TOULOUSE-LAUTREC ILLUSTRATES THE BELLE ÉPOQUE
The MMFA reveals an outstanding private collection of prints and posters by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

June 18 to October 30, 2016

Montreal, June 15, 2016 – Relive the golden age of Parisian cabarets through the exhibition TOULOUSE-LAUTREC ILLUSTRATES THE BELLE ÉPOQUE. From June 18 to October 30, 2016, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) will unveil an outstanding private collection that brings together almost all of the most famous prints and posters by Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), the great French nineteenth-century master who revolutionized the art of printmaking.

Organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., the exhibition gives the public the opportunity to admire close to one hundred prints and posters from nearly the entire period of his lithographic career, from 1891 to 1900, iconic images and rarely exhibited unique proofs carefully chosen for their quality and colour.

The exhibition also features some works by Toulouse-Lautrec’s associates, including a painting by Louis Anquetin, L’Intérieur de chez Bruant : Le Mirliton (Inside Bruant’s Mirliton) (1886-1887). Known until fairly recently only through its preparatory studies, this work is being shown to the public for the first time. It is without a doubt a major rediscovery in terms of the art history of fin-de-siècle Paris.

Through his lithographs, Toulouse-Lautrec captured the heart of Parisian nightlife during the Belle Époque in dynamic cabaret and dance hall scenes inspired by the city’s burgeoning entertainment district. He established a studio in bohemian Montmartre and became a frequent visitor to lively hot spots like the Chat Noir, the Mirliton and the Moulin Rouge. His depiction of their performances fashioned a portrait of modern Parisian nightlife.

“During the opening of Warhol Mania in 2014, we were already making plans to pay tribute to Warhol’s illustrious predecessor, Toulouse-Lautrec. Today, thanks to this truly outstanding private collection, which is being unveiled at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and will later be shown at The Phillips Collection in Washington, we can proudly proclaim, ‘Mission accomplished!’ The one hundred prints and posters (plus a few drawings and paintings by the artist and his circle) that
are being unveiled are in a truly outstanding state of conservation – this must be emphasized, as these ephemeral works of art were not designed to last. It is an opportunity to visit Paris of the Belle Époque, its stars and cabarets…” said Nathalie Bondil, the MMFA’s Director and Chief Curator.

“I am thrilled that the Phillips is collaborating with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for the first time on a major international loan exhibition like Toulouse-Lautrec Illustrates the Belle Époque,” said Dorothy Kosinski, Director of The Phillips Collection. “This project marks the first solo exhibition of Toulouse-Lautrec’s work at the Phillips in nearly eighty years. We are delighted to share this collection with our audiences in Canada and the United States for the first time.”

AN EXCEPTIONAL COLLECTION REVEALED

Exhibitions of Toulouse-Lautrec’s prints and posters are hardly uncommon, but this presentation reveals an outstanding collection of close to a hundred works assembled by a private collector in recent years.

Almost all the exhibited prints are in superb condition, their inking and colour still brilliant. Thanks to the collector’s connoisseurship and his devoted care of the works in this expanding collection, which represents nearly all the lithographs executed by Toulouse-Lautrec, we are able to explore and appreciate the artist’s ambitions and his use of the lithographic medium to achieve them.

This collection includes rare and exceptional trial proofs, including some that have never before been catalogued or published. Among these works that have never before been exhibited in public are unique impressions (such as unique trial proofs for both Moulin Rouge – La Goule and the rare Le Pendu [The Hanged Man]), as well as very rare prints (such as the trial proof and final proofs for Reine de Joie [Queen of Joy], May Milton, May Belfort and for the famous poster Jane Avril).

The presentation also includes four closely related works by two of the artist’s close associates: Théophile Alexandre Steinlen (a drawing in coloured crayons of a dance hall interior and a large-scale poster of his famous Tournée du Chat Noir); and Louis Anquetin (a superb pastel entitled Au cirque (At the Circus) and the large and fascinating painting L’Intérieur de chez Bruant : Le Mirliton (Inside Bruant’s Mirliton), which is being exhibited for the first time.

