

# Toulouse-Lautrec

DELPHI  CLASSICS

# *Masters of Art*

**Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**

(1864-1901)



## **Contents**

### *The Highlights*

Jeanne Wenz (1886)  
Woman at her Toilet (1889)  
Justine Dieuhl (1891)  
Moulin Rouge — La Goulue (1891)  
At the Moulin Rouge (1892)  
The Englishman at Moulin Rouge (1892)  
The Kiss (1892)  
The Inspection (1894)  
Dr Gabriel Tapié de Céleyran (1894)  
Oscar Wilde (1895)  
La Goulue Dancing with Valentin-le-désossé (1895)  
The Clowness Cha-U-Kao (1895)  
Marcelle Lender Dancing the Bolero in 'Chilpéric' (1895)  
Paul Leclercq (1897)  
The Sphinx (1898)  
Scenes from 'Messaline' (1901)

### *The Paintings*

The Complete Paintings  
Alphabetical List of Paintings

### *Other Artworks*

Drawings and Posters

### *Brief Biography*

H. de Toulouse-Lautrec (1904) by Frank L. Emanuel

*The Delphi Classics Catalogue*

**Flautree**

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**Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec**



*By Delphi Classics, 2022*

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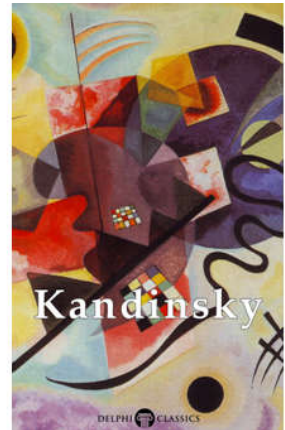
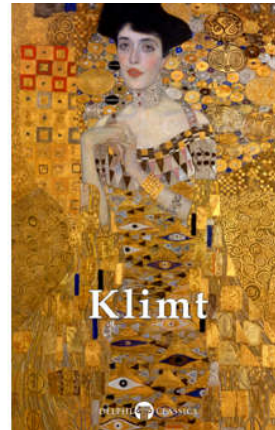
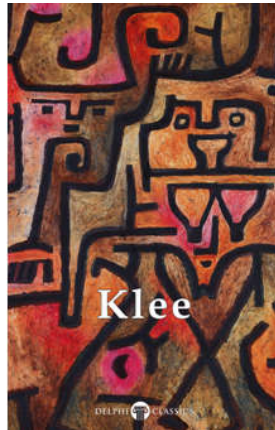
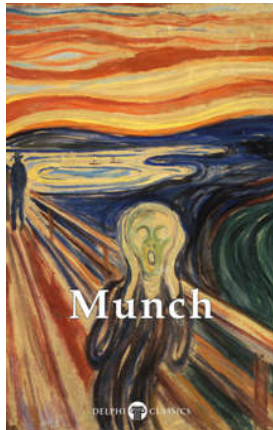
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Contact: [sales@delphiclassics.com](mailto:sales@delphiclassics.com)

