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VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF FIN-DE-SIECLE PARIS
BY RUSSIAN IMMIGRANT ARTISTS

MA Thesis in Historical Studies

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Nadezhda Kislitsyna

(Russian Federation)

Thesis submitted to the Department of History,
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Arts degree in Historical Studies
Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

Chair, Examination Committee

Thesis Supervisor

Second Reader

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I, the undersigned, **Nadezhda Kislitsyna**, candidate for the MA degree in Historical Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract: The Impressionist movement, called by Arnold Hauser “an urban art,”¹ made city the focus of vibrant artistic activity. Certainly, Paris, the city of all cities, with its grandiosity and diversity drew attention of many artists living and working there. At the end of the twentieth century all elements of life in the city of Paris could be found in the paintings of Manet and Impressionist artists whom he mentored and influenced. They immortalized scenes of the city life in their masterpieces. Truth to nature and truth to human vision were the core beliefs of the Impressionists, and the paintings they produced were the interpretations of what the artist was seeing. However, scholars say very little that French Impressionists were not the only ones expressing their opinion on what nineteenth century Parisian life looked like. Although much research has already been done in the area in regard to French artists, and numerous books providing the reader with a general overview and giving a glimpse into the nuances of Parisian urban life, its patterns and rhythm, have been written as part of studies dedicated to the problem of Haussmannization and Impressionist art, there was no explanation given or comparison made with Russian painters who constituted a significant part of the nineteenth century Parisian art community, and focused on similar subjects in their art. It is fascinating to discover what the Russian immigrant artists had to say about the transitions they observed and how they were influenced, if they became more conservative or more radical, if they were interested in what was going on or keeping their ties with homeland. The most interesting would be to observe how they depicted the same places (such as Parisian café, the image of which can be found among the masterpieces of many painters) and what details, social or cultural in particular, they were focusing on.

¹Arnold Hauser, “Naturalism and Impressionism” in *The Social History of Art: Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age*, Vol. 4 (London: Routledge: 1993), p. 158.

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Introduction

For much of the nineteenth century, France, and especially Paris, was the focal point of advanced ideas in the world of art.²

What did Paris, the capital of vivid cultural and social life, look like a hundred years ago after it had risen like a phoenix from the ashes of the fires of the Commune? Was the magnificent city just an enormous studio with new talents in visual arts, writing and music emerging at every corner? Was it a web of newly constructed wide long boulevards by Parisian architect Georges-Eugene Haussmann? Was it inhabited by strolling ladies and gentlemen showing off their new garments and hurrying to photographer Nadar's apartment to see a new Impressionist exhibition or to *Grand Opéra* to listen to a new composition? Or perhaps, it was an industrial center with skies black from smoke of plants and factories, populated by *les misérables* - the rejected and unnoticed by the elite circles?

As Rosemary Wakeman observed in her essay *Making Paris and Parisians*,

the urban landscape and culture of Paris have become such a rich field of investigation that they almost qualify as a discipline in and of itself.³

After nineteenth century urbanization in Europe had brought important cultural changes to society, such as the increasing influence of the bourgeois middle class and the establishment of mass culture, Paris, one of the leading business and cultural centers, inevitably became a constant subject of scholarly interest, as it influenced the politics, education, entertainment, media, fashion and science of the whole world, and served as a trend-setter for the rest of Europe. At the same time, a great breakthrough in visual arts happened with the emergence of the Impressionist movement, dubbed by Arnold Hauser "an urban art."⁴ All elements of the city could then be found in the paintings of Edouard Manet and other Impressionist painters, whom he mentored and influenced, such as Mary Cassatt, Camille Pissarro, Edouard Manet, and Gustave Caillebotte, who immortalized scenes of the city life in their masterpieces. Truth to

²Terry W. Strieter, *Nineteenth Century European Art: A Topical Dictionary*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999

³Rosemary Wakeman, "Making Paris and Parisians" in *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 31, No. 4, (May 2005), pp. 565-566.

⁴Arnold Hauser, "Naturalism and Impressionism" in *The Social History of Art: Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age*, Vol. 4 (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 158.

nature and truth to human vision were the core beliefs of the Impressionists, and the paintings they produced were interpretations of what the artist was seeing. The world around them was changing and they captured those transitory moments and specific places. As Hauser explains,

The dominion of the moment over permanence and continuity, the feeling that every phenomenon is a fleeting and never-to-be-repeated constellation, a wave gliding away on the river of time, the river into which “one cannot step twice”, is the simplest formula to which impressionism can be reduced.⁵

Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann’s reconstruction of Paris, the opening of numerous street cafés, the growing influence of the bourgeoisie, etc., were the transformations that the Impressionists like Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, and others were eager to record⁶ in order to share their thoughts on those changes.

