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# Performing “Fine Arts”: Dance as a Source of Inspiration in Impressionism

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## Abstract

The proposed article aims to highlight the importance of the most significant performing art which, according to the author's opinion, is dance, in influencing one of the most magnificent movements in world art history: Impressionism. Through an diachronic and deep cut in time, namely, the last decades of the nineteenth century France, a period commonly known as *fin de siècle*, this article attempts to illuminate the unseen sides of this magical "physical ceremony" which was meant to affect dramatically not only art, but also the social status of the country. The process of human movements, especially female ones, through the interaction of body and music was ultimately the cornerstone of the configuration of not only the aesthetics, but the overall ideology of some of the most prominent representatives of Impressionism, but also Post-Impressionism, as in many cases it determined their own lives. The imposing and much debated waltz, the classical ballet as well as the charming can-can and, its ancestor, the playful quadrille, were harmonically blended with the enchanting tools and materials of the Impressionist artists and the result was some of the most astonishing works of art in the world art history.

[**Key words:** Dance, Impressionism, painting, waltz, ballet, theatre, cabaret, women.]

## Introduction

Dance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century played a particularly dominant role not only in the dance halls of the world but mainly in the social arenas of both East and West as it seemed to invade and fatally change the hierarchy in the moral and aesthetic principles of many world societies. For instance Argentinean ladies in the 1850s, used to wear protective pads under their clothes in order to avoid the "unseemly" physical contact with their partners, not being able to resist to the charm of the, banned by the Pope, tango. The reactions and protests from the Austrian, German and French "good societies" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe, caused by the way waltz was danced<sup>i</sup> as well as the arrest of 1009 women by the police for dancing swing in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century US constitute characteristic examples of what kind of changes dance would bring in the course of the European and American social and cultural history.

So, if we turn our attention to France in the second half of the 19th century, we can realize that dance, both as a classical performing art and as a simple social event or a spectacle of night entertainment, played an important role in the way people looked at the new status quo dictated by the new order of the time. The era of our concern was an extremely turbulent and at the same time constructive and prolific period when newly born ideas, innovative inventions and new political and social developments took place in Europe. The

fertile ground of the French society was ready to bear some particularly significant ideological, political and cultural events such as the Prefect Baron Haussmann's role in modernizing Paris (1853), the Parisian Commune<sup>ii</sup> or else the Fourth French Revolution (1871), or the miraculous construction of the Eiffel Tower and at the same time the inauguration of the Great International Paris Exhibition, the World's Fair (1889), just to name a few. Arts, both visual and performing, flourished at that time of unprecedented change and development, rendering Paris the most renowned art centre in the world. Thus such a wonderful and strongly influential performing art, as dance was, which seemed to evolve along with the new, sweeping changes in Europe could not leave French fine artists' interest untouched. It not only influenced but also transformed in a way the imagination and the creative verve of the greatest and most important visual artists of that era, as it constituted an inexhaustible source of inspiration. The result of this was a totally new way of visual expression in the art works of the greater fine artists of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, the most important art movement of the fin de siècle in France which led to the miracle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Modern Art.

### **The Success of Waltz and the Birth of Impressionism**

The new, innovative wind which began to blow in the cultural life of the City of Light was the providential matrix that would give birth to a promising magma of reversal, dispute and revolt against any previous artistic power that would stand as an obstacle to freedom of expression. Impressionism was born to represent what its name really implies: the impression and its charting on a rigorous personal and unordered style.

On the other hand many types of dances (social, classical, recreational) constituted the basis on which Impressionist artists relied in order to acquire their inspiration for the most exquisite pieces of painting (and sculpture) of the World Art. The waltz was one of them as it arrived in France in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>iii</sup> and spread with such rapidity that the impressive Parisian magazine *La fleur de lys* published on June 4, 1824 a long article devoted to this 'peculiar' dance, titled *Guilty Idignity*. In this article religious authorities condemned and reproved in a hard way this new dance style, blaming it on the corruption of the young and the innocent housewives. The pastors were ordered to excommunicate the waltz as a dance that misrepresented the spirit, plagued the heart and led to the loss of the soul. The Viennese Waltz was one of the first popular dances, which used real closed stance (close body contact of the partners) and polka the second dance in Europe which used this "provocative" new attitude. Generally speaking, in the 19th century this contact between the female and male bodies was considered scandalous and it got finally accepted after a very long time.

