

*Strand 4. Research and Doctoral Thesis in Progress*

**The Relationship Between Poster Design and Other Artistic Output During the Art Nouveau and Jugendstil Era**

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Abstract

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century many artists (painters, graphic designers, illustrators, others) ventured in the design of posters, using newly developed techniques in lithography. Many of these artists were influenced by Art Nouveau. In this study, posters as designed by different artists (Jules Chéret, Alphonse Mucha, Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, Ramon Casas, Maurice Denis, Théo van Rysselberghe, Koloman Moser, Jan Toorop, Aubrey Beardsley) are compared with their other artistic output. For some artists, there are clear linkages and resemblances between their poster designs and their other artworks (Chéret, Toulouse Lautrec). For others, however, rather large differences can be observed (Mucha, Denis, van Rysselberghe). For most artists, the influence of Art Nouveau appears to be stronger and more explicitly displayed in their poster design compared to their other artistic output.

**Keywords:** Posters, paintings, lithography, Art Nouveau, Jugendstil, Secession, Modernisme, Toulouse Lautrec, Denis, Beardsley

## **1. Introduction**

Towards the end of the 19th century there were great improvements in the techniques of lithography. Numerous painters, graphic designers, and other artists all over Europe ventured into the new techniques of colour printing. One specific application of lithography that became very popular was the making of posters. At the same time, it was the era of Art Nouveau and Jugendstil.

This study examines the way artists (painters, graphic designers, illustrators) combined designing and producing posters - which were often in Art Nouveau style - with their other artistic output.

To structure the present analysis, three types of artists will be distinguished. Firstly, those who were, at least for a certain period, almost exclusively active in the field of poster making. Examples are Jules Chéret, Alphonse Mucha, Paul Berthon, Henri Privat-Livemont and others. These artists are widely known for their poster designs, but not, or much less for other artistic output. Secondly, those artists who made a sizeable number of posters, but designing posters cannot be considered their main artistic output. Artists belonging to this category are equally or even better known for their other artworks. Examples are Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, Théophile Steinlen and Ramon Casas. A third category of artists are those who became primarily famous for other work, while they only ventured on a very limited scale in poster design. Among these are for example some members of the Nabis-group (Maurice Dennis, Pierre Bonnard), Théo van Rysselberghe, Jan Toorop, Koloman Moser and Aubrey Beardsley.

For representatives from each group, we explore how posters relate to their other work. We hypothesize that often, but not always, the influence of Art Nouveau is more clearly apparent in the design of posters than in other work by the same artist. This is in particular the case for those artists who, for the purpose of this study, are classified in the third category, that is those who produced only a very limited number of posters. For some of them, designing a poster might have been a sort of side-line or just an experiment in their overall artistic development.

## 2. Artists mainly known for their poster design

### *Jules Chéret(1836-1932)*

When Jules Chéret, in 1859, went for a second time to London to try his luck in printing and lithography, he soon met the French-British perfume manufacturer Eugène Rimmel. Chéret and Rimmel became friends and a few years later Rimmel started to support Chéret in establishing a commercial lithographic printing shop in Paris. New modern presses were shipped from England to Paris and in 1866 Chéret's new printing shop could start operations.

It was the beginning of major developments in poster printing and poster design. Jules Chéret started to experiment with new technologies in lithography, using more than one stone and great improvements were made particularly in the use of colour. In addition, the poster designs by Chéret were radically different from what had been usual up to then. The text of a poster was no longer only a source of practical information, but became part of the overall design, with letters integrated in the overall image. At the same time the amount of text was significantly reduced as it was the image that should convey the message. The posters by Chéret, often characterised by images of colourful, delicate young women in fashionable clothes, were not only a great success among the general Parisian public, also numerous artists, such as Toulouse Lautrec, Monet, Degas and Rodin became highly interested in the new developments in lithography <sup>1</sup>.

Between 1880 and 1900 Chéret produced almost 1500 posters: posters for cabaret, theatre, and opera, as well as commercial posters for products such as soaps, wines, cigarettes, lamp oils, etc. As a result of his popularity Chéret also received various commissions for mural paintings, which would serve as interior decoration. Chéret's friend Baron Joseph Vitta for instance invited him to design mural paintings for his villa La Sapinière (Evian) <sup>2</sup>. Thanks to the innovative work of Chéret the designing and printing of posters, which up to then had been mainly a manufacturing activity, became increasingly accepted as a form of art.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth ISKIN, *The Poster: Art, Advertising, Design, and collecting, 1860s-1900s*, Hanover, New Hampshire Dartmouth, College Press, 2014, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> R. ISKIN, *The Poster.....* , p.152.

