Press Release

CaixaForum Barcelona

From 18 October 2018 to 2 January 2019
The exhibition, unprecedented in our country, presents 345 works, including paintings, drawings, etchings, sculptures, newspapers, posters, photographs and objects from the period

In 1880, Montmartre was a poor, marginal place that did not even form part of Paris. However, in a relatively short span of time, the area was transformed into the literary and artistic centre of the French capital. "la Caixa" Foundation presents Toulouse-Lautrec and the Spirit of Montmartre, an unprecedented exhibition in our country that explores the main features of radical French art in the late-nineteenth century. The “spirit” referred to in the title was a feeling, an avant-garde mentality that infused the work of many artists of the time. Outstanding among these was Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, who played a key role, introducing extraordinary aesthetic advances. Through 345 works loaned by collections from around the world, the show examines the rich exchanges that took place among a score of like-minded artists during Toulouse-Lautrec’s short lifetime and a brief period thereafter. The exhibition also illustrates the vital role that ephemeral artistic productions – etchings, posters, illustrations for books and the press, designs for music scores and so on – played in the careers of Toulouse-Lautrec and his contemporaries: all this provided them with the means of reaching wider audiences and earning a living outside the restrictive academic system.


@FundlaCaixa @CaixaForum #ToulouseLautrecCxF
Barcelona, 17 October 2018. Today, Elisa Durán, Deputy General Director of "la Caixa" Banking Foundation, Valentí Farràs, Director of CaixaForum Barcelona, and Phillip Dennis Cate, art critic and independent curator, will officially open the exhibition *Toulouse-Lautrec and the Spirit of Montmartre*.

Within its cultural programmes, "la Caixa" Foundation focuses particularly on the art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the mission of promoting knowledge and appreciation of a key period in the formation of contemporary sensibilities. Now, presenting the exhibition *Toulouse-Lautrec and the Spirit of Montmartre*, the Foundation continues to pursue the goal of enabling wider audiences to discover the artistic effervescence of the late-nineteenth century, key to understanding events in later decades. Along similar lines, we should also remember the shows devoted to such artists as Alphonse Mucha, Gustav Klimt, Maurice de Vlaminck, Camille Pissarro and Joaquín Sorolla, the collective exhibitions *Impressionist and Modern. Masterpieces from the Phillips Collection* and *French Masters from the Clark Collection*, and earlier transversal projects such as *Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, 1909-1929. When Art Danced with Music*.

The exhibition that now opens at CaixaForum Barcelona examines a unique period in the last one hundred and fifty years of European art history. In the explosive emergence of the Parisian neighbourhood of Montmartre as a radical, “modern” literary and artistic centre, we can see the conquest of freedom over convention, the triumph of creativity and the artistic calling over the certainties of bourgeois life, the beauty of the moment vanquishing the timeless but lifeless values of the academies.

Produced by "la Caixa” Foundation, *Toulouse-Lautrec and the Spirit of Montmartre* is a show without precedent in our country. The exhibition presents an extraordinary selection of 345 works including paintings, drawings, etchings, sculptures, newspapers, posters, photographs and objects from the period, such as an original travelling shadow theatre. All this was made possible thanks
to the cooperation of dozens of museums and international collectors, as well as the work of the curator, Phillip Dennis Cate. As Cate explains in the catalogue produced to accompany the show, he has been researching into the art of Toulouse-Lautrec and his circle since the 1970s.

The result is an in-depth study of what Cate calls “the spirit of Montmartre”; a feeling, an avant-garde mentality. The show examines essential aspects of French radical late-nineteenth century art and reveals the great aesthetic achievements of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, a key figure who created some of the best-known lithographs and drawings associated with the Montmartre scene. The show features no fewer than 61 works by Toulouse-Lautrec, including six oils and a drawing.

The exhibition enables us to see Toulouse-Lautrec’s work and that of his fellow anti-establishment conspirators in context, revealing the fruitful exchanges between like-minded artists during Toulouse-Lautrec’s short lifetime and a brief period after his death.


The show also delves into the important role played by ephemeral artistic works in the trajectories of Toulouse-Lautrec and his colleagues. These productions, which include prints, poster art, book and magazine illustration, music score design and other works on paper, were the means by which these artists reached larger audiences, as well as enabling them to earn a living outside the restrictive academic system.

