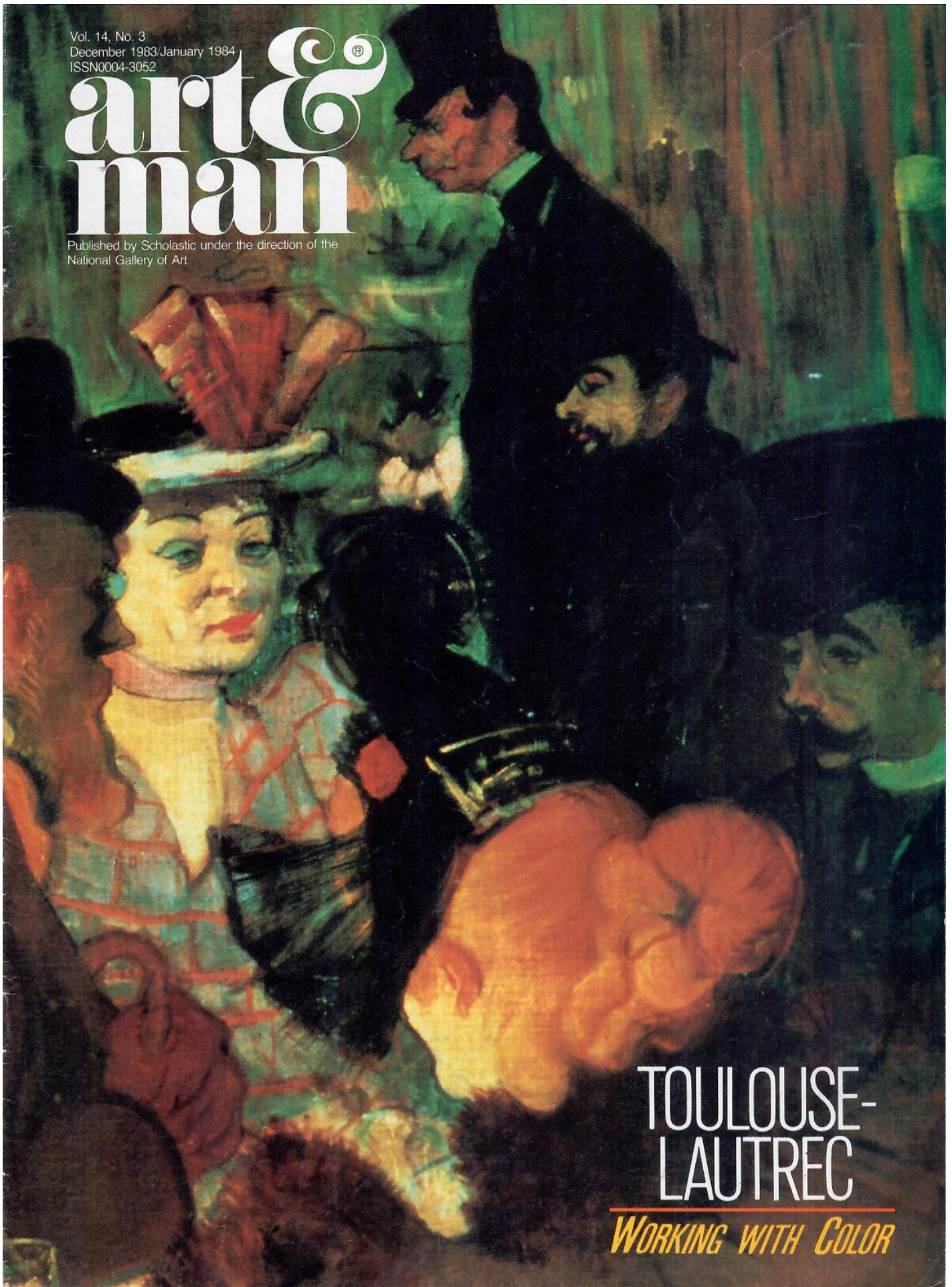


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TOULOUSE-
LAUTREC

WORKING WITH COLOR

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC'S NIGHT PEOPLE

“Ugliness has its own beauty. I love to discover it where it has been seen by no one else.”— *Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec*



Self-Portrait, 1896. Albi Museum.

Toulouse-Lautrec made many cartoons like this of himself

Imagine walking down a dark street in Paris nearly a hundred years ago. It's late at night, but the streets are jammed with people, and they all seem to be headed toward one place. The whirling, colored lights direct your eye to the sign above, “The Moulin Rouge” (The Red Windmill). You enter the small door and are suddenly in the midst of blaring music, glaring lights,

and whirling dancers. Everyone at the tables seems to be talking, laughing, and drinking. And in the middle of all this activity is a small, bearded man wearing a derby hat, dashing off one sketch after another. You sit down and watch the floor show. Finally, as the lights dim and everyone has left, the man in the hat finishes his last drawing. His friends get up and pick up his papers and walking stick. When he finally gets to his feet, you see that the top of the artist's hat reaches only to their elbows.

