offers us a virtual overview of the story of European modern art between the two World Wars.

Pierre Matisse played a crucial role in the promotion of a series of artists working in Europe at the time, a cast of characters that includes such figures as Miró and Balthus, Giacometti, Dubuffet and Magritte, as well as lesser-known artists such as the Latin Americans Matta and Lam.

The range of these works is as rich in style as it is in psychological tone. We are invited to compare, for instance, the whimsical abstractions of Miró with the chilly realism of Balthus or the quirky humour of Dubuffet’s childlike scenes with the sombre poetry of Giacometti’s figures. There is Magritte’s *The Eternally Obvious*, an otherwise appealing female nude boxed within a series of frames, bringing to mind a dissected lab specimen or a disassembled mannequin. While Matta’s cryptic abstraction, Untitled, 1937 “Au Prince” presents a sort of organic landscape – combining plump and striated forms – inhabited by primordial shapes that recall micro-organisms.

The influence of Pierre Matisse continued to be felt in the years following World War II, during the so-called "American art boom." It was motivated in part by the European artists who had begun to arrive in New York prior to the war – escaping its horrors and the repression of totalitarianism – and who left a visible mark on the work of young American artists such as Pollock and de Kooning. If Pierre Matisse did not deal directly with them, they nevertheless all profited greatly from their fertile contact with those great European modern artists whose international reputations he had largely shaped.
Of all the works exhibited by Pierre Matisse, one is especially curious about those by his famous father. The present selection provides a revealing glance at the master’s career, from the sculptures of his early years – at once rough and sensuous – to the grand, expansive forms of his late mural works. In evidence are Matisse’s most characteristic themes. There are portraits of models, friends and family – at times penetrating and realistic, at others distant or intimate, but always hovering between observed fact and poetic ideal – as well as the characteristic Matisse nudes. Flouting their lazy sensuality, they are sometimes touched by a taste for the exotic, as in Model Wearing a Tulle Skirt, or reveal the effortless glamour of contemporary ladies who, in family portraits such as Marguerite Wearing a Hat, also manifest a tense awareness of the artist’s gaze. Here, an assertive brush and a sober palette bring out the commanding presence of the artist’s daughter, then a very young woman.

We also get a glimpse of a less typical Matisse. That is the case with his portrait of Eva Mudocci. Transparent and angular like scattered glass shards, the work reveals the artist’s personal take on Cubism. Especially striking, too, are the engaging drawings and prints he made late in his career, such as Mask. Constructed with a few thick, fluid strokes, these works are as succinct as they are expressive.

This summary look at the career of Pierre Matisse hints at the dramatic changes undergone by the artist-dealer relationship during the modern era. His attitude towards these artists – and the sometimes difficult relationships he forged with them – ultimately was deeply personal. As this exhibition makes clear, his high regard for these artists, and their art, made itself felt far beyond the doors of his New York gallery.