

**THE PARIS OF TOULOUSE-LAUTREC FEATURES OVER 100 PRINTS AND POSTERS FROM MoMA'S COLLECTION**

***The Paris of Toulouse-Lautrec: Prints and Posters***

July 26, 2014–March 22, 2015

The Paul J. Sachs Prints and Illustrated Books Galleries, second floor

**NEW YORK, June 25, 2014**—The Museum of Modern Art presents ***The Paris of Toulouse-Lautrec: Prints and Posters***, an exhibition dedicated to Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and drawn almost exclusively from MoMA's collection of posters, lithographs, printed ephemera, and illustrated books, on view from July 26, 2014, to March 22, 2015. A preeminent artist of Belle Époque Paris, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864–1901) brought the language of the late-19th-century avant-garde to a broad public through his famous posters, prints, and illustrations for journals and magazines. His work allows entry into many facets of Parisian life, from politics to the rise of popular entertainment in the form of cabarets and café-concerts. Organized thematically, the exhibition explores five subjects that together create a portrait of Lautrec's Paris: café-concerts and dance halls; actors, singers, dancers, and performers; his sensitive depictions of women from all walks of life, including his landmark portfolio *Elles*, depicting prostitutes during nonworking hours; his creative circle, highlighting designs for song sheets for popular music, programs for avant-garde theatrical productions, and his contributions to magazines and intellectual reviews; and the pleasures of the capital. The exhibition features over 100 examples of the best-known works created during the apex of his career. *The Paris of Toulouse-Lautrec: Prints and Posters* is organized by Sarah Suzuki, Associate Curator, Department of Drawings and Prints, MoMA.

Lautrec made the venues and performers of late-19th-century Paris famous through his posters and prints, and in turn, it was his work for them that brought him the greatest acclaim. Among those in Lautrec's spotlight were the dancer La Goulue (born Louise Weber), featured in several lithographs, including *La Goulue* (1894) and *Au Moulin Rouge, La Goulue et sa Soeur* (1892), that reference Lautrec's debt to depictions of actors in 18th-century Japanese *ukiyo-e* woodcuts. As in the Japanese prints, Lautrec often uses signs and symbols—a specific gesture, an accessory or accoutrement, a hairstyle—rather than a portrait likeness to indicate his subject. Other performers featured include Cha-U-Kao, the Moulin Rouge clown whose name and costume were inspired by Japanese motifs—depicted in *La Clownesse au Moulin Rouge* (1897) and *La Danse au Moulin Rouge* (1897)—and May Milton, an Irish actress who had come to Paris with a British dance troupe and who is often marked by her pug nose and a peculiar kind of hat, as depicted on the cover of the song sheet *Eros vanné* (1894).

Lautrec's fascination with performers extended to dancers, opera singers, and actresses. Lautrec's color lithograph of 1893, *Miss Loie Fuller*, references the 1892 debut of the American

dancer named Loïe Fuller at the Folies-Bergère. Each of the 60 impressions of this lithograph is inked in a unique combination of colors—green, yellow, orange, mauve, violet, blue, and rose—many of them dusted with metallic pigments to give luster. The performer with the greatest long-term presence in Lautrec's work was the dancer Jane Avril, whom he depicted many times between 1893 and 1899 in such works as *Jane Avril*, from the portfolio *Le Café Concert* (1893); in a rare color poster she commissioned for her stint at the Jardin de Paris (*Jane Avril*, 1893); and for a tour of London with *La Troupe de Mademoiselle Eglantine* (1896). She is one of the few performers that Lautrec also depicted in her offstage life; in an 1893 poster for *Divan Japonais*, a café-concert that had been recently refurbished with a Japanese-themed décor, Avril is shown off-duty at the bar, and on the cover for the portfolio *L'Estampe Originale* (1893), Avril is shown in the printshop, inspecting a freshly pulled lithograph.

Women are a singular focus of *Elles* (1896), a portfolio of 12 works that marks Lautrec's greatest achievement in lithography. The series of carefully observed brothel scenes runs counter to the expectation of the titillating and the tawdry, instead presenting brothel workers during quiet moments of mundane intimacy—having coffee in the boudoir, during the final moments before waking, amid rumpled sheets and unmade beds, with hair to be repinned and corsets to be replaced. In *Femme qui se lave, la toilette* (1896), a woman washes before a basin, her bare breasts reflected in the mirror, contrasted with the eroticized picture of seduction that hangs above. With *Femme au tub* (1896), there is nothing erotic in the scene, save the image of Leda and the Swan displayed on the wall, and no sense that the subject knows she is being watched.