Around 1850, when the Paris Opera was in financial difficulties, its director had the bold idea to include the Viennese Waltz to some of its shows on a trial basis. This was proved to be a great success as the curiosity of the public filled the halls again. Paris, the centre of arts, forwarded slowly the idea

of this 'prohibited' dance and made it accepted throughout the world.

As we can see, there was certainly no coincidence that dance as thematic material would play an important role in the course of this new power in Fine Arts given that its birth coincided with the planning and realization of the Opera building, a project of Charles Garnier (1825-1898) - i.e. a space that would host not only the Viennese Waltz itself but also some of the most remarkable, from both an artistic and aesthetic point of view, dances across the universe<sup>iv</sup>.

The dazzling opulence and rich structural composition of this imposing neo-baroque building was completed by the insertion of a series of life-size sculptures compositions among which there was a special group called *The Dance*. This work, made of plaster, was the brainchild of the then-known academic sculptor Jean - Batiste Carpeaux, (1827-1875) who depicted a frenzied scene of Bacchanalians bearing many of the features of the naturalistic approach of painters of Realism, but also the art of the Renaissance<sup>v</sup>.

This project reflected the human body through the erotic sensation of dancing with such a verisimilitude as to be considered obscene and vulgar by the conservative French public of the time so, it was not long before strong pressure was exerted for "dismantling" not only this one but also similar sculptures. This reaction of the Parisian public, which was quite often manipulated, was an indicator of attitude to artists in general, who were often subjected to negative criticism and even to aggression at that time, not only in France but throughout Western Europe.

The institutions of arts in Paris imposed a strange status quo under which specific circles of critics and artists formed a strict and rigorous committee which had the power to approve (or reject) projects by practicing artists in order to present them at the annual Public Salon Exhibition - a kind of art show occurring in town once a year. The answer, which did not take long to come out by the unsuccessful participants, was the organization of a new and independent Salon where their works would be exhibited by themselves, which angered not only the public but also the coterie of reviewers, as such a move was regarded as rebellion against institutions<sup>vi</sup>.

It was through this independent move that gave birth to the stream of Impressionism, a liberal "dogma" which despised the soft colours and thoughtful touches of the painters of Realism and proposed bold colours, violent brushstrokes and themes bathed in natural light. One of the basic principles of impressionism had been expressed long before the conception of its name by the French landscape painter Eugène Boudin, to the then young Claude Monet (1840-1926):

"Anything that is painted directly and on the spot has strength, vitality and brawniness, qualities that can never be achieved in the laboratory. Three touches from life amount to two or more days of work in the laboratory or on the easel"<sup>vii</sup>.

Painters such as Monet, Manet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro, Buzz etc., praised the

free landscape and the outdoor painting influenced mainly by the work of the British John Constable (1776-1837) and the Frenchman Camille Corot (1796-1875). Nevertheless, they have also praised human pleasures, fun and love while others like Renoir, Degas and Lautrec, the light entertainment, the human toil but also the margin of life.

### **Renoir's Social and Sensual Dance**

Although most of the representatives of this stream came from bourgeois families, which played an important role in the selection and performance of their subjects, Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) was the only one who came from the working class. Apart from the human figure that he depicted in portraits and paintings of nudes, he was inspired particularly by the social lives of Parisians, either in the night or daytime, putting dance prominently in his works.

Dancing in the works of Renoir is not but a simple social union or association of persons of the opposite sex mainly of the bourgeoisie. Thus we see how the images of prosperity and happiness of the upper social classes, by which he was so much impressed were contradicting his roots revealing the intimate intention to waive or to embellish them. Smiling elegant men and well-dressed women with immaculate coiffure either as individual pairs on neutral background or as groups of dancing couples, danced carefree and happy to the rhythm of waltz. An old mill on the hill of Montmartre Le Moulin de-la-Galette had become a Café and at the same time a ballroom with social events and had eventually been, especially in the summer when dances were taking place in the courtyard, a great support for the painter. We are pleased to notice that urban dance in his paintings was a dance transformed along with the wonderful music of his time in one of the most powerful means of expression of the Parisian society: beauty, harmony, flirt, joy and hope are some of the countless feelings expressed by both the male and female dancers through the grace of their movements affecting the pulse of their spectators by inviting them to become participants in this rite of consciousness of the human spirit. It should however be noted that the images shown by Renoir through these paintings do not constitute an objective rendering of reality as the harsh and unpleasant aspects of life seem to have been totally ignored and replaced by an idealized image of harmony and peace.<sup>viii</sup>