The MMFA’s collection includes five lithographs by Toulouse-Lautrec, ranging from 1894 to 1898, three of which were recently donated to the Museum by Freda and Irwin Browns. In the Museum’s Library collection, we are also fortunate to have the complete album Yvette Guilbert. Published in Britain in 1898 for an English audience, it features nine lithographs (including the
cover), with an accompanying text in English by Arthur Byl. The final image depicts Yvette Guilbert performing one of her famous songs as an encore.

**CURATORIAL TEAM AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The exhibition *Toulouse-Lautrec Illustrates the Belle Époque* is organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

In Montreal, the exhibition is curated by Gilles Genty, Art Historian and Guest Curator; Nathalie Bondil, Director and Chief Curator of the MMFA; and Hilliard T. Goldfarb, Senior Curator – Collections and Curator of Old Masters at the MMFA.

In Washington, D.C., the exhibition is curated by Gilles Genty, Art Historian and Guest Curator; Dorothy Kosinski, Director of The Phillips Collection; and Renée Maurer, Assistant Curator at The Phillips Collection.

“Toulouse-Lautrec’s works reveal the spectacle of the *Belle Époque*: the dreams, ambitions, desires, disillusionments of its performers, all depicted by an artist with a humanist gaze who saw them every day, without judging them,” added Gilles Genty, art historian and guest curator. “Toulouse-Lautrec is the heir of the nineteenth-century caricaturists (Daumier, Gavarni) and he also heralded, through his revolutionary posters, the visual culture of the twentieth century.”


Following its presentation in Montreal, the exhibition will be presented at The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., from February 4 to April 30, 2017.
EXHIBITION LAYOUT AND DESIGN

In Montreal, the exhibition was designed by Sandra Gagné, architect and Head of Exhibitions Production at the MMFA.

Presented in the MMFA’s Jean-Noël Desmarais Pavilion, the exhibition reflects the main themes explored by the artist: Modern Life, the Theatre, Café-Concert, and the Night Scene. The exhibition explores contemporary life in late nineteenth-century Paris, from its cabarets, with the revels and excesses of Paris nightlife, to modern daily life, including cycling, the newly invented automobile, and the joys of walking one’s pet, as well as diversions like the circus and the race track.

In the Café-Concert section, music will plunge visitors into the Belle Époque ambience. They will hear period recordings of Aristide Bruant, Félix Mayol and Yvette Guilbert, contemporaries of Toulouse-Lautrec. A musical selection by Marie-Claude Sénécal, producer at ICI Musique.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Museum extends its thanks to the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec for its vital support. Our gratitude also extends to the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the Canada Council for the Arts for their ongoing support. In Montreal, the exhibition has benefited from the invaluable support of the Volunteer Association of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, which, since 1948, has contributed to the Museum's development by organizing and hosting remarkable fundraising events. We would also like to recognize the Volunteer Guides for their ongoing contribution to Museum life. The Museum would like to recognize the essential contribution of Air Canada and Bell, as well as La Presse and the Montreal Gazette.

We would also like to thank all the Museum’s VIP members and the many individuals, companies and foundations for their generous support, especially the Arte Musica Foundation, presided over by Pierre Bourgie, and the Fondation de la Chenelière, directed by Michel de la Chenelière.

The Museum’s International Exhibition Programme receives financial support from the Exhibition Fund of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Foundation and the Paul G. Desmarais Fund.
EXHIBITION ART BOOK
*Toulouse-Lautrec Illustrates the Belle Époque*

The exhibition *Toulouse-Lautrec Illustrates the Belle Époque* is accompanied by a 134-page art book containing some 120 colour illustrations. This volume examines the artist’s social milieu and his use of lithography. It includes a detailed exhibition checklist, a chronology of the artist and a description of the legendary personalities and venues in Montmartre depicted by Toulouse-Lautrec.