Lautrec was also a part of a creative circle of authors, editors, and composers who commissioned him to publicize their work. He made posters to advertise reviews including *La Revue blanche* (1895) and *L'Aube* (1896), a short-lived publication remembered exclusively for Lautrec's lithograph. The monochrome image suggests the journal's title—the blue light of dawn. The booming café-concert scene demanded a constant supply of new musical material, and Lautrec made numerous cover illustrations for song sheets, including the cover of the song sheet for "Carnot malade!" (1893), composed by Eugène Lemerrier and popularized at the Chat Noir. Lautrec was also a season ticket holder at the Théâtre Libre and created a program for *Le Missionnaire* (1894), where he inverted the spectacle of the theater, depicting the audience instead of the performers, as if to indicate that they were as much a part of the action as what occurred onstage.

Paris was Lautrec's city, the site of his studio, his printers and publishers, his friends, his beloved nightlife, and his muses. He found inspiration in the city's urban character, and passed many hours sketching in the Bois de Boulogne, the city's great cultivated wilderness, where an ever-changing cross-section of society went to promenade, whether on foot or horseback, by bicycle, carriage, or motorcar. In *Au Bois* (1897), Lautrec features his cousin Aline de Rivières walking with her little dog, with a rider silhouetted in the background. In 1895, Lautrec prepared a large poster to be used as an advertisement for the literary review *La Revue blanche* that featured

the aristocrat Misia Godebska ice skating. Against a nearly blank background, with only the barest sense of the ice rink, she is shown clad in a polka-dot dress, fur muff and capelet, and veiled hat with elaborate plumage. *Confetti* (1894) is one of the few posters Lautrec made to advertise a consumer product; Lautrec used his signature *crachis* technique to great effect, his colored splatter mimicking the round form of the product, which was already big business.

**SPONSORSHIP:**

The exhibition is supported by the MoMA Annual Exhibition Fund.

Paint and wallpaper provided by Farrow & Ball.

**PUBLICATION:**

The accompanying publication presents more than 100 prints and posters by Toulouse-Lautrec from MoMA's outstanding collection of his work. Spanning the artist's mature career, they exemplify Lautrec's extraordinary range and ability as a printmaker and brilliantly evoke his milieu and central preoccupation: fin-de-siècle Paris, particularly the bohemian life he shared with the dancers, artists, prostitutes, and impresarios of the city's burgeoning demimonde. Sarah Suzuki, Associate Curator in the Department of Drawings and Prints at MoMA, provides an overview essay as well as illuminating texts that introduce the thematically organized groups of prints from the collection. The book includes a color poster of Lautrec's lithograph *La Troupe de Mademoiselle Églantine*. Hardcover. 9"w x 10.5"h; 160 pages; 185 illustrations. ISBN: 978-0-87070-913-5. \$45. Published by The Museum of Modern Art and available at MoMA stores and online at [MoMAstore.org](http://MoMAstore.org). Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK|D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson outside the United States and Canada.

**LEARNING SPACE:**

August 2014-March 1, 2015

Bauhaus Staircase, second floor

Visitors can drop in to this interactive lounge to learn more about the creative process of artist Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and the urban and artistic environments in Paris that helped activate his art. Visitors can draw or describe work and leisure spaces that inspire them; create their own cocktail napkin sketches that capture the activity around them; and partake in drawing workshops and other programs, led by contemporary artists. Free with Museum admission.

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**For downloadable high-resolution images, register at [MoMA.org/press](http://MoMA.org/press).**

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**Public Information:**

**The Museum of Modern Art**, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400, [MoMA.org](http://MoMA.org).

**Hours:** Saturday through Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

**Museum Admission:** \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Free admission during Uniqlo Free Friday Nights: Fridays, 4:00–8:00 p.m.

**MoMA.org:** No service charge for tickets ordered on [MoMA.org](http://MoMA.org). Tickets purchased online may be printed out and presented at the Museum without waiting in line. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).