

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

CLAUDE MONET AND TOULOUSE LAUTREC

AND THEIR COLOUR

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO:

THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN & C.S.

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE ART TEACHERS CERTIFICATE

AND THE B.A. DEGREE IN ART AND DESIGN EDUCATION

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

BY

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INTRODUCTION:

My interest is in colour, how versatile it is as a visual medium, and how strong an element it can be in a picture.

To illustrate this I have chosen the works of two great artists: Claude Monet and Henri de Toulouse Lautrec, who were both masters in their handling of colour and yet were very different from each other.

Apart from the fact they lived at the same time and were both French they had little in common except great talent. Since Claude Monet painted landscapes in natural light out of doors, and Toulouse Lautrec's work was of people and crowds in indoor scenes with artificial light.

The reason why I am so impressed with the work of these two artists, is that they both used colour so effectively. Monet, who is regarded as the father of IMPRESSIONISM, painted with small speckled, dab strokes of colour. These were pure unmixed colours particularly the three primaries and their complementaries. He was fascinated with the fleeting effects of light, and a great example of this are his series of paintings of Water Lilies and the facade of Rouen Cathedral.

Good examples of how effective these speckled strokes of colour can be are his paintings "Rue Montorgueil Decked out with Flags" (1878) and "Le Cap Martin" (1884) in which all realistic detail is submerged in a riot of colour.

In comparison Toulouse-Lautrec used colour effectively in an opposite way. He was influenced by Impressionist work during 1886-1887, but in 1888 began to evolve a style of his own based on large areas of colour and expressive outlines. His colour schemes became bolder and more brilliant, which is reminiscent

of Gauguin's work for example Gauguin's series on Breton women where he took to the extreme of using harsh black lines to enclose delicate tones of skin. Also in the field of Graphic Art he revolutionized the technique of lithography with his bold new style of poster design using simplified forms with broad areas of unmodelled colour.

An example of his effective use of large areas of flat colour is the lithograph "The Englishman at the Moulin Rouge" (1892). In this the main character who takes up one half of the picture area is just one colour:- hat, face, shirt, coat are all an earthy brown. It is simple yet amazingly effective.

Before any further comparisons I wish to elaborate on each artists background, influences and development.

BACKGROUND: CLAUDE MONET

Claude Monet was born in Paris in November 1840. He was the eldest son of a wholesale grocer and spent his youth in Le Harve.

The sea shores of Normandy had a definite effect on his sensitivity and he later said of the sea:

"I should like to be always near it or on
it and when I die be buried in a buoy". I

Monet did not immediately begin to sketch the natural scenes around him. His artistic beginnings were as a cartoonist - by which he earned his pocket money. He attributed his initiation into painting nature to his meeting with the artist Eugene Boudin. When Claude Monet was eighteen years old he had his caricatures exhibited in the same shop window as Boudin; who encouraged Monet to join him on painting trips around the coast.

Monet said:

"It was as if a veil was torn from my eyes,
I understood what painting could be". 2

Under Boudins guidance he came to perceive and enjoy the pleasures of painting out of doors and the subtleties of sunlight and water. Boudin in his own work pursued a perfection of fleeting colour and light. He felt it was essential to retain "ones first impression". Boudin believed that:

"everything that is painted directly and
on the spot always has a force, a power,
a vivacity of touch that cannot be re-
created in the studio". 3

Boudin taught Monet that the everyday scene changes from one moment to the next.

In 1859 Monet's caricatures paid for a trip to Paris where he met Boudin's former teacher - Troyon. Monet stayed in Paris studying in the Academe Suisse and while there he frequented the "Brasere des Martyrs" - a meeting place of Courbet and the other realist painters. Monet later admitted, having spent considerable time there without gaining any particular benefit from it.

Monet drew an unlucky number in the lottery for military service, so he chose to go to Algeria (after studying Delacroix ' pictures). The year he spent there, the heat, light and colours had a deep effect on him. He returned to France determined to introduce to his palette a whole new chromatic range of higher keyed colours and to commit himself to landscape painting.

Monet declared:

"--- You cannot imagine how much I learned there - the impressions of colour and light which I had received sorted themselves out - the gem of my future research was there."

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In 1862 Monet entered the studio of the Neo-classical painter Charles Gleyre and stayed until 1864, an agreement with his father for buying him out of the army.

During these years Monets most important encounters were outside his academic studies (he stayed in Gleyre's studio to please his father) and it was these encounters that guided the development of his painting during the first years of his career.

Monet met Jongkind (1819-1891), a Dutch artist in 1862 and worked with him.

"---He explained to me the why and wherefore of his manner and thereby completed the teaching I had already received from Boudin.

From that time he was real master; it was to him that I owe the final education of my eye."

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Jongkind who had a long career of landscape painting behind him, demonstrated his sense of ordinance, formulas for expressing natures irregularities whether through perspective or flattened areas of land, sea and sky. Jongkind also used a fluent and delicate handling of the brush to suggest detail and the fall of light by impression. Jongkind taught Monet to look and to believe in the value of his own vision. While Boudin introduced Monet to Nature, Jongkind taught how to bend it to his will.

Working with Jongkind Monet painted "The Pointe de la Heve" and "The Mouth of the Seine at Honfleur", These two paintings known as the "two marines" were exhibited in the Salon - the French equivalent of the Royal Academy - in 1865 and were well received by the critics. Though much larger than Jongkind's canvases, the two marines are tributes to his style. In both paintings the sparkle and movement of the shore are captured by the energy and spontaneity of the brushwork. Monet's free and bold brushwork also adapted itself to the chop of the open water in the "Pointe de la Heve", the beach is built up of crisp touches suggesting pebbles of various tones reflecting in water. Both paintings

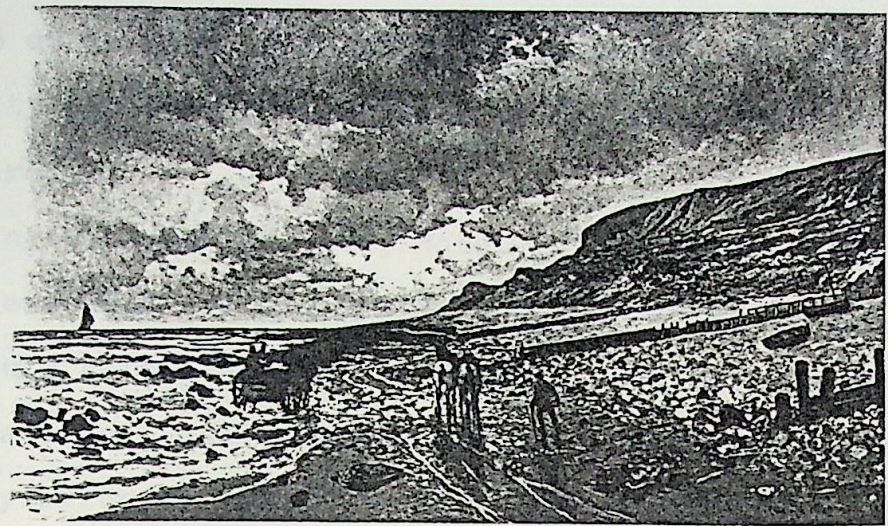


PLATE 1.

The Pointe de la Heve.

capture two different atmospheres, the Mouth of the Seine is busy with fishermen coming and going followed by seagulls. The bellowing clouds have a hint of warmth unlike the heavy clouds in Pointe de la Heve. The colours are subdued but show a sensitivity to light and impressions by the play of light over certain areas.

During this period, too, Monet got to know Courbet. Courbet generally worked on a dark-toned canvas priming and built up his paint thickly towards the highlights. Monet favoured a light-toned priming which helped him achieve the luminosity which he sought in his light-effects.

In Gleyres studios, Monet met three fellow students with ideas similar to his - Frederic Bazille (1841-1870), Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) and Alfred Sisley (1839-1899) who all became close comrades. When Gleyre retired Monet took his friends to Chailly in the forest of Fontainebleau, not far from where the Barbizon masters were working* (they were interested in depicting the same setting at different times of day and different seasons) This was one occasion when the group worked together, although they shared the same interests, they were not so closely linked in the 1860s. The group were principally interested in painting landscapes and scenes of modern outdoor life, and wanted their paintings to convey the way in which modern man saw the world around him, and were influenced by Charles Baudelaire's "The Painter of Modern Life" (published in 1863) which urged the artist to study the fashionable scenes around him, and yet remain detached from them. Under Monets lead they started painting large figure compositions in the open air.

* example Millet - "Peasants at lunch after harvest".

It was here in the forest of Fontainebleau in 1865 that Monet decided to execute a vast picnic scene 20' long.

"Dejeuner sur L'Herbe " (1865) was initially conceived as a naturalistic challenge to Monet's painting of the same title, but its scale and the informal grouping would outshine.

Manet's Dejeuner sur L'Herbe which had caused such a sensation at the Salon des Refuses - a counter Salon set up for artists refused by the Salon itself - in 1863.

Monet's "Dejeuner sur L'Herbe" was painted as much as possible in bright sunlight. The idea of models posing in the open air was quite new and was scorned by Courbet. "Dejeuner sur L'Herbe" taught Monet lessons in Nature and painting. Enlarging his study three times, he had to change from the flexible application of the sketch to covering a wide area of canvas with a broad brush. Hence he became more aware of the brush and the paint and the resilience of the canvas. Monet's interest in the quality of light is evident. His approach up to this had been fairly simple - a previous painting: "The Road at Chailly" (1865) shows a large strongly lit area with an expanse of shadow, and in contrast to the subdued scheme of the two marines shows Monet producing a much greater pictorial animation as the sunlight falls on patches of reflective and translucent foliage, upon the picnic, cloth and dresses of the seated figures. He emphasised the large highlights in colour thus creating an awareness of the broad spread of pigment upon the two-dimensional stretch of canvas.

This painting was intended for the Salon, but converting his sketches into a huge painting with life-size figures prevented him from making the Salon deadline.



PLATE 2.

Dejeuner sur l'Herbe (detail)

Monet declared later:

"If I had submitted it and it had been accepted, who knows if my career might have been shaped differently? Having put it aside, I went on to other experiments that took me further than I had thought.

I fell in love with light and reflections. After that, there was no reason to return to a canvas conceived and treated by other methods."

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Realising his *Dejeuner sur L'Herbe* would not be ready on time but determined to submit a Salon entry, he painted within a few days, a large full-length portrait of his mistress Camille. It was accepted by the jury and became one of the most discussed works in the 1866 Exhibition. According to William Seitz in his book "Monet" this painting owed a lot more to Manet's style than did Monet's version of "*Dejeuner sur L'Herbe*." In this painting Camille is seen from above and behind, looking momentarily poised rather than posed. Trailing her elegant gown, she has just stopped and half-turned towards the painter.

"*Woman in the Green Dress*" was painted under studio lighting and doesn't have the spontaneity and freshness as Monet's outdoor scenes.

"*Women in the Garden*" was the successor to "*Dejeuner sur L'Herbe*" a group of figures in the open air, life-sized and placed against foliage. Three of the costumes worn by the ladies in *Dejeuner* reappear in "*Women in the Garden*". All four women are based on Camille. This time Monet sought to put all his ideas into effect. In "*Dejeuner sur L'Herbe*" he was content to make extensive studies directly from nature integrating them



PLATE 3.

Woman in the Green Dress

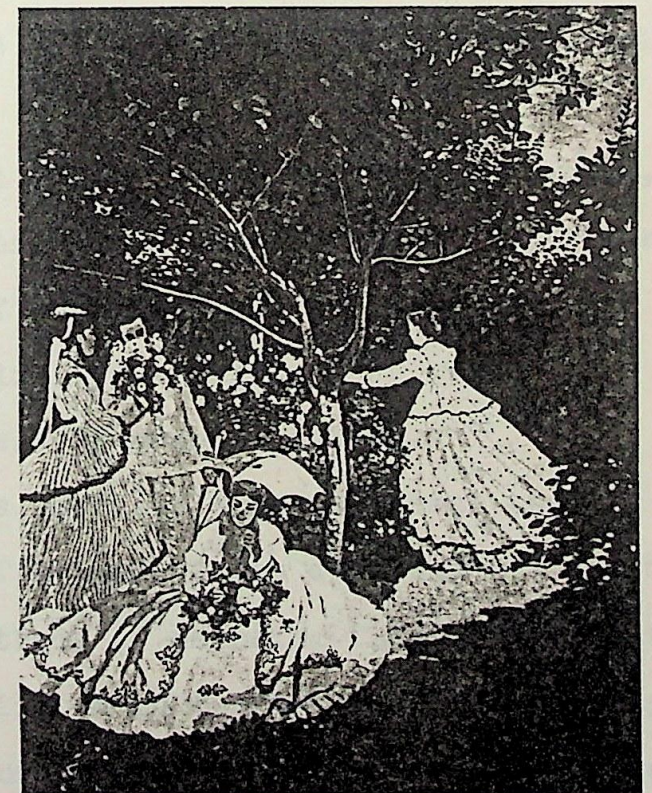


PLATE 4.

