



Title 302

L'Automobiliste 1898. A lithograph in a private collection by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec.

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Nothing could have been more interdisciplinary than the contribution by D.E. Tubbs which he called **The Car and its Artists**. Mr Tubbs, a journalist and veteran author of the history of motor transportation, had written and published numerous books and many articles about cars. When I met him, he proudly showed me his latest book *Art and the Automobile* which was published in 1978 by Lutterworth. "Here is something really interdisciplinary" he said and I shared his opinion. He kindly agreed to condense the substance of the book to an article for ISR and I received his manuscript together with 12 splendid illustrations from his own collection in July 1980 and published it in September 1981.

I was particularly interested in his contribution as I had always thought that technology had not inspired artists, perhaps with a few exceptions of railways, ships and aircraft during their historical beginnings. Tubbs soon proved to me that cars were a special case, perhaps because artists themselves owned and drove cars, but never railways, ships or aircraft. Tubbs had found in years of collecting, that eminent artists like Toulouse-Lautrec, Derain, Bonnard, van Dongen, Leger, Matisse and David Hockney have at least flirted with automobile subjects.

The real flavour of car art can only be transmitted through the superb 225 illustrations, particularly of the 50 colour pictures, of Tubbs' 1978 book, a copy of which lies now by my side as I write. Just as the technology of the car grew from the awkward pre-1900 single-cylinder three-wheeler to the supercharged racing monsters of the 1920s and 1930s, so the European artistic styles changed from post-Impressionism, Futurism, Surrealism, to Social Realism. In the United States after World War II, the motor car, celebrated as one of the chief totems of the American culture, finds its mirror in Pop art and Photo-realism. History of technology and of art flow past the reader as he turns the pages of this book of interdisciplinary splendour.

All I can do here is to give brief chapter headings of the book and of the ISR article based on it. Pictures of early motor car races 1895-1905; Ernest Montaut and his school of early poster artists; Futurism to Dada via Rene Vincent; Styling, coach work and interior appointments of the Jazz Age; Art and Architecture in motor car design by stylists; art for the enthusiast as portrayed by Bryan de Grinau, Geo Ham, Peter Helck and others; and finally the car in contemporary art and sculpture.

As a car enthusiast myself, once the owner of a beautiful 1935 four and a half litre silver Lagonda, I must admit that this interdisciplinary contribution gave me much pleasure to read, edit and publish.

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