**Montmartre: radical, anti-establishment and anti-bourgeois**

In 1880, Montmartre, located in the outskirts to the north of Paris, was a place of poverty and marginalisation. Soon, however, the neighbourhood would begin
to attract young avant-garde artists like Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Paul Signac, Pierre Bonnard and Henri-Gabriel Ibels; performers like Aristide Bruant and Yvette Guilbert; writers like Émile Goudeau, Alphonse Allais and Alfred Jarry; and musicians and composers like Erik Satie, Vincent Hyspa and Gustave Charpentier.

In late-1881, the frustrated artist Rodolphe Salis founded a cabaret, Le Chat Noir, in Montmartre. Le Chat Noir and its regulars, especially the artists and writers known as Les Arts Incohérents (“Incoherents”), a kind of proto-Dadaist or proto-Surrealist group, were the main driving force that made Montmartre such an important focus for avant-garde artistic and literary life in the Paris of the early-1880s.

Indeed, in a relatively short period of time, Montmartre became the literary and artistic centre of Paris. By the end of the century, there were more than forty entertainment establishments in the neighbourhood: cabarets, concert cafés, dance halls, music halls, theatres, circuses and so on. In time, this cultural and ludi environment ended up by being commercialised by its very creators, to the extent that, ironically, “bohemia” became an important international tourist attraction.

Montmartre was radical, anti-establishment and anti-bourgeois by definition. Rejecting more traditional venues, artists, performers, poets and writers presented their works at cabarets, concert cafés, circuses and experimental theatres, in the street (in posters and processions), and in popular books and magazines.

Montmartre’s artistic community innovatively adopted certain anti-academic practices, such as humour, visual calembours (puns, plays on words), irony, satire, parody, caricature and puppets. All this, to critique the society of their time and the human condition in general. A favourite theme of these artists was modern life in Montmartre itself: streets, cabarets, dance halls, performers, artists, prostitutes, vagabonds and so on. The members of the artistic community of Montmartre proclaimed their independence, their social and political engagement and their artistic preferences by manipulating artistic techniques in such media as painting, sculpture, printing, music, the theatre and even film.

Structured into nine sections, Toulouse-Lautrec and the Spirit of Montmartre examines the outstanding contributions that all these artists made to fin-de-
siècle art. The exhibition begins by presenting the landscapes of Montmartre, and continues with a section devoted to the Le Chat Noir cabaret, focusing particularly on shadow theatre and the “Incoherents” group, which paved the way for the Dada movement. Subsequent sections are devoted to the press, posters and the relations between art and serial production techniques and the mass media and, finally, nightlife, shows, the circus and the image of women.

As is usual, the exhibition is complemented by a publication, edited by "la Caixa" Foundation. This catalogue includes articles by the curator Phillip Dennis Cate and the experts Saskia Ooms, Michela Niccolai, Laurent Bihl, and Ricard Bru, who examines the links between Montmartre and Catalan artists. Parallel to the show, a programme of activities for all audiences will also include a lecture by the curator and the lecture cycle Montmartre: Landscape of Bohemia, coordinated by the magazine Historia y vida. Guided tours for the general public and coffee-debates will also be organised, and the facilities will also include the family space Le Petit Chat Noir and family guided tours under the title A Night in Montmartre.
EXHIBITION SECTIONS

Paris and Montmartre
Montmartre, formerly an independent township to the north of Paris, was absorbed by the city in 1860, becoming its 18th arrondissement. It is delimited, officially, by three boulevards, Clichy, Rochechouart and La Chapelle, to the south; by Boulevard Ney to the north; by St. Ouen and Clichy avenues to the west; and by Rue d’Aubervilliers to the east. However, the “spirit of Montmartre” knew no borders. To a large extent, this “spirit” can be considered an avant-garde state of mind best which found expression in the new entertainment establishments, groups of artists, writers and actors, and the means of promotion that emerged and flourished there at around the turn of the twentieth century. This exhibition presents Paris and, especially, Montmartre, as the cradle of artistic movements that defied the system and sought to embrace the complexities of a society that was no longer so easy to define. The work of Naturalists, Symbolists, Incoherents, Nabis and, particularly, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, suggests a renewed vision of life and society during this important period in French modern art.