Women in the garden

Into the final composition afterwards in his studio. This time he decided to execute his painting completely in the open air. Since this was a vast composition he dug a trench in the garden in order to reach the top. His colours are moderate in intensity using equal value of each colour. Like the "Dejeuner sur L'Herbe" he used large areas of highlights but the foliage and flowers seem to come away from the canvas, to bounce forward. He is beginning to break up structured forms with his use of light e.g. the face under the parasol is painted in tan, pink violet, pale blue and the upperlip and bottom of the nose are highlighted with reflections from the surface of the white dresses. He uses the decorative trim on the dresses to carry the eye round the figures in contour lines, with the aid of the moving figure.

It was a time of great financial hardship for Monet. With his work rejected by the Salon, and his family cut off his allowance, he often could not afford even to buy canvases. On one occasion Renoir had to steal bread so that Monet might have something to eat. Monet also had a temporary failure of eyesight and became suicidal.

During the 1860s, Monet began to use colour differently, moving from the subdued scheme of the two marines to brighter and more contrasting hues of the "Dejeuner sur L'Herbe". The influence of Eugene Delacroix (1799-1863) was of great importance for the development of Monet's colour. Monet recognised that it was impossible to represent the brilliance of the colours of natural forms seen under sunlight by using the traditional methods of painting inherited from the Renaissance. The paints available to Monet were just not bright enough to reproduce the colour experience he had when he looked at say a field at Noon.

Monet influenced by Chevreol realised that the apparent colour of an object is affected to a considerable degree by the colour of the light that shines upon it. The colour of the light not only affects the forms in the light but also alters the apparent colours in shadow, introducing hues that are the opposite of the colour of the light source.

Delacroix's paintings and his comments taught Monet how juxtaposed areas of contrasting colour could be used to brighten and enliven a whole scene. Monets early example of this is the "Terrace at Sainte-Adresse" (1866), with strong contrasting reds and greens in the flowerbeds and the soft blues in the open shadows set against the light creamy tones of the highlights. The view shows the Monet family but the subject is atmosphere, light and colour.

Towards the later 1860s Monet worked at various sites in and around Paris, in the Seine valley and the Normandy coast. When he was in Paris he relished the artistic debates between writers and painters at the Cafe Guerbois - a regular meeting place for artists and writers. But Monet found it easier to work in solitude. He wrote to Bazille from Le Harve in 1868

"In Paris one is too preoccupied with what one sees and hears, however strong minded one may be, and what I shall do here will at least have the virtue of being unlike anyone else's work, because it will simply be the expression of my own personal experiences."

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In 1869 Monet and Renoir worked together, and were beginning to paint the shimmering atmosphere of light and water, at La Grenovillere on the Seine.

Monet began more and more to use pure unmixed colours, particularly the three primaries, and their complimentaries, banning blacks and browns.

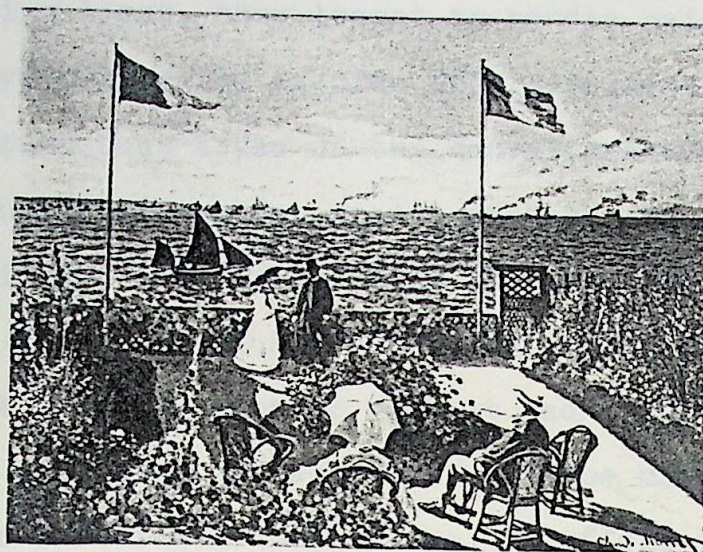


PLATE 5. Terrace at Sainte- Adresse



PLATE 6. La Grenouillere

In order to seize and convey a sensation of movement and quivering light, they learnt to handle paint more freely and loosely, not trying to hide their fragmented brush strokes. They found that areas of the canvas painted in small strokes of colour would appear from a distance to be more brilliant than similar areas painted in flat or in gradually modulated tones. They also found that an area of green appeared more intense and even greener when it had within it small numbers of red or orange spots. Blues could be made brilliant by a similar introduction of orange. In effect what they did was to create a form of optical vibration. The vibrating small spots of colour gave the surface of the canvas a shimmering quality, which seemed to make the light and colours represented in the painting more like the original subject.

Application of the paint in small broken strokes prevented the creation of sharp contours. Light had become the great unifying factor of figure and landscape.

Renoir's treatment of La Grenouillere is softer and more feathery than Monet's La Grenouillere. In Monet's painting the water is the domineering factor. The figures on the island have become abstract shapes, and undistinguishable from their own reflections, bathers stand waist-deep in water. The fast brush strokes and the contrasting colour of light and shade on the lapping water captures a shimmering and moving quality. While the water is the domineering factor in Monet's painting, Renoir was more concerned with the figures and less to the water. The eye is led from the boats to the tree to the figures and the water unifies the theme. Monet was more concerned with visual phenomena as such, while Renoir with the subject.

By the end of 1869 the Cafe Guerbois became the headquarters for the friends - Monet, Renoir, Pissarro, Bazille, Sisley, Manet and Degas. They discussed techniques and exchanged ideas and emerged more determined and motivated after their discussions and arguments.

The aims shared by the group included:

- 1) The use of small strokes and dabs of brightly coloured paint.
- 2) The use of pure colour on the canvas instead of first being mixed on the palette.
- 3) The use of light and colour as the sole means of unifying a picture, as opposed to the traditional method of building up a painting by outline and modelling with light and shade.
- 4) The painting of the whole work in the open air.
- 5) The technique, influenced by the French scientist Chevreul, of depicting light in terms of component colours - juxtaposed colours alter each other and when seen from a distance two different colours placed side by side blend into a single tone.

Monet's developing interest in optical effects are further seen in the series of snow scenes which he painted around Honfleur at this time. By this time his style was being modified by his knowledge of Japanese art. Japanese colour woodcuts were beginning to be known in Europe when Japan entered into trade relations with it.

Several Japanese motifs corresponded with effects currently being explored in Monet's environment - for example the cut-off composition, figures seen from unexpected angles or

partly obscured, and large flat areas of colour and dramatic perspective. An example of Monets work using dramatic perspective is his "Road near Honfleur in Snow" (1867). The impact it gives is one of an impression in a momentary glance.

In June 1870 Monet married his model and mistress Camille. He was honeymooning at Trouville with Camille and their son Jean when the Franco-Prussian war broke out. To escape conscription he fled to London. There he saw the paintings by Constable and Turner. Although not directly influencing him Monet was inspired by their technique of rendering the atmosphere of the landscape. His palette lightened more and more and he began to avoid any sharp contrasts. "View of Hyde Park, London" was painted there in 1871. In London he was extremely poor until he met Daubigny who introduced Monet to the art dealer Durand-Ruel.

On his return to France in 1871 Monet settled in Argenteuil outside Paris, which was famous for its boating and regattas. Here he made his base until 1878. Monets friends painted here on occasions - Sisley, Renoir and Manet.

Here Monet built a floating studio boat, so that he could paint the shore and reflections in the water from the river. He felt completely at ease between water and sky, two elements that were becoming indispensable to his painting. It was in Argenteuil that Monet struck up a friendship with a neighbour Caillebotte.

In 1872-1873 Monet had a ready outlet for his work in the dealer Paul Durand-Ruel, whom he had met in London.

In 1874 Monet revived a pre-war project, that of launching an exhibition and doing so form a group and bypassing altogether

the Salon. They decided to include some respectable artists who would appear less offensive. Thirty nine artists with one hundred and sixty five works took part. Monet used the group exhibition to mirror the variety of his work. "Luncheon" which was rejected at the 1870 Salon was included in the group exhibition. This painting is broadly handled, with vigorous separate strokes of the brush, and has a markedly asymmetrical cut-off composition. Its details are clearly defined and the whole scene has a clear focus instead of revolving round a wide unfocused area of reflections and simple dabs of paint. Monet also included "Impression - Sunrise". Paintings of this sort were not considered finished enough for the Salon, and by including them in their own show, Monet and his friends were creating a new form for the exhibition of the response to his subjects and shown that an outdoor study could be suitable for exhibition.

In Monet's "Impression - Sunrise" he applied thin dabs of washes. The blues and oranges are muted in a greying haze that gives the impression of night meeting day. The boats and wharfs almost the same tone as the misty atmosphere, suggest a close relationship to a number of Whistlers Nocturnes. Only the disc of the sun and its pigmented reflection; whose sharp strokes move down the canvas are solid. In this painting Monet through his use of colour has captured mixed feelings of shadow and light, cold and warm. Monet, titling this painting "Impression - Sunrise" was proclaiming that he attached more importance to his own feelings than to the mere reproduction of subject matter.

The "Impression - Sunrise" drew the critical abuse of critic Louis Leroy, whose title led him to christen the exhibition as "Exhibition of the Impressionists" and the term was rapidly



PLATE 7.

Luncheon

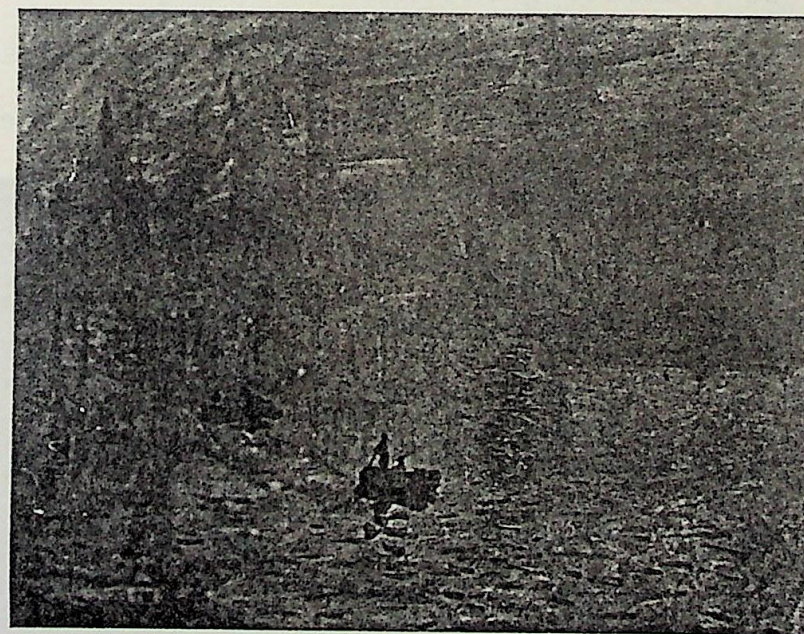


PLATE 8.

Impression : Sunrise.

accepted. This first exhibition was ridiculed. The colours and the distortion of forms were found to be offensive. Critic Jules Castagnary wrote:

"They are impressionists in the sense that they paint not the landscape but the sensation that the landscape produces"

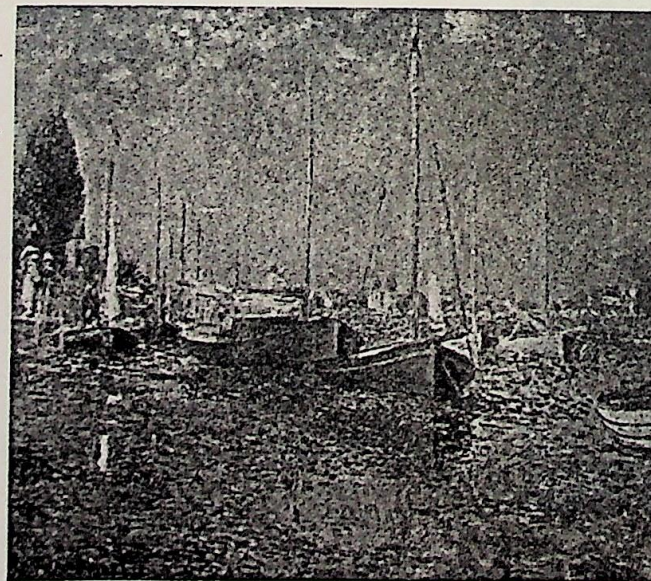
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This definition applies well to this picture.

Following the first Impressionist exhibition, Monet produced a group of paintings devoted to the snow-covered streets and houses near his home.

The following year in 1875 his paintings struck a new note of chromatic intensity, emphasizing the complementary contrast of vermilion boats against the strong blue of the water, e.g. "Red Boats, Argenteuil".

Ten paintings of 1875 and more than a dozen from the following year take up again the subject of figures in the fields and gardens e.g. "Gladioli" (1876) and "Promenade. Woman with a Parasol" (1875). In "Gladioli" Camille is depicted in the background, in half light overshadowed by the intensely coloured flower beds, with reds and pinks set in strong contrast to the complementary greens of leaves, stalks and grass. What one is aware of is the intense, vibrant colour. In these works he extended



his explorations of heightened colour. The interplay of intense patches of coloured pigment plus the mixture of dappled light and shade create an optical activity that overpowers the

PLATE 9. Red Boats Argenteuil.