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## The Highlights

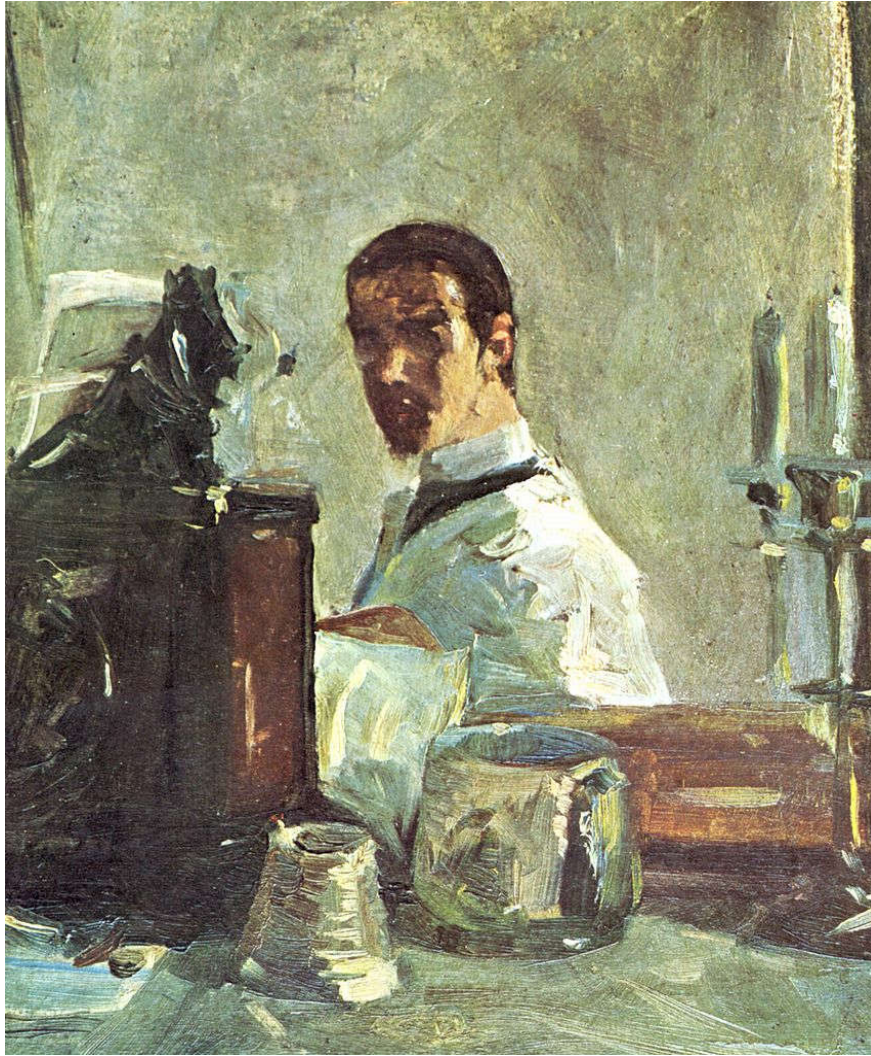


*Albi, a commune in southern France on the river Tarn, 50 miles northeast of Toulouse — Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's birthplace*



*The birthplace, Hôtel du Bosc*





*Lautrec's 'Self-portrait in front of a mirror', c. 1882*

## **The Highlights**



In this section, a sample of Lautrec's most celebrated works is provided, with concise introductions, special 'detail' reproductions and additional biographical images.

## Jeanne Wenz (1886)



Regarded as one of the forerunners of the Post-Impressionist movement, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec was born on 24 November 1864 in Albi in southern France. He came from a line of ancient aristocratic families, descending from the medieval Counts of Toulouse. His parents were cousins and it was an unsuccessful union, as they were much unsuited to each another. Countess Adèle was clever, pious and virtuous, desiring a peaceful life, while her husband, Count Alphonse, was an eccentric and outgoing man, who acted on impulse. Surviving accounts tell us how the Count enjoyed dressing up on a variety of occasions, at one time