**Fauvism between 1901 and 1906**

Between 1901 and 1906, several comprehensive exhibitions were held in Paris, making the work of Vincent van Gogh, Paul Gauguin, and Paul Cézanne widely accessible for the first time. For the painters who saw the achievements of these great artists, the effect was one of liberation and they began to experiment with radical new styles. Fauvism was the first movement of this modern period, in which color ruled supreme.

The advent of Modernism if often dated by the appearance of the Fauves in Paris at the Salon d'Automne in 1905. Their style of painting, using non-naturalistic colors, was one of the first avant-garde developments in European art. They greatly admired van Gogh, who said of his own work: ``Instead of trying to render what I see before me, I use color in a completely arbitrary way to express myself powerfully''. The Fauvists carried this idea further, translating their feelings into color with a rough, almost clumsy style. Matisse was a dominant figure in the movement; other Fauvists included Vlaminck, Derain, Marquet, and Rouault. However, they did not form a cohesive group and by 1908 a number of painters had seceded to Cubism.

Fauvism was a short-lived movement, lasting only as long as its originator, Henri Matisse (1869-1954), fought to find the artistic freedom he needed. Matisse had to make color serve his art, rather as Gauguin needed to paint the sand pink to express an emotion. The Fauvists believed absolutely in color as an emotional force. With Matisse and his friends, Maurice de Vlaminck (1876-1958) and André Derain (1880-1954), color lost its descriptive qualities and became luminous, creating light rather than imitating it. They astonished viewers at the 1905 Salon d'Automne: the art critic Louis Vauxcelles saw their bold paintings surrounding a conventional sculpture of a young boy, and remarked that it was like a Donatello ``parmi les fauves'' (among the wild beasts). The painterly freedom of the Fauves and their expressive use of color gave splendid proof of their intelligent study of van Gogh's art. But their art seemed brasher than anything seen before.

During its brief flourishing, Fauvism had some notable adherents, including Rouault, Dufy, and Braque. Vlaminck had a touch of his internal moods: even if The River (c. 1910; 60 x 73 cm (23 1/2 x 28 3/4 in)) looks at peace, we feel a storm is coming. A self-professed ``primitive'', he ignored the wealth of art in the Louvre, preferring to collect the African masks that became so important to early 20th-century art.

Derain also showed a primitive wildness in his Fauve period-- Charing Cross Bridge (1906; 80 x 100 cm (32 x 39 in)) bestrides a strangely tropical London-- though as he aged he quenched his fire to a classic calm. He shared a studio with Vlaminck for a while and The River and Charing Cross Bridge seem to share a vibrant power: both reveal an unselfconscious use of color and shape, a delight in the sheer patterning of things. This may not be profound art but it does give visual pleasure.