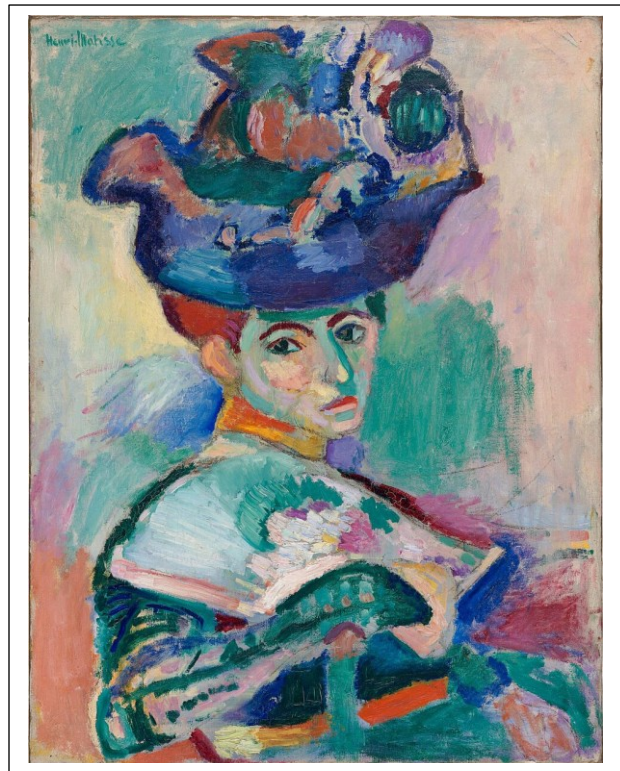




FAUVISM

OLLI Sketchy Abstractions Class 5



Henri Matisse. Woman with a Hat, 1905.

PUBLIC DOMAIN

OLLI Sketchy Abstractions Class 5 – Fauvism

Moderator: Harold Dreibelbis

Sketchy describes a rapidly executed freehand drawing that is not usually intended as a finished work.

Abstraction describes art that is unconcerned with the literal depiction of things from the visible world—it can, however, refer to an object or image which has been distilled from the real world.

Fauvism: (per Wikipedia)

Follow this link for information on Fauvism. Fauvism is a style of painting and an art movement that emerged in France at the beginning of the 20th century. It was the style of les Fauves (French pronunciation: [le fov], the wild beasts), a group of modern artists whose works emphasized painterly qualities and strong color over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism.

[1800 – 1890s Fauvism Gallery](#)

See the entire “Academy to Abstract a timeline” on my website, www.CW4SP.com | [Art](#).

Core Characteristics of Fauvism (per MS Copilot)

Fauvism’s core characteristics center on radical color, liberated brushwork, and emotional intensity. The movement (1905–1908) pushed painting away from naturalism and toward pure expressive force.

Core Characteristics of Fauvism

1. Explosive, Pure Color

- Fauvists used **pure, brilliant pigments straight from the tube**, often unmixed.
- Color was applied **arbitrarily**, not to match reality — a face could be green, a sky red.
- This approach emphasized **emotion over representation**.

2. Bold, Aggressive Brushwork

- Paintings feature **wild, energetic strokes** that feel raw and spontaneous.
- Brushwork is used to heighten emotional impact rather than capture fleeting light (as Impressionists did).

3. Simplified Forms & Abstraction

- Subjects are reduced to **simplified shapes**, often outlined or flattened.
- Representation is secondary to **expressive design and color harmony**.

4. Emotional Expression Over Realism

- Fauvism is closely related to Expressionism: both prioritize **feeling** over accuracy.
- The goal is to provoke an **intense sensory or emotional reaction** through radical visual choices.

5. Influence from Post-Impressionism & Non-Western Art

- Inspired by **Van Gogh's intensity**, **Gauguin's saturated color**, and **Seurat's pointillism** (though without scientific rigor).
- Many Fauves studied **African and Oceanic art**, which encouraged bold simplification and helped lead some toward Cubism.

6. Shock Value & Break from Tradition

- Their 1905 Salon d'Automne exhibition shocked critics, prompting Louis Vauxcelles to call them "**les Fauves**" — **the wild beasts**.
- The movement marked a decisive break from academic realism and fin-de-siècle Symbolist gloom.

Summary

Fauvism is defined by **vivid, non-naturalistic color**, **forceful brushwork**, **simplified forms**, and a commitment to **emotional expression** over realism. It was short-lived but profoundly influential, paving the way for **Cubism** and other modernist movements.

If you want, I can also compare **Fauvism vs. Expressionism**, build a **visual cheat-sheet**, or map how it connects to **Symbolism** and **Post-Impressionism**.

