

## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

- 1.) Paul Berthon  
*Salon des Cent, 17e Exposition*  
(Salon des Cent, 17<sup>th</sup> exhibition), 1897  
Lithograph  
18 3/4 x 14 1/8 in. (47.5 x 36 cm)
- 2.) Paul Berthon  
*Mai (May)*, 1898  
Color lithograph  
25 x 10 7/8 in. (63.5 x 27.5 cm)
- 3.) Paul Berthon  
*La Vague (The Wave)*, 1899  
Color lithograph  
25 1/2 x 16 1/2 in. (64.8 x 41.9 cm)
- 4.) Paul Berthon  
*La Viole de Gambe*  
(The Viola da Gamba), 1899  
Color lithograph  
23 5/8 x 14 1/2 in. (60 x 37 cm)
- 5.) Paul Berthon  
*Les Pipeaux (The Reedpipes)*, 1899  
Color lithograph  
17 x 22 1/4 in. (43 x 56.5 cm)
- 6.) Paul Berthon  
*Roses de Noël (The Christmas Roses)*, 1899  
Color lithograph  
16 1/2 x 16 3/8 in. (42 x 41.5 cm)
- 7.) Paul Berthon  
*Société des Amis des Arts de la Manche*  
(The Society of the Friends of the Arts of Manche), 1899  
Color lithograph  
31 1/2 x 23 in. (80 x 58.5 cm)
- 8.) Paul Berthon  
*Vision Antique (Ancient Scene)*, 1899  
Color lithograph  
10 3/4 x 23 1/2 in. (26 x 59.7 cm)
- 9.) Paul Berthon  
*Les Eglantines (Wild Roses)*, 1900  
Color lithograph  
15 3/8 x 21 in. (39 x 53.5 cm)
- 10.) Paul Berthon  
*Les Fils de la Vierge*  
(The Threads of the Virgin), 1900  
Color lithograph  
22 5/8 x 16 3/5 in. (57.5 x 42.5 cm)
- 11.) Paul Berthon  
*La République (The Republic)*, 1900  
Color lithograph  
19 1/4 x 14
- 12.) Paul Berthon  
*Concert Mystique (Mystic Concert)*, 1901  
Color lithograph  
13 3/4 x 17 7/8 in. (35 x 45.5 cm)
- 13.) Paul Berthon  
*Sa Très Gracieuse Majesté la Reine Wilhelmine*  
(Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Wilhelmine), 1901  
Color lithograph  
15 1/8 x 14 1/8 in. (38.5 x 36 cm)



Paul Berthon, *Salon des Cent, 17e Exposition*, (Salon des Cent, 17<sup>th</sup> exhibition), 1897

- 14.) Eugène Grasset  
*Chocolat Mexicain / Masson*  
(Mexican Chocolate / Masson), 1892  
91 rue de Rivoli, Paris  
Color lithograph  
46 7/8 x 30 3/4 in. (119 x 78 cm)
- 15.) Eugène Grasset  
*Abricotine*, c. 1900  
Color lithograph  
43 1/2 x 29 1/2 in. (110.5 x 74.9 cm)
- 16.) Alphonse Mucha  
*Gismonda*, 1894  
Color lithograph  
85 x 29 1/4 in. (216 x 74.2 cm)
- 17.) Alphonse Mucha  
*Au Quartier Latin (The Latin Quarter)*, 1898  
Color lithograph  
32 x 24, m 1/2 in. (82 x 62 cm)
- 18.) Alphonse Mucha  
*Leslie Carter*, 1908  
Color lithograph  
83 1/2 x 32 in. (212.1 x 81.3 cm)

HAGGERTY MUSEUM OF ART, MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY, JUNE 8 - SEPTEMBER 10, 2006

## ART NOUVEAU FRENCH POSTERS: BERTHON, GRASSET & MUCHA THE MILTON AND PAULA GUTGLASS COLLECTION

During the 1890s, developments in color lithography helped make posters the dominant form of mass communication and spawned a poster craze. With new technological advances, artists and master printers could create large scale images which appealed to both advertisers and art collectors. This interest in printmaking was responsible for the spread of Art Nouveau style lithographs across Europe and America.

