

General Information

Title: *Réveil*

Artist: Henri Fantin-Latour

Date: 1886

Size: 12 1/4 x 9 inches

Medium: Lithograph

Acquisition #: 93.2

Additional Work by Artist in Collection: No

Completed by: Michael Diane Wood,
Summer 2018



Artist's Biography

Henri Fantin-Latour was a French artist known for his painting, printmaking, and illustrations. His father was his first teacher, but he eventually studied at acclaimed art academies, such as the École des Beaux-Arts. Throughout his career he exhibited at the official French Salons, but he also exhibited his work in the Salon des Refusés, which was a rebel salon organized for artists that had been refused by the jury of the official salon.

He rejected the theories and methods of impressionism and his still-lives and portraits were painted in the realism of the old masters. This may stem from the part of his early career in which he lived mainly by copying the master's paintings in the Louvre.

He was well known for his paintings of flowers and his group portraits of artists, writers, and musicians. His lithographs were filled with creative themes that propelled him forward as an influential symbolist painter. His works revealed his romantic passion for great composers and influenced later symbolist painters.

Symbolism

Symbolism was a late nineteenth-century movement for art and literature originating in France, Russia, and Belgium. It was a reaction against realism and naturalism that instead sought to focus on imagination and idealized spirituality and dreams. The artists of symbolism attempted to portray truths in an indirect manner, using figures, colors, and objects to represent ideas.

Henri Fantin-Latour was unique as a symbolist because his art used both realism and symbolism. His work often centered around other artists, writers, composers, and thinkers of his time. He was known for his paintings of flowers that were done in realism, but the symbolism of his lithographs earned him an important place in the symbolist movement.



By the Table, 1872, Oil on Canvas, 63 x 88 in.

An example of Henri Fantin-Latour's use of group portraits, usually to depict famous composers and artists.



Vase of Flowers, 1875, Oil on Canvas, 10 3/4 x 13 1/2 in.

Henri Fantin-Latour became well known for his depictions of flowers.



The Muse, 1886, Lithograph, 9 x 6 in.

An example of Fantin-Latour's use of symbolism.

Subject

Henri Fantin-Latour depicts the figure of Glory holding a palm leaf in one hand and flowers spilling out of her other hand. She is descending from the night sky. The palm leaf is often used as a symbol for martyrdom and greatness. Fantin-Latour, like many printmakers, made multiple versions of this print subject and in many of them he included the name of Richard Wagner on a tombstone at the feet of Glory. This pays homage to the composer by symbolising his immortality through the greatness of his music. Many symbolists were known to champion the music of the composer. This idea is also supported by the title given to the work by Fantin-Latour, *Réveil*, meaning awakening. This theme of appreciating other great minds was common in Fantin-Latour's work, as well as symbolist work in general, and this lithograph was no exception.

Terms

- Impressionism – a style or movement in painting characterized by a concern with depicting the visual impression of the moment, especially in terms of the shifting effect of light and color.
- Lithograph – a printing method that uses grease to attract ink in order to transfer the image onto paper.
- Louvre – world's largest art museum located in Paris, France.
- Realism – in art or literature the practice of staying true to nature or to real life and to accurate representation without idealization.
- Richard Wagner – born in 1813 and died in 1883 after a career as a German composer, theatre director, polemicist, and conductor who is chiefly known for his operas.

References:

- <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/44083>
- <http://www.henri-fantin-latour.org/biography.html>
- <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henri-Fantin-Latour>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_\(arts\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_(arts))

SYMBOLIST COLLAGES

Grades K-5

Big Idea: Critical Thinking and Reflection
Enduring Understanding 1 VA.3.C.1 : Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent.

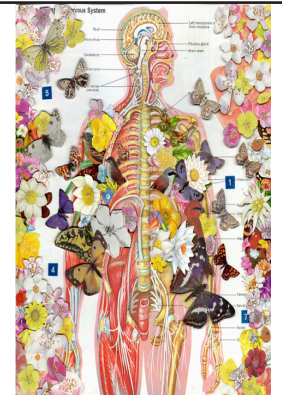
- Benchmarks:**
- **VA.3.C.1.1** — Use the art-making process to develop ideas for self-expression.
 - **VA.3.C.1.2** — Reflect on and interpret works of art, using observation skills, prior knowledge, and experience.

