

Bellevue Arts Museum: L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters

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ART | CRAFT | DESIGN
BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

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Contact: Emilie Smith

Phone: 425.519.0755

emilies@bellevuearts.org

Posters from France’s Belle Époque travel to Bellevue Arts Museum in *L’Affichomania*



Eugène Grasset, *La Marque Georges Richard/Cycles & Automobiles*, 1899.

Photograph by John Faier. © 2015 The Richard H. Driehaus Museum. *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters* is on view at Bellevue Arts Museum June 26 – August 23, 2020



Images: Alphonse Mucha, *Princess Hyacinth*, 1911, color lithograph; Jules Chéret, *Yvette Guilbert, Au Concert Parisien*, 1891; Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, *Le Journal/La Traite des Blanches (The White Slave Trade)*, 1899; Jules Chéret, *Folies-Bergère/La Loie Fuller*, 1893. Photographs by John Faier. © 2015 The Richard H. Driehaus Museum.

Bellevue, WA—Bellevue Arts Museum is pleased to present *L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters*. The exhibition, which opens at BAM on June 26, features colorful lithographic posters that bring the exuberant spirit of France’s Belle Époque to life.

The exhibition will include over 50 lithographic prints by the five grand masters of the medium: Jules Chéret, Eugène Grasset, Alphonse Mucha, Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen, and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. 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*.

L’Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters was organized by The Richard H. Driehaus Museum and is toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC. In-kind support from Seattle SignShop.

ABOUT THE COLLECTION

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 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.

International Arts & Artists in Washington, DC, is a nonprofit arts service organization dedicated to increasing cross-cultural understanding and exposure to the arts internationally, through exhibitions, programs and services to artists, arts institutions and the public.

ABOUT BELLEVUE ARTS MUSEUM

Bellevue Arts Museum provides a public forum for the community to contemplate, appreciate, and discuss visual culture. We work with audiences, artists, makers, and designers to understand our shared experience of the world. bellevuearts.org.

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info@bellevuearts.org | 425.519.0770

Bellevue Arts Museum, [510 Bellevue Way NE](#), Bellevue, WA 98004
