

Toulouse-Lautrec Illustrates the Belle Époque
The Phillips Collection: February 4–April 30, 2017
AUDIO TOUR

AUDIO TOUR STOP 1



Paris 18th Arrondissement, The Moulin Rouge, after 1900
© Neurdein / Roger-Viollet1900

Hello, I am Renée Maurer, associate curator of The Phillips Collection, and I would like to welcome you to *Toulouse-Lautrec Illustrates the Belle Époque*. This exhibition presents an extraordinary array of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's printed work from nearly the entire period of his lithographic career. Close to 100 iconic and rare images of late-19th-century Montmartre are brought together for the first time in the US from one of the leading collections of prints and posters by Toulouse-Lautrec.

The son of aristocracy from Albi, France, Toulouse-Lautrec moved to bohemian Montmartre in 1882 and reveled in the nightlife. An avid draftsman, he worked in Paris at a momentous time for printmaking due to innovations in color lithography and printing technology.

In 1891, Toulouse-Lautrec first experimented with lithography. He pushed the boundaries of the medium in works marked by fragmented forms, compressed pictorial space, dramatic scale, and a vivid chromatic range, the result of printing from several stones and layering colors. For his subject, he looked to modern life and its entertainments—caricaturing performers and spectators—honing in on essential details to produce great visual impact.

This exhibition shows defining and unique impressions of celebrities from La Goulue and May Belfort to Jane Avril, with work by contemporaries of Toulouse-Lautrec, including Théophile Alexandre Steinlen's memorable poster for the Chat Noir and Louis Anquetin's recently rediscovered painting of the cabaret Mirliton, creating an enduring account of turn-of-the-century Paris.

AUDIO TOUR STOP 2



Caudieux
1893

Brush and spatter lithograph, printed in four colors. Key stone printed in olive green, color stones in yellow, red, and black on wove paper
49 1/16 × 35 1/4 in.
Private collection

French art critic Félix Fénéon wrote this passage in support of the poster for the anarchist weekly *Le Père peinard* on April 30, 1893:

Let's suppose we're outside in the street . . . out for a stroll with a friend or going back to the daily grind . . . we can see posters. . . . It's like an open-air exhibition that lasts all year round and that's free for all to admire wherever they happen to be. Its art, for God's sake, it's stunning, it's a blend of life and art with no tricks to it within the grasp of all decent men and women.

If they've been in place for only a short time, if it's raining cats and dogs or if they're stuck to cardboard, there's a good chance you can unglue them, for heaven's sake—only watch out for the cops. Once your back home...wash them under plenty of cold water, hang them out to dry over a broom handle...patch up any tears and Bob's your uncle A Lautrec at home . . . it certainly brightens up the place. It creates a riot of colors and brings a sense of fun to your digs. Sure! Posters really add style.

AUDIO TOUR STOP 3



Ambassadeurs, Aristide Bruant
1892

Brush and spatter lithograph, printed in five colors. Key stone printed in olive green, color stones in orange, red, blue, and black on wove paper, on two sheets 52 15/16 × 36 5/8 in.

Private collection

Aristide Bruant sings *Dans La Rue* (1900), a song about a man from the streets who is tricked by love

Aristide Bruant sings *Nini Peu d'Chien* (1889), a song about a woman walking the streets from the Arsenal to the Bastille.

AUDIO TOUR STOP 4



Cover for *L'Estampe originale*
1893

Brush and spatter lithograph. Printed in six colors. Key stone printed in olive green, color stones in beige, salmon red, red, yellow, and black on wove paper 22 ¼ × 25 11/16 in.

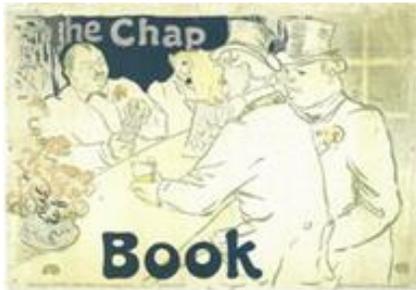
Private collection

This is a passage from French art critic André Mellerio book *Original Lithography in Color* 1898:

“Toulouse-Lautrec demands to be considered. He has contributed in a powerful way to the creation of original color lithography, both from the point of view of conception and of craftsmanship. His personal taste and circumstances have pushed him to create numerous works.

The artist conceives simply and clearly—completely in terms of the print. He uses contrasting flat tones, vigorously composed and colored. Silhouettes also attract him—they stand out dramatically, but always form a compositional ensemble. . . . [What] Toulouse-Lautrec produced for Marty's *L'Estampe originale* seems typical in all these respects. The large areas of color harmonize and respond to each other, while the white paper plays an important role. The main tones, outlined with light strokes, are never vulgar, and never loud in spite of their boldness. They are warmed by the savage red of the woman's hair, at the same time that the scarlet of her lips stands out."