sitting down to lunch with the family attired as a ferocious Highlander. He liked outdoor pursuits such as hunting and hawking and he was often unfaithful to his wife. If the Count's first-born child, Henri, had outlived his father, he would have been succeeded to the family title of Comte de Toulouse-Lautrec.

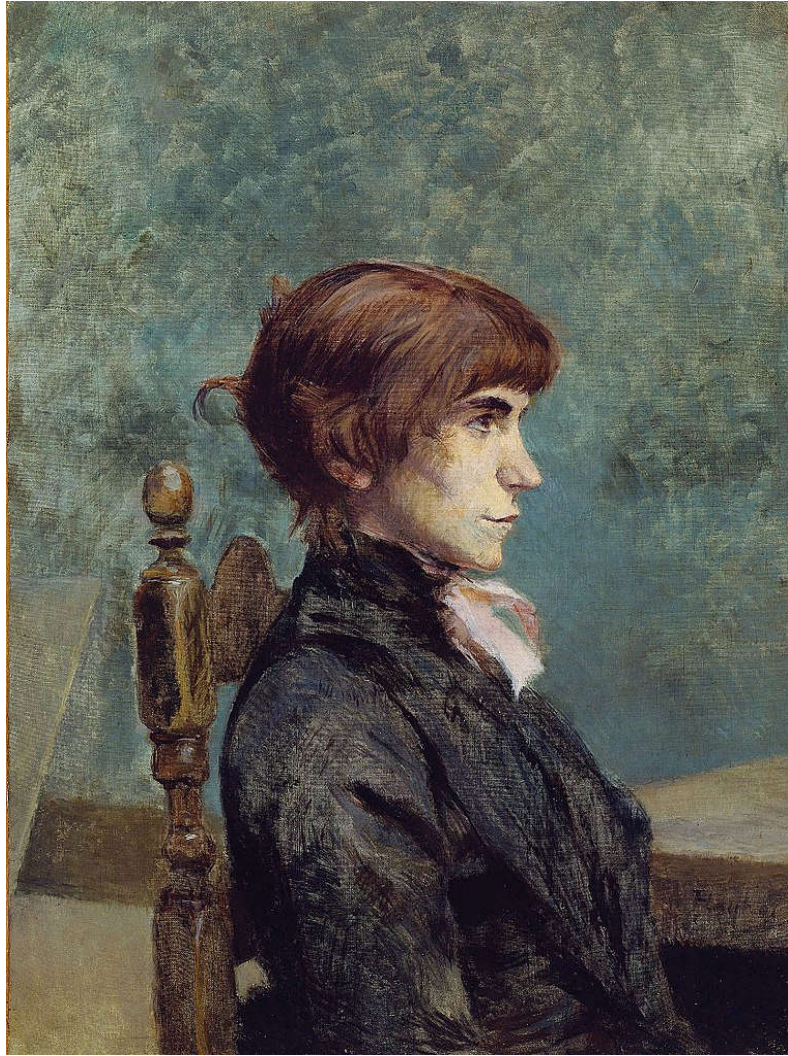
After the untimely death of a younger brother, the parents separated and a nanny eventually took care of Henri. At the age of eight, he was living with his mother in Paris, where he occupied himself with drawing sketches and caricatures in his exercise workbooks. The family soon discovered his rare talent for art. Lautrec's family was noted for artistic, though amateur interests, as Henri's father and his uncles were skilled draughtsmen and the Count also had experience in sculpturing. A friend of the Count, René Princeteau, a sporting artist, occasionally visited Henri to give informal lessons. Some of his earliest paintings are of horses, a specialty of Princeteau, and a subject that Lautrec would revisit in his "Circus Paintings". Princeteau's teachings of how to depict an animal subject would have far-reaching consequences on how Lautrec would later represent his human subjects.

