

French Paintings and Pastels, 1600–1945

The Collections of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, Editor



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Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Jane Avril Looking at a Proof, 1893

Artist	Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, French, 1864–1901
Title	<i>Jane Avril Looking at a Proof</i>
Object Date	1893
Alternate and Variant Titles	<i>Jane Avril regardant une épreuve; Jane Avril: "La Mélinite"; Jane Avril Examining a Proof, study for cover of 'L'Estampe Originale'</i>
Medium	Oil and dry media/crayon on paper
Dimensions (Unframed)	20 1/4 × 12 5/8 in. (51.4 × 32.1 cm)
Credit Line	The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. Gift of Henry W. and Marion H. Bloch, 2015.13.27

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In the opening scene of John Huston's classic film *Moulin Rouge* (1952), Jane Avril, played by the Hungarian

American actress Zsa Zsa Gabor, is presented as the refined antipode to her fellow entertainer La Goulue (née Louise Weber, 1866–1929). Whereas La Goulue and her costar Aicha throw cognac at one another and, in the words of impresario Charles Zidler, "behave like alley cats," Avril sings a sentimental ballad and sashays elegantly across the dancehall, enchanting its patrons.¹ As is often the case with Hollywood, this characterization is partly fictional. Although Avril did perform solo at the famed Paris nightclub and appealed to less raucous cabaret-goers, she was best known for her idiosyncratic style of dance, not her singing. In 1893, when Avril had been appearing at the Moulin Rouge for four years, the art critic Arsène Alexandre described her routine as follows:

*She dances, this one, she dances with lateral movements of her legs, back and forth, combining the motions of a jig and an eel, these comical and above all very gracious movements of a female Hanlon that Jane Avril has adapted so originally from English dance, but which she has given a Montmartre accent in the process that, decidedly, it was lacking.*²

By comparing Avril to the world-famous Hanlon-Lees acrobatic troupe, whose act combined gymnastic feats with knockabout comedy, Alexandre emphasized both the athletic and droll elements of her performance. These features earned her the nickname *La Mélinite*, an

allusion to a French brand of explosives.³ But neither version of Avril—the singing sensation romanticized in *Moulin Rouge* or the quirky dancer critiqued by Alexandre—finds visual confirmation in Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's oil sketch *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof*. Instead, Toulouse-Lautrec recorded his close friend in a moment of quiet contemplation, away from the public eye.



Fig. 1. Paul Sescou (French, 1858–1926), *Jane Avril*, ca. 1893, albumen print, 5 7/16 x 3 7/8 in. (13.8 x 9.9 cm), Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, 17-FALP/6/74

Born Jeanne-Louise Beaudon (1868–1943), Avril grew up in difficult circumstances. She suffered abuse from her alcoholic mother and, as a teenager, developed Sydenham chorea, a disorder typified by unpredictable movements of the arms, legs, trunk, and facial muscles. Her illness resulted in a two-year stint at the Hôpital de la Salpêtrière, where she was treated by the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot.⁴ This period of hardship had an upside, however; according to Nancy Ireson, the erratic gestures brought on by Avril's condition probably inspired her unique choreography.⁵ Period publicity images attest to the importance of these dance moves to Avril's celebrity. In a posed photograph by Paul Sescou (1858–1926) from the early 1890s, Avril twists and bends

her upper body while holding her hands to her head, such that she appears simultaneously serpentine and angular (Fig. 1).⁶ Avril's capacity for contortion and singular dancing caught the attention of Toulouse-Lautrec, an habitu  of the Moulin Rouge and other caf -concerts, around 1890.⁷ They formed a strong rapport, and for the next decade Avril served as Toulouse-Lautrec's frequent muse. Fran ois Caradec relates how Toulouse-Lautrec would fetch Avril in his fiacre, or carriage, at all hours, whenever he had need of a sitter.⁸



Fig. 2. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Edward Ancourt (printer), and Andr  Marty (publisher), Cover for "L'Estampe originale," *Album I, publi e par les Journal des Artistes*, 1893, lithograph printed in six colors on folded wove paper, 23 x 32 5/8 in. (58.4 x 82.8 cm) (sheet) 22 1/4 x 25 11/16 in. (56.5 x 65.2 cm) (image), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1922