When comparing for the purpose of the present paper Chéret's murals and other paintings with his poster designs, there appear to be quite some similarities in style, themes and subjects. In many of these works dancing women in colourful outfits are frequently featuring subjects and the overall atmosphere in paintings and posters is often rather similar. Altogether, there seems to be a relatively high degree of uniformity in the various forms of artistic output of Chéret, whether oil paintings, pastels or posters. As an example we place Chéret's poster 'Bal au Moulin Rouge' next to the painted decoration Chéret designed for the stage curtain of the Musée Grévin in Paris.

### *Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939)*

Alphonse Mucha, born in 1860 in Moravia, spent as a young adult some years in Vienna, but subsequently moved to Paris in 1887, where he lived for almost twenty years. Between 1904 and 1910 Mucha made several trips to the United States and returned to his homeland in 1910, where he lived in Prague until his death in 1939<sup>3</sup>.

The artistic output of Mucha consists of paintings, drawings, illustrations for books, magazines, calendars and other printed materials. Mucha was also active in designing jewellery, stained glass windows, sculpture and interior design<sup>4</sup>. However, by far his most widely known artworks are his posters. In 1894 Alphonse Mucha made his breakthrough with a poster for the Parisian stage performer Sarah Bernhardt. It was the turning point in Mucha's career. The posters were of a radically new style both in terms of format, approximately two meters high and 75 cm wide, as in terms of design. Over a period of five years Mucha made six more posters for Sarah Bernhardt. In all posters Sarah Bernhardt features in full length on the poster, richly dressed, and surrounded by floral, oriental or byzantine decorative patterns, with everything painted in relatively soft colours.

In the years that followed, Mucha's popularity rose fast. He received commissions to design posters for a wide variety of products and companies such as Job cigarette papers, the

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<sup>3</sup> Jeremy HOWARD, *Art Nouveau, International and national styles in Europe*, Manchester/New York, Manchester University Press, 1996, p.18-23.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah MUCHA (ed.): *Alphonse Mucha*, Mucha Ltd/Malcolm Saunders Publishing Ltd, 2000.

Monaco-Monte Carlo railway services, Nestlé baby foods, Waverley cycles, Moët et Chandon champagne, and so on. But as mentioned above, Mucha was active in various fields, including oil painting. In Mucha's own eyes, by far his most important oil paintings are presumably the works he made under the name 'The Slav Epic'. Already in earlier work, Mucha had shown interest and skills in painting historical scenes, for example with his decoration of the walls and ceiling of the Lord Mayor's Hall in the Obecni Dum, the new municipal building of Prague, built between 1905 and 1912. But it was thanks to the support of the American businessman Charles Richard Crane that Mucha could finally start painting his 'masterpiece', the 'Slav Epic'. Working on it for more than 15 years (between 1912 and 1928), it resulted in twenty immensely large panels, measuring up to six by eight meters and portraying a thousand years of history of the Slavic peoples.

When making a comparison between the paintings by Mucha and in particular his 'Slav Epic' on the one hand, and his lithographic posters on the other hand, there appears to be a vast distance between the two. The posters, which feature practically always women with long curly hair, with an expression of the 'femme fatale' and surrounded by floral decorations, are a landmark in Art Nouveau poster history. The paintings, on the other hand, are of a total different nature, depicting in a realistic and classical painting style major events in Czech and Slav history, full of symbolism and religion. To illustrate the widely different nature of Mucha's posters and paintings, the poster for Job cigarette paper is placed beside a segment taken from one of the 'Slav Epic' panels (Panel 2, 'The Celebration of Svatovit').

### **3. Artists known for their poster design, but as much or more for other artistic output**

*Henri de Toulouse Lautrec (1864-1901)*

Henri de Toulouse Lautrec made about 30 lithographic posters, a very small number compared, for example, to the more than 1400 posters designed by Jules Chéret. Yet, the influence by Toulouse Lautrec on poster design and poster development can hardly be

