

# TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

Matthias Arnold



TASCHEN

Taschen  
TOULOUSE-LAUTREC (I) #BASICART

Matthias Arnold

BA

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In evidenza

**MOSTRA:**

[Il mondo fluttuante di Toulouse-Lautrec](#) - Milano, Palazzo reale dal 1 ottobre 2017 al 28 febbraio 2018

[Toulouse-Lautrec. La Belle Époque](#) - Verona, Palazzo Forti dal 1 aprile al 3 settembre 2017

**Il maestro di Montmartre  
Musica, balli e Moulin Rouge**

Nella nostra visione di Parigi, il pittore e illustratore **Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec** (1864–1901) gioca un ruolo di non poco conto. In stampe, manifesti, dipinti e disegni, l'artista **ha immortalato la vita notturna cittadina durante la Belle Époque facendo sì che il quartiere settentrionale di Montmartre rientrasse a pieno diritto nella mappa globale dei principali luoghi del piacere e della creatività.**

Nato in una famiglia francese di antico e nobile lignaggio, sembra che Toulouse-Lautrec abbia attinto ben presto alle immagini del demi-monde, focalizzando la sua attenzione sulle **sale da ballo, i cabaret e i bordelli** di Montmartre, e scegliendo come soggetti **ballerini e cantanti di fama**, prima fra tutti Jane Avril. Le sue opere spaziano da vivaci scene di spettacolo a tranquilli e teneri ritratti lontani dalle luci della ribalta, come Il divano e A letto. La sua padronanza stilistica si rivela sia nelle **grafiche audaci, che si esprimono al meglio nei manifesti promozionali di Jane Avril, sia negli schizzi eseguiti in scioltezza eppure evocativi.**

Morto ad appena 36 anni per complicazioni dovute all'alcolismo e alla sifilide, Toulouse-Lautrec ha tuttavia esercitato un'enorme influenza sul piano culturale. Questo volume introduttivo accompagna il lettore tra cantanti, ballerini, musicisti e prostitute alla scoperta di un artista dotato di **grande umanità, un impressionante talento figurativo e una spiccata capacità di cogliere l'energia e le storie di una città.**

**L'autore:**

**Matthias Arnold**, nato nel 1947, ha scritto la sua tesi di dottorato su Vincent van Gogh. Vive a Monaco e lavora come autore freelance.

**La collana:**

Ciascun volume della collana Basic Art di TASCHEN comprende:

- Una sintesi dettagliata che ripercorre cronologicamente la vita e l'opera dell'artista, soffermandosi sulla sua importanza a livello storico e culturale
- Una biografia concisa
- Circa 100 illustrazioni a colori con didascalie esplicative

#BasicArt



**Reine de Joie, 1892**  
Study for the poster  
Charcoal on cardboard,  
192 x 105 cm (75 1/2 x 41 3/4 in.)  
ARK, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec

**PAGE 33**  
**Reine de Joie, 1892**  
Coloured lithograph (poster),  
128.6 x 93.2 cm (50 1/2 x 36 3/4 in.)  
ARK, Musée Toulouse-Lautrec

**PAGE 34**  
**Ambassadeurs, Aristide Bruant, 1892**  
Study for the poster  
Gouache on cardboard,  
146.5 x 95 cm (57 3/4 x 37 3/8 in.)  
Paris, collection Steven S. Nathans

**PAGE 35**  
**Ambassadeurs, Aristide Bruant, 1892**  
Coloured lithograph (poster),  
150 x 100 cm (59 x 39 3/8 in.)  
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France

drawn on, and covered the whole with fatty, coloured printing ink, the moistened parts did not absorb the ink and in printing on paper only the chalked parts took. In the course of time the process had become more sophisticated through the use of chemicals. At the start of the 19th century, lithographic printers started up business in Paris, initially concentrating on the reproduction of written texts or musical scores, by degrees, artists discovered the technical and material potential of lithography.