Apart from this, rather simplified interpretation of the identification of urban dance with the concepts of satisfaction and prosperity so much opposed to his childhood experiences, Renoir never hesitated to renounce his perpetual passion and admiration for the opposite sex. The sleek, contoured, voluptuous young women always invaded his dreams and were automatically transformed into sensual forms of inspiration for a grand part of his overall painting work. The elegant, fresh, young French women constituted his great passion which, however, was responsible for the transubstantiation of a simple and perhaps despicable fantasy into a fine art. This, however, became an even stronger foothold when an attractive female figure 'was connected' with a male body through a fathomless indolence and erotic fantasy dance.

These are the main reasons why in most of his paintings which are dominated by the urban dance or some kind of it (*Dance in Bougival* (1883), *Dance in the country* (1886), *Dance in the city* (1888), but even in the multi-faceted work of *Le Moulin de la Galette* (1876)), the female figure seems to prevail in the up until then 'sexist' waltz dance, marginalizing the male figure in the background. Even though the male figure, following the fatal waltz steps, always looks to 'guide' the erotic, unconsciously will-less and therefore more desirable female body, the women



Figure 1: Auguste Renoir, *Dance in the city* (1888)

manages to achieve domination. So the feminine charm and beauty seem to invalidate the previously male dominating status of this dance, and transform it into a more 'feminine' form of urban entertainment. More precisely, in the painting *Dance in the city* all the above are strongly highlighted by the seventeen years old female model Renoir chose to pose for him: her name was Suzanne Valadon and she was one of the most attractive women of that era who was to become his lover and a famous painter herself, later.<sup>ix</sup> On the other hand, the female model he used for the painting *Dance in the country* was mademoiselle Aline Charigot, a young twenty years old dressmaker, who had a more simplistic and intimate beauty compared to the



Figure 2: Auguste Renoir, *Dance in the country* (1886)

impressive bourgeois Valadon, was about to become his wife. Both women seem to gather most of the characteristic features Renoir used in order to screen the endlessly 'seductive' and challenging or - on the contrary - low profile aesthetics of the female dance showmanship. The rather subdued male figure in both works (as well as in the painting *Dance in Bougival*) belongs to his close friend Paul Lott.



Figure 3: Edgar Degas, *The Rehearsal*, 1871

### Edgar Degas and the Ballet 'Nymphs'

In contrast to the vivid depiction of the social life of Parisians by Renoir, it was the artistic instinct of another artist that came into play and whose relationship with dance was recorded by history as integral and unique. Edgar Degas (1834-1917) was regarded as the uncompromised artist whose expressively rich and experimentally diverse work had to do more than anyone else with the representation of life in cities given that he was not interested at all in landscapes and large painting outdoors (he always worked in his laboratory in contrast to Renoir and the others who painted from nature).<sup>x</sup> Degas preferred, despite his bourgeois origin, the cheap and nasty reality of night-time of gas-illuminated roads, regional cafés women who worked hard as laundresses and ballet dancers. The fact that he was inspired by a very important kind of performing art which had then triumphed in the choices of cultural entertainment of the upper social strata, ballet<sup>xi</sup> did not necessarily mean the artistic and purely aesthetic depiction on canvas of this sensual art. The artist, however, really loved the world of dance. In a letter to the sculptor Paul-Albert Bartolomé in January 1886 he mentioned:

*"Apart from my heart, I feel everything grows old in me. Even my heart has something artificial. It has been sewn by the dancers in a soft, pink satin purse like their shoes".*

Degas used to give different answers when he was asked about his mania to paint ballet dancers. *"I like their dresses"* he said once. *"They constitute, in a way, the continuity of the ancient statues"*, he replied another time. However, there exists a third version according to which ballet dancers merely offered him the pretext to capture the human movement.<sup>xii</sup>



Figure 4: Edgar Degas, Little Dancer aged fourteen, 1881.

