

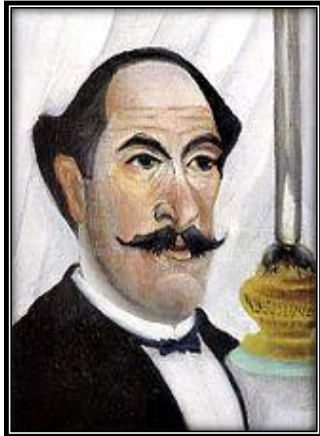
Henri Rousseau

(ahn-REE roo-SO)
French painter

1844 – 1910

66

Henri Julien Félix Rousseau was a Post-Impressionist painter in the Naïve or Primitive manner, known as “*Le Douanier*” (“the customs officer”), a humorous moniker of his occupation. He was ridiculed during his life, but he became recognized as a self-taught genius with works of high artistic quality.



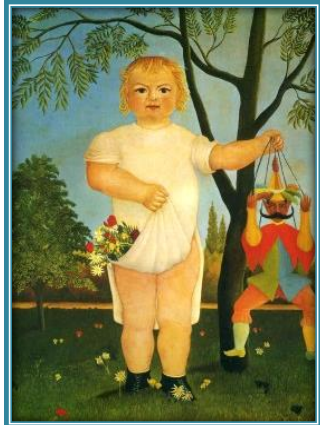
Henri Rousseau was born in Laval, France in 1844 into the family of a plumber. After his father became a debtor, his parents had to leave town, and their house was seized.

In high school he won prizes for drawing and music. He worked for a lawyer and studied law, but "attempted a small perjury and sought refuge in the army," serving for four years, starting in 1863 (19).

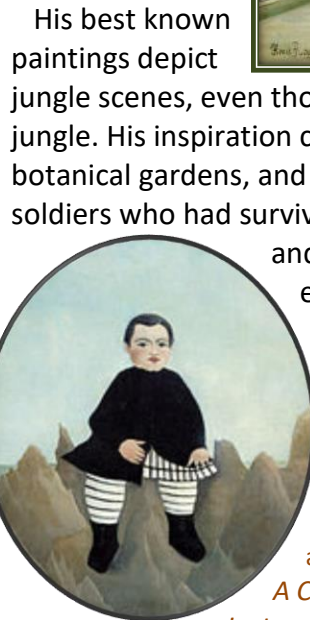
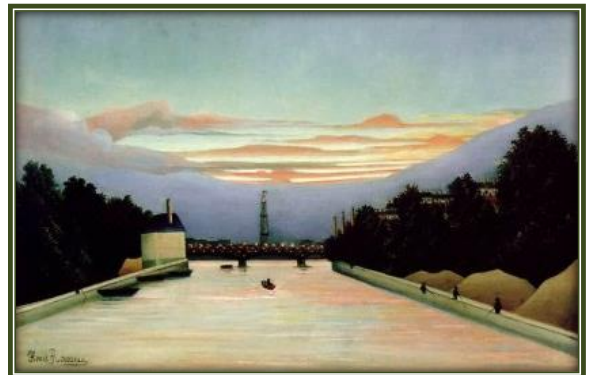
After his father's death, Rousseau moved to Paris (24) to support his mother.

At (24), he married Clémence Boitard, his landlord's 15-year-old daughter. They had six children (only one survived). At (27), he was appointed as a tax collector on goods entering Paris. His wife died in 1888 (44), and he married Josephine Noury in 1898 (54).

He started painting seriously in his early forties, and by age 49 he retired from his job to work on his art full-time. Essentially he was self-taught.



His best known paintings depict jungle scenes, even though he never left France nor saw a jungle. His inspiration came from illustrated books, Paris' botanical gardens, and taxidermied wild animals. He also met soldiers who had survived the French expedition to Mexico and listened to stories of the subtropical environment they had encountered.