A great number of scholarly books and articles were written on these subjects both at the time and in later years, such as the studies by Mary Gluck, Timothy Clark or Mary Tompkins Lewis. These works explained the attitude of the French artists of the period to the idea of modernization, the phenomena of *flânerie* and modernity. However, scholars often fail to mention that French Impressionists were not the only ones expressing their opinion on what nineteenth-century Parisian life looked like. Much research has already been done on French artists, and numerous books provide the reader with a general overview, giving a glimpse into the nuances of Parisian urban life, its patterns and rhythm. This research has been completed as part of studies dedicated to the problem of Haussmannization and Impressionist art. However, there are no explanations given or comparisons made with Russian painters who constituted a significant part of the nineteenth-century Parisian art community and focused on similar subjects in their art. Thus, many questions still remain unanswered, such as the identity of those Russian artists working in Paris, if they experienced the revolts of Haussmannization, and how their reflections of reality differed from those of the French artists. It is worthwhile to discover what

⁵Arnold Hauser, “Naturalism and Impressionism” in *The Social History of Art: Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age*, Vol. 4 (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 159.

⁶Mary Tompkins Lewis, *Critical Readings in Impressionism and Post-Impressionism*, University of California Press: 2007, pp. 78-80.

Russian immigrant artists had to say about the transitions they observed and how they were influenced by them, e.g. if they became more conservative or more radical, if they were interested in what was going on or keeping their ties with homeland. The most interesting comparative aspect lies in an observation of how Russian artists depicted the same places as French artists (such as Parisian café, the image of which can be found among the masterpieces of many painters) and what details, social or cultural in particular, they were focusing on.

When in the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian artist Vassily Shukhaev arrived in France, he wrote in a letter to his teacher in Leningrad: “I am amazed by energy of Russians abroad. They work so hard. There are so many varying kinds of shows here compared to pre-war times. The whole of old Russia did not do nearly as much as our Russians abroad are doing now.”⁷ He meant not famous personalities, like Marc Chagall and Alexander Benois, Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova, but dozens of artists of the *École de Paris*, almost forgotten in Russia now. However, despite being forgotten at home, all of them were well known in the West.⁸ They took part in Paris Salons, official art exhibitions organized by the French *Académie des Beaux-Arts* (Academy of Fine Arts) since 1725 and from 1881 onwards – by the *Société des Artistes Français* (Society of French Artists). They designed for Serge Diaghilev’s *Ballet Russe* and other theater performances. Lastly, they illustrated the publications of classics, both Russian and Western. At this time in Paris, there were several groups of Russian artists in immigration holding hundreds of exhibitions. Furthermore, a significant amount of books has highlighted their artistic development in the Parisian school. Nowadays, they occupy places of honor in the museums of Paris, London and New York; however, Russian art historians and museum curators are only beginning to rediscover them.

⁷Андрей Толстой, «Художники русской эмиграции. Константинополь– Белград – Прага – Берлин – Париж», Литературная Газета, выпуск 29, Москва: 2005. (Andrey Tolstoy “Russian Artists in Immigration. Constantinople – Belgrade – Prague – Berlin - Paris” in *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, volume 29, Moscow: 2005).

⁸Alexander Shlepyanov, introductory speech for the auction *Russian Atlantis: Russian Artists of the Paris school*, London: 2011, <http://www.pushkinhouse.org/en/events/russian-atlantis>, accessed in May, 2012.

Clearly, there was a great variety of topics these Russian artists had been focusing on in their arts. For many of them, who never forgot where they originally came from, Russia was still the most popular and loved subject. For instance, Ilya Repin, who stayed in France from 1873 to 1876 and adopted the techniques of local artists, produced just a few images of the city that became his home for three years. Among them can be named *Parisian Café* painted in 1875, which comes with a rather special story of how it had never been acknowledged by Russian critics, and was displayed in Russia in March 2011 for the first time since 1916. For artists like Repin, seeking acknowledgment in their homeland, the most favorite topic in their art remained Russia and Russian folklore, which is why the main masterpiece Repin produced while in France became *Sadko*, based on the Russian medieval epic, *bylina*.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the two Russian artists, Konstantin Korovin and Nicholas Tarkhoff, to whom this research is dedicated, it is crucial to explore the issue of visual representation of the city and its interpretation. The problem of exploring the city as a phenomenon of the cultural life of an individual is a relatively new subject in the area of urban studies, developed out of the understanding that the city is an element of one's world view, unifying the values and ideals of society on a certain stage of its existence, or development. Max Weber sets forth this two-way relationship between city and culture,