PLATE 10.

Gladioli



PLATE 11.

Promenade. Woman with a Parasol

figures.

In "Women in the Garden" (1866) and during the first years at Argenteuil e.g. "The Bridge at Argenteuil" (1874). Monet had explored relationships of colours, moderate in intensity, in close proximity to each other on the value scale. Now he became interested in the optical strength of colour, its qualities of vibration, the ability to come from the canvas, to seem to dance free. So, in painting the flowers he heightened the contrast of the blossoms, that they appear visually to overrule our awareness of the composition of the canvas.

A number of other paintings of the second half of the Seventies reveal in different ways Monet's new concerns about freedom of colour and brushwork.

"Gare Saint-Lazare" series (1877) and "Rue Saint-Denis" (1878) In comparison to rural Argenteuil, "Gare Saint-Lazare" and "Rue Saint-Denis" represent the modern city, its vitality, tempo and atmosphere. In these paintings the perspective is centered. Against the structure in "Gare Saint-Lazare" smoke and clouds bellow, dissolving line and mass. Monet did at least seven paintings of this site, viewed from different angles, each recording a distinct state of light and weather. Monet included these seven canvases in the third Impressionist exhibition held in April 1877. In "Rue Saint-Denis" Monet translates the colour of flags into a series of strokes that conveys the visual, and the excitement of the event. In these works Monet captures atmosphere successfully. He transmits noise, movement and excitement. In "Rue Saint Denis" he captures atmosphere with his expressive use of colour, suggesting shapes. The reds flutter and dance in a frenzy of motion, while in "Gare Saint-Lazare" the colouring more subdued,

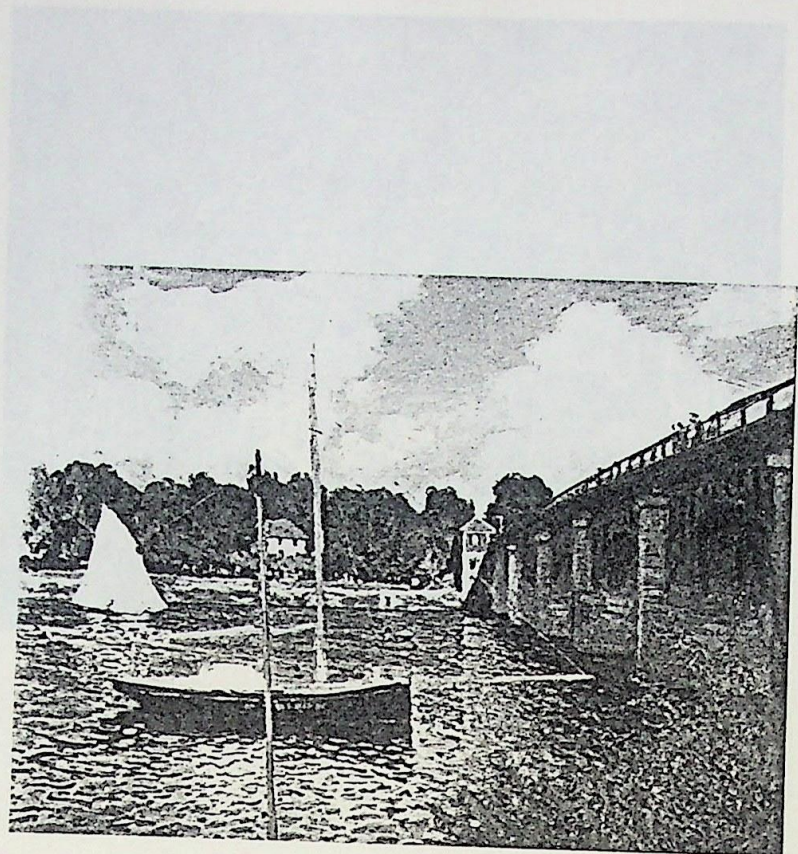


PLATE 12.

The Bridge at Argenteuil

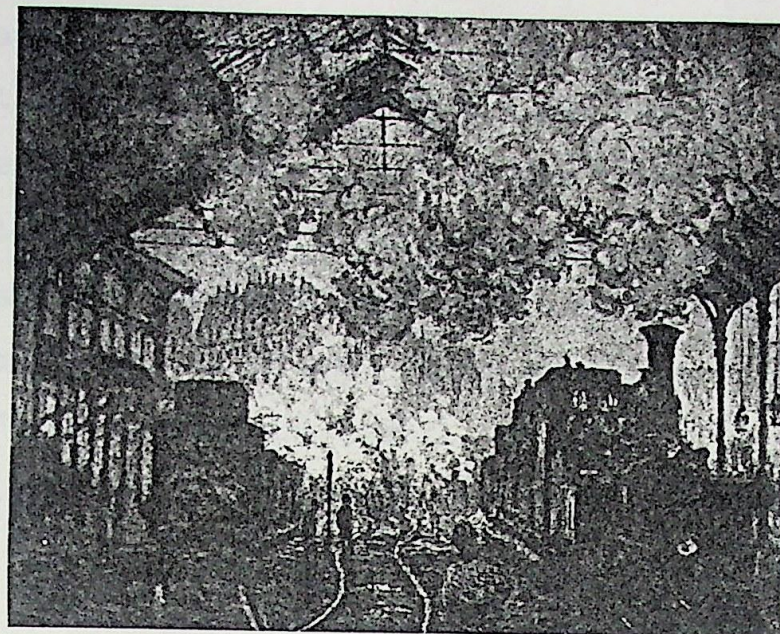


PLATE 13.

Gare Sainte- Lazare



PLATE 14.

Rue Sainte - Denis

give a steamy, fog-like atmosphere. The smoke has a blue hue with a hint of purple as it puffs accross the top of the canvas. Between the heavier deeper colour of the trains a lighter cloud rises to block out the background city. While the train on the right is in focus the train on the left and the building beside it appear to be misted in heat and steam.

In 1873 Monet left Argenteuil and moved to Ventheuil until 1881. Camille died in 1879 after the birth of a second son, Michel, and Monet's uncertain financial situation caused severe hardships. At the same time dissension was growing with the Impressionist group, and in 1880 Monet absented himself from the Impressionist exhibition for the first time. Frantically seeking necessary resources, he decided to return as Renoir had done to the Salon with his painting "Lavacourt". This painting was accepted, but badly hung, but it did get a mention from the critic in the Gazette des Beaux - Arts, who wrote, its luminous and clear atmosphere makes all the neighbouring landscapes in the gallery seem black. Monet's decision to exhibit at the Salon was a grave fault in the eyes of his friends. It marked the beginning of the breakup of the group. This was Monet's last attempt to submit to the Salon. Through Renoir, Monet received his first one-man show in 1880. The final exhibition of the Impressionist group was in 1882 and each member had begun to develop into his own individual style. Dispersal was not a sign of defeat but one of further progress. From here on each artist was fully conscious of the aims he pursued, his capabilities, and to pursue his own development he must be on his own. This dispersal was probably easier because Monet, the assumed leader, preferred to work on his own.

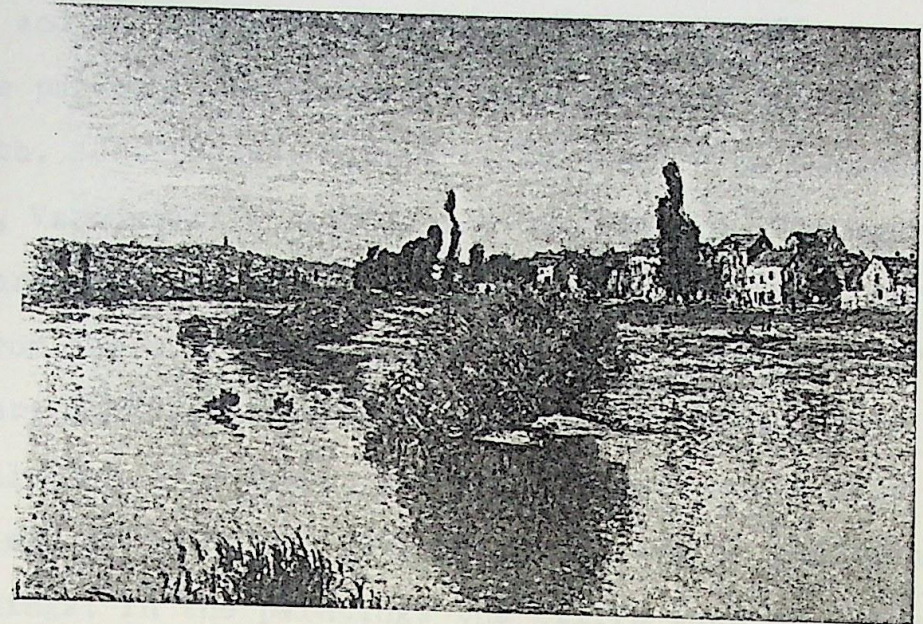


PLATE 15.

Lavacourt

Monet's work of the 1880s may be divided into three extended and alternating groups. During a whole decade of restlessness and continually being on the move, Monet painted the Normandy coasts from 1880 to 1883 and 1885 to 1886. He painted at Giverny in 1883 and at the Mediterranean in 1884 and 1888.

The paintings of Normandy meant a return to the scenes of his youth. "Cliffs near Dieppe" (1882) and "The Douanier's Cottage, Varengeville" (1882) and "The Church, Varengeville" (1882) are examples of the work he did there. Monet favoured views from the clifftops, this led him to dispose his forms in a way very like Japanese landscape prints, of which he was an avid collector. For Monet, the art of Japan was a form of naturalism, which helped revitalize his way of seeing his own surroundings. In the paintings the cliffs take up three-quarters of the canvas, emphasising curves and shapes, against the straight line of the horizon. Large shapes are devoted to the colours of grasses and heather. On each canvas the buildings become part of the cliff line and blend in with the natural foliage around it. His colour in "The Douanier's Cottage" and "Cliffs near Dieppe" are contrasting yellow and blues, the warm foreground against the cool distance. Monet did several views of the "Douanier's Cottage", each recording a time of day or a weather condition. This canvas is one of the most luminous of these works. In "The Church, Varengeville" Monet translated the dramatic sunset by emphasizing his contrasts between oranges and reds set against blues and greens, the canvas is rich in colour. Monet's friend and biographer Gustave Geffroy noted:

"One of the great advantages of Monet's simplification of form, was that it provided a ready basis for the elaboration of colour."

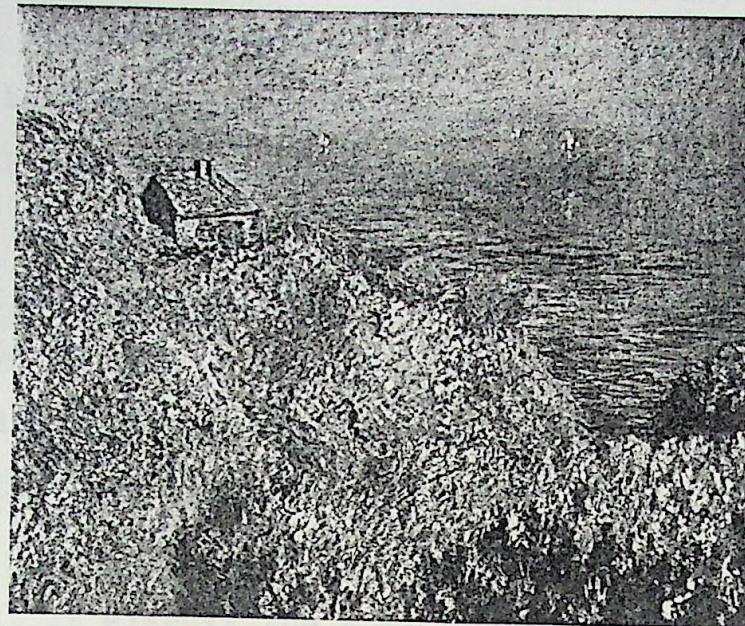


PLATE 16. The Douanier's Cottage



PLATE 17. The church, Varengeville.

In those paintings he depicts a time of day. For Monet everything depended upon the fleeting conditions of light. The story was told by Degas of seeing Monet arrive one day at his painting site on the beach at Varengeville. Monet takes a look at the sky and exclaims:

"Half an hour too late! I'll have to come back tomorrow." 10

The Mediterranean offered a vast new world of experience to the sensitized eye of Monet. In 1884 he travelled to the Riviera and his letters to Durand-Ruel are full of his experience with colour:

"--- It is exactly the sparkle, this enchanted light that I am determined to render, and those who haven't seen this country, or who have seen it wrongly, will protest, I'm sure, the lack of resemblance, although I am well below the tone everything is iridescent." 11

The paintings of Bordighera seem to have redirected Monet's palette towards the sun. A long suite of canvases of cluttered vegetation, compositionally undistinguished, their obsession is colour. During the 1870s Monet had from time to time come to using a palette reduced to the colours of the spectrum as in "Gladioli" (1876) and while the palette of the Normandy landscapes as in the "The Douanier's Cottage, Varengeville", and "The Church, Varengeville" his palette was organised into complementary contrasts. But it is in his painting "Bordighera" (1884) that Monet used the colours of the spectrum. Detail is unimportant. There is a strong feeling of the speed of Monet's painting - not only in the painterly texture but also in the way that blues and greens find a place among warmer tones of the flowering shrubs. Another good example is "Le Cap Martin" (1884)



PLATE. 18.

