

**TOULOUSE-LAUTREC
AND THE BELLE EPOQUE
IN PARIS AND ATHENS**



DECEMBER 6th 2007 – MAY 4th 2008

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF:



The Museum **Herakleidon** presents the exhibition
«**TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND THE BELLE EPOQUE IN PARIS AND ATHENS**»
from **December 6th** until **May 4th 2008**

At the center of this exhibition is a rare collection of approximately 70 original works on paper by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, which the organizers have placed in the historical, social, artistic, and aesthetic context of the time (1800 to the beginning of the 20th century). Furthermore, there has been an effort to approximate the prevailing historical and artistic conditions of urban Athens of the same era, with the goal of revealing the influence of the French Belle Epoque on the social and artistic life of Athens and to establish a number of obvious parallels.

The original works of Lautrec that are being exhibited (publicity posters, prints, and drawings) draw their inspiration from everyday life and entertainment. Advertisements for cabarets and periodicals, which are some of the best-known images of the great French artist, are shown next to portraits of famous actors and singers of the time, as well as sketches and caricatures. The works of Lautrec are accompanied by appropriate passages from French literature, photographs, and other objects, in order to help the viewer better understand the atmosphere of that time.

This parallel between the Belle Epoque in Paris and the corresponding one in Athens is drawn in order to present the apparent influence of the first on the second. The urban way of life and the means of entertainment in Greece during the last two decades of the 19th century have been re-created with the help of rare archival material, mainly from the collections of the Hellenic Literary and Historical Archives (E.L.I.A.), the Benaki Museum Photographic Archive, Alpha Bank and Mr. Petros Vergos. Publicity posters, often created by important Greek artists such as Gyzis and Galanos, calendar and journal covers, photographs and postcards, theatrical programs with emphasis on French repertoire, and literary passages invite the visitor to become acquainted with the flavor of that era.

During the exhibition «Toulouse-Lautrec and the Belle Epoque in Paris and Athens» visitors will also be able to purchase the exhibition catalogue, a bilingual edition (Greek-English) which is a publication of our museum.

Curated by Belinda Firos, Iris Kritikou

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Working Hours: Mon.: closed, Tue - Sat.: 13:00 – 21:00, Sun.: 11:00 – 19:00

General admission **6€**, / Students and persons over 65 **4€**, / Children under 12 **free**

Group Visits : Kindly call to make arrangements

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Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901)



Toulouse-Lautrec is best known for his works depicting scenes from cabarets, theaters, dance halls, and brothels. These were themes that the artist lived, beginning in 1885 when he moved to Montmartre and immersed himself in its nightlife. He wanted to show life as it is, not as it should be, but this objectivity was not without empathy or humor. His interest lay in portraying people, not only those he met during his nights on the town, but also his friends and the working-class citizens of Paris. He was a hard-working artist, producing an enormous body of work in a wide range of media.

Henri-Marie-Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa was born on November 24, 1864 in the family home, Château du Bosc, in Albi, France. His father, Comte Alphonse was an eccentric aristocrat, who loved to dress up and whose main interests were hunting and falconry. His mother, Comtesse Adèle was a reserved and cultivated woman to whom the artist remained close to the end of his life.

Toulouse-Lautrec was not to enjoy his family's country lifestyle of riding and hunting. Due to a genetic bone condition and following a fracture of his left leg at age thirteen and his right one the following year, his legs stopped growing while his torso developed normally. He had to use a cane when

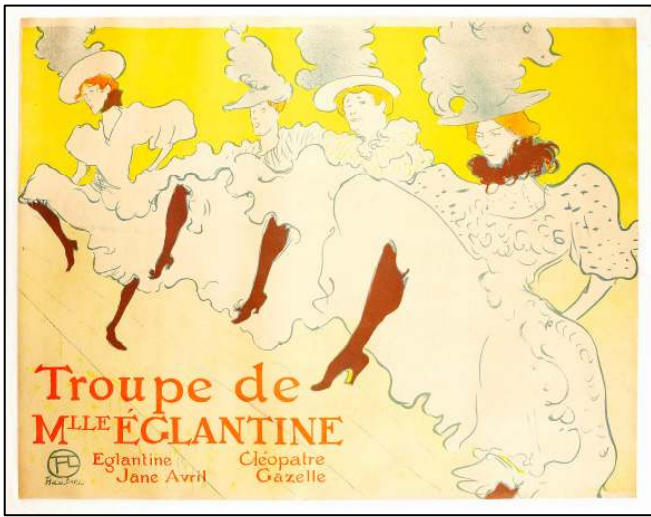
walking and only grew to 1.52m tall. Comtesse Adèle encouraged her son's interest in drawing and his first subjects were his family, their horses and hounds.

The artist's first painting lessons were with a friend of Comte Alphonse, the animal painter Princeteau, who convinced his parents to allow Lautrec to study art. After succeeding his baccalauréat in Paris, he joined the studio of Léon Bonnat for a few months in the spring of 1882 and later moved to the one run by Fernand Cormon, a history painter interested in the ancient world. The mornings were spent at his teacher's studio practicing academic drawing, but in the afternoons Lautrec visited the Salons and exhibitions, where he discovered the big divide between academic art and the new artistic movements of the time, notably that of the Impressionists. He was most influenced by Degas and the Japanese printmakers.

In 1891 he produced a color poster for the Moulin Rouge, which made him famous overnight. Lautrec made 30 posters in his lifetime, but also illustrated theater programs, book covers, menus, invitations, and sheet music. His expressive use of line found the perfect medium in lithography. He never made a distinction between commercial and fine art.

