

Toulouse-Lautrec and Photography

This exhibition is pioneer in confronting the work of the internationally famous artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) with fin de siècle photography. It is presenting the artist's paintings, drawings, lithographs, and posters against a background of historical photographs, which reveal the same or similar motifs, often serving as models for the artist. Ironically, none of the photographs were taken by the artist himself—Toulouse-Lautrec never owned a camera nor used one himself. Rather, if he needed photographs for his art he commissioned friends to do the camera work for him. He very often let these friends take pictures of him, frequently in the strangest attitudes and costumes.

Toulouse-Lautrec's photographer friends

Only one of the three friends who took pictures for Toulouse-Lautrec was a professional photographer, namely Paul Sescau. The second of the trio, François Gauzi, wanted to become a painter like Toulouse-Lautrec, and they studied together at the studio of Fernand Cormon. The third was Maurice Guibert, a well-to-do young bon viveur. For a period Lautrec taught him how to paint, until Guibert decided to devote himself to photography, his true passion. In texts and images, the exhibition and catalogue will be introducing all three of these friends of the artist, making their importance for his work apparent.

Lautrec as a master of disguise

Lautrec loved to dress up, regardless of whether it was just for his own amusement or to visit one of those fancy dress balls that were so popular in fin de siècle Paris, where dressing up was very much in vogue. In the photographs he had made of himself in grotesque outfits, he sometimes appeared as a cross-eyed samurai soldier or a fanatical mosque crier, sometimes a pious altar boy or a garishly dolled-up female singer. Several photographs were made of him in the company of other artists or groups of friends in which he seems to have been staging strange performances of a kind.

Lautrec's photographic eye

A further important aspect of this exhibition project is the hitherto largely ignored fact that Toulouse-Lautrec, like hardly another artist of his time, had a highly photographic eye. What he depicted and his style of representation would have been inconceivable without modern photography. His audacious designs with their brutally truncated figures and steep perspectives are evidence of this, as is also his impetuous, sketchy style. Like photography, in his drawing technique he strived to capture momentary impressions as spontaneously as possible. And who would have dared to paint the artificial world of Paris's red-light district Montmartre, its seductive delights and the desolation lurking behind its bright facades, as truthfully and matter-of-factly—as photographically—as Toulouse-Lautrec?

Lautrec's portrait of Misia Natanson

There is a specific reason why this exhibition is taking place in Bern. Namely, the Kunstmuseum Bern owns a captivating painting by this artist featuring a portrait of Misia Natanson, wife of the publisher of *Revue blanche*, sitting at a grand piano. The beautiful young woman was a much-admired figure in artistic circles in Paris, and it is therefore not surprising that she was likewise portrayed by other young contemporary artists, such as Edouard Vuillard, Pierre Bonnard, or Félix Vallotton. For this reason we have dedicated a separate thematic section to this woman and her illustrious circle.

The show consists of more than 300 exhibits, of which a surprisingly large number belong to Swiss collections. We likewise were able to obtain loans from museums and private collectors in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Hungary, and the USA, as well as, first and foremost, the Musée Toulouse-Lautrec in Albi.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive, richly illustrated catalogue containing scholarly essays. Hirmer Publishers, Munich, are producing the catalogue.

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Exhibition

Duration: Aug. 28 – Dec. 13, 2015

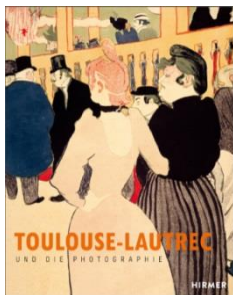
Opening: Thursday, Aug. 27, 2015, 6:30 p.m.

Curators: Rudolf Koella (guest curator), Isabelle Fehlmann (assistant), Simon Oberholzer (assistant)

Admission fee: CHF 20.00 / reduced CHF 16.00

The exhibition is placed under the patronage of: Dr. Bernhard Pulver (Erziehungsdirektor des Kantons Bern), Alexander Tschäppät (Stadtpräsident von Bern), S. Exc. René Roudaut (Botschafter Frankreichs in Bern), Daniele Devynck (Direktorin des Musée Toulouse-Lautrec in Albi), Dr. h.c. Eberhard W. Kornfeld (Galerist und Auktionator in Bern), Wolfgang Wittrock (Kunsthändler in Berlin)

Catalogue



Toulouse-Lautrec und die Photographie / Toulouse-Lautrec et la photographie

Hrsg. von Rudolf Koella in Zusammenarbeit mit Matthias Frehner, unter Mitwirkung von Isabelle Fehlmann und Simon Oberholzer. Mit Beiträgen von Matthias Frehner, Rudolf Koella, Michel Frizot, Jean-Paul Morel. Gebunden, ca. 280 Seiten, ca. 300 Abbildungen in Farbe. Hirmer Verlag, München. ISBN 978-3-7774-2467-5. CHF 48.00, in Deutsch oder Französisch

Poster



F4
89,5 x 128 cm
CHF 20.00

Accompanying Program

Öffentliche Führungen: Sonntag, 11h: 30. August, 6./13./27. September, 4./11./18./25. Oktober, 1./8./22. November, 6./13. Dezember. Dienstag, 19h: 29. September, 13.*/27. Oktober, 10. November**, 1. Dezember.

Dienstag, 18h: 8. September (vorgängig zu öffentlichem Vortrag). * mit dem Fotohistoriker Markus Schürpf

** mit dem Kurator Rudolf Koella. **Öffentlicher Vortrag:** Prof. Dr. Götz Adriani: *Toulouse-Lautrec Druckgraphik*. Dienstag, 8. September 2015, 19h. **Public guided tours:** Sunday, September 20 and November 29, 11:30am, Tuesday, November 17, 7:30pm. **Visites commentées publiques :** Mardi 15 septembre et 8 décembre à 19h30, Dimanche 15 novembre à 11h30. **Reihe «Kunst und Religion im Dialog»:** Sonntag, 13. September, 15h-16h, Isabelle Fehlmann (Kunstmuseum Bern) im Gespräch mit Jan Straub (christkatholische Kirche), Kosten: CHF 10.00. **«Vom Zauber der Lithografie»:** Geführte Besichtigung des Druckateliers von Tom Blaess. Samstag, 14. November, 15h-16h30, Kosten: CHF 20.00 pro Person, Treffpunkt: bei der Kasse des Kunstmuseums (10 Minuten Spaziergang zum Druckatelier an der Aare), Anmeldung: vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch. **Einführung für Lehrpersonen:** Dienstag, 1. September, 18h, Mittwoch, 2. September, 14h, Kosten: CHF 10.00 pro Person, Anmeldung: vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch. **Volkshochschulkurs:** Mittwoch, 15h - 16h: 21./28. Oktober, 4./11. November 2015, Anmeldung: Volkshochschule Bern, T 031 320 30 30, info@vhsbe.ch, Kosten: CHF 80.00 für 3 Mal. **Anlass für Kinder «NACHT IM KUNSTMUSEUM»:** Freitag, 6. November, 18h – 22h, Ein bunter Anlass mit gestalterischen Aktionen, spielerischen Werkbetrachtungen und Clown Fulvio als Gast. Für Kinder von 6 – 12 Jahren. Anmeldung bis 3. November: vermittlung@kunstmuseumbern.ch, T 031 328 09 11, Kosten: CHF 25.00 inkl. Abendessen, Treffpunkt: 18h, Haupteingang Kunstmuseum Bern

With the generous support of:



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