As it is shown in the Paris Opera Museum Library archives, Degas had attended a total of 177 ballet and opera performances and managed to have access to the backstage before obtaining enough money to be subscribed to the theatre. However, his constant presence there did not bother the dancers. Degas was a bourgeois and used to go to the Opera with his friends who belonged to the same class as him, if they were not aristocrats, in contrast to the ballet dancers themselves most of which came from financially and socially lower classes. Degas was a voyeur but without the emotional charge that this word currently bears. His work was a kind of hidden camera, a secret body that went thoroughly unnoticed. Thus, he tried to see his art through a wide angle lens of artistic approach, which included not only the almost photographic depiction of dance movements of the small ballerinas but also the dark side of their world. This means that he managed to trap the time in his paintings and to capture the grace, glamour and excellence of a dance performance, but also to penetrate into the backstage area and the ballroom and to debunk in his own way the glamour of a performance. Thus we see dancers stripped of light and spectacular masquerade that gives the scene to look so earthy, austere almost vulnerable in the systemic, debilitating activity of their exercises. The female dancers of Degas are slightly ethereal and mythical given that, with loose bodies and members, uneasily and under pressure they are deprived of any erotic grace in the eyes of their masters. The tough and sometimes ruthless professional life seems to be depicted in all its extent in these two-dimensional

works of his.<sup>xiii</sup>

But apart from his paintings, Degas was engaged particularly towards the end of his career with sculpture because his eyes did not help him anymore with the details painting demanded. On the other hand, any kind of sculpture he had dealt with before that time was only intended to improve his paintings. But, the only piece of sculpture that he managed to exhibit<sup>xiv</sup> while he was alive was the famous *Little Dancer aged fourteen*, a small masterpiece of metal (bronze) which he inspired nude in order to 'dress' it later with other than metal materials (fabric, hair) revolutionizing the academic sculpture of the nineteenth century. However, this rather unexpected and challenging combination of traditional and non-traditional sculpture materials caused a shock to the Parisian public.

However, the relationship between Marie van Goethem, the young daughter of a laundress who posed as a model for his afore mentioned most admired piece of sculpture and Edgar Degas, was occasionally discussed. The truth is that in 1881, the period when this statuette was presented at the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition in Paris causing many controversial comments, it was not unusual for the "little mice" - as the French capital Opera ballet dancers were affectionately called - to seek patrons among wealthy spectators who were gathered at the backstage, as Degas used to do. Most of his sculptures (which were models in wax) were cast posthumously and are subject to small nude dancers in moments of exercises. Degas's sculptures glorify the human form and effort for pure performance of art, dance, which makes them more than merely nude.

### **Lautrec's Nocturne Marginalized Dances**

The post-impressionist painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (1864-1901) was of aristocratic descent. Alcoholic, bohemian and scarred with severe physical disabilities<sup>xv</sup>, he excommunicated almost at once his origin and was devoted to his art. A decisive role in this was played by his miserable appearance since he was often subjected to racist treatment by his entourage, which caused him to turn quickly to the pole opposite to that he already knew as life.<sup>xvi</sup> Enchanted by the Parisian nightlife and, all the more so, by that of dives and cabarets, the brothels, the circus and bars he drew all his inspiration from the sidelines trying to give the latter the glory and beauty that he truly believed they deserved. This world made Lautrec feel not only socially but also amorously acceptable (his love affairs with prostitutes gave him the right to sleep in brothels and thus to capture from nature on the canvas his impressions in a pragmatic and grounded way rather than a pornographic one).