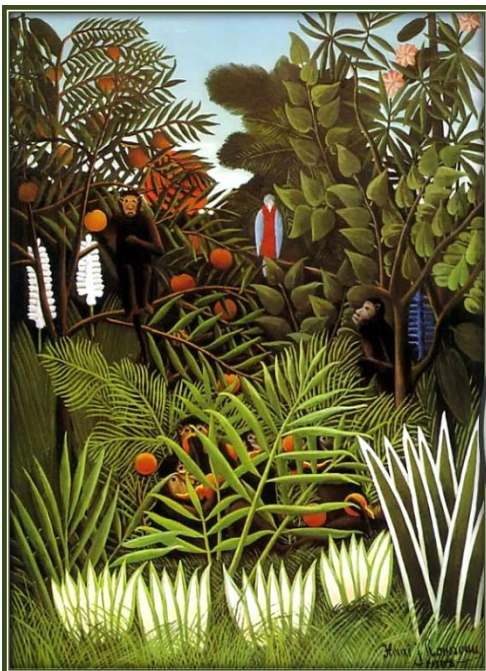


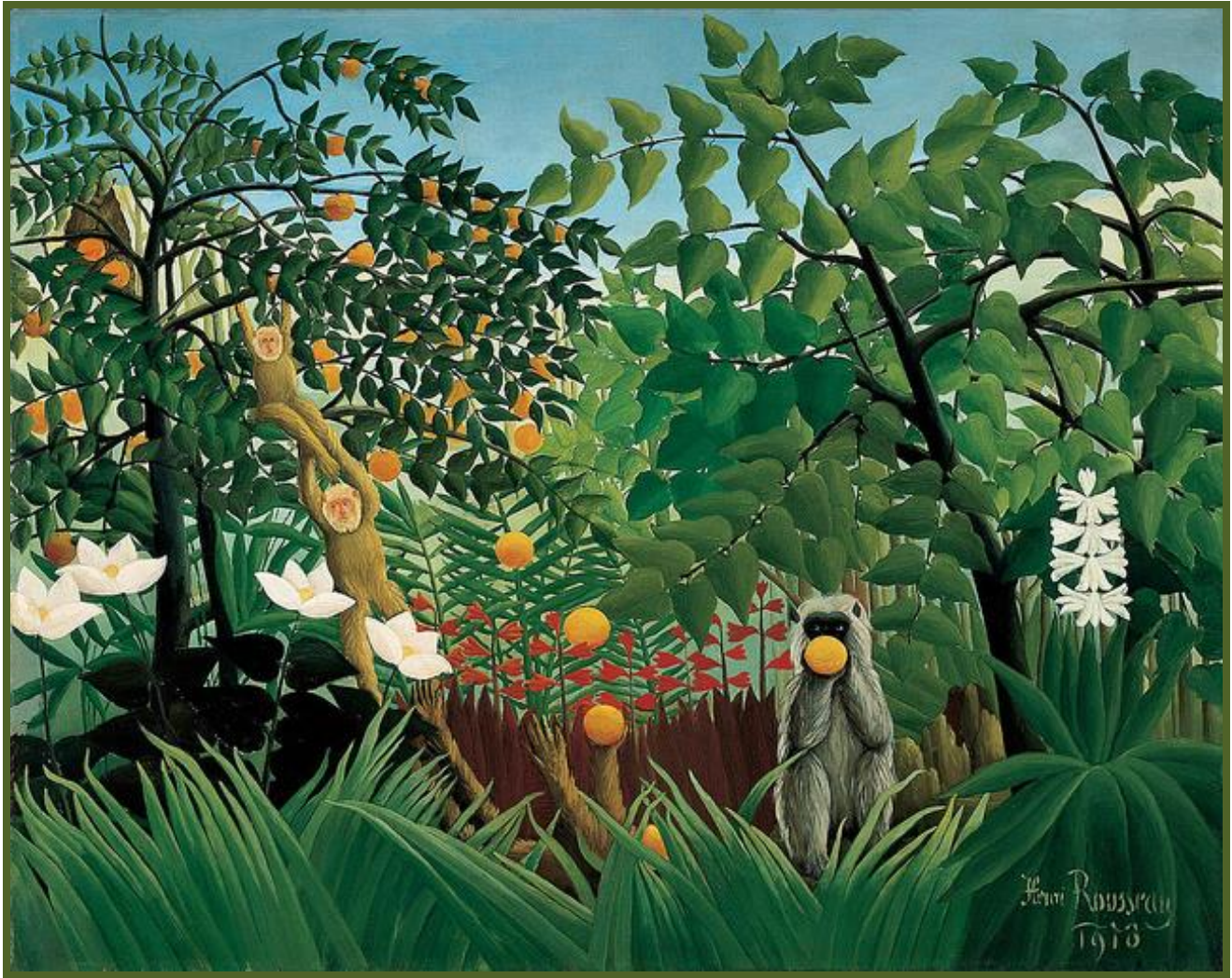
and listened to stories of the subtropical environment they had encountered. He described his frequent visits to the Jardin des Plantes (Plant Garden):

"When I go into the glass houses and I see the strange plants of exotic lands, it seems to me that I enter into a dream."

