

KADIN KOSTELIC . NOVEMBER 22, 2015 . ART 415-001
THE LEGACY OF LITHOGRAPHY IN THE 19TH CENTURY

In the year 1796, a Bavarian playwright by the name of Alois Senefelder discovered a wholly original method of printmaking which he entitled “Chemical Surface Printing.” Today, this purely chemical process is known as lithography, a process which utilizes the natural antipathy of water and grease. Due to its ease of production and artistic potential and versatility, lithography quickly spread throughout Europe. Its use, form, and function evolved throughout the 19th century, maturing under the care and handling of Europe’s pivotal artists. Like its handlers, the purpose of lithography changed in tandem with the century’s successive movements in art, which ranged from Neo-classicism to the stirrings of German Expressionism. These movements, and therefore the changing face of lithography, reflect the changing ideals of 19th century Europe, and the ways in which these ideals were met with artistic intent.

Lithography, as Senefelder originally conceived it, was intended as a practical means of production. A struggling playwright burdened by the cost of having his pieces printed, Senefelder had been experimenting for some time with a cheaper means to reproduce his work. There is a quaint retelling by Senefelder himself of lithography’s moment of inception; that is, an ordinary day in which he, unable to find paper to record a to-do list, wrote on stone instead. On a hunch, he then etched the stone as one would an intaglio plate, subsequently discovering that while the grease of the pencil he used readily repelled water and acid, it easily took in ink. While still situated in fact, this whimsical recounting, like so many romanticized stories of invention, seems to negate the systematic research Senefelder had built up over the course of years that led to the ability to recognize the potential of his breakthrough.¹

Johann Anton Andre, a music publisher from Offenbach, was also quick to recognize the potential of lithography after seeing Senefelder’s announcement of his invention in 1799.² It was through this connection with a commercial firm that lithography was recognized as a versatile

and relatively inexpensive means of reproduction. Additionally, nearly from its onset, Senefelder and others familiar with his process also recognized the medium's potential for artistic expression. This potential was fully realized in the 19th century as lithography was used as a vital tool to thoroughly investigate the entire breadth of artistic movements in Europe at the time. To best understand the advance of these movements in relation to the development of lithography and their effects on the artistic world, I have selected a deliberately grouped series of European lithographs, whose creative merits and cultural context provide insight to life in the 19th century.

To begin, one should look to the start of lithography as an artistic means of expression, seen first in Benjamin West's print from 1801, *Angel of the Resurrection* (**Figure 1**). Lithography had already been disseminated across Europe as a commercial mode of production, with varied success. Philipp Andre, Johann's son who also dealt directly with Senefelder, had been promoting and championing lithography as a graphic art in London by providing the necessary materials of the craft to any artist of note. The President of the Royal Academy, West was one of the first to embrace the artistic merits of the medium. An allegorical depiction first done in pen and ink, his *Angel* shows the initial confusion of lithography as a process. The tight cross-hatching marks, characteristic of etching, show a limited understanding of the true potential of lithography, which allows for fluid, gestural impressions.³ This borrowed technique from other processes of printmaking also shows lithography's chameleon-like ability to imitate other methods of reproduction, which teeters between being an asset and a detriment to the medium. For some artists, it allowed a means to translate their established style into a reproducible form that was both an iteration and an interpretation of their work.

In the commercial market, lithography had continued to be employed in new ways, the most successful of which was as a cheap medium to reproduce famous works of art. This had

such an impact that in 1808, when Senefelder published a compilation of several reproduced renaissance drawings, the artist Albrecht Dürer was raised from obscurity and established as Germany's national artist.⁴ However, this was still just replication, not artistic creation. It was only in France that lithography was able to firmly rise in the public opinion as an art form. At the time, the work of Jacques-Louis David was highly influential to all those involved in the Academy and the French Salon. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres was a proponent of David's Neo-classical style; creating works inspired by Classical models and Enlightenment ideals which were still marked by his distinct stylistic idiosyncrasies. Remembered best by his portraits in both painting and printmaking, his *Four Portraits* (**Figure 2**) illustrate his "classical drawing in all of its delicacy and assurance," demonstrating lithography's ability to accommodate an artist's particular purpose and style.⁵

Lithography also suited the purposes of Romantic artists, including Eugène Delacroix, Ingres's declared nemesis.⁶ Spurred by the disillusionment that accompanied the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789, Romanticism, with its emphasis on imagination and emotion as opposed to the reason found in Neo-classical depiction, rose up as the countering school of thought.⁷ To appreciate Delacroix's significance to lithography and art, it's best to first consider the work of Jean-Louis André Théodore Géricault and Francisco Goya.

