



## Henri Rousseau: The Dream (One on One)

*Ann Temkin*

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A singular figure in the avant garde of the early twentieth century, Henri Rousseau (1844-1910) was a self-taught painter who turned to art after retiring as a customs inspector at the age of 49. Although he never left Paris, Rousseau painted a number of jungle scenes, drawing on images of the exotic as presented to the urban dweller through popular literature, colonial expositions and the Paris zoo. "The Dream" (1910) is the artist's last major work. Exhibited at the 1910 Salon des Independants a few months before Rousseau's death in September of that year, it exemplifies that surreal juxtaposition of the exotic and the domestic, realized with an uncanny exactitude, for which Rousseau is so beloved today. The poet and art critic Guillaume Apollinaire praised the work, countering his detractors: "The picture radiates beauty, that is indisputable. I believe nobody will laugh this year." In this volume, Ann Temkin, the Museum's Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture, guides readers in deciphering this mysterious painting, illuminating its significance and placing it within the development of modern art and in Rousseau's own life.

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