One of the pictures for which Avril posed was the Nelson-Atkins sketch, itself a figure study for Toulouse-Lautrec's cover for *L'estampe originale* (Fig. 2). The brainchild of Jean-Andr  Marty (1857–1928), *L'estampe originale* was a quarterly print portfolio that sought to showcase new talent and was published in ten volumes between 1893 and 1895.⁹ Toulouse-Lautrec's lithograph headed the first album, which appeared on March 30, 1893. It depicts Avril scrutinizing a proof—that is, a trial impression—pulled by P re Cotelle, the bespectacled printer seen handling the press in the left background, at the Imprimerie Edward Ancourt on the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Denis. This print shop was one of Toulouse-Lautrec's favorite haunts, where he undertook some of his boldest lithographic experiments; it even plays a cameo role in *Moulin Rouge*.¹⁰ Consequently, many scholars have interpreted Toulouse-Lautrec's cover as a meta-illustration that unsubtly references his own printmaking; Joachim Pissarro speculates that the proof may actually portray Avril herself.¹¹

On a formal level, *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* distinguishes itself from the *Estampe originale* cover through its pared-down detail and "hesitation-free

execution."¹² Although the sketch was included in François Daulte's monograph *French Watercolors of the 20th Century* (1968), it is not, in fact, a watercolor.¹³ Employing a technique known as *peinture à l'essence*, Toulouse-Lautrec diluted oil paint with a solvent (probably turpentine), allowing him to apply pigment swiftly over the paper support.¹⁴ This rapid brushwork is particularly evident in Avril's feathered hat and bright red hair. Whereas in the *Estampe originale* cover her headwear is solid black, unmodeled, and clearly silhouetted, in the sketch it is a muddle of aubergine, mauve, and indigo, heightening its sense of texture and blurring its profile.¹⁵ Likewise, the spatter pattern that gives volume to Avril's coiffure in the lithograph contrasts with the jagged, irregular strokes above her ear in the oil sketch. While these differences stem from the possibilities and limitations of each medium, the painting nevertheless possesses a raw immediacy unmatched in the lithograph.

Both images represent Avril in a high-collared, fur-trimmed cloak with an elbow-length cape, a fashion that obscures her willowy figure and slender legs, reportedly her most distinctive features.¹⁶ Known as a carrick coat, this overgarment first gained popularity in England during the early nineteenth century.¹⁷ It spread across the European continent, as evidenced by an advertising poster from 1888 for the Parisian department store Aux Buttes Chaumont (Fig. 3). Designed by Jules Chéret (1836–1932), the poster portrays a stylish woman sporting a plumed hat and black carrick coat with three layered shoulder capes. Her daughter wears a miniature version of this ensemble, but with a higher hemline that softens the effect. During Avril's lifetime, the vogue for all things English remained strong. Avril spoke some English, took an Anglicized stage name, traveled repeatedly to London, and would later perform at the Palace Theatre in Westminster with the dance troupe of Eglantine Demay, so it is unsurprising that she emulated English sartorial trends.¹⁸ Evidently, Toulouse-Lautrec thought that Avril's carrick coat suited her, because she wears the same costume in his bust-length portrait of her at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute.¹⁹

Another major theme of *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* is connoisseurship. Avril appraises the sheet in her hand with a practiced eye, searching for defects that would necessitate a reprinting. Her implied expertise reflects not only the esteem in which Toulouse-Lautrec held her but also her active involvement in the arts. It has long been known that Avril commissioned posters from Toulouse-Lautrec to advertise particular performances, but recent research also suggests that she dabbled in watercolors herself and received at least one invitation to illustrate a French daily.²⁰ Toulouse-Lautrec was not



Fig. 3. Jules Chéret (French, 1836–1932) and Chaix (publisher), *Aux Buttes Chaumont, Vêtement Carrick*, 1888, color lithograph, 94 ½ x 35 7/16 in. (240 x



Fig. 4. Maurice Biais (French, 1875–1926) and Établissements Minot (publisher), *La Maison Moderne*, ca. 1900, color lithograph, 45 ¼ x 30 11/16 in. (115 x 78 cm), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, IFN-9014951

the only artist to recognize Avril’s competence in matters of taste. In a color lithograph from about 1900, Avril’s future husband, Maurice Biais (1875–1926), depicted her inspecting Art Nouveau objects at La Maison Moderne, a Parisian gallery and design firm founded by the German art critic Julius Meier-Graefe in 1899 (Fig. 4).²¹ Standing with her back to the viewer, Avril examines an enamel inkwell designed by Maurice Dufrenoy (1876–1955), bronze statuettes created by the Belgian sculptor George Minne (1866–1941), and a porcelain cat manufactured by the Danish company Bing and Grøndahl (est. 1853), among other items for purchase.²² Her slightly hunched posture reflects her unique physiognomy but is also indicative of close looking, distinguishing her from casual consumers of visual and material culture. Like Toulouse-Lautrec, Biais seems to have valued Avril’s aesthetic judgments.