The contribution of the city in the whole field of culture is extensive. ...The city and it alone has brought forth the phenomena of the history of art. Hellenic and Gothic art, in contrast with Mycenaean and Roman, are city art.⁹

Traditionally, the study of the city and the urban was carried out from a socio-economic, political/administrative, or legal perspective, and to a much lesser extent with how it deals with the images of the city, offered by literature and fine arts. On the other hand, visual methods based on studying the image of the city become increasingly important for sociological studies during the recent years. For instance, visual sociology nowadays deals with the analysis of existing images, produced without the involvement of the researcher (newspaper photos, movies,

⁹Max Weber, *The City*, translated and edited by Don Martindale and Gertrud Neuwirth, New York: The Free Press, 1966, p. 234.

television programs, postcards, etc.), and visual ethnography uses visual methods to obtain data, such as socio-cultural stratification of population, people's ideological and political orientation and values, national identity, aesthetic preferences, ways of symbolic self-representation, or patterns and styles of everyday behavior of citizens. Thus, another significant aspect, which deserves to be mentioned, is the problem of perception, interpretation, and representation of the image of a city in the visual arts. This approach to the city is increasingly gaining more popularity with the growing importance of visual arts and the development of more techniques of depicting the city, such as photography. I believe that it is beneficial to look at not only the way the city is understood by an artist or a city dweller, but also at the way visual representation of city life is portrayed by them, since the process of interpretation is one of the key phenomena of culture, identified with giving meaning to an object. In his book *Interpreting Our Heritage*, first published in 1957, the American scholar Freeman Tilden characterized the process of interpretation, claiming that it is meant to explain the subject and not only to describe it, but it should not only contain information, but include also a "discovery" or a revelation based on the information received. Moreover, interpretation is supposed to include in itself a wide context, stimulating interest and giving a wider perspective.¹⁰ In the context of the city, interpretation has two sides or meanings: the first is given by the artist, an observer depicting the city and its elements; and the second is created by a spectator, a city dweller who has his own understanding of experiencing the city and its culture. As it will be revealed in this thesis, very often the two meanings differ significantly from each other. Interestingly enough, in both cases it is important to remember that interpretation always remains subjective, and cannot be considered to be absolute truth.

The problems of perception and interpretation of the city in the artistic consciousness are usually associated with the particular city and its characteristic features. Given the vast number

¹⁰Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, Chapel Hill: University of New Carolina Press, 1977, p. 138.

of cities and a greater number of their images, it is impossible to trace in one study the development of the iconography of each metropolis, not even over several decades. This is why this study is focusing on the study of Paris at the turn of the century, in order to analyze different ways of interpretation and perception of the urban environment by Russian artists, to define a typology of images, and to address the problem of reflection of personal experiences. The nature of the subjective perception of the city is becoming a popular area of research at present, since the image of the city, existing in the minds of its residents and/or artists working on the urban theme, is a complex and constantly evolving subject, due to a number of interacting factors. These factors include the physical qualities of the city itself, the actual socio-cultural situation, the views of the individual, and the individual's ideas about the world in general and place in this world.

In order to define the typology of the city depictions that existed in the beginning of the twentieth century, one may turn to the study of the Russian art historian Grigory Kaganov, who worked on the typology of representation of a city in classical and modern art. In his studies, Kaganov explains that traditionally the city is portrayed as an aerial view (also called a bird's eye view or view from above), panorama, urban interior, and street scenes, and he claims that the Impressionists were the first artists in the history of art began to develop the problem of modern urban everyday life, inspiring other European artists.¹¹ This work simplifies the analysis of the images of Russian artists, to whose ways of interpretation and perception of the Parisian environment, to which this research is dedicated.

Traditional methods of comparative historical analysis are applied in the thesis permit to study the methods of representation of the urban environment in visual art practices. The growing importance of visual material has led it to become the main tool for the creation and formation of the image of the city. The image of the city in literature, fine arts, mass

¹¹Григорий Каганов, *Городская среда: приемство и наследование*, Москва, 2000, с. 49-62. (Grigory Kaganov, *City Environment: Acceptance and Perception*, Moscow: 2000, pp. 49-62).

consciousness, or individual perception is rarely neutral, in most cases it is an artistically-treated, socially and psychologically mediated assessment of the city or its fragments based on cultural background, or historical process. The extensive amount of visual material left behind, such as panoramic city views, views of individual objects, genre sketches of street scenes, has a special value for urban historians as it was produced by contemporary artists, who not only recorded the condition of the city, but passed on its character. The same role is played by literary descriptions of the city, as well as memoirs and narratives made by travelers.

