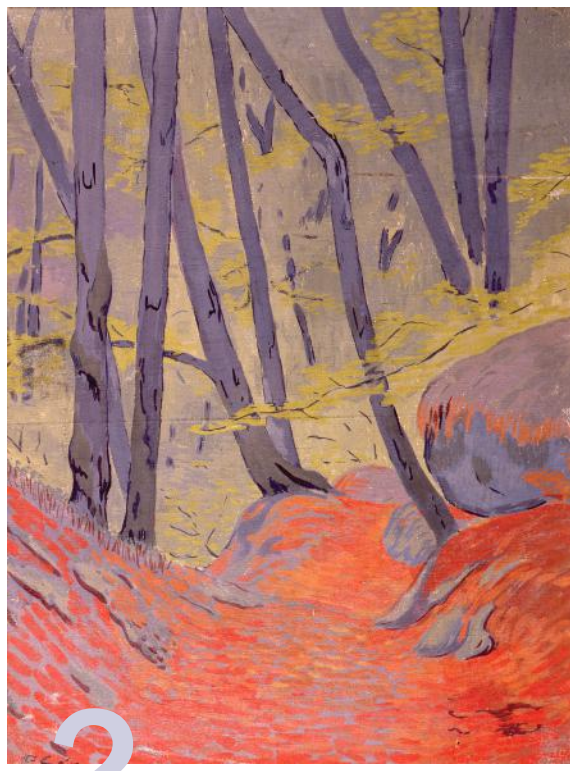




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Lautrec's contemporaries

1. Émile Bernard (1868-1941), *Portrait de ma sœur Madeleine*, 1888, Oil on canvas
2. Paul Sérusier (1864-1927), *Sous-bois (Le Huelgoat)*, 1892, Oil on canvas
3. Georges-Daniel de Monfreid (1856-1929), *Paysage de Collioure*, Oil on canvas

In 1922, having already been involved in the preliminary negotiations of the Toulouse-Lautrec donation from 1908 onwards, Louis-Charles Bellet, member and the secretary of the Council of Administration, set about completing the Albi Museum's collection. He was interested in the links that existed between modern artists and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, and approached Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, Emile Bernard and Maurice Denis. He therefore set out to create a panorama of the artistic trends in Lautrec's day.

Émile Bernard (1868-1941) was a regular visitor to the studio of Cormon, where he met Vincent van Gogh, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Louis Anquetin. In 1886, while staying for the first time at Pont-Aven, he got to know Paul Gauguin. The pair became friends and together in 1888 they established new principles of composition and creation. Synthetism put the emphasis on line, colour and form. In *Portrait de ma sœur Madeleine*, Bernard uses simplified forms, flat, two-dimensional motifs and expanses of strong colour outlined in black to achieve the portrait of his sister, whose gaze is lost in a private reverie. From 1888 to 1893, he took this approach further. In *Pont-Aven*, a number of elements - the simplification of form, the lack of facial realism, the recreation of the landscape, the originality of composition and the compartmentalised expanses of monochrome colour - enabled Bernard to move beyond theory. In this way, he conveyed the primitive ideal which Brittany, still largely untouched by the modern world, represented for him.

Initially **Paul Sérusier** (1864-1927) joined the Nabi group, and applied the precepts of Gauguin as he understood them - focussing on the main motif, replacing images by symbols and the representation of nature for the idea it represented. In the summer of 1891, he settled in Huelgoat, Finistère. The village was surrounded by a great forest which, according to legend, was full of elves and fairies. This "primitive" and mysterious countryside inspired Sérusier, leading him, in

Sous bois (Le Huelgoat) to define his own chromatic palette, occupying a place between heritage and dynamism. He applied his precepts, rigorous composition and a separation of warm and cool colours, to a series of still lifes, among which is *Nature morte, pomme et écuelle bleue*.

Synthetism melted into Symbolisme and struggled to survive the departure, in 1891, of **Paul Gauguin** (1848-1903) for Tahiti, which he evoked in *Changement de résidence*. He turned to the technique of wood engraving, to his mind a means of making his paintings more accessible, a mid-way medium sculpture and painting. Gauguin strove to identify an indigenous art, which he then recreated in his own manner, notably in his sculpture *l'Idole à la perle*.

George-Daniel de Monfreid (1856-1929) studied at the Académie Julian, like Edouard Vuillard, Paul Sérusier and Maurice Denis. He shared a studio with Paul Gauguin, becoming at once his confidant, his biographer and a collector of his work. *Paysage de Collioure*, whose date is unknown, can be placed among the landscapes painted by Monfreid from 1900, with its balanced construction, simple, geometric forms, drawn-out brushstrokes and complementary colours. The absence of human figures draws our attention to the intense light of the mediterranean landscape and confers on the work a tranquil and atemporal atmosphere. In 1905 Monfreid worked on a series of still lifes, one of which was *Nature morte à la coupe de fruits, dit Les Mandarines*. Its disciplined construction in fluid, elegant lines stands out against the floral wallpaper. Muted, harmonious colours enhance the illusion of the various elements - glass, porcelain, pewter, reflection and transparency.