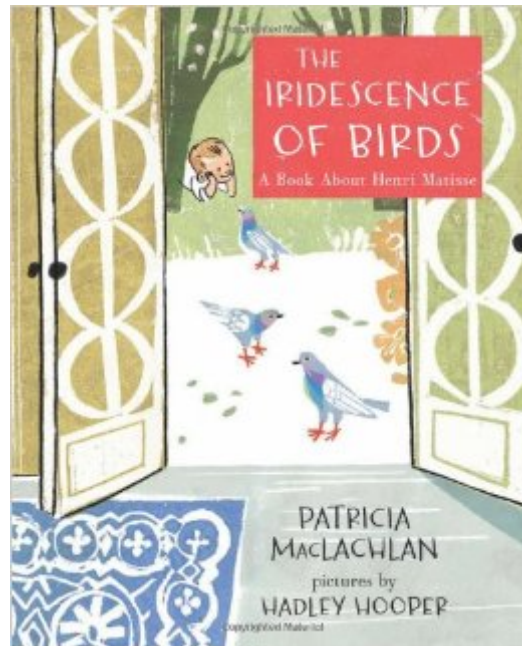


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# The Iridescence Of Birds: A Book About Henri Matisse



## Synopsis

If you were a boy named Henri Matisse who lived in a dreary town in northern France, what would your life be like? Would it be full of color and art? Full of lines and dancing figures? Find out in this beautiful, unusual picture book about one of the world's most famous and influential artists by acclaimed author and Newbery Medal-winning Patricia MacLachlan and innovative illustrator Hadley Hooper. A Neal Porter Book

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD240L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Roaring Brook Press (October 14, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1596439483

ISBN-13: 978-1596439481

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 0.4 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (25 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #70,200 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #27 in [Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Art > History](#) #47 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Art](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

An absolutely lovely book. I bought it for my 18 month old great-nephew who is in love with books that show creative colors and images. He knows birds from bees and butterflies and identifies each. While he's very respectful of his books (for an 18 month old), I was very pleased with how sturdily bound the book was and the quality of the paper. I suspect this will be a book he'll keep for decades. You can tell by the image I've included, how happy he was.

I fell in love with art history classes in a senior level humanities class and wished art history had been part of the school curriculum all along. When I became a teacher and principal, I introduced great art to children as young as three in our pre-school program and continued it through eighth grade. We learned the names of paintings and artists through the use of large posters of art from Art museums which I glued onto foam core. Parents of one of our kindergarten students said they took

their child to Manhattan and on an elevator there was a poster of an exhibition of Matisse. The student said to their surprised parents, "Oh, look - there's a picture by Matisse." We had an artist of the week each week so that by the end of the year students could identify 52 major art works. This book illustrates the art influences of the artist Matisse. His mother painted plates and put them on the wall. (That would be a fun art project to do after reading this book with your child or students.) Matisse was also fascinated by the iridescence of pigeons the book informs us. Then there was the fabric weaving in the town in which he lived. The art work in this book looks like some of Matisse's paintings. After reading this book it would be fun to buy a calendar of Matisse's work, or an inexpensive book of his art work, and tear out the pages to create a bulletin board display. If you want to introduce young children to fine art, this is a fun and colorful introduction.

Love the story - it is easy for children to understand and become inspired by. The illustrations are gorgeous - they give homage to Matisse's work but are in beautiful combinations of line-drawings, color and texture within a printmaking style unique to Hooper. I absolutely adore this book and can't wait to give them as gifts to young and old friends!

The *The Iridescence of Birds* by Patricia MacLachlan wasn't what I expected. From the title, I assumed it would be about birds. When I discovered that it was about an artist, I prepared myself instead to read a straightforward biography. Again, MacLachlan surprised me, for her picture book is anything but ordinary. The text is poetic and the illustrations echo Henri Matisse's own evolving palette. This dreamy picture book is proof that adults can learn new things. For example, with much apologies to those of my readers who are artists, I knew nothing before about Henri Matisse. Now I know that he lived in France. His mother painted plates and brought red rungs to hang on the walls. She let Matisse mix paint colors, as well as arrange fruits and flowers brought from market. Moreover, the family raised pigeons. The title refers to the fact that as a boy, Matisse watched the movements of these pigeons. He observed their colors that changed with the light as they moved, a concept that his mother informed him meant iridescence. Incidentally, despite my college-level vocabulary, this is a new word for me. Certainly, a selling point for me about *The Iridescence of Birds* is how much I learned, without really realizing it. That's always the best way! Next, I'd like to talk about MacLachlan's style. It's a little unorthodox, in that MacLachlan tells her whole story in one long sentence. It's also speculative in nature, being worded as a book-length query. Yet it works. Each phrase leads to the next, with the final one ending with a question mark. It makes for a quiet and somewhat meandering book that perfectly

captures an idyllic childhood. According to MacLachlan, she had experienced a difficult time trying to find a publisher for *The Iridescence of Birds*. Until one unique editor took on the project, MacLachlan had categorized *The Iridescence of Birds* as a story that didn't work and wouldn't sell. Would the book have worked just as well if it had been punctuated in a conventional manner? Would the book have worked just as well if it had included more exhaustive facts? Maybe. Maybe not. I don't know. What I do know is that at the end, I felt inspired to both know more about Matisse and to paint. That makes it a win for this reviewer!

*Iridescence Birds\_Inside* If I were to criticize anything, it would be the illustrations. Some critics note that the artwork becomes bolder and brighter as the story unfolds. While I admit there is a progression, the pages remain a little too quiet and flat in their feel for me, especially given that I'm reading about an artist. At the same time, I have to accept that I might also just be ignorant here. According to other reviews, the artwork includes Matisse's own images. The illustrator for *The Iridescence of Birds* herself explains in the back pages that she spent months looking at reproductions of his work. She apparently chose to try relief painting, because it forced her to simplify her shapes and to focus on the colors. At any rate, I did like all the varieties of colors, especially those associated with the pigeons. Also, I was particularly taken by the pages that showed both the boy and the adult Matisse. *The Iridescence of Birds* might not have been what I expected, but it was a pleasure to read. Should it inspire you to want to know more about Henri Matisse, there is a short bio at the end. In it, I learned that Matisse always loved birds, so it seems fitting for me to learn about him. There is also a list of fuller-length biographies about Matisse.

A inspirational children's book about the artist Matisse. The writing and illustrations are just right, introducing a young reader to Art. Henri painted what he saw and what he remembered...the iridescence of birds ! A child's earliest impressions of something can be a creative inspiration for the rest of your life. A special book I hope will be noticed and read...

Visually stunning story of how Matisse became the artist he did--by combining what he saw and what he remembered. *The Iridescence of Birds* deals with complex ideas simply: how our surroundings influence us and how we perceive the world around us, all the while dazzling us with the warm, vibrant illustrations. Truly, each page is a work of art!

A wonderful book that I read about on the Brainpickings weekly blog and ordered right away for my

"grandchildren of choice". Mothers reported that it was a hit! It is a beautifully written & illustrated very simple biography of Matisse--highly recommended for the artistic child!

While the writing is luminous and beautiful, the illustrations are NOT vivid, as one reviewer claims--and as they should be. They are flat, flat, flat, and HUGELY disappointing. Iridescence means light, almost glittering. Whether it was the paper or ink choice on the publisher's part, I am not able to gift or recommend this book, and I would have given it to several artist nieces. I can't even keep it on my shelf as I would like to. Roaring Brook, you did a huge disservice to the author, the illustrator, and Matisse.

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