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Cirque Fernando: The Equestrienne *by* Henri de Toulouse Lautrec

Original Lithographic Bookplate - Main Subject: Post-Impressionism

Item Number
5839850940

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Dimensions (As Shown)
10W x 6H Inches
25.4W x 15.24H cm

Medium
Original Lithographic Bookplate

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About Henri de Toulouse Lautrec

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, French postimpressionist painter, lithographer, and illustrator, who documented the bohemian nightlife of late-19th-century Paris. Toulouse-Lautrec was born in Albi into one of the oldest aristocratic families in the south of France in 1864. His father, Count Alphonse, was a notorious eccentric known for all kinds of unpredictable behavior: from washing his socks in the river (unheard of for an aristocrat!) to galloping off to a hunt wearing outlandish costumes, to simply disappearing for long stretches of time. The young Henri never became very close to him.

Henri suffered from a genetic condition that prevented his bones from healing properly. Henri was weak and often sick. By the time he was 10 he had begun to draw and paint. At 12 young Toulouse-Lautrec broke his left leg and at 14 his right leg. The bones failed to heal properly, and his legs stopped growing. He reached young adulthood with a body trunk of normal size but with abnormally short legs. During his convalescence, his mother encouraged him to paint. He subsequently studied with French academic painters L. J. F. Bonnat and Fernand Cormon.

He stayed in the Montmartre section of Paris, the center of the cabaret entertainment and bohemian life that he loved to paint. Circuses, dance halls, nightclubs, racetracks and parisian brothels all these spectacles were set down on canvas or made into

lithographs. Toulouse-Lautrec was very much a part of all this activity. He would sit at a crowded nightclub table, laughing and drinking, and at the same time he would make swift sketches.

Toulouse-Lautrec preserved his impressions of these places and their celebrities in portraits and sketches of striking originality and power. Outstanding examples are La Goulou Entering the Moulin Rouge (1892, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi), Jane Avril Entering the Moulin Rouge (1892, Courtauld Gallery, London), and Au salon de la rue des Moulins (1894, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec).

His stunted physique earned him laughs and scorn, and kept him from experiencing many of the physical pleasures offered in Montmartre, a sorrow that he drowned in alcohol. At first it was beer and wine. Then brandy, whiskey, and the infamous absinthe found their ways into his life.

Art and alcohol were his only mistresses, and they were mistresses to which he devoted all of his time and energy. He was doing one or both almost every day of his life until he died.

Adapting the fad for Japanese style (asymmetric composition, flat areas of color) that then pervaded French art to the also burgeoning art of the picture poster, he created thousands of artworks both to memorialize his friends and to advertise their venues. Among those whose images are now a part of art history are the Moulin Rouge dancers Louise Weber (La Goulue) and Jane Avril, and the combative singer/entrepreneur Aristide Bruant.

Toulouse-Lautrec, many of whose works are in the museum that bears his name in Albi, was a prolific creator. His oeuvre includes great numbers of paintings, drawings, etchings, lithographs, and posters, as well as illustrations for various contemporary newspapers. He incorporated into his own highly individual method elements of the styles of various contemporary artists, especially French painters Edgar Degas and Paul Gauguin. Japanese art, then coming into vogue in Paris, influenced his use of sharp delineation, asymmetric composition, oblique angles, and flat areas of color. His work inspired van Gogh, Georges Seurat, and Georges Rouault.

His alcoholic dissipation, however, eventually brought on a paralytic stroke, to which he succumbed at Malromé, one of his family's estates. Since then his paintings and posters--particularly the 'Moulin Rouge' group have been in great demand and bring high prices at auctions and art sales.

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Sorry. No information about this medium is available.

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