By a coincidence of history, *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* has never been exhibited in Toulouse-Lautrec’s home country, or indeed anywhere in Europe. However, it



Fig. 5. “Portrait of Jane Avril,” *The Sun News-Pictorial* (Melbourne), October 11, 1939, National Library of Australia, Canberra

played an important and little-known role in the *Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art* held at various Australian venues during the Second World War. Curated by Basil Burdett, an art critic for the Melbourne *Herald*, and subsidized by Keith Murdoch, the newspaper’s managing director, this exhibition has been likened to Roger Fry’s trailblazing show *Manet and the Post-Impressionists* (Grafton Galleries, London, 1910) in terms of its historic import.²³ Between 1939 and 1946, more than seventy thousand Australians from across the mainland and Tasmania flocked to see paintings and sculptures by the European avant-garde, many for the first time.²⁴ In the media coverage of this momentous event, Toulouse-Lautrec’s sketch was heralded as an avatar of modernism. When the exhibition opened at the National Art Gallery of South Australia in Adelaide in August 1939, the English expatriate artist John Goodchild (1898–1980) reproduced *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* in his review for *The Advertiser* and singled it out for special praise.²⁵ Later that year, when the exhibition traveled to

the Melbourne Town Hall, Toulouse-Lautrec's sketch was chosen to advertise the show on the front page of *The Sun News-Pictorial* (Fig. 5). Avril appears above a photograph of grinning, off-duty Australian soldiers reading magazines at Camp Seymour, such that she seems all the more serious and focused by comparison—far removed from the cabaret performer whose saccharine song captivates audiences in *Moulin Rouge* and whose eccentric dancing earned her legions of admirers in real life. By highlighting less well-known aspects of Avril's personality, Toulouse-Lautrec created an introspective portrait that still resonates today.

Brigid M. Boyle
November 2019

Notes

1. The ballad's title, "It's April Again," is a play on her name, since *Avril* means *April* in French.
2. Arsène Alexandre, "Celle qui danse," supplement to *L'Art français* (July 29, 1893), repr. and trans. in Nancy Ireson, ed., *Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril: Beyond the Moulin Rouge*, exh. cat. (London: Courtauld Gallery, 2011), 130–33, at 131. "Elle danse, celle-là, elle danse avec ces mouvements latéraux des jambes, ces sortes de mouvements de gigue et d'anguille, ces très comiques et surtout gracieux mouvements d'hanlon femelle, que Jane Avril si originalement adaptés de la danse anglaise, mais en leur donnant l'accent montmartrois qui, décidément, leur manquait."
3. Helen Burnham, *Toulouse-Lautrec and the Stars of Paris*, exh. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2019), 39.
4. Gabriel P. Weisberg, "Consuming Jane Avril: The Mystery of Celebrity Culture in the Symbolist Age," in *European Drama and Performance Studies: Consuming Female Performers (1850s–1950s)*, ed. Sabine Chacouche and Clara Sadoun-Édouard (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015), 281–302, at 284. Charcot admitted Avril on December 28, 1882, and released her on July 11, 1884.
5. Nancy Ireson, "Dancing in the *Asile*: Jane Avril and Chorea," in *Toulouse-Lautrec and Jane Avril*, 42–57, at 52.
6. The Biblioteca Nacional de España proposes a date of 1888 for this photograph, but I follow Sarah Suzuki in dating it to circa 1893; see Sarah Suzuki, *The Paris of Toulouse-Lautrec: Prints and Posters from the Museum of Modern Art*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2014), 46. For Sescou's life and career, see Steven F. Joseph, "Paul Sescou: Toulouse-Lautrec's Elusive Neighbour," *History of Photography* 37, no. 2 (May 2013): 153–66.
7. G[abriele] M[andel] Sugana, *The Complete Paintings of Toulouse-Lautrec* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1969), 83.
8. François Caradec, *Jane Avril: Au Moulin Rouge avec Toulouse-Lautrec* (Paris: Fayard, 2001), 88.
9. Claire Frèches-Thory, Anne Roquebart, and Richard Thomson, *Toulouse-Lautrec*, exh. cat. (London: South Bank Centre, 1991), 386.
10. About halfway through the film, Toulouse-Lautrec and Père Cotellet collaborate on a color poster of Avril, which is subsequently displayed on kiosks across Paris.
11. Richard R. Brettell and Joachim Pissarro, *Manet to Matisse: Impressionist Masters from the Marion and Henry Bloch Collection*, exh. cat. (Kansas City, MO: Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2007), 134.
12. I borrow this term from Luciano Migliaccio, "Toulouse-Lautrec at MASP: The Scandalous Trace of Freedom," in Adriano Pedrosa, ed., *Toulouse-Lautrec: Em vermelho [in red]*, exh. cat. (São Paulo: Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand, 2017), 60–72, at 63.
13. See François Daulte, *French Watercolors of the 20th Century* (New York: Viking, 1968), 36–37.
14. See technical notes by Nancy Heugh, Heugh-Edmondson Conservation Services, December 18, 2016, NAMA conservation files.
15. Here, I am describing the shades of purple seen in Avril's headwear, rather than identifying specific dyes present in the Nelson-Atkins sketch.
16. Weisberg, "Consuming Jane Avril," 299.
17. For more on the carrick coat, see Yana Glemaud, "Carrick Coat," *Fashion History Timeline*, Fashion Institute of Technology, December 12, 2018, <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/carrick-coat/>; and Virginia Schreffler Wimberley, "Empire Dress and Fashion," in José Blanco F. and Patricia Hunt-Hurst, eds., *Clothing and Fashion: American Fashion from Head to Toe*, vol. 2, *The Federal Era through the*

