

Handwritten graffiti in black ink on a green and white background.

Foreword

6\$

HLS BB..

Large, stylized graffiti in blue and purple with a star pattern.



Will

Handwritten graffiti in black ink.

Handwritten graffiti in black ink.

Handwritten graffiti in blue ink.



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Large, stylized purple signature or graffiti.

FORTIEZ



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IRRESPONSIBLE

Jacques-Louis David

1748–1825, FRENCH

David blurred the boundaries between life and art. He involved himself in the turbulent events of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era, while acting as a leading figure in the Neoclassical movement.

Jacques-Louis David was born in Paris on August 1748. His father, a successful businessman, died in a fire when the boy was just nine—an event, perhaps, of the eventual importance of the eventful life. He was to lead a life that was made a reality by the uncertainty of the architects, and was essentially expected to follow in his father's footsteps. By 1765, however, David had decided to become a painter, and approached the great rococo artist François Boucher (1703–70), a conservative who did not want to take any more pupils because his sight was failing. Instead, he recommended Joseph-Marie Vien as a tutor. This was a good choice. Vien was the former winner of the Prix de Rome and was an enthusiastic proponent of the latest neoclassical theories. The new inspiration from the art of antiquity led the artist to adopt a serious moral tone and reject the frivolous erotic fantasies of the rococo style.

Classical education

Under Vien's guidance, David determined to win the Prix de Rome. He failed the first time, making a heart-breaking suicide attempt. He was disappointed, but in 1784 he won, with a strong victory. He was then sent to Rome, where he remained until 1787. He was so against a political unrest.

“Only the man who has attracted a blood-thirsty mob can be called a great man.”

JACQUES-LOUIS DAVID



DIAGNOSES THE DEAD, 1774

The Greek philosopher Diogenes, cured of his madness by the sight of his mother, who was a prostitute.

By Raphael, David was about 180. By this time, the rococo style was about to be replaced by the neoclassical style, and so against a political unrest.

IN CONTEXT Neoclassicism and Pompeii

During the neoclassical period, interest in the ancient world was stimulated by the discovery of the ruins at Herculaneum and Pompeii. These two cities, which had been destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE, were excavated in 1738 and 1748 respectively. They had been remarkably well preserved in mud and ash, yielding

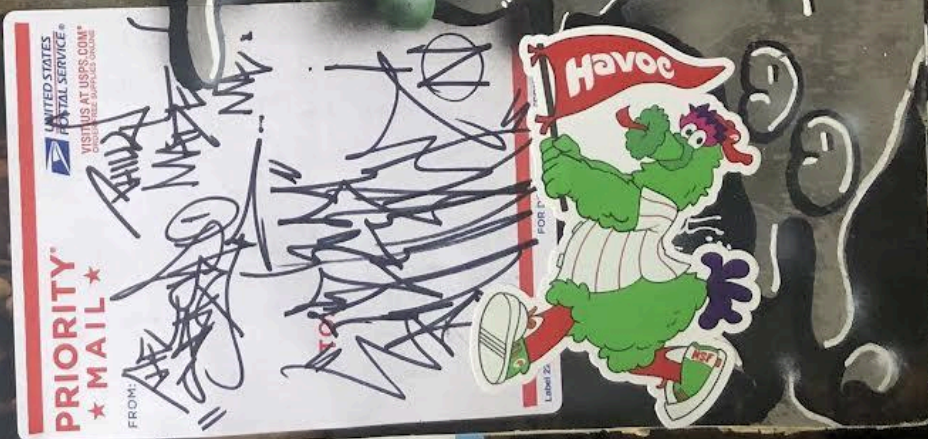
many fine paintings and architectural remains. The mystique of these discoveries was guarded jealously. Artists were forbidden to sketch there without special permission—Vien was one of the fortunate few to acquire this. David visited the sites with an archaeologist friend, Quatremère de Quincy, and was hugely impressed.



SATYR WITH WINEBAG, POMPEII

SELF-PORTRAIT, 1794

This portrait was painted while David was imprisoned following the death of his political allies. The artist's expression and clenched grip reflect his agitated state.





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death. Matisse, however, added more contemporary references. The yellow stars resemble shell bursts, and the red circle in the figure's chest looks suspiciously like a bullet wound.

Final years

Matisse's last major undertaking before his death at the age of 84 was

ON TECHNIQUE Paper cut-outs (*gouaches découpées*)

As he grew more infirm, Matisse developed a new technique of producing artworks. He cut shapes out of brilliantly colored paper and, with the aid of assistants,



him a particular fascination for decorative Middle Eastern textiles. Matisse developed a repertoire of favorite themes, such as sensual nudes and odalisques, brightly colored interiors, and lush still lifes with exotic fruit and flowers. He was criticized by

some for avoiding subjects that reflected the grim realities of life, but such comments were largely unjustified. In 1929, Matisse underwent two operations for cancer, which left him seriously disabled, and the following years were bleak. Not only did his wife demand a total separation but he was living in the midst of a war zone under less than ideal circumstances.

It was in this environment that Matisse began producing his paper cut-outs (see box, right), the finest of which were reproduced as stencil prints in a memorable art book, *Jazz* (1947). With their intense colors and childlike style, these designs appeared at first glance to be joyous and celebratory, but on closer inspection, the imagery displays undercurrents of violence and death. *Locus*, for example, looks like a straightforward depiction of the ancient Greek legend about the young man who flew too close to the sun, before plunging into his

KEY MOMENTS

1905

Joins Paul Signac in St.-Tropez, where he briefly experiments with a pointillist style.

1913

Visits Morocco and paints the extraordinary, dreamlike *The Coffeehouse*.