Count Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa was born on his father's estate near the small French town of Albi, in 1864. Young Henri was never very strong, and when he was too sick to go to school, his mother would teach him. The rest of the time he drew. When he was 14, he fell and broke both legs. Due to a bone disease, his legs never grew again. In spite of this handicap, in 1881 Henri passed his high school exams and went to live with his

mother in Paris in order to study painting. A few years later, he moved in with various friends. He began to go out with them at night, when people couldn't see him too well, to the dance halls, cafés and cabarets in the area. At last he had found a world into which he could fit. Among the circus performers, artists, singers, dancers, and all the other night people at the “Moulin Rouge,” Toulouse-Lautrec did not look strange. In fact, his appearance made him popular, not ridiculous. He appears with some of his many friends in the painting, right. As one of them said, “At first one is upset by his size, but he is so delightful, so full of life, that the more you see him, the bigger he seems to grow.”

Toulouse-Lautrec made portraits of people he saw in the music halls, capturing their personalities through their gestures, glances, and attitudes. He also made illustrations for newspapers, as well as posters, which became as famous as his paintings. But, because of his disability and because of the life he led—staying out all night and drinking heavily—in 1898, the artist was hospitalized. In 1901, at the age of 37, he died at his parents' estate. After his death, French officials tried to keep his paintings out of sight. His work was not thought fit to be seen. Today, Toulouse-Lautrec is considered to be one of the greatest French artists, and his posters, as well as his paintings and drawings can be seen in museums all over the world.

In this issue, you will see more of Toulouse-Lautrec's work and learn how he developed the color poster into a major art form. You'll see how some other printmakers design with color, and finally, you'll create your own color print.

At the Moulin Rouge, 1892. Art Institute of Chicago.



The artist (top center, walking beside the tall man) and his friends lived in a world most people never see.

Cover: Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901). *At the Moulin Rouge* (detail), 1892. Art Institute of Chicago.

Maurice R. Robinson, Founder of Scholastic Inc., 1895-1982

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THE COLORS OF LIFE

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec painted what he saw all around him. And since the kind of people he saw were sometimes strange, odd-looking outcasts, he used clashing, violent colors to express their personalities. Look back at the painting on page 3. The main colors are opposite, or *complementary* colors—orange and green, which, when used together, contrast—giving a feeling of energy. And how do the women's bright orange hair and the green faces of some of the figures in the painting make you feel?

“Posters are the poor person's Louvre—the true mural art of our time.”

—Anatole France



The photographer P. Sescou, 1894.

(Above) This poster says more about the photographer it advertises than just giving his address. Toulouse-Lautrec could also make a theatre poster (center) and a playbill (far right) into works of art.

At the end of the 19th century, only painting and sculpture were recognized as "fine art." Posters and newspaper illustrations were not considered art, and those of Toulouse-Lautrec were thought to be the worst of all. One critic said, "That little monster's violent insults, roughly dashed off, reeking of wine and blood." When Lautrec began designing advertisements for night clubs and entertainers, posters were very popular due to the recent development of the mechanical press. Pleasant, colorful posters filled with plump young ladies advertising various products covered the walls of Paris. Toulouse-Lautrec's strange images and bright colors changed how posters looked from then on.

Since posters were meant to be seen from a distance, artists simpli-

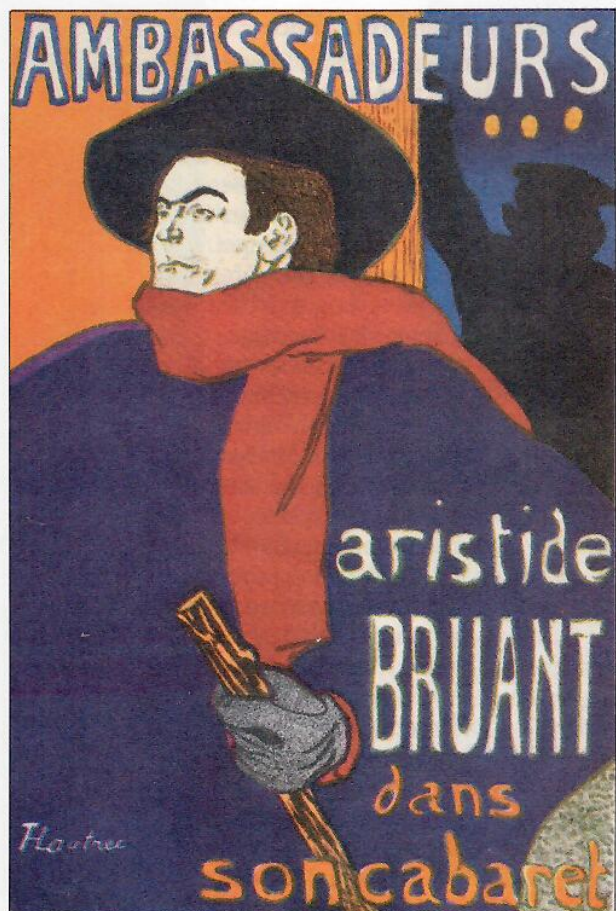
fied their forms, using bright, flat areas of color. Lautrec's figures are stylized, sometimes seen from below, sometimes appearing as sinister black shadows, cut off unexpectedly at the edges so the figure was somewhat mysterious. For the program (below, right) of an unusual play, in which the characters acted with their backs to the audience, Lautrec drew two very strange figures. The colors—red, pink, dark red—create a *monochromatic* color scheme (see the color wheel on page 15). You can see how different *values* (lightness and darkness) of the same color can sometimes give a tense, nervous feeling.

