

# TEACHERS' RESOURCE

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL:  
BEYOND THE MOULIN ROUGE



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The Teachers' Resources are intended for use by secondary schools and colleges and by teachers of all subjects for their own research. Each essay is marked with suggested links to subject areas and key stage levels. The essays are written by early career academics from The Courtauld Institute of Art and are intended to give teachers and students access to the academic expertise available at a world renowned college of the University of London.

We hope teachers and educators will use these resources to plan lessons, help organise visits to the gallery or gain further insight into the exhibitions at The Courtauld Gallery.

**SUGGESTED CURRICULUM LINKS FOR EACH ESSAY ARE MARKED IN BLUE.**

To book a visit to the gallery or to discuss any of the education projects at The Courtauld Gallery please contact: [education@courtauld.ac.uk](mailto:education@courtauld.ac.uk)  
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**TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL TEACHERS' RESOURCE**  
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# WELCOME

The Courtauld Institute of Art runs an exceptional programme of activities suitable for young people, school teachers and members of the public, whatever their age or background.

We offer resources which contribute to the understanding, knowledge and enjoyment of art history based upon the world-renowned art collection and the expertise of our students and scholars.

The Teachers' Resources and image CDs have proved immensely popular; my thanks go to all those who have contributed to this success and to those who have given us valuable feedback.

In future we hope to extend the range of resources to include material based on the permanent collection in The Courtauld Gallery which I hope will prove to be both useful and inspiring.

With best wishes,



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Cover image:  
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec  
*Jane Avril leaving the Moulin Rouge*  
1892  
Oil on cardboard  
© Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art

This page:  
*At the Moulin Rouge (detail)*  
c.1892-95  
Oil on canvas  
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# 1: TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL:

## BEYOND THE MOULIN ROUGE INTRODUCTION TO THE EXHIBITION

Nicknamed *La Mélinite* after a powerful form of explosive, the dancer Jane Avril (1868-1943) was one of the stars of the *Moulin Rouge* in the 1890s. Known for her alluring style and exotic persona, her fame was assured by a series of dazzlingly inventive posters designed by the artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901). Jane Avril became an emblematic figure in Lautrec's world of dancers, cabaret singers, musicians and prostitutes. However, she was also a close friend of the artist and he painted a series of striking portraits of her which contrast starkly with his exuberant posters. Organised around The Courtauld Gallery's painting *Jane Avril in the Entrance to the Moulin Rouge*, the exhibition explores these different public and private images of Jane Avril. The exhibition brings together a rich group of paintings, posters and prints from international collections to celebrate a remarkable creative partnership which captured the excitement and spectacle of bohemian Paris.

In contrast to Toulouse-Lautrec, who was a member of one of France's oldest noble families, Jane Avril was the daughter of a courtesan. Born Jeanne Beaudon, she suffered an abusive childhood and, aged thirteen, ran away from home. The following year she entered the formidable Salpêtrière hospital in Paris to be treated for a nervous disorder popularly known as St Vitus' Dance. It was at one of the *bal des folles*, the fancy dress balls which the hospital organised for its patients, that she took her first dance steps and found both her cure and her vocation. New research undertaken for this exhibition examines the connections between her eccentric movements, described by one observer as an 'orchid in a frenzy', and contemporary medical theories of female hysteria. Her experiences helped shape her public persona and, as a performer, she was not only known as *La Mélinite* but also as *L'Etrange* (the Strange One) and *Jane La Folle* (Crazy Jane).

At the age of twenty she was taken on by the *Moulin Rouge* as a professional dancer. Adopting the stage name Jane Avril (suggested to her by an English lover), she was determined to make her mark as a star in the flourishing world of the Montmartre dance-halls and cabarets, which featured such larger-than-life personalities as *La*

*Goulue* (the Glutton), *Grille d'Égout* (Sewer-grate) and *Nini les-Pattes-en-l'air* (Nini legs-aloft). The ability to generate publicity through a carefully crafted image was the key to success and celebrity in the entertainment industry of Montmartre. A racy portrait of the brazen *La Goulue*, lent to the exhibition by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, underscores the contrasting sophistication of Avril's public image.

The epicentre of this world was the famous *Moulin Rouge*. Opened in 1889, it offered customers a nightly programme of performances by its roster of stars. At the *Moulin Rouge*, an exceptional loan from the Art Institute of Chicago, is one of Toulouse-Lautrec's most celebrated paintings and a highlight of the exhibition. It serves as the artist's homage to this venue as well as a monumental group portrait of his circle. Shown from the rear, Jane Avril is instantly recognizable by her red hair. The scandalous *La Goulue* is seen with raised arms in the background, where the diminutive figure of Lautrec's can also be made out. The ghostly face of May Milton, one of several English performers, looms into the canvas from the right.

Although she also sang, Jane Avril's true vocation was as a solo dancer and she devised her own choreographic routines and dress. Combining sensuality and ethereal detachment, her remarkable performances captured the imagination of artists and writers alike. Lautrec's friend, Paul Leclercq, described the scene:

*'In the midst of the crowd, there was a stir, and a line of people started to form: Jane Avril was dancing, twirling, gracefully, lightly, a little madly; pale, skinny, thoroughbred, she twirled and reversed, weightless, fed on flowers; Lautrec was shouting out his admiration.'*

Jane Avril became the subject of some of Lautrec's greatest posters, landmarks in the history of both art and advertising. One of the first was made to promote Avril's appearance at the *Jardin de Paris*, to which a special bus ran every night after the *Moulin Rouge* closed at eleven. This large and dramatic poster shows Jane Avril in the provocative high kick of the





**Painter and model, together, have created a true art of our time, one through movement, one through representation**

The critic Arsène Alexandre, writing in 1893



cancan, framed by the hand of a musician grasping the neck of a double-bass. The radical composition reflects Lautrec's admiration for Japanese prints. The poster was an instant hit and Avril credited it with launching her career. As in all his publicity posters, Lautrec focuses on enhancing the uniquely recognisable aspects of his subject's appearance. Referring to this image of Avril, the critic Frantz Jourdain praised 'the svelte spectator with her sharp eye, her provocative lips, her tall slender, adorably vicious body'. One of Lautrec's last posters of Avril shows her full length; a snake coils up her dress, animating her wild dance.

In 1896 Jane Avril travelled to London to perform at the Palace Theatre as part of the troupe of Mademoiselle Eglantine. At her personal request Toulouse-Lautrec designed a poster for the performance which shows Avril at the end of the line of four cancan dancers, captured in a brilliant froth of petticoats and black stockings. The exhibition reunites a group of material relating to this commission, including a preparatory drawing, Avril's letter to Lautrec from London and the programme for the Palace Theatre. Avril's repertoire included songs such as *Mon Anglais* (My Englishman). She admired England and critics speculated that aspects of her dance style and attire had English origins. She noted pointedly in her memoirs that 'over there, one lives freely, without bothering others or making fun of them, as happens so often at home'. New research has

uncovered further fascinating details about Lautrec and Avril's connections with England, including the first British exhibition of works by Lautrec in 1894.

Toulouse-Lautrec's relationship with Jane Avril was closer than with any of his other Montmartre subjects and she remained the artist's loyal friend until his death. Their friendship is reflected in a series of remarkable portraits in which the star is shown as a private individual, in contrast with her exotic poster image and her performances at the *Moulin Rouge*. An arresting bust-length portrait of Avril, loaned by the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, focuses on her startlingly white and angular face. The Courtauld Gallery's *Jane Avril in the Entrance to the Moulin Rouge* captures Avril on the cusp of public and private worlds. A carriage is glimpsed in the background while the hat and coat on the wall may allude to her male admirers. However, she seems withdrawn and far older than her twenty-two years. In *Jane Avril leaving the Moulin Rouge*, Avril is shown as a passer-by, an elegant but anonymous and solitary figure. The exhibition reunites these portraits for the first time and also includes a rich documentary section exploring the intersection of Avril's medical history and her public persona.

Toulouse-Lautrec's death in 1901 marked the end of the golden age of Montmartre. Jane Avril went on to perform briefly as a stage actress before marrying and settling into bourgeois obscurity. Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril examines a friendship which has come to define the world of the *Moulin Rouge*. However, it also looks beyond Avril's identity as a star of Lautrec's posters to consider the complex personal histories and the cultural changes which lay behind this remarkable creative partnership.

Left:  
*Jane au Jardin de Paris*  
1893  
Lithograph  
© Museum of Modern Art, New York

**CURRICULUM LINKS: KS3+ Art and Design, History, Art History, and other Humanities as well as Dance History**

## 2: OUT OF EDEN:

### THE DEMI-MONDE AND THE STAGE WORLD OF JANE AVRIL

'BENEATH THIS SHIMMERING SURFACE GILDED BY YOUTH, BEAUTY AND FORTUNE, BENEATH THIS WORLD OF LACE, OF LAUGHTER, PARTIES AND LOVE, CREEP SINISTER DRAMAS... SCANDALS, RUIN, DISHONOURED FAMILIES...CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM THEIR MOTHERS AND FORCED TO FORGET THEM QUICKLY IN ORDER NOT TO CURSE THEM LATER ON.'

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#### OUT OF EDEN

Written by Dr Caroline Levitt, a visiting lecturer at The Courtauld Institute of Art.

CURRICULUM LINKS: KS3/4+  
Art and Design, Art History, History, MFL  
French and other humanities

These words, spoken by the character Olivier in Alexandre Dumas' 1855 play *Le Demi-monde*, reflect not only the qualities of the socially marginalised 'half-world' that Dumas generically describes, but also the early life of Jane Avril (1868-1943). The *demi-monde*, Olivier explains, consists of women 'with a fault in their past, a stain on their name; they huddle together so that we see it as little as possible. With the same origins, the same exterior and the same prejudices as society women, they find themselves no longer part of that society and make up what we call a half-world, which is neither aristocracy nor bourgeoisie'. The *demi-monde* can be understood as a subversion of the bourgeois and aristocratic classes, lacking the delicacies or etiquette of both, yet retaining less expensive versions of their fashion and glamour. It is perhaps ironic that the *demi-monde* was celebrated and glamorised in operas such as Verdi's *La Traviata* (1853) and Massenet's *Manon* (1884), both of which end poignantly in tragedy, and which would have been performed in grand theatres to well-heeled audiences.

Jane Avril, born Jeanne Beaudon, was the daughter of a courtesan and an Italian client, who her mother claimed was a Marquis. She was looked after by her grandparents for a while, before returning to live with her mother, who abused her both physically and verbally and forced her to do whatever she could to get money. At the age of thirteen, Jeanne ran away from home and in 1882 was admitted, on the advice of the psychiatrist friend of one of her mothers' former lovers, to the Salpêtrière mental hospital for treatment, by Professor Charcot's innovative methods, of a nervous condition.

Whether or not Jeanne's father was indeed of noble standing, she and her mother were certainly women with faults in their past and stains on their names. Jeanne joined countless other women at the Salpêtrière, which turned out itself to be a section of the *demi-monde* in which Jeanne would flourish. Every year, the hospital held what was known as the *bal des folles* ('the ball of the mad women'), in one of the wards; this was a fancy dress party for the inmates and public alike, and it was during this event that Jeanne discovered her love of dancing





Above:  
 At the Moulin Rouge: The Dance  
 1890  
 Oil on canvas  
 © Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia

and received her first public applause. The unconventional setting for Jeanne's rise to stardom chimes with the subversion of high society that the *demi-monde* effected in general: dressed in the trappings of the bourgeoisie, Jeanne and the other women could play at being what they were not, and whilst the hospital ward was hardly the stage of a grand theatre, it gave Jeanne the opportunity to experience something of the glamour of Parisian culture.

