



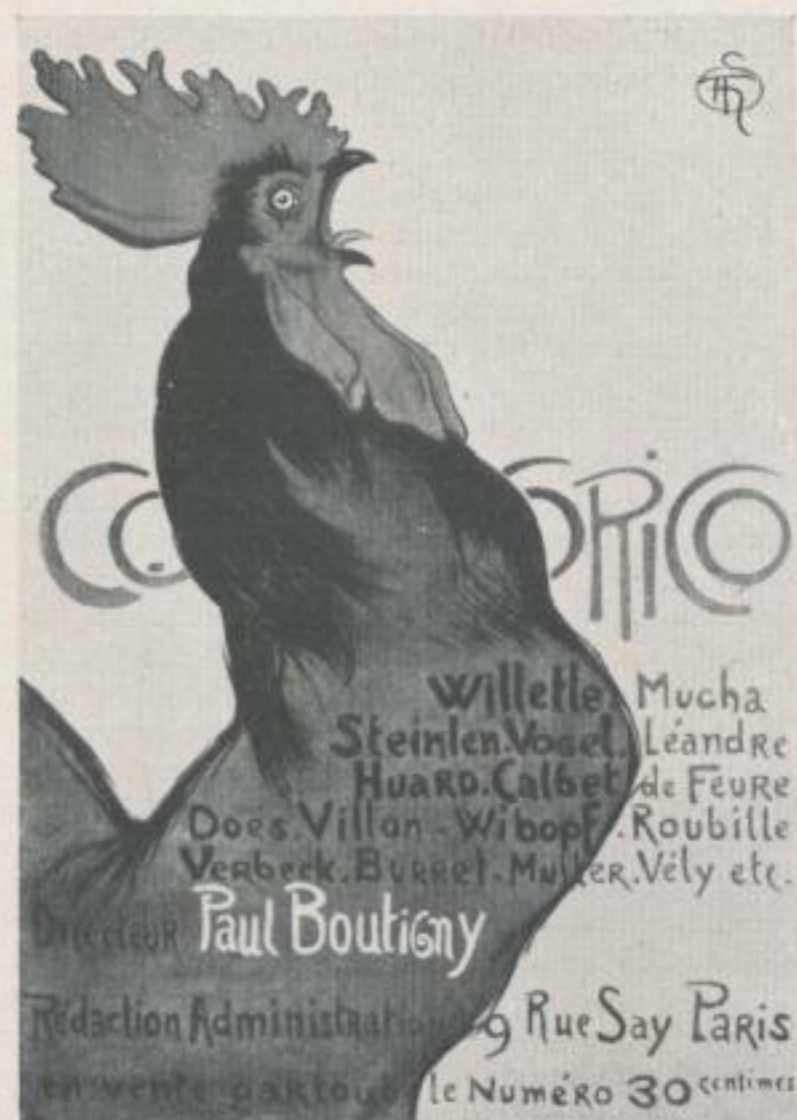
1894

Posters

from the collections of Dr. Hans Sachs, Berlin W 62

STEINLEN (1859-1923)

In the battles to achieve the best expression, to catch the eye, to attain the highest possible degree of attractiveness, which have been waged about the poster, the flat, graphic manner, coolly objective, has sometimes prevailed, only to be superseded by, and again to get the upper hand of, the thoughtful, picturesque, narrative style which makes use of figures. The course of development has been anything but simple. The styles have melted into one another, combated one another, contrasted and combined and have consequently produced a most inspiring variety of variegated impressions. "Principal exponents of the two groups of Powers", to use a Prussian minister's expression, were, in Germany, Bernhard and Hohlwein. Hohlwein raised the picturesque poster with figure-composition to a high level (the Swiss artist Baumberger attained perhaps a still higher level of perfection) whereas Bernhard, adhering to the strictly graphic idea, soberly calculating the psychological preliminaries, created the objective poster in its highest degree of perfection. It is no disgrace to either of them that they both had one eye on France, the classical home of poster art. It is still less to their detriment that the art of Lautrec and Steinlen, fast friends and opposite poles of art, should have had its part in forming their style. As recently as the April number of this magazine, Lautrec was hailed as the "undeniably greatest poster artist of all time", and Steinlen, born Alsatian, who grew up in Switzerland and made Paris his home, is no less worthy of a seat at the Olympian board of the great ones of poster art.



1899