Géricault, a pioneer of the Romantic movement renowned for his painting *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819), had broken through the mainstays of Davidian tradition to invigorate Classical style with emotive intensity.⁸ His forays into lithography, at the time still a mainly monochromatic medium, present a surprising sense of color. The dimension, expression, and movement created through color in his painted works are equally maintained in black and white, exemplified in his print *The Flemish Farrier* (**Figure 3**). Part of a thirteen piece series illustrating

scenes of impoverished England, this print displays Géricault's interest in the depiction of contemporary reality in the manner of monumental history painting. The soft, tonal effects of the lithographic crayon allowed Géricault to create the misty atmosphere inside the workshop, while the rich contrast of velvety blacks to clean whites help emphasize the heroic musculature of the smith and horse. Even through a relatively maudlin subject, Géricault's lithography is capable of emitting a sense of epic drama.

Goya, already an eminent printmaker and painter, was introduced to lithography late in his life, creating his first lithograph at the age of 73. Despite his age, or perhaps because of it, Goya was able to develop an artistic lithographic practice that was to be considered the "classic manner of drawing on stone - a manner as free as a sketch but with a black and white as rich as the color in a painting."⁹ Working in Bordeaux while in exile from the Bourbon restoration in Spain,¹⁰ Goya worked out his technique of reductively working on stone, scraping out highlights and building back up shadows. Caught between the worlds of *pueblo* culture and *illustrodo* Enlightenment, Goya would often depict scenes that seemed to simultaneously mock and extol the *pueblo* way of life, as seen in *The Bulls of Bordeaux* (**Figure 4**). The frantic movement and violence of the bull fights shows both engaging excitement and violence that borders on the barbaric. Part of a four piece series, *The Bulls of Bordeaux* is among one of the most notable examples of lithography from the century, using daring gestural strokes and energetic forms to create a dynamic scene of spectacle.¹¹ Both Goya and Géricault transformed lithography from a mere means of production to a new medium of expression, utilizing the strengths of the medium to express Romantic concepts of individuality and subjective feeling.

Returning to Delacroix, one is able to see Goya's influence and a continuation of Géricault's tradition. Delacroix work *Young Tiger Playing with its Mother* (**Figure 5**) exhibits

similar colorful tonal effects as well as epiphenomenally displaying the Romantic “fascination with animals as both forces of nature and metaphors for human behavior.”¹² Also evident is an interest in exoticism and the Orient, which was a form of escapism from the turbulent politics in France. These qualities would later influence the work of the Impressionist and the Symbolist movement. As his works appear to include and consolidate all the influences he was privy to, Delacroix has been “regarded as one of the most important representatives of his time in intellectual France.”¹³ Delacroix’s method of interpreting his influences, copying them, and reintroducing them as something new and uniquely his own can be seen as a parallel to the lithographic print - a reiteration and a translation that results in originality.

For all the impact they made on the medium, lithography was little more than an sideline venture for the Romantic painters.¹⁴ Ironically, despite the advances in lithography which stemmed from traditions of painting, the true potential of artistic lithography rose from ventures in the commercial market through the hand of Honoré Daumier. It has been compared that “what Dürer was to engraving and the woodcut, and Rembrandt and Goya to etching, Daumier was to lithography.”¹⁵ His significance to history is not only as an artist by the means of his craft, but as an artist by his observance of the human condition. In Felix Man’s book *Artist’s Lithographs*, he eloquently states “Only rarely has an artist been involved in the political happenings of his time to such an extent as Daumier, without losing his artistic identity and falling into a merely tendentious art.”¹⁶ His satirical caricatures for the publication *La Caricature* held more weight than mere cartoons; the fact that Daumier’s pieces have outlasted the circumstances that inspired them supports the value of his lithographs as artistic creation. Through these ironic depictions lithography became a social force in the world, combining its qualities as a powerful artistic mode of expression and as a propagating agent of change.

