*. As with Cross, the stark contrast between the gold of the sunlit areas and the violet tree trunks, the curves of the plane trees silhouetted against the light, the solitude of the old man sitting on the bench, convey a sense of harmony between man and nature...”

FRANÇOISE BALIGAND

EXTRACT FROM THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

► MATISSE AND CROSS

A FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN PAINTERS

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Henri Matisse meets Henri Edmond Cross

“...When Matisse returned to Paris in the autumn of 1903 he met Paul Signac, whose paintings he had admired at the exhibition at Samuel Bing’s gallery, L’Art Nouveau, in June 1902, and who encouraged him to join him at Saint-Tropez. At the Salon des Indépendants in 1904, he was on the hanging committee with Marquet and Manguin. Cross exhibited as he did every year, presenting six pictures painted in Venice, in evanescent pastel hues with white playing a key role.

Matisse asked Signac to find him a house in Saint-Tropez to rent for the summer. He stayed there from 12 July to 15 September, but his friends Manguin and Marquet were in Normandy. He felt isolated there, and until Cross arrived at Saint-Clair early in August, he only had Signac for company. ‘Our friend Matisse is here,’ Signac wrote to Cross, ‘a very good sort, intelligent and a real painter – but yet another victim of copying – if a cloud changes shape, it puts him on the spot, and leaves him helpless... He talks to me about his plumb line, *chambre claire*, with all the colours, ochre, white and black... that make up his range.’”

In the few canvases he painted that summer, Matisse did not apply Signac’s theories advocating using pure colours in small, distinct touches following the law of simultaneous contrast. Matisse’s main preoccupation that summer was Cézanne. He borrowed the July 1904 issue of the periodical *L’Occident* from Signac and explained what he was looking for in Cézanne in a letter to Marquet: ‘In this issue, there’s Cézanne’s doctrine written by Bernard... «organising his sensations», «modulating and not modelling» and it’s very interesting.’ He painted structurally organised pictures of the village of Saint-Tropez, numerous watercolours and a painting of the bay (*Le Golfe de Saint-Tropez* or *Le Goûter*, fig. 1),²⁰ a view of the beach at Graniers, near Signac’s house, set against the vertical of a pine and painted with broad touches of pure colour very different to Signac, who described Matisse working: ‘[Matisse] takes a long look at the verdant eucalyptus in bloom there in front. In his first-floor studio at La Hune, Signac worked on paintings from watercolours done directly from the subject, recomposing them, eliminating the unintentional and applying the Neo-Impressionist doctrine in a manner he considered scientific. Possibly influenced by him or Cross, Matisse also began his landscapes with watercolours before ‘doing away with the direct copy from

nature'. He grew closer to Cross. The latter was less dogmatic and more sensitive than Signac, and Matisse found his anxious nature reassuring. 'I saw Cross here,' he wrote to Marquet, 'who also seemed pretty tortured, so much so he's often wondered if he's really cut out for painting... Signac, on the other hand, seems very sure of himself and as I see him almost daily this self-certainty weighs on me a great deal and gives me the impression I'm a sorry soul with no willpower, with no idea where I'm going and no means to get there... I regret being able to see [Cross] only very rarely (twice since we've been here), whereas I see Signac every day.' Together, Cross and Matisse painted incomparably fluid, vibrant watercolours in almost Fauve colours. Matisse exploited the whiteness of the bare canvas, emphasising colour over drawing, using a tree to organise the composition..."

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Dominique Szymusiak,

EXTRACT FROM THE EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

► HENRI EDMOND CROSS

BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE

Based on the catalogue of the 1998 exhibition Henri Edmond Cross 1856-1910, presented at the Musée de la Chartreuse in Douai (co-published by the Musée de la Chartreuse de Douai/Somogy, authors: Françoise Baligand, Sylvie Carlier, Isabelle Compin and Monique Nonne).

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Henri Edmond Cross

20 May 1856

– Henri Edmond Joseph Delacroix is born in Douai, the son of an old-established family of ironmongers.

Vers 1856

– Henri's boyhood talent as a painter and draughtsman are noticed by the family's landlord, Dr Soins, who encourages his interest in art and ultimately finances his studies.

