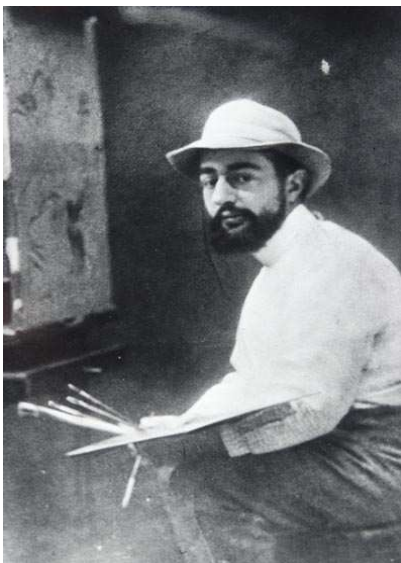


## HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC (Albi, 1864- Malromé, 1901) Biography of a many-sided artist



*Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and his friends at the Moulin de la Galette, (ca.1887)*



**Henri-Marie Raymond de Toulouse-Lautrec-Monfa**, was born on **November 24th 1864** at Albi, to one of the oldest families of the provincial nobility. His mother, **Adèle Tapié de Céleyran**, married her cousin **Alphonse, count of Toulouse-Lautrec**, a brilliant horseman with a passion for the hunt and horses, like all his line.

Henri grew up between the **château du Bosc**, situated to the North of Albi in the Rouergue and the **château de Céleyran**, near Narbonne.

The year **1878** was marked by an accident which happened in the living room of the house where he was born: rising from a low chair Henri slipped and broke his left femur; a year later he fractured the other leg after a slight fall. Lautrec suffered from a hereditary disease of the bones probably due to his parents close blood relation. It was to have a decisive effect on the young man's destiny. Immobilised for months on end, he filled his days with drawing, then painting, developing a taste which was widely followed in his entourage, and a gift which he had shown when very young, and which was to become his vocation.

From 1882, Lautrec completed his training first at **Leon Bonnat's** academic workshops, then with **Fernand Cormon**, in Montmartre. His immersion in the Montmartre life completed his transformation: faced with all the artistic movements which he discovered in the Parisian galleries, he took to modernity, and became as much an actor as a spectator in the Bohemian life of Montmartre which was to provide his inspiration. With his genius for portraits, he immortalised the stars, from **Aristide Bruant** to **Jane Avril**, from **Yvette Guilbert** to **Loïe Fuller**. A regular visitor to brothels, he studied the simple day-to-day reality of the prostitutes. The theatre, the Comédie-Française, the vaudeville or the avant-garde shows for which he designed programs and sets, fed his insatiable appetite for the human comedy.

The thirty one posters which he designed between **1891** and **1900** impress with their strength and their masterly simplification of the image, and make him a precursor of the 20th century poster. His lithographic production also includes **361** prints which highlight the virtuosity of his expressive and elegant line.

Lautrec's life was driven by his creativity. His relentless work combined with his pleasures and the abuse of alcohol gradually sapped his health. He died at his mother's Malrome estate in Gironde, on **September 9th 1901**.