The first Le Chat Noir
In late-1881, Rodolphe Salis, a frustrated artist, founded a cabaret, Le Chat Noir, at 84, Boulevard Rochechouart in Montmartre. Proclaiming his new establishment an “artistic cabaret”, Salis proceeded to invite young artists, writers, composers and musicians to use Le Chat Noir as their centre of activities. Salis decorated this pseudo-Gothic building, redolent in the growing nostalgia felt in France for the Rabelais tradition, in Louis XIII style. Eugène Grasset designed iron candelabra for the interior, while Adolphe Willette painted the iconic exterior sign for the cabaret, a black cat on a half moon, as well as the well-known large painting, Parce domine. On 1 October 1882, the Le Chat Noir journal published the list of works for an unusual exhibition, Les Arts Incohérents, organised by the writer Jules Lévy. The list included works by both artists and – to the surprise of many – non-artists. The cabaret continued to stage “Incoherent” exhibitions and dances for thirteen years. Le Chat Noir and its regulars, especially the “incoherent” ones, played a major role in establishing Montmartre as the centre of avant-garde literary and artistic life in Paris in the early 1880s. Fumisme, a kind of humour practiced by the Incoherents and other groups that frequented Le Chat Noir, was a reaction to the pomposity and hypocrisy that, according to this group, characterised much of society. The Incoherents took the absurd, anti-bourgeois humour of fumisme to extremes, and produced artistic works that form a prelude to the Dadaism, Surrealism and conceptual art of the twentieth century. The “Incoherent” exhibitions were full of surprising works inspired, above all, by visual play and combinations of words and images.
The second Le Chat Noir
In June 1885, Salis moved Le Chat Noir to a large, carefully furnished, three-storey hôtel in Rue Victor Massé, close to the old Le Chat Noir, which the singer Aristide Bruant acquired and renamed Mirliton. Perhaps the most important and influential contribution to the arts made by the second Le Chat Noir was the cabaret's sophisticated shadow theatre, created in 1886 by the artist Henri Rivière. In La Tentation de Saint Antoine, presented in late-1887, Rivière transformed simple, traditional shadow theatre generally performed as domestic and family entertainment into a highly elaborate, technically complex theatrical production that featured all the elements that would characterise the cinema in the future: movement, colour and sound (both music and voice). The works presented at Le Chat Noir ranged from the Napoleonic saga L'Épopée (1886) to Henry Somm's pure fumiste humour in Le Fils de l'eunuque (1888), as well as the blend of realism and fantasy in Rivière's La Tentation de Saint Antoine and the serious, symbolist religious work La Marche à l'étoile (1890), by Rivière and Georges Fragerolle. Rivière's elaborate productions required the collaboration of twelve mechanics, as well as many of his friends and colleagues as writers, singers, musicians and technical assistants. Les Quat'z'Arts cabaret, located at 62, Boulevard de Clichy, which first opened its doors in December 1893 and continued to be active well into the twentieth century, spread the dynamic ethos of the artistic cabaret that began with Le Chat Noir, producing shows and reviews, as well as organising the street parades, known as Vachalcades, of 1896 and 1897.

Newspaper art and the avant-garde
The invention in 1875 by the engraver Charles Gillot of a printing system with a typographic press, black and white photomechanical illustrations based on relief line etchings, revolutionised the publishing industry. Drawing now became essential to the involvement of artists in the new printing technology, and the role it played changed radically during this period: drawing ceased to be, basically, a preparatory step for painting to become an independent medium for directly and mechanically transferring the artist's aesthetic onto the final product, the printed support. In fact, the modern aesthetic of avant-garde artists like Toulouse-Lautrec and the Nabis focused on the simplicity of flat, linear designs and attached little importance to realism in their trademark effects of illusion and tonality. In essence, the new technology was a liberating force that helped to reinforce modernist trends in art, while also enabling artists to continue exercising full aesthetic control. When Picasso, Duchamp, F. Kupka and other future twentieth-century avant-garde artists came to Paris for the first time in around 1900, they were already familiar with and influenced by the style and themes found in the “newspaper art” of the likes of Steinlen, Willette, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Ibels. These works were reproduced in such journals as Le Chat noir, Le Courrier français, Le Rire, Gil blas illustré, Le Frou Frou, L’Assiette au beurre and so on. Picasso’s can-can dancers in Le Frou Frou were inspired by the work of Toulouse-Lautrec, while Kupka’s 1902 cover illustration for La Vie en rose pays homage to Steinlen and Willette.