1866

– Henri Edmond meets the painter Carolus Duran, and spends a year as his protégé.

1878

– Admitted to the academies of drawing and architecture in Lille, where he is a regular visitor to the city museum.
– Leaves Lille for Paris.

Neo-Impressionism : social and cultural context

1839

– Publication of Eugène Chevreul's study *De la loi du contraste simultané des couleurs* ("On the law of the simultaneous contrast of colours"), a summary of his research on light and colour, for use by painters. The work was closely studied by the Neo-Impressionists – Seurat and Signac in particular – together with other theories (those of Charles Henry, Ogden Rood, James Clerk Maxwell...). As Chevreul explains in his introduction: 'when the eye sees two contiguous colours at the same time, it differentiates them as far as possible, in terms of their optical composition, and tonal register.'

1859

– 2 December: Birth of Georges Seurat, in Paris.

1863

– 11 November: Birth of Paul Signac, in Paris.

1867

– Publication of *Grammaire des arts du dessin* ('A Grammar of the Art of Drawing and Design'), by Charles Blanc. The study articulates the new awareness of the primordial importance of colour and the concept of optical beauty, and was a major influence on the work of Seurat in particular.

1869

– 31 December: Birth of Henri Matisse, in Cateau-Cambrésis.

1878

– Seurat enrolls at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, in Paris.

1881

– Exhibits for the first time at the Salon des Artistes Français (a still-life, and a kitchen interior).

1883

– Exhibits a second time at the Salon (a dark portrait).
 – Adopts the name Cross.
 – Visits the Mediterranean (the Alpes Maritimes) with his family and Dr Soins. Paints a large number of landscapes.
 – Exhibits a portrait of Dr Soins at the Exposition Universelle in Nice, at the end of the year.

1884

– Cross meets Seurat, Signac and others (the founding members of the Neo-Impressionist movement) at the Salon des Indépendants, where he continued to exhibit for the rest of his life.

Cross's early work is notable for its dark palette: he paints highly realist, intimist portraits, mostly with black grounds.

1886

– Cross's landscapes are noticed by the distinguished critic Félix Fénéon.
 – Makes several journeys to Belgium and Holland.

1879

– Publication of *Modern Chromatics*, by the physicist Ogden Rood. Rood discusses the 'optical mixing' of colours, as described later by Félix Fénéon. A French translation, *La Théorie scientifique des couleurs et leur application à l'art et à l'industrie* ('The Scientific Theory of Colours and their Application to Art and Industry') was published two years later, in 1881.
 – *Impressionnistes en 1886*, by Félix Fénéon.
 – May: Seurat is deeply impressed by the fourth Impressionist exhibition. With two friends, he moves to a studio on Rue de l'Arbalète, then Rue de Chabrol.

1880

– Publication of *Phenomena of vision*, by David Sutter. David Sutter's essay sets out sixty-seven rules on the relationship between painting and science. 'Science,' he wrote, 'frees us from incertitude of any kind, and allows the artist to evolve in complete freedom.'

1882

– Signac enrolls at the École Nationale des Arts Décoratifs.

1884

– Founding of the Salon des Artistes Indépendants, by a grouping of some 400 artists unhappy with the strictures of the official Salon des Artistes Français. With no jury, the Indépendants was open to all artists. The 'first' Neo-Impressionists – Seurat, Signac, Dubois-Pillet, Angrand and Cross – were frequent visitors.
 – 15 May–1 July: Seurat's *Une baignade, Asnières* is shown in the tearoom of the Salon des Artistes Indépendants.
 – 11 June: Dubois-Pilet registers the statutes of the Société des Artistes Indépendants.
 – Paul Verlaine publishes *Les Poètes Maudits* ('The Cursed Poets'); Joris-Karl Huysmans publishes his cult novel *À rebours* ('Against the grain').
 – *Une baignade à Asnières*, Seurat
 – Charles Henry's 'Introduction à une esthétique scientifique' (an introduction to the science of aesthetics) is published in *La Revue Contemporaine*. The text has a profound influence on Seurat.

1885

– Pissarro meets Seurat, and is inspired to join the Neo-Impressionist movement.