Brodighera

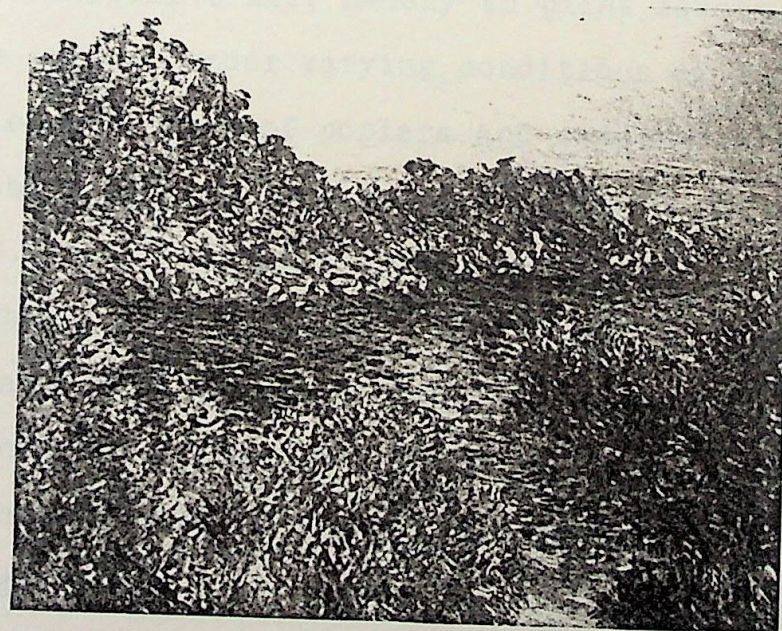


PLATE 19.

Le Cap Martin

where Monet sets two strips of vegetation between two inlets. "Le Cap Martin" is composed of delicate dabs of spectrum colours. The surprising possibilities of a quite limited palette are evident in this, according to Monet, "gem-like" painting. Boudin found Monet's painting so "daring", "vibrant" and "intense", that it was impossible to look at anything else afterwards. 12

Monet was afraid that the Mediterranean would seem exaggerated to many, though he felt that what he achieved fell well below the dazzling reality. Unlike Gauguin and Van Gogh a little later, he did not believe in exaggeration as an artistic principle in its own right. 13

In 1883 Monet and his family rented a house at Giverny, but his trips to the shore continued, and he was attracted by more and more dramatic subjects.

In the three years after his visit to the south of France, Monet sought iridescence and strove for higher colour intensities.

Around 1890 Monet began to develop an idea that he had already touched upon several times, namely to paint several canvases of the same subject under varying conditions of light.

The first series was a row of poplars and some haystacks not far from Giverny, the house he now owned due to a rise in sales in France and the U.S.A. at the turn of the decade.

Monet recollects:

"I believed that two canvases would suffice, one for grey weather and one for sun. At that time I was painting some haystacks that excited me and that made a magnificent group ---

I saw that my lighting had changed, I said to my stepdaughter "Go to the house and bring me another canvas!"

So she brought it to me, but a short time afterwards it was again different. "Another", "still another" and I work on each one only when I had my effect."

14

Taken as a whole Monet's aim in the series paintings was to develop specific records of a chosen site, which he would convey the changes of the seasons, weather, atmosphere, passage of light and its varied colour. Each series was part of the same general goal, each belonged to the species of effort. But to look at the various series is to realise that each one is unique. Each one contains within it the same shifts in mood, temperature, personality, moments and emotions.

Monet worked at the haystacks from the summer of 1890 to the winter of the following year. The colours of hour and season are recorded with deep and fiery reds, oranges, purples, greens in the sun. Ignoring their bulk, through colour, Monet bestows on the haystacks the gift of elegance.

This example, one of the series in which Monet tried to capture the transient splendour of light. The hills, trees, houses and fields are bathed in colour, the blues of the hills, trees and sky radiate against the melting heat of the haystacks and fields. The blues in the shadows of the haystacks cooling the heated aura.

Monet expressed his wish to be "true and exact" in depicting nature, to record faithfully its aspect at each moment of change. 15 Truth and exactness were related to his conviction that a subject does not exist in a single state but that its aspect changes every moment and that change is revealed by its surroundings, by air and light, which vary continually.

For two winters following the "Haystacks" and "Poplars" series Monet worked in Rouen depicting the facade of the Rouen Cathedral under different atmospheric conditions. Monet followed the hours of the day from early morning, with the facade in misty blue shadow, to the afternoon when it is flooded with sun and finally to the end of the day when the sun disappears behind the buildings of the city. The complicated iridescences of sunrise and sunset are more difficult to interpret and it is precisely in their most hallucinating extravagance that one becomes aware of the transformation that takes place. This example, called "Harmony in Blue", vibrates with the complimentary blues and oranges. It's a composition using these two colours, and it's as if he has painted the layer of air in contact with the facade, whose solidity does not appear to exist.

Two years lapsed between beginning the paintings and the exhibition of the twenty Cathedral facades at Durand-Ruel's in the spring of 1895.

The second half of the nineties was filled with new projects. Early in 1895, Monet travelled to Norway and developed a limited series of paintings from the trip e.g. "Mount Kolsaas, Norway" (1895) In 1896 and 1897 he worked at two series - paintings of the Normandy coast and an extended series of Mornings on the Seine e.g. "Morning Mists" (1897) On his return visit to the Normandy coast Monet's new works were closely based on his earlier paintings e.g. "The Church, Varengeville" (1882) but in his new series he demonstrated nature in its different aspects. In "Morning Mists" Monet painted a double image - nature and its reflection in water. The feeling is as its title suggests with its pastel shades of blues, mauves, yellows, pinks and turquoises.

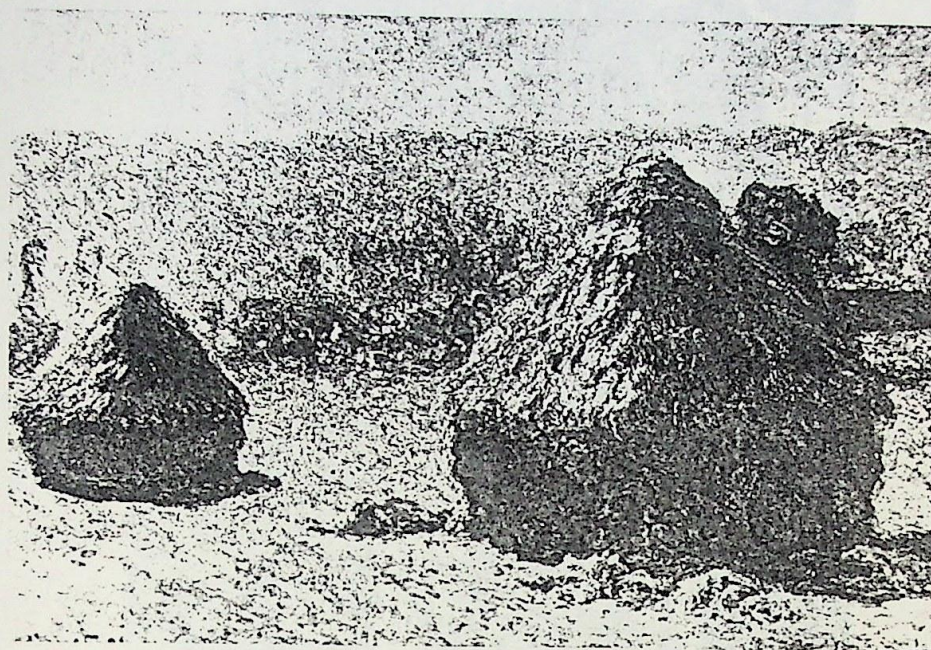


PLATE 20.

Haystacks

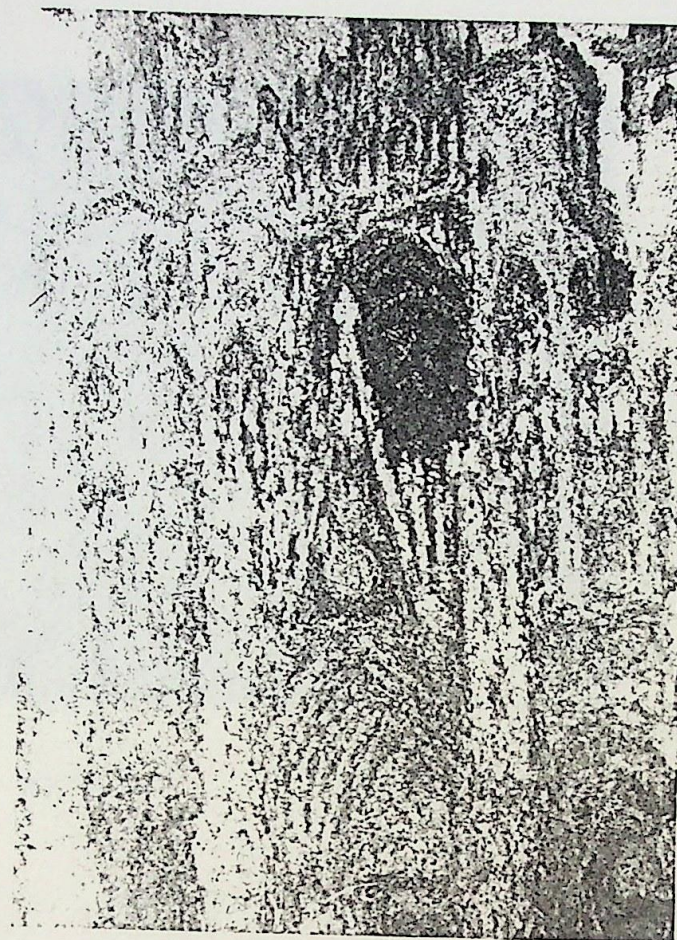


PLATE 21.

Harmony in Blue, Facade of Rouen Cathedral

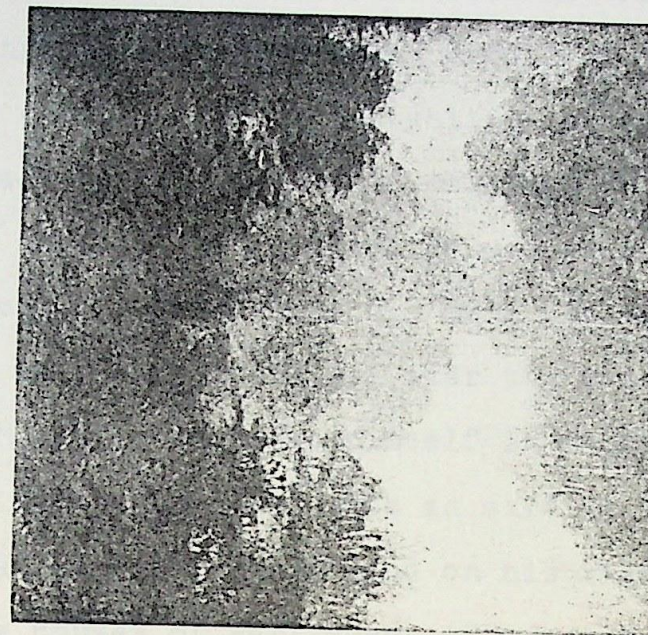


PLATE 22.

Morning Mists

The painting is composed of shapes. A large shape of various tones of greens and blues with flicks of purple takes up one third of the canvas on the left and balances the lighter shapes on the right the mists causing veils through which he perceived the curving shapes of trees and reflections. Monet suggested water in highlighting strokes accross the middle of the canvas, seeming to divide the canvas in two and highlighting on occasions further down the canvas. In this series of mornings on the Seine, emphasis is on surface decoration. This series was painted near Giverny. Monet would go out before dawn, his main desire to paint the confluence of mist and rising sun over the water.

In 1899 Monet established himself in London and took a fifth floor room at the Savoy Hotel with an excellent view of the Thames. To his left was Waterloo Bridge and on his right Westminster Bridge and the Houses of Parliament. From each view he developed an extended series of works which came to be part of a larger cycle of London paintings. Monet travelled to London three times during the following four and a half years working on his series there and in Giverny. In 1904, thirty seven paintings, exhibited at Durand-Ruel's gallery in Paris.

