

## Toulouse-Lautrec's The Circus: Thirty-Nine Crayon Drawings in Color (Dover Fine Art, History of Art)

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec



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A bareback rider's skirt ripples in the breeze, an acrobat bends his muscular limbs into a handstand, and a poodle obeys a clown brandishing a whip. The circus is in town! These kaleidoscopic visions from under the big top offer audiences a series of post-Impressionistic sideshows, courtesy of thirty-nine brilliant crayon drawings in the distinctive style of Toulouse-Lautrec.

These scenes took place far from the artist's customary haunts, the bars and cafes of Montmartre. While Toulouse-Lautrec was at the height of his artistic powers, he was compelled to undergo treatment for alcoholism at a country clinic. Seeking relief from his forced confinement, he sketched vignettes from a local circus troupe's rehearsals. His sensitive interpretations of the scenes reflect the cruelty behind the performers' exotic feats, as well as his self-image as an entertainer, an outsider, and a captive.

Although these drawings are masterpieces of composition and movement, the artist gave them away. The originals were scattered across Europe and America for decades, until an intrepid collector tracked them down. These reproductions are the work of a noted lithographer, Fernand Mourlot, whose skill recaptures the color and spirit of Toulouse-Lautrec's works.

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