When one considers that Daumier made close to four thousand lithographs in less than forty years, or one every three days,¹⁷ trying to pick one to encapsulate his impact on lithography and the artwork becomes impossible. One of his most challenging and emotionally impactful works, however, is *La Rue Transnonain* (**Figure 6**), created for the publication *L'Association Mensuelle*. Spurred by the desire to bring attention to the horrific killings on the 15th of April, 1834, in which union protestors were massacred in their homes, this work is both *avant-garde* and a work of Realism. In a sense it is a political tool, forcing people out of complacency and inciting a revolution in thought through the depiction of reality in gritty detail.¹⁸ The flatness created by Daumier's rendering of space and the planographic nature of lithography emphasizes the morbidity of the scene, bringing to focus each terrible detail while still retaining a sense of perspective. This work and his other pieces of government and bourgeois critique inspired the public and artists alike, sparking dissent in the public sphere and inspiration in his greatest contemporaries, such as Delacroix and Degas.¹⁹ In A. Hyatt Mayor's article "Lithographs," he aptly comments that "Daumier's firm footing in the life of his age makes him the one artist who comes nearest to summing up the complexity of nineteenth-century France,"²⁰ as well as, the complex nature of nineteenth-century lithography.

Another vital influence in the realm of social critique and lithographic practice is Édouard Manet. Although he made a sizable amount of etchings, like the Romantic painters before him Manet found the tonal variation and directness of mark achieved with lithography were better suited to his exploration of color, as well as his sketch-like use of line. The importance of Manet's work comes from its shockingly modern quality; Man refers to him as the "true father of modern lithography."²¹ In his politically charged work *The Barricade* (**Figure 7**), Manet captured the violent repression of a Communard rebellion by France's national guard. The

bracing, graphic quality and lack of descriptive modeling reflect and exaggerate his style of painting that would later affect ideas of Modernism.²² Manet's work also reflects the scrutiny of a *flaneur*, an observer of urban street life, presented in an unapologetically Realist manner which challenged the viewer and called attention to social realities. These studies of Parisian life would influence many of the Impressionists although Manet was never quite a part of the Impressionist movement. He preferred to comment on societal injustice and hypocrisy within the realm of the French Salon. His style of working fit within the lithographic practice well; as an appropriator of art history, who allocated compositional elements or entire subjects from past masterpieces such as in his famous painting *Olympia* (1863) which was modeled after Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538), Manet created subversive works that transposed the colloquial language of art familiar to the bourgeois public in the same way lithography reiterates images to form different meanings.

A good friend to Manet, Edgar Degas also contributed to the development of the lithographic practice. Motivated by experimentation and innovation, Degas utilized every form of printmaking, "aim[ing...] to extract the typical from every graphic technique, accidental happenings included," the "typical" meaning the core strengths of the medium.²³ Similar to Goya, Degas invented his own process of working on stone. First, he would create an ink drawing on copperplate, using it to make an impression on transfer paper. He then transferred this drawing to stone, working with several types of media to create various effects, taking proofs every so often to view his progress.²⁴

With this process, Degas explored his preoccupation as a *flaneur*, and this fascination with observance grew to venture beyond the domain of public life and breach the private sphere of the "bath and brothel."²⁵ In his lithograph *After the Bath III* (**Figure 8**), Degas explores one of his favored themes of women bathing. Like Manet, Degas depicted current women rather than

the usual subjects of goddesses or nobility, choosing to focus on contemporary subjects. This choice to depict modern life, the unfinished, sketch-like quality of line and shading, and his focus on elements of lighting all point to Degas's involvement with the Impressionist movement. In his lithographs, one is able to see the constant refinement and focus of vision as progressive prints become more simplistic and less compositionally involved.²⁶ His figures give off the feeling of arrested or suspended motion, always posed within radically cropped frames or seen from unique perspectives. This cropped focus, or "angle of ambush" as Mayor describes it, stems from an interest in Japanese ukiyo-e prints, an interest shared by many of his Impressionist contemporaries.²⁷ Colta Ives describes Degas's particular interest in Japonisme well in her series of articles for The Metropolitan Museum of Art:

Degas avoided staging japoneries that featured models dressed in kimonos and the conspicuous display of oriental props. Instead, he absorbed qualities of the Japanese aesthetic that he found most sympathetic: elongated pictorial formats, asymmetrical compositions, aerial perspective, spaces emptied of all but abstract elements of color and line, and a focus on singularly decorative motifs. In the process, he redoubled his originality.²⁸

These qualities translated well to lithography, as the planographic process easily allowed for the investigation and manipulation of such pictorial elements. By utilizing the unique attributes of the medium to their fullest potential within the realm of his field of interest, Degas advanced lithography by recognizing it as a separate, not secondary, mode of study to painting.