The London cycle was the most extensive of Monet's series to date, both in terms of the number of canvases that he worked at and the number of exhibitions at Durand-Ruels. The example shown here from the series called "London - The Parliament" is like Monet's "Impression" in that it captures an atmospheric effect of a ghostly image. Its message is not the stone architecture, but the silhouettes and reflections of colour and light in the foggy and watery atmosphere. The buildings are suggested by the use of darker shade of blue against the light blue fog and orange glow

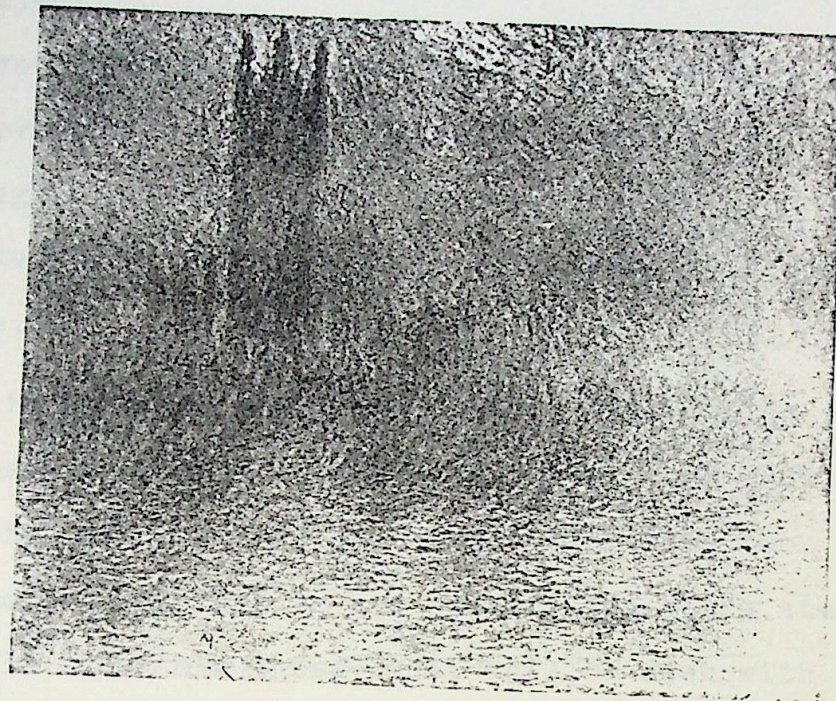


PLATE 23.

London: The Parliament

behind them establishing their form. The orange glow is reflected in the water giving the painting a warmth and vibrancy against the cold blue. This also creates a feeling of depth.

Monet recalled:

"I love London so much, but --- only in winter---
---I love the fog --- it is the fog that gives it
its magnificent amplitude, its regular and
massive blocks become grandiose in that mysterious
mantle."

16

After Monet's series on the Thames, Oscar Wilde said about him that the artist adds something to nature and that without his paintings of English scenes one would never have been aware of the beauty of colour inherent in the bridges and misty atmosphere of London, while after him these could only be seen with his eyes.

17

Following his purchase of the property at Giverny in 1890, Monet began an elaborate programme to improve his garden. He introduced a new and exotic species of water lilies in his pond and built an arched bridge over the pond inspired by the Japanese bridges. As many as six gardeners worked full-time to create and maintain an environment that provided a never-ending source of inspiration during the last thirty years of his life.

In November 1899, shortly after his return from his first trip to London, Monet informed Durand-Ruel of his London campaign and mentioned he had seven paintings of the water lily basin to exhibit. This group of paintings took the Japanese bridge as its main motif. This example shown called "The water-lily pond harmony in green" (1899) shows how Monet's paintings were becoming unrepresentational. In this painting Monet has achieved

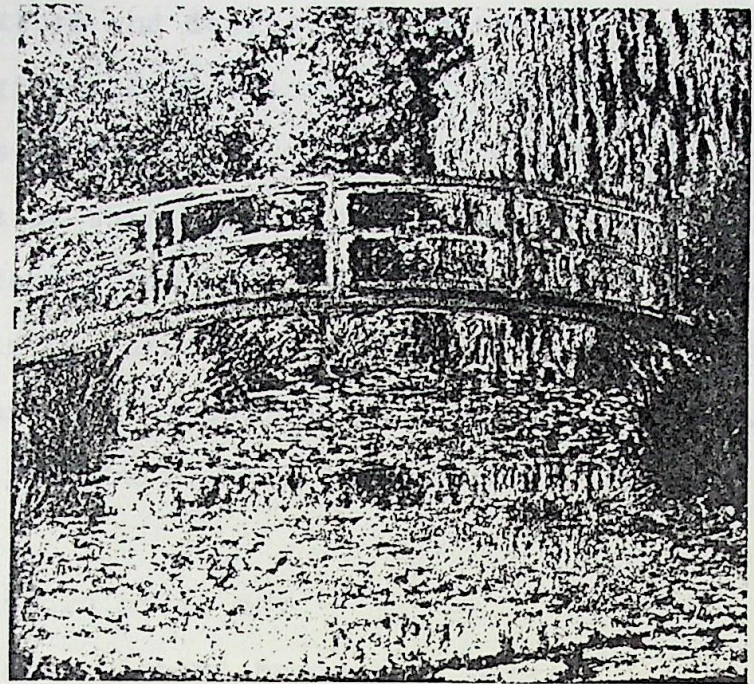


PLATE 24. The Water - lily pond harmony in green

a pleasing balance between the many abstract greens which envelope the picture to the graceful curve of the bridge, the only realistic object in the composition. The emphasis is on surface texture and design. His textural use of the brush and technique gives the reflections in the water a vibrating and liquid effect, with touches of pink floating on the water.

It was at this time that he began to plan for a single scheme of decoration in a special pavilion, in which the viewer would be surrounded totally by vast curving panels, representing nothing but the surface of the ponds. He was at this time totally captured by water after his trips to London and Venice,

Monet spoke of it as:

"--- Water without horizon or bank;

nerves tense from work would be relaxed there ---

18

But during the next few years the project was abandoned with his wife dying in 1917 and a cataract was forming over his eye. In 1914 Georges Clemenceau, his close friend, encouraged Monet to begin his project called "Decorations des Nymphéas" and a special studio was built, and completed in 1916. By 1918 Monet had completed a series of thirty panels. By the following year he had embarked on yet another series, much larger. These were to be painted in the studio.

But meanwhile his eye-sight was failing, he was tormented by the knowledge that he could not be sure of colour. He continued to paint, however, returning to the Japanese bridge. These paintings are like nothing else he had ever painted. The colour is not a balanced harmony of warm and cool colours, but a smouldering tangle of reds and bright blues and yellows. The arch

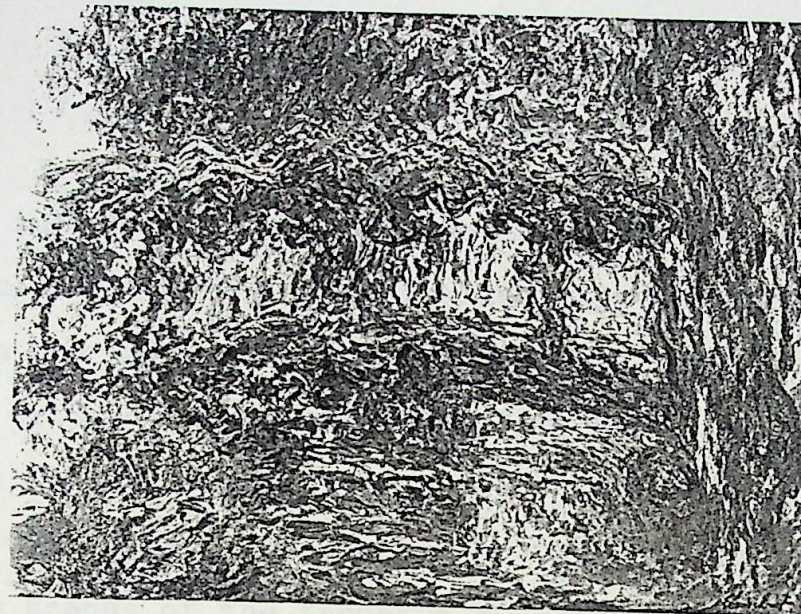


PLATE 25.

The Japanese Footbridge.

of the bridge is like a furnace with the flickering brush-strokes of red on red. In 1923 he had an eye operation which improved his sight. Monet spent the last three years of his life finishing his "Decorations des Nymphéas" which he donated to the French nation.

As well as influencing artists Monet inspired later movements. Monet influenced Van Gogh deeply especially in his use of colour but also in the way he depicted nature e.g. Monet's painting "Pears and Grapes" (1880) was very influential with its freedom and informality of composition. Monet's "Rue Montorgueil Saint Denis, Decked out with Flags" influenced Van Gogh's fourteenth of July, the streets scenes of the Fauves e.g. Braque and the Futurists and the paintings of New York by John Martin and Mark Tobey.

Monet's "Haystacks" struck Kandinsky with the force of a revelation when he saw the series on exhibition in 1895.

Kandinsky declared:-

"it engraved itself indelibly on the memory and quite unexpectedly hovered before the eye down to the smallest detail --- but what was absolutely clear to me was the unexpected power of the palette which surpassed all my dreams. Painting took on a fabulous strength and splendour. And at the same time, unconsciously, the object was discredited as an indispensable element of the picture." 19

When Monet sought to revitalize artistic vision through the use of bright colours, the exclusion of black and the use of cool colours in shadows he was taking advantage of the scientific discoveries about colour with the introduction of juxtaposing

complimentary colours. By doing this he paved the way for the various movements that were to follow, and for future artists in the way he expressed his own feelings rather than paint as was expected of him, for example in his "Impression-Sunrise" he painted his own impressions rather than paint the mythological scenes that were favourable at the time.

Monet lived long enough to see Impressionism slotted into the historic past but what he was striving for - to experiment in shape and colour, colour for its own sake to the point that colour dissolved form, and capturing movement and feeling - these elements led to the complete freedom of action enjoyed by the Twentieth century artists. Roy Litchenstein can also be considered a disciple of Monet's with his use of pure colour and his painting of the facade of the Rouen Cathedral. Mondrain and Mark Rothko both abstracted pure colour and were also concerned with the balance and vibrancy of colour.

BACKGROUND: TOULOUSE LAUTREC

Henri de Toulouse Lautrec was born in November 1864 at Albi, France. His family were aristocrats, with a notable ancestry, and his father was a count. This allowed Lautrec a privileged lifestyle, but it was marred by two accidents at an early age which left him crippled.

During the following period of three years Lautrec passed a monotonous existence in spas in the hope that cures might restore his health. Realising he could not join in the normal pursuits of the aristocratic life of riding and hunting. Lautrec concentrated and delighted more in painting. At eighteen, Lautrec grew no more than five feet tall, and was able to walk with the aid of a cane.

In July 1881 Lautrec returned to Paris to take the baccalaurat examination. Success resulted after his second sitting in November, which meant he could discontinue his studies at home, with strong support from his Uncle Charles who was convinced that Lautrec had great potential as a painter. 1
Lautrec lived with his parents in Paris and studied under his father's friend Rene Princeteau, a deaf mute, who painted dogs and horses.

In Lautrec's earliest works the influence of Princeteau comes through in the spontaneous sketches of animal and hunt scenes. Lautrec modelled his work entirely on that of Princeteau with so much success that in a batch of their drawings few people could say which came from which hand.

Lautrec was fascinated by movements whether by humans or animals.

After only a few weeks Princeteau considered it desirable to find a more advanced teacher for Lautrec.

Princeteau presented Lautrec to the Atelier Bonnet in 1882. Bonnet was an academic painter and imitated the work of the old masters. Primarily he was a portrait painter, very fashionable and expensive.

Lautrec followed the guidance of Bonnet closely and made restrained drawings of live male and female models to Bonnets requirements which were very different from the spontaneous sketches which he had made in Princeteau's studio. In his paintings Lautrec had always used light colours upon the advice of Princeteau, but Bonnet persuaded Lautrec to adopt a very sombre palette. Lautrec even agreed to paint the historical and mythological subjects which were a required entry into the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

According to Lautrec's Mother:

"Bonnet is not very gentle with his students.

Apparently this indicates a real interest in the development of their abilities".

2

During the summer of 1882 on his return to the countryside, Lautrec reverted to his favourite subjects - horses, huntsmen and peasants.

After his vacation, Lautrec returned to Paris to find that the Atelier Bonnet had closed, Bonnet having been appointed Professor at the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

The responsibility of deciding upon his own future was left to Lautrec, now eighteen.

Lautrec and a group of friends from the Atelier Bonnet asked the fashionable artist Cormon to undertake the super-

vision of their work. Lautrec worked in Cormon's studio until 1887.

Cormon, painter of "Cain" and principal exhibitor at the Salon of 1880, was fascinated like many romantics by pre-history and antiquity. But he was tolerant of new doctrines and gave his Atelier quite a different atmosphere from the studio severity of Bonnets. In 1883 Lautrec wrote to his Uncle Charles of his progress at Atelier Cormon:-

"Cormon's comments are far milder than those of Bonnet. Whatever you show him, he warmly approves.

It will surprise you, but I like this reaction less. Instead, the lashes of my old master's

whips put ginger into me and I didn't spare

myself. Here, on the other hand I feel a little

diffident, and have to make an effort conscientiously

to produce a drawing which will impress Cormon."

3

Working with Cormon, Lautrec gradually accustomed himself to his teaching, for in the works executed during 1882 to 1886 Cormon's influence of elaborate detail can be seen. Lautrec took up the conventional subjects that were suggested for example Icarus and the scenes from Merovingian life.

Guzi wrote:-

"At the Atelier Lautrec shows distaste for the subject-matter recommended by Cormon, themes chosen from the Bible, mythology and history. He considers that the Greeks ought to be left to the Pantheon and firemen's helmets to David. He loathes gloss: grey predominates in his work, and many of his portraits are

primarily drawings enhanced by colour." Lautrec felt more at ease with the nude in "Fat Maria" (1884). This painting was painted in a studio with diffused light. The brushwork is stiff.