Contributing authors include: Nathalie Bondil, Director and Chief Curator of the MMFA; Gilles Genty, art historian; Hilliard T. Goldfarb, the MMFA’s Senior Curator – Collections and Curator of Old Masters; Dorothy Kosinski, Director of The Phillips Collection; Chantelle Lepine-Cercone, art historian; and Renée Maurer, Assistant Curator at The Phillips Collection.

This book is published in English and French editions by the Publishing Department of the MMFA (main publisher), and The Phillips Collection (associate publisher), in collaboration with Les Éditions Hazan, Paris (associate publisher). The graphic design is by Montreal studio Feed.

On sale at the MMFA’s Boutique and Bookstore.
The English edition is distributed by Yale University Press.
RELATED PROGRAMMING

CONCERT

**October 21 | 6 and 8 p.m.**
Toulouse-Lautrec Cabaret
Jeanne-Marie Levy, voice; Jean Delescluse, voice; and Pascal Hild, piano.

After his memorable performance in *Érik Satie the Visionary* in January 2016, Jean Delescluse is back with an evening of cabaret music celebrating “The Soul of Montmartre,” Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. This is a generous programme of music that was heard in the cabarets for which Toulouse-Lautrec created his celebrated posters. Other songs by artists whose portraits were painted by Toulouse-Lautrec complete the programme. From the Moulin Rouge to the Chat noir, embark on a panoramic tour of Parisian life in the years of the Belle Époque!

Place: Glass Court of the MMFA, Jean-Noël Desmarais Pavilion

LECTURES

Place: The MMFA’s Maxwell Cummings Auditorium

**June 17 | 10.30 a.m.**
*Toulouse-Lautrec and Lithography as Viewed through a Remarkable Collection*
By Hilliard T. Goldfarb, Senior Curator – Collections and Curator of Old Masters at the MMFA. In English.

Lecture reserved for the Museum’s VIP members.

**June 17 | 2 p.m.**
*Toulouse-Lautrec : écrire la vie*
By Gilles Genty, art historian and guest curator of the exhibition *Toulouse-Lautrec Illustrates the Belle Époque*. In French.

Lecture reserved for the Museum’s VIP members.
FIFA+ | FILMS

Place: The MMFA’s Maxwell Cummings Auditorium

July 13 | 6 p.m.

Moulin rouge
with José Ferrer and Zsa Zsa Gabor.

Following a bad fall down the staircase of his family’s château in Albi, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec becomes crippled for the rest of his life. He escapes his solitude by painting. After moving to Paris, he becomes a frequent visitor at the Moulin Rouge, where he befriends the cabaret’s stars.

August 10 | 6 p.m.

Les aventuriers de l’art moderne, part I
Amélie Harrault, Pauline Gaillard and Valérie Loiseleux, France, 2015, 52 min., French.

“Bohème”: A glimpse into the private lives of the founders of modern art, from Montmartre in 1900 until the Liberation. An intense choreography of intersecting destinies, superbly rendered with paintings, illustrations and animation. First part: In raucous Montmartre at the turn of the twentieth century, a group of artists (Max Jacob, Pablo Picasso and Guillaume Apollinaire…) revel in their bohemian lifestyle.

“La bande de Picasso”: Picasso’s Les demoiselles d’Avignon hails the advent of Cubism and causes a scandal. The early days of artistic recognition also see growing rifts: Picasso moves to Montparnasse. World War I breaks out. Picasso and Max Jacob, invalided out of the army, remain in Paris. Braque, Derain and Apollinaire leave for the Front.

August 17 | 6 p.m.

Les aventuriers de l’art moderne, part II
Amélie Harrault, Pauline Gaillard and Valérie Loiseleux, France, 2015, 52 min., French.