Seemingly perversely, Jeanne described the hospital as an 'Eden', pointing out that everything is relative. It was with a heavy heart that, cured, she left in 1884, only to be found by her mother, who once again abused her. Jeanne was forced to run away again and work as a prostitute in the Latin Quarter of Paris, where she met other girls and began to frequent dance halls and make a name for herself. One such venue was the *Bal Bullier*, near to the university, which was essentially a garden with a dance floor. This was not an uncommon format, as we shall see, and it attracted many students. Women were allowed free entry, presumably because their presence attracted male clientele. There, and in the nearby café the *Cloiserie des lilas*, she met a variety of writers of the day, including Jean Moréas, Paul Fort, Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Oscar Wilde and the English poet Robert Sherard. Sherard gave her the stage name Jane Avril and thus began to help her form a public identity for herself. Once again, she could play at being what she was not - this time to earn a living.

1889 marked one of the most important events in Parisian cultural history: the city was host to that year's *Exposition universelle* (Great Exhibition, or World's Fair). It was for this that the Eiffel Tower was built, along with countless temporary exhibition pavilions and entertainment venues, to awe the crowds that would flock in from across the world. Jane Avril worked for a while as a rider at the hippodrome, and also as a cashier for the sideshows; but for her, the greatest impact of the *Exposition* was the opening of the *Moulin Rouge* in Montmartre, where she was employed as a dancer. Montmartre at this point was still very much on the outskirts of the main city and the *Moulin Rouge* (literally 'Red Windmill', so named after

its emblematic red sails that turned day and night) consisted of an interior dance floor and stage area, once again within a garden, to the side of which stood a huge hollow model elephant, large enough to host belly-dancing performances. It was conceived as an exotic venue, based on the traditional format of the *café-concert*, itself a development of simple bar entertainment, whereby performances would take place as customers sat around at tables eating and drinking. It attracted clients from every conceivable sector of society, and there shop assistants and menial workers would rub shoulders with artists, the aristocracy and even royal foreign visitors. In one of Lautrec's depictions of the *Moulin Rouge* (see left), the varying attire and bodily stances of the figures reinforces the class distinctions: the elegantly-dressed and gracefully-poised woman in the foreground contrasts with the vigorous dancing of the girl in the centre, who wears no hat and shows off her undergarments. This was a place where the *demi-monde* was not so much the subject of the entertainment provided, but rather where this 'half-world' performed to entertain the world it imitated. As in the *Salpêtrière*, women 'huddled together', this time to dance the cancan (a form of a quadrille), in frothy skirts and (usually) bloomers.



However, as in the *Salpêtrière*, Jane Avril did not blend in with the crowd for long. She began to dance as a soloist rather than in groups, and was the only dancer allowed

Right:  
 La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge  
 1891-2  
 Oil on board  
 © Museum of Modern Art, New York

to wear coloured bloomers instead of the usual uniform white. Her style contrasted with that of other famous *Moulin Rouge* soloists, such as Louise Weber, known as *La Goulue* (see previous page), and yet Jane Avril had an appeal of her own. The critic and art collector Frantz Jourdain wrote that '*La Goulue was not particularly distinguished. It was not the same with Jane Avril – la Mélinite – whose strange and aristocratic pale mask, intelligent look, sometimes tinged with sadness, and spiritual legs enchanted Lautrec. To confuse La Môme Fromage [Weber's girlfriend] and her colleagues with Jane Avril would be – and I mean no offence to anyone – to mix up serviettes and napkins... The queens of the quadrille jigged; Jane Avril danced.*' From her success at the *Moulin Rouge*, Jane Avril earned a place dancing at the *Jardin de Paris*, an open air ball, concert hall, stage and funfair set up in the gardens of the Champs Élysées (on the site where the Petit Palais now stands) in 1885. The venue also included a puppet theatre and an entrance hall of crazy mirrors. The *Jardin de Paris* would combine with the *Moulin Rouge* in 1897 in preparation for the building of the *Petit Palais* for the 1900 *Exposition universelle*, and the two venues had in fact been established by the same person: Charles Zidler. When the *Jardin de Paris* first opened, the dancing had been somewhat incidental, with those who had gone there to enjoy the attractions getting up on the dance floor to entertain. However the tight links between the *Moulin Rouge* and the *Jardin* meant that by 1893, when Lautrec made his poster *Jane Avril au Jardin de Paris* (see section 1) it had become an after hours haunt of the *Moulin Rouge* dance troupe. As the dancers came down from Montmartre, so did their audience, and thus the crowds that flocked to the Champs Élysées were as diverse as those at the *Moulin Rouge*. A reporter for *Le Mirliton* wrote of the venue '*Nothing nicer, Goddammit, after a good supper, than to come and take the air in this new Eden, where you find everything you need for your diversion and enjoyment*'. From the relative 'Eden' of the Salpêtrière, Jane Avril had found her place in a world where the *demi-monde* created a staged paradise for the rest of the world, and where these two halves of society came together.



The venues in which Jane Avril performed were distinct from the grand theatres that were the reserve of the genuinely wealthy,

although it is interesting to see that even within such opulent venues as the theatre that provides the setting for Pierre Auguste Renoir's *La Loge*, the *demi-monde* and the bourgeoisie are confounded through the medium of paint. The woman who looks genteelly back at us, with her powdered face, shimmering jewellery and velvet gloves was painted from a model called Nini, who lived in Montmartre. She, like the women described by Alexandre Dumas, claims through fashion a glamorous identity that is not her own. Whilst this woman sits passively waiting to be looked at, and her male companion looks around the theatre, probably at other women, we cannot be certain of what is taking place on the stage; but in this era when operas were regularly being written and newly performed, it seems reasonable to conjecture that it may very well have been a staged representation of the *demi-monde* to which Nini herself belonged.

In later years, Jane Avril performed at the *Folies Bergère*, the oldest nightclub of its kind in Paris, established in 1869. However, unlike the barmaid in Édouard Manet's *A Bar at the Folies Bergère*, Jane Avril seems somehow complicit in Lautrec's representations of her.



Whilst we may see something of the tinge of sadness that Jourdain noted in Avril in the face of the barmaid, the two women are in many ways very different from each other. The one is dressed in the costume provided for her by her employers, the other is able to personalize the traditional outfit of the cancan and make it her own. The barmaid remains still, cut off from the society she serves by the marble bar, whilst Avril seems to enter the audience's space and actively engage with them through her gestures. Importantly, Avril is a named star, promoted by the artist who paints her, whilst the barmaid remains anonymous, but for the name of the model (Susanne) and seems to be vulnerable to the advances of the clients who pay for her service.

Finally, Edgar Degas' depictions of adolescent dancers reinforce for us just how far Avril had come by the time Lautrec painted her, from the nervous fourteen year-old who entered the Salpêtrière. In *Two Dancers on a Stage* we see not fully-grown women, but young girls, their pug noses representative of their lower social class. They are most likely girls from the *corps de ballet* rather than stars of the company, and have probably been sent out to work as dancers to earn money for their families. To the far left of the composition, cut off by the edge of the canvas, a third dancer stands, perhaps even in the wings. Degas gives us a view from the side of the

stage, perhaps of a rehearsal, encouraging us to look beneath the 'shimmering surface' and 'world of lace' to the plight of girls who belong to the *demi-monde* and perform it for entertainment.

In contrast, the Jane Avril of Lautrec's paintings is a confident young woman, performing not elite ballet or opera for a wealthy audience, but actively creating a new form of popular culture in which the *demi-monde* is no longer marginal, composed of fallen women hiding behind one another, but takes centre stage, with individual protagonists able to find a style and place of their own.



Left:  
Pierre-Auguste Renoir  
*La Loge*  
1874  
Oil on canvas

Middle:  
Édouard Manet  
*A Bar at the Folies-Berère*  
1882  
Oil on canvas

Right:  
Edgar Degas  
*Two Dancers on a Stage*  
c.1874  
Oil on Canvas

# 3: ARTIST AND MUSE OR MUSE AND ARTIST?

In 1893 the art critic Arsène Alexandre wrote of Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril: '*Painter and model, together, have created a true art of our time, one through movement and one through representation.*' Alexandre clearly recognized that there was something special in the relationship between the painter, Lautrec, and his model, friend and dancer Avril. Their collaboration resulted in the creation of unusual and exciting images that challenged the conventions of representing women. This was an equal partnership, where both parties respected each other's creativity and both worked to serve each other's interests.

Today, Jane Avril seems like an unconventional sex symbol, especially in the portraits painted by Toulouse-Lautrec. Avril was living and working in the same world as the women painted by Manet and Degas, but Lautrec's images of Avril are not representations of an easily available beautiful girl but of a highly individual and elegant woman. His portraits of her capture a sense of the respectful intimacy they shared as friends as well as fellow artists. Although they came from very different social backgrounds they can both be seen as outsiders, set apart from conventional society. Despite this they had found a home in the chaotic world of Montmartre.

Lautrec came from a privileged aristocratic family but throughout his life he was dogged with health problems and by his short stature - the growth in his legs was stunted after a he broke them as a teenager. When discussing his work, critics often cast him as a bitter, suffering artist and suggested that this drew him to depict the ugly and painful aspects of life, although more recently his work has been characterised as honest and realistic.

Jane Avril had a similarly troubled past. Her mother had been a famous courtesan and as a girl Jeanne Beaudon - who changed her name to Jane Avril once she began performing - lived with her grandparents. As her mother became older, her career waned and money was short. After years of physical and verbal abuse Avril ran away and sought the help of one of her mother's former lovers. He had a psychiatrist friend, Dr. Magnan, who diagnosed Avril with chorea, a nervous disorder also known as

*the dancing madness*, which manifests itself in small muscular contractions especially in the face and arms. Dr Magnan recommended she should be taken into medical care and in December 1882 Avril was admitted to the famous Salpêtrière hospital under the supervision of Professor Charcot. Charcot was renowned for his study and treatment of hysteria and pioneered methods such as hypnotism and electric shock therapy. Avril stayed in the hospital for eighteen months, and it became a sanctuary for her away from her mother and her precarious former life. She also discovered her talent as a dancer during her time as a patient, attracting applause for her performance in one of the annual fancy dress balls held at the Salpêtrière.

Avril returned home but it was not long until she ran away again, this time with a lover, a young medical student she had met at the hospital. The affair was short lived and in her despair Avril contemplated drowning her self in the river Seine. On her way down the river she met the Madame of the brothel, *la grande Marcelle*, who took pity on her and offered her a roof. Avril's new life had begun. Like the barmaid in Manet's painting she was obliged to spend the night with patrons but she also had the opportunity to dance, first at the public dance hall, the *Bal Bullier*, and then later at the newly opened *Moulin Rouge* night club. It was here she met Lautrec in the early 1890s.

Lautrec was not the only artist to capture Avril, she also inspired sculptor Antoine Bourdelle who produced a porcelain bust of the dancer in 1900, its sinuous lines and slightly sinister facial expression casting her as an Art Nouveau *femme-fatale*. Picasso was less flattering in his satirical charcoal sketch, the harsh lines making Avril look shrunken and skeletal. While Lautrec's portraits of Avril were not universally flattering, they capture more of her personality than Picasso or Bourdelle have done, showing her as an individual rather than a generic symbol of femininity.