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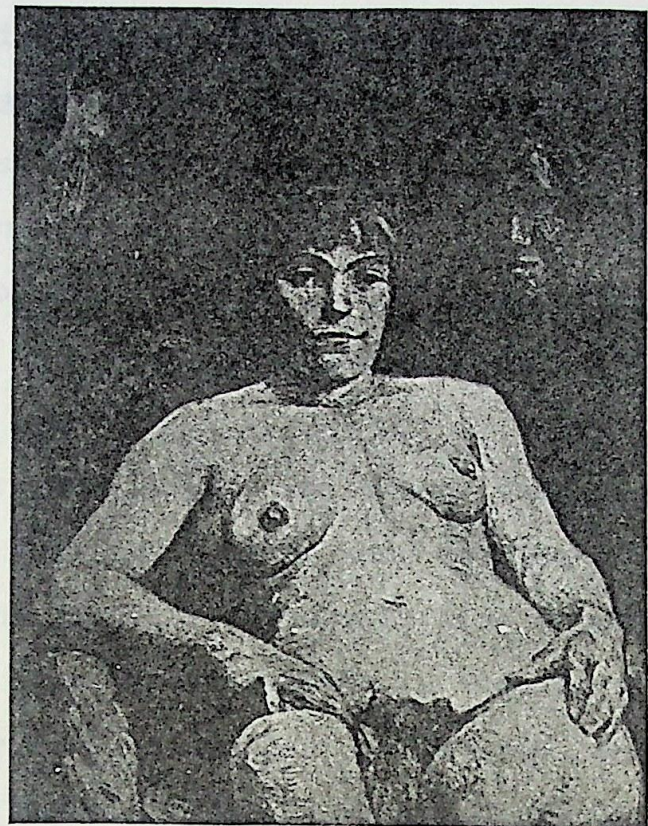


PLATE 26.

Fat Maria

But the handling of the figure is assured and confident. The outline of the figure is emphasised by the darkness behind. Lautrec has not hesitated to draw our attention to the contempt and disillusion which emphasised by the use of greens, blues and browns in the background. The figure has a greyish hue with highlights of blues, yellow ochre, and cool pinks.

On 1884 Cormon invited Lautrec to work with him on an important edition of the works of Victor Hugo, which proved highly successful. This work was the first for which Latrec received payment.

That same year when Lautrec was twenty one, his Mother left Paris and moved to Bordeaux. Lautrec went to live in Monmartre with his friends the Greniers. From that time onwards he developed a taste for a life of greater freedom. In the summer of 1884 while visiting his Mother in Bordeaux Lautrec analysed what he had learnt and what he himself felt. He made another attempt at landscape painting and then reverted to portrait painting and figure painting, discovering that he was more interested in people and showing their charicture through his painting. 4

With his friends Lautrec regularly visited "Le Chat Noir" - a cabaret that attracted artist and writers. Lautrec enjoyed the people, the noise and the contrasting lights. This cabaret was soon sold to Aristide Bruant, then a little known singer and composer with the new name of the "Mirliton" for the cabaret. Bruant invited Lautrec to illustrate his songs. He also proposed that Lautrec's pictures should be displayed on the walls of the "Mirliton" and his drawings published in the Mirliton magazine which he issued from time to time. In this way at twenty one Lautrec became known to the public and he began to secure commissions for his work.

Lautrec felt at home in Cormon's studio and Bruant's cabaret, for in both places he found that free and easy atmosphere he had begun to enjoy.

Familiar with the art of printing, following his collaboration with Cormon over the illustration of works by Victor Hugo, Lautrec developed an interest in engraving.

The necessity to simplify colour tones and to select linear forms compatible with mechanical processes of reproduction began to exert a profound influence on Lautrec's technique. In his collaboration with Bruant in the Mireliten magazine Lautrec sought to create the lively images of the themes of Bruant's songs. He would depict with whose features he was familiar in a pose relating to the theme of the song. For example, for Bruant's song "A la Bastille", one of Lautrec's friends, a provincial young lady is portrayed at a Cafe table with a glass in her hand. The picture is simple. The background is hazy, dabbled strokes with a feeling of impressionism but unlike the impressionist use of colour, it is subdued. The figure in front unlike the impressionist technique is strong and domineering clear and light coloured.

The relationship between Bruant and Lautrec was sustained by their common inquisitiveness, seeking originality. Bruant's songs emphasised the satiric nature of Lautrec's work and his complete freedom whether political or social.

5

1886 in Atelier Cormon, two newcomers arrived, Emile Bernard and Vincent Van Gogh. Van Gogh had such a violent temper that neither his fellow students nor Cormon dared to question his artistic theories, so intense was the passion with which he defended them. Van Gogh was working in the manner of the Impressionists and the Scientific Laws of colour contrasts upon



PLATE 27.

A la Bastille

which Impressionism was based and he was influenced by the Japanese coloured print. Lautrec also was being influenced by the Impressionists who exhibited regularly at the Durand-Ruel Gallery. Henri Rachou recorded his impression of Lautrec, his fellow student at that period:-

"He often accompanied me to the Louvre, much as he continued to admire Gothic art, he had already begun to show a marked preference for that of Degas, Monet and the Impressionists".

6

Lautrec was captivated by the originality of Impressionism and admired the work of Degas, whose draughtmanship and choice of subjects: actresses, clowns, dancers, circus scenes and brothels appealed to Lautrec. Lautrec's admiration for Impressionism and Japanese prints completely alienated him from the work of Cormon.

While Lautrec was influenced by the technique of Impressionism - that of painting dabs with a heavily loaded brush - his colours were subdued. For example "Portrait of the Comtesse De Toulouse Lautrec"(1887). This portrait shows Lautrec's Mother seated indoors, reading. The painting is subdued in colour. The whole painting takes on a hazy blue effect except for his mother's face, which dominates the picture in warm flesh colours. The outline of her back in the centre of the picture is silhouetted against the light coming through the window in the background, this emphasises her strength and calmness.

Lautrec continued to paint indoors for he loved the gaiety, noise and coloured lights in the cabarets. He seldom left Paris, but he was persuaded on one occasion to visit the Greniers in



PLATE 28. Portrait of the Comtesse de Toulouse Lautrec

their country home. An account of Lautrec's feelings while there was given by Francis Jourdain:-

"Lautrec soon began to appreciate the charm of Villiers. He wished he were a fawn and could walk naked in the woods. But this neophyte in the woodland world was a townsman and boredom soon seized him. Lautrec saw no significance in the movement of branches and rapidly grew weary of the multi-coloured fields that spread like a charming Harlequin's cloak. He went to an Inn, had a barrel rolled up to the largest of the four walls and began to paint on that ---- He painted a deceptively gilded setting lit by gas-lamps, where ballet dancers with made up faces danced and the hairy hand of the conductor in the foreground."

7

In 1888 Lautrec began to evolve a style of his own based on larger areas of colour and expressive outlines. At the same time he evolved a freer form of brushwork, using long sweeping strokes for drawing outlines and a network of shorter strokes in the enclosed areas for creating Texture and Surface modelling. His colour schemes, too became bolder and more brilliant. This freed him from the meticulous Impressionist technique of small dabs of pure colour and allowed him to record what he saw quickly and easily. He wanted to establish a stylistic continuity between his hasty instantaneous sketches and the paintings or lithographs into which they developed.

As soon as he evolved a personal style his work became more spontaneous and more vital and as a result that for ten years after 1888 he was at the height of his career.

The turning point in Lautrec's work was his painting. "The Circus Fernando: The Equestrienne" (1888). Here he began to

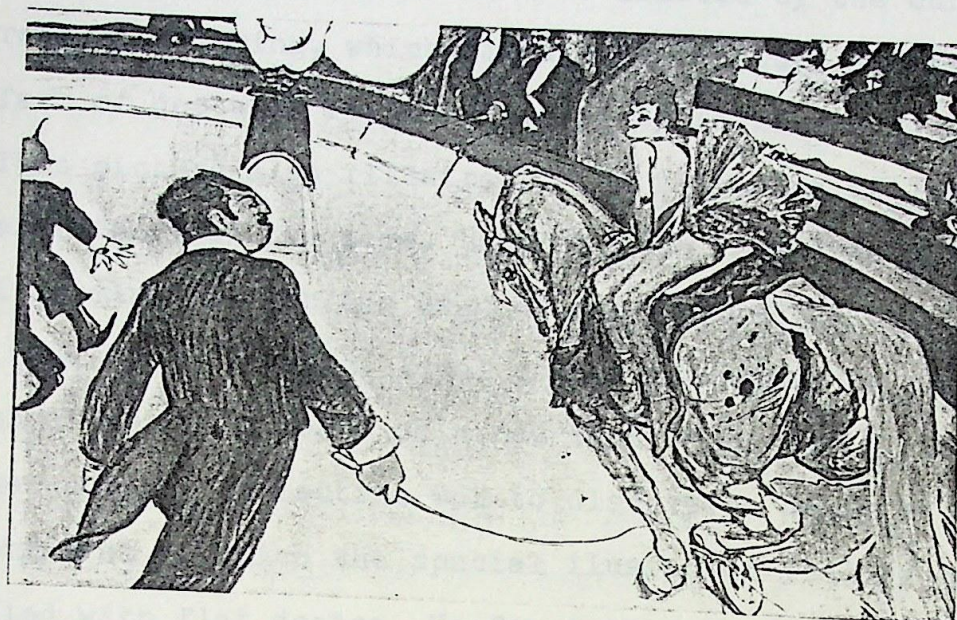


PLATE 29.

The Equestrienne

experiment with space and movement. The ring master and the two clowns and horse are silhouetted against the surface of the ring, and treated very flat. The horse and rider are exaggeratedly foreshortened implying depth which is limited by the curving balustrade of the ring, which divides the picture almost in half. The effect of depth is further reduced by looking down on the ring. This picture also illustrates the influence of Japanese print exhibitors of the time. Lautrec took liberties with natural appearances for the sake of the general rhythm. He boldly used broad areas of local colour and tried to create an illusion of depth by means of a new sort of pictorial logic.

The problem for Lautrec was to discover a means of pictorial representation in which the spacial illusion of reality could be reconciled with flat design. He found this solution through studying Japanese prints.

He also developed from Japanese art how to give unity to composition through linear rhythm, how to achieve a decorative effect by contrasting curves and angles, and how to suggest a character and feeling through expressive outlines. From Japanese art he also developed how to use silhouettes and simple masses of flat colour.

The Japanese influence is evident in "The Equestrienne" but it is very much more pronounced in his two big compositions "At the Moulin de la Galette" (1889) and "At the Moulin Rouge: the Dance" (1890).

"At the Moulin de la Galette" is composed on two panes. The background plane of dancers and the foreground plane of three women and a man. The depth in the picture is limited by the abrupt diagonal of the bench on which the women are sitting which

is set off by the counter diagonals of the floor boards and the vertical lines of the tables in the right foreground. The picture is further held together by the elaborate structure of verticals and horizontals both in the foreground and background, by a contrast of empty and crowded spaces. This was one of the first pictures in which Lautrec developed his characteristic style of painting, using rather liquid paint applied thinly and in broad strokes. The transparency created by allowing the canvas ground to show through gives an added feeling of luminosity and space. The colours are not as bright as "The Equestrienne" but the colouring has a night club quality, with the overall green and orange hue. The woman on the left of the foreground has a green face, the crowd in the background are under variations of green and yellow lighting while the lady seated on the right in the foreground has bright orange hair.

In the later picture "At the Moulin Rouge: the Dance" the arrangement is more elaborate, based on three planes - the crowd in the background, the central plane where La Goulue and Valentin le Desosse are dancing and the foreground plane, - the passers by. The composition is so skillful it gives the impression of being a flash photograph. Again the depth of the pictorial space is limited by the placing of the foreground which help to encircle the dancers and by the line of background figures and by the lines of the floor boards. The colours are brighter and flatter than the Moulin de la Galette. With his use of colour Lautrec has formed diagonal lines which makes the eye travel over the picture. For example, the woman in the foreground wearing a pink dress that catches yellow tints from the lights to the red stockings of La Goulue dancing in the centre to the red jacket of the page in the crowded background. The brightness in the background makes the



PLATE 30.

At the Moulin de la Calette.



PLATE 31

At the Moulin Rouge : The dance

crowd stand out in silhouette and back to the woman in the foreground wearing the lemon coloured hat. This painting was bought and hung in the foyer of the "Bal du Moulin Rouge" - a luxurious establishment in Montmartre consisting of can-can girls, belly dancers and blaring orchestra.

Those pictures represent Lautrec's mature style, but with posters he was not obliged to concern himself with the representation of an actual scene. By 1890 Lautrec had become very interested in lithography with the aid of his friend Maurin. Lautrec learned the technique of dry-point and the advantage in achieving greater colour variations and carachis - the spattering of stone with minute dots - with the aid of a toothbrush. The demands of lithography inspired his bold new style of poster design using simplified forms, broad areas of colour and a very limited degree of spatial illusion.