A dark, brooding figure with a savage profile and wrapped in a sweeping, blood-red scarf (below, center) was an ad for Aristide

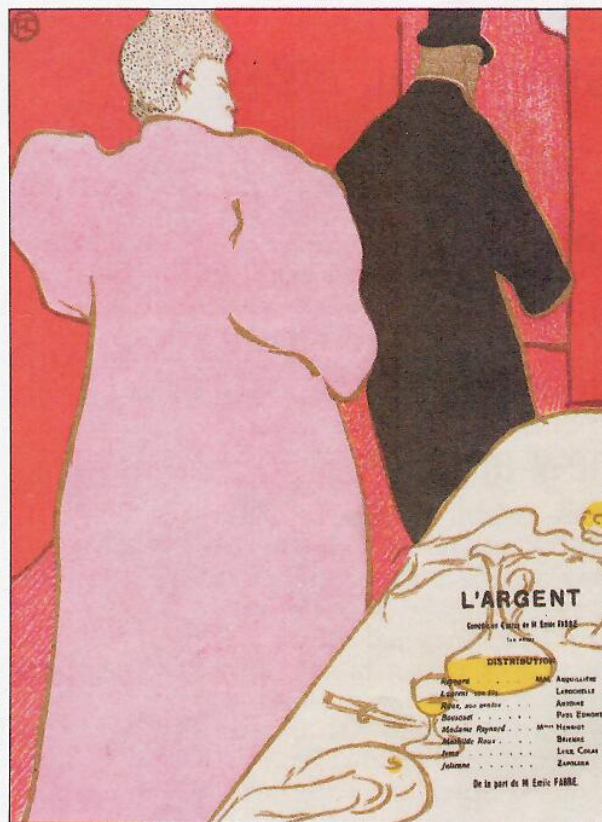
Bruant, an entertainer who was best-known for insulting his audience. The *related* color scheme (see page 15) of purple, orange and red, all dark in *value*, brings your eye to the expression on his face.

Lautrec made a poster (below, far left) for his friend Sescou, a photographer, in the *complementary* colors, orange and green. The light *values* suggest a playful reference to the photographer's reputation for flirting with his models.

Other posters remained advertisements, but Lautrec's illustrations, book covers, menus, or playbills rank as works of art. Their bold designs, striking colors, and unusual compositions not only advertise an event. They communicate the artist's very personal feelings about the human condition.



The Ambassadeurs; Aristide Bruant in his cabaret, 1892.



L'Argent, 1893. Cabinet des Estampes, Paris.

COLORFUL FACES

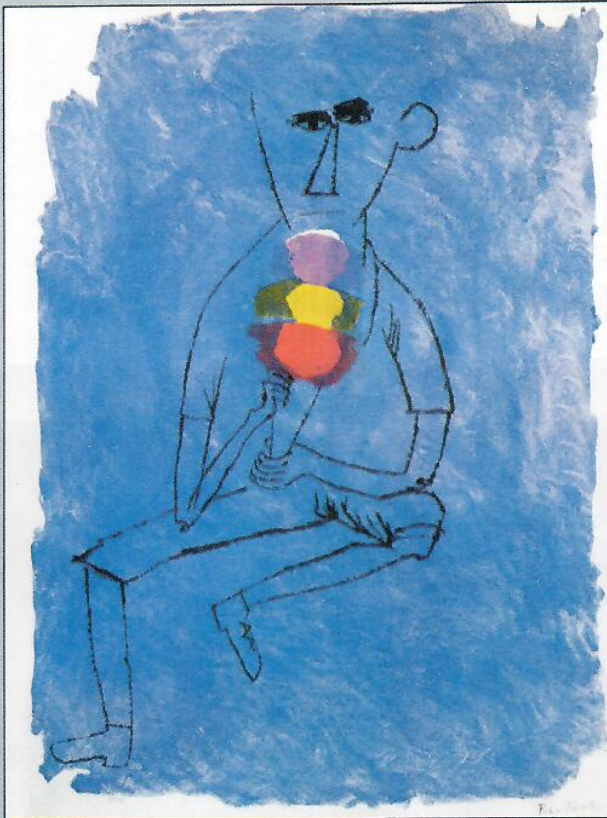
Since Toulouse-Lautrec's time, the color poster has become a new art form.



Andy Warhol (b. 1930). Marilyn Monroe, 1962. Silkscreen on canvas. Private collection.