There also exist a number of studies reflecting on various stages of transformation of the urban environment and its visual representation. One of the earliest attempts to analyze the phenomenon of the urban environment and visual arts, were the works of Walter Benjamin, who in his essay *Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century* written in 1935, where special attention was paid to two main points. First, he analyzed the immediate transformation of the urban environment: the construction of new roads, edifices, neighborhoods and thus, the changing the structure of the city. Changing the urban space, in turn, is reflected in human consciousness, which means that changes in the urban environment and visual arts are interrelated.¹² Benjamin's work has great importance for understanding of everyday urbanism, as it describes a new psychological type of an urban dweller, a *flâneur*, and his relation to the increasing visualization of urban culture. It is no accident that this new type of city resident originated in Paris, with its boulevards and arcades, which have become the object of Benjamin's unfinished study published after his death, *Paris Arcades*. The passages, with their architectural innovations (the use of metal) and the status of its trade centers specializing in luxury goods, had become attractions for visitors in the nineteenth century. By the end of nineteenth century, after the city reconstruction carried out by Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann, Paris attained a prominent system of boulevards and avenues. These reasons were what made artists turn to the theme of the city of

¹²Walter Benjamin, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century" in *The Arcades Project*, translated by Rolf Tiedemann, President and Fellows of Harvard College: 1999, pp. 1-26.

Paris, one of the world-renowned and most significant cultural centers of the beginning of twentieth century.

Among a large number of works on urban studies, there is a lack of works highlighting the subject of urban images in contemporary art. A few decades it was T. J. Clark, a prominent British art historian, who suggested in his book *The Painting of Modern Life - Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* that “it is tempting to see a connection between the modernization of Paris put through by Napoleon III and his henchmen... and the painting of the time.”¹³ However, I would like to amplify Clark’s statement by proposing to not only look into the French Impressionist paintings, but also into the masterpieces of Eastern Europe, namely, Russian artists staying in Paris at the same time and observing the cultural life of the city, to make a comparison of their perception of the great changes in the image of the city at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.

In my thesis, I narrow my focus to two individuals, the quite famous Konstantin Korovin and the less studied and popular figure Nicholas Tarkhoff. A recently published research conducted by Valentina Byalik is the first work dedicated to the life and art of Nicholas Tarkhoff, which was published in the Russian language. It sheds light on specific aspects of the life of the artist, includes the letters he exchanged with his friends, contains excellent quality reproductions of his paintings, which were completely disregarded during Communism. This study, especially the chapter “The Image of the City”, explains how by balancing between Impressionism, Fauvism and Symbolism, Tarkhoff was able to develop his own unique style, which he applied in depicting fin-de-siècle Paris. Konstantin Korovin, to whom another chapter is dedicated, is known as the first Russian Impressionist. For him, Paris had always been a favorite subject, inspiring him to produce a solid number of paintings of the city, which were not

¹³Timothy James Clark, “The View from Notre-Dame” in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1984), p. 23.

received well by critics in Russia, and therefore, these paintings are not well-known, even nowadays.

In addition to studying the works by Korovin and Tarkhoff, I have an intention to look into newspaper articles written by famous art figures, among whom include Alexander Benois, a painter and art critic, art exhibition organizer and the editor of the *Apollon* arts magazine Sergey Makovsky (1910), and French poet and art critic Alexander Mercereau (1910). These articles examine the art world of the late nineteenth – early twentieth century Russia and France, exploring pictorial ad market strategies, the critical reception of paintings as well as the role of Russian immigrant artists in the formation of the Post-Impressionist and Avant-garde traditions.¹⁴ These articles will help to set the criteria for the evaluation and analysis of the works I am planning to analyze.