The term Art Nouveau appeared in periodicals such as *L'art moderne* and was advertised by Samuel Bing whose Paris gallery was called the Maison de l'Art Nouveau. This "new" style was at the height of popularity from 1892 through the first decade of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century the Universal Exposition in Paris showcased Art Nouveau in every medium. The style is characterized by organic, sinuous and asymmetrical lines inspired from nature. Artists also drew from the Arts and Crafts movement, Japanese woodblock print design and the work of the Pre-Raphaelites. Visual elements of the style include simplification of form, flattening of space and the use of curvilinear lines with an emphasis on decoration and craftsmanship.

Part of the excitement for this style was generated by playbills such as Alphonse Mucha's poster of Sarah Bernhardt as Gismonda, a color lithograph featured in the Haggerty Museum's exhibition *Art Nouveau French Posters: Berthon, Grasset and Mucha the Milton and Paula Gutglass Collection*. Many of the Art Nouveau posters were considered fashionable and highly desirable at the time. Now they are an important record of artistic ideas prior to World War I.

The Haggerty exhibition includes nineteen lithographs created by Eugène Grasset, Paul Berthon and Alphonse Mucha from 1892 and 1908. These graphic artists working in Paris played a significant role in shaping the Art Nouveau movement in France. Produced at the height of the Art Nouveau period, the lithographs in this exhibition were created as both advertisements and works of art.

Eugène Grasset (1841-1917) was the eldest of the three artists featured in the exhibition. As a theoretician and prolific practitioner, the Swiss-born artist shaped French Art Nouveau and its successor the Art Deco movement. He influenced a generation of artists as a teacher. In 1871, Grasset moved to Paris and began his artistic career designing fabric and wallpaper in addition to illustrating books. During the 1880s, he produced designs for French and American publishers and commercial posters for a variety of clients including department stores and theatres. In 1892, Grasset was commissioned by the French chocolatier Chocolat Masson to design a poster for a new brand of chocolate. The resulting *Chocolat Mexicain Masson* (no. 14) is more than an advertisement. It is a work of art that transcends its commercial purpose.



Alphonse Mucha, *Gismonda*, 1894

In 1894, Léon Deschamps, the editor of *La Plume*, offered Grasset his first solo show. The exhibition was held at the magazine's new gallery, the Salon des Cent. That exhibition and the subsequent *La Plume* issue dedicated to the artist attracted considerable attention. Both furthered Grasset's reputation and increased the demand for his work.

Examples of Grasset's commercial posters include the color lithographs *Magasins à la Place Clichy*, 1891 and *Abricotine*, c. 1900 (no. 15). The latter features a young woman with one hand on a basket and the other reaching to pick an apricot. The image, printed by Devambez, was a powerful advertisement for an apricot liqueur made by P. Garnier, a company located north of Paris. Grasset often combined earlier engravings of figures with decorative borders, patterns and text to create his commercial work.<sup>1</sup> In addition to lithographs, Grasset also designed magazine illustrations, textiles, furniture and dinner services based on stylized plant forms typical of Art Nouveau.

Paul Emile Berthon (1872-1909) was a student and disciple of Grasset. In 1893, he moved to Paris and began studying at the Ecole Normale d'Enseignement du Dessin where he met Grasset, the then Professor of Decorative Arts. Two years later, he participated in the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts in Paris. This led to commissions to create the cover design for magazines including *L'Image* (July 1897) and *Poster* (May 1899).

Both Berthon and Grasset produced posters for the Salon des Cent, an annual exhibition begun in 1894. Each of these exhibitions had a special poster made by a leading graphic artist. Grasset produced the poster for the inaugural exhibition which featured his own work. Three years later, Berthon created the seventeenth annual exhibition poster, the *Salon des Cent, 17e Exposition* (no. 1). In this poster, the artist confined lettering to the bottom of the print to concentrate the viewer's attention on the central image. The young woman, who is the subject of this poster, is provocative. With exposed shoulders, an amulet on her forehead and a snake arm band, she stares directly at the viewer with large intense eyes. In his depiction of women, Berthon was influenced by the French painter Luc Olivier Merson and the sensual and iconic figures created by Alphonse Mucha.