*Self-portrait of the Artist with a Lamp, and Child with a Puppet, 1903 (59).
A Carnival Evening, 1886 (42).*

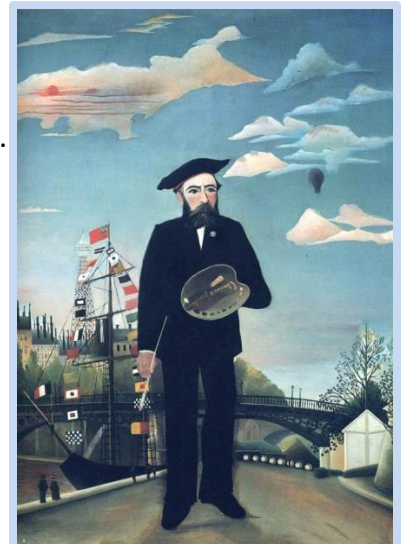
*La tour Eiffel peinte par Henri Rousseau, 1898 (54).
Exotic Landscape, 1908 (64). Boy on the Rocks, 1895-97 (51).*



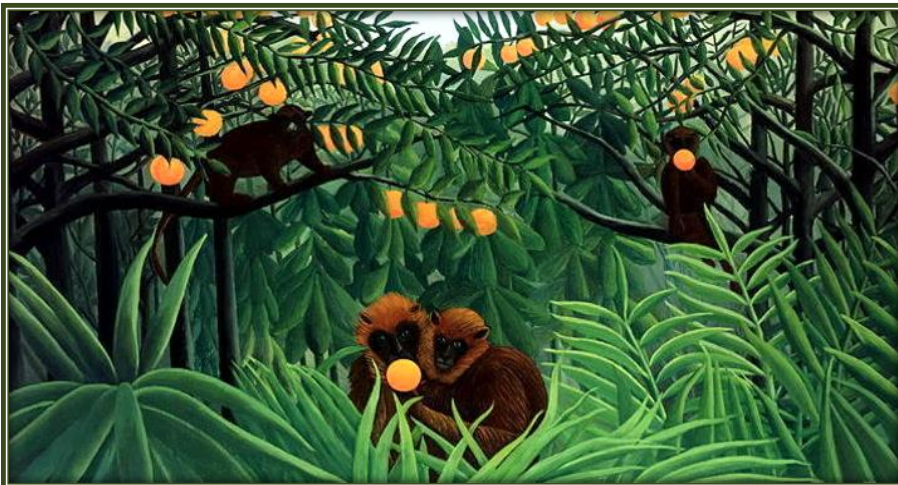


He claimed to have invented a new genre of *portrait landscape*, a painting with a view, and a person depicted in the foreground.

Rousseau's flat, seemingly childish style often shocked people. He was ridiculed, but there is sophistication with his particular technique.

