



Matisse and Picasso: The Story of Their Rivalry and Friendship

Jack D. Flam

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Matisse and Picasso achieved extraordinary prominence during their lifetimes. They have become cultural icons, standing not only for different kinds of art but also for different ways of living. Matisse, known for his restraint and intense sense of privacy, for his decorum and discretion, created an art that transcended daily life and conveyed a sensuality that inhabited an abstract and ethereal realm of being. In contrast, Picasso became the exemplar of intense emotionality, of theatricality, of art as a kind of autobiographical confession that was often charged with violence and explosive eroticism. In *Matisse and Picasso*, Jack Flam explores the compelling, competitive, parallel lives of these two artists and their very different attitudes toward the idea of artistic greatness, toward the women they loved, and ultimately toward their confrontations with death.

Matisse and Picasso: The Story of Their Rivalry and Friendship Details

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Author : Jack D. Flam

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From Reader Review Matisse and Picasso: The Story of Their Rivalry and Friendship for online ebook

Sue says

Picasso & Matisse had such different styles and personalities but their influence on each other was incalculable. Each reached greater heights b/c of the other. So interesting to compare their iconic works to each other. I've always felt Picasso single-handedly changed the art world. However, Matisse's impact was not far behind. Recommend!

Sue says

docent book for August discussion group

Michelle says

Loved this book! I had previously read Françoise Gilot's book of her visits to Matisse in Vence with Picasso - which Flam used as a reference occasionally in this book. I loved Flam's comparison of the energy carried by both painters, both personally and professionally. I will never look at another Picasso or Matisse work the same way again.

Kathy says

Fascinating

Joseph says

The personal dynamics of Matisse and Picasso, which form the foundation of their innovative contributions to the world of art, are showcased in this well-written book. Not only do we get a glimpse of those very personal motivations that drive great artists, but the author provides us with that additional layer of intensity spurred by their competition, which came to define this post-impressionist period in art. The great part of this book is how Matisse and Picasso played off each other -- action and reaction, from begrudged admiration to a not-so-muted hostility, all represented and interpreted in their paintings. We learn how much of their work came to represent a conduit for their feelings about the people in their lives, their feelings about the tumultuous era within which they lived, and most of all, their mutual desire to redefine art in a unique way. Their interpretation of life as they aged is a great case in point - Matisse ignoring the realities of old age through a single-minded focus on his creations, while Picasso used his work to express his depression and defiance. Ultimately, the reader is left with a clear impression that this competition was based on mutual respect borne of the struggle to innovate and redefine their craft.

Teddy Farias says

very insightful, very well researched

Gerald Thomson says

A great side-by-side history of, arguably, the two artists most responsible for modern art. The story is told chronologically, going back and forth between both painters' lives, showing how often they intersected. The similarities are there, for certain, but the differences are what pop out. Both men, reacting to the realism of history paintings and the emotion of the impressionists, come up with completely different results that complemented each other. A very interesting handling of these subjects.

Elena says

Very intriguing and easy read. I learned a lot about the history of Gertrude Stein's connection with them; it's pretty insightful and inspiring #100

Laurie says

I enjoyed the comparisons between these two artists, two of my favorite artists.

Beth says

I am still reading this on my iPod. Yesterday I read it during lunch and took advantage of the free WiFi and looked at my Art Envi app. I browsed works by Cezanne, Picasso & Matisse to get a better feel for the paintings of each artist. It helps to see the paintings in color - it's too bad the book only has black and white photos. They don't really illustrate the art on a par with the text, which is excellent.

3/19/10 I finished reading this at lunch today. We are going to NYC this summer and I will definitely plan a visit to MOMA to see works by both of these artists. In the closing chapter, the author mentions MOMA's 1980 retrospective of Picasso's works. We were there! We went on our honeymoon, along with my parents. My mother & I breezed through, and then we waited for my new husband and my father to meet us in the museum shop! I do remember we saw Guernica.

Susan says

Matisse and Picasso vie in an intense, fueling and begrudging respect for each other as these prolific painters of the 20th century seep unshakable influence from each others use of a certain color, a brushstroke, or the flattening of perspective. Almost seems as though one can not create without the other's competing.

Nic says

the contradictions of history and creativity, excellent read, Flam did a good job of describing the play between these two giants and their individual motivations

Brian says

Did you know that Picasso basically mimicked the art that Matisse was producing and did not try to hide the fact that he was doing it? This angered Matisse to no end. This is a great book about the friendship and rivalry between two masters and you get intimate details about their subjects and influences. Matisse was bitter about how famous Picasso became, feeling like he was getting overshadowed. Picasso, to his credit was always quick to say that amongst contemporaries, he only really loved Matisse. Great book!

Rebecca says

Why can't all art historians write this way? This is a lucid and captivating account of the intersections between the life and art of Matisse and Picasso, for whom Gertrude Stein, who introduced them, might well have coined the term "frenemies." I thought I was pretty well versed in the period and works covered -- blockbusters like Joy of Life and Demoiselles d'Avignon come up in my teaching from time to time. But Flam kept surprising me with novel information and insights about familiar artworks. For instance, I never thought of the wallpaper background in Picasso's papier colle works as a Matisse reference, an argument Flam makes convincingly. Highly recommended.

Joseph Adelizzi, Jr. says

Can there be creativity without competition? After having read Jack D. Flam's "Matisse and Picasso: The Story of Their Rivalry and Friendship" I think I am more inclined to allow that competition does play a role in creativity.

In my perfect world creativity would stand on its own – the artist would generate fantastic, moving, original works by squirreling away in isolation for a period before returning to polite society with a cart full of his or her magical masterpieces in tow. In fact, the idea of creating something amazing to one-up someone, at least in part, always felt immature to me. TV shows like "Cupcake Wars" or Competitive Christmas Decorating (not sure of the exact title of that one – no doubt it contains some form of the word "battle" in it) do nothing to change my mind.

However, Flam, or rather Matisse and Picasso have shown me my vision may be flawed. To expand and elucidate, to create anew, perhaps there needs to be something or someone to push against, someone to react to, someone to react to you. Flam shows us that is what Matisse and Picasso seemed to be engaged in for the whole of their artistic lives. Thanks to that symbiotic (or was it adversarial?) relationship we all have carts full of masterpieces to enjoy forever.

As much as I enjoyed Flam's presentation of the relationship between the two artists and the impact each had on the other, the book itself had some drawbacks. First, all the pictures of the great works were in black and white. Given so much of the mastery, particularly relative to Matisse, comes from the use of color, the absence of color in the plates was very frustrating. Also, often the text would describe a work, get me curious, and then not provide a picture of that work.

So, competition may be necessary for creativity. I see it more now, thanks to Flam, Matisse, and Picasso. Am I going to spend the next six months catching up on missed episodes of "Chopped?" No.