Just Another Pretty Face

Do you recognize this woman? You've probably seen some of her films on television. In the 1950s, Marilyn Monroe was the biggest star of all. Today, her glamorous life and then her suicide have made her a legend. She has become, like so many well-known people who are seen on magazine covers and billboards, not a person, but an image. Someone everyone recognizes, but no one really knows. The contemporary American artist Andy Warhol has done dozens of prints of Marilyn Monroe. In this silkscreen, he has taken a blurry newspaper photo of the star and made it enormous. He has then added bright color shapes that underline all the false elements of a famous star's face—lipstick, eye shadow, wig, and makeup. What feeling do the three pairs of flat, bright *complementary* colors (see page 15), red and green, orange and blue, and yellow and violet, give this print? How do the "pretty" colors Warhol has chosen compare to what you know about Marilyn Monroe's life?



Ben Shahn (1898-1969). *Triple Dip*, 1952. Serigraph, hand-colored.



Utagawa Kunimasa (1773-1810). *Woman and a Cat*. Woodblock.

“Blue Boy”

American artist Ben Shahn learned to draw as a teenager, when the local bullies in his Brooklyn neighborhood forced him to draw their favorite baseball players in chalk on the sidewalk. Later, he worked in a lithography studio, where he developed his very individual style and sense of color. Social issues were very important to Shahn and the distorted, stylized figures of his posters and prints express his concern for people. In *Triple Dip*, the artist uses a *monochromatic* color scheme (compare this print to Toulouse-Lautrec’s *monochromatic* playbill on page 5). Shahn uses dark blue lines on a blue wash background. He has then added three color dots to his print, to focus attention on the ice-cream cone. Despite the bright colors and the subject, the mood of this lithographic print seem cheerful? Do the boy’s eyes look happy, as his figure seems to fade into the blue background? What could the artist be saying about childhood in this print?

Colors from the East

Compare this portrait of a woman with Toulouse-Lautrec’s poster of the actor Aristide Bruant on page 5. Do they look in any way similar? The simplified, cut-off figures are very much the same, since Lautrec was influenced by 18th-century Japanese printmakers like the artist Kunimasa, who did this woodcut. And, if you look at the color wheel on page 15, you can see that both artists also used the same kind of color scheme to achieve their results. *Related* colors are those that are next to each other on the color wheel. Purple, orange, and red are related colors, as are yellow and green. For his strong, sinister poster, Lautrec used *dark* values of his *related* colors. But, is this the same mood you might wish to suggest in order to show a woman leaning on a flowered tablecloth and playing with a little white cat? *Light* values of the *related* colors yellow and green create a more appropriate atmosphere. Where might Toulouse-Lautrec have gotten the idea for the thick, black lines he used in his posters?