underestimated<sup>5</sup>. In 1891 Toulouse Lautrec made his first poster: the litho 'Moulin Rouge: La Goulue'. The poster, advertising the cabaret club Moulin Rouge, depicts the cancan dancer 'La Goulue' (the 'Glutton') and her dance partner 'Valentin le Désossé' ('No bones Valentine'). The large four-colour poster (170x119 cm) was an immediate success and an estimated 3000 copies were posted on hoardings or otherwise distributed all over Paris. In the years that followed Toulouse Lautrec made posters for various purposes. He designed posters for a number of artists (Aristide Bruant, Jane Avril, May Belfort, Caudieux), but also posters which were aimed at promoting books, such as the story 'Reine de Joi' by Victor Jozé, and 'Babylon d'Allemagne', from the same author. The only poster Toulouse Lautrec made for a manufactured product is the one he designed for the bicycle chain 'La Chaîne Simpson'<sup>6</sup>. With his posters, characterized by large surfaces in one colour, little perspective, solid lines, and cropping of images, Toulouse Lautrec did set a completely new standard in poster design. The style adopted by Toulouse Lautrec was clearly influenced by Japanese woodblock prints which, at that time, became increasingly popular, not the least because of the activities of art promotor Samuel Bing, who in 1895 had opened in Paris the art gallery 'La Maison de l'Art Nouveau'<sup>7</sup>.

Yet, the posters are only a small part of the total artistic output of Toulouse Lautrec. Altogether he produced some 700 paintings, close to 300 watercolours, over 5000 drawings and about 350 prints and lithos. So what is the relationship between the posters designed by Toulouse Lautrec and his other artistic output? In particular in his paintings and drawings Toulouse Lautrec shows a very strong capability to illustrate the human aspects of everyday life in the Parisian entertainment world of those days. People, mostly women, are portrayed in everyday situations, such as sitting on a sofa, standing before a mirror or putting on their stockings. Also in Toulouse Lautrec's posters, it is the people, their faces, their postures, and their interactions which create the image. The difference with the paintings is perhaps that the

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<sup>5</sup> R. ISKIN, *The Poster* ..... , p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> Jordi VIGUÉ, *Galerie van de Grote Meesters: Toulouse Lautrec*, Lisse, Rebo International b.v., 2005, p 99 (Dutch language) (originally: *Galeria de Grandes Maestros: Toulouse Lautrec*, Barcelona, Gorg Blanc S.L., 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Gabriel WEISBERG, Edwin BECKER, Évelyne POSSÉMÉ (ed.): *De oorsprong van l'Art Nouveau: Het Bing Imperium* (exhibition catalogue, van Gogh Museum, 26 nov. 2004-27 febr. 2005), Amsterdam, van Gogh Museum/Mercatorfonds, 2005 (Dutch language).

individuals in Toulouse Lautrec's posters have more the character of a caricature. Human expressions are just somewhat exaggerated and humour and irony and perhaps even mocking come into play. Yet, posters and paintings display to a large extent a similar atmosphere and there appears to be a sort of continuity and contextual interrelationship between all these works.

Two examples are given to illustrate the relationship and resemblances between paintings and posters by Toulouse Lautrec. First we compare the painting 'La Danse au Moulin Rouge' with the poster 'Le Moulin Rouge: La Goulue' (Fig. 1; Fig. 2). We also place the poster 'L'Estampe originale' next to the painting 'Jane Avril entering the Moulin Rouge'

#### *Ramon Casas (1866-1932)*

Born in 1866 in Barcelona, Ramon Casas went in 1881, at the age of 15, for the first time to Paris. Between 1883 and 1887 Casas lived part of the year in Paris, mainly autumns and winters, while spending the remaining time in Barcelona, Madrid or Granada. In 1897 Casas returned to Barcelona and established, together with Santiago Russinol, Miguel Utrillo and Pere Romeu, the artist café Els Quatre Gats. The café was based on the café-theatre Le Chat Noir, which Ramon Casas had been visiting frequently during his stay in Paris. In the years that followed Els Quatre Gats became the center of modernista developments in Barcelona<sup>8 9</sup>.

Ramon Casas is above all known as a painter. During his years in Paris he became acquainted with French painters such as Degas, Manet and Toulouse Lautrec. It is under the influence of these painters that Casas developed his own style and became one of the pioneers and main representatives of 'modernisme' or 'Catalan modernisme'. As a painter Casas is especially known for his skills in painting large crowds, whether in the open air, theatres or other places. Casas is also known as a portraitist, having made a large number of drawings

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<sup>8</sup> Fransesc FONTBONA: 'Van Sala Parés via Els Quatre Gats naar de kunst van de volksbuurten', in Teresa SALA (ed.): *Barcelona 1900* (exhibition catalogue, van Gogh Museum, 21 sept. 2007 – 20 jan. 2008), Amsterdam, van Gogh Museum, 2007, p. 129-158 (2007 (Dutch language).

