**KU Pon-ung (구본웅, 具本雄, 1906-1953)**

Ku Pon-ung was a modern artist and critic active during the Japanese colonial period and the Korean War. Due to his spine curvature and eccentric personality, Ku was likened to the French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) and called "The Seoul Lautrec." Ku attended the Taiheiyō School of Fine Arts in Tokyo, where he was introduced to Fauvism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Cubism and other modern Western art styles, later pioneering their acceptance in Korea. In Tokyo Ku's paintings were shown in several modern art exhibitions organized by independent groups, held in opposition to state-sponsored exhibitions. In addition, Ku held solo exhibitions of unconventionally expressionistic oil paintings in Seoul. He participated in non-governmental exhibitions in Korea and established a group called *Mogirhoe* in 1934 with other Korean Western-style painters, their shows opposing the Chosŏn Art Exhibition, the annual juried show established by the colonial government in Seoul. Many of Ku's oil paintings were lost during the Korean War, but several portraits and still lives survive. Ku worked closely with contemporaneous writers and his friendship with a modern poet Yi Sang is well known. Ku also edited and published the literary magazine *Ch'ŏngsaekchi*. After the Liberation of Korea from Japan in 1945, Ku attempted to revitalize Korean art, experimenting with various formats and media, including traditional ink painting and newspaper illustration. He did so even during the turmoil of the Korean War.

**References and Further Reading**

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