

Toulouse Lautrec Posters 1864 - 1901

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec 1864 - 1901

1864

1864 – Henri-Marie-Raymond Toulouse-Lautrec-Montfa is born in Albi in the south of France. He is the son of Count Alphonse-Charles-Jean-Marie Toulouse-Lautrec-Montfa of a very old French noble family, and of his wife Adèle-Zoé-Marie-Marquette Tapié de Céleyran.

1868

His parents separate.

1872

The countess moves to Paris with 8 year old Henri. He starts school at the Lycée Fontaine in October. He covers his schoolbooks with sketches and caricatures. René Princeteau, a friend of his father and a deaf-mute artist who paints animals, gives him his first drawing lessons.

1875

In January, young Henri is in fragile health and goes back to Albi with his mother. He is given private lessons.

1878-79

Henri has hardly grown over the past ten years. He breaks his left thighbone and some months later the right

one too. His legs stop growing. These fractures could be due to insufficient ossification (osteogenesis imperfecta), a congenital abnormality. His legs, suffering from rickets and almost completely straight, have to support an enormous torso. He never grows taller than 1.52m (5 ft).

1881

In July, Henri fails his baccalauréat in Paris but is accepted in Toulouse. This is when he decides to become an artist. With the support of Princeteau and his uncle Charles, he eventually talks his mother round to accepting his artistic vocation.

1882

Henri leaves for Paris to study art. He works in Princeteau's studio where he meets the painter Jean-Louis Forain. He also study in the studios of two prominent Salon artists: Léon Bonnat and Fernand Cormon. His classmates include

Charles Laval, François Gauzi, and Louis Anquetin. He also meets Emile Bernard, Gauguin's future comrade.

1883

Lautrec has his first relationship with Marie Charlet, a 17 year-old model. Through Bernard he meets Père Tanguy, a Montmartre color merchant, who shows him works by Cézanne.

1884

He meets Edgar Degas whom he immensely admires. He takes part in his first group exhibition in Pau.

1885

Lautrec frequents the Montmartre cabarets – the Elysée-Montmartre, the Moulin de la Galette and Aristide Mirliton where he also displays his work.

1886

He meets Van Gogh in Cormon's studio and they become friends. He leaves Cormon's studio in the autumn and rents a studio at 7, rue Tourlaque, on the corner of rue Caulaincourt, which he keeps until 1897. This is where he meets Suzanne Valadon, who models for him. She is his mistress until her suicide attempt in 1888.

1887

The Pointillist painter Van Rysselberghe invites him to an exhibition in Brussels, and he exhibits with Van Gogh and Anquetin in Paris. Develops an interest in Japanese prints.

1888

Belgian critic Octave Maus invites him to present 11 works at the Vingt exhibition in Brussels in February. Théo Van Gogh, Vincent's brother, buys *Poudre de Riz* for 150 Francs for the Goupil gallery.

1889

The Moulin Rouge opens on 90 boulevard de Clichy in October. Lautrec becomes a regular. He has a table reserved and displays his work there.

1890

He meets the professional can-can dancer Jane Avril. He paints *Moulin-Rouge (Dressage des nouvelles par Valérie Désossée)*, which Joseph Oller, the manager, soon buys for the establishment.

1891

Lautrec creates his first prints. Creates A la Mie, and the notorious Moulin-Rouge poster that makes him famous in the Paris art world.

1892

Has a project of a print album for the great popular singer Yvette Guilbert, but she declines. He designs the prints Divan Japonais cabaret and for the singer Aristide Bruant.

1893

Joyant organises Lautrec's first large private exhibition – 30 pieces – at the Boussod-Valadon gallery. Lautrec is introduced to the literary world, in particular that of the theatre, through the intermediary of Bernard, the actor Romain Coolus and the critic Félix Fénéon. He attends all the premières. He lives for some time in a brothel on rue d'Amboise, and produces 16 works there. He takes part in the "painters-engravers" exhibition and presents 11 lithographs. Creates the poster for Jane Avril's show at the Jardin de Paris.

1894

He goes to Brussels with Anquetin for the La Libre Esthétique exhibition, then on to Holland where they study Rembrandt and Hals. In June and October, Lautrec goes to London where he displays posters for the "Royal Aquarium". Album of lithographs for Yvette Guilbert. Spends a lot of time in the circle of Thadée Natanson, publisher of the fashionable artistic review the Revue Blanche. He meets the Nabi painters Bonnard, Vuillard and Vallotton. Lives in a brothel for some time.

1895

Goes to Brussels for the La Libre Esthétique exhibition and leaves for London in May. Meets Oscar Wilde and Whistler whom he sees as role models. Takes part in a major lithography exhibition at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris; creates the scenery for La Goulue's fairground stall at the foire du Trône (place de la Nation) where the famous dancer puts on a show after leaving her music hall career. Frequent the "Irish and American Bar". Meets with singer May Belfort. Poster for May Milton and portraits of clowness Cha-U-Kao.

1896

Second major private exhibition in Joyant's gallery, 9 rue Forest, which attracts numerous visitors. Develops an interest in Japanese erotic prints in general, and those by Utamaro in particular. Takes part in a poster exhibition in Reims. Tristan Bernard introduces Lautrec to the world of bicycle racing. He creates 2 prints on the theme. Publication of Elles lithograph album.