A contemporary to the Impressionists, but separated by his advents into the world of fantasy, was Odilon Redon. His lithographs, called "noirs," explore the possibilities of feeling and depicting inner realities within shades of black. Black, for Redon, was "the agent of the mind

far more beautiful than the most beautiful color of the palette or the prism,” which was an opinion most compatible with the monochromatic lithographic practice.²⁹ In his piece *The Celestial Art* (**Figure 9**), Redon aspired to creating “an art capable of evoking associations and feelings the way that music does.”³⁰ Music, the works of authors such as Poe and Baudelaire, Delacroix’s use of luminescent color, and changing color notions presented by artists such as Van Gogh and Seurat all influenced Redon’s work.³¹ His work, which would later influence Surrealism, was very much ahead of his time. Few if any other graphic artist before him had endeavored to explore ideas unattainable to human sight.³² Similar to Degas, Redon used lithography as a mode for study, an investigative tool to better understand the world. Degas acted as an observer to the contemporary world around him, whereas Redon observed the inward realm of the mind.

After 1897, Redon made a short-lived shift to color, making only two color lithograph prints before he started working in oils. This brief foray into color printing was inspired by other advances in color lithography at the time, chiefly established by the poster artists Jules Cheret and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. The use of color in lithography had existed soon after Senefelder’s discovery. Up until the 1890s however, its use was limited. Color printing had been established very early as a method for advertising. Its commerciality or “low art” standard made it unappealing to the artistically inclined, as was the fact that commercial printers jealously guarded knowledge of their methods. Cheret and Lautrec helped color lithography come into its own as an art form.

The appeal of Cheret’s work is immediately grasped, as seen in his poster *Fantasy: Le Pays Des Fees, Jardin Enchante* (**Figure 10**). The bold, brilliant, and clear use of color is gripping, and attracted the attention of artists like Seurat, whose ideas of chromoluminarism and

drawing without line found an accord with the flat, layering of color and soft marks of color lithography. His work, often derived from the tradition of Romantic painting, established the poster as a form of high art - a feat made possible by the rising influence and interest in 'popular culture' versus the 'high culture' of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie.³³ His most significant impact, however, might be his influence on Toulouse-Lautrec, who valued his opinion so highly that he sent Cheret a copy of every poster he created.³⁴

Similar to Manet and Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec was an observer of diversion and entertainment, obsessed with representing the "personalities and habits of the people [of Paris] - their affections, their dissolution, and their loneliness," as seen in *Jane Avril at the Jardin de Paris* (Figure 11).³⁵ Jane Avril, a nightclub dancer and singer, is seen performing her exotic cancan, the erotism of which is contrasted by the emotionally disengaged expression on her face. This detachment is an allusion to the theme of self-alienation that Toulouse-Lautrec often explores. Her pointed foot, suggestive of fetish tastes at the time, and the innuendo of the fist gripping the neck of the bass scroll are both part of Toulouse-Lautrec's impish ploys to capitalize on popular tastes. His prints dazzle the viewer with technical effects, exploiting innovative techniques such as *crachis*, or spattered ink.³⁶ Similar to Degas, Toulouse-Latrec absorbed the Japanese ukiyo-e influence into his work, describing color as flat plains of brilliant clarity, firmly bound by his typographic use of line.³⁷ The brief life of Toulouse-Lautrec has had a lasting impact on lithography and the whole of graphic arts that continues into present day.

As the center for artistic development in 19th century Europe, France, with her pleasures and failings, directed the development of lithography. Nearing the turn of the century, however, lithography started making strides in Germany. Edvard Munch, whose lithographic practice started in Paris and influenced German Expressionism, can be seen as an artistic link between these two regions.³⁸

Edvard Munch, much like Redon, was highly introspective in his artistic practice, and his work shared similarities with Symbolism's erotic mysticism and Romantic individualism. Munch created dark works of psychological complexity, utilizing the graphic practice established by Toulouse-Latrec to

explore themes of human experience and turmoil, similar to those investigated by his peer Van Gogh. His piece *Attraction I* (**Figure 12**), a haunting depiction of faceless lovers, is an example of his abstracted expression of desolate love and melancholic allure. The restless delicacy of line and obscured swathes of inky blacks helped Munch express his anxieties about life's dilemmas. Man describes his work as "the outcome of the experiences of a tortured soul transformed into a perfect artistic form;" this transformation, like the process of lithographic reiteration, allowed for new perceptions of the events and ideas his work reflected.³⁹ This motif of searing experience reflected as beautiful expression would guide lithography's development in Germany as a support to German Expressionism into the 20th century, handled by artists such as Kathe Kollwitz who dealt with the ramifications of a world in conflict.