Lautrec painted Avril in several different guises, as an elegant, fashionable woman, as a connoisseur of art and as explosive performer. With her slim figure and facial twitch, a lasting marker of her traumatic

childhood, her appearance did not fit in with the other more traditionally glamorous or beautiful dancers at the *Moulin Rouge*, such as the provocative *La Galoue*. It was this difference, perhaps, that Lautrec and the other customers of the *Moulin Rouge* found fascinating. Their attraction to Avril can be put in the context of a widespread desire for difference such as the enthusiasm for non-western art and for the art of the insane.



The unconventionality of Avril's persona and performances is brilliantly captured in *Jane Avril Dancing* (above) a rare depiction of the moment of performance. Avril was a can-can dancer and here we see her from

Above:  
*Jane Avril Dancing*  
c.1891-92, Oil on cardboard  
© Musée Toulouse-Lautrec, Albi

## ARTIST AND MUSE OR MUSE AND ARTIST?

Written by Katie Faulkner, a current PhD candidate at The Courtauld Institute of Art and gallery educator.

**CURRICULUM LINKS:** KS4+  
Art and Design, History, Sociology,  
Art History and other humanities.

the back with her skirt hitched up to reveal her slender calves. Her knees are pointed inwards and her weight is delicately balanced on her left foot. The sketchy brush strokes overlap producing a wavering outline. The left foot, for example, is drawn in pale outline just below a darker and more solid rendering, an indication of its previous position and the quick back and forth movement of dance. Avril went to Laurec's studio several times to sit for her portraits. These were friendly meetings with Lautrec mixing up potent cocktails, which Avril tried to avoid drinking. She often performed for Lautrec in the studio, sometimes singing while she danced. This portrait could have been realised as Avril danced in front of Lautrec although he often also drew and painted her from memory.

By choosing to show Avril from the back, Lautrec has emphasised her unusual movements. It is the individuality and unique qualities of Avril's dancing that is emphasized, rather than straightforward sensuality and sexual appeal. The lines that seem to spark off her legs and hips recall the shaking and shuddering of a fit. We can see why the writer Georges Montorgueil commented on the 'epileptic choreography' of the dancers at the *Moulin Rouge* and other nightclubs. The combination of the awkward positioning of stiff limbs and shaking lines vividly shows why others tended to describe Avril's dancing as 'strange' or 'crazy'. Images of women who were diagnosed as hysterics, such as the studies of Paul-Marie-Louis-Pierre-Richer, were easily available in Paris at the time and had a widespread appeal. As well as their medical interest, the images of scantily clad women writhing around in the throes of a hysterical fit also held a strong erotic charge. Avril shared quarters with hysterical patients in the Salpêtrière and would certainly have been aware of the power of these images. It is not clear if Avril consciously evoked the movements of the hysterics in her own dances, but contemporary viewers could have made the connection and drawn links with Avril's time spent under the care of Charcot.

One of Lautrec's portrait of Avril from the early 1890s (right) shows the interest that the painter took in her not just as a performer but as a person in her own right. The portrait is considered to be one of the most honest representations of Avril, a real likeness of her appearance and personality.

At the same time, in painting this portrait Lautrec demonstrates his skill and originality as a painter. Unlike his striking advertising posters or other portraits, which reference the *Moulin Rouge*, there is no indication of Avril's working life here. This representation is autonomous of her celebrity. Lautrec has painted her with an intelligent expression – her head, topped with a characteristically elaborate hat, is cocked to one side and her eyebrows appear to be slightly raised as if she is listening and thinking intently. She is also shown wearing a Garrick cloak, a fashionable English riding coat. The dramatic high collar and the swingy bulk

of the coat lend her slight figure a sense of dignity and elegance. This idiosyncratic fashion choice also points to her interest in all things English, an Anglomania she shared with Lautrec.

Lautrec has also inscribed his own personality into the work through his distinctive painting style. The portrait has been painted on cardboard, which was Lautrec's preferred painting support. The absorbency of the board necessitated a decisive technique. Lautrec worked quickly, making bold strokes with dilute oil paint, which resulted in the dramatic lines and flat, matt surfaces that make up this uncompromising portrait of Avril. This approach requires the use of strong tones and deeply pigmented colours. The dark reds, greens and blues of the background and Avril's outfit vividly contrast with her golden hair and pale face punctuated with red lips. This sombre palette creates a more contemplative atmosphere than the other more garish portraits done in the garish lamp light of the *Moulin Rouge*.

It is easy to see how Avril's unusual and ephemeral dances could be lost in the sweeping narrative of the history of Paris at the end of the nineteenth century. Lautrec's paintings and lithographs have perhaps inevitably become the more permanent markers of the personalities of Montmatre. Although not always highly regarded by the art critics of his own time, Lautrec's paintings and posters are now seen as masterpieces and are proudly hung in galleries and museums all over the world. Avril's legacy is perhaps not as celebrated.

In the 1890s, however, the writer Arsène Alexandre saw Avril as a true artist. Alexandre felt that Avril had mastered 'the most lively French art, the most incontestable, the most attractive, and perhaps the only one still left [...] the art that a woman uses to adorn herself.' Alexandre described how Avril's thin body was the perfect 'pretext' for the wonderful layers of fabric that made up her costumes, comparing her to an orchid in a frenzy. He makes it clear that her dresses were an integral part of the choreography and performance: 'She composes bright orange schottishes, with a few black notes at the clef (gloves and stockings); polkas in clear lilac, waltzes in a minor key of black.' Alexandre conjures up an image of Avril as a composer, likening the colour of dresses to time and key signatures, while frills and flounces are compared to the ornamental musical figures such as trills and intermezzi. For Alexandre, 'a woman who knows perfectly how to find and announce her unique character with the right formula of the right clothes, is a true work of art.' His emphasis is on Avril's artistry rather than Lautrec's. It was Lautrec's role to keep the memory of Avril's 'subtle charms' alive. In Alexandre's interpretation at least, Avril was not a muse who acted as a blank canvas for the projection of Lautrec's his own visions and desires. Instead she held Lautrec and her audience enthralled, keeping a tight control of her own image and how it was recorded.

## LAUTREC'S PAINTINGS AND LITHOGRAPHS HAVE PERHAPS INEVITABLY BECOME THE MORE PERMANENT MARKERS OF THE PERSONALITIES OF MONTMATRE.

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Above:  
Jane Avril  
c.1891-92,  
Oil on cardboard, mounted on panel  
© Clarke Art Institute, Williamstown

# 4: TOULOUSE-LAUTREC:

## THE MASTER OF PRINTMAKING



Above:  
*Divan Japonais*  
1893  
Lithograph  
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

### THE MASTER OF PRINTMAKING

Written by Vanja Vlahovic, PhD candidate at The Courtauld Institute of Art and gallery educator.

**CURRICULUM LINKS:** KS4+  
Art and Design, Graphic Design,  
Art History and other Humanities.

Without a doubt, Toulouse-Lautrec's most significant contribution was to the realm of the graphic arts. By adopting lithography and poster art as main mediums for his artwork, Lautrec single-handedly promoted their standing to a respectable medium in the art world. Lautrec's first lithographs date from 1891, the course of his evolution into the graphic arts cannot be described briefly since, as this exhibition demonstrates, his artistic output encompasses such a large variety of works, from drawings to paintings and prints. Such variety, combined with interrelationships between his work in printing and other media, establishes Lautrec as a true graphic artist who was well versed in the intricacies of the printing process. Lautrec's lithographs as a whole represent a separate artistic idiom, which is not only distinct from drawing and painting but actually enhances the formal techniques of both. This essay will address the significance of the lithograph print in Lautrec's artwork, outlining the status of the print form in his oeuvre and the technical process of printmaking, as well as documenting some of the influences of the Japanese print on this medium.

One of the most immediately noticeable qualities in many of Lautrec's artworks is their focus on a single figure, such as Jane Avril, as emphasized in this exhibition. Lautrec was known for becoming artistically 'obsessed' for a period of time with different women, he referred to his obsessions as 'furias.' These obsessions were often focused on female performers, specifically actresses and music-hall stars, including the dancers Louise Weber, also known as 'La Goulue' (depicted by Lautrec in his first poster of 1891) and of course Jane Avril (a close friend of the artist), in addition to the performer Yvette Guilbert. Almost all of Lautrec's work is on the subject of Parisian nightlife, similar to that of his older contemporary Edgar Degas, but infused with a much more uncensored viewpoint, rich with raw energy. The art of the two men was indeed similar, Lautrec drawing his subjects, like Degas, from contemporary life: Parisian theatres, dance halls and circuses. Both artists also specialized in portraying movement and depicting personal moments of the lives of women through private viewpoints with abrupt cropping, as influenced by

the success of photography and the growing interest in Japanese prints. For instance, both Degas' and Lautrec's novel, asymmetric compositions are derived from their mutual admiration of Japanese prints, which often feature figures off centre in the composition or even partially cropped. Furthermore, both Degas and Lautrec used the medium of lithography, although Lautrec more so than Degas. When asked about the similarities between their work, Degas acknowledged Lautrec's work as being very close in style to his own, although more vulgar, referencing Lautrec's depictions of prostitutes and female performers. However, what most separates these two artists is the immense contribution Lautrec made to the realms of colour lithography, specifically with his poster art, a medium he propelled into the mainstream of 19th and 20th century art.

Lautrec's attitude toward the lithograph is incredibly important when analyzing the significance of the role of the lithographic print in his oeuvre. Between his drawings, paintings and lithographs of the same topic it appears that his drawings and paintings are preparatory sketches for his prints. Thus, it is his prints that are the end result of his work, and thereby of the most significance to the artist. It is even more noteworthy that there is no sign, as one might expect there to be, of a gradual development towards the pictures' final lithograph form. On the contrary, there is no change in the arrangement of figures between the cartoon and the lithograph, rather the outlines of all the figures and the essential features of plane and space are unchanged from the drawn or painted study to the final lithograph.

Further supporting the high esteem Lautrec assigned to his lithographs is the high quantity and huge variety of his works in print form. Lautrec made book illustrations, theatre programs, song-sheet covers, invitations and even menus, as well as illustrations for a growing number of periodicals. Lautrec's work first appeared as drawings reproduced in various magazines, some attached to *café-concerts*. However, his prints increasingly featured in journals that catered for discerning print collectors, such as *L'Estampe Originale* and *La Revue Blanche*. *L'Estampe Originale*, for instance, a creation of André Marty, also known for

having published *Le Café-Concert*, was a publication issued three times a year in limited editions to select subscribers. It featured lithographic prints by leading artists including Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro and Odilon Redon. Lautrec was so keen on these types of journals that he later launched a similar journal of his own titled *L'Escarmouche*. It unfortunately came to an end within a few short months, running from 12 November 1893 to 14 January 1894.

From his first print, the poster *La Goulue*, Lautrec favoured lithography as his main printing medium because of the ability to mass-produce these prints inexpensively and quickly. Lautrec's posters were commissioned as advertisements for performers and their establishments, hanging on walls throughout Paris and reaching a wide and broad audience. In fact, most of the lithographs he made were commissioned by newspaper editors or writers, dealers and publishers, and for specific events or theatrical projects. To properly evaluate Lautrec's use of this medium, however, the technical process and evolution of lithographic printing should first be addressed.