<sup>9</sup> Eliseu TRENÇ BALLESTER: 'Graphic Arts in Catalonia, 1888-1936', in *Hommage to Barcelona, The City and its art, 1888-1936* (exhibition catalogue, Hayward Gallery, 14 Nov. 1985-23 Febr. 1986), London Hayward Gallery, 1985, p. 241-252.

and paintings of many of the intellectual, political and economic elite, not only from Barcelona, but also from Paris, Madrid and beyond.

Yet during his stay in Paris Casas also witnessed the developments in lithography and became familiar with the posters as made by Chéret, Grasset, Steinlen, Toulouse Lautrec and others. It is therefore of no surprise that back in Barcelona, Casas also took up poster design. Ramon Casas produced a sizeable number of posters, first of all for the Els Quatre Gats café itself, such as the poster ‘Sombras’, advertising the ‘shadow play’ (‘Theatre d’Hombres’) copied from Le Chat Noir in Paris. But Ramon Casas also designed posters for a variety of brandnames, such as Champagne Codornia, Los Cigarillos Paris, Anis del Mono Vicente Bosch, etc. The various posters designed by Casas display a wide variety of styles. Some appear to be close to Casas’ painting style, such as the posters for Job cigarette papers and Los Cigarillos Paris. Others are quite directly related to Spanish or Catalan culture, such as the posters for Vicente Bosch Anis del Mono (with the woman in traditional dress) or the posters advertising bull fights. But there are also posters which are much more reflecting the time Casas had spent in Paris - for example the posters for Codorniu, Fabra Barcelona, and Auto Garage Central, or the above mentioned ‘Sombras’ poster for Els Quatre Gats.

The different styles in which Casas designed posters can be illustrated by placing three of his posters besides each other: the posters ‘Job papier à cigarettes’, ‘Auto Garage Central’ and one of the ‘Anis del Mono’ posters.

#### **4. Artists widely known for their other artistic output, but who designed only few posters**

*Maurice Denis (1870-1943)*

A painter whose poster production fits pre-eminently in the third category of this study is Maurice Denis. Maurice Denis has a large oeuvre of paintings, drawings, lithographs and

decorative panels, and he was also active in designing stained glass windows, mosaics, ceramics, wallpapers and the like. However, Denis designed only one poster.

Maurice Denis was one of the founding members of a group of painters who called themselves ‘Les Nabis’ (Hebrew for ‘prophets’)<sup>10</sup>. The group was established between 1888 and 1890, as a sort of reaction to impressionism. Besides Denis, among the other members were the painters Paul Sérusier, Pierre Bonnard, Édouard Vuillard, Félix Vallotton, Paul Ranson and Henri-Gabriel Ibels. Within the group Denis was the most theoretically oriented and also the most religious one. His nickname was ‘Le Nabi aux belles icônes’. The members of Les Nabis experimented with new forms of painting, where use of colour and compositional lay-out tended towards abstract art. As the symbolic meaning of the artwork was important, the style has clear overlaps with symbolism. The Nabis also considered the decorative function of art important, as, in their opinion, it could help narrow down the distance between autonomous and applied arts. Accordingly, several of the Nabis got involved in decorative mural paintings for private houses. The Russian art collector Ivan Morozov for example asked Denis to decorate the music room in his mansion in Moscow. It resulted in a set of large decorative panels titled ‘The Story of Psyche’<sup>11</sup>.

In 1892, the art critic and owner of the Toulouse newspaper *La Dépêche*, Arthur Huc, requested Denis to design a promotional poster for his newspaper. The request resulted in a poster which carries almost all characteristics of Art Nouveau: a woman with curly hair at the centre of the image, the dress of the woman drawn in elegant sinuous lines and decorated with flowers, and an overall design with very little use of perspective (Fig. 3). Designing this poster seems to have been a one-time event within the total oeuvre of Denis, and it might well have been a sort of kindness to Arthur Huc, who had asked him to make the poster.

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<sup>10</sup> Patricia ECKERT BOYER, *The Nabis and the Parisian Avant-Garde* (exhibition catalogue, Zimmerli Art Museum), New Brunswick/London, Rutgers University Press, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> Albert KOSTENEVICH, *Gauguin, Bonnard, Denis, Een Russische liefde voor Franse kunst* (exhibition catalogue, Hermitage Amsterdam, 14 sept. 2013 – 28 febr. 2014), Amsterdam, Hermitage, 2013, p. 117-129 (Dutch language).