19th Century (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015), 112–15.

18. Weisberg, "Consuming Jane Avril," 291.
19. For more on this portrait, see Sarah Lees, ed., *Nineteenth-Century European Paintings at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute* (Williamstown: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2012), 2:794–97.
20. Weisberg, "Consuming Jane Avril," 294.
21. Weisberg was the first to identify the woman in this lithograph as Avril; see Gabriel P. Weisberg, "The Urban Mirror: Contrasts in the Vision of Existence in the Modern City," in Carrie Haslett et al., *Paris and the Countryside: Modern Life in late 19th-Century France*, exh. cat. (Portland, ME: Portland Museum of Art, 2006), 1–62, at 1. For a discussion of Biais's formal appropriations from the German satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, see Sarah Sik, "Pirated Posters: International Print Politics and The Graphic Art of Maurice Biais," in Hardy S. George and Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Paris 1900*, exh. cat. (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Museum of Art, 2007), 110–29. The Bibliothèque nationale de France dates Biais's lithograph to 1902, but I follow Weisberg and Sik in dating it to circa 1900.
22. Bertrand Mothes, "La Maison Moderne de Julius Meier-Graefe," in Catherine Méneux, Emmanuel Pernoud, and Pierre Wat, eds., *Actualité de la recherche en XIXe siècle: Master 1 (2012–2013)* (Paris: Histoire culturelle et sociale de l'art, 2014), 1–22, at 16, <https://hicsa.univ-paris1.fr/page.php?r=133&id=681&lang=fr..>
23. Eileen Chanin and Steven Miller, *Degenerates and Perverts: The 1939 Herald Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2005), 17.
24. Chanin and Miller, *Degenerates and Perverts*, 197.
25. John Goodchild, "'The Advertiser' Art Exhibition: Lunch Hour Lecture Arranged," *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), August 23, 1939. Toulouse-Lautrec's sketch is the sole illustration in this article.

Technical Entry

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Jane Avril Looking at a Proof by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1863–1901) is a color study for the cover of the first volume of *L'Estampe originale*. Although executed in *peinture à l'essence*, a painting medium, the paper ties the painting to the lithography process, and the secondary media, wax crayon, offers insight into Lautrec's composition for the print.

Lautrec used a cream to beige machine-made, medium-thick, smooth surfaced wove paper,¹ which was torn down after media application. The front of the paper was prepared with a tinted, water-soluble coating that shifts the paper tone to a muted yellow.² The coating is slightly glossy and transparent and has no visible brush strokes. Scattered along the left edge, and in a single location in upper left quadrant, are tiny ruptures in the coating through which the paper fibers are visible. The paper is stiffer than uncoated papers of the same thickness, and the coating has rendered the torn edges jagged and brittle. There are no oil halos on the back of the paper (Fig. 6), indicating the coating was an effective barrier against residual drying oils in the paint.

While the components of the coating are unknown, its water-soluble nature, the presence of a tinting agent, its overall even application, and resistance to the oil medium all point to the possibility that the support is a lithographic transfer paper. In the 1890s, transfer lithography was a popular method for artists who might be challenged by the technical nature of traditional lithography and had no easy access to lithographic stones to produce drawings that could be printed as lithographs.³ Lithographic transfer papers could be purchased or produced by the artist. Recipes called for flour, starch, glue (animal skin or isinglass), white



Fig. 6. The front and back of *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* (1893). On the front, the paper color is significantly yellower, probably due to the oil-paint proof coating. There is no evidence of oil bleed on the back of the paper; however, adhesive residues from a previous mounting are present along the edges. The gray mark in the center of the paper is adhesive residue.

pigments, plaster of paris, gum arabic, humectants (honey or syrup), glycerin, and gamboge.⁴ The addition of gamboge⁵ gave the paper a yellow tint and aided the artist in choosing the correct side upon which to draw.⁶ Lautrec's choice of paper is puzzling because the paint would have made a mess of the lithographic stone during the printing process. However, Lautrec may have been more interested in utilizing the yellow tone of the paper as a mid-tone in his painting.