MOULIN ROUGE
OU LIN ROUGE
OU LIN ROUGE
CONCERT
BAL
TOUS Les SOIRS
LA GOULUE

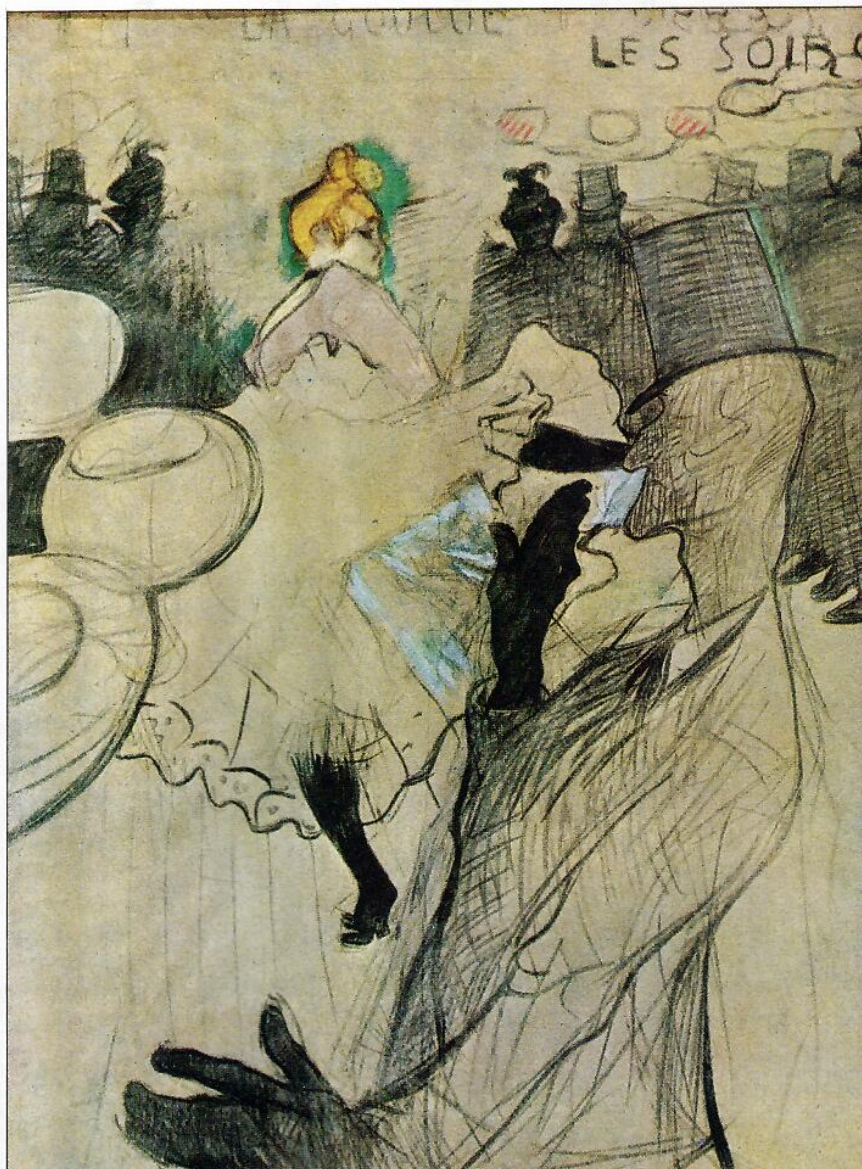


"...THE STAR PERFORMER ENTERS. SHE IS SHORT, BABY FACED, AND PLUMP, HER HAIR WORN IN A CLOWN'S TOP KNOT. BUT THE MOMENT SHE BEGINS TO DANCE, HER CHEEKS GLOW, HER ARMS RISE HER LEGS SWING UP WILDLY, BEATING THE AIR AND THREATENING THE SPECTATORS SHE WHIRLS ABOUT AND BECOMES ALMOST POSSESSED BY HYSTERIA."

—PARISIAN NEWSPAPER, 1893.

MOULIN ROUGE

BY TOULOUSE-LAUTREC



At the Moulin Rouge, La Goulue, 1891. Charcoal with color wash. Albi Museum.

Masterpiece of the Month #3

Creating A New Art

In this first sketch for the Moulin Rouge poster, which are the complementary colors?

Find out how
Toulouse-Lautrec
created his
first poster.

“A strange, tall girl with a vampire’s face, the profile of a bird of prey, a tormented mouth, and little, metallic eyes.”

“He looked something like a monkey and something like an opossum. His tall, thin figure resembled that of a lamppost and his large feet, lifted each time at exactly the same angle, revolved like clockworks.”

What would a poster look like with two creatures like those described above? Would anyone want to come to a place where these two danced as entertainment? Appar-

ently they did, for when Toulouse-Lautrec's poster of the dance team of "La Goulue and Valentin" went up all over Paris, the *Moulin Rouge*, where they performed, was packed every night. The *Moulin Rouge* opened in 1889 and it soon became the most famous of the Parisian music halls. It was so big that it included a huge promenade, a large garden with a life-sized model elephant, and a track for donkey-rides. There was a vast bar with tables, a loud band, and a noisy crowd who came to dance or watch the floor show. One of its best customers was the little painter who came night after night, sitting in the same place, always drawing. After two years of seeing Lautrec in his music hall all the time, the manager of the *Moulin Rouge* commissioned a poster from the artist. For this work, Lautrec wanted to capture the special quality of the "star" performer, who can turn an ordinary show into a magic experience. So he drew, not Louise Weber, a fat, blonde, former laundress, but "La Goulue," the star of the *Moulin Rouge*. Her partner, Valentin, who worked all day in his brother's law office and in the evening became Valentin "The Boneless," is the other dancer in the poster.

When Lautrec visualized his idea, he then had to draw it on a lithography stone with special crayons, so the design could be printed. He could use three colors—yellow, red, blue—in addition to black. The yellow plate would be first, containing the background, the lights, and the mysterious round shape on the left. La Goulue, the lettering, and the large figure of Valentin in front, would be red. The third plate, the blue, would be printed over the yellow in some places, making areas like the background appear green. Blue added to the red figure of Valentin, would make him look purple. The black lines and the audience would be on the last plate. Toulouse-Lautrec worked hard to learn this printing technique. A worker at the Ancourt Printing Company describes the artist's arrival at the office each morning. "He would be there when we came, sitting in a cab after a night out, waiting for the doors to open, with his pockets full of the old toothbrushes he used to spatter the stones."

When the prints were done and Paris awoke one morning to find 500 Toulouse-Lautrec posters all over the city, opinions were mixed. The poster featuring the tough-looking woman surrounded by a sinister band of dark figures, the distorted, grotesque person in front, and the garish, clashing reds and greens, purples and yellows, upset many people. Everyone was talking about the new poster. Some liked it, some hated it, but no one ignored it. So, Toulouse-Lautrec considered his first poster a great success.

Toulouse-Lautrec enjoyed jokes, like this trick photo of himself.