Toulouse-Lautrec's painting was formed and matured with endogenous, but also exogenous non-French and even non-European<sup>xvii</sup> aesthetic and morphic footholds. Initially, as Degas did, Lautrec recorded the marginal ethics of the Parisian society yet based on the immediacy of his own senses. Since 1886, Lautrec visited systematically Aristides Bryan, a popular music composer and spent his evenings in his own cabaret, called "Le Mirliton", to get ideas in

order to illustrate many covers of his songs. He quickly became a regular frequenter of clubs such as the “Moulin de-la-Galette”, the dance hall “Elysée” in Montmartre and in the 1889 the well known “Moulin Rouge”. Sitting at a table in a corner of the ballroom, he would sketch innumerable scenes of the delectable programs quadrille dancing, a dance that we would later know as can-can. His hasty sketches were completed the day after and he used them in order to make paintings or lithographs. Every night he used to be among the audience of several cabarets in order to study the elegant movements of their exuberant dancers who would monopolize the interest of the male customers. Dancers such as Jane Avril and Gulu were arrested by the experienced eye of the painter and were depicted on his paintings, conveying the joy of lively nightlife of not only “Moulin Rouge” but also “Le Jardin de Paris”.<sup>xviii</sup> These two cabarets had become widely known not because of his paintings but rather from the posters he created for them.

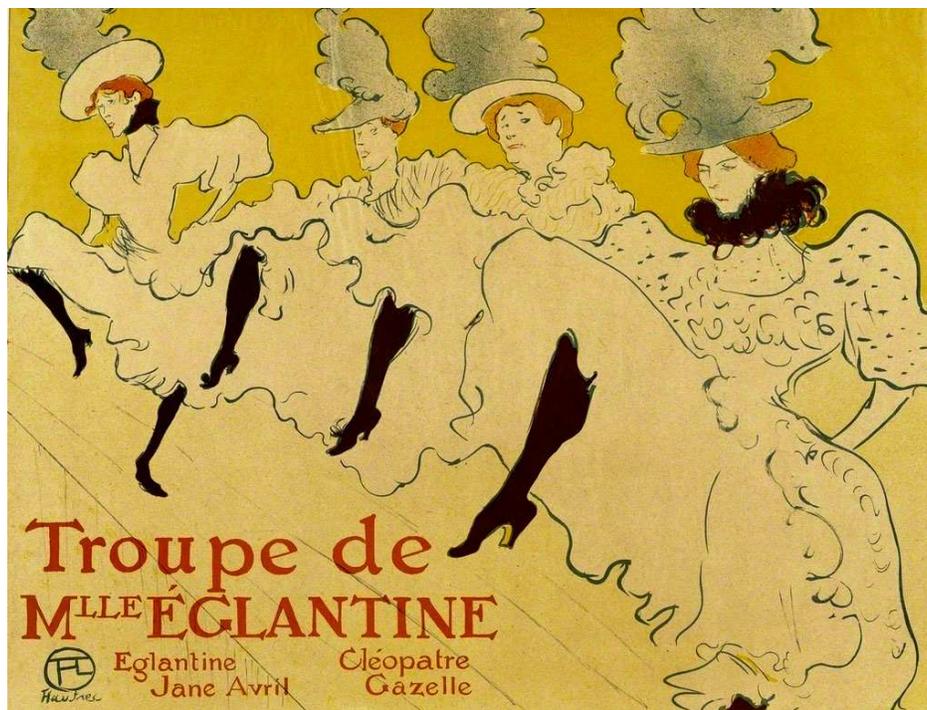


Figure 5: Toulouse-Lautrec's poster depicting cabaret dancers one of which is Jane Avril, lithography, 1892.

He was also a frequent customer at the cabaret "Divan Japonais", trying to capture the expressive and enigmatic face of Yvette Gilbert, the French excellent performer of the Belle Époque era. At the same time he focused on the strange melancholy of the clown Cha - U - Kao who was a famous *chahut-chaos*<sup>xix</sup> dancer, too. On the contrary when he painted the charismatic movements of the dancer Marcel Lender, all her sensual movements were translated into a bright wreath full of colours and when he tried to capture the charm of the attractive Loie Fuller's Serpentine Dance, all his colourful sketchy lines were transformed into abstract dance movements. By using the same decisive strokes Lautrec worked on the portraits of popular persons of the circus. Most of the singers and dancers that were depicted in his paintings,

were primarily his personal friends, as he never ceased to be himself an integral part of their fantastic world. As he often said: "Only persons exist. The landscape is not and should not be but only a minor element. It should be used only for the better understanding of the nature of a person".<sup>xx</sup>