1897

Takes part in Libre Esthétique exhibition in Brussels in February. Leaves behind 87 works in his old studio which new tenants use to cover holes in the wallpaper; the rest are sold for next to nothing. Hardly paints but drinks a lot. Has an attack of delirium tremens during the summer.

1898

Exhibits 78 works at Goupil's gallery in London in May. Second lithograph album dedicated to Yvette Guilbert, for the editor Sands. Rarely sober, his work diminishes. Suffers from a persecution delirium, believes he is being pursued by the police and takes refuge at a friend's house.

1899

Provides the illustrations for Jules Renard's *Histoires Naturelles*. Bouts of depression, obsession and anxiety become more and more frequent. In addition to this, his beloved mother leaves Paris in January to look after her own mother who is ill in Albi. Lautrec has an alcoholic fit in the brothel on rue des Moulins. He is confined to a mental hospital on avenue de Madrid in Neuilly. His mental state is mocked in the press. His new notoriety helps raise the prices of his work.

1900

Argues with his family, who want him to have a guardian. He falls back to drink. Is member of a jury to judge poster Paris World's Fair; participates in a wheelchair.

1901

Attends numerous theatre productions and dedicates 6 paintings to the opera production of *Messaline*. Another fit March results in a cerebral hemorrhage; his legs are paralyzed. From the beginning of April, he spends 3 months in Paris where he settles his estate and signs important works. In July, he leaves Paris permanently. He goes back to the Arcachon basin, then to Taussat. On the 15 August, he has a stroke in Taussat which leaves him paralyzed on one side. On 20 August, his mother takes him to Malromé where he dies on the 9 September at 2.15 am, aged 36, in the presence of his parents, his cousin Gabriel and Viaud.

The principal Posters :

Moulin Rouge, La Goulue 1891. Commissioned by MR owner Charles Zidler. Shows Louis Weber, La Goulue (the « glutton ») and Jacques Renaudin, Valentin le Désossé (Valentin the boneless) dancing. In the background the shadow profiles of his cousin Tapié de Celeyran, TL, Jane Avril and the Englishman William Warrener (moustache).

Reine de Joie 1892. Advertises scandalous novel by Victor Jose (pen name of Polish writer Jozef Dorbski de Jastzebiec) and portrays two main characters, the demi-mondaine Hélène Roland and the fat banker Olizac inspired by the baron Rothschild.

Aristide Bruant 1892-93. 4 posters. Originally a railway clerk had his début as popular singer in Rodolphe Salis's Chat Noir, which later became his own cabaret, the Mirliton. Specializes in bawdy and crude « faubourg » songs and in insulting his audience who enthusiastically come back for more. Massive silhouette always draped in cloak and wearing red revolutionary scarf and wide brimmed hat.

Jane Avril au Jardin de Paris 1893. Illegitimate daughter of Italian nobleman and Paris demi-mondaine became the first great soloist of can can. Also known as La Mélinite (an explosive like dynamite) had a stylish appearance and much more refined manners than most dancers. Frequented the literary world and high society.

Divan Japonais 1893. Tiny café-concert on rue des Martyrs decorated with Japanese lanterns and bamboo.

On stage the great popular singer Yvette Guilbert recognizable by her trademark black gloves. Jane Avril sits in foreground in the company of music critic and founder of the Revue Wagnerienne Emile Dujardin.

Caudieux 1893. Energetic comic, known as «l'homme canon».

La Revue Blanche 1895. Founded in 1889 and directed by the Natanson brothers until 1903, this was the principal literary and artistic review of the 1890's. TL was a regular contributor along with the Nabi artists, Bonnard, Vuillard, Denis and Valotton. Portrayal of Thadée Natanson's wife, talented pianist, and elegant muse of the literary and artistic worlds Misia Gobeska skating.

May Belfort 1895. Irish singer specializing in little girl acts. Her hit song was «I've got a little cat, I'm very fond of that».

May Milton 1895. Obscure and ugly English performer introduced to TL by Jane Avril.

Irish and American Bar – the Chap Book 1895. Advertisement for American men's magazine. Depicts famous cocktail bar on rue Royale with American Indian/Chinese barman Ralph from San Francisco mixing cocktails («rainbow cups»). At the bar sits Tom, the Rothschild cabman.

La passagère du 54 1896. Poster for the poster salon organized by the magazine La Plume. Portrays beautiful stranger from cabin 54 seen by TL on ship heading from Le Havre to Africa. He was so taken by her he remained on the boat all the way to Lisbon.

La Troupe de Mlle Eglantine 1896. Poster for a Jane Avril performance in London at the Palace Theatre. From left to right Jane Avril, Cléopâtre, Eglantine, Gazelle.

Le Photographe Sescou 1896. Friend of TL who specialized in photographing paintings.

Elles 1896. Lithographic album published by Gustave Pellet with 11 plates by TL illustrating daily life in Paris brothel. Inspired by Japanese albums, notably Utamaro.

La Vache Enragée 1896. Poster announcing the appearance of the Journal officiel de la commune libre de Montmartre a satirical and Bohemian review created by artist Adolphe Willette. Portrays an artistic costume parade held in Montmartre with a «vache enragée» or rabid cow.