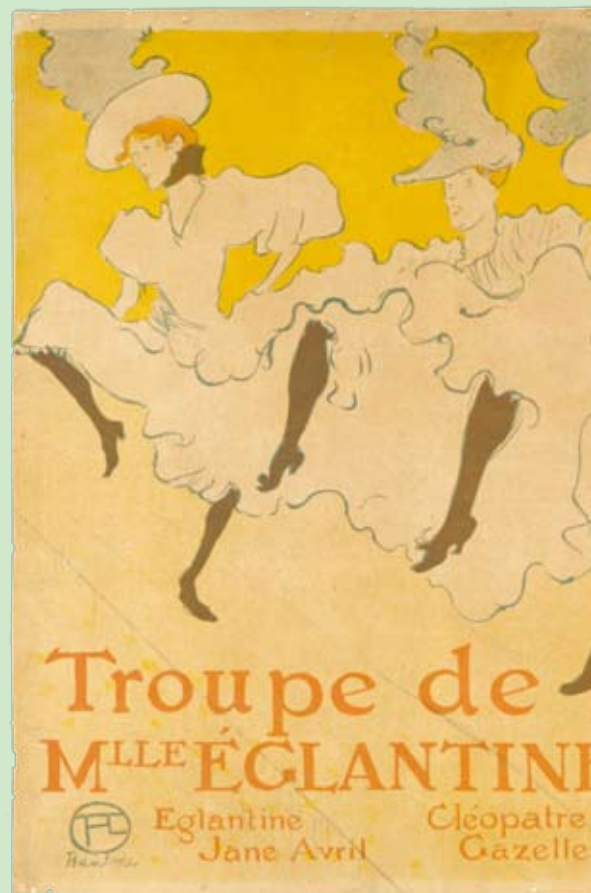
Lithography is a method for printing using a stone (lithographic limestone) or a metal plate with a smooth surface. The Bavarian author Alois Senefelder is attributed with inventing this technique in 1796 as a economic method of mass-producing texts. However, lithography can be used both for printing texts and for images, such as artwork. The technical process involves drawing an image in wax or another oily substance on a lithographic stone, which is slightly etched and divided into hydrophilic and hydrophobic regions. The hydrophilic regions accept a film of water and thereby repel the oily ink and the hydrophobic regions repel the water and accept the ink. Thus, lithography's technical success is due to a very simple knowledge of chemical properties. For instance, the positive part of an image is a hydrophobic, or water hating substance, while the negative image would be hydrophilic or water loving. Thus, when the plate is introduced to a compatible printing ink and water mixture, the ink will adhere to the positive image and the water will clean the negative image. This allows a flat print plate to be used, enabling much longer and more detailed print runs. When printing, the stone is kept wet with water, as the water repels the greasy ink and the hydrophobic areas left by the original oily drawing accept it. When the hydrophobic image is loaded with ink, the stone and paper are run through a press which applies even pressure over the surface, transferring the ink to the paper and off the stone. The image may be printed directly from the stone or plate, however, in this technique the image or text will appear in reverse from the original. Another option is offset lithography, which is used today for the production of most high-volume texts or books, in which the image is transferred to a flexible sheet, usually rubber, for transfer to the paper.

During the first years of the 19th century, lithography made only a limited impact on

printmaking, mainly due to the remaining technical difficulties with this manner of printing. In 1816, Godefroy Engelmann, who owned a press in Paris, addressed many of the technical difficulties and by 1820 lithography became an increasingly popular medium choice for artists such as Delacroix and Géricault. Lithography had a very strong presence in France after that point and by the 1870s artists such as Odilon Redon, Henri Fantin-Latour and Degas produced much of their work in this way. Colour lithography was invented and popularized in the 1890s and became increasingly popular with French artists, most notably, with Lautrec. When creating his lithographs, Lautrec most commonly drew directly onto litho stone, and only in exceptional cases did he use specially prepared transfer paper. He drew mostly with greasy lithographic chalk or a paintbrush with oily inks. Before his editions were printed, trial proofs and individual colour proofs were taken, so that corrections could be made where necessary, and finally the work was released for printing. Lautrec was very involved in this process, working closely with the printer and often making many corrections until he got the perfect design. Lautrec often worked with the small Ancourt printing firm, and here Lautrec worked first with the lithographer Cotellet, and then with Henri Stern, who later opened his own business.

For his posters Lautrec often printed quite large editions, ranging from 1000 to 3000 prints. He also created sheet music title pages, programmes, and so on, and these were also often printed mechanically, although he did use a hand press for any smaller editions. Despite the very large quantity of posters he created, today only a few copies have survived. This is because, despite the big editions, these posters were printed on a cheap, wood-pulp paper and were intended mainly for use as functional, yet ephemeral, advertisements, not as museum bound works of art. Furthermore, when printing his posters, Lautrec made only a few impressions available for specialist collectors of posters and prints.

Since Lautrec is best known for pioneering colour lithographs, it is important to discuss his technique in this new form of lithography. Lautrec would start with one keystone with the image drawn in olive green or brown ink and would then use one stone for each colour. In his most experimental prints, he would sometimes even use five stones in a wide range of colours, and the fourth stone was inked in a rainbow of colours, known as 'iris painting.' After the fifth stone was inked and while the ink was still wet, Lautrec or his printer sprinkled gold or silver powder over the print, creating a shimmering effect. This technique was adopted from Japanese prints. Not surprisingly, no two impressions of this print are the same, each differing slightly from the other. Like many other artists of the period, such as Van Gogh, Lautrec collected Japanese prints. The flatness of the subject, bold use of colour and the importance of outline and simplified line are all elements of Japanese art that are clearly visible in





**NEVER SATISFIED,  
ALWAYS UNREMITTING,  
FOR ONE MORE  
RETOUCH, LAUTREC  
TOYED WITH THE  
STONE UNTIL THE  
LAST MOMENT.**



Lautrec's work. Another technique favoured by Lautrec was the spatter technique, sometimes referred to as *crachis*. This technique involves dipping a small brush in lithographic ink, shaking off the excess, and then running a knife along the surface to produce a spattering of ink. Lautrec used this technique to great tonal effect in many of his prints. However, despite his use of these novel techniques, the large majority of his prints were actually monochromatic images drawn in crayon. More than other printmaking techniques, artists working in lithography largely depended on access to a good printer, and the development of Lautrec's work, with colour lithography for instance, was greatly influenced by his location in Paris, the city most advanced in lithography at this time.



Now that we have evaluated Lautrec's technical process of lithographic prints, I would like to turn our attention to analyzing several examples of his prints, which appear in this exhibition. One of the most famous of these examples is *Jane Avril au Jardin de Paris*, 1893 (See section 1 for image). This print features Jane Avril at the *Jardin de Paris*, which was opened in 1885 by the famous Charles Zidler. The *Jardin de Paris* featured a concert-hall, dance hall, fairground, puppet-theatre, diorama, and crazy-mirrors in its entrance. It became a favorite spot for the stars of Montmartre in addition to the elite of Europe, including the aristocrats of France and England. In this poster, Lautrec shows Jane Avril's well-remembered performances at the *Jardin de Paris*. Depicting her awkwardly mid-movement and off centre, the design is reminiscent of Degas' depictions of dancers mid-movement in what is often termed 'stop-pose' action. The use of solid blocks of colour, such as for Avril's dress, and the position of Avril off centre in the frame is reminiscent of Japanese wood block prints. Here Lautrec uses three colours in this colour lithograph, which appear to be orange, yellow and black. However, contemporary accounts of the poster indicate that its original colours were in fact red and yellow; the orange colour is possibly a product of the pigment fading over time or perhaps that this is a later version of the print. This poster experienced immense success and Lautrec sold numerous copies, even re-issuing the print in several different versions.

Lautrec's *Troupe de Mlle Eglantine* from early 1896 (top) references Jane Avril's trip to London as part of the Troupe

d'Eglantine, to perform at the Palace Theatre. Similar to Lautrec's poster *Jane Avril au Jardin de Paris*, 1893, Lautrec's *Troupe de Mlle Eglantine* is again limited to three colours, yellow, red and black. Again featuring his subjects mid-movement, Lautrec further emphasizes this aspect of rhythmic movement by using block colours to depict the dancers' legs. However, unlike his earlier poster, Lautrec keeps the skirt of the dress devoid of colour entirely. Instead he uses the intense block colour to depict the background of the poster in a vivid eye-catching yellow, perhaps an advertising strategy to make the poster more effective in drawing in the attention of potential clients.

However, it is important to keep in mind that Lautrec's prints were not only confined to the realm of posters, as evidenced by, for example, Lautrec's *Couverture de L'Estampe Originale* created in 1893 (bottom). As mentioned earlier in this essay, *L'Estampe Originale* was a catalogue published three times a year featuring limited edition lithographs by many of the most prestigious artists of the time, including Lautrec, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro and Odilon Redon. Typically the work took more of a traditionally artistic approach to the lithograph than the commercial use of the poster by Lautrec. *Couverture de L'Estampe Originale* was featured in the *L'Estampe Originale* portfolio of fine-art prints. This print depicts Jane Avril in the printing studio *Imprimerie Ancourt* along with its master lithographer Cotelle, the elderly man shown turning the handle of the press. In this work, Lautrec depicts the process of creating the print, a unique inside glance into Lautrec's personal experience with the process of printmaking. As I mentioned earlier, Lautrec was passionate about his printing methods and techniques. When making his posters, the artist would stay at the printer's premises for hours on end: '*Never satisfied, always unremitting, for one more retouch, he toyed with the stone until the last moment.*'

In sum, it is Lautrec's use of the lithograph that sets him apart from his contemporaries. His groundbreaking use of colour lithography for mass-produced art invaded the everyday lives of Parisians, redefined advertising and brought lithography a new status as an artistic medium. Thus it is through his prints and posters that we see Lautrec's greatest contribution to the arts.

Top:  
*Troupe de Mlle Eglantine*  
1896  
Lithograph  
© Victoria and Albert Museum

Bottom:  
*Couverture de L'Estampe originale*  
1893  
Lithograph  
© Museum of Modern Art, New York

# 5: MUSIC IN MONMARTRE

Norman Atkins' 1893 lyrics for *Oui Tray Bong! Or My Pal Jones* were memorialised by Charles (not yet Charlie) Chaplin. Telling of a visit to Paris by three friends, the song establishes the hedonistic pleasure for which Montmartre in particular was famous, and simultaneously translates this exoticism into an English hit, full of the feigned innocence and prudishness-with-provocative-spin that so exercised music-hall audiences on both sides of the Channel. At the *Folies-Bergère* and *Moulin Rouge* in Paris, and the *Gaiety* and *Palace Theatre of Varieties* in London there was a healthy exchange of artists, plays in translation, and music. Jane Avril undertook a London tour in 1893, but if legend is correct, had assumed her stage name under the influence of English poet Robert Sherard, who introduced her to the *Café Vachette*, and could often be heard singing *Mignonne, voici l'Avril*. By 1904 Thomas Barrasford, the entrepreneur owner of sixteen British music-halls, had opened a Parisian *Alhambra* to complement the existing theatre at Leicester Square. The review of its opening night in *Le Figaro*, 7th February 1904, was tongue in cheek: 'thanks to our ever so Parisian music-halls, we will end up with an absolute mastery of English. Most of the artists having names from beyond the channel.'

In 1909, the *Alhambra Theatre of Varieties* in London staged a ballet, *The Two Flags: A Franco-British Divertissement* including Maid Marianne and John Bull to mark the diplomatic union of the *Entente-Cordiale* (1904). A further ballet *Our Flag* followed in December 1909, with music by the eighteenth-century composer Thomas Arne and including the now famous tune of *Rule Britannia*. This ballet was celebrated in crisp bright oil by the Camden Town painter Frederick Spencer Gore whose canvas *Rule Britannia*, 1910 (Tate), along with more reflective images by Walter Richard Sickert (*Mini Cunningham at the Old Bedford*, 1892, and *Noctes Ambrosianae*, 1906, of spectators in the

## MUSIC IN MONTMARTRE

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**CURRICULUM LINKS: KS4+**  
Art and Design, Music, Art History and other Humanities.

gods of the Middlesex music-hall in Drury Lane), provide the English counterpart to Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's extensive work documenting and advertising the celebrities of Montmartre in music, dance, and theatre in general.