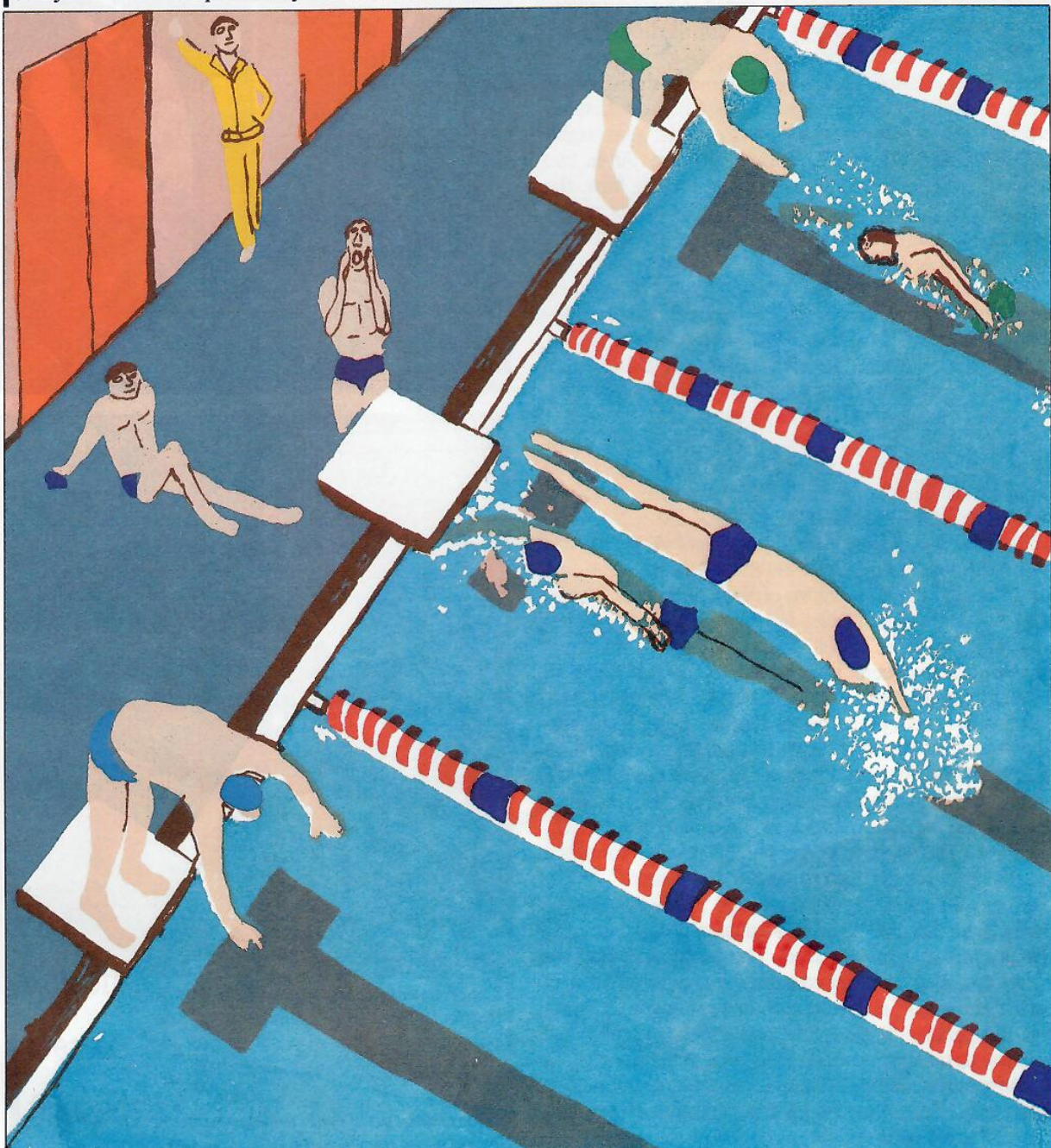


Lautrec and the manager of the Moulin Rouge in front of the music hall's "old" poster.

Article on *La Goulue* by English critic Arthur Symons, 1892.
Description of *Valentin* by Gustave Coquiolt in Lautrec, 1913.

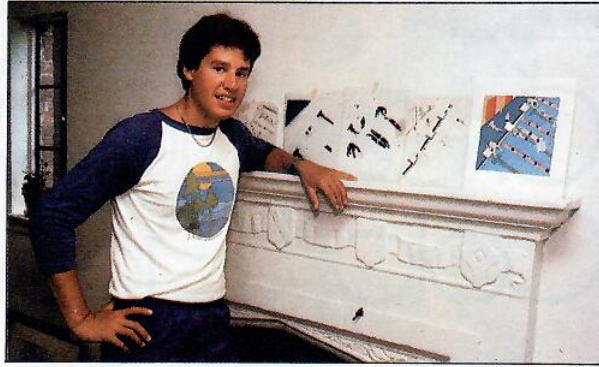
David Sharff: PRINTMAKER

Can you find the complementary colors in this silkscreen print?



Photos by Janet Soderberg

David Sharff with the various stages of his award-winning print The Race.



Have you ever been to a swim meet? Did it look anything like this award-winning silkscreen print by David Sharff? Can you guess what kind of race this is—with teams of swimmers waiting, diving, and swimming madly for the end of the pool?