1886

– May: Seurat's painting *Un dimanche après-midi à l'île de la Grande Jatte* is shown at the last Impressionist exhibition, on Rue Laffitte in Paris. The picture symbolises the transition from Impressionism to Neo-Impressionism, and is widely considered

1889

– Cross exhibits six landscapes at the Salon des XX in Brussels.

1891

– Cross is vice-president of the organising committee for the Salon des Indépendants. He exhibits a portrait of Mme Hector France (Irma Clare, whom he later married)

- his first “divisionist” work.
- Cross joins the Neo-Impressionists.
- Moves to the Mediterranean coast.

as the foundational work of divisionism. Félix Fénéon, the most celebrated art critic of his day, and co-founder of the *Revue Indépendante*, describes the work as ‘the complete, systematic paradigm of this new [approach to] painting.’

- At the same Salon, Seurat and Signac meet Pissarro, the only artist to exhibit at all eight Impressionist exhibitions. Under their influence, Pissarro briefly adopts the pointillist technique.
- 19 September: Félix Fénéon coins the term ‘Neo-Impressionism’ to describe the new movement, in an article published in the Brussels review *L’Art moderne*.

1887

- Launch of a new review, *La Révolte*, distributed by Jean Grave, propounding the ideas of the Russian geographer, scientist and anarcho-Communist Pierre Kropotkine. The Neo-Impressionist group maintained close links with Jean Grave and the anarchist movement.
- February-March: Seurat exhibits *Un dimanche après-midi à l’île de la Grande Jatte* at the Salon des XX in Brussels. The Neo-impressionist movement attracts new followers in Belgium, including Van Rysselberghe, and Van de Velde. The movement is supported, and finds more followers, in the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Italy.
- In the same year, Seurat paints *Le Petit Déjeuner* (‘Breakfast’), a revelatory demonstration of the rigorous Neo-Impressionist technique, using small touches of separate, pure colour (divisionism).

1889

- In Brussels, paintings by members of the Groupe des XX (the so-called ‘Vingtistes’ – Van Rysselberghe, Lemmen, Ensor and others) are shown alongside works by ‘guest artists’, including Seurat, Luce, Gauguin, Monet, Pissarro...

1890

- Seurat publishes his study *Esthétique*, summarising current scientific theories of colour (those of Chevreul, Blanc, Rood and Henry) and asserting a genuine, scientific basis for his work and that of the other Neo-Impressionist painters.
- Signac is elected to membership of the Groupe des XX.

29 March 1891

- Georges Seurat dies in Paris, at the age of 42. His untimely death plunges the newly-formed Neo-impressionist group into a period of doubt and uncertainty. Signac assumes leadership of the movement, which adopts significant changes in style.
- *Le Cirque*, Seurat.

Cross's move to the Mediterranean coast was to have a profound influence on his painting: his fascination with the brilliant light and colours of the landscape led him to abandon portraiture and still-life. He was influenced, too, by Manet, Monet and Pissarro. In 1884, his close involvement with the Salon des Indépendants brought him closer to the work and theories of Seurat and Signac – an artistic kinship that was also (in the case of Signac) to become a lasting friendship. The Neo-Impressionists met regularly, forming a loose, anarchic group. Cross abandoned his earlier palette of dark shades and neutrals, working exclusively in pure colour.

1892

– Cross takes part in the first “Exhibition of Neo-Impressionist painters” with Pissarro, Luce, Signac, Van Rysselberghe...

1895

– Cross's decorative composition *L'Air du soir* (“Evening Air”, exhibited in 1894 at the Salon des Indépendants and later presented as a gift to Signac) is the inspiration for Matisse's *Luxe, calme et volupté*.

Cross's painting *La Plage de la Vignasse*, shown at the Salon des Indépendants in 1892, reflects Signac's experiments in the depiction of the effect of light on local colour – a lengthy and “tentative” process, as the artist himself points out.

Les Îles d'or is Cross's first great masterpiece – an attempt to “paint light itself”.

Light, sunlight and the transfiguration of landscape into a “poetic vision” of Nature become Cross's chief centres of interest. At the same time, he develops a marked interest in stylization and decorative painting.

1896

– First collaboration with a publisher: Cross produces a lithograph, *L'Errant* (“The Wanderer”) for Jean Grave.
– Cross translates Ruskin's work *The Elements of Drawing*, later to become an important reference work for Signac.