As far as the structure of the work is concerned, the dissertation will consist of the introduction, two research chapters and conclusion. The introduction will contain explanations of the historical background for the study and include notes on methodology, sources and the relevance of conducted research. In addition, a few pages will be dedicated to the theories I have chosen to back up the thesis. The introductory part will be followed by two research chapters, dedicated respectively to two Russian artists in Paris, Konstantin Korovin and Nicholas Tarkhoff, will offer a more detailed look into the life of each master and their artistic work based on an analysis of primary sources, such as the artists' private letters and notes. The narratives by the masters themselves, as well as the ones written by their colleagues, kept in the Manuscript Department of the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, help to clarify biographical details about Konstantin Korovin and Nicholas Tarkhoff and answer many questions that enable a new perspective by placing the artists' work into a wider historical and social context. In addition, these texts reflect the daily life of the artists, which allow one to look more objectively at their

¹⁴Александр Бенуа, «Выставка Тархова» в газете «Речь», Октябрь, 1910. (Alexander Benois, “Tarkhoff’s Exhibition” in *The Speech* newspaper, October, 1910).

activities and relationships. For instance, in a letter to Benois from November 18, 1910, Tarkhoff develops an argument with critics and gives an evaluation of his own art.¹⁵ The drafts of Korovin's writings also include his own characteristics of paintings and reflections on how his personal style was being established.¹⁶ The research chapters also will answer the fundamental questions of the study, such as how the city of Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century was portrayed by Russian immigrant artists. The conclusion is intended to contain the results of conducted research. Additionally, the text of the study will be complemented by comments in the references, bibliography and a list of visual sources.

Chapter 1. Konstantin Korovin – the first Russian Impressionist and His Depictions of Paris. *Parisian Lights* series.

First born in France, the Impressionist movement spread widely across Europe during the last few decades of nineteenth century. Impressionists saw their task as the precise depiction of quickly fading and passing light effects on canvas. They believed that the said light effects, almost invisible and unnoticed, define everything in nature: contours and colors of objects, the way they contrast, harmony and disharmony, changing atmosphere of the landscape, its mood and emotional tonality. Light and color became the main “protagonists” of every painting produced by Claude Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro, and others, as these artists took the viewers on a captivating journey through their paintings along the city boulevards, letting them admire the new architectural styles and discover the sites along the Seine that inspired their art. The Impressionists mostly worked outside, *en plein air*, which was a new principle that defined the specific character of the Impressionist art that focused on “the dominion of the moment over permanence and continuity.”¹⁷ The outside world was where

¹⁵Nicolas Tarkhoff's letter to A. Benois, November 18, 1910, in Manuscript Department, State Russian Museum, Collection 137, code 1612.

¹⁶Korovin's Notebooks from 1890s in Manuscript Department, State Tretyakov Gallery, Collection 11, #31.

¹⁷Arnold Hauser, “Naturalism and Impressionism” in *The Social History of Art: Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age*, Vol. 4 (London: Routledge: 1993), p. 159.

freshness and clearness of color came into the picture, free from dark museum coloration, adding spontaneity and sharpness of perception to the Impressionists' depiction of everyday life. Consequently, the Impressionists' casualty to composition was not built according to complicated classical canons, but adopted by artists from nature itself.¹⁸

The formation of the Impressionism in Russian art is linked to Konstantin Korovin (1861-1939), a painter who changed the course of modern art in Russia after his visit to Paris in late 1880s. Several accounts dedicated to his life and art shed light on the personality of these first Russian Impressionists. These accounts include a monograph by Raisa Vlasova, as well as studies by Vera Domiteeva and Nina Moleva, all published a few decades ago, and bearing the same title *Konstantin Korovin*. In regards to this chapter, these sources were particularly helpful in terms of providing necessary background knowledge. These narratives contain invaluable information on the details of the artist's biography, thoroughly exploring the inner lives of the artist and his colleagues, and those who surrounded them - art critics and gallery owners, whose opinions influenced greatly on the perception and further fate of the masterpieces produced. By highlighting different aspects of socio-cultural developments that the societies of Paris, Moscow and Saint Petersburg underwent in the end of nineteenth century, using examples of several biographies and referring to the role of several critical actors, the writers of the historical accounts of Konstantin Korovin provide researchers a way to view Korovin's art as it had been understood by most celebrated visitors of his exhibitions.

In this chapter, I explore the way the city of Paris was understood and depicted by one of the most admired Russian artists at the end of nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century - the years of *La Belle Epoque* that attained the reputation of a profound center of arts, with the emergence of Impressionism, music halls, opera, and scientific research. It is beneficial to point out that there is practically no documentation that could help one to define the exact date

¹⁸Arnold Hauser, "Naturalism and Impressionism" in *The Social History of Art: Naturalism, Impressionism, The Film Age*, Vol. 4 (London: Routledge: 1993), p. 158-160.

of Korovin's first trips abroad in order to adequately judge the first impressions Europe gave him. The available data, the epistolary material, signatures and dates on the works of the artist, merely add to the confusion. However, there is no doubt that these visits started during the second half of the 1880s, confirmed by both Korovin's works and those of Russian artists who supported him, though they were not many. The reason for the lack of Russian support was that in Russian official artistic circles and in the bourgeois public Impressionism was not accepted, despite the fact that the 1880s in France were the period when Impressionism has already matured and moved slowly towards decline.