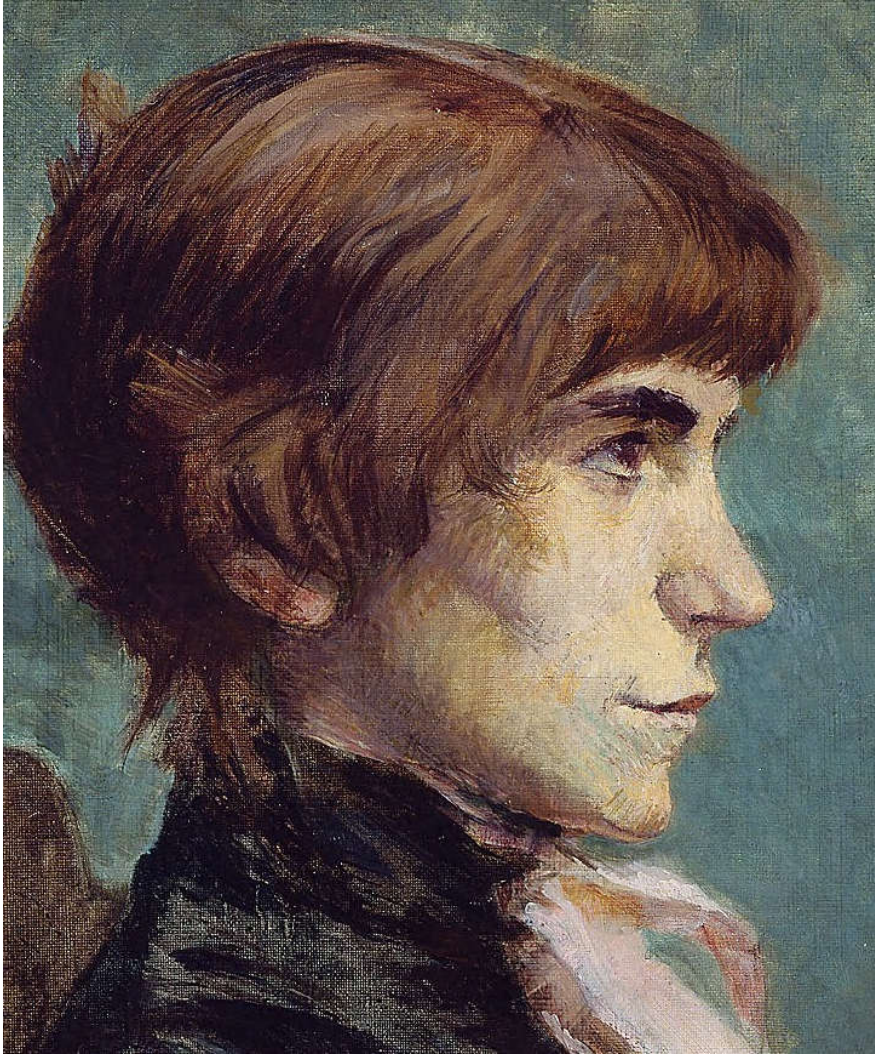
He had always been a delicate youth and in May 1878 he suffered a serious accident, badly fracturing his left femur. At the time he was already studying at Princeteau's studio. The youth spent many days of his slow convalescence painting and drawing. Disaster struck again in August the following year, when he had another accident, now breaking his right leg. Due to these unfortunate fractures, both legs stopped growing correctly, although his torso developed at a normal rate. This in effect gave him an appearance of suffering dwarfism, accentuated by his thick nose, puffy lips and the unusual waddling walk that he developed over time. It was soon clear that he would never be able to enjoy the vigorous sporting life carried out by his father and so naturally he turned his attention to his artistic gifts. Were it not for these two bizarre accidents, he would likely never have become one of the greatest French artists of the late nineteenth century.