Yet no matter how atmospheric, visual images can only give a fraction of the sensation of noise, movement, vibrancy and dynamism that stimulated both professional artists and the clientele of these very successful venues. This essay endeavours to outline some of the music that was so necessary to the performance of Avril's and nearly every other act. Despite indications of instruments and notation in Lautrec's works, and the publication and advertisement of scores in the journals of the cabaret-artistic such as *Le Mirliton* and the *Chat Noir*, matching particular music to Avril's dance routines is far from easy. Many popular waltzes were inadequately transcribed, but amongst them, one by Adolphe Gauwin is inscribed to Avril. Although it is a simple piano reduction that survives, the piece would have been taken up by whatever instruments were available. Lautrec frequently depicts string instruments rather than piano, and Gauwin himself was an adept arranger of large scores: his 1903 reduction of Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème* for cinema audiences uses trombone, oboe, horns in F, bassoon, clarinet, flute, violin, viola, cello, bass, harp and percussion. At the *Chat Noir*, the shadow-theatre regularly demanded up to twenty-three instrumentalists and fourteen singers.

In contrast to these extravagant orchestrations, cabarets such as the *Chat Noir* or *Auberge du Clou* also provided a nursery for *poète-chansonniers* (singer-songwriters) who would later grace the stage in vaudeville tours de chant of some larger *café-concerts* such as the *Casino de Paris*. Maurice Chevalier and the singer-dancer *Minstinguett* commenced in exactly this way, becoming famous through the revue *Pa-ri-ki-ki*, 1918. Popular, idiomatic, and avant-garde mixed freely between venues, categorised as *cabaret artistique*, *music-hall* and *café-concert* largely according their respective entry fees, the opulence of their décor, and scale of their spectacles. Where the first were generally smaller, more intimate and of more esoteric

design, offering a mixture of poetry, chansons, operettas and shadow theatres, the latter mixed circus entertainment with a public dance floor.

In an evocative lithograph, *Jane Avril, au Jardin de Paris*, 1893 (see section 1), Henri-Toulouse Lautrec synthesised music and dance. Space is defined by a dark border emanating from the neck of a double bass, looping around Avril on the dance floor, and an improvisatory music stand forms the boundary between orchestra pit and stage, the floorboards of which sheer away at a sharply raked angle. The image captures the dynamic and vivacious atmosphere of the *Jardin de Paris*, one of the most popular *café-concerts* in Champs Elysées, whose clientele was drawn by the knowledge that the stars of the *Moulin Rouge* would congregate there post-performance, to begin their own revelry.

Lautrec's poster-portraits of Avril are matched by series depicting the singer-songwriters Aristide Bruant and Yvette Guilbert. Their catchy music and Bruant's political and satirical lyrics infused the culture of Montmartre. Bruant's publicity journal for his cabaret *Le Mirliton* published scores of the latest songs amid its cover illustrations, offering a montage of recent evenings in colour and sound. "*La Vigne au vin*" and a French version of the American hit "*Tha-ma-ra-boum-de-hé*" appeared on 20th January and 17th February 1893 in designs by Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen. On both covers, the musical score sits piecemeal, intruding on the narrative visual record beside it. Aesthetically disjointed, the covers provide a record of events to be reconstructed in the mind of the reader: a guide rather than a lure. Nonetheless, publishing scores in this way was excellent advertising. In an age of musical proficiency, scores could be taken home and learnt by the club's clientele as well as taken on more seriously to other cabaret or music-hall venues around the city.

For striking and atmospheric posters, Bruant, like so many others, turned to Toulouse-Lautrec, who was also responsible for the vast majority of covers of Bruant's independently published songs. Determined and pugnacious, Bruant's stage-presence radiates from

MY PAL JONES, FULL OF COGNAC, STARTED PRANCING,  
THEN HE SAID, 'LET'S GO AND SEE THE LADIES DANCING'  
TO THIS PLACE WE'D NEVER BEEN BEFORE,  
AND SUCH SIGHTS I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

//



Above:  
French photographer (late 19th century)  
*The Moulin Rouge*  
c.1899  
© Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

This essay is accompanied by three live performances in The Courtauld Gallery:

THURSDAY 30 JUNE, 28 JULY,  
AND 15 SEPTEMBER 2011  
7-8PM

To find out more please visit:  
[www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/  
exhibitions/2011/LautrecEvents](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery/exhibitions/2011/LautrecEvents)

two near mirror-image posters by Lautrec, *Ambassadeurs: Aristide Bruant dans son cabaret, 1892* and *Eldorado: Aristide Bruant dans son cabaret* of the same year. Bruant's iconic hat, cape and red scarf advertise celebrity: potent and carefully managed self-fashioning that subsumes the identities of the two competing venues. Bruant was not alone in assuming a costume that was instantaneously recognisable. Yvette Guilbert's long black gloves became so ubiquitous that Lautrec would be able to reduce her to just that. In a subtle poster for the cabaret-artistic *Divan Japonais* of 1893, the gloves make it clear that it is Guilbert singing to a small orchestral accompaniment, although we do not see her head. In the foreground sits Jane Avril in a characteristically flamboyant hat, beside her, according to her recollection, the editor of the *Revue Wagnérienne*, Édouard Dujardin. For the *Divan Japonais*, effects of costume or profile were enough to demonstrate the range and celebrity of their artists and clients.

Dujardin's presence at the *Divan Japonais* is indicative of the cross-pollination of what might otherwise be regarded as contrary genres in this period. Jean Cocteau was later to regale Claude Debussy for being insufficiently French precisely due to Wagnerian influences detected in his work. Yet Debussy himself had returned from Bayreuth in 1889 determined not to fall into writing Wagnerian eulogy, however many of Dujardin's circle formed his close friends (for instance Ernest Chausson and Emmanuel Chabrier). Moreover, alongside Maurice Chevalier and Eric Satie, Debussy occasionally played the piano at the cabaret *Auberge du Clou*, where Satie encouraged him to make use of a cabaret style: the result a song, *La Belle au bois dormant* (July 1890), to a text by Vincent Hyspa. That Satie and Debussy held one another in high regard is well known, but this brief collaboration between Debussy and Hyspa was to have a resounding effect on Satie's cabaret career.

Although Satie's cabaret work is frequently disregarded today, he was known as a *café-concert* composer in his town of Arcueil-Cachan, and between 1887 and 1909 this was the music from which he earned a living. Taking a job as the second pianist at Rudolphe Salis' *Chat Noir* cabaret in

February 1888, Satie accompanied singers, arranged popular music, and played for Henri Rivière's brilliantly conceived and rapidly famous shadow-plays. First introduced to Salis in 1887 as 'Erik Satie, gymnopédist!', it was at the *Chat Noir* that the *Gymnopédies*, *Gnossienes*, and *Ogives* probably had their first hearing. The three series of pieces for solo piano were advertised in *Le Chat Noir* journal in 1888, 'conceived in the mystical-liturgical genre' by the 'sphinx-man.' The enigmatic qualities both of the pieces themselves and Satie's hyperbolic publicity were wholly in keeping with the aesthetic of the *Chat Noir*. In contrast to the lavish spectacles of the *Moulin Rouge* or *Folies-Bergère*, the *Chat Noir*'s theatricality was orchestrated through medieval décor that summoned the glorious age of François Rabelais and François Villon, a relic of the latter

*Tendrement* (1902) and *La Diva de l'Empire* (1904) are perhaps the most well known. Where *Tendrement* has been described as a 'sung waltz', perhaps written under the influence of Darty's usual Viennese composer, Rodolphe Berger, *La Diva de l'Empire* is a classic cakewalk with the syncopated rhythm of rag-time America, introduced to Paris through Sousa marches. Satie himself was later to admonish the next generation, 'do not forget what we owe to the *Music-Hall*, to the *Circus*'. It is from there that stem the newest creations, tendencies, and curiosities.' It was precisely the varied quality of Satie's composition that alerted Jean Cocteau to his potential as leader for a new group of composers after the First World War. Evoking Satie's warning, Cocteau questioned Francis Poulenc: 'Are you familiar with...the Spectacle Casino de Paris. Merry-go-

poetry would join arch satire. Music thrived in these conditions, breaking academic formulae and embracing popular idioms no less so than the poetry of Apollinaire or the painting of Picasso. Amid the ferment of Montmartre the fin-de-siècle was transposed into the foundations of modernism.

#### SUGGESTED REPERTOIRE:

**Maurice Chevalier**

*Place Pigalle*  
*Ma Pomme*  
*Dites-moi, ma mère*

**Claude Debussy**

*La Belle au bois dormant* (July 1890),  
text by Vincent Hyspa.

**Yvette Guilbert**

*Le Jeune homme triste*  
*La Fiacre*  
*L'Éloge des vieux*

**Reynaldo Hahn**

*C'est sa Banlieu*, from *Ciboulette*  
Act 2 (1923)

*La Dernière Valse* from *Une Revue* (1926)  
*Quand la nuit n'est pas étoilée*, *Le Bel Inconnu* (1932)

**Jules Massenet**

*Mignonne, voici l'Avril*  
(1875, *Mélodies* vol I)

**Olivier Metra**

*Waltz of Roses* (c.1892)

**Francis Poulenc**

*C* (1943)

**Erik Satie**

*Gymnopédies*, *Gnossienes*, and *Ogives*  
(1888)

*Je te veux* (1897 or 1901)

*Tendrement* (1902)

*La Diva de l'Empire* (1904)

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Left:  
French artist (late 19th century)  
*Programme from the Moulin Rouge*  
1892, Printed matter  
© Bibliothèque nationale de France



allegedly held in Salis' inner sanctum. It is in proximity to this context too then, that we should regard Satie's hieratic *Sonneries de la Rose+Criox*, 1892, written for the inauguration of the first exhibition of Josephin Péladin's *Salon de la Rose+Criox*, and dedicated to Debussy. Possibly taking a cue from the *Chat Noir* and anticipating Vincent d'Indy's conservatoire faction the *Schola Cantorum* founded in 1894, Satie's pieces for solo piano were interspersed with Palestrina's *Missa Papae Marcelli*. Although the *Chat Noir* did not itself practice Péladin's occultism, its sense of ceremony is well documented. As Salis' original co-owner Emile Goudeau recalled, new poetry was piped in to a piano fanfare after which Salis himself would declaim: 'Silence, mylords, the celebrated poet X... will let us hear one of those poems for which the crowns were plaited by nymphs in grottos... the grottos of Montmartre, the holy city.' The celebrated poets numbered Paul Bourget, Guy de Maupassant, Frédéric Mistral; the chansonniers, Aristide Bruant.

If the *Chat Noir* was the site for Satie's more esoteric music, then it was at the *Auberge du Clou* that he formed a lasting collaboration as composer for the cabaret singer Vincent Hyspa. Writing for Hyspa and the singer Paulette Darty, Satie produced a number of songs specifically for this venue. Of the twenty-eight manuscripts, *Je te veux* (1897 or 1901),

rounds dizziness world upside-down velvet mirrors and enamel-painted Louis XIV horses which are rearing in a paradise of dentists and theatre loges.' The cautions carried over into the compositions of the post-war avant-garde group *Les Six*. Poulenc's song 'C' with a text by Louis Aragon mixes popular and art genres much as Debussy's and Satie's cabaret songs of the 1890s had. Simultaneously, the darling of the *Princesse de Polignac*'s turn of the century soirées, Reynaldo Hahn, was to compose light operettas looking back to this period of compositional liberation.

