

HENRI de TOULOUSE- LAUTREC

1864-1901
FRENCH PAINTER
ADVERTISING POSTERS



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The Art Heritage Program's Toulouse-Lautrec unit meets the following Colorado Department of Education-Visual Arts Standards

- 1. Observe and Learn to Comprehend**
- 2. Envision and Critique to Transfer**
- 3. Invent and Discover to Create**
- 4. Relate and Connect to Transfer**

Learning Targets:

- **Students will recognize and describe examples of advertising in the world around them** (e.g., Taco Bell, Pepsi, Mattel, Marvel Comics, etc.)
- **Students will demonstrate their understanding of Toulouse-Lautrec's art by using images and words to illustrate an event poster** (e.g., a poster about spay/neutering pets, Spring Art Week at the Art Center, etc.)



SUMMARY

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec ((**TOO-LOOZ LAH-TREK**)) was a French painter known for his lithography and poster art. Lautrec was born in 1864, in northern France. His family was one of the oldest in France, with ancestors who had fought in the Crusades and traced their nobility back to Charlemagne. The French aristocracy had little political power by the late 19th century, but the Lautrec family was very wealthy and kept apartments in Paris and country estates in the south of France.

Henri's father, Count Alphonse was considered an odd and strange person. His passions were hunting with a falcon or hawk and riding horses while dressed in a coat of chainmail and a cowboy hat. Count Alphonse also loved wearing other flamboyant costumes. He often disappeared for long

stretches of time, traveling all over France and Europe to participate in hunts and other activities. Henri's mother said of her family, "...they got three pleasures out of hunting game birds: shooting, drawing and eating."

Henri's mother, Adele Tapie de Celeyran was Count Alphonses's first cousin. She was much quieter and steadier than her husband. As a child, Lautrec suffered from a genetic condition that caused him to be weak and frequently ill. But, by the time he was 10 years old, he'd discovered an interest and talent for sketching and painting. As a teen, he broke first his left and later his right leg. The bones did not heal properly and his legs ceased to grow. He reached maturity with a body trunk of normal size but with abnormally short legs. He was only 4 ½ feet tall.

Deprived of the physical life that a normal body would have permitted, Lautrec lived completely for his art. He dwelt in the Montmartre section of Paris, the center of cabaret entertainment and bohemian life that he loved to depict in his work. Dance halls and nightclubs, racetracks, prostitutes—all these were memorialized on canvas or made into lithographs.

Lithography - In the graphic arts, a method of printing from a prepared flat stone or metal or plastic plate, invented in the late eighteenth century. A drawing is made on the stone or plate with a greasy crayon or tusche, and then washed with water. When ink is applied it sticks to the greasy drawing but runs off (or is resisted by) the wet surface allowing a print — a lithograph — to be made of the drawing. The artist, or other print maker under the artist's supervision, then covers the plate with a sheet of paper and runs both through a press under light pressure. For color lithography separate drawings are made for each color. (ArtLex)

Lautrec was very much an active part of his community. He would sit at a crowded nightclub table, laughing and drinking, meanwhile making swift sketches. The next morning in his studio, he would expand the sketches into brightly colored paintings. He often sang popular songs at the top of his voice while he painted.

Lautrec elevated poster-making into a fine art; the attention his posters attracted helped make the business they advertised successful. Lithography was a new technique during Lautrec's life and he single handedly showed the artistic potential of the medium. The multiple copies of the posters were very popular. Collectors often took down the posters as fast as they went.

Lautrec began making posters after a nightclub manager asked him to help with publicity for a new act. The image Lautrec created was so successful; he went on to do posters for performing artists all over Paris. The artist would begin his designs by choosing an image that symbolized the essence of the performer. He then simplified that image so it could be seen and recognized instantly from a distance. His unique use of color was a vital part of the process.

Details of Lautrec's work include:

- **Caricatures:** He was gifted in depicting details with a few lines that allowed one to identify the person and what they might be like. By simplifying the essence of the person, he created an image easily recognizable from a distance.
- **Broad areas of flat color:** This style was much like those used by the master Japanese woodblock artists whose work influenced many of the artists of the time. Lautrec often combined unusual colors to create an impact.
- **Repeated lines and curves** show motion and delineate details.
- **Cropped figures:** Often, only parts of a person or scene are shown with the impression that

the action is continuing off the page.