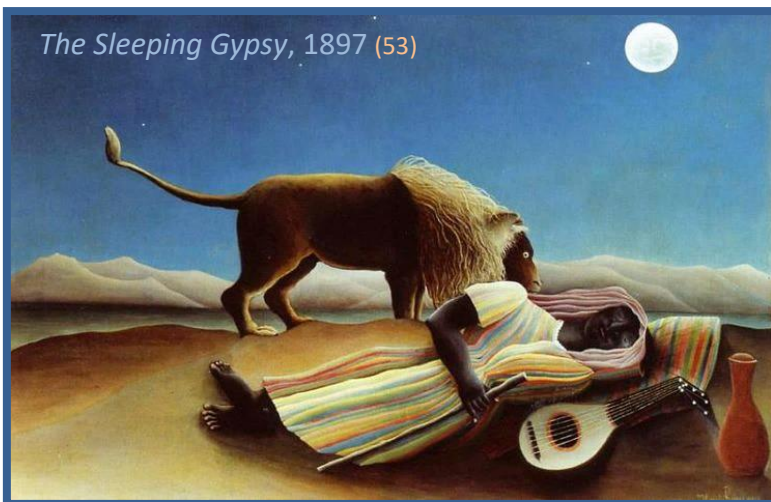


Exotic Landscape, 1910 (66).
Flowers in a white vase. and
Bouquet of Flowers, 1910 (66).
Self Portrait, 1890 (46).
The Tropics, 1910 (66).
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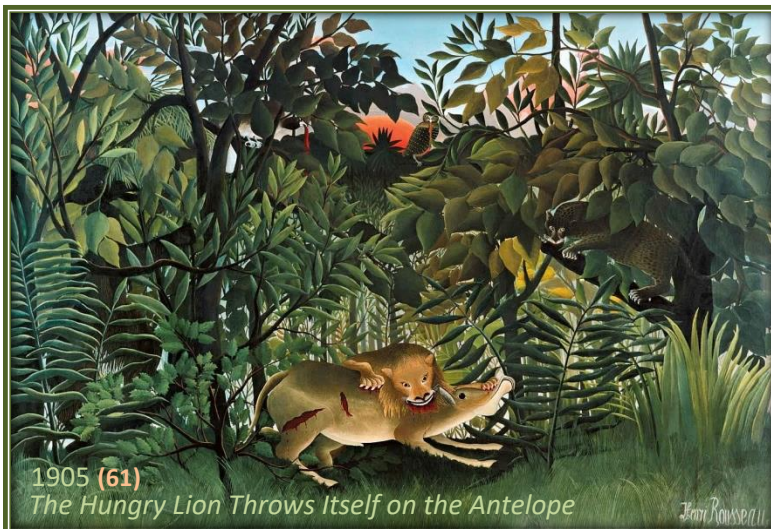




Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!), 1891 (47)



The Sleeping Gypsy, 1897 (53)



*1905 (61)
The Hungry Lion Throws Itself on the Antelope*

At **61**, *The Hungry Lion Throws Itself on the Antelope* was exhibited near avant-garde artists such as Henri **Matisse**.

When Pablo **Picasso** found a painting by Rousseau being sold on the street as a canvas to be painted over, he recognized Rousseau's genius and went to meet him.

Flowers of poetry, 1890 (46).



From 1886 (**42**), he exhibited in the Salon des Indépendants regularly. His work was not placed prominently, but it drew an increasing following.

With *Tiger in a Tropical Storm (Surprised!)* in 1891 (**47**), Rousseau received his first serious review.

At **53**, he produced one of his most famous paintings, *The Sleeping Gypsy*.



The Flamingoes, 1907 (63)





After retiring at **49**, Rousseau supplemented his pension with part-time jobs, work such as playing violin in the streets and producing *Le petit journal* covers.

His work influenced many artists, among them **Picasso**, **Léger**, **Beckmann** and the Surrealists. The visual style of the animation films *Kirikou and the Sorceress* (1998) and *Madagascar* (2005) were partly inspired by Rousseau.



What

Historical Timeline

Who

- 1844 – Morse’s **telegraph** used for first time
- 1851, **52** – **Sewing machine**, **Elevator** (Elisha Otis)
- 1857 – **Germ theory** of disease
- 1864 – **Pasteurization** 1867 – Nobel’s **dynamite**
- 1875 – **Bell’s telephone** 1880 – **Edison’s light**
- 1870 – Franco – Prussian War
- 1884 - **85** – **Chinese – French War**
- 1886 – **Statue of Liberty** dedicated
- 1889 – **Eiffel Tower** 1891 – **Zipper** invented
- 1893 – **Ford’s automobile**, **Sprague’s Electric Trolley**
- 1896 – **Radio**, First modern **Olympic games** (Greece)
- 1900 – **Olympics in Paris**
- 1903 – **Wright Bros.’** first powered **flight**

- 1833 – 1897 – Johannes **Brahms**
- 1833 – 1896 – Alfred **Nobel**
- 1840 – 1893 – Pyotr **Tchaikovsky**, Russian
- 1853 – 1890 – Vincent **van Gogh**
Fight Between a Tiger and a Buffalo, 1908 (64).
Muse Inspiring the Poet, *The Equatorial Jungle*, and
Mandrill in the Jungle, 1909 (65). *Traumgarten*.
Section of *The Merry Jesters*, 1906 (62).