1893

– Antoine de La Rochefoucauld opens the *boutique néo*, a Neo-Impressionist gallery at no. 20, Rue Laffitte.

1895

– The *boutique néo* closes, having failed to attract public or critical attention.
– Jean Grave launches the libertarian review *Temps nouveaux*, including articles, drawings and prints by the Neo-Impressionists.
– 1895-98: Matisse is a regular visitor to Gustave Moreau's studio.

1896

– Matisse exhibits for the first time with the Salon des Cents and the Salon de la Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts. He becomes an associate member of the latter, at the suggestion of Puvis de Chavannes.
– In the same year, Matisse meets Pissarro and Rodin.

1897

– Matisse discovers a handful of Impressionist canvases at an exhibition in an annex of the Musée du Luxembourg, in Paris, and takes a close interest in the movement.

1898

- On visits to Paris, Cross is a regular at literary and artistic gatherings held by Van Rysselberghe and Emile Verhaeren.
- The first Neo-Impressionist exhibition in Germany is a tremendous success. Germany, like Belgium, will go on to play an important role in the spread of the movement.

1899

- Cross suffers attacks of chronic rheumatism.

1903

- Visits Venice. The city becomes a source of fresh inspiration.

For years, Cross's work is dedicated to the celebration of colour, following the example of Luce or Bonnard. He achieves "a perfect mastery of the technique of colour".

In the artist's own words: "[Neo-Impressionists] are far more interested in creating harmonies of pure colour, than in harmonizing the colours of a particular landscape or natural scene."

1904

- Cross shows six paintings of Venice at the Salon des Indépendants.
- He spends time with Matisse, a decisive source of inspiration for his later works.

1899

- Signac publishes his study *D'Eugène Delacroix au néo-impressionnisme*. The book re-examines and defends the innovative optical processes developed by Seurat (to whom it is dedicated), explains the pointillists' approach to the decomposition of colour, and retracing the direct line of descent (as he sees it) from Delacroix to the Neo-Impressionists:
"...The Neo-Impressionist does not stipple, he divides. And dividing involves: Guaranteeing all benefits of light, coloration and harmony by:
 - 1. An optical mixture of pigments which are pure (all the tints of the prism and all their tones);*
 - 2. The separation of different elements (locally applied color, lighting colors, their reactions, etc.);*
 - 3. The balance of these elements and their proportion (following laws of contrast, deterioration, and irradiation);*
 - 4. Choosing a touch that is proportionate to the size of the painting..."*

1900

- Matisse meets Derain at the studio of Eugène Carrère.

1901

- Matisse exhibits at the Salon des Indépendants.

1903

- Matisse takes part in the first Salon d'Automne.

1904

- Matisse paints *Luxe, calme et volupté*. The influence of Signac and Cross (whom Matisse met in Saint Tropez and Le Lavandou) is clearly apparent in the picture's composition and its quasi-divisionist technique.

1905

– Solo exhibition at Galerie Druet, featuring thirty paintings. The exhibition is a critical success. Almost all the pictures are sold. The exhibition's catalogue includes a preface by Symbolist poet Emile Verhaeren, who did much to promote the Neo-Impressionist movement in Belgium: "...*These landscapes, my dear Cross, are not merely pages of sheer beauty, but motifs embodying a lyrical sense of emotion. Their rich harmonies are satisfying to the painter's eye, and their sumptuous, luxuriant vision is a poet's delight. Yet this abundance never tips into excess. Everything is light and charming...*"

1906

– The French State acquires a watercolour by Cross following the Salon des Indépendants – the only one of his works to be bought by the State during his lifetime.

1907

– A new, highly successful, solo exhibition at Galerie Bernheim (Cross's dealer since 1906).
– Cross suffers badly from rheumatic attacks during the second half of the year.

1910

– Death of Henri Edmond Cross; he is buried in the cemetery at Le Lavandou. His tomb bears a bronze medallion designed Van Rysselberghe.