As we can see, Lautrec liked painting women and especially women dancing. From the prostitutes or the cabaret singers and dancers, the workers as well as the actresses and in some cases the bourgeois ladies, Toulouse - Lautrec painted tirelessly women whose souls were infiltrated through their body movements. He painted them in countless synthetic variants with verve soul, imagination and integrity always driven by the virtue of truth. With respect for the persons he depicted in his works, and understanding about what they really were, he tried to reveal the truth of their social reality, which however was not always brutal and unjust. Without inhibitions, he initially entered a cruel and inhumane environment by tracing the innermost truths of people in whose characteristics the mixed feelings of joy and happiness, agony and tension co-existed simultaneously. At the meantime he found out that dance and women were inextricably woven parts of that reality and constituted the most significant features of his own world.

## **Conclusion**

The once rapid and rhythmical and sometimes slow and seductive dance steps in the music halls, cabaret, bars and theaters of the French capital in the second half of the nineteenth century, were destined to be vital for the evolution of painting and sculpture of the afore mentioned great masters of Impressionism. However, if we try to understand the main reasons of this huge contribution to dance in visual arts development of that era we will certainly focus on the following points:

a) Although dance (traditional, ceremonial, religious, social) has always been a reference point for the visual arts throughout the course of history of world cultures, in this case it constitutes the catalytic element which shaped an imaginative and inventive thematology seen through a totally new prism, and also a new aesthetic style. In conjunction with the new technologies of the time (invention of the camera and later the kinoscope<sup>xxi</sup> and the first portable cinema<sup>xxii</sup>), the new aesthetic order that was brought by the "invasion" of the Japanese prints in Europe and in combination with the rapidly changing social, political and cultural conditions of the time, dance was an inexhaustible source of new ideas for visual artists.

b) If we approached closely the starting point of inspiration and action that the three artists who were the subject of our interest in this research had in common, we would find that all three were possessed by the same likes, desires and passions, despite their completely different backgrounds and experiences. Their common love for entertainment, the female sex, the almost always unexplored movement of the human body, but also their ability to depict ideally all the wealth of information they received, enabled them to produce works which are considered to be the culmination of Impressionism.

### Acknowledgement of the sources of the images used

Figure 1: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pierre-Auguste\\_Renoir\\_019.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pierre-Auguste_Renoir_019.jpg)

Figure 2: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pierre-Auguste\\_Renoir\\_-\\_Danse\\_%C3%A0\\_la\\_campagne.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pierre-Auguste_Renoir_-_Danse_%C3%A0_la_campagne.jpg)

Figure 3: <http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/edgar-degas/the-rehearsal-1877>

Figure 4: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:La\\_Petite\\_Danseuse\\_de\\_Quatorze\\_Ans](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:La_Petite_Danseuse_de_Quatorze_Ans)

Figure 5: [http://statico.artsy.net/additional\\_images/523b5eeb275b24fa9f00029b/1/larger.jpg](http://statico.artsy.net/additional_images/523b5eeb275b24fa9f00029b/1/larger.jpg)

### Notes and references

<sup>i</sup> Kalamatianos, Stavros. *Chorou Enstikto (Dance Instinct)*. Athens : Private Publication, 2000, 26.

<sup>ii</sup> The Paris Commune was the labor revolutionary government which was established in Paris after the revolt of the National Guard and the urban workers and lasted from 26 March 1871 until 28 May of the same year.

<sup>iii</sup> The waltz was a fashion in Vienna around 1770. Despite many genres of popular music, many composers like Mozart wrote several waltzes for the Vienna dancers. In this romantic period the most classical compositions of the Viennese waltzes were written by Schubert, Chopin and Brahms. This dance, which was born in the provinces of Austria and its capital, began evolving and acquiring its current form, thanks to the Napoleon soldiers who travelled to Paris, a city which had more than 700 dance halls at that time. Of course this constituted a solid and firm basis for the development of new streams in the arts, particularly dance.

