

## Topic Page: [Fauvism](#)

Definition: **fauvism** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Expressionist style based on extremely vivid non-naturalistic colours. Matisse was the leading figure and, with Signac and Derain, exhibited at the Salon d'Automne (1905). A critic described their work as something produced by wild animals (Fr. *fauves*). Other members included Albert Marquet, George Rouault, Vlaminck, and Braque. Although fauvism was short-lived, its influence on expressionism was profound.



Summary Article: **fauvism**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Image from: [Bathers \(Les Grandes Baigneuses\)](#) in [National Gallery Collection](#)

Movement in modern French painting characterized by the use of very bold, vivid, pure colours. The name is a reference to the fact that the works seemed crude and untamed to many people at the time. The Fauves believed that colour and a strong linear pattern were more important than realistic representation; André Derain's *London Bridge* (1906; Museum of Modern Art, New York) is an example. Although short-lived, lasting only about three years (1905–08), the movement was highly influential. It was the first specific artistic movement of the 20th century, that would transform European art between the turn of the century and World War I. The key figure of fauvism was Henri Matisse, other important members being Maurice de Vlaminck, Georges Braque, Georges Rouault, Raoul Dufy, and Derain.

Fauvism was not an official school with a manifesto, but a group of artists motivated by the same concerns. Matisse, Vlaminck, and other like-minded friends exhibited as a group at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1905 and were given the name Fauves by the critic Louis Vauxcelles (who also coined the term cubism). Seeing a Renaissance-like sculpture incongruously placed in the same room, Vauxcelles remarked, 'Donatello aux milieu des fauves' ('Donatello among the wild beasts'). Many other comments on the Fauves' work at this exhibition were equally uncomplimentary; one critic accused them of 'flinging a pot of paint in the face of the public'.

It was Matisse who, in 1899, began experimenting with neo-Impressionism, which greatly influenced fauvism. Another important influence was Vincent van Gogh, who used colour in a highly emotional way; in 1901, after seeing an exhibition of his work, Vlaminck said, 'I was so moved that I wanted to cry with joy and despair. On that day I loved van Gogh more than I loved my father.' Other influences included the work of Delacroix, Manet, and Gauguin (specifically his Tahiti series). Inspiration was later provided by African masks – an interest they passed on to the cubists.

Other members of the Fauves at the 1905 exhibition included Derain and Rouault. They were joined the following year by Dufy and in 1907 by Braque. At that time they shared a love of intense colour, often used for decorative effect rather than to convey the natural appearance of things. Beginning in 1908, however, the group identity broke up, as the artists developed in different ways. Matisse continued to be concerned with the emotional use of colour, as seen in his later paper cut-outs, but Braque had a radical change of direction after meeting Picasso in 1907, going on to develop cubism with him. In spite of its short life, fauvism had great influence, particularly on expressionism in Germany.

## essays

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Fauvism. (2018). In Helicon (Ed.), *The Hutchinson unabridged encyclopedia with atlas and weather guide*. Abington, UK: Helicon. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/fauvism>

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## APA

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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