The final years of Cross's life were marked by a worsening of his chronic illness, and a prolific period of extreme, fertile creativity. In 1903, he opted for "an art of synthesis and imagination", in the words of Maurice Denis, expressing his sense of fulfillment in the glories of nature. At the same time, he introduced nude figures into his painted landscapes. His painting was increasingly liberated, the quest for harmony still its overriding preoccupation. Cross also painted a growing number of watercolours, finding respite and repose in the technique.

1911

– July: the city of Douai holds a retrospective in Cross's honour.

1905

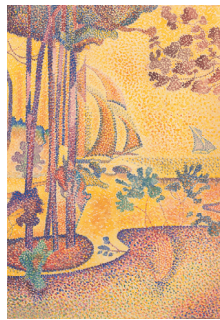
– Matisse spends the summer in Collioure, with Derain. The town is one of several places to have a decisive influence on his work.
– Matisse shows his painting *Luxe, calme et volupté* at the Salon d'Automne, to critical acclaim. Commentators note the influence of Signac's pointillist technique. Signac decides to buy the picture.

1908

– Signac becomes president of the Salon des Indépendants, a post he holds until 1934.
– Matisse's first solo exhibition in the United States, organised by Alfred Stieglitz in New York.

► PRESS VISUALS

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Henri Edmond Cross, *Study for L'Air du soir*, 1893 – Watercolour on paper
Signed bottom left : HE CROSS
27 x 18.5 cm – Private collection – © D.R.



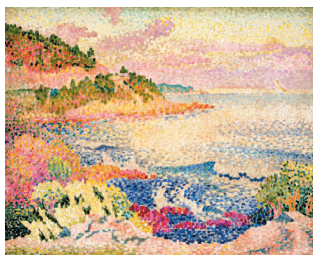
Henri Edmond Cross, *Bords méditerranéens [Shores of the Mediterranean]*, 1895 – Oil on canvas
Signed and dated bottom left :
Henri Edmond Cross 95 – 65 x 92 cm
Private collection – © Steven Tucker



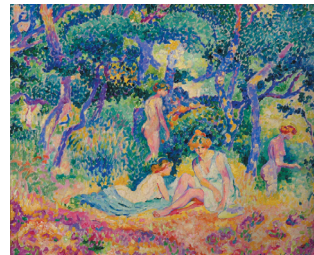
Henri Edmond Cross, *La Mer clapotante [The lapping waves]*, c. 1902-05 – Oil on canvas – Signed
bottom left: Henri Edmond Cross
60 x 81 cm – Private collection – © D.R.



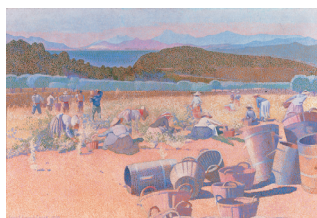
Henri Edmond Cross, *Venice: The Salute*, 1903 – Watercolour
26.5 x 17 cm – Private collection
© Ledain / Galerie de la Présidence



Henri Edmond Cross, *Provençal coast, Le Four des Maures*, 1906-07
Oil on canvas – Signed bottom right:
Henri Edmond Cross – 73 x 92 cm
Musée de la Chartreuse, Douai
© musée de la Chartreuse, Douai



Henri Edmond Cross, *Le Bois or Nu sous bois [Woodland scene with nude]*, 1906-07 – Oil on canvas – Signed bottom
left: Henri Edmond Cross – 46 x 55 cm
L'Annonciade, musée de Saint-Tropez
© Jean-Louis Chaix, ville de Saint-Tropez



Henri Edmond Cross, *Les Vendanges [Grape harvest]* – 1891-1892 – Oil on
canvas – 94.9 x 140 cm – Signed and
dated bottom left: Henri Edmond Cross
1892 – Private collection – © D.R.



Georges Seurat, *Port-en-Bessin*, 1888
Oil on canvas – 54.3 x 66.7 cm
Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis
© Saint Louis Art Museum, Museum –
Purchase, 4:1934



Paul Signac, *Portrieux, Gouverlo*, 1888 – Oil on canvas – 46.2 x 55.5 cm
Hiroshima Museum of Art, Hiroshima
© Hiroshima Museum of Art



Paul Signac, *Tartanes pavoisées à Saint-Tropez* [Tartanes decked with bunting, Saint Tropez], 1893 – Oil on canvas – 56 x 46, 5 cm – Von der Heydt Museum, Wuppertal – © D.R.