The transformation of lithography, from its inception to its entrance into the 20th century, is as complex as the progression of art itself. Lithography's assimilation into artistic practices offered European artists an innovative tool to meet the unique cultural, ideological, and aesthetic challenges that spanned the century. Its maturation as an art form was directly influenced by the intentions and interests of its generation's artists; in that way, lithography is truly a child of the 19th century. As an artistic tradition, it has absorbed the lessons and challenges of a tumultuous age in history, coming into its own as a cultivated art form. By understanding its evolution as a means of expression, the value and tradition of lithography - in this modern age where problems of reproduction have been solved through more technologically advanced means - can be understood and furthered as a powerful artistic tool.

¹ Felix H. Man, *Artists' Lithographs: A world history from Senefelder to the present day*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1970, 11.

² Michael Twyman, *Breaking the mould: The first hundred years of lithography*. London: The British Library, 2001, 16.

³ Man, 16.

⁴ A. Hyatt Mayor, "Lithographs." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 7.3 (1948): 86-94. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 Nov. 2015, 87.

⁵ Man, 35.

⁶ Giovanni Garcia Fenech, "Ingres vs Delacroix: An Artistic Rivalry Spills over at a Party." *The Artstor Blog*. Artstor, 17 June 2012. Web. 29 Nov. 2015. <<https://artstor.wordpress.com/2012/06/17/ingres-vs-delacroix-an-artistic-rivalry-spills-over-at-a-party/>>.

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- ⁷ Colta Ives, "Lithography in the Nineteenth Century." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000. Accessed October 27, 2015.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/roma/hd_roma.htm
- ⁸ Man, 37.
- ⁹ Mayor, 88.
- ¹⁰ Mayor, 88.
- ¹¹ Man, 39.
- ¹² Ives, "Lithography in the Nineteenth Century." http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/roma/hd_roma.htm
- ¹³ Man, 40.
- ¹⁴ Mayor, 89.
- ¹⁵ William M. Ivins, "Daumier as a Lithographer." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 18.4 (1923): 94-98. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 Nov. 2015, 96.
- ¹⁶ Man, 42.
- ¹⁷ Ivins, 96.
- ¹⁸ Ives, "Lithography in the Nineteenth Century." http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/rlsm/hd_rlsm.htm
- ¹⁹ Mayor, 90.
- ²⁰ Mayor, 90.
- ²¹ Man, 49.
- ²² Colta Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism." *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 46.1 (1988): n. pag. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 Nov. 2015, 10.
- ²³ Man, 51.
- ²⁴ Man, 51.
- ²⁵ Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism," 19.
- ²⁶ Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism," 20.
- ²⁷ Mayor, 89.
- ²⁸ Ives, "Lithography in the Nineteenth Century." http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jpon/hd_jpon.htm
- ²⁹ Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism," 24.
- ³⁰ Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism," 26.
- ³¹ John Ward, "The Nineteenth Century: Autonomy of Color." *Yale Art Gallery Bulletin*, Vol. 27/28, Vol. 27, no. 3 - Vol. 28, no. 1 (1962): 33-46, 39.
- ³² Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism," 24.
- ³³ Bradford R. Collins, "The Poster as Art: Jules Chéret and the Struggle for the Equality of the Arts in Late Nineteenth-Century France." *Design Issues* 2.1 (1985): 41-50. *JSTOR*. Web. 29 Nov. 2015, 43.
- ³⁴ Collins, 50.
- ³⁵ Ward, 41.
- ³⁶ Ives, "Lithography in the Nineteenth Century," http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/laut/hd_laut.htm
- ³⁷ Man, 55.
- ³⁸ Man, 59.
- ³⁹ Man, 59.

Exhibition Paper



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He is not here: for he is risen. etc.



KATHERINE ANNE (NORTH) LADY GLESBERVIE.

Not in the 1790s. Not in the 1797.

A. Hamilton & Co. engravers.



SYLVESTER (DOUGLAS) LORD GLESBERVIE.

Not in the 1790s.

A. Hamilton & Co. engravers.



THE HON^{BLE} FREDERIC SYLVESTER DOUGLAS.

Not in the 1790s. Not in the 1797.

A. Hamilton & Co. engravers.



FREDERIC (NORTH) EARL OF GILSFORD.

Not in the 1790s.