Drawing the threads of these networks of people and venues together, the lens of Jane Avril herself is useful to sharpen the extraordinary rich mixture that this essay has only been able to outline. Maupassant, philosopher Henri Bergson, and actress Sarah Bernhardt would meet at the psychiatrist Jean-Martin Charcot's dramatic Tuesday lectures at the Hospital of the Salpêtrière, where Avril had been a patient in the early 1880s; patients and society attendees would dance together at the legendry Salpêtrière mid-Lenten balls before the artist-bohemians would, perhaps, be joined by the hospital's one-time inmate at the *Chat Noir* for a late night-cap. Equally incongruous, the composer Gustave Charpentier would write a cantata for Lenten revelries in Montmartre, where diffuse symbolist

# 6: SWEET AND STRANGE:

## ART AND MADNESS AT THE CLOSE OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The dancer Jane Avril and the artist Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec were mutual inspirations for one another's creativity in the final years of the nineteenth century. This essay complements Courtauld curator Nancy Ireson's research into Avril's life, and opens out new ways of seeing how Jane Avril drew on associations with madness, particularly the quintessentially nineteenth-century ailments hysteria and chorea, in order to dance with a wild innovation that wowed audiences in France and abroad. Toulouse-Lautrec's images of Avril are also set in the context of a wider consideration of how illness was perceived in *fin-de-siècle* France and how it was painted. By focusing on iconic works by Henri Matisse, Vincent van Gogh and Georges Seurat in the Courtauld's permanent collection, the Gallery's Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril exhibition can be seen as a compelling exploration of two key ideas in western art: the genius artist, and the perceived madness of bohemian eccentricity.

### AN EXPLOSION AT THE MOULIN ROUGE

Joseph Oller built the *Moulin Rouge* in 1889 as an exotic and fashionable cabaret club on the border between respectable and *demi-monde* Paris on the Boulevard de Clichy near Montmartre. Jane Avril's 'crazy' dance style appealed to the club's owner Charles Zidler, and she soon began dancing at the *Moulin Rouge* to critical acclaim. The writer Jean-Paul Toulet saw Jane Avril's routine at the *Moulin Rouge* in the 1890s and exclaimed that Avril was 'something voluble and harmonious that, from head to toe, seems to vibrate in its entirety. You follow it with your eyes, like a whirlpool... But sharply and suddenly, she eludes her own rhythm, breaks it, creates another; and she never seems to weary of reinventing herself.' Reinvention, a frenetic pace, and an unexpected whirl of imagery defined not only Avril's dances but also Toulouse-Lautrec's *Moulin Rouge*-inspired artwork.

Born Jeanne Louise Beaudon, the dancer was encouraged by the British poet and critic Robert Sherard to take the stage name 'Jane Avril'. Rechristened, Avril was one of the most celebrated dancers of the *fin-de-siècle*, taking Paris and London audiences by storm. The name 'Avril' (April in English) had implications of youth, vigour and freshness – a springing into life.

This would have suited her dance routine well. Moreover, she was often seen in a style of dress known as 'baby English', in which grown women would appear on stage like oversized dolls, singing lyrics with a tongue-in-cheek innocence. Just as the French music hall scene featured aspects of fascination with British style, Parisian cabaret acts and its associated new kind of popular art – championed by Toulouse-Lautrec – appealed to British audiences. Toulouse-Lautrec's reputation in London was partially secured by posters displayed at the *A Collection of Posters* shows in 1894 and 1896 at the London Aquarium. Images of Avril featured at both events.

Jane Avril's nickname at the *Moulin Rouge* was *La Mélinite*, after a well-known French brand of explosive. It may also have connected her with her past in the Salpêtrière sanatorium, discussed below, as this site was formerly an arsenal. Avril disliked being called *La Mélinite* however, not because of its suggestion of a powerful blast, but because it implied that the skill of her performances was not really located in their grace, subtlety or technical intricacy, but rather in a volatile explosion. In his essay *Celle qui danse* (She Who Dances), Arsène Alexandre described Jane Avril on stage as 'an orchid in a frenzy'. Orchids had significant cultural associations at the time, as they were perceived to be emblems of decadence. Avril's art form was a decadence on the edge, in a state of paradoxically measured loss of self-control.

Toulouse-Lautrec's image of Avril (right) in the middle of a dance routine confronts the viewer with an alarming yet attractive physical contortion. The Courtauld's catalogue entry for the picture describes it as 'erratic and fit-like', and an example of 'epileptic choreography'. Feet awkwardly turned, leg sharply akimbo, Avril's body – particularly at its delicate yet tensile joints – seems pushed to its outer limits. In her memoirs, Avril claimed that upon discovery of the music hall scene and what she might offer as a performer who could push boundaries whilst holding a crowd, she 'went to dance and leap, like a runaway goat, or better, like the madwoman I must have been, to an extent.'



Above:  
*Celle qui danse*  
Pub. 29 July 1893  
Printed material  
© Musée Montmartre, Paris

### SWEET AND STRANGE

Written by Dr Ayla Lepine, visiting lecturer at The Courtauld Institute of Art

**CURRICULUM LINKS:** KS4+  
Art and Design, History, Psychology,  
Sociology, Art History and other  
Humanities.

## PERCEPTIONS OF MADNESS

When Jane Avril was still Jeanne Louise Beaudon, a traumatic and abusive childhood resulted in a long stay at the Salpêtrière between 1882 and 1884. This hospital was famous in the late nineteenth century for its treatment of patients with a variety of mental and physical illnesses, including hysteria (which was often perceived as a mental condition specifically affecting women and linked with sexuality) and chorea. The teenage Beaudon was diagnosed with the latter condition. Chorea is a disorder in which the body makes involuntary rapid movements and muscular contractions. It was seen as entirely distinct from hysteria and often connected with significant past events, such as physical abuse, which could act as triggers. Chorea and 'choreography' have the same Greek root. Chorea's uncontrollable gesticulations can consist of twisting, writhing motions that seem to proceed systematically from one muscle group to the next. The connotations of 'dance' were potent and conscious for Jane Avril as she boldly began her career on the threshold between illness and entertainment.

The most famed doctor at the Salpêtrière was Professor Jean-Martin Charcot, who regularly used photography to record the process of patients' hysterical attacks. The hospital amassed an extensive iconography of mental illness and its physical effects. Jane Avril's memoirs distance her from this activity, and she places herself as an observer on the outside of this recording exercise rather than a participant. Avril believed that many patients diagnosed with hysteria were inclined to perform for the camera, emphasizing the extent to which a fit would consume and distort the body. Lisa Appignanesi, who has written extensively on the history of psychology and is Chair of the board of the Freud Museum in London, explained that at the Salpêtrière, Charcot's patients diagnosed with hysteria *'like the early silent film stars who may well have imitated their expressions, went through the dramatic paces of their condition for the camera.'* This practice was not exclusive to Charcot's work at the Salpêtrière. In London at the Bethlem Royal Hospital (from which the word 'bedlam' is derived), the doctor Hugh Diamond regularly photographed female patients in order to create a visual encyclopedia of madness. Here too, the boundary between scientific observation and performance was very unclear. A recent exhibition at the Wellcome Institute in London showcased the intersections of art and madness in Vienna at the turn of the century, and explored the relationship between madness and modernity. In Vienna's sanatoriums and in the groundbreaking work of Sigmund Freud, conditions such as hysteria were documented, magnified, and held up for public scrutiny as inspiration for medical experts and artists alike.

In the 1880s the Salpêtrière in Paris annually opened its doors for the *Bal des folles* (top right). Patients dressed in their finest (or in Jane Avril's case, borrowed a fine dress from the doctor's daughter) not only to dance and celebrate, but also

to put themselves on show for a curious public eager to see the inner workings and inhabitants of a famous sanatorium. This was no obscure event; it was a popular date on the Paris calendar and even the famed actress Sarah Bernhardt came to the Bal to meet the patients and experience the physical and mental effects of their conditions up close.



There was no moral quandary about seeing mental illness as a source of entertainment and levity in France at the close of the nineteenth century. Serious medical enquiry was matched by enthusiastic public curiosity. Illustrations and photographs of hospital patients undergoing treatment or in the midst of a violent and involuntary episode were widely circulated. As such, Jane Avril's approach to musical hall dance routines and her overt references to convulsive fits and uncontrollable physical gesticulations would probably have been easily understood by a titillated audience as allusions to physical signs of madness. The historian Rae Beth Gordon has made a strong case for connecting *café-concert* performances to a 'hysterical aesthetic', noting that the dancers themselves were deliberately invoking hysterical references in order to create new movements and routines. Avril described the hysterics she had met and watched at the Salpêtrière as 'stars of hysteria' who 'created a sensation'.



## THE GENIUS ARTIST

Vincent van Gogh painted his *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* in 1889. It is one of the most famous and important images in the history of art, and is often used to cement van Gogh's reputation as the quintessential 'mad genius'. Van Gogh's bouts of mental instability and their direct impact on his painting continue to be a subject of debate. One of the most incisive discussions of the reception of van Gogh's

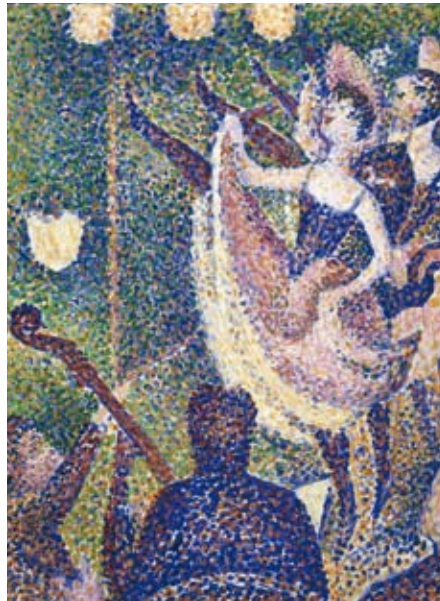
**BEFORE THE MIRROR'S  
DANCE OF SHADOWS,  
SHE DANCES IN A  
DREAM,  
AND SHE AND THEY  
TOGETHER SEEM,  
A DANCE OF  
SHADOWS;  
ALIKE THE SHADOWS  
OF A DREAM.**

//

Top:  
French photographer  
*The Ball of the Madwomen (Le Bal des folles)*  
c. 1900  
© Service des Archives de L'Assistance  
Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris

Bottom:  
Vincent van Gogh  
*Self-portrait with Bandaged Ear*  
1889  
Oil on canvas

work in relation to his apparent insanity was written by the art historian Griselda Pollock in 1980. Pollock contends that we must look beyond the strange celebrity culture built up around the volatile fusion of painting and illness in order to consider van Gogh's art on its own terms, informed but not overpowered by popular biographical readings. Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait...* in the Courtauld Gallery represents the painter in the midst of personal struggle and points to its aftermath. There is no promise of complete healing after the severity of physical violence. Positioned in warm outerwear near the threshold of the studio between the anxiety of an unfinished canvas and the inspiring presence of a nineteenth-century Japanese print, van Gogh emphasized the physical injury – a cost of mental unrest – by locating it literally within his practice and experiences as an artist. Placing pain and medical discourse at the epicenter of his art connects van Gogh's image in surprising and strong ways with many of Toulouse-Lautrec's representations of Jane Avril, and with Avril's performances themselves.