Jane Avril is depicted in *peinture à l'essence*, a mixture of de-oiled paint and turpentine, applied from paste to wash consistency. The paint dried quickly into a matte film. Lautrec began the composition by laying in the dark blue outlines of the figure, hat, and drape lines of the cloak. The paint he used for the outlines is fluid, while the paint in the hat and face was applied as a paste. Lautrec's palette includes a white, blues, reds, a green, and a yellow. Although pigment analysis was not undertaken, the pink wash in Avril's coat, face, and lips (Fig. 7) produces the characteristic orange fluorescence for alizarin.⁷ The white is the opaqueness that Lautrec exploited on Avril's skin tones and the feathers in her hat. All colors are blended on the paper, and the application method is wet-into-wet. While impasto is not present, individual brushstrokes are visible, and Lautrec used a variety of brush sizes and shapes. The red of the cloak was applied with a wide, round brush, while the eyelids and lashes appear to have been accomplished with a hard, fine point, possibly with the pointed tip of a brush handle. Fingerprints and the texture of a plain-weave cloth (Fig. 8) are present in the ostrich feather at upper right. Lautrec executed the oil

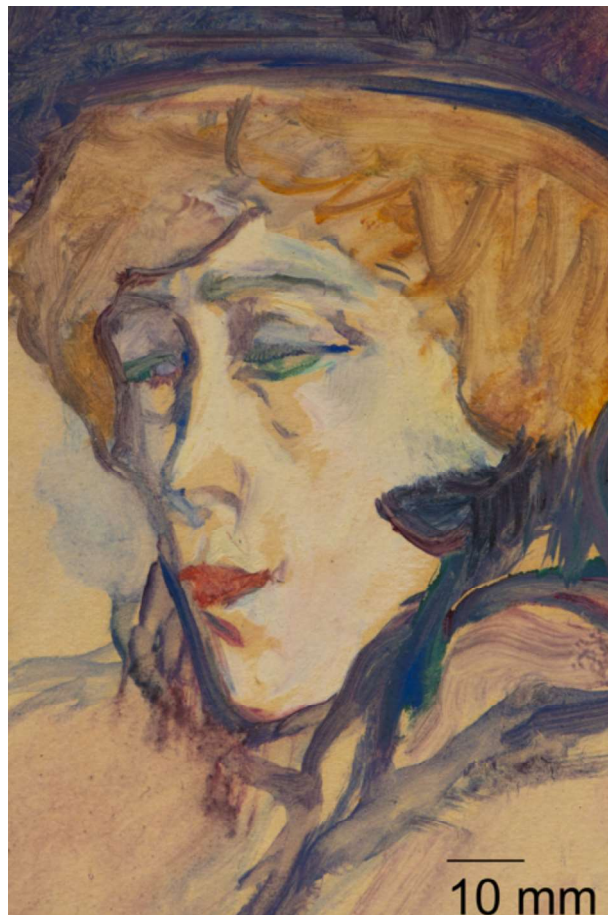


Fig. 7. Detail of Avril's face in *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* (1893) showing the palette used to depict the features and hair. The red is the same as that used in the coat. A hard-tipped, pointed implement was used to create the eyelashes.

sketch with the paper on a vertical angle (possibly on an easel) causing the wash to color the cape of the carrick coat and form drips at center right. Although Lautrec worked quickly, he was certain in both his initial lines and paint application, and the only changes to the composition are in the placement of the print Avril is examining (Fig. 9).



Fig. 8. Photomicrograph of *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* (1893) showing the fingerprint within the plumage on the hat.



Fig. 9. Detail of Avril's hands with the printing proofs in *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* (1893). This is the only area of the image where Lautrec changed the placement of the lines.

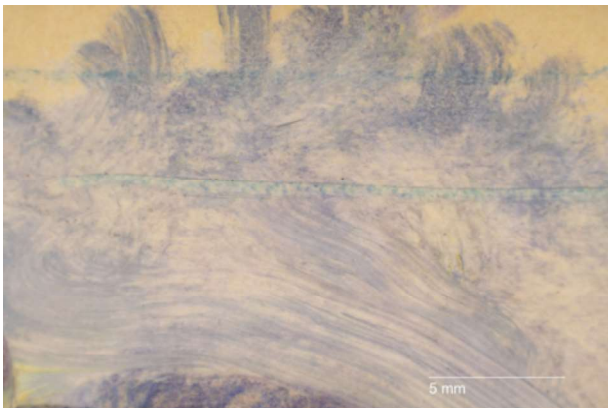


Fig. 10. Photomicrograph of *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* (1893) showing the crayon line along the upper edge of the work. This line cuts through the wet paint.