Eighteen-year-old David Sharff has been in art classes since junior high, and swimming competitively since elementary school. So it's not surprising that he chose swimming for the subject of his first print. Last summer we interviewed him at his home in Brookline, Massachusetts. He's now a freshman at Tulane University in New Orleans, studying architecture.

Why did you decide to focus on a swim meet in your first print?

Because it's the highlight of all your practicing. It's full of action and color. What you see in this print is what you would actually see at a meet. But it took four months to get it to look this way.

What came first?

I started by drawing small thumbnail sketches from different angles. I wanted an angle that showed people both swimming and watching, and one that gave you a feeling of being in the race. The diagonal arrangement I finally used seemed to work out the best.

Then I enlarged the small sketch and started working on the details. But I had no experience in drawing figures like this, and I couldn't get them right. Finally my teacher took pictures of me "swimming" in the classroom. We lined up benches and I posed lying down on them, pretending to swim.

How did you choose the colors?

Some were easy. The red and blue in the lane lines are the school colors. The orange doors I remembered seeing at a pool once. The color of the water was the hardest. I wanted it to be like a real pool, where you can see down to the bottom. So my teacher suggested I add a clear ink to the blue to make it transparent.

What came next?

It was time to make the screens that are used for printing, and I still didn't know what I was doing. My teacher told me to divide the different parts of the drawing up by color. Then trace each color on a different sheet of paper. Through a photographic process, I made negatives for the screens. You need a separate screen for each color. When you make the print, the screen allows just one color to go through.

Normally you make all the screens first. But I'd make one screen at a time and print the color—because I couldn't wait to see what it would look like. But it would

be weeks before I'd get another color on the print because the screens were so hard to make.

At the end, I had to make up for lost time if I wanted to get it into the Scholastic [art] contest. The last colors I did all in one day. I thought I'd never make it. But that Friday, I skipped some classes, and finished it.

What did you like about print-making?

I liked the process of making multiple pictures that all looked like you painted them by hand. In fact, it was better than if I had painted them, since I'm not such a hot painter.

Next time I'll do something simpler! Usually you only do two or three colors the first time, but I jumped in and did six or seven, which was too much.

Do swimming and art have anything in common?

They're both very disciplined. You're driving toward something, and there's a desire for perfection. Like art, a lot of swimming is also private. When you're practicing, you're on your own, swimming 300 or 400 laps in two hours or so. It's very lonely.

Why did you decide to study architecture?

I was planning to go into pre-med, but I wasn't too excited about it. I thought, oh no, 10 more years! I realized what I really liked was designing and building things. You have to go for something you do well, something that really interests you. I thought architecture is something I can enjoy my whole life.

Creating A Color Print

You've already seen how the artist Toulouse-Lautrec used new images and color combinations to recreate the unusual world he lived in. In this workshop, you will create a color print that expresses the way you feel about your own special world.

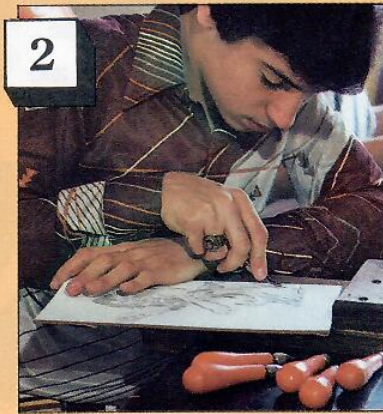
Materials

- Glass or plastic plate
- Water soluble printing inks
- Cutting tools (*Speedball* points #1, 3, and 5)
- Linoleum blocks or soft wood (4" x 6" suggested)
- Roller
- Paper (white or colored)
- Carbon paper

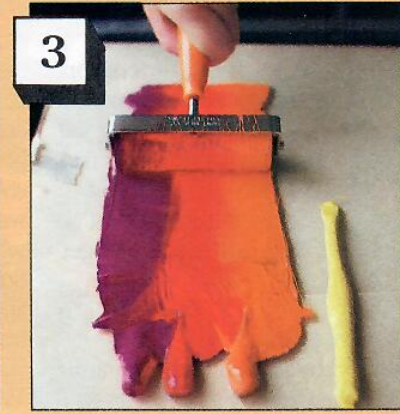
Starting Out



1 Sketch your ideas. Transfer to wood or linoleum block. Stress strong lines, simple shapes, bright colors.



2 Cut out the shapes and lines you want to appear white. Always cut *away* from you. (You can make a holder like this by attaching two pieces of wood to a base, one on top, one on the bottom.)



3 Squeeze ink on glass. Using roller, blend ink just enough—it should be tacky, not gloppy. (You could use some *related* colors, like red, yellow, and orange.)

Prepared by Francis Chauncy, Clayton (NJ) High School.

