

The Belle Époque comes to life through stunning exhibition in Vero Beach



Eugène Grasset, La Marque Georges Richard/Cycles & Automobiles, 1899, color lithograph, Photograph by John Faier, © 2015, The Richard H. Driehaus Museum

VERO BEACH, FLA.- The Vero Beach Museum of Art, Vero Beach, FL is presenting L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters, a colorful exhibition of lithographic posters and ephemera that brings to life the exuberant spirit of France’s Belle Époque. L’Affichomania is on view at the Vero Beach Museum of Art through January 12, 2020.

Celebrating the inexhaustible energy of fin-de-siècle Paris, L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters features lithographic prints by the five grand masters of the medium: Jules Chéret, the father of the modern poster; Eugène Grasset, who explored feminine beauty in rich, medieval settings; Alphonse Mucha, known for depicting sensuous women and the whiplash curves of their tresses; Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, creator of some of the best-loved images of the era; and finally Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, who pointed the way to modernism. These pioneering artists defined a never-before-seen and never forgotten art form: the color poster. L’Affichomania explores the achievements of these artists in concert with the poster’s role in French society, which includes its effect on the life of the Parisian street, the rise of advertising, the entertainment district of Montmartre, and the changing representations of women.

Bright, bold, and found everywhere along the boulevards of late nineteenth-century 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 alike. The color poster was heralded as a new art form as artists took hold of the commercial printing process known as chromolithography and adapted it to their creative needs. In their hands, the color lithograph became a thrilling new means of creating visual excitement in the form of posters; some called it a "color revolution." As pedestrians encountered this lively new scenery posted on the Parisian boulevards, the pulse of modern life seemed to beat faster, inciting a desire to acquire the prints- by buying and selling special editions or by stealthily removing them from walls and kiosks. This sudden popularity of posters fueled a passion for collecting them, called *affichomania*.

Jeannine Falino is an independent curator and museum consultant. Formerly Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, she has created exhibitions and produced catalogues for many institutions. Recent exhibitions include *Crafting Modernism: Midcentury American Art and Design* (Museum of Arts and Design, 2011-12), *Gilded New York: Design, Fashion, & Society* (Museum of the City of New York, 2013-17), *New York Silver, Then & Now* (Museum of the City of New York, 2017-18), and *L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* (The Richard H. Driehaus Museum, Chicago, 2017-18).

A catalogue, *L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*, by Jeannine Falino with essay by Richard H. Driehaus and photographs by John Faier, is available for purchase at the VBMA Museum Store.

US tour dates for *L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* are as follows: Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH (June 8, 2019 – September 15, 2019); Vero Beach Museum of Art, Vero Beach, FL (October 19, 2019 – January 12, 2020); and Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, Wausau, WI (March 7, 2020 – May 31, 2020).

L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters was organized by The Richard H. Driehaus Museum and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum explores the art, architecture, and design of the late 19th and early 20th centuries with a focus on the Gilded Age. The Museum is located just steps from the Magnificent Mile within the meticulously restored Nickerson Mansion, renowned as Gilded Age Chicago's "Marble Palace." The exquisite building was saved twice, first by a collective of over 100 Chicago citizens in 1919, and then by philanthropist Richard H. Driehaus, who sponsored its restoration from 2003 to 2008. The Museum features an outstanding collection of decorative arts—particularly Tiffany glass—as well as special exhibitions from other fine museums. The Driehaus Museum further illuminates the period through numerous educational and cultural programs.