- **Unusual perspective:** Many scenes have the viewer looking down or up into a picture. Many pictures do not have a single point perspective and are off-center.

Lautrec felt at home in the dimly-lit nightclubs of Paris. Although his odd appearance often drew unwanted attention at other locations, at the Moulin Rouge (moo-lon ROO or 'red mill') he felt he fit in with the dancers, circus performers and other night people.

Lautrec is best known for the expressive portraits he made of people in the music halls and bars of Paris. His posters brought him great success. In 1898, because of his disability and the life he led—staying out all night and drinking heavily—the artist had to be hospitalized. In 1901, at the age of 37, he died at his parents' estate. His father insisted on driving the hearse at the funeral. Count Alphonse whipped the horses into a gallop, forcing the mourners to run after them to the cemetery.

Henri Toulouse-Lautrec left behind a large body of work: 737 oil paintings; 300 prints; 275 watercolors and over 5,000 drawings. Although his work was not accepted for many years, today his posters and paintings are very popular. He is considered to be one of the greatest artists of the 19th century, and his colorful works can be seen in museums all over the world. (Scholastic Art Magazine, Sept/Oct 1997)

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Observe and Learn to Comprehend & Envision and Critique to Transfer (VA 1 & 2)

From the time he was 13 years old, the French artist Toulouse-Lautrec (Too-LOOSE La-TREK) knew he was different. As a child, his health had never been good. During his teens, he broke first one leg and then the other. His legs never grew again. As a result, he had the head and body of a grown man and tiny, weak legs. Lautrec's appearance made his life difficult. On the other hand, his disability forced him to spend all of his energy developing his artistic talent and he created some of the most powerful images in Western Art. (Scholastic Art Magazine Sept/Oct 1997)

1. **SELF-PORTRAIT IN A MIRROR:** 1880; Oil on cardboard: 16" X 13" Count Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was born on his father's estate in the south of France in 1864. A member of one of the oldest and wealthiest families in France, young Henri was often unable to go to school. This gave him plenty of time for one of his favorite activities –drawing. Lautrec made this drawing of himself when he was 16. Lautrec often painted his works on cardboard liking the rough-colored, absorbent surface.

2. **PORTRAIT OF MOTHER-COUNTESS ADELE de TOULOUSE LAUTREC AT BREAKFAST:** 1883: 37" X 32":

3. **PORTRAIT OF COUNT ALPHONSE de TOULOUSE LAUTREC:** (Henri's father): 1883: 37" X 32":

Toulouse-Lautrec was very close to his mother all his life. His father was frequently gone on hunting trips. These paintings were done in an Impressionist style, in which paint is applied more thickly and details are not as emphasized. What is your 'impression' of his mother? His father? Henri's father enjoyed falcon hunting and horses. He also enjoyed dressing up in costumes and was an odd character, well-known for his unpredictable behavior.

4. **MOULIN ROUGE – LA GOULUE:** 1891; Lithograph in four colors. 75 x 46 inches. Printed across three sheets of paper. When Toulouse-Lautrec grew up he moved to Paris to study art. His disability hadn't been as noticeable at home on his family's estate, however in the big city he found it difficult to blend in; people would often stare at him because he was very short and had difficulty walking.

He made friends with artists like Van Gogh, Degas (day-GA) and Renoir (ren-WA) and began spending his evenings in nightclubs and bars. He would sit at a table and sketch the people he saw around him, the next day he turned the sketches into paintings.

The owner of a new nightclub called the Moulin Rouge (moo-lon ROO) asked Toulouse-Lautrec to create a poster to advertise the new business. He created this poster featuring two popular dancers. The dancer in the middle ground was known for her high kicking steps, the man in the foreground was nicknamed "Bones" because of his loose-jointed dancing.

5. **AMBASSADEURS: Aristide Bruant dans son cabaret** 1892; Lithograph in five colors. 54 x 37 ½ inches. Printed across two sheets of paper. In the 1890's, there was no television, or "American Idol" shows to introduce new talent. The only options were to place an ad in the newspaper or to put up posters. And, of course, everyone wanted their poster to get the most attention. Toulouse-Lautrec's posters became very popular because, instead of just using a simple image or words as a description, he painted images that caught people's attention. What draws your attention most in this poster? Would you be able to know what it was advertising even if you were standing far away from it? Why?