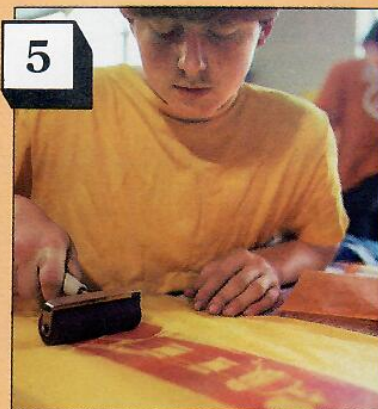
Photos by Richard Hutchings

Some Solutions

In your print, you can use one color on white paper. You can get various color combinations by mixing inks, using colored paper, or both. How do the *related* colors (yellow and deep orange) add to the calm mood in the lighthouse print? And how do the *complementary* colors (red and green, blue and orange) increase the stormy feeling of the sailboat print?



4 Roll *thin* layer of ink on block. (You could use one solid color or combine several *complementary* colors like red and green.)



5 Put paper on block (don't move it, or print will blur). Use clean roller or wooden spoon to print. Pick up one corner first, to see if print is "done."



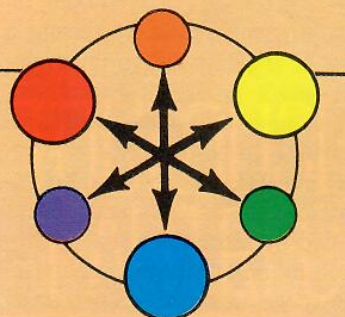
6 Remove paper. If you use colored paper, your ink will mix with the background color. Remember, your image will print backwards!

About Color

- *Monochromatic* colors are *tints* (made by adding white), or *shades* (add black) of the same color. Red, pink, and dark red would be a *monochromatic* color scheme.
- *Related* (or analogous) colors are next to each other on the color

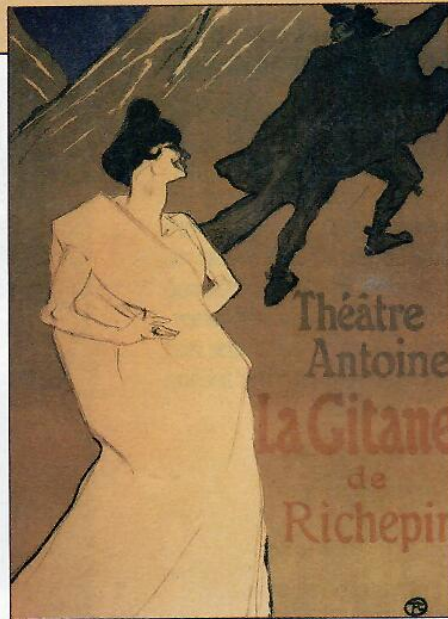
wheel (yellow and orange, purple and blue are *related*).

- *Complementary* colors are opposites on the color wheel. Orange and blue, purple and yellow, red and green are *complementary* "pairs."



The Real Thing

If you live in Santa Barbara, San Antonio, Flint (MI), Oklahoma City, or Hartford, perhaps you've already seen the actual posters done by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec that are only reproduced in this issue. A large traveling show, now at the Fine Arts Center in Nashville (TN) until Dec. 15, contains originals of Lautrec's posters and all his other graphic works. The exhibition will be at the Georgia Museum of Art in Athens, Jan. 8-Feb. 19, 1984; the Beaumont (TX) Art Museum, Mar. 1-Apr. 15; Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota (FL), May 1-June 15; Columbus (OH) Museum of Art, June 30-Aug. 12; Indianapolis Museum of Art, Sept. 2-Oct. 14; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Oct. 28-Dec. 9, 1984.



Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901), *La Gitane*, 1900. Baldwin M. Baldwin Foundation. Exhibition organized by San Diego Museum of Art and circulated under the auspices of International Exhibitions Foundation, Washington, DC.

Toulouse-Lautrec's France

This photo was taken in Paris in 1901, the year Toulouse-Lautrec died. At the same time that the great French painter was creating the masterpieces you've just seen in this issue, another Frenchman was producing a very different kind of art. At the end of the last century, Eugène Atget, one of the pioneers of photography, took over 10,000 photos. Atget died nearly unknown. Now his beautifully composed pictures of French life have been rediscovered in a large exhibition called the *Ancien Regime*, currently at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston until the end of December. In the fall of 1984 it will go to the Minneapolis Institute of Art, Sept. 15-Nov. 1984; the Detroit Institute of Arts, Dec. 4-Jan. 13, 1985; the Cleveland Museum of Art, Jan. 21-Mar. 25, 1985; and the Museum of Modern Art (NY), spring 1985.



Eugène Atget (1857-1927), *Un Coin, Rue de Seine*, 1901. Museum of Modern Art, N.Y.

Smithsonian World

This artist isn't only working on a large painting. He is creating a piece of architecture, an urban design, and a symbol of communication. A new TV series, *Smithsonian World*, to be broadcast on PBS early in 1984, will give you an unusual look at "art" that isn't always created by artists in a studio. Produced by one of the largest museums in the world, the Smithsonian

Institution, each of the seven hour-long programs will take you to places like the ruins of an ancient Greek city, the jungles of Panama, the center of the earth, and the bottom of the sea. Check your local PBS listings for the exact time in your area.



Robert Rauschenberg (b. 1934), *At the Astor Bar*, 1968.