L’Affichomania

The Passion for French Posters

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L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters features approximately 60 posters and ephemera by the five grand masters of the medium: Jules Chéret, Eugène Grasset, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and Alphonse Mucha. The posters date from 1875 to 1910, the spirited era in France known as the Belle Époque. These pioneering artists reigned in Paris during this period of artistic proliferation, defining a never-before-seen, and never forgotten, art form.

Bright and bold and found everywhere along the boulevards of fin-de-siècle Paris, the color poster was a brilliant fusion of art and commerce. It advertised cigarette papers and milk, immortalized stage stars and bohemian cabarets, and won the adoration of passersby and art collectors. As pedestrians encountered this lively new scenery posted on the Parisian boulevards, the pulse of modern life seemed to beat faster, fueling a desire to acquire the prints—by buying and selling special editions or stealthily removing them from walls and kiosks. This sudden popularity of posters fueled a passion for collecting them, called affichomania.

Drawing from the Driehaus Collection of Fine and Decorative Arts, L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters explores the eruption of the poster craze in Paris, bringing to life the exuberant spirit of the Belle Époque.