Session Activity: Symbolism can be used for many different purposes, such as self-representation, glorification of leadership, or story-telling. For this activity the students will focus on self-reflection and self-representation. Henri Fantin-Latour used symbolism in his work to represent the glory of artists and their lives by identifying symbols that represent the personal traits of those artists. The aim of this activity is to create a stepping stone for students to develop an understanding of visual symbols and their application.

- Objectives:**
- Students will develop basic self-reflection skills.
 - Students will develop an understanding of visual symbols.
 - Students will learn to apply meaning to symbols and use them for self-expression.

- Instructions:**
1. Teachers will go over the meaning of symbolism and its use in art.
 2. Students will take time to think about and write down adjectives they think describe themselves, such as happy, fun, loud, etc.
 3. The teacher will provide the student with magazines and safety scissors.
 4. The students will go through the magazines and cut out images they think symbolize the words they had written.
 5. The students will create collages to represent themselves and their adjectives.
 6. Students will present their collages to the class, identifying their symbols and conveying their meanings.

- Materials:**
- Notebook paper
 - Old magazines
 - Safety scissors
 - Glue sticks
 - Posterboard paper



Ben Giles is a collage artist that often conveys his message through symbolism of the human existence. This image combines the human anatomy with flowers and butterflies that could represent the positive aspects of the human soul.



This collage by Ben Giles is also a symbolist piece. The boat is on an ocean of money. The raging storm behind it emphasizes the dangers of becoming engulfed by riches.

SYMBOLISM

Grades 6-12

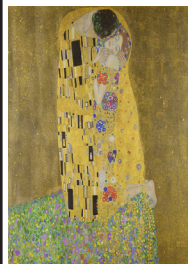
BIG IDEA: Critical Thinking and Reflection
Enduring Understanding 1 VA.912.C.1 : Cognition and reflection are required to appreciate, interpret, and create with artistic intent.

- Benchmarks:**
- **VA.912.C.1.2** — Use critical-thinking skills for various contexts to develop, refine, and reflect on an artistic theme.
 - **VA.912.C.1.4** — Apply art knowledge and contextual information to analyze how content and ideas are used in works of art.
 - **VA.912.C.1.6** — Identify rationale for aesthetic choices in recording visual media.
 - **VA.912.C.1.8** — Explain the development of meaning and procedural choices throughout the creative process to defend the artistic intention.

Session Activity: Henri Fantin-Latour used symbols to represent ideas and people within his art, so during this activity students will use the process of symbolism to develop a work of art that represents themselves. This exercise is meant to push students to evaluate themselves and use critical thinking to apply their artistic perspectives. Students will sketch their images, then transfer that imagery to linoleum blocks to create prints with symbolism in the vein of Fantin-Latour's art.



The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters, Francisco Goya, 1799, etching, 21.5 cm × 15 cm.
The man sleeping at the desk represents the idea of reason, while the swarming bats and owls symbolize foolishness and ignorance.



The Kiss (Lovers), Gustav Klimt, 1907–1908, oil and gold leaf on canvas, 180 cm × 180 cm.
This piece is one of Klimt's most famous works and the two figures embracing represent love and intimacy.

- Instructions:**
1. The teacher will go over the meaning of symbolism with the students and discuss the symbolism in the Henri Fantin-Latour print, *Réveil*.
 2. The students will list adjectives that describe themselves as well as things that are important to them, followed by objects that could be used to represent those things.
 3. Students will sketch symbolist images based on their lists.
 4. The teacher will distribute linoleum blocks and tools while going over safety requirements.
 5. Students will design images on the linoleum that use their symbolist sketches.
 6. Once the designs are cut and the linoleum is covered in ink students will print their designs on paper.
 7. Students will write artists' statements that describe their process and the symbols in their work.
 8. Students will present their finished work and their artists' statements to the rest of the class.
 9. After each presentation the students will engage in an art critique of each others' work.

- Critique Questions:**
- Was the artist successful in symbolizing the self? Why or why not?
 - Do the symbols mean anything different to you?
 - Does the message the artist wanted to convey come across?

- Materials:**
- Paper
 - Linoleum blocks
 - Lino blades
 - Ink

- Objectives:**
- Students will develop critical thinking skills.
 - Students will learn to connect meanings to symbols.
 - Students will learn the process of linoleum print making.
 - Students will develop an appropriate process of art criticism.