Eccentricity's potential to surge towards new advances in art is also evident in the work of both Georges Seurat and Henri Matisse. Like Toulouse-Lautrec and many others, Seurat found rich subjects for pictures in the Paris cabarets and *café-concerts*. His *Study for Le Chahut*, also finished in 1889, combines strong compositional diagonals with his characteristically intricate pointillist technique. Seurat's development of pointillism has often been seen as an obsessive tendency exploited through his volatile genius for painting. This perception has been cemented for a public searching for understanding of his peculiar yet visually arresting post-Impressionist technique with Stephen Sondheim's 1984 Pulitzer-winning musical *Sunday in the Park with George*.

When the first technicolour can-can whirl of stimulation was losing its spark in Montmartre, Henri Matisse began to entirely revolutionize the boundaries of painting. The first decade of the twentieth century saw the rise of the Fauves, who were given their movement's name by critics who claimed this new art by Matisse

and André Derain seemed to have been produced by wild beasts, not refined Frenchmen. Matisse's bold lashes of colour, such as in *Red Beach* of 1905, are expressive of deep feeling rather than naturalistic observation. To push at the boundaries of art and of social norms in order to make something radically new took many forms in the prolific and rapidly changing years of the *fin-de-siècle*. The creative relationship between Jane Avril's dance and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's paint has to be seen within this broader range of artistic experimentation.



The poet Arthur Symons believed that the dancers he saw in London and Paris were at the cutting edge of creativity, devising new moves and drawing on a daringly wide range of influences. Jane Avril was at the forefront of that pioneering set of performers, and her self-conscious incorporation of gestures and contortions of the patients she lived with in the Salpêtrière confirm this. Symons' poem *La Mélinite*, inspired by Jane Avril, puts the dancer's art beyond reality in a world of dim light, magic and ambiguity; the dancer and the shadows she animates refuse to be separated and distinct:

*Before the mirror's dance of shadows  
She dances in a dream,  
And she and they together seem  
A dance of shadows;  
Alike the shadows of a dream.*

In his vivid, energetic image of the *Troupe de Mlle Églantine* in 1896 (see section 4), Toulouse-Lautrec set Jane Avril on the margins of the high-kicking gang, leg bent in at the knee and turned inwards toward the trio in the foreground. By showing Jane Avril dancing in time and in rhythmic harmony yet somehow more liberated and set apart, Toulouse-Lautrec's composition singles out Avril's style and peculiarity, establishing her image on the edge as a powerful visual analogy for his own artwork.

Left:  
Georges Seurat  
*Study for Le Chahut*  
1889  
Oil on panel

Right:  
Henri Matisse  
*Red Beach*  
1905  
Oil on canvas

#### FURTHER READING:

Lisa Appignanesi: *Mad, Bad and Sad: A History of Women and the Mind Doctors from 1800 to the Present* (London: Virago, 2008).

Jane Avril: *Mes mémoires suivi de Cours de danse fin-de-siècle* (Paris: Phebus, 2005).

Sander L. Gilman, ed: *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origin of Psychiatric Photography* (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1976).

Sander Gilman, Roy Porter, George Rousseau, Elaine Showalter, and Helen King: *Hysteria Beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

P. W. Halligan, C. Bass and J. C. Marshall, eds: *Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Hysteria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

Nancy Ireson and Anna Gruetzner-Robins: *Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril: Beyond the Moulin Rouge* (London: Paul Holberton, 2011).

# 7: REGARDER!:

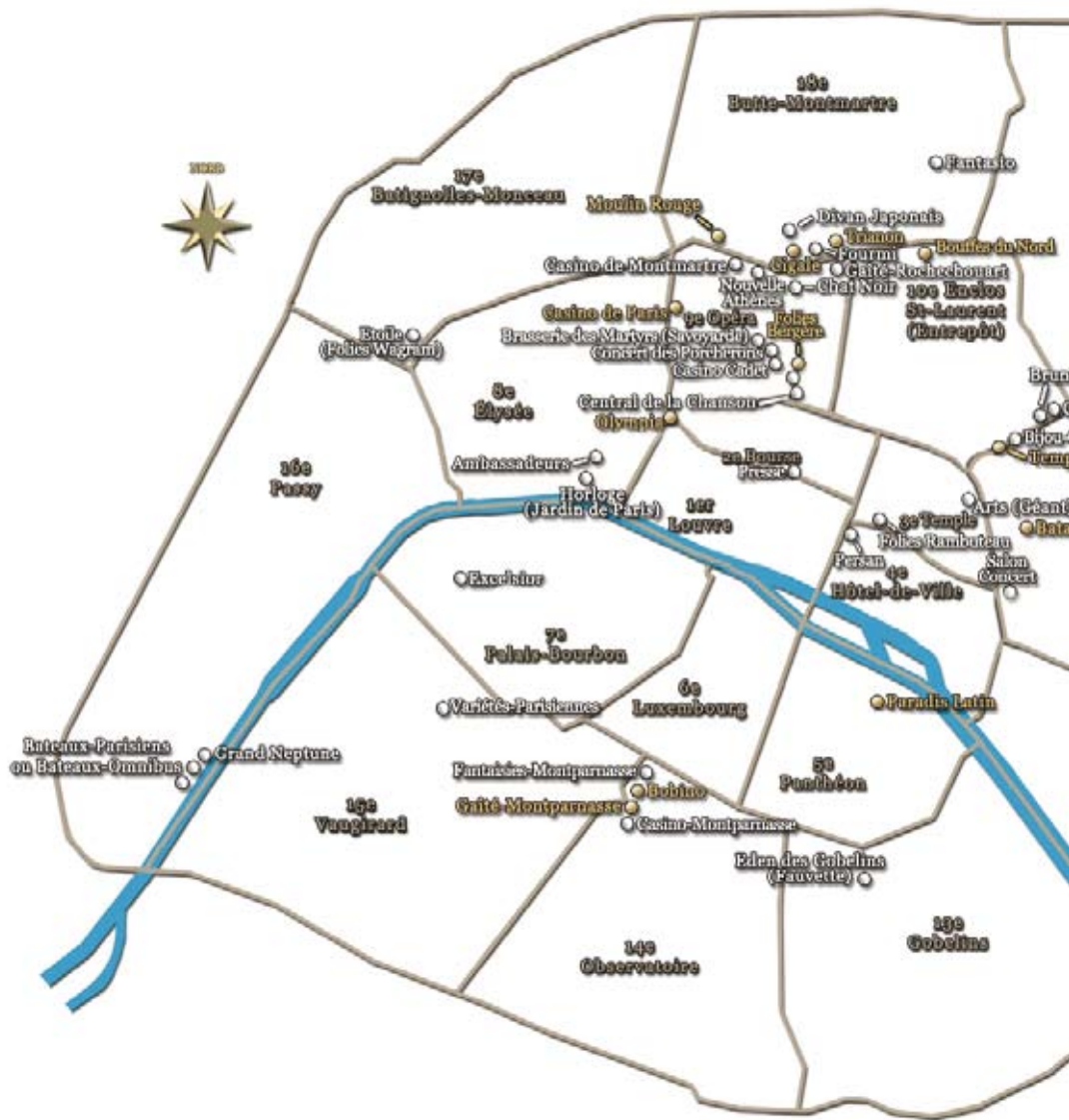
## NE ME PARLEZ PLUS DU 'GAY PAREE'

La notion du "Gay Paree", synonyme de divertissement, de débauche et de vie populaire et artistique de la fin du XIXe siècle, attire toujours de nombreux touristes et curieux à Paris. Le terme 'Gay Paree', inventé à la Belle-Epoque (à la fin du 19e et début du 20e siècle), dénote le sentiment de liberté que le nouveau gouvernement des années 1880 insufflé grâce aux nouvelles réformes. C'est à cette époque que la Marseillaise devient l'hymne national, que le 14 Juillet devient fête nationale, que les réunions publiques sont autorisées et que la liberté de la presse est promue. Les cafés de Paris, considérés auparavant comme des endroits louches, se multiplient et fleurissent.

À Montmartre, le Moulin Rouge illumine encore de nos jours le boulevard de Clichy, et l'Olympia et les Folies-Bergère sont toujours des salles de spectacles très réputées. En hommage à cette époque, on trouve à chaque coin de rue des affiches, des tee-shirts et d'autres sortes de marchandises reproduisant les plus célèbres affiches de spectacles de Toulouse-Lautrec et de ses contemporains.

La légende populaire nous fait imaginer des lieux malfamés, miteux, érotiques et dangereux. Cependant, le succès de ces salles de spectacles reposait surtout sur le talent des artistes qui s'y produisaient ainsi que l'immensité des lieux : le Moulin Rouge par exemple, avait des jardins où l'on pouvait monter à dos d'âne, le Casino de Paris comprenait une patinoire, le Chat Noir était haut de trois étages et la salle principale des Folies-Bergère renfermait un grand podium où se produisaient des numéros de cirque. Bien que le public aimait 's'encanailler' et assister à des spectacles parfois lascifs, exotiques ou bizarres, on se rendait dans ces établissements en tenue du soir, particulièrement au Moulin Rouge.

À cette époque le succès des bals parisiens soulève la désapprobation des autorités civiles et religieuses. La débauche paraît y régner, et les danses sont taxées d'obscénité. Lieux de sociabilité et de détente, les cabarets donnent parfois l'impression d'être des foyers de subversion. Ils ne s'attaquent pourtant pas directement au pouvoir, à l'ordre social, aux bonnes mœurs ou à la religion ; ils



### REGARDE! NE ME PARLEZ PLUS DU 'GAY PAREE'

Written by Alice Odin and Marie Sautin  
Translation by Alice Odin  
(for a full English translation see overleaf)

CURRICULUM LINKS: KS4+  
MFL French.

Right:  
Henri-Gabriel Ibels  
Cover to *Le Café-Concert*  
1893  
Lithograph  
©Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Map:  
J. Marchioro  
© Du Temps des cerises aux Feuilles mortes

# À MONTMARTRE, LE MOULIN ROUGE ILLUMINE ENCORE DE NOS JOURS LE BOULEVARD DE CLICHY, ET L'OLYMPIA ET LES FOLIES-BERGÈRE SONT TOUJOURS DES SALLES DE SPECTACLES TRÈS RÉPUTÉES



se détournent de la bourgeoisie prude et sérieuse. Ils sont, après tout, les seuls lieux où les différentes classes sociales se retrouvent et se rencontrent, et où insouciance, légèreté et grivoiseries sont autorisées. Il faudra attendre les années 1910 pour que le milieu du crime ternisse l'image de Montmartre et de Pigalle avec l'arrivée de la prostitution et du crime organisés.

Si nous connaissons tous le Moulin Rouge immortalisé en 2001 dans le film de Baz Luhrman, les affiches du Chat Noir ou le French-Cancon, très peu d'entre nous savent cependant où se situent aujourd'hui les cafés-concerts, les bals et les music-halls de cette époque. Moins d'un tiers ont survécu dans leur état d'origine, et très peu sont encore utilisés comme lieux de spectacle ou de divertissement.

## PROMENADE DANS LE MONTMARTRE DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC ET JANE AVRIL

Commencez votre ballade au métro Blanche, sur la ligne 2 (bleue). Le Moulin Rouge, au 82 Boulevard de Clichy n'a pas changé d'endroit. Il vous fait face directement au sortir du métro Blanche. Le Mirliton d'Aristide Bruant, devenu le restaurant le Mirliton Magnum, est juste à côté.

Descendez le Boulevard de Clichy en direction de la Place Pigalle (et le Folie's Pigalle). Après la place, sur votre gauche, au 75 Rue des Martyrs, allez jeter un coup d'œil au Divan du Monde (nouveau nom du Divan Japonais où Yvette Guilbert se produit à partir de 1891), accueillant de nos jours essentiellement des concerts de musique du monde.