An interesting analysis was made by Katherine Kuenzli <sup>12</sup>, who compared the poster for La Dépêche with a painting by Denis from the same year, titled ‘Ladder in the Foliage’ (Fig. 4). Originally the painting was designed as a ceiling decoration for the house of the painter and music publisher Henri Lerolle. While the two works have a lot in common, particularly in terms of composition, the painting has a strong allusive character, while the poster delivers a rather straightforward message, that is to read and buy the newspaper. That Denis possibly considered this poster design as a sort of frivolous task, might perhaps be illustrated by the way he painted the feet of the woman: they are both left feet.

### *Théo van Rysselberghe (1862-1926)*

In 1883 the Belgian painter Théo van Rysselberghe was one of the founders of the artists group ‘Les XX’ in Brussels. The objective of the group was, among others, to bring together the various disciplines of art, such as painting, music, literature, architecture and sculpture. Apart from van Rysselberghe, well known members of the group were James Ensor, August Rodin and Paul Signac. In 1893 the group was transformed into ‘La Libre Esthétique’, in which van Rysselberghe played again an important role <sup>13</sup>.

In the beginning of his career van Rysselberghe painted in an impressionistic style. However, after his visit to Paris in 1886 and having seen works by George Seurat like ‘Un dimanche à la Grande Jatte’, van Rysselberghe changed his style towards pointillisme and divisionism. For this painting style he became most known. One of his most widely known works is ‘La Lecture par Emile Verhaeren’ (‘A Reading by Emile Verhaeren’, 1901). Decorative panels represent another type of van Rysselberghe’s paintings. In 1902 the Art Nouveau architect Victor Horta invited van Rysselberghe to design a decorative painting for the newly built villa of Armand Solvay in Brussels. It resulted in a very large painting (320x448 cm), titled ‘La Lecture au Jardin’ (‘A Reading in the Garden’), which was placed in the stair landing of the house.

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<sup>12</sup> Katherine KUENZLI, *The Nabis and intimate Modernism: Painting and the Decorative at the Fin-de-Siècle*, London/New York, Routledge, 2016 (Asghate, 2010), p. 62.

<sup>13</sup> Jan BLOCK, ‘Théo van Rysselberghe and the Architecture of Decoration’, *The Low Countries: Arts and Society in Flanders and The Netherlands*, 18, 2010, p. 254-264.

But van Rysselberghe was also highly interested in lithography and poster design. In 1895 he was commissioned to design a set of affiches for the Belgian train company Wagons-Lits. The designs for the Wagons-Lits affiches were done in oil paint in a still rather classical impressionistic style. However, more or less in the same period van Rysselberghe designed posters in a much more modern style, very different from those he designed for the Wagons-Lits company. Examples are the two affiches he designed for the expositions of ‘La Libre Esthétique’ of 1896 and 1897<sup>14</sup>. Here, the influence of Toulouse Lautrec is clearly visible. In fact, the 1896 poster shows strong similarities with a poster of Toulouse Lautrec for the ‘Salon des Cent Exposition Internationale d’Affiches’, held in Paris in 1895. Finally a poster even more noteworthy is the one van Rysselberghe made for the Brussels art gallery and printing shop N.Lembrée (1897). Here van Rysselberghe seems to follow more strictly the style of publicity posters as it developed in Paris at the time. Perhaps van Rysselberghe thought that in this way the commercial objectives of the poster were met at its best.

We conclude by placing the Lembrée poster next to the decorative (and pointillistic) painting that van Rysselberghe made for the Solvay Villa. It is with the poster where van Rysselberghe has most clearly expressed a connection with Art Nouveau.

### *Jan Toorop (1858-1928)*

The Dutch painter Jan Toorop is specifically known for the poster he designed for the Delft Salad Oil Factory. The poster was one of a series of posters, commissioned by this food products company to various painters, including George Hendrik Breitner, Bart van der Leek and Theo Nieuwenhuis.