A. Hamilton & Co. engravers.



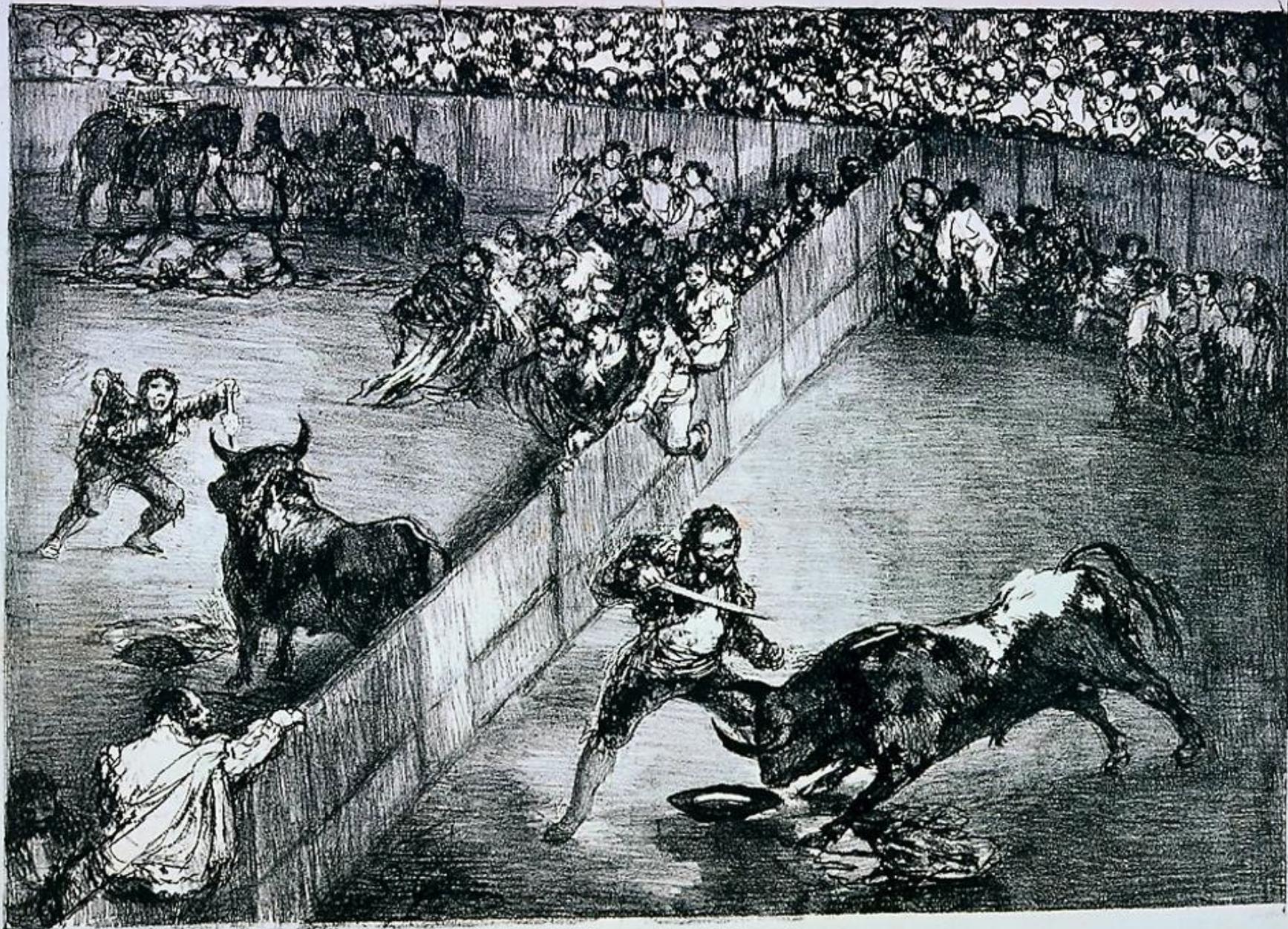
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THE FLEMISH FARRIER.

London. Published by Rodwell & Martin, New Bond St. Feb. 1. 1821.

C. Hullmandel's Lithography.





Engr. Delacroix.

Lith. de Delasnois.

Peune Tigre jouant avec sa mère







Deqa

In the studio, 1874

45 1874



Deque



FOLIES-BERGÈRE



La Loïe Fuller

© 1907 G. BERNARDINI

Les CÉLÈBES - Salles Théâtrales / en face Berges Paris