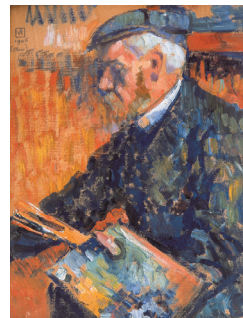
Maximilien Luce, *Camaret*, 1894
Oil on canvas– 72.4 x 92.1 cm – Saint Louis Art Museum, Saint Louis, 29:1998
© Adagp, Paris 2011



Henri Matisse, *Collioure, rue du Soleil, été 1905* – Oil on canvas– 46 x 55 cm
Musée départemental Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis © Succession – Henri Matisse / Photo Philip Bernard



Theo Van Rysselberghe, *L'Entrée du Port de Volendam*, c. 1896
Oil on canvas– 38 x 55, 5 cm
Musée Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid
© Colección Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza en depósito en el Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza



Theo Van Rysselberghe, *Portrait of Henri Edmond Cross*, 1906 – Oil on panel – 23 x 18 cm – Initialed and dated with location, upper left: VR 1906 St Clair
Private collection – © D.R.

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Michel Draguet

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Françoise Baligand

Henri-Edmond Cross: Symbolist inclinations and anarchist sympathies

Sylvie Carlier

Matisse and Cross, a friendship between painters

Dominique Szymusiak

“There, in a place made of sun, trees, rocks and waves...”:

friends at Saint-Clair

Claudine Grammont

Cross the watercolourist

Patrick Offenstadt (author of the forthcoming catalogue raisonné of the works of Henri Edmond Cross).

Publication details

Éditions HAZAN

Bilingual French/English edition

Paperback with cover flaps

150 Illustrations – 240 pages

Format : 22 x 28.5 cm

Price: 29 euros TTC

► **EXHIBITION**

AT THE MUSÉE DÉPARTAMENTAL

HENRI MATISSE IN CATEAU-CAMBRÉSIS

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Henri Edmond Cross and Néo-Impressionism. From Seurat to Matisse

10 March – 10 June 2012

The exhibition at the Musée Départemental Matisse in Cateau-Cambrésis presents 73 major works by Henri Emond Cross, from 1891 to his death in 1910. Thanks to the co-production with the Musée Marmottan Monet, and research by Françoise Baligand, the exhibition features paintings loaned from museums throughout Europe and the US, and reunites Cross's *La Ferme, matin* (which belonged to Matisse) with its pendant, *La Ferme, soir* (now in a private collection).

The Musée Matisse also presents 39 watercolours by Cross, painted out of doors, together with watercolours painted by Matisse in Collioure, as preparatory landscape sketches. Both painters give free rein to the play of colour with the bright white of the paper, unfettered by drawing. Cross helped Matisse explore the contribution and potential of Neo-Impressionism; in return, Matisse encouraged Cross to engage with wider issues and concerns (notably the question of line), and to adopt a bolder colour palette.

Henri Edmond Cross and Neo-Impressionism. From Seurat to Matisse follows an earlier exhibition, *Matisse-Derain, Collioure, 1905, a Fauvist summer*, organized by the Musée Matisse in 2005-6, in partnership with the Musée de Céret. To highlight the role of Cross's Neo-Impressionist paintings as a major influence on Matisse's work, the museum is also displaying 13 paintings by Matisse – early landscapes painted out of doors in Brittany in 1896, Corsican landscapes, scenes from Saint-Tropez and Collioure – together with paintings by Camoin, Manguin, Valtat and Derain.

In association with the Musée Marmottan Monet, the exhibition explores a fresh approach to new movements and experiments in art, connected to the work of Matisse.

► VISITOR INFORMATION

MUSÉE MARMOTTAN MONET

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Bus : 22, 32, 52, P.C.

Opening times
Tuesday to Sunday,
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Late opening Thursday, until 8 p.m.
Closed Mondays, December 25
and January 1

Admission
Standard: 10 euros
Concessions: 5 euros
Under 7s: gratuit

Group bookings
Christine Lecca – Tel. : 01 44 96 50 83
Group admission: 6 euros per head

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**Special edition, *Connaissance
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