Jan Toorop was born in Java, Indonesia, but moved to the Netherlands at the age of 11. He painted successively in various styles, such as naturalism, impressionism, pointillism and symbolism, but is most known for his work in symbolistic style. In many of his paintings, drawings, lithos and other work, there is clearly an Indonesian influence, combined with

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<sup>14</sup> Hadewych HERNALSTEEN, *Brussel Bedrukt, Affiches voor de tentoonstellingen van Brusselse kunstenaarsverenigingen, 1880-1914*, Masterproef, Faculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, Universiteit Gent, Academiejaar 2011-2012 (Dutch language).

elements of Art Nouveau. Toorop had also a broad European focus, having links with ‘Les XX’ in Brussels (being a member of that group from 1885-1893), with avant-garde painters in Paris, with the PreRaphaelitic and the Arts & Crafts movements in England, and with the Wiener Secession. In 1902 Toorop was with several artworks represented at the Wiener Secession exhibition. Toorop is generally considered to have had an influence on Gustav Klimt, the founder of the Wiener Secession. In later life Toorop converted to Catholicism, and as a result religion plays a major role in his later works <sup>15</sup>.

Examples of artworks by Toorop which clearly reveal an influence of Art Nouveau are paintings like the Song of Times, Fatalism and The Three Brides. It should however also be noted that in a large part of Toorop’s oeuvre Art Nouveau elements are totally absent <sup>16</sup>. With respect to Toorop’s posters, above mentioned ‘Salad Oil’-poster (1894) is generally considered an important example of Dutch Jugendstil. It is because of this poster that in the Netherlands Art Nouveau is, somewhat mockingly, occasionally nicknamed ‘Salad Oil’ style. Toorop made few other posters, but almost all of them have elements of Art Nouveau. In most cases a woman features at the centre of the poster, while the other parts of the poster are filled with symbolic and ornamental patterns. Perhaps the only other poster commissioned by a commercial company is the one Toorop made for the Arnhem Life Insurance Company. Here Toorop seems to have followed even stronger a main stream European Art Nouveau style, possibly in an attempt to make the poster more accessible for a large public.

We conclude by placing the ‘Salad Oil’ poster besides Toorop’s painting ‘Fatalism’ (detail). Both works reveal elements of Art Nouveau. However, while the poster displays a rather formal, straightforward style, the painting is of a highly enigmatic and mystical character, as is so often the case with artworks by Toorop.

*Koloman Moser (1868-1918)*

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<sup>15</sup> Paul BEGHEYN SJ, Ruud PRIEM, *Jan Toorop Studies*, Zwolle, Waanders Uitgevers/ Nijmegen Museum Het Valkhof, 2009 (Dutch language).

<sup>16</sup> Ad VAN GAALEN (Ed.) Jan Toorop special, *Studio 2000 magazine*, nr 1, 2013, p. 1-72.

In 1897 the Wiener Secession was founded under the guidance of Gustave Klimt and with Koloman Moser, Otto Wagner and Josef Hoffmann among its co-founding members. Six years later, in 1903, Koloman Moser left the Wiener Secession and established together with Josef Hoffmann, and with support from the entrepreneur and banker Fritz Wärndorfer, the Wiener Werkstätte<sup>17 18</sup>.

Among the members of both the Wiener Secession and the Wiener Werkstätte, Koloman Moser was perhaps the most versatile, not only active in the fields of graphics and painting, but also in designing ceramics, stained glass windows (for example for the ‘Kirche Am Steinhof’), furniture, porcelain and glass, jewellery, tableware, and even toys for children.

With respect to his style, and in particular his graphic designs, Koloman Moser followed until about 1900 a rather curvilinear style, influenced by French and Belgian Art Nouveau. The drawing, titled ‘Girl’s Head’ (‘Mädchenkopf’) is a typical example of this period. It served as cover for an issue of *Ver Sacrum* (1899, nr 4), the magazine of the Wiener Secession. After 1900 Koloman Moser’s designs were much more characterised by geometric and linear patterns, partially under the influence of Scottish designers like Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife Margaret Macdonald, who both participated in the eighth exhibition of the Wiener Secession in 1900.

Koloman Moser designed a limited number of posters. In 1899 he designed the poster for the fifth exhibition of the Wiener Secession, a poster which shows resemblance to work by the Dutch artist Jan Toorop. The poster ‘Lesen Sie’ (1900) is one of his few commercial posters, designed for ‘Österreichs Illustrierte Zeitung’. Another poster, also in typical European (Belgian-French) Art Nouveau style, is the one he made for the mineral water ‘Fürst von Metternich’sche Richardsquelle’ (1899). In 1904, the Austrian furniture company Jacob and Josef Kohn requested Moser to design a poster for a new store in Nowo Rodomsk, then

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<sup>17</sup> Christian WITT-DÖRRING (ed.): *Koloman Moser: Designing Modern Vienna 1897-1907* (exhibition catalogue, Neue Galerie New York, May 23 – Sept 2, 2013) Neue Galerie New York/Prestel Verlag Munich-London-New York, 2913.