All links

Britannica

Fauvism | Definition, Art, & Facts | Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/art/Fauvism>

Wikipedia

Fauvism - Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fauvism>

Smarthistory

Smarthistory – Fauvism, an introduction

<https://smarthistory.org/a-beginners-guide-to-fauvism/?sidebar=europe-1900-50>

Suggested project – Fauvist portrait

Look at these portraits by Henri Matisse:

[Woman with a Hat](#)

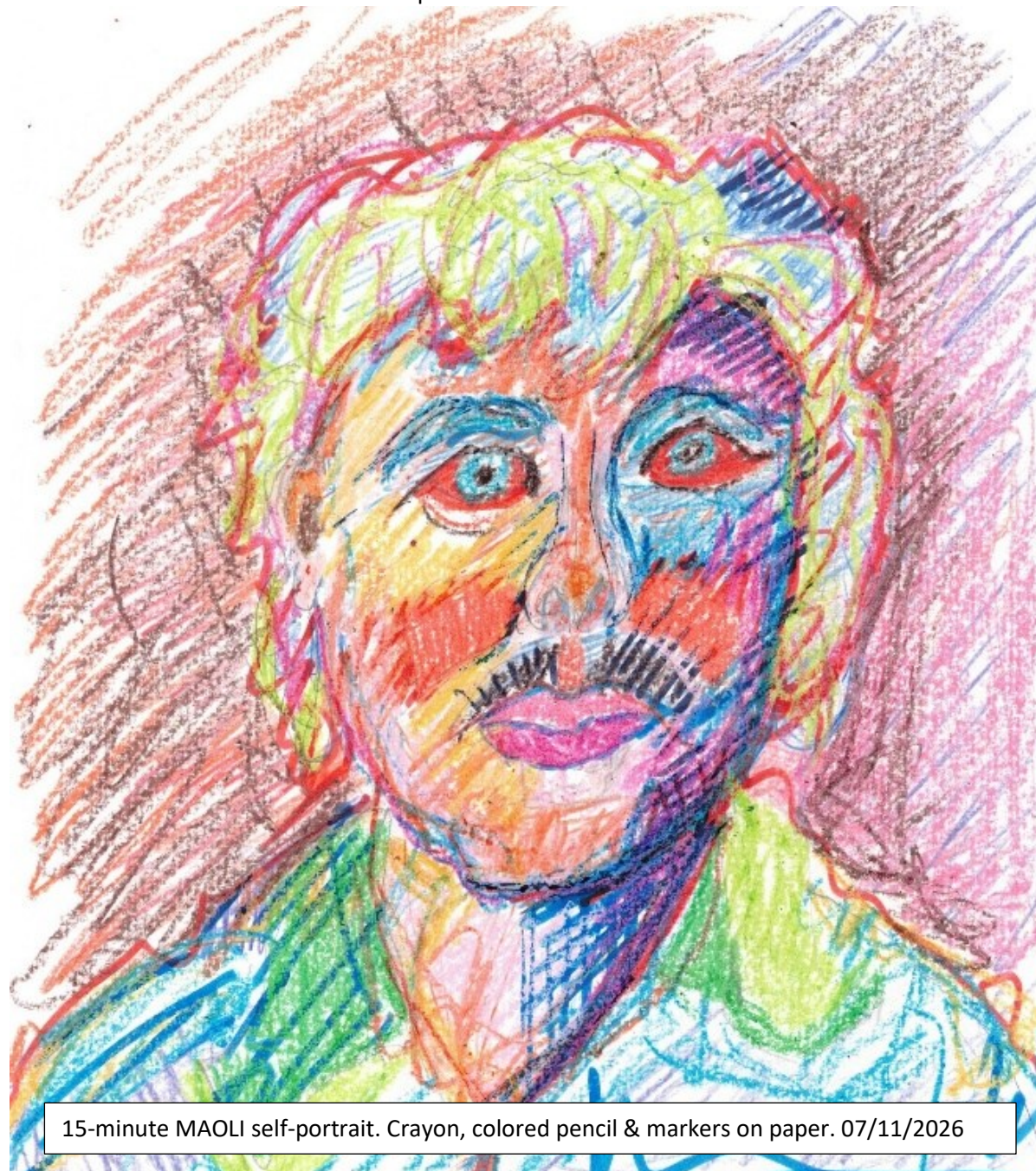
[Portrait of Madame Matisse](#)

[Self-Portrait in a Striped T-shirt](#)

What characteristics of Fauvism are evident in these portraits?

Try This: Draw a face in the Fauvist style.

Remember, we are doing sketches and are heading for abstractions. Do you see how Fauvism leads us down that path? If you create an object d'art, great! But the main thing is to warm up to the artistic freedom these different isms cuddled up with. Be the artist!



15-minute MAOLI self-portrait. Crayon, colored pencil & markers on paper. 07/11/2026

Suggested project – Fauvist landscape

Look at these 3 Fauvist landscapes:

Henri Matisse, *Le bonheur de vivre*,

Henri Matisse, *Les toits de Collioure*

André Derain, *La jetée à L'Estaque*

What characteristics of Fauvism are evident in these landscapes?

Try This: Draw a landscape in the Fauvist style.