Eventually, Princeteau persuaded the reluctant family that Henri should train as a professional painter in March 1882. He entered the Paris studio of Léon Bonnat, an accomplished academic portraitist, who was also renowned for his work as a teacher. Lautrec received a meticulous grounding in the techniques of painting and draughtsmanship, which had been bequeathed from the great neo-classical masters David and Ingres. In spite of his atypical appearance, Lautrec was popular with the other students, who appreciated his cheerful persona and generous nature — this latter trait always sure to win the approval of impoverished artists. During this frenetic period of learning, Lautrec enjoyed the pleasures of the Parisian cafés, concert halls

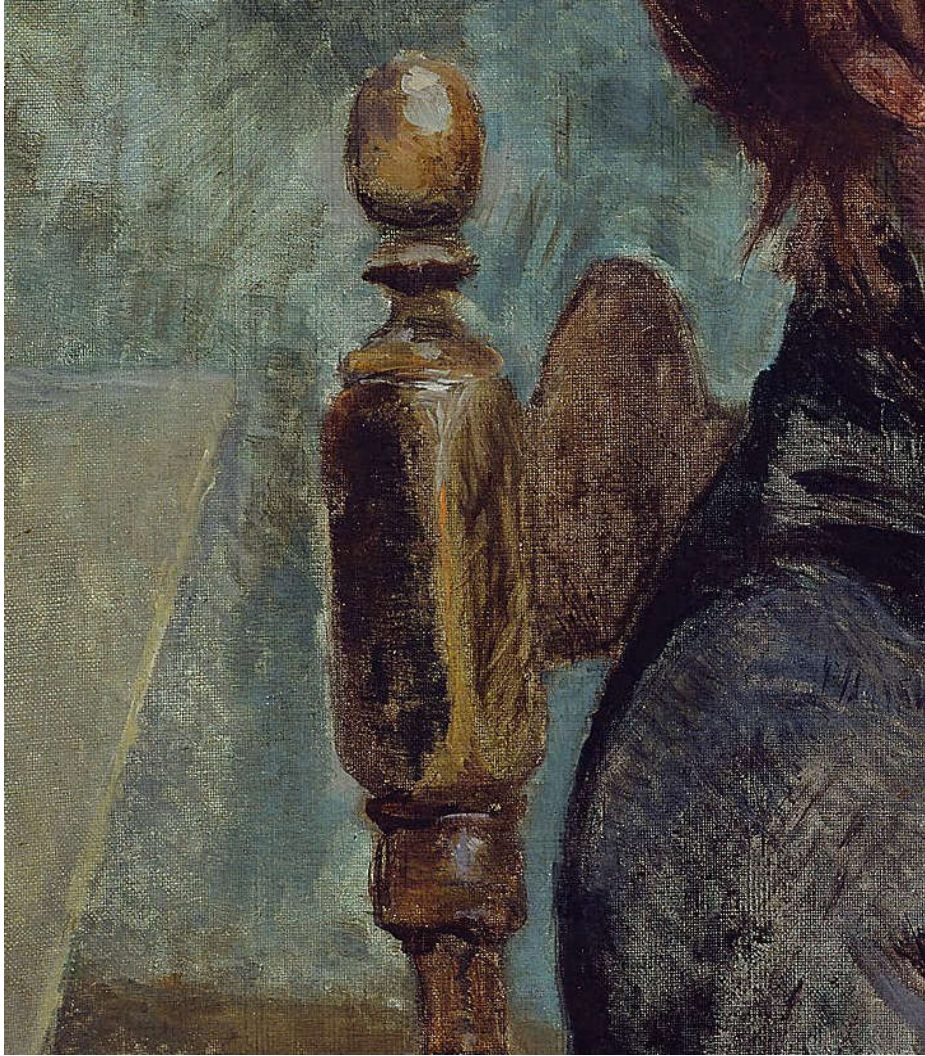
and drunken escapades with his fellow students. In time Bonnat decided to close his studio and Lautrec and the others changed to the atelier of Fernand Cormon, another celebrated academician, who worked in Montmartre. In the early 1880's, this colourful suburb, today situated on a large hill in Paris' 18th arrondissement, was enjoying the period of its greatest glory. The cabarets had recently opened their doors for the first time, the Moulin de la Galette dance-hall was a great favorite and there was the cosmopolitan club, Chat Noir, which was always a popular meeting place for artists and writers to mingle. Lautrec had been living with his mother in another district of Paris, but he now took the decisive step of leaving the family home to share an apartment with a friend in Montmartre. As you can imagine, the night-time diversions of the place were now more than ever accessible to the young artist.