In 1891 Lautrec was asked to design a poster for the Moulin Rouge - the result was the most vigorous and novel poster to date with its complex and bright colours. In the centre La Goulue is dancing and displaying her billowing white petticoats. In the foreground her gaunt partner Valentin is in silhouette but drawn in a manner as to emphasize his personality. These are the same couple as in the previous "At the Moulin Rouge" painting. In the background is a line of spectators in pure silhouette. Here again Lautrec carries through the Japanese influence in his posters by the very foreshortened perspective lines of the floor. The colour of the poster is very elaborate. The bright yellow shape on the left is echoed on the top right hand side. The lettering of "Moulin Rouge" is a vivid red, losing its vividness in La Goulue's top mixed with white shapes, changing to red/purple in her



PLATE 32.

Poster for the Moulin Rouge

stockings and then to the blue/purple of Valentin's silhouette. Lautrec's colours are not soft. He preferred acid, slightly jarring colours in contrast to those which would be pretty and immediately pleasing. Lautrec is the first to have understood that a poster had to be lapidary.

Using this technique Lautrec immortalized Bruant's portraits for his many different cabarets. In this example Lautrec emphasises the red by surrounding it with black. The colours are broad and striking.

In 1893 Lautrec created for Jane Avril an even more attractive poster than the one of La Goulue. Jane Avril, is alone on stage and she is all the more striking as the bright orange, yellow and white are combined in her costume and hair, whereas the colours surrounding her are only half-toned shades of grey and green. In the foreground the top of a double-bass is emerging from the orchestra pit. The way it's drawn, the movement of its curves gives the impression of a rising curtain. The musical instrument directs the eyes to Jane Avril dancing under a greeny-white light, free of the slightest trace of shadow.

Lautrec's posters transformed these dancers and singers into stars. Loie Fuller, the American entertainer was the great discovery of the Parisian season of 1893-1894. She had hit upon the idea of a dance in which she remained immobile while simulating dance movements by manipulating the transparent material of her filmy gown by means of long sticks. At the same time multicoloured lights trained onto the veils in which the dancer was draped gave them a mysterious ghostly appearance. Lautrec was so enthralled by this original spectacle with its effects of moving colour that he created an equally original

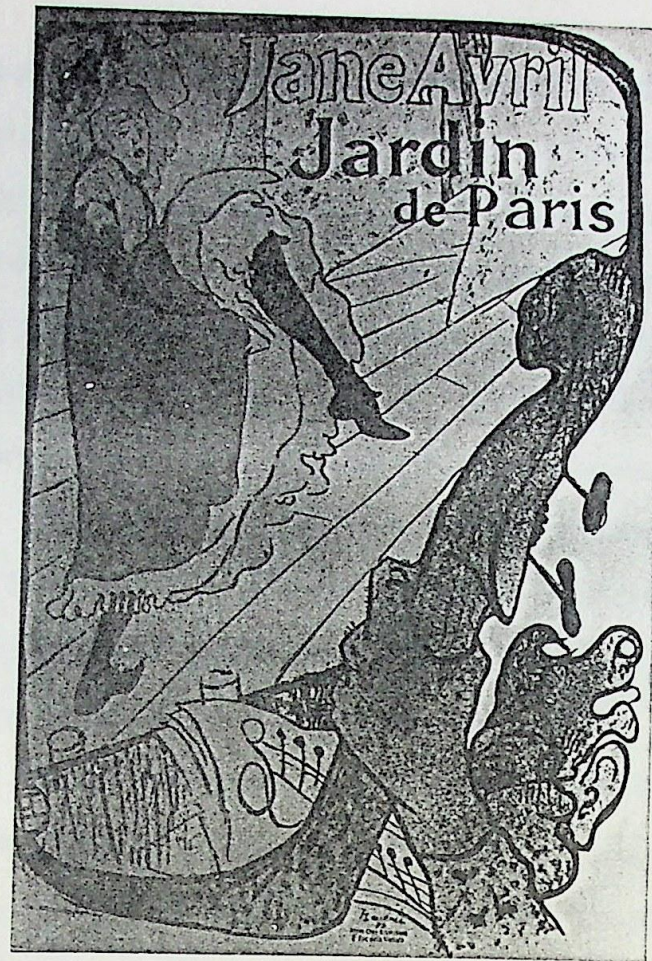


PLATE 34

Poster of Jane Avril



PLATE 35.

Lithograph of Loie Fuller

lithographic process which would enable him to portray it. When the lithograph had been printed he painted in watercolour on each copy, heightening the colour with pads of cotton wool. He then sprinkled gold powder irregularly over the surface in order to give them the changing colours of the electric spotlights.

Lautrec's non-conformism, his interest in Montmartre and the life there encouraged him between 1892 and 1895, not only to frequent brothels, but also to live in two of them over long periods. This allowed him to live in the immediate vicinity of prostitutes. His residence there was not the outcome of a sudden whim. He wished to immerse himself completely in the life of these establishments. Like Gauguin and Van Gogh, he wanted to grasp the reality and essence of alien surroundings. What Lautrec observed, inspired him for many years to execute drawings, paintings and posters. An example of a painting executed in 1895 was "Au Salon" where Lautrec painted the prostitutes of this brothel. Without abandoning the sharpness of his stroke, Lautrec gave in his painting greater importance to the colour zones which were not merely flat painted surfaces as in his posters, but included light and dark contrasts and suggested something in relief. Seated on large purplish sofas, the women wait for their clients in an atmosphere of luxury and boredom. Their faces, whose individual particulars are stressed, express disillusionment, emphasis, laid upon the contrast between the lavish of their surroundings and the drudgery of their apathetic submissiveness. Their thoughts far away, while waiting for their clients. The colours of the red sofa, red carpet and the bright of the women's hair are further illuminated by the warm lighting in the room. The woman's green dress in the foreground appears to be changing



PLATE 36.

Au Salon



PLATE 37.

Woman at her toilet

to pale oranges and greys only in the shadows it remains blue/green, helped by the touches of green on the walls in the background.

Altogether Lautrec designed thirty posters from 1891 to 1896. Some were commissioned by actors and cabaret artists such as Bruant and Jane Avril. Never did he adopt a formula, all his posters are different as for each occasion he devised an appropriately striking image. All the posters have a pleasing and decorative qualities because they were produced with pictorial economy. For example in the poster Jane Avril as depicted earlier. By its scale, its weight and the fact there is no colour elsewhere in the design, the figure dominates the composition. It is a good example of Lautrecs ability to take a few elements of reality and produce an image of gaiety simply by the way he used pure colour and linear rythm.

In 1896 Lautrec published a portfolio of lithographs entitled "Elles". Most of the subject matter had to do with brothels. One of the plates shows the clowness Cha-U-Kao, a robust woman and whose large form he emphasised. In one lithograph we get a glimpse of her in her dressing room, dressing before going onstage, another in the example shown, she is seated heavily, her legs spread apart, a pensive expression on her face. We are made to feel the strength of a muscular acrobat. This lithograph has boldly simplified forms with large areas of colour as in her yellow collar, dark leg and orange/red bench with very little detail and the minimum of depth and modelling. The strength of darkness in the figures legs holds the picture together. The colours are soft and subtle as if the effects of lighting create a haze and the heated atmosphere makes the colours glow.

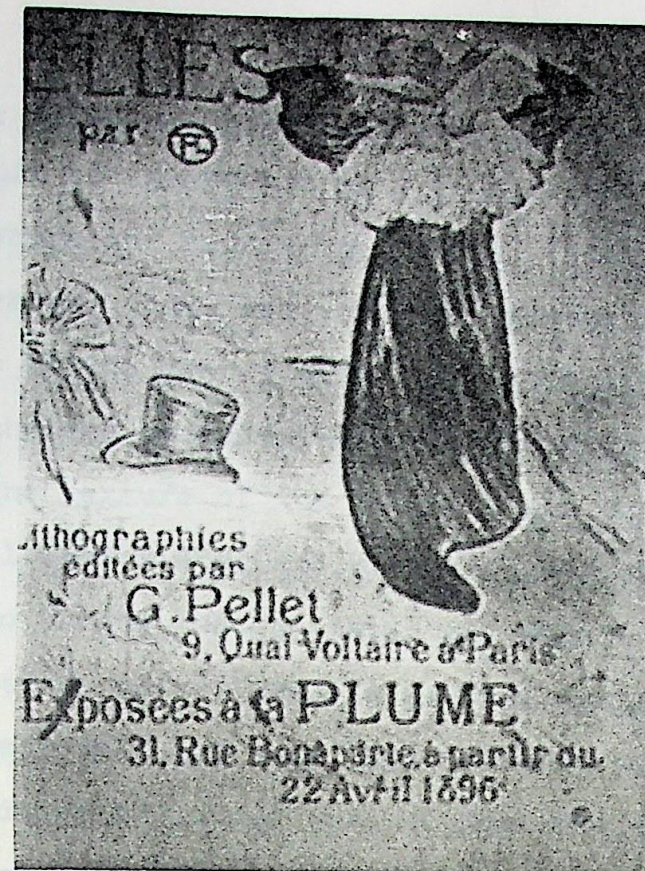


PLATE 38.

Cover for lithographs Elles

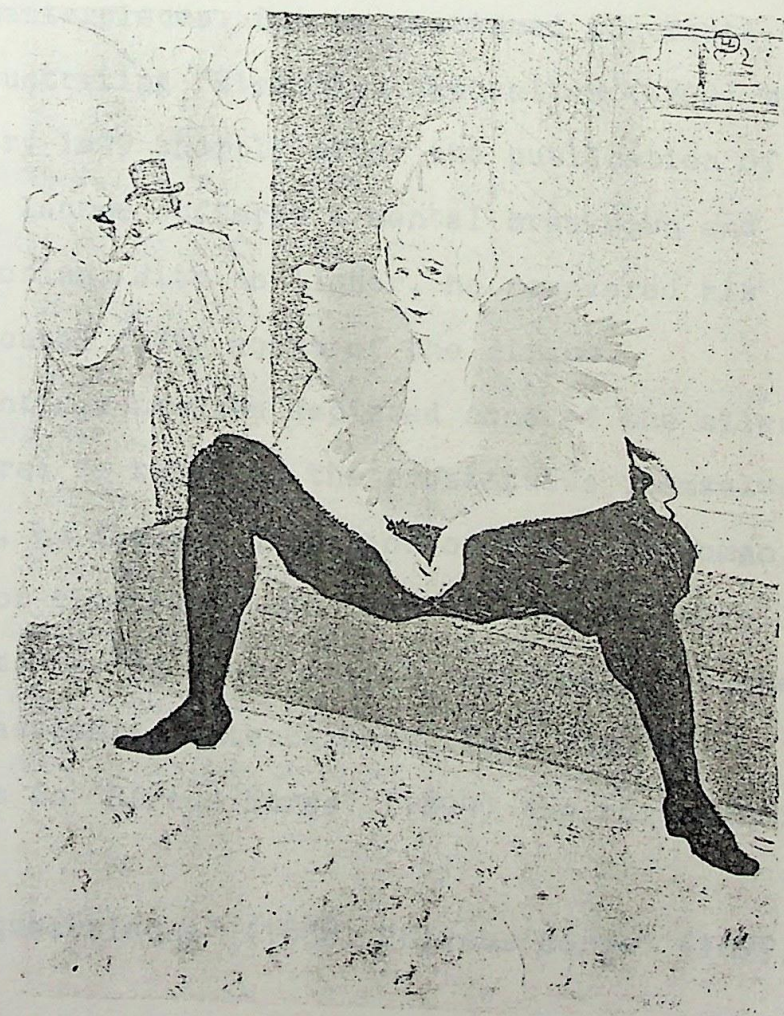


PLATE 39

Lithograph of Cha-u-Kao

Other stars captured Lautrec's attention - Marcella Lander inspired him to create not only lithographs but also a large painting where she dances the Bolero. Using rich colours of yellow, orange, pink, red, blue and green, Lautrec renders the brightness of the dancer under brilliant light. A frilly background technique accentuates the personality of the woman in the picture. The texture of the yellow light echoing in her pink and blue floral head pieces and blue and grey of the costume. The light is so bright that it omits any detail from her face, except the red outline of her profile without any shadows.

Lautrec's full and busy life involved making nightly rounds of cabarets, dance halls and bars of Montmartre, living in brothels and drinking to excess, which ended up by impairing his health. His creative powers were also weaker and by 1898 he was incapable of executing any more masterpieces. But he continued to create beautiful woodcuts, illustrating "Histoires Naturelles (1899) by Jules Renard. In February 1899 shortly after the publication of "Histoires Naturelles", Lautrec suffered a mental breakdown and was confined to a sanatorium. With no liquor, he recovered his artistic powers and executed fifty works of the circus.

In his brothel paintings Lautrec depicted none of the clients but restricted the figures to those of the prostitutes themselves. In the circus paintings, he focused attention on the horsewoman, horsemen, animal tamer or clowns. He considered these to be fellow-artists whose achievements lay in their actual performances rather than in their function as public entertainers. This idea he carried right through as in "Circus Horse" (1899) the horseman is the important figure.

