



## Modern Art on the Côte d'Azur

Picasso, Matisse, Chagall and their contemporaries

**24–30 March 2026 (MM 906)**

7 days

Lecturer: Mary Lynn Riley

**2–8 October 2026 (MM 192)**

7 days

Lecturer: Monica Bohm-Duchen

Europe's greatest concentration of classic modern art in the idyllic Mediterranean setting where it was created.

Old and new collections, with outstanding work by Renoir, Bonnard, Braque, Léger, Miró, Giacometti, Cocteau, Chagall, Matisse, Picasso.

Visits to the coastal towns and villages which inspired the artists.

Stay in Nice throughout.

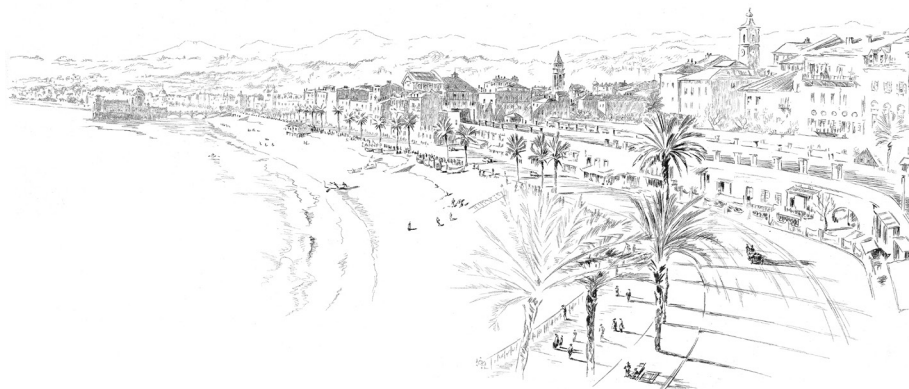
Natural resources and climate have drawn invaders and visitors to Nice and its surroundings from the Greek colonists of classical times to the jet-set of today. But from the late 19th century a special category of visitor – and settler – transformed the Côte d'Azur into the greatest concentration of modern art in Europe.

Monet first visited Antibes in 1883; Signac bought a house in the fishing village of St-Tropez in 1892. Matisse's first visit to the Midi in 1904 transformed his art, and from 1918 he spent more time on the Côte d'Azur than in Paris.

Matisse, Chagall and Picasso are merely among the most illustrious of the artists who chose to live in the South of France. Many of their fellow modernisers followed suit: Braque, Bonnard, Dufy, Picabia.

This tour is an extraordinary opportunity to see how modernity relates to the past as well as the present, and how gallery displays can be centred on the art, the location or the patron/collector. In Matisse's Chapelle du Rosaire at Vence, traditional arts and crafts have been revived by a modern genius, as in the monumental mosaic and glass designs of Léger which can be seen at Biot.

There are also echoes of collecting habits of earlier eras in the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild. The mixture of past and present and the juxtaposition of the Goût Rothschild with the beauty of its location are breathtaking. (Graham Sutherland drew exotic flowers and plants in the extraordinary gardens.)



Nice, etching c. 1925 by Frederick Farrell

At Antibes the Picasso Museum is housed in the Château Grimaldi, lent to Picasso as studio space in 1946 where he produced life-affirming paintings.

Old and new galleries abound, such as the Fondation Maeght, St-Paul-de-Vence, whose building (designed by José Luis Sert, 1963) makes it a work of outstanding sympathy to its natural surroundings, in gardens enlivened by Miró's *Labyrinthe* and other sculptures.

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Nice, March 2026:** Fly (British Airways) at c. 11.45am from London Heathrow to Nice. **October 2026:** Fly (British Airways CityFlyer) at c. 11.00am from London City to Nice. There is an afternoon visit to the Musée des Beaux Arts Jules Chéret, concentrating on their 19th- and early 20th-century holdings.

**Day 2: Nice.** The Musée Matisse unites a wide range of the artist's work; sculpture, ceramics, stained glass as well as painting. In the afternoon, visit the Marc Chagall Museum which has the largest collection of the artist's works: notably the 17 canvases of the Biblical Message, set in a peaceful garden in a salubrious Nice suburb.

**Day 3: Antibes, Vallauris, Cagnes-sur-Mer.** Most of the paintings Picasso produced in his studio in the Château Grimaldi in 1946 have been donated to the town of Antibes. Vallauris is a centre of contemporary pottery revived by Picasso, whose masterpiece *War & Peace* is here. Renoir's house in Cagnes-sur-Mer is set amidst olive groves, a memorial to the only major Impressionist to settle in the south.

**Day 4: St-Tropez, Le Cannet.** Drive west to St-Tropez, which has been popular with artists since Paul Signac settled here in 1892. The Musée de l'Annonciade is one of France's finest collections of modern art (Signac, Maillol, Matisse, Bonnard, Vlaminck, Braque). Continue to Le Cannet, where the first museum dedicated to the works of Bonnard opened in 2011.

**Day 5: Villefranche-sur-Mer, St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, Nice.** In Villefranche is the small Chapelle St-Pierre, decorated by Cocteau. Continue to St-Jean-Cap-Ferrat to see the paintings, sculpture and furniture of the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild, a mansion set in attractive gardens. The afternoon is free in Nice.

**Day 6: St-Paul-de-Vence, Vence.** The Maeght Foundation at St-Paul-de-Vence is renowned for its collections (Picasso, Hepworth, Miró, Arp, Giacometti, but not all works are shown at once) and for its architecture and setting. In the afternoon visit the Chapelle du Rosaire, a Dominican chapel designed by Matisse.

**Day 7: Biot.** The Musée National Fernand Léger was built to house the artist's works bequeathed to his wife. Fly from Nice arriving at London Heathrow at c. 3.15pm.

*Please note that the October 2026 tour departs from London City airport and returns to London Heathrow.*

*In recent years, renovation work has led to museum closures. At the moment all visits listed are possible but we cannot rule out the possibility of changes.*

Modern Art on the Côte d'Azur  
continued

## Lecturers

**Mary Lynn Riley.** Resident on the Côte d'Azur and a specialist in 19th- and 20th-century modern and contemporary art. She designs and teaches art courses and art appreciation workshops for adults at the Musée Bonnard in Le Cannet and lectures at other area museums. She completed her Master of Fine Arts at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore, USA and previously worked at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC.

**Monica Bohm-Duchen.** Lecturer, writer and curator specialising in 20th-century art. She studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem before graduating in English Literature and History of Art from UCL, and with an MA in Art History from the Courtauld. She has lectured for the National Gallery, Tate, Royal Academy, Courtauld, Sotheby's and Birkbeck College. She is contributing editor of *Insiders/Outsiders: Refugees from Nazi Europe and their Contribution to British Visual Culture* (Lund Humphries, 2019), which accompanies the year-long nationwide Insiders/Outsiders Festival that she initiated in 2019.

## Practicalities

**Included:** private coach; accommodation as described below; breakfasts and 4 dinners (with wine, water and coffee); all admissions; all tips for waiters and drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. Hotel La Pérouse, Nice** ([hotel-la-perouse.com](http://hotel-la-perouse.com)): stylish 4-star hotel, partially built into the cliff and overlooking the Promenade des Anglais. All rooms have a balcony or terrace. It was renovated in 2023.

**How strenuous?** There is a fair amount of walking and standing around in museums. The coach cannot always drop off directly outside the museums so some walking is required to access some of the sites visited, over steep terrain in places. Average distance by coach per day: 40 miles

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.