



Jane Avril
By Toulouse-Lautrec



13. Jane Avril. 1893. Color lithograph, poster. 48¼ in. x 36 in.

[Cover this area before printing. Page is designed for creating a two-sided copy for the previous coloring page. Coloring pages are designed for kids to share the information at home that was discussed in the Art Discovery presentation, and are NOT FOR USE AS THE ART DISCOVERY PROJECT!]

Jane Avril

By Henri Toulouse Lautrec
(tuh LOOZ luh TREK)

1893

In Paris during the 1880's and 1890's, long before rock concerts, CDs, I-pods, even radios or television, people went to music halls or cabarets (cab arrays) for entertainment. Most of these places used large, brightly colored posters to advertise the performers. The posters were hung on outside city walls all over Paris. They were called "the art of the streets". More than a hundred years later, the shows these posters advertised have been forgotten, but some of the original posters still exist. The originals are very costly for modern poster collectors. These 19th century posters are still so popular that many copies are printed, framed and sold today.

Henri Toulouse Lautrec loved the nightlife in Montmartre. This was an area located on a hill in the north of Paris, which at one time was just outside the city limits and dotted with grain mills. The area developed into a nightclub district and, because rent was cheap here, it was also an area where many struggling young artists of the 19th century could afford housing or art studios. Two of the best-known cabarets or music halls in Montmartre were "*Le Chat Noir*" (the Black Cat) and "*Moulin Rouge*" (the Red Mill). (*One huge, lit-up mill wheel remained and turned in the darkness above the roof of the Moulin Rouge. The turning windmill can still be seen there today.*) These now famous nightclub names are associated with several 19th century artists with such famous names as Renoir, Picasso, Degas, Matisse, Pissarro, and Vincent van Gogh who also enjoyed the nightly entertainment found there. Favorite nightclub singers and performers in this district included Yvette Guilbert (gee bear) and Jane Avril. Posters advertised these famous dance halls of the day and several others, such as "*Jardin de Paris*," also located in the Montmartre district.

Lautrec was at the forefront of the popular 19th century Poster Art movement. In 1891, he created a poster, his very first, for the *Moulin Rouge*. Lautrec was such a regular customer that he had a table permanently reserved for him. He knew the entertainers who worked there and was already a well-known painter. Lautrec's first cabaret poster revolutionized this new art form and he went on to design more than 30 posters. His poster's clean lines, large, flat areas of color and brisk movement of design made them popular and eye-catching.

This poster portrait was one of several Lautrec painted for his good friend Jane Avril. He liked to feature qualities of the people in his portrait posters that made them each unique and distinctive. This poster features Jane's distinctive bonnet. This cabaret dancer specialized in "splits" and the "military salute" (for this she held one straight leg high over her head). Avril's wild dance style earned her the nickname "*La Melinite*" (French term for a form of dynamite).

In the fifteen years from 1886 until his death in 1901, Henri Toulouse Lautrec completed over 725 oil paintings, 275 watercolors, about 5,000 drawings and more than 325 prints or posters.