In addition to the *Salon des Cent, 17e Exposition*, 1897, Berthon created posters for other exhibitions and periodicals including the *Revue d'Art Dramatique*. His 1899 poster *Société des Amis des Arts de la Manche* (The Society of the Friends of the Arts of Manche) (no. 7) was designed to publicize the group's fourth annual exhibition. Berthon next worked on a series of images of women with flowers and musical instruments as seen in *La Viole de Gambe* 1899, *Les Pipeaux* (The Reedpipes), 1899 and *Concert Mystique* (Mystic Concert), 1901. Berthon's œuvre also featured a pair of mythological scenes entitled *Vision Antique* (no. 8) and *La Nymphé Dansante* (The Dancing Nymph), 1899. The artist's interest in experimenting with chromolithography are evident here and to the overall development of the Art Nouveau poster.



Eugène Grasset, *Abricotine*, c. 1900

Tragically, Berthon's career as an Art Nouveau artist and designer ended with his early death in 1909.

The Czech graphic artist and painter, Alphonse Mucha (1860-1939) is the best known and most celebrated of the three artists in this exhibition. Mucha studied in Prague and Munich before moving to Paris in 1887 where his early Art Nouveau work won him critical acclaim. He studied at the Académie Julian and the Académie Colarossi in Paris and received a medal of honor at the Salon des Artistes Français in 1894. That same year, he produced a lithograph of the French actress Sarah Bernhardt as Gismonda in a new play of the same name by Victorien Sardou. This poster for a production at the Théâtre de la Renaissance in Paris was Mucha's first of many images of Bernhardt.

Mucha's *Gismonda* poster (no. 16) was instrumental in establishing the artist's reputation as the preeminent poster designer in Paris. His design for this work was influenced by an earlier lithograph of Bernhardt by Eugène Grasset. According to Victor Arwas, "The *Gismonda* poster was created as the fusion of two posters created earlier for Sarah Bernhardt.

Grasset provided the composition. [Manuel] Orazi supplied the background."<sup>2</sup>

Byzantine influences can be seen in the mosaic background and richly textured garment with gold accents worn by the actress. Bernhardt so admired this life-size image that she signed a six-year contract with the artist for additional posters, as well as costumes and stage designs for future productions. From late 1894 until 1902, Mucha worked for the actress who was known to have supervised "every aspect of her plays, including costumes and décor, fabrics and jewelry."<sup>3</sup> The *Gismonda* poster in the Haggerty exhibition advertises the performer's American tour. As indicated on the poster the performance was under the direction of Abbey, Schoeffel & Grau, proprietors of Abbey's Theatre in New York.

Despite his success following *Gismonda*, Mucha rejected any direct link with the Art Nouveau movement. He did not see himself as an Art Nouveau artist. Rather, he asserted that "art is eternal, it cannot be new." Nevertheless, people recognized him as the leading Art Nouveau designer.

In addition to his work for Sarah Bernhardt, Mucha designed a major poster (no. 18) for the American actress Leslie Carter who was often called "the American Sarah Bernhardt."

At the turn of the twentieth century, large posters and decorative lithographic panels were the advertising norm. They dominated until the advent of the First World War which marked the end of the Art Nouveau period. After the war, artists rejected Art Nouveau in favor of Art Deco. This was followed by a period of further neglect of Art Nouveau works. During the economic depression that followed World War I, many Art Nouveau era posters were damaged or destroyed. Since posters were not highly valued, people often used them as wall paper or to wrap gifts. Fortunately, some of the lithographs from the turn of the century have survived and are now in the hands of private collectors such as Dr. Milton Gutglass, who has generously made them available for this exhibition.

Annemarie Sawkins  
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1. Arwas, Victor. *Berthon & Grasset* (London, 1978), p. 23.
2. *Ibid*, 42.
3. *Ibid*, 39.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Haggerty Museum of Art is pleased to present *Art Nouveau French Posters: Berthon, Grasset, Mucha: The Milton and Paula Gutglass Collection*. The exhibition showcases lithographs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by three of the era's most influential artists. At the height of the poster craze, these artists produced some of the best advertisements for new products, performances and exhibitions.

The exhibition is made possible through the generous cooperation of Dr. Milton Gutglass who played an integral role in developing the exhibition by providing work from his collection. Dr. Gutglass has been an important supporter of the Haggerty Museum of Art for many years. His acumen as a collector and generosity as a donor has helped build both the Milwaukee Art Museum and Haggerty Museum collections.

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