6. **DIVON JAPONAIS:** 1892, lithograph, 31" x 23 1/2." This was an advertising poster for another night club. The decor of the club was oriental with lanterns and bamboo chairs. The picture includes two of Lautrec's favorite dancers (he was quite fond of red-haired women). In the foreground is Jane Avril. In all of Lautrec's pictures of her, the caricatures (exaggerated pictures) include her red hair. The trademark Lautrec chose for the dancer in the background, Yvette Guilbert (gir-bear), was long black gloves. How many colors has the artist used here? How many places has Lautrec used "s" shaped curves?

7. **JANE AVRIL,** 1893; Lithograph in five colors. 50 1/2 x 37 inches. Text by the artist. Do you recognize the red haired lady? How can you tell that music was an important element in her act?

Toulouse-Lautrec used a printing process called "lithography" to create his posters. Lithography requires a good working relationship between the artist and the person who uses the machine to print the art. The print is made by drawing the design on a large, flat stone with a special pencil that draws a greasy line. The oil or grease works against the water in the ink to create a chemical reaction that allows the lines and colors to be placed on the poster. A new drawing must be made for every color that is used in the print.

8. **LA TROUPE DE MLLE EGLANTINE.** 1896; Lithograph in three colors. 24 1/4 x 31 1/2 inches. Text by another hand. The words on a poster were often added later, allowing the poster to be used for several events. The words on this poster were done by a different artist, although Toulouse-Lautrec did the main design. What can an artist do to make sure his/her words can be read from a distance?

9. **LA PASSAGERE DU 54 – PROMENADE EN YACHT.** 1896; Lithograph in seven colors. 23 15/16 x 15 3/4 inches. Third state. Text by the artist. Although he had many friends, Toulouse-Lautrec never married.

This poster was inspired by a lady he saw once when he traveled on a small ship. He was fascinated by her, but never approached her to introduce himself. She spent every day watching the ocean from her deck chair. This poster was created to advertise a poster exhibition.

10. **LA CHAINE SIMPSON.** 1896; Lithograph in three colors. 33 7/8 x 47 inches. Artist's monogram in lower right. Text by another hand. This poster advertises the bicycle chains sold by the Simpson Company. The first idea that Toulouse-Lautrec had for his poster is the sketch on the left. It was rejected by the company, so he tried again. How did he create the illusion of speed?

11. **JOCKEY:** 1899, lithograph: 20" x 14" Toulouse-Lautrec's disability and lifestyle created problems for his health. He died in 1901 at his parent's estate. He was 37 years old.

This lithograph was one of the last that Lautrec did. It was commissioned for a book about horses, but he never finished the series. Although this is not a poster, his style is still evident. Notice the unusual angle of view in the picture; the horses seem to be running off the page.

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REFLECT AND CONNECT TO TRANSFER (VA Standard #4)

During the last 5 minutes with your students, perhaps as they are cleaning up or while they are creating, take a moment to encourage the students to discuss and review their understanding of Toulouse-Lautrec:

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

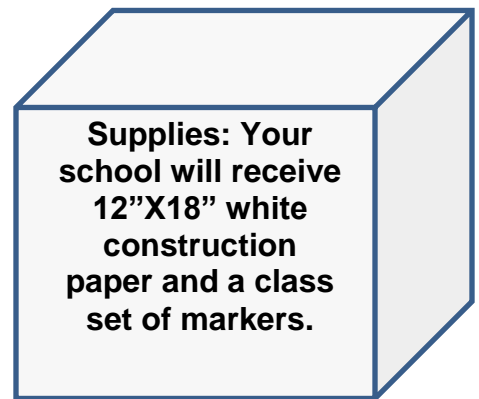
- 1. What was one thing you learned about Lautrec?**
- 2. How did Lautrec use images and words to advertise an event or a product?**
- 3. How will you (did you) use words and images to create your poster?**
- 4. What do you wonder?**

FEATURED ART PROJECT

Invent and Discover to Create (VA Standard #3)