Compared to "The Equestrienne" (1888) "Circus Horse" (1899) is

painted in the same manner as his paintings before 1888. They have a dull appearance. After leaving the sanatorium he returned to Paris, but resumed his drinking and again his work deteriorated. His colour became more subdued, the reflection of his weakened strength. In his work "La Modiste" (1900) the figure of the girl dominates the dark surroundings, orange and green light reflecting down on her, as he used to paint the women at the Moulin Rouge, illuminating her hair, face and dress, the darkness emphasising this brightness. There is a mellow and sympathetic feeling to the picture in the expression of the face, with the head bent and eyes lowered.

In July 1901 Lautrec left Paris for his home. Shortly thereafter he suffered an attack which left him paralyzed. He died in Malrome on September 9, 1901.

Lautrec with his pioneering mastery of stone lithography, invented the modern poster as an art form. So not only did he influence later painters but he actually opened the way for all Graphic artists and the field of commercial art, which addresses itself to the general public.

Lautrec also simplified the forms of objects to bring them into the linear rhythm of the picture and to achieve complete unity. This contributed to the establishment of Art Nouveau - being a blend of stylization and decoration, expressed in linear terms which developed from his oriental influences.

COMPARISON OF MONET AND LAUTREC

It is true that one understands more about an artist when he is compared to another, as if their different works compliment each other, for you are no longer discussing an artists work relative to his own development, but discussing it out of context with the artist and in comparison to another's work.

The two artists Claude Monet and Toulouse Lautrec were both French and lived at the same time. Lautrec living his thirty seven years during Monets eighty six years life span. Both artists devoted their lives to their work and painted prodigiously throughout their lifetimes for ever striving to perfect their work.

Monet and Lautrec were opposites in their subject matter. Monet was a landscape artist and worked out of doors in natural light. Whereas Lautrec worked indoors, people being his subject matter, and in artificially lit environments. Even though their subject matter and lighting conditions were of different extremes they had a basic common denominator. Both men were obsessed with capturing a fleeting instant: Monet of light on objects, for example his series of haystacks, and Rouen Cathedral facades, and Lautrec by his sketches and posters of dancers and people in their most characteristic gestures that expressed the hectic cabaret life in which they existed.

They were both influenced by Japanese prints, but in different ways: Monet by their use of the omission of detail in the interest of the picture as a whole; Lautrec by the Japanese Techniques of composition and achieving unity by linear rhythm.

Monet at the beginning of his career was influenced by Delacroix and the scientist Chevreul who was known for his scientific and mathematical approach to the perception of colour.

Monet's first example "Terrace at Sainte-Adresse" derives from Chevreul's theory: that of depicting light in terms of its component colours and juxtaposing them so that when seen from a distance, different colours placed side by side blend into a single tone and further influenced by Delacroix's Theory that juxtaposed areas of contrasting colour could be used to brighten and enliven a whole scene. Lautrec in turn was influenced by Monet and Degas in his early years. Although Lautrec was influenced by the Impressionists he did not blindly follow their aims. In the portrait of his mother only the technique of brush-work is the direct Impressionist influence.

The most important common characteristic is that even though they were working in different Media i.e. oil painting and lithographs their use of colour was masterful: Monet in dabs of complimentary colours and Lautrec in large flat areas to illustrate this point further a comparison of their works at the height of their careers is necessary - Monets, Rouen Cathedral facade at Sunset and Lautrecs lithograph "Englishman at the Moulin Rouge".

In Lautrec's lithograph what strikes you is large areas of one colour. It's recognisable in its choice of colour as being Lautrecs work. The figures are outlined. Form is a big part of it as the figures are the substance in the picture and are contained in black lines. Lautrecs approach is much more pleasing than Gauguin, more refined and sensitive. There is a great deal of tonal contrast between the dark green glove and the light green dress of the woman on the left. There is also a great deal of contrast between the man and the two women. The man on the right is all mauve. There is unusual colour treatment between the window and the wall. The wall is painted orange and the window

is blue with green bars. The dark lines which surround the objects and figures in the lithograph divides the window and wall in a whimsical line.

Unlike Monet, Lautrec does not leave the optical mixing to the observer, he presents it all as a finished work where he as the artist defines separate areas as separate colours rather than the observers having to visually interpret the mixture of primary and secondary colours for themselves.

The mention of Monet in the context of his Rouen Cathedral facade at sunset" makes it hard to believe that these two paintings were within a year of each other. Their styles couldn't be further apart while still being part of the late nineteenth century French art.

The striking feature of Monet's painting is the essence of all Monet's works which is his technique of placing colours in juxtaposition, not mixing them so that the colours blend naturally by the sympathetic laws that has associated them. The predominance of orange and red, which is likely as it is a sunset scene, is cooled by a refreshing blue dabbed on in strokes of pure colour, hardly ever mixing with the red.

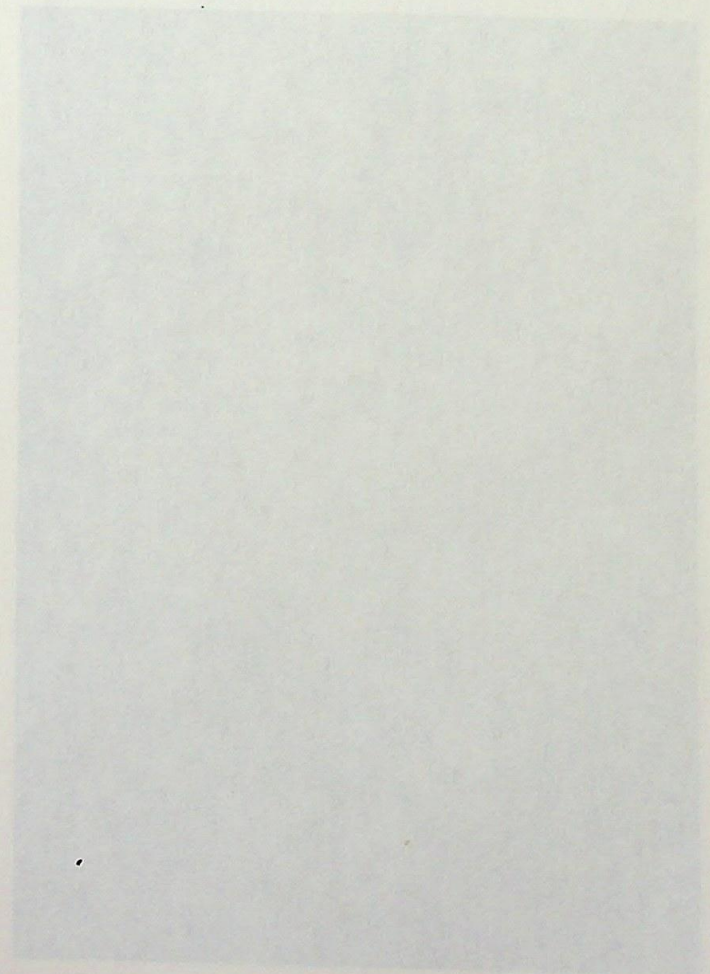
It is interesting to note how both artists used the same colours- one in a painting and one in a lithograph while both having very different ends. Monet's colours of red, yellow, blue, green, purple, and orange have a daylight atmosphere while Lautrec uses the same colours including brown and black and achieves a night club atmosphere.

Monet's painting is unmistakable, a formless soft lined facade with a vibrancy of the "Pleinaire". Here it is noticeable how similar both pictures are in their formless regard to detail.

Lautrec in his flat figures and colours and Monet in his submerging of detail with light and colour.

Both pictures give us an insight to the rest of the artists work and their striking conflicting approaches to colour.

Lautrec's approach is to paint an area of colour as the true representation of a subject. Monet's is to build up an area with dabs of pure colour showing how light plays on a surface. Lautrec interprets local colour in a simplistic way and Monet explored the possibilities of light and shade. Both do justice to the very individualistic approaches leaving us in no doubt that they were masters of two different art forms.



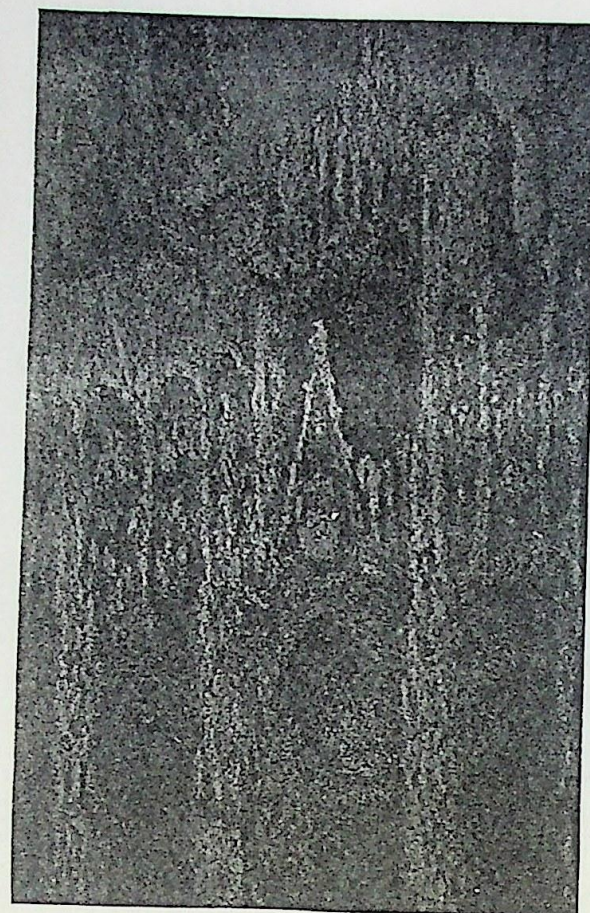


PLATE 43.

Rouen Cathedral facade



PLATE 44.

Detail of the facade

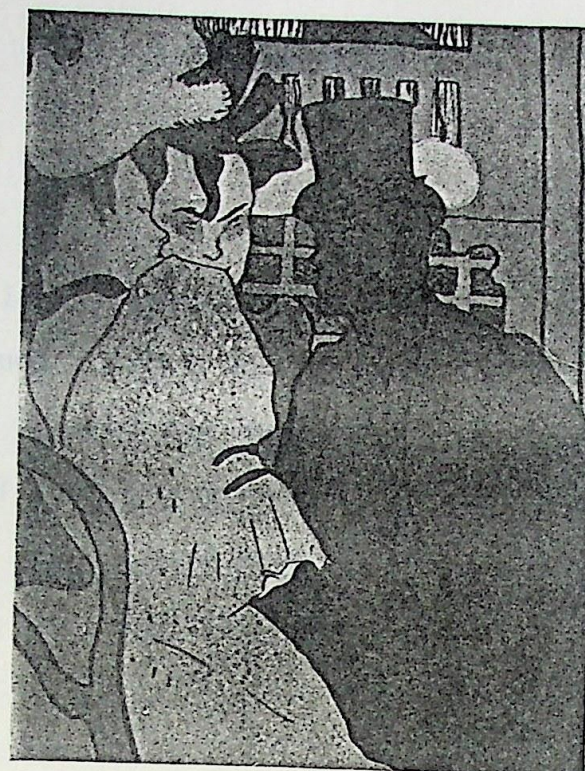


PLATE 45.

The Englishman at the Moulin Rouge

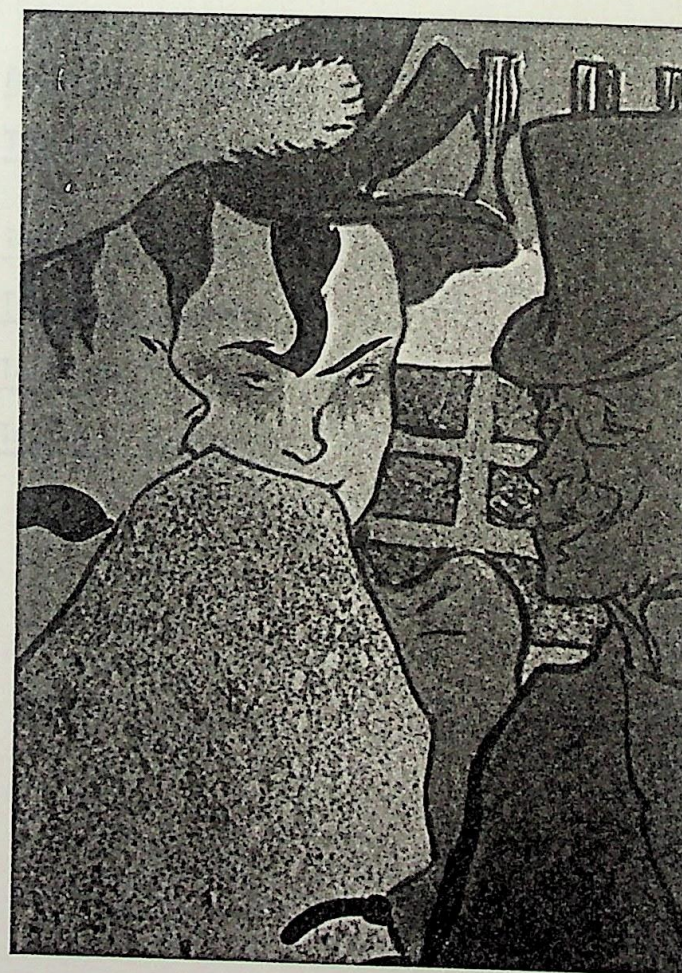


PLATE 46.

Detail of the Englishman at the Moulin Rouge.

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