As Raisa Vlasova describes in her monograph on Konstantin Korovin, Russian researchers still debate on the years of the first trip the artist made to Europe; the dates range from 1885 to 1888.¹⁹ In the unpublished manuscript of the artist, he mentions the year 1880, but it is considered to be a mistake. The words from his essay *My Early Years* appear to be more truthful:

I was amazed by Paris when I first came here being 26 years old.²⁰
 From here it follows that his first visit happened in 1887, since this was exactly the time when he began incorporating into his art new techniques, which the teachers from the Imperial Academy of Arts in Russia criticized him so harshly for. Obviously, this came from discovering the Impressionists, who were using brighter and lighter color tones, and from this first trip the new phase in his painting began. During these months, Korovin was mostly observing, learning and breathing in the air of freedom from established canons - the freedom he had been longing for in Russia. Later Korovin would say,

Here they are, the French. They have most of what we have accomplished, but also something different. Impressionists... In their art I found everything I was criticized for back home, in Moscow.²¹

Upon returning to Russia, Korovin wrote,

¹⁹Райса Власова, *Константин Коровин, Жизнь и Творчество*, Москва, Художник РСФСР, 1969, с. 27-34. (Raisa Vlasova, *Konstantin Korovin, Life and Art*, Moscow: 1969, p. 27-34).

²⁰*Korovin's Drafts* in Manuscript Department, State Tretyakov Gallery, Fund 97, №56.

²¹В. Склярёнок, статья по книге «Все величайшие отечественные художники», стр. 2 (V. Sklyarenko, article on the book *All the Greatest Artists in Russia*). Retrieved from http://kkorovin.ru/v_sklyarenko2.php in May, 2012.

Feeling the beauty of color and light – this is where an artist finds expression, enjoys the freedom, the interaction between tones. Truthful tones are the core of the painting, and the subject should be found for tones. My art is bad since I do not feel it so well – true art is the Impressionism.²²

These words written by the artist himself demonstrate the dissatisfaction with what was suggested by the Russian Art Academy, as well as his longing and search for the new, since on one hand, Korovin by the nature of his talent and even his character was already an Impressionist. On the other hand, what made him finally give into this desire to explore the new was the changing historical situation. In 1886, the last Impressionist exhibition took place, and their existence and steady position in the artistic world was officially acknowledged, since the style had been widely used in France, and won its audience.

So, at the end of 1892, Korovin moved to France, where he spent almost a year. This new stage in Korovin's artistic development was connected to this trip, during which the master tried to look at French art more closely. This was something Korovin could now learn from the French masters, trying to follow their logic and truth, looking for new possible ways to evolve as an artist, and where he knew he would find his new style, since the French capital at that time was welcoming many young artists from all corners of the world, without limiting them in their growth. He said,

I was amazed by Paris, when at the age of twenty-six first came to this city, but still it felt like I had already seen the place before. Everything looked exactly the way my grandmother had described. The French art of painting had a great impact on me...²³

The master carefully studied modern French art, and it was the Impressionists that the artist had in mind when he wrote in a letter to Apollinary Vasnetsov, a prominent Russian artist and master of historical painting,

I painted very little, almost nothing, I was just learning, I swear, I studied as much as I could. The French paint so well. Well done, you devils! Everything is new, but so far it is taking me towards the logic of truth. This art is somewhat permanent, integral: one is never bored. Integrity is not selling, some brave souls. Their technique is almost toxic; one cannot produce anything else afterwards.²⁴

²²Korovin's Drafts in Manuscript Department, State Tretyakov Gallery, Fund 97, №58.

²³Рассказы Константина Коровина. Литературные опыты великого художника. (Konstantin Korovin's Short stories. Literary works by the great artist.) Retrieved from <http://kkorovin.ru/stories13.php> in May, 2012.

²⁴«Писал мало, почти ничего, учился, ей богу, учился. Хорошо пишут французы. Молодцы, черти! Все ново, но пока в сторону логики правды. Искусство какое-то постоянное, целостное, не надоедает. Больно

From those years on Korovin was only willing to work in the newly discovered way he had so admired, and adopted for the rest of his life.