In 1898 the artist's health began to deteriorate, due to alcohol abuse and syphilis. In 1899, after an attack of delirium tremens, he spent several months in a clinic, but started drinking again upon his return to Paris. Consequently his work suffered. In August of 1901 Lautrec suffered a paralytic attack and was taken to his mother's country house in Malromé, where he died on September 9th.

- 1864** Born 24 November.
- 1872** Begins his schooling at the Lycée Fontanes (now Condorcet) in Paris. Starts to frequent René Princeteau's studio.
- 1878-79** Fractures his legs.
- 1882** Enters Bonnat's studio and later that year begins to work in Cormon's studio.
- 1885** Meets Aristide Bruant and Suzanne Valadon, who becomes his mistress. Begins to frequent the Montmartre cabarets and dance halls.
- 1886** Meets Van Gogh. Leaves Cormon's studio. Exhibits at the Mirliton.
- 1888** Exhibits with "Les Vingt" in Brussels. Quarrels with Suzanne Valadon. Contracts a venereal disease.
- 1889** Exhibits for the first time at the Salon des Indépendants.
- 1891** Produces a poster (his first) for the Moulin Rouge.
- 1892** Begins to focus on lithography: four posters and two color lithos.
- 1893** Becomes acquainted with the *Revue Blanche* circle. Begins to paint theatrical subjects.
- 1894** Takes up residence in the house of ill repute in the Rue des Moulins.
- 1895** Designs posters for May Belfort, May Milton and the *Revue Blanche*. Paints panels for La Goulue's booth. Visits London, where he participates in the exhibition *A Collection of Posters* and meets Oscar Wilde.
- 1896** Publishes *Elles*, prints depicting prostitutes.
- 1897** First signs of alcoholism during the summer.
- 1898** Exhibits at the Goupil Gallery, London and travels there for opening. Illustrates Jules Renard's *Histoires Naturelles*. His health begins to deteriorate.
- 1899** Taken to an asylum at Neuilly after an attack of delirium tremens. Stays there until May and is released into the care of a guardian. Starts drinking again on his return to Paris in the autumn.
- 1900** Further deterioration of his health. Visits the *Exposition Universelle de Paris* in a wheelchair.
- 1901** Puts his Parisian studio in order, March-July. In August has a paralytic attack. Is taken to his mother's country home in Malromé where he dies on 9 September.



La Troupe de Mlle Eglantine - 1896 - color litho, 62x79.9cm



Aristide Bruant dans son cabaret (sans lettres)
- 1893, color lithograph 138.5 x 99.2cm



Jane Avril- 1893 - color litho, 129x94cm



Anna Held - Lithograph-1898, 39 x 32cm



La Revue Blanche - 1895 -color litho, 125.5 x 91cm

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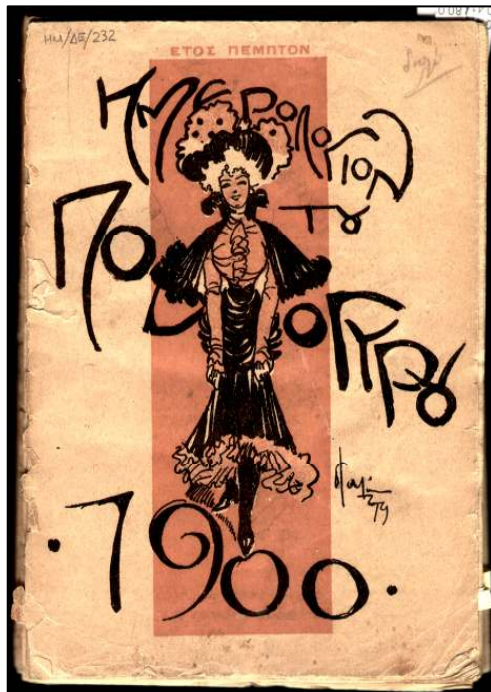
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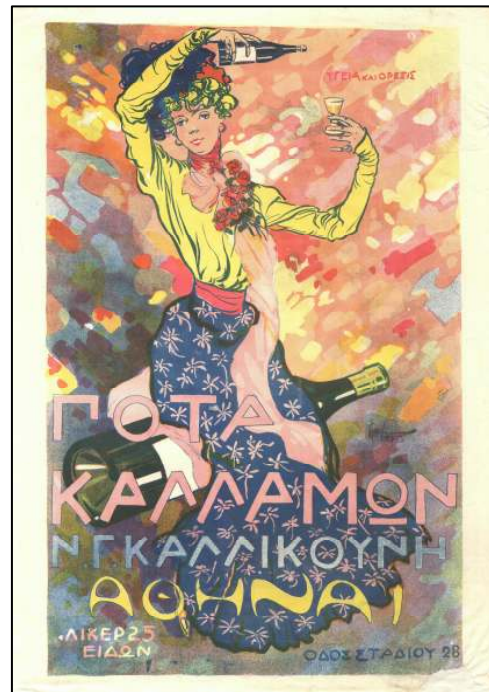
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Photo on tennis court. Athens, circa 1900.
 Eftaxias. Benaki Museum Photographic Archive



Calendar 1900 / E.L.I.A Archive



Beverage Advertisement / E.L.I.A Archive



Group in Carriage, Athens, circa. 1900, Eftaxias. Benaki Museum
 Photographic Archive



D. Galanis, pen on paper, 25-7-1903
 Petros Vergos collection