The secondary media are blue and red wax crayon and graphite pencil. The wax crayon was harder than the wax crayons manufactured today and maintained a better point. A single line of red wax crayon runs along the upper edge of the sheet. It is parallel to and covered by a line of blue wax crayon. Blue wax crayon was used to sketch out details of the printer's workshop behind Avril and to indicate forms to Avril's right. The wax crayon was applied over the paint and in some cases when the oil paint was still wet (Fig. 10). The crayon is discussed at length below, as it is an important link to another preliminary drawing for the print. The graphite pencil appears to have been applied last. It is on the left, upper, and right edges only, and its sole function may have been to indicate where to tear down the sheet.

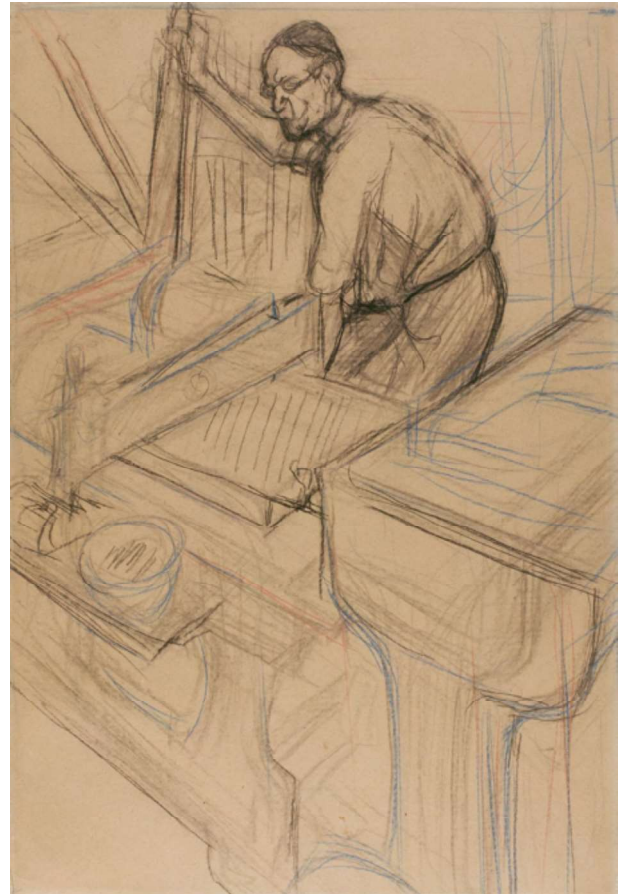


Fig. 11. Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Study*, ca. 1893, charcoal with colored crayons on tan wove paper, 20 x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (50.9 x 34.8 cm), The Art Institute of Chicago, Mr. and Mrs. Carter H. Harrison Collection, 1933.880. *Study* depicts the left half of the cover for the first edition of *L'Estampe originale*. In this image, Père Cotelle, the master printer at Anacort press, is engaged in running the lithography press.

The wax crayon is better understood if *Jane Avril looking at a Proof* is compared with Lautrec's *Study* (Fig. 11),

which depicts the left half of the design for *L'Estampe originale* with Père Cotelle working the wheel of the lithographic press. The drawing is executed in charcoal and red and blue crayon on wove paper. Although the paper is not the same as that used in *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof*, there are striking similarities in wax crayon application.⁸ The charcoal lines in *Study* were rapidly executed, but in contrast with *Jane Avril looking at a Proof*, Lautrec corrected himself. He used very dark lines to indicate Père Cotelle's final posture and the position of his arm, and he simplified and altered the placement of the lines of the press. In *Study*, both red and blue wax crayons appear in the background and define elements of the press. The wax medium rarely appears in the same locations as Lautrec's darkest charcoal lines, but where crayon lines appear, they are replicated in the final print. The different colors of crayon may represent two revision campaigns, with the blue crayon applied last and to both studies simultaneously.

If *Study* and *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* are examined on a line-by-line basis, it is clear that some of the crayon lines overlap both works (Fig. 12). The blue and red crayon lines along the upper edge of *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* begin on *Study* and correspond to the upper edge of the printed image. The three blue lines below Avril's hands match the lines of the paper stand in *Study*. The two blue crayon lines that form a point in the center of the paper stack in *Study* become the corner of the print that Avril is examining. Moving upward, the five blue crayon lines that intersect the print and Jane Avril's coat are the back edge of the paper stack.



Fig. 12. In this image, *Study* and *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* (1893) are shown at their correct size ratio. The works are aligned along the blue crayon lines at the top of the paper. Places where the crayon lines overlap both artworks are noted in red and include, from top to bottom: the upper border of the print, the paper stack, the corner of the print in Avril's hands, and the paper stand at the foot of the press.