The following canvas, *Justine Dieuhl* (1891), was produced during this period, when the artist was only twenty-two years old and a student under Cormon. Jeanne Wenz was the mistress of Lautrec's fellow-student, Frédéric Wenz, from whom she had taken her lover's name. The painting is a relatively straightforward portrait, revealing the characteristic technique of cross-hatched strokes that would later become a hallmark of Lautrec's style. Though the canvas is decidedly conservative in approach, there are hints of the experimental artist that he would become. The subtle palette, with accents of pink and green, is impressive when considering his youthful age. As in many of his later paintings, he chooses a profile view to depict his friend's lover — a compositional device often found in Renaissance portraiture, though less popular in contemporary art. It is not a strict profile pose, being slightly oblique in the body's position, giving it a more dynamic and realistic appearance, as though we have just interrupted the sitting. It is certainly not a conventional or flattering portrait, preferring an exploration of naturalistic features. Jeanne looks upwards and her arms appear to hang straight down, suggesting that her patience is wearing thin. Had the sitting over-run? Her lips are curiously shaped. In the centre they appear closed with frustration, though there is a strong upward curve of a smile to the side, perhaps hinting at an underlying warmth and playfulness of character.

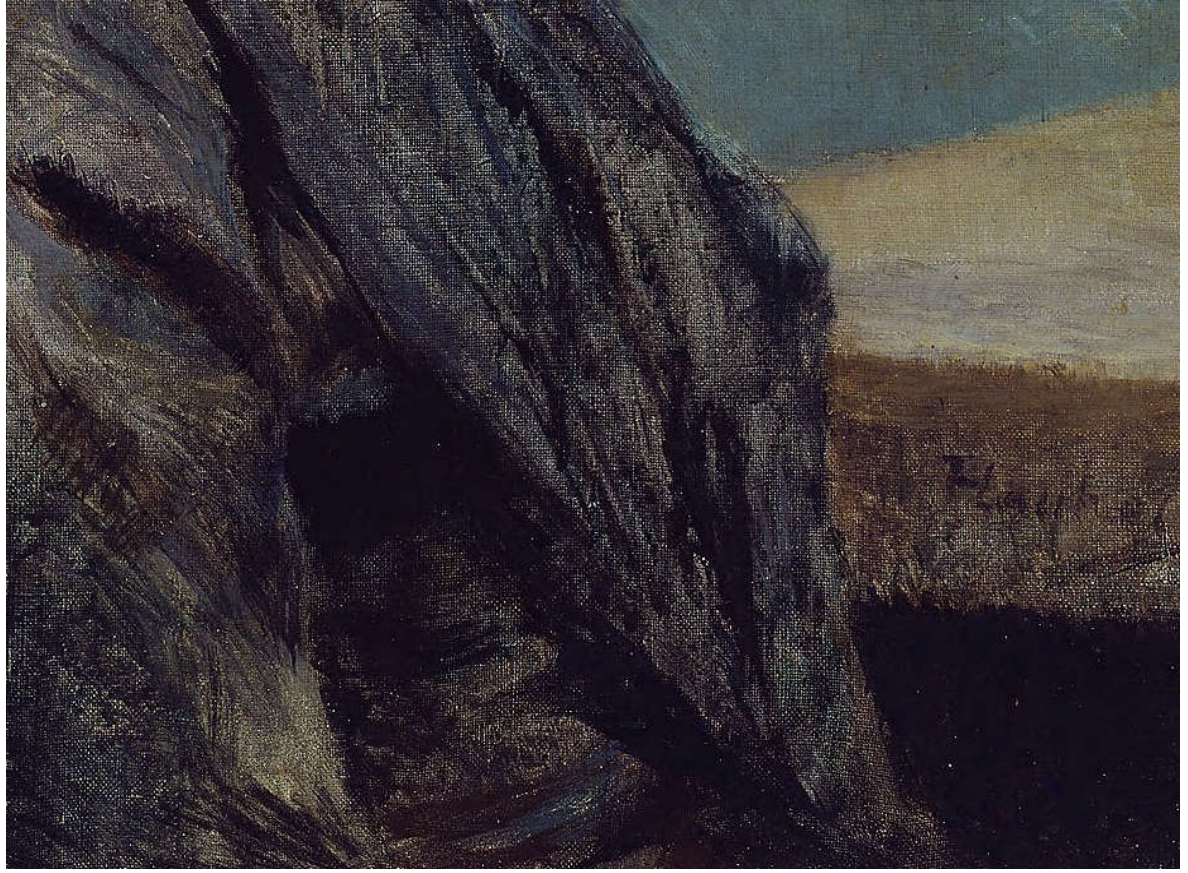




*Detail*

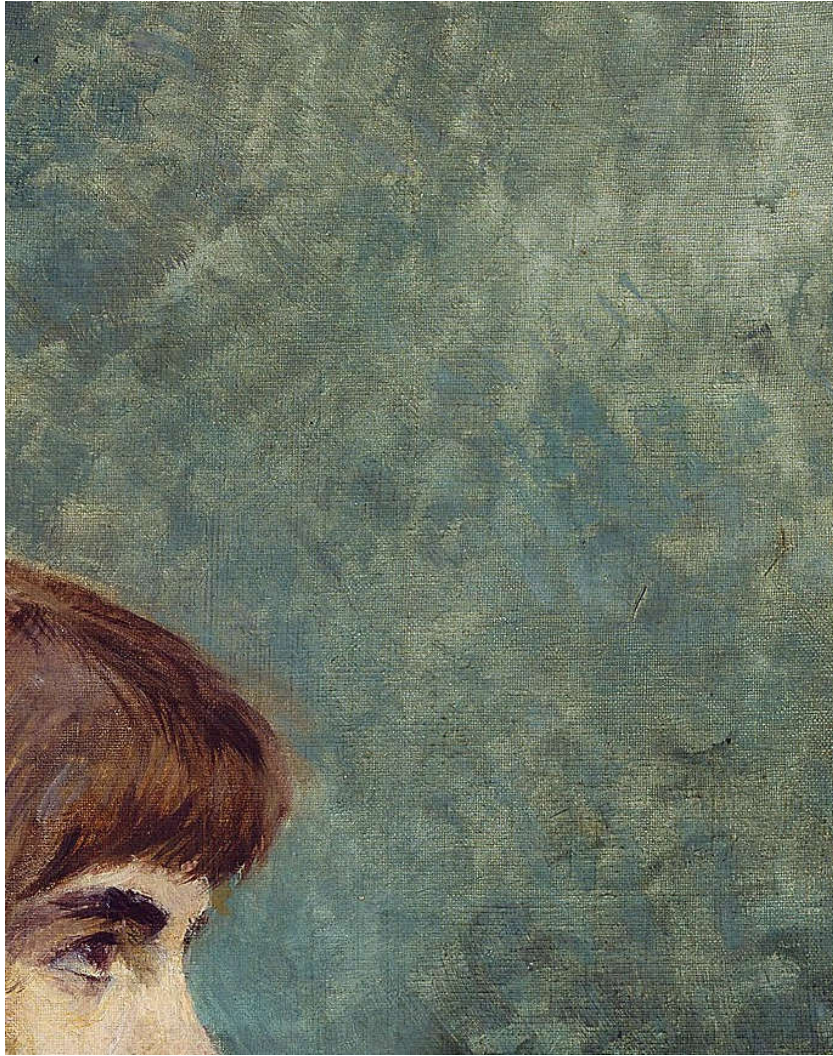


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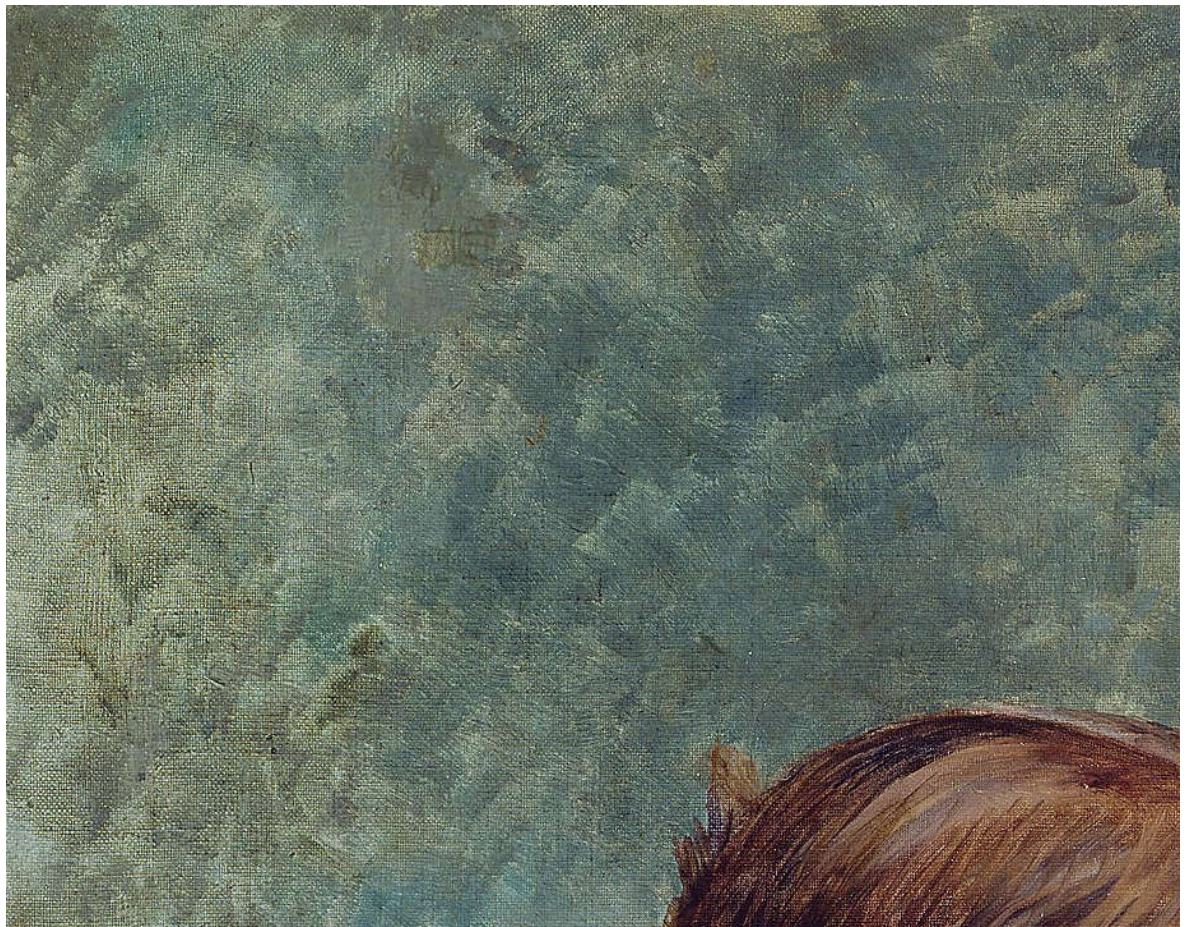