<sup>iv</sup> Mead, Curtis-Christopher. *Charles Garnier's Paris Opera*. New York: Architectural History Foundation, 1991, 89

<sup>v</sup> Honour, Hugh, Fleming, John. *A World History of Art*. London: Fleming Honour Ltd, 1982, 58, 59.

<sup>vi</sup> Bayle, Françoise. *Orsay Visitor's Guide*. Versailles, Paris : Artlys, 2002, 26-29.

<sup>vii</sup> Sutton, C. Peter, Finamore, Daniel. *Eugène Boudin*. Salem: Peabody Museum of Salem, 1991, 19.

<sup>viii</sup> Bronchkaya, Natalia. *Auguste Renoir*. Leningrad: Aurora Art Publishers, 1984, 34-36.

<sup>ix</sup> Rose, June. *Suzanne Valodon, the Mistress of Montmartre*. New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1999, 6.

<sup>x</sup> Grove, Bernd: *Degas*. Cologne: Taschen, 2001, 7.

<sup>xi</sup> Ballet has its roots in the Italian Renaissance that is in between the 15th and 16th century. Etymologically it derived from the Italian word *ballo* which means dance. It was then quickly spread to the French court where it was further developed. In the 17th century it was associated with the opera and this is considered the time when the first recording of its basic steps started. This fully explains the fact that its vocabulary is in French. The 19th century was a period of great social change which was also

reflected in ballet as it converted it from a dance for the bourgeoisie to a romantic dance for all. That was the time when Paris became the centre of the European ballet. During this period and especially until the mid-19th century ballet techniques were much developed mainly for women who started dancing at the edges of their feet, a surprisingly impressive technique which in combination with the elevation on the toes, suggested a supernatural lifting to a mythical world.

<sup>xii</sup> Toulatou, Isma M.. «Πόρνες οι μπαλαρίνες του Ντεγκά» (“Prostitutes the Degas’s ballerinas”), *To Vima*, 1102 (2011): 30.

<sup>xiii</sup> Blistene, Bernard. *A History of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art*. Paris: Flammarion, 2003, 39.

<sup>xiv</sup> In the Sixth Impressionist Exhibition, 1881.

<sup>xv</sup> His early childhood years rolled smoothly. In 1873, his family moved to Paris where Henri started going to high school. Two years later, however, his fragile health forced his parents to stop him going to school and thus he started having private lessons at home. In 1878 he slipped and broke his left leg, while the next year he fell over again and broke his right leg. After that his legs would stay forever as fifteen-year-boy legs, while the upper part of his body would develop normally. Throughout the rest of his life, the adult Lautrec would look like a dwarf, something that would deeply stigmatize him and would determine all the aspects of his life, including his work.

<sup>xvi</sup> Haftmann, Werner: *Painting in the Twentieth Century*, Vol. 2. New York: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1965, 45, 46.

<sup>xvii</sup> This can be interpreted in two ways: a) mainly because many of the dancers that attracted his attention were foreigners, carrying the strange and many times peculiar elements of their culture in their art and b) because Lautrec was a loyal fan of the Japanese civilization and especially of the Japanese prints that had flooded France that time.

<sup>xviii</sup> Gombrich, Ernst, Hans. *Το Χρονικό της Τέχνης (The Story of Art)*, trans. Lina Kasdagli. Athens: National Bank of Greece Cultural Foundation, 1994, 554.

<sup>xix</sup> A high-kicking and quite difficult kind of dance which was particularly popular at the cabarets of Paris at that time.

<sup>xx</sup> Mortoglou, Iliana. «ΤΟΥΛΟΥΖ ΛΩΤΡΕΚ: Ένας άνδρας που ζωγράφιζε γυναίκες» (“TOULOUSE-LAUTREC: A man who was painting women”), *Rizospastis*, 97 (2001): 4.

<sup>xxi</sup> The kinoscope was invented by William Dickson, who worked in the laboratories of Thomas Edison. It was a projector which was equipped with the ability to screen the film in a box, which was visible only by one viewer each time through a hole.

<sup>xxii</sup> In 1893 the French brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière, based on Dickson’s and Edison’s kinoscope, invented the *cinematographe*, that is a portable movie camera which was used for the making, printing and projecting the film. On December 28, 1895, they made the first public screening in Paris.

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