“Paris capitale du monde”: The year is 1916. In Montparnasse, foreign artists are starving. The Russian artist Soutine, poorer than poor, befriends the stunningly beautiful Italian, Modigliani. In
1917, Apollinaire stages Les mamelles de Tirésias [The Breasts of Tiresias], his first “surrealist” play and the first occurrence of the word “surrealist.” World War I ends, but Apollinaire dies of the Spanish flu. His funeral marks the end of bohemianism.

“Les enchanteurs de Montparnasse”: In reaction to the absurdity of war, the Dadaist and Surrealist revolution is in full swing. At its head are André Breton and Louis Aragon, along with Man Ray, Robert Desnos and many others. While Ray indulges his passion for Kiki before running off with Lee Miller, Aragon meets Elsa Triolet, Picasso is torn between two women, and Salvador Dalí bursts onto the scene.

**August 24 | 6 p.m.**

*Les aventuriers de l’art moderne, part III*
Amélie Harrault, Pauline Gaillard and Valérie Loiseleux, France, 2015, 52 min., French.

“Libertad!”: A glimpse into the private lives of the artists and intellectuals in the first half of the twentieth century. Fifth part: In the early 1930s, the rise of Fascism drives the artists to get involved. In 1936, the Spanish Civil War is mobilizing: Malraux, Robert Capa and Gerda Taro support the Republicans. In 1937, the massacre at Guernica inspires Picasso to paint.

“Minuit à Paris”: Conclusion: World War II breaks out. A number of artists and intellectuals flee Europe. Those who remain attempt to live, paint and write as a way of resisting the occupying forces or simply as a means of surviving as best they can. Some collaborate, some resist, most adapt.

**August 31 | 6 p.m.**

*Toulouse-Lautrec and Montmartre*
Carroll Moore, USA, 2005, 35 min., English.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Montmartre are renowned for paintings and posters inspired by the edgy spectacle of Paris’s infamous quarter in the late nineteenth century. Using works by the artist and his colleagues, rare archival footage and sound recordings, period photographs and interviews with contemporary scholars, this film traces the relationship between the aristocratic painter and Montmartre’s avant-garde culture.

Followed by
Can-Can
Walter Lang, USA, 1960, 131 min., English.

In Montmartre in 1896, the can-can is forbidden, but Simone still performs it night after night at her club. She and her girls use their feminine wiles to charm the authorities into looking the other way. But the ambitious young judge Philippe Forrestier is determined to make her honour the letter of the law.

- 30 -

Source and inquiries:

Patricia Lachance  
Press Officer | MMFA  
T. 514-285-1600, ext. 315  
M. 514.235-2044  
plachance@mbamtl.org

Elisabeth-Anne Butikofer  
Press Officer | MMFA  
T. 514-285-1600, ext. 205  
M. 514-272-4653  
ebutikofer@mbamtl.org

A selection of visuals is available on the Museum’s website at: mbam.qc.ca/media

Follow the MMFA on:

FACEBOOK facebook.com/mbamtl  
TWITTER twitter.com/mbamtl  
INSTAGRAM Instagram.com/mbamtl  
YOUTUBE Youtube.com/mbammmfa

About the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

The MMFA welcomes a million visitors each year. Quebec’s most visited museum, it is one of the most popular museums in Canada and ranks twelfth among art museums in North America. Its innovative temporary exhibitions combine artistic disciplines (fine arts, music, film, fashion and design) and are circulated to museums around the world. Its encyclopedic collection, which is on display in four – soon-to-be five – pavilions, includes international art, world cultures, decorative arts and design and Quebec and Canadian art. The Museum complex includes a 444-seat concert hall. The MMFA is also one of Canada’s leading publishers of art books in English and French, which are distributed internationally. The Michel de la Chenelière International Atelier for Education and Art Therapy, the largest educational complex in a North American art museum, will be housed in the future Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavilion for Peace, which will be inaugurated in November 2016.