Korovin's close familiarity with Impressionism happened not only during his first trip to France, but also at the World Exhibition in Paris in 1900. This period in late 1890s was the time when the art of Konstantin Korovin was enriched by Parisian motives. Following the example of the French Impressionists, Korovin adds the theme of the city into his art, and while Russian masters back home were focusing on the realism of the country side life, he begins the new trend of portraying the beauty of the urban landscape.²⁵ Starting with two views of Paris *After Rain* (1897 and 1900) and two paintings under the same name (*Parisian Café*, both in late 1890s), he produced a series of masterpieces depicting the French capital, which received the title of *Parisian lights* and made his name famous in the West during the exhibition at the Parisian Salon in 1900.

Korovin accepted the idea of urban painting and embodied it in his paintings that followed the depiction of the outdoor café, such as *Paris: the Seine; At the Boulevard, Paris; Cafe de la Paix*; and *Paris at Night, Boulevard des Capucines*. The painter saw the city as a source of air and color effects. Paris, at day and night, was filled with a special rhythm of life, full of movement and light, and Korovin admired the lights of lanterns, colorful advertisements, and shop windows beaming with advertisements. Examining his paintings, the viewer can almost hear the creaking of the wheels of carriages, the cries of newspapers sellers, and sounds produced by traveling musicians - all the details that give his painting the effects of theatricality, like in *Paris* painted in 1907. Here, the legitimate question emerges concerning his works dedicated to the subject of the city of Paris. It is well-known that the French Impressionists were eager to record what they saw around, and left behind extensive visual reports, but what did the

уж техника ядовита - ничего после написать не можешь.” *Korovin's Letters*, Manuscript Department, State Tretyakov Gallery, Fund 11, №31.

²⁵Нина Молева, *Жизнь моя — живопись (Константин Коровин в Москве)*, Москва: Московский рабочий, 1977, с. 232. (Nina Moleva, *My Life Is Painting (Konstantin Korovin in Moscow)*, Moscow: Moscow Worker, 1977, p. 232).

Russian artist focus on in his works and what was he willing to omit in his visual discussion of the magnificent city?

Before proceeding to the discussion and analysis of visual sources, a few words on the historical background would be beneficial. It should be explained that during the Second Empire, one could observe the great changes in the image of Paris after Napoleon III, believing in the industrialization of France, had appointed Baron Georges-Eugene Haussmann, Prefect of the Department of the Seine from 1853 to 1879, to rebuild Paris in order to turn it into a modern city, “with wide boulevards, sanitation and clean water, and to remove the tiny streets in which discontent had festered and which provided protection from the army.”²⁶ Although he had many passionate critics, by the end of nineteenth century Paris became a lively city full of sparkle, glitter, café life and new forms of entertainment. Haussmann instigated a very ambitious program of city planning that destroyed the medieval fabric of the city and replaced it with it with large boulevards, new bridges, an opera house, and avenues giving new perspectives to monuments.²⁷ The new spaces created during the renovation were where the spectacle of Paris was put on display. Appropriately, the topic of the street life gained great popularity in Western European art of the time, since the Impressionists were attracted to those elusive moments, constant volatility, and flashing multi-colored crowd. Konstantin Korovin was one of the artists for whom the theme of Parisian streets and boulevards became a favorite one, which is confirmed by an impressive amount of paintings of those, where different classes of society could be seen to “coexist but not connect” together. Although those places were quite ambiguous, with “a mixture of classes and classifications,” blurring the lines of traditional conventions as T.J. Clark points out, representatives from different spheres of society and different quarters of Paris could be found there, where “people are hard to make out, their

²⁶ N. Blake and F. Frascina, “Modern Practices of Art and Modernity” in *Modernity and Modernism: French Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, Yale University Press: 1994, pp. 50-140.

²⁷ Timothy James Clark, “The View from Notre-Dame” in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1984, p. 23.

gestures and expressions unconvincing, their purpose obscure,”²⁸ Korovin still concentrated on figures from the upper classes, not drawing attention to the problems of society his primary goal, as it was common for Naturalism and Realism. Such places, first of all, were the main squares of Paris, breathing with luxury and glamour, Place de la Madeleine, with excellent food establishments, situated at the end of Rue Royale and “named after the neo-classical church in its center”, Place de la Bastille, the former place of the fourteenth century fortified royal residence,²⁹ or Place de l’Opera, where people could be seen promenading after attending famous opera productions; and all of them are found among Korovin’s works.