Fig. 13. In this image, the size ratio between *Study* and *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* (1893) has been adjusted, and the drawings are overlapped to show how they correspond with the print. The red lines indicate the keystone lines in the lithograph, and the composite image shows how close Lautrec's painted and drawn lines are to the major compositional features in the print.

Lautrec's contribution to *L'Estampe originale* became a six-color lithograph (Fig. 2). In the final composition the artist scaled the drawings down slightly and added the bottom portion of the press and Avril's skirt. The Jane Avril portion of the composition remains largely unchanged, and superimposing the keystone lines of the print over *Jane Avril Looking at a Proof* shows how little deviation exists between the three works (Fig. 13).

Jane Avril Looking at a Proof was edge mounted; however, the acidic and degraded brown paper backing was removed in a 2016 conservation campaign. Except for possible fading of the pigments and staining from an acidic face mat, the painting is in good condition.

Rachel Freeman
May 2021

Notes

1. The description of paper color/texture/thickness follows the standard set forth in Elizabeth Lunning and Roy Perkinson, *The Print Council of America Paper Sample Book: A Practical Guide to the Description of Paper* (Boston: Print Council of America, 1996), unpaginated.
2. Solubility testing was carried out by Nancy Heugh. Nancy Heugh, technical examination and condition report for French Painting Catalogue Project, October 2015–September 2016, NAMA conservation file, 2015.13.27.
3. Transfer lithography played a pivotal role in the revival of lithography as a fine art, and one of the

prints associated with *L'Estampe originale* Album IV (published in October–December 1893), *The Draped Figure Seated*, is a transfer lithograph by James McNeill Whistler (American, 1834–1903). Because Lautrec's cover for *L'Estampe originale* is not a reversal of the preliminary drawings, it is possible that the design was transferred to stone using lithographic transfer paper.

4. Henry John Rhodes, *The Art of Lithography: A Complete Practical Manual of Planographic Printing* (London: Scott, Greenwood and Son, 1914), 52–54.

<https://archive.org/details/artoflithography00rhod/page/n7/mode/2up>.

5. At the time of writing, the presence of gamboge in the coating is not confirmed. Gamboge is a yellow colorant extracted from trees of the *Garcinia* as a gum resin. When it is ground and applied as a watercolor, it produces a bright yellow color with full spectrum illumination and a green yellow fluorescence with ultraviolet light. Unfortunately, gamboge is light sensitive, and the yellow color fades quickly. John Winter, "Gamboge" in *Artists' Pigments: A Handbook of Their History and Characteristic*, ed. Elisabeth West Fitzhugh (Oxford: National Gallery of Art, Washington and Oxford University Press, 1997), 3:143–55.

6. Linda Stiber Morenus, "Joseph Pennell and the Art of Transfer Lithography," *Print Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (September 2004): 248–65.

7. Helmut Schweppe and John Winter, "Madder and Alizarin," in *Artists' Pigments*, 3:109–42.

8. I am grateful to paper conservator Kristi Dahm, department of conservation and science, The Art Institute of Chicago, for her observations of the paper and media. Email correspondence, September 28, 2020.

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Provenance

Jean-André Marty (1857–1928), Paris, by March 1893;

Purchased from Jean-André Marty by Scossa [1];

Louis Bernard, Paris [2];

Dr. George Viau (1855–1939), Paris [3];

With [Hugh] Willoughby, London, and André Schoeller, Paris, by September 25, 1921;

Purchased from [Hugh] Willoughby and André Schoeller by Galerie Wildenstein, Paris, September 25, 1921–1931 [4];

Transferred from Galerie Wildenstein, Paris, stock no. 1189d, to Wildenstein, New York, by 1931 [5];

Transferred from Wildenstein, New York, to Galerie Wildenstein, Paris, by August 1939 [6];

Transferred from Galerie Wildenstein, Paris to Wildenstein, New York, by October 23, 1946–August 1956 [7];

Purchased from Wildenstein and Co., New York, by David (1898–1982) and Anne (1903–1972) Rosenthal, Scarsdale, NY, New York City, and West Palm Beach, FL, August 1956—at least November 1972;

With John and Paul Herring and Company, New York, by October 6, 1977;

Purchased from John and Paul Herring and Company by Marion (née Helzberg, 1931–2013) and Henry (1922–2019) Bloch, Shawnee Mission, KS, 1977–June 15, 2015;

Given by Henry and Marion Bloch to The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, 2015.

Notes

[1] See label on the verso, encapsulated, brown paper, eight-sided with blue borders, in faded brown MS ink at top left corner of red paper dust seal: "Jane Avril / couverture de l'Estampe / originale / Edition Marty /

Vendu par lui a / la collection / Scossa / puis Collection Louis Bernard”.