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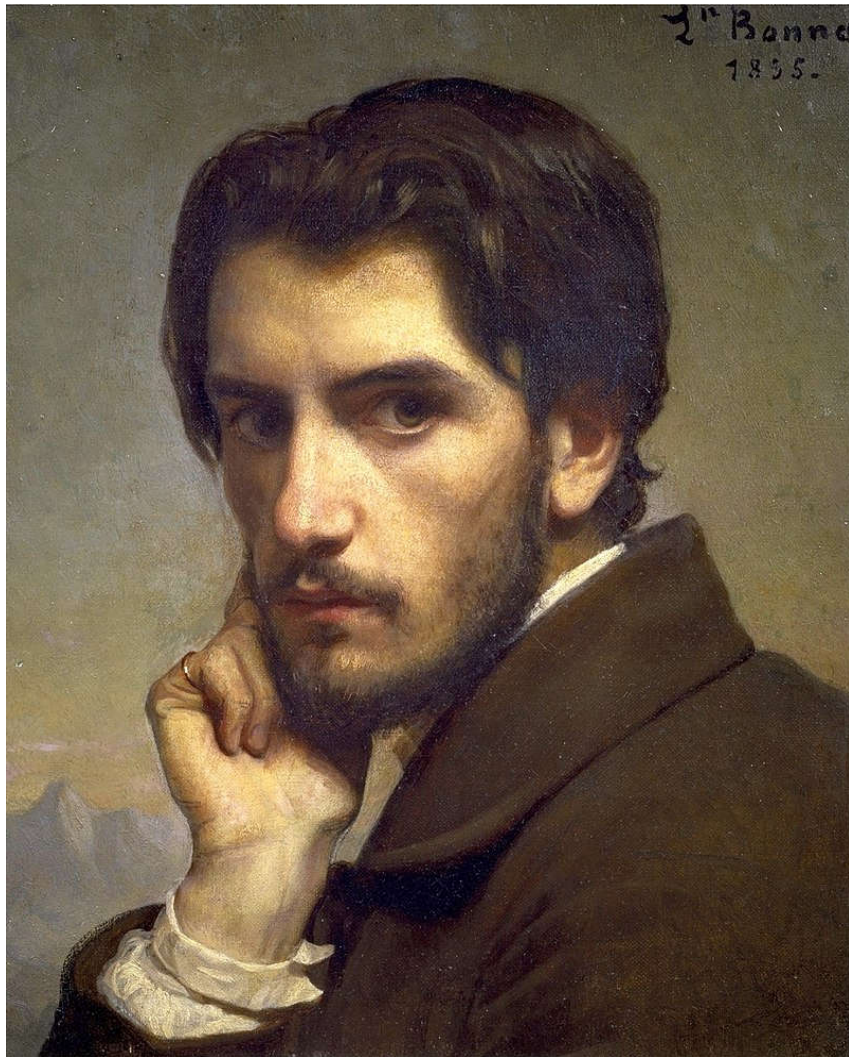
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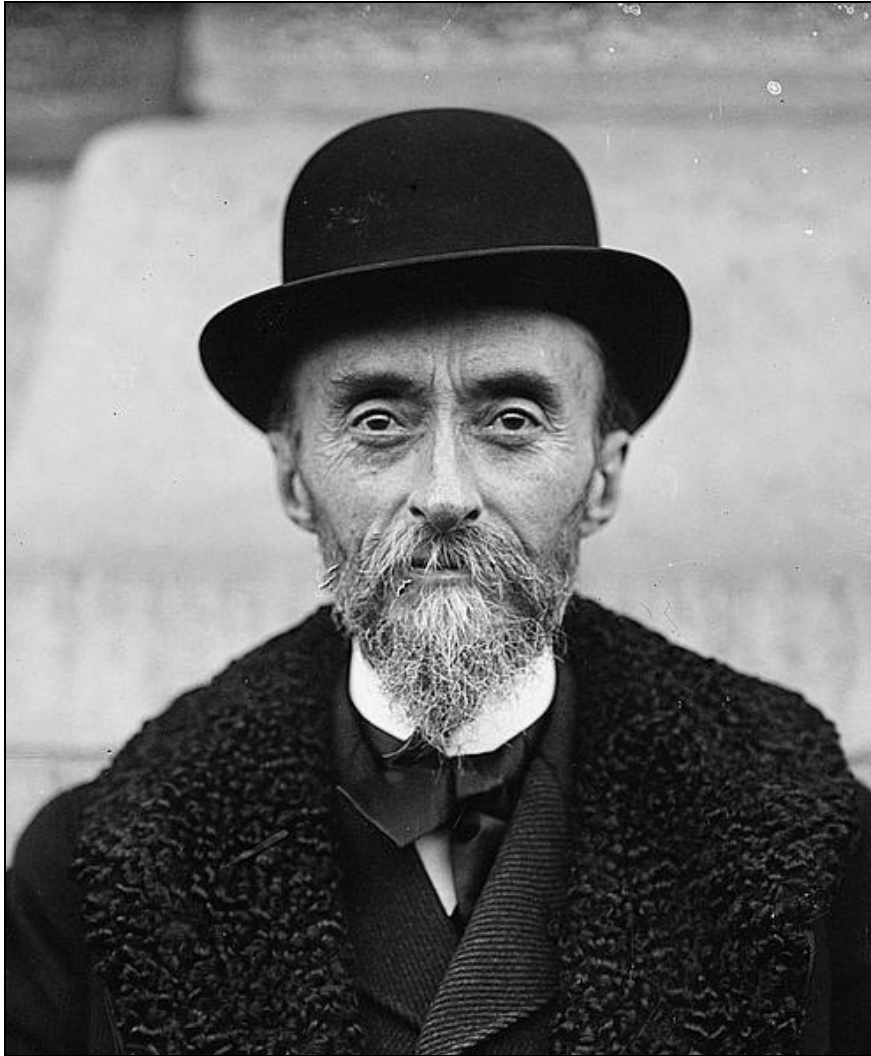
*Detail*



*Léon Bonnat's self portrait, age 22, c. 1855 – Bonnat (1833-1922) was Lautrec's first major tutor.*



*'Sleeping Girl' by Léon Bonnat, c. 1852*



*Lautrec's second master, Fernand Cormon (1845-1924) was one of the leading historical painters of modern France.*



*'View of Montmartre' by Alfred Sisley, musée de Grenoble, 1869*



*Recent view of Montmartre, including the Basilica of the Sacré-Cœur*



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*End of Sample*