Etchings and original posters
In the 1880s and 1890s, the combination of a growing number of engravers and dealers, societies and exhibitions devoted to etching, as well as the publication of art magazines
such as *La Revue blanche*, enabled and encouraged the creation of a market for artists’ original etchings and posters. The most important magazine devoted to etching was *L’Estampe originale*, which published 97 etchings by 74 artists between 1893 and 1895, providing an extensive vision of fin-de-siècle art. More than twenty-five per cent of the artists represented in *L’Estampe originale* took part directly in literary, theatrical and artistic activities in Montmartre. Toulouse-Lautrec’s cover illustration for the albums of the first year of *L’Estampe originale* portrays the master lithographer Père Cotelle surrounded by bottles spilling their ink, manually working the press while the sophisticated dancer Jane Avril examines a freshly-printed proof. In this way, Toulouse-Lautrec suggests that, unlike the industrial mass production of images, the limited edition "original print" is more artistic and attractive for modern customers. Colour etching, especially colour lithography, was among the main innovations introduced by *L’Estampe originale*, and would be play a key role in development of the artistic poster. Although ephemeral and commercial in nature, posters were the most widespread and systematic means of promoting the different aesthetic approaches of avant-garde artists among broader audiences. In fact, the poster had been identified for the first time as a potential artistic medium in the 1870s, thanks mainly to Jules Chéret, the father of poster art and a highly influential figure on the next generation of artists, including Toulouse-Lautrec and his contemporaries.

**Cafés, concert cafés and dance halls**

The origin of the Parisian café as a public local for the consumption of beverages dates back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, while in the first quarter of the nineteenth, cafés also became meeting places for small groups of poets and artists. With the transformation of Paris by Baron Haussmann during the reign of Napoleon III, the 1850s and 1860s saw concert cafés emerging as elaborate structures housing a stage for the actors and a room (or garden in summer) with holding between 500 and 1,500 spectators. These concert cafés provided the venue for performances by a huge range of singers and actors, including Aristide Bruant, Yvette Guilbert and Loïe Fuller. For their part, Parisian dance halls were frequented by a very diverse clientele. For example, the Bal Bullier, on the left bank, attracted students, while the Moulin Rouge, like the L’Élysée-Montmartre, older than the former and located just two doors down from the original Le Chat Noir, and the future Casino de Paris (1891), at 15, Rue de Clichy, hosted an exclusive clientele and encouraged a certain degree of sexual freedom. At the Moulin de la Galette, frequented by the poor, little educated working classes, entrance to the dance cost eighty cents per couple, while the Moulin Rouge charged every client, whether male or female, an expensive admission charge of between two and three francs just to see the lively can-can or chahut dances.

**Theatre and shows**

In spring 1887, André Antoine founded the Théâtre Libre in Montmartre, at 96, Rue Blanche. An experimental playhouse, the Théâtre Libre (1887-1896) eschewed the affected repertoire of traditional French theatre to present naturalist plays based on the novels of Zola, Paul Alexis, the Goncourt brothers and other authors, as well as introducing productions of pieces by foreign writers such as the Norwegian playwrights Bjørnstjerne Björnson and Henrik Ibsen. The eclectic nature of the avant-garde activities staged by the Théâtre Libre were complemented by symbolist works performed by the Théâtre de
l’Oeuvre at the various venues the company rented in Montmartre and surrounding area. Founded in 1893 by Aurélien Lugné-Poe, Camille Mauc lair and Édouard Vuillard, the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre is probably best known for its production of *Ubu Roi*, the play by Alfred Jarry, which opened at the theatre in December 1896. The revolutionary *fumiste*, scatological script of the play, an amoral vision of greed and war, and the appearances of leading actors as puppets, effectively announced the arrival of theatre of the absurd. The scenery and the use of masks (Jarry wanted the actors to disguise their appearance, their movements and their human voices and become transformed into puppets) were designed and painted by Bonnard, Toulouse-Lautrec and Vuillard, among others. Throughout their existence, both the Théâtre Libre and the Théâtre de l’Oeuvre commissioned many local artists in Montmartre to create illustrations for the covers of their programs and – like Toulouse-Lautrec and Valtat – to design scenery. In fact, the collaborative and experimental environment that surrounded the cabaret Le Chat Noir was revived and reinforced thanks to the emergence of these two theatres.

**The circus**

During the closing quarter of the nineteenth century, the circus gained great social and professional recognition among artistic and literary communities. At that time, there were several permanent circus rings in Paris. The most popular ones among the artists of Montmartre were the Nouveaux Cirque, on the right bank, where the stars were the clowns Footit and Chocolat, and the Cirque Fernando (which became the Cirque Medrano in 1897), located in Montmartre, three blocks from the second Le Chat Noir, its big top holding 2,500 spectators. There were also smaller travelling circuses, known as *fêtes foraines*, that set up their big tops in the outskirts of the city.