<sup>18</sup> Angela KARASCH (ed.): *Illustrierte Moderne in Zeitschriften um 1900* (Katalog zur Ausstellung der Universitätsbibliothek Freiburg i. Br., 15 Juli bis 31 Aug., 2005), Freiburg i. Br., Universitätsbibliothek, 2005 (German language).

Russia, now Poland. The poster is one of the finest examples of geometric type poster design by Koloman Moser, and displays a very high level of precision and technical skills, but also elegance and creativity.

The last 15 years of his life, Koloman Moser almost completely abandoned his design activities and devoted himself mainly to painting. The paintings have little relation with his previous work. Influenced by the Swiss painter Ferdinand Hodler, Moser painted landscapes, portraits and also various works in a rather symbolistic style.

For Moser, with such an extremely large and varied artistic output, it is difficult to assess the relationship between his poster designs and his other artistic output. Yet, we conclude by comparing the poster ‘Lesen Sie’ with a graphic work of about the same period, the drawing ‘Madchenkopf’. Both works clearly reveal strong elements of Art Nouveau, but the poster could perhaps be considered the most exuberant of the two.

#### *Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898)*

When discussing the development of poster art in England, the name of Aubrey Beardsley cannot be left out. During his short life, Beardsley was one of the most creative, and at the same time one of the most controversial artists associated with Art Nouveau. Beardsley is generally considered to be part of the Aesthetic Movement, an art movement with which, for example, also James McNeill Whistler, William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Oscar Wilde and Edward Burne-Jones are associated.

In 1892, Aubrey Beardsley made a short trip to Paris and became acquainted with the work of Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, as well as the work of other major actors in poster design (Chéret, Steinlen). Beardsley also became familiar with the Paris fashion for Japanese woodcuts. In the following years, and partially already before his trip to Paris, Beardsley made hundreds of illustrations, drawings, cartoons, book covers, and also some poster designs. In his drawings Beardsley developed a completely new individual style, characterised by solid but elegant lines, large black and blank fields, and sometimes highly detailed and fine painting.

Regarding the themes and subjects of his drawings, there was generally ample room for the decadent, the macabre, the perverse and the erotic, as well as the humoresque and the grotesque. Despite his short life - Beardsley died from tuberculosis at the age of 26 - his work had a major impact on illustrative art in England.

As mentioned, Beardsley was also active in the field of poster design. The first poster made by Beardsley was for John Todhunter's play *A Comedy of Sighs*<sup>19</sup>, and perhaps his most well-known poster is the one advertising children's books for the publisher T. Fischer Unwin<sup>20</sup>. The only poster Beardsley designed for a manufactured product was the one he drew for the Singer sewing machine company. Interestingly, the poster features an elegantly dressed women, but there is no sewing machine depicted at all.

When comparing Beardsley's posters with his other artistic output, there are clearly commonalities. However, while many of his drawings exhibit strong elements of shock and provocation, this is generally not the case with his posters. What is more, the typical art nouveau elements, which feature in many of Beardsley's works, appear to be somewhat softer and more friendly in the posters, compared to other work. This is understandable, as the posters are meant to stimulate people to go to a theatre, to buy a journal or a product such as a sewing machine, and not to deter people. To illustrate this difference in appearance between poster and other work, the poster Beardsley made for the play 'A Comedy of Sighs' is placed next to a well-known drawing of Beardsley, titled 'The Fat Lady'. The woman in the 'Comedy of Sighs' poster has clearly a more friendly appearance than 'The Fat lady'.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

In this study, we compared posters designed by different artists with their other artistic output. For all artists considered, at least part of their output is influenced by Art Nouveau. Artists were classified into three categories. The first category regards those who were, at least

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<sup>19</sup> R. ISKIN, *The Poster*..... , p. 47 and Pl 10.

<sup>20</sup> R. ISKIN, *The Poster*..... , p. 236 and Pl 40.

during a certain period, mainly active in designing posters, such as the painters Jules Chéret and Alphonse Mucha. The second category painters were renowned for their other artistic output, but also designed a sizeable number of posters. Representatives of this category are Henri de Toulouse Lautrec and Ramon Casas. The third category is formed by artists who are known for their other artistic output, but designed only a few posters. We include here Maurice Denis, Théo van Rysselberghe, Jan Toorop, Koloman Moser and Aubrey Beardsley.

