

PALM LEAF

Michael Cole-Fontayn, Chairman of Europe, Middle East & Africa
Ann Dumas, Curator, Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse
February 2016

Michael: The Palm Leaf painting by Matisse is perhaps a very vivid and slightly unconventional piece. What can you tell us about this painting, which was painted while Matisse was staying in Tangiers?

Ann: Yes, it's a fantastic painting because the colours are so vivid and it's so strong and he pulls us into a very close focus - it's as if we're standing right there in the garden with him.

He'd arrived in Tangiers a few weeks before and gone there obviously for the brilliant light, which he loved. But much to his disappointment, there were several weeks of non-stop, heavy rain and suddenly the rain stopped and the sun came out and of course it was a fantastic spring with all the plants suddenly burgeoning. And Matisse described working on this painting as 'a sudden rush of spontaneous creation', which he said was 'like a flame'.

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