De retour sur le Boulevard de Rochechouart, marchez en direction du métro Anvers. Vous tomberez rapidement sur la Cigale, au numéro 120, construite à l'emplacement de l'ancien Bal de la Boule Noire. De nos jours une salle de concert rock très prisée, elle a accueilli Mistinguett à ses débuts dans les années 1890s. Plus bas, le Chat Noir, au 84 Boulevard de Rochechouart n'existe plus depuis longtemps, mais l'Elysée Montmartre, au numéro 72 est toujours là, avec son immense salle de bal (redécorée après un incendie en 1900) et une vaste programmation musicale. Ne manquez pas le Trianon, construit dans l'ancien jardin de l'Elysée Montmartre en 1894 qui est toujours utilisé pour des concerts, spectacles et émissions télé. Au Métro Anvers, tournez à droite dans le square et prenez la rue Turgot, jusqu'à la rue de Rochechouart qui devient ensuite la rue Cadet, après l'intersection avec la Rue Lafayette. Au croisement avec la rue Lamartine, sur la place Cadet au numéro 19-21, se situait le Casino Cadet (anciennement connu sous le nom du Concert des Porcherons), grande salle de bal jusqu'aux années 1870. Continuez à descendre la rue Cadet jusqu'au croisement avec la rue Richer. Remontez la rue Richer jusqu'au numéro 32 où vous trouverez les Folies-Bergère ; vous pouvez encore de nos jours assister à un spectacle ou une comédie musicale en soirée.

Revenez sur vos pas, jusqu'à la célèbre confiserie et plus ancienne chocolaterie de Paris A la Mère de Famille au 35 Rue du Faubourg de Montmartre. Prenez ensuite la rue Montmartre, jusqu'à la rue des Martyrs. Au numéro 7-9 existait la Brasserie des Martyrs. Revenez sur vos pas, et dirigez vous à l'Ouest, en prenant la rue St Lazare. A l'église de la Trinité, tournez à droite et remontez la rue de Clichy jusqu'au numéro 16, le Casino de Paris et son imposante façade, encore très en vogue aujourd'hui. A l'époque, on profite de la grande patinoire, on s'y promène dans un décor très Belle Epoque et on suit des attractions sur un grand podium. De nos jours, les chanteurs, comédiens et spectacles populaires s'y produisent.

Remontez la rue de Clichy jusqu'à la Place de Clichy et son métro. Vous avez fait là une belle ballade dans le Paris de Jane Avril et de Toulouse-Lautrec. Il vous reste encore toute la butte Montmartre et le Sacré-Cœur à explorer !

La carte ci-jointe montre exactement où sont situés les cafés-concerts et les salles de spectacles les plus connus, et les plus populaires de la fin du XIXe siècle. Toulouse-Lautrec et Jane Avril connaissaient et fréquentaient certainement ces endroits.



## ACTIVITÉ KS3/KS4: PERFECTIONNEZ VOTRE SENS DE L'ORIENTATION !

C'est l'anniversaire de votre meilleur(e) ami(e) et vous aimeriez l'emmener dans un des cafés-concerts de l'époque de Toulouse-Lautrec. Utilisez l'itinéraire et la carte ci-dessus pour lui indiquer le trajet jusqu'à votre lieu (et heure) de rendez-vous. N'oubliez pas d'utiliser les points de repères faciles comme les stations de métro et les noms de rue !

FOR MORE MFL REGARDE!  
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publicprogrammes/regarde.shtml](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/publicprogrammes/regarde.shtml)

# REGARDE!:

## STOP CALLING IT 'GAY PAREE'!

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Fun, leisurely, arty and popular 'Gay Paree' still attracts many tourists to the French capital nowadays. 'Gay Paree' was a term that originated at the *Belle Époque* (at the turn of the nineteenth into the twentieth century) when the liberal government introduced a raft of reforms in the 1880s. The Marseillaise became the national anthem, July 14 became a national holiday, public meetings were allowed without official authorization, and the freedom of the press was promulgated. The cafés of Paris, previously regarded as hotbeds of sedition, multiplied and flourished.

In Montmartre, the *Moulin Rouge's* windmill blades still shine bright on the *Boulevard de Clichy* and the *Olympia* and the *Folies-Bergère* are still popular concert halls. Walking around this area you will find posters, tee-shirts and other memorabilia celebrating Toulouse-Lautrec and his contemporaries of the end of the 19th century.

Legend has it that this part of Paris (the 9th and 18th 'arrondissements'), was well known for being seedy, disreputable and dangerous. However, the success of this area relied mainly on the variety and quality of artists performing in the *café-concerts* and on the vast architecture of these concert halls. The *Moulin Rouge* for example had gardens in which one could ride a donkey, the *Casino de Paris* boasted an ice-rink, the *Chat Noir* was three storeys high and the *Folies-Bergère* had such a large stage that circus acts could perform on it. Even if members of the audience enjoyed the overall working-class atmosphere of the area and attended shows that could be perceived as strange, exotic and even promiscuous, they still had to dress smartly to enter places such as the *Moulin Rouge*.

In those days, the governing and religious authorities frowned on these entertainment places. Debauchery seemed to prevail, and the style of dancing performed was seen as obscene. Despite their subversive reputations, these concert halls and cabarets were mainly social places where Parisians could relax and enjoy themselves. They were not subversive places directly confronting the ruling political and religious powers but establishments where the prudish and serious bourgeois morals

were abandoned. Indeed, these were the only places where most social classes met and interacted. Organised crime and prostitution was not a problem until the 1910s, when the reputation of Montmartre and Pigalle plunged.

While most of us have heard of the *Moulin Rouge*, thanks to Baz Luhrman's film in 2001, seen reproductions of the *Chat Noir* posters and French Cancan dancing, very few of us actually know where the original concert-halls, cafés and ballrooms from the era were located. Fewer than a third of these cafés and cabarets have survived and very few are still used as entertainment centres nowadays.

### A STROLL THROUGH TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL'S MONTMARTRE

Start this itinerary at the metro *Blanche* (on the blue metro line number 2). The *Moulin Rouge*, on 82 Boulevard de Clichy is in front of you when you come out of the station. Next to it, the restaurant *Le Mirliton* has replaced Aristide Bruant's original *Mirliton*.

Walk down the Boulevard de Clichy towards *Place Pigalle* (and the *Folie's Pigalle*). Turn left after the *Place Pigalle* into the Rue des Martyrs. At number 75, check out the *Divan du Monde* (the new name for the *Divan Japonais* where Yvette Guilbert danced from 1891) which still operates as a concert hall, programming mainly world music.

Back onto the Boulevard de Rochechouart, walk towards the *Anvers* metro station. You will come across the *Cigale* (at number 120), which was built on the original *Bal de la Boule Noire* site. This is where Mistinguett started her singing career in the 1890s. It is nowadays a very well-known rock concert hall.

Further down, you will walk in front of number 72, which used to be the *Chat Noir* building. This hall has disappeared but just a few doors down, at number 84 Boulevard de Rochechouart, the *Elysée Montmartre* is still very vibrant with its ball room (which was redecorated in 1900 after a fire) and its busy events schedule. The *Trianon*, nowadays used for TV and music shows, is still up and running. It was originally built

in the gardens of the *Elysée Montmartre* in 1894.

After the *Anvers* metro station, turn right into the square and walk down the Rue Turgot until the Rue Rochechouart which becomes the Rue Cadet after crossing the Rue Lafayette. The *Place Cadet* (after crossing the Rue Lamartine), number 19-21, used to boast the *Casino Cadet* (also known as the *Concert des Porcherons*), a large ball room used until the 1870s. Continue to walk down the Rue Cadet until the Rue Richer. Walk up the Rue Richer to number 32 where you will see the *Folies-Bergère*, a place nowadays famous for its schedule of musicals.

Turn back on the Rue Richer until you spot (and maybe enter?!) the oldest chocolaterie in Paris, *A la Mère de Famille* at 35 Rue du Faubourg de Montmartre. Walk on the Rue Montmartre, until you reach Rue des Martyrs. The *Brasserie des Martyrs* used to be at number 7-9. Turn back and head west, walking on the Rue St-Lazare. After the Church de la Trinité, turn right and walk up the Rue de Clichy up to number 16, the *Casino de Paris*. You can't miss it, as its façade is very noticeable. Back in Toulouse-Lautrec's days, the ice rink and the large stage were its main attractions, as well as its late 19th century interior decoration. Nowadays, a large number of musicals and pop concerts take place there. Continue to walk up the Rue de Clichy until the Place de Clichy and its metro station. You have walked through Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril's Paris. You still have the whole of the Butte Montmartre to explore!

The map points to the most well-known concert halls of the late 19th century, which Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril would have associated with. Those coloured in yellow are still standing; those in white have been demolished.

### KS3/KS4 ACTIVITY: PRACTICE YOUR SENSE OF DIRECTION!

It's your best friend's birthday. You want to treat him/her to a show in one of the original 19th century concert halls. Use the itinerary and the map above to guide him/her around and give him/her directions to the meeting place. Don't forget to use easy landmarks such as metro stations and street names!

# 8: TEACHING RESOURCE CD

This Teaching Resource CD includes images from the TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL: BEYOND THE MOULIN ROUGE exhibition as well as related works from the collection. This disc has been specially formatted to be easy to use. Images can be copied and downloaded as long as they are used for educational purposes only. The images have all been formatted for use with white boards or projectors. A copyright statement is printed at the end of this section which outlines authorised and restricted usage. This should be read by every user before using this resource.

## 1: LAUTREC'S PERFORMERS

Jane Avril was not the only performer Toulouse-Lautrec depicted. Here are images of other famous female dancers and entertainers sketched by the artist. The drawings reveal Lautrec's precise and refined technique, which highlight the performer's movements and expression.

## 2: PARISIAN NIGHTLIFE

The Courtauld Gallery collection holds other works epitomizing Parisian nightlife around Toulouse-Lautrec's time. In this section are works by Renoir, Manet and Degas where women are the centre of attention.

## 3: ARTIST AND MUSE

Jane Avril was one of Toulouse-Lautrec's muses. Artists often have favourite models, friends or relatives who truly inspire them to create innovative works. Have a close look at these images to see which other artists from The Courtauld Gallery collection nurtured a strong and creative bond with their muse.

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Please visit our following pages for more information on:

- Public Programmes: [www.courtauld.ac.uk/publicprogrammes](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/publicprogrammes), where you can download other resources, organise a school visit and keep up to date with all our exciting educational activities at The Courtauld Institute of Art.
- The Courtauld Gallery: [www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery](http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/gallery), where you can learn more about our collection, exhibitions and related events.

## HOW TO USE THIS CD

This CD has been formatted to work with as many browsers as possible including Linux, Macintosh OS and Microsoft Windows.

This is why it will not launch immediately when inserted in your computer.

Please follow the instructions below to launch this interactive CD.

## INSTRUCTIONS:

- Open the *Data* folder
- Inside are 3 folders: *Toulouse-Lautrec*, *graphics* and *style*
- Open the *Toulouse-Lautrec* folder
- Inside is a sub-folder: *images* and 4 html files: *Lautrec's Performers*, *Parisian Nightlife*, *Artist and Muse* and *index*.
- Double click on *index*, one of the html documents.

This will then launch the *Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril* teaching resources in your web browser.

This can be used like surfing the internet by clicking on images or highlighted words to navigate throughout images and pages.

Click on menu or click on an image to enlarge.



If your web browser is unable to open the folder you can open the data folder, inside which you will find all of the images saved as j-png files.

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## CURRICULUM LINKS: KS2+ Art and Design, History, Art History, and other humanities.

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