Though the number of artists considered in this study is small, some concluding observations can be made. For two painters, Chéret and Toulouse Lautrec, it appears that there is a rather direct linkage between their poster designs and their other artistic output. In the case of Chéret, many of his works feature joyous dancing women, dressed in colourful outfits and strong commonalities can be found between Chéret's posters and his other artistic output. Also for Toulouse Lautrec, people, and in particular women, are at the centre of most of his artworks. However, compared to Chéret, individual expressions and human emotions play a much more important role. A difference between posters and other artworks by Toulouse Lautrec is perhaps that in his posters humour and also irony are much more visibly and openly present.

Three painters included in this report seem to show rather large differences between their poster designs and their other artistic output. The most telling example is Maurice Denis. Paintings by Denis are generally characterized by a high presence of symbolism, while also religion features strongly in many of his works. The only poster designed by Denis is painted in a completely different style: it has all the characteristics of Art Nouveau. Also for Belgian painter Théo van Rysselberghe, the limited number of posters he designed are rather distinct from his paintings. A striking example is the poster he designed for the art shop N.Lembrée. Finally, also for Alphonse Mucha, who played such an important role in the development of the poster, it appears that his other artistic output is often of a very different nature when compared to his posters. This is in particular the case with his historic paintings such as 'The Slav Epic'.

For Casas, Toorop, Moser and Beardsley, the comparison between poster design and other output is complicated. Casas made a sizeable number of posters, but in rather diverging styles. In some of them his own modernistic painting style can be recognized, but in others there is a clear influence of the prevailing French poster style of those days. The posters Casas designed for drinks such as Anis del Mono and his poster designs for bull fights, are again in a different style and link up with Catalan culture. For Dutch painter Jan Toorop it is interesting to see how typical elements of Art Nouveau, such as women with long flowing hair, are incorporated both in many of his symbolic paintings as well as in his most well-known poster, the one for Delft salad oil. For Koloman Moser, an interesting aspect of his work is the transition from a curvilinear French Belgian inspired Art Nouveau style to a more linear and geometric style, presumably under the influence of artists from Scotland such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald. Finally, the English painter Aubrey Beardsley is in particular known for his provocative and partially highly erotic drawings. In terms of style and design, there are clearly resemblances between the few posters he designed and his other artworks. However, the posters are void of the shock elements which characterise so many of his other artworks. All in all, in most of the posters designed by the artists included in this report, elements of Art Nouveau are clearly present. This is far less the case in most other artistic output by the same artists.

Finally, it is important to stress that only nine artists are discussed in this report. When a similar study as the present one would be done on a larger scale, various other names can and should be included for each of the three categories of artists listed above. Thus, for the first category, apart from Chéret and Mucha, other artists to be considered are for example Eugène Grasset, Paul Berthon, Henri Privat-Livemont, and possibly also the Americans Will Bradley and Louis Rhead. Candidates to be included in the second category are for example Théophile Steinlen, Jules-Alexandre Grün, Alessandro de Riquer, Emil Orlik, Josef Auentaller and Manuel Orazi. Finally, for the third category other Nabis painters like Pierre Bonnard and Henri Gabriel-Ibels, but also the Scottish artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Russian painter Léon Bakst might be included. When the study would be scaled up accordingly, it will give a better and more complete picture how poster design relates to other artistic output.

## **Curriculum Vitae**

Maarten NUBÉ

Name: Maarten Nubé. Born 26-06-1946, The Hague, The Netherlands. Study Biochemistry and Nutrition (Master and Ph.D.) Leiden University, Netherlands. From 1980-1990 several assignments in International Nutrition, working in developing countries (Philippines, Kingdom of Tonga, other Pacific countries, Ghana, Pakistan). As of 1990 return to the Netherlands, academic career at VU-University Amsterdam. Numerous scientific publications in the field of nutrition and economic development. Formal retirement as of 2012, though partial continuation of academic activities until 2015. Since around the year 2000 increasing interest in and spending time on Art Nouveau, Jugendstil and related fields, with a focus on Europe-wide linkages. Attending various courses on art-related subjects. Attending the two Coup de Fouet conferences Barcelona 2013 and 2015, and the Mathildenhöhe-workshop Darmstadt April 2016. Preparing small booklets on Art Nouveau and Jugendstil for private distribution (2015: Booklet "Arc Outrepassé "(Horseshoe form); 2018 (forthcoming): Booklet "The Art Nouveau Experience".