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TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL TEACHERS’ RESOURCE
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The Courtauld Institute of Art
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.

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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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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’Egout (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 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
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.
‘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.’

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 Massanet’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.
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...
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 Mélinité – 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 Mirton 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 genteely back at us, with her powdered face, sparkling 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
In 1893 the art critic Arsenic 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 recognised 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 recognised that there was something 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.

Jane Avril had a similarly troubled past. Her mother had been a famous courtesan and as a child 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.

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.
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 Lauree'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 hysteric 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 Montmartre. 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 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.
4: TOULOUSE-LAUTREC:
THE MASTER OF PRINTMAKING

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
Lithography made only a limited impact on transfers to paper. During the first years of the 19th century, offset lithography, which is used today for printing, the stone is kept wet with water, thereby repelling the oily ink and the hydrophobic regions accept a film of water and thereby 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 hydrophilic or water loving, while the negative image would be hydrophobic or water hating. 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 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 Cotelle, 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 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 printing.’ 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 the work of Lautrec.
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-posing’ 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 reissuing 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 one of Lautrec’s early posters featuring his subjects mid-movement in what is often termed ‘stop-posing’ 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 reissuing 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
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 flags: A Franco-British Divertissement. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. Where the first were generally small, more intimate and of more esoteric spectacles. 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MY PAL JONES, FULL OF COGNAC, STARTED PRANCING, THEN HE SAID, "LET'S GO AND SEE THE LADIES DANCING" TO THIS PLACE WE'LD NEVER BEEN BEFORE, AND SUCH SIGHTS I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

"
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, gymnopedist!’, 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 tendency (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-

allegedly held in Salis’ inner sanctum. It is in proximity to this context too then, that we should regard Satie’s hieratic Sonnieres de la Rose+Croix, 1892, written for the inauguration of the first exhibition of Josephin Péladan’s Salon de la Rose+Croix, 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 Péladan’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 logos.’ 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 legendary 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 revellies in Montmartre, where diffuse symbolist 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-siécle 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’Etoile 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
Mignon, 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)

FURTHER READING:
Catherine Hirdson: Female Performance Practice in the Fin-de-siécle Popular Stages of London and Paris, MUP, 207.
Steven Moore Whiting: Satie the Bohemian: from cabaret to concert hall, OUP, 1999.

Left: French artist (late 19th century)
Programme from the Moulin Rouge 1892, Printed matter
© Bibliotèque nationale de France
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 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.’
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 
habitants 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 

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.

FURTHER READING:
Jane Avril: Mes mémoires suivi de Cours de danse fin-de-siècle (Paris: Phébus, 2005).

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.

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 Melinite, 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.

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.

In the Paris cabarets, 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 looking at the anxieties 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 looking at the anxieties 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.

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 Melinite, 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.
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 insuffle 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’obsénité. 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
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 l’insouciance, l’être et les 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 Divan-Japonais, 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-LAURET ET JANE AVRIL


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, aillez 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.


Revenez sur votre parcours, tournez à droite dans le square Louis XVI, et prenez la rue Turgot, jusqu’à la rue de Clichy. 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 fréquentait certainement ces endroits.

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 !

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

Pour plus d’informations, veuillez consulter le site web suivant : www.courtauld.ac.uk/publicprogrammes/regarde.shtml
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, 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 1970s, 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 Magnum 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 was 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-LAUTURE 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, 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, 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-peg files.

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WELCOME
Henrietta Hine

1: TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL: BEYOND THE MOULIN ROUGE
With thanks to exhibition curators Nancy Ireson and Caroline Campbell

2: OUT OF EDEN
Caroline Levitt

3: ARTIST AND MUSE OR MUSE AND ARTIST?
Katie Faulkner

4: TOULOUSE-LAUTREC: THE MASTER OF PRINTMAKING
Vanja Vlahovic

5: MUSIC IN MONMARTRE
Charlotte de Mille

6: SWEET AND STRANGE: ART AND MADNESS AT THE CLOSE OF THE 19TH CENTURY
Ayla Lepine

7: REGARDÉ!: NE ME PARLEZ PLUS DU ‘GAY PAREE’
Alice Odin and Marie Sautin

8: TEACHING RESOURCE CD
Courtauld Gallery Public Programmes

TEACHERS’ RESOURCE
TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND JANE AVRIL: BEYOND THE MOULIN ROUGE
First Edition

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