There was a great affinity between the young radical artists and the actors they portrayed. Many people in both groups had placed themselves beyond what society generally considered acceptable. Circus artistes were seen as marginalised simply because they engaged in unconventional, insecure work that entailed a strange kind of life, one with “dubious morality”. The circus is theatre, drama, humour, as well as a demonstration of physical dexterity. It takes its protagonists’ capacities to the limits of the superhuman and makes what is normally considered impossible, possible. These qualities were led artists like Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, Ibels and Joseph Faverot, among others, to include the circus in their pictorial repertoire.
In the second half of the nineteenth century, the writers and artists who died of syphilis included such leading figures as Charles Baudelaire, Jules de Goncourt, Guy de Maupassant, Georges Seurat, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Paul Gauguin. Towards the end of the century, this health crisis had generated a prolific, systematic body of artistic and literary work on the theme of prostitution. As women in general gained greater economic independence and social mobility, the group of those engaged in prostitution diversified and became more difficult to control and identify. This break in the traditional way of isolating and identifying prostitutes not only increased men's concern about sexually transmitted diseases, but also reflected widespread social instability that had existed in France since the fall of the Second Empire. In the mid-1880s, the Incoherents began to use the expression "la femme honnête et l'autre," ("the honest woman and the other") as a humorous way of referring to the ambiguity that existed between the external appearance of a respectable member of the bourgeoisie and their clandestine relationship with a prostitute, and as an ironic metaphor for what they considered the deceptive hypocrisy of bourgeois society in general. Besides this fascination with portraying prostitutes, representations of women by the artists of Montmartre representation of women by the artists of Montmartre ranges from realistic, meditative portraits in pastoral settings or domestic interiors to symbolic fantasy and idealism, from austere nude to exotic depiction, but all in stark contrast to the deeply-ingrained academic definition of classical beauty and modesty.
Greetings,

PRESS RELEASE

ACTIVITIES PARALLEL TO THE EXHIBITION

GENERAL PUBLIC

LECTURE BY THE CURATOR
TOULOUSE-LAUTREC AND THE SPIRIT OF MONTMARTRE
Phillip Dennis Cate, art critic and independent curator

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 7 pm

LECTURE CYCLE: MONTMARTRE, LANDSCAPE OF BOHEMIA
Coordinated by:

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 7 pm
LAND OF ARTISTS AND BUSTLE
By Eliseu Trenc, Emeritus Professor at the University of Reims

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 7 pm
SOUND MAP OF MONTMARTRE
By Marta Espinós, pianist, musical curator and artistic co-director of Lo Otro

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 7 pm
FEMALE FIGURES IN MONTMARTRE
By Victòria Combalia, art history and Professor of Art History at the University of Barcelona

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 7 pm
MONTMARTRE BEYOND TOULOUSE-LAUTREC
By Francesc Fontbona, PhD in History, and member of the Institute of Catalan Studies and the Royal Catalan Academy of Fine Arts of Saint George

Best regards,

[Signatures]
GUIDED TOURS
See website for times

TOURS WITH COFFEE-DEBATE
EVERY TUESDAY AT 4.30 pm

GUIDED TOURS FOR GROUPS
Groups maximum 25 people. Registration: 931 847 142. Groups with their own guide are also required to register for day and time.

FAMILY AUDIENCES

FAMILY AND EDUCATIONAL SPACE +7
EL PETIT CHAT NOIR
In the exhibition is a space devoted to families, with activities related to the show itself.

FAMILY VISIT +7
A NIGHT IN MONTMARTRE
See website for times

SCHOOLS

FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY, TIMES BY ARRANGEMENT
Registration: 931 847 142 or caixaforumbcn@magmacultura.net

DRAMATISED TOURS
Levels: from 3rd year primary and ESO compulsory secondary education

GUIDED TOURS
Levels: ESO compulsory secondary education, baccalaureate and vocational training
From 18 October 2018 to 2 January 2019

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08038 Barcelona
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Times
From Monday to Sunday, from 10 am to 8 pm
December 24 and 31 and January 5, from 10 am to 6 pm

Closed: December 25 and January 1 and 6

"la Caixa" Foundation Information Service
Tel. 900 223 040

Prices
Admission free for "la Caixa" customers
Visitors other than "la Caixa" customers: 4 euros (includes admission to all exhibitions)
Admission free for minors under 16 years

Ticket sales
CaixaForum ticket office and www.CaixaForum.es

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