Create a poster:

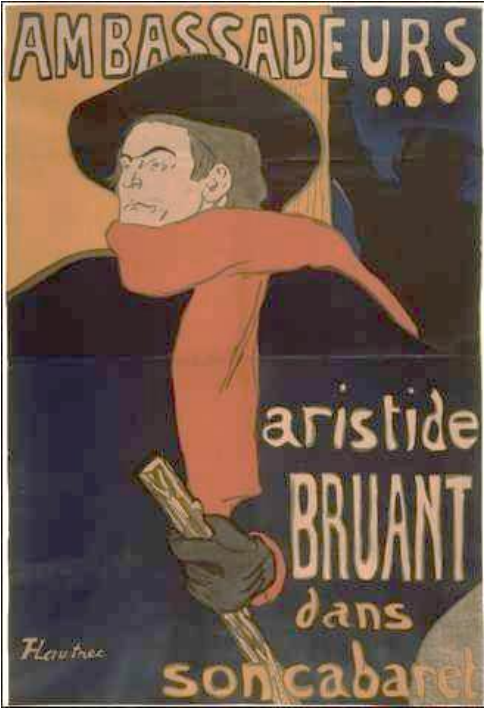
1. Choose a theme: You Could--
 - Make a connection with a favorite “cause”, i.e. the animal shelter, a book fair, Arbor Day, an upcoming school fundraiser, clothing or food drive, etc.
 - Make up a campaign; “Curl up with a book”, behavior expectations, “Dine in style at the school cafeteria”, “School Custodian Appreciation Week”, etc.
 - Contact a local business (in your neighborhood, or through a parent) to see if they might sponsor a class project to promote their store, restaurant, office, etc. Example: a veterinary office could sponsor a contest and print the winning design for distribution, or display at their store.
2. Work as individuals or as a group.
 - Use full size paper (12”X18”) for each student, or have students work in small groups.
 - You may want to decide the theme for the students, or let them decide their own.
 - Talk about how Toulouse Lautrec used dark silhouettes in the background, colorful characters in the foreground, and sometimes a “grayed” image in the fore- or middle ground.
 - Talk about how the artist used lettering, usually hand-drawn, often the main idea was in capitals and the rest in caps/lower case.
 - Show students how to “map” out their poster so they have room for everything. (see example)



- You may want to use templates (die cuts, or other traceable) for the background silhouettes.
- Have students design their foreground character and draw it.
- Have students letter their poster in one color.

Alternative Project Ideas:

1. Students can create silhouettes (do you want to dictate shape?) to use either as stencils or repeated figures or as patterns for printing.
2. Have students trace a shape from a picture to reproduce in a print like Lautrec did. Why did the shape catch the student's eye?
3. Have students design a trade-mark or logo for themselves or each other. What is their most recognizable trait or appearance? Do the same for the school...and either draw or print it.
4. Have an advertising executive come in or a graphic artist and explain what they look for in a good advertisement. Have the students draw an ad for a local product the advertising agency represents.
5. Have students draw posters for an event coming up. Limit them to a certain number of lines or colors for the drawings...or give them a length of string to use for the lines. Have them fill in the broad areas outlined with color.
6. Give students mirrors and have them draw caricatures of themselves (older students). Or have them draw a cartoon of the teacher or principal if they are game.
7. Have students design a cover or poster for their favorite song, singing group, or movie. Again, limit the number of lines and colors. Have them use three words in the poster or cover to describe the topic.
8. Show the students a large picture of something for 1 minute. Take it away and have them draw what they remember the most. Could this be the essence of what Lautrec was able to do so well, reduce his posters to the most memorable elements?
9. Bring in two or three distinctive hats. Have students model such concepts as snobbish, mean, clown, romantic with gestures, facial expressions and how they wear their hat.
10. Visit the Sentinel or a local printing company and see how the press runs are made. Up until the last few years, the paper had to be run through as many presses as there were colors. Now, the more sophisticated presses allow the printing of several colors at a time.



We learned about Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec in Art Heritage. Toulouse-Lautrec was a French artist who lived from 1864 to 1901. He created advertising posters.



How to Spot a Toulouse-Lautrec:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Name _____

Date _____