[2] Louis Bernard collected extensively around 1900–1914. He owned Toulouse-Lautrec’s paintings *Monsieur Émile Davoust* (1889, Kunsthaus Zurich), *Woman Seated in a Garden* (1891, National Gallery, London), and *Alfred La Guigne* (1894, Chester Dale Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.). A separately listed Bernard (no first name given) also owned an oil on cardboard work titled *Jane Avril Dancing* (private collection). See M.G. Dortu, *Toulouse-Lautrec et son œuvre*, vol. 2 (New York: Collectors Editions, 1971).

[3] See label on verso (on the upper right side of red paper dust seal), which reads in part, in gray printing ink: “Collection George Viau” and “No.” and in brown and black manuscript ink, handwritten above the printed name: “exchange [sic] contre une etude [sic] par Manet”. The earliest mention for this work being in the Viau collection is: Waldemar George, “La Collection Viau,” *L’Amour de l’Art* 5, no. 1 (January 1925): 365–66, (repro.), as *Portrait de Jeanne Avril*. Given the Wildenstein ownership dates of the picture, it is unlikely that Viau owned it in 1925. Phone call from Joseph Baillio, Wildenstein and Co., New York, with Glynnis Stevenson, NAMA, July 24, 2019; see notes in NAMA curatorial files.

[4] Phone call from Joseph Baillio, Wildenstein and Co., New York, with Glynnis Stevenson, NAMA, July 24, 2019; see notes in NAMA curatorial files. Baillio confirmed that Willoughby and Schoeller were working in their capacities as dealers when they sold the drawing to Wildenstein.

[5] Phone call from Joseph Baillio, Wildenstein and Co., New York, with Glynnis Stevenson, NAMA, July 24, 2019, see notes in NAMA curatorial files. Wildenstein, New York, lent the picture to exhibitions in Cleveland in 1933 and Kansas City in 1935.

[6] By August 23, 1939, Galerie Wildenstein, Paris, had sent the drawing to Adelaide, Australia for the *Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art*. Due to the upheaval of World War II, the drawing would not return from Australia until 1945–46. See email from Kylie Best, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, to Glynnis Stevenson, NAMA, July 3, 2019, NAMA curatorial files. In several sources from the 1940s, this work is listed as being in the collection of Georges Wildenstein (1892–1963). All concrete evidence points to the drawing belonging to Wildenstein’s New York and Paris branches rather than to Mr. Wildenstein personally and being transferred between the two gallery locations. The works of art physically located at the Wildenstein Paris gallery were confiscated by the German National Socialist (Nazi)

regime in 1940. Since NAMA’s drawing remained in Australia at the time, it did not suffer this fate.

[7] Latest possible date of transfer is the start date (October 23, 1946) of the exhibition *A Loan Exhibition of Toulouse-Lautrec, For the Benefit of the Goddard Neighborhood Center*, Wildenstein, New York.

Related Works

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Cover for “L’estampe originale”*, 1893, color lithograph on paper, 22 ¾ x 26 ¼ in. (57.8 x 66.7 cm), The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Cover for “L’estampe originale”*, 1893, lithograph, 22 ¼ x 25 13/16 in. (56.5 x 65.5 cm), The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Cover for “L’estampe originale”*, 1893, lithograph printed in six colors on folded wove paper, 22 ¼ x 25 11/16 in. (56.5 x 65.2 cm), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Le Père Cotelle*, 1893, charcoal, with colored crayons, on tan wove paper, 20 x 13 ½ in. (50.8 x 34.3 cm), Art Institute of Chicago.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, *Jane Avril*, 1893, oil and crayon on cardboard, 19 7/10 x 50 4/5 in. (50 x 129 cm), illustrated in *Impressionist and Modern Paintings and Sculpture, part I* (New York: Christie, Manson and Woods, May 11, 1988), 48–49.

Theodore van Rysselberghe, *Poster for N. Lembrée, Estampes et Encadrements....Brussels*, 1897, color lithograph, 27 3/8 x 20 1/8 in. (69.5 x 51 cm), Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Exhibitions

The Tenth Annual Exhibition of Water Colors and Pastels, Cleveland Museum of Art, January 10–February 12, 1933, no cat., as *Jane Avril*.

One Hundred Years of French Painting, 1820–1920, The William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art and The Mary Atkins Museum of Fine Arts, Kansas City, MO, March 31–April 28, 1935, no. 60, as *Jane Avril*.

Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art, National Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, August 21–September 17, 1939; Lower Town Hall, Melbourne, Australia, October 16–November 1, 1939; David Jones’ Gallery, Sydney, November 20–December 16, 1939; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, August 1942; National Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney,

November–December 1943 and October 5–31, 1944, no. 117, as *Portrait de Jane Avril*.

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The Bloch Collection, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO, June–August 1982, no cat.

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