AUDIO TOUR STOP 5



Irish American Bar, Rue Royale, The Chap Book
1895

Brush, spatter, crayon and transferred screen lithograph, printed in five colors.

Key stone printed in olive green, color stones in dark blue, yellow, pink, and red on wove paper

16 ¼ × 24 5/16 in.

Private collection

According to poet Paul Leclercq, Toulouse-Lautrec “was a great gourmand. He always carried a little grater and a nutmeg to flavor the glasses of port he drank. He knew many rare recipes for standard dishes . . . [and] valued straightforward cooking. According to Lautrec, the exact amount of cooking, the quality of butter and the spices, and a great deal of care, were the secrets of keeping a good table. He loved dishes which had been simmered slowly for hours and seasoned with perfect art. He tasted old vintages and liquors as a connoisseur.” He also proudly mixed colorful and potent cocktails.

AUDIO TOUR STOP 6



E. LaGrange, Detail of *The Dance Hall of the Moulin Rouge*, illustration in *Le Panorama: Paris La Nuit* (Ludovic Baschet, ed.) c. 1898

Photorelief, Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, Gift of Phillip Dennis Cate and Lynn Gumpert

Photo: Jack Abraham

This memorable score, known at the *Infernal Galop* or the *Cancan* appears in the overture and the final scene of Jacques Offenbach's opera *Orpheus in the Underworld* (1858), a comic retelling of the ancient Greek myth of Orpheus.

AUDIO TOUR STOP 7



La Revue blanche

1895

Brush, spatter and crayon lithograph, printed in four colors. Key stone printed in olive green, color stones in blue, red and black on wove paper, printed on two sheets
49 7/16 × 35 15/16 in.

Private collection

Close friend and patron Thadée Natanson recalled how Toulouse-Lautrec spent many early mornings back at the printers. “The presses had fallen silent. The studio seemed empty. It was only when I already had my foot on one of the last steps leading down to the studio that I finally discovered Lautrec. He was not leaning over it but was lying down, full length, on a lithographic stone much bigger than himself: never satisfied but always relentless in the attentions that he continued to lavish on the stone slab right up to the very last moment. He would be adding one more retouching, before the slab [was] left for the printer in the middle of the afternoon for the first color to be applied to it.”

AUDIO TOUR STOP 8



Yvette Guilbert

1894

Crayon, brush, and spatter lithograph with scraper, printed in olive green on laid Arches paper

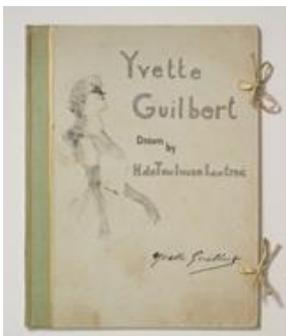
Trial proof before text, Plate 16 from *Yvette Guilbert*, Paris: L'Estampe originale
13 7/6 × 6 5/16 in.

Private collection

Yvette Guilbert sings *Le Fiacre* (1890) by Léon Xanrof, a song about a married woman riding around Paris in a small horse drawn cab with her gentleman friend, Leon.

Yvette Guilbert sings *Le Jeune Homme Triste* (1907) by Maurice Donnay, a song about the misfortunes of a sad and lonely man.

AUDIO TOUR STOP 9



Cover for *Yvette Guilbert*

1898

Lithograph printed in black on blue-gray paper mounted on cardboard with silk ties
First edition, *Yvette Guilbert* album London, Bliss, Sands & Co.
19 15/16 × 15 3/16 in.

Private collection

On March 13, 1898, British publisher W.H.B. Sands wrote to Toulouse-Lautrec about their 1898 lithographic album for singer Yvette Guilbert:

Dear Sir: I have 4 “Yvette’s” —my idea is to make an album—how many drawings do you think will be necessary? As I have told you 6 in my opinion . . .

In addition, I would like to have you furnish me with an estimate.

- A. How much would it cost, for paper, printing, etc. in order to print 200–350 in the same size as the drawings which you sent to me . . .
- B. How much for the stones? This is because I also have an idea that printing a larger number of smaller ones would succeed . . .
- C. Do you think [Guilbert] would want to sign? This would be something. She will be here in London at the beginning of May, so we must launch the book in the middle of April.

My devoted compliments, W.H.B. Sands

Please write immediately if it would displease you if we print a large quantity, low cost, costing 3 francs or 5 francs?—naturally you would share the profits beyond the cost of the stones and the drawing.

A few weeks later Toulouse-Lautrec responded to W.H.B. Sands: “Enclosed I am sending you the note on the stones for Y. Guilbert, the preparatory proofs, and the stones plus packing....I will go to see Yvette myself for her signature. Yours truly, H. de T. Lautrec”