By 1820 the first lithographic masterpieces had been created, by Théodore Géricault, Richard Parkes Bonington, Francisco de Goya and Eugène Delacroix, among others. There were also specialists, such as the Frenchman Nicolas-Toussaint Charlet and his pupil Denis-Auguste Marie Raffet, who were less well known than these painters. Before Toulouse-Lautrec, the most significant of French lithographic artists were Paul Gavarni and Daumier. Both of them did most of their work for illustrated magazines – editors had been quick to perceive the uses of lithography for illustrative purposes. This kind of work generally consisted of commentary on current affairs, whether in a more neutral, realistic manner or in exaggerated, caricaturist vein: both Gavarni and (above all) Daumier have rightly reaped praise for the high artistic quality of their work in caricatures, which they employed to plead the cause of a more just society.

By Toulouse-Lautrec's day, other methods, cheaper but not necessarily better, were coming to replace the original methods of stone-printing; and photography also looked to be a promising means of illustration. This had the effect of making Toulouse-Lautrec independent of illustrative journalism in a way that had not been afforded to Daumier. He was free to make lithographic posters his own special province, along with lithographic work expressing his own concerns; the posters were his starting point.

Surviving studies and sketches show us clearly how carefully the artist prepared the *Moulin Rouge* poster. He used paintings, watercolour and pastel drawings, sketches, and even lithographs (ill. p. 32) to vary his theme of dancing at the *Moulin Rouge*, and of *La Goulue* and *Valentin*. After the sensational success of this poster, the artist did further coloured prints of the *Moulin Rouge*, such as his two masterpieces of 1892, *La Goulue and Her Sister at the Moulin Rouge*, and *The Englishman* (William Tom Warren, 1861–1924) at the *Moulin Rouge* (ill. p. 48).

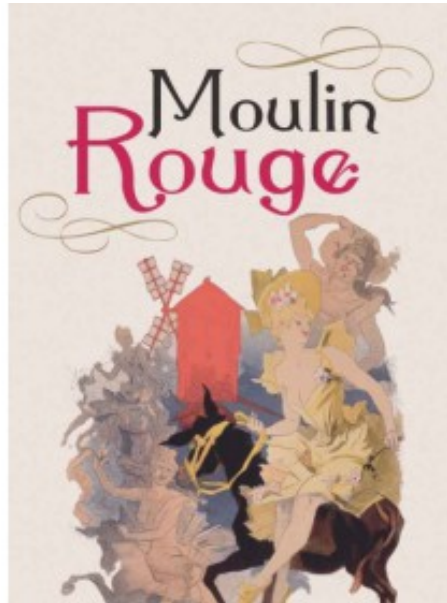
In the first *Moulin Rouge* poster, Toulouse-Lautrec again used the Japanese and Cloisonnist approaches he had first used in 1888 in the circus picture: heavily simplified figurative zones, an unusual composition based on cut-offs at the picture edges, silhouetted figures on a bright ground, and linear contours so that even at a distance the poster is effective. Extreme reduction and stylised presentation of this order – a limited conjunction of lines, spaces, colours and lettering – is characteristic of his poster work and highlights the contrast with his other lithographic work: the posters are the end result of a process of crystallising that has gone through numerous stages, and are no longer intended to have the vitality of a fresh sketch or a painting rived with intuition. They have been done for a different purpose and are distilled versions of something concrete, which has been seen and is a symbol of the thing advertised.

The *Moulin Rouge* poster must be the most famous poster in art history, and rightly so. Toulouse-Lautrec was hard put to reach once again the standard he had set himself, and in subsequent posters he came close a couple of times but never quite brought it off. About a dozen of the 30 posters he did are of comparable quality. If we want to see why his *Moulin Rouge* poster aroused such excitement, we have only to compare it with the poster for the same club



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Titoli correlati



MOULIN ROUGE

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