Eventually, from portraying some random streets, the master “moves” to other spots, familiar even to those who never visited Paris, and more aristocratic ones as well, like one of the great boulevards - *Boulevard des Italiens*, the street *Champs-Elysees* with the view of the famous *Arc de Triomphe* or the depiction of the beautiful sixteenth century monument, *Tour Saint-Jacques*, close to Notre-Dame de Paris, and open to walking viewers thanks to Haussmann’s renovation project. As Nancy Forgione explains in her article *Everyday Life in Motion: The Art of Walking in Nineteenth Century Paris*, “always a city for walking, Paris became much more conspicuously so during the second half of the nineteenth century,” as Haussmann’s reconstruction project “opened up boulevards, bridges, squares, and other public places to traffic and to view.”³⁰ Thus, the main protagonist in modernity was the *flâneur*. As Robert Herbert explains, the *flâneur* was usually characterized by “wearing the clothes of the upper-class,” distinguished by his interest in “the aesthetic and elegant,” and not in mundane life aspects like “sales and investments”.³¹ As for the inner world of the *flâneurs*, they “flaunted his wit in artful phrases whose irony was fully appreciated by only by the inner circle of writers, painters,

²⁸ Timothy James Clark, “The View from Notre-Dame” in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1984, pp. 23-78.

²⁹ Nicola Williams, *France Highlights*, LP Publications: 1999, pp. 144-160.

³⁰ Nancy Forgione, “Everyday Life in Motion: The Art of Walking in Late 19th Century Paris” in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 87, № 4, December 2005, pp. 664-687.

³¹ Robert Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure and Parisian Society*, Yale University Press: 1991, pp. 33-40.

musicians, intellectuals and fashionables to whom they were addressed.” According to Herbert, “*flâneurs* adopted an “attitude of protest against the vulgarized, materialistic civilization of the bourgeois century,” were “devoted to newspapers” and considered “the best-informed person in Paris.”³² In this sense, all the Impressionists, starting with Edouard Manet who was born in a rich upper class family and was a dandy himself, were *flâneurs*, and their work was described as the “realism of the *flâneur*.”³³ This idea of the main person in the painting depicting a street or a boulevard was transmitted from French masters like Gustave Caillebotte to Russian immigrant artists, whose images reflecting the changes carried out by Haussmann also gained acclaim during the period.

Konstantin Korovin added characteristic figures of the Parisian strollers, placing emphasis on the phenomenon of *flânerie*, the uniqueness of the modern city. He brilliantly depicted the activity of *flânerie*, which was walking down the streets and observing what was around, in his later masterpieces *Promenading in Paris by Night*, *Paris Street Scene with Tram and Red Car*, and *Sketch of Paris by Night with Promenading Couple*. What is striking here is that the artist again does not traditionally portray only male figures, for him women are as important from the content of his paintings, which offer depictions of not only couples, but even single female figures. Thus, Korovin raises the question of female *flânerie*, an often ignored phenomenon and a complex issue, of which Aruna D’Sousa and Tom McDonough debate in their study.³⁴ The two scholars note that art history mostly ignored the fact of its existence, making the *flâneuse*, as they call the female passers-by, an almost invisible character. The fact that they were depicted by Konstantin Korovin could be, perhaps, explained by the fact that in the beginning of twentieth century when most of his paintings were produced, women managed to gain more independence and were allowed to go out alone, and attending public events

³² Robert Herbert, *Impressionism: Art, Leisure and Parisian Society*, Yale University Press: 1991, pp. 33-40.

³³ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life” in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, translated by P.E. Charvet, Penguin Classics, 1972, pp. 395-422.

³⁴ Aruna D’Sousa, Tom McDonough, *The Invisible Flâneuse: Gender, Public Space and Visual Culture in Nineteenth Century Paris*, Manchester University, 2006, pp. 3-17.

unaccompanied did not threaten their reputation as much as it would have just a few decades before.

The mentioned points emphasize that just like their Parisian colleagues, the Russian artists, although also noticing other not so obvious issues, were still focusing on the common phenomena of the day, painting the urban landscape and the alienating nature of modernization and they were also fascinated by the idea of modernity causing a sense of isolation in urban centers. Some of such examples are two Konstantin Korovin's paintings *Paris: Boulevard des Capucines* (1906 and 1911) that very clearly depict this desolate state of mind of the city's inhabitants from all walks of life coexisting within the newly built boulevards of Haussmann's Paris. In the images from his latest Parisian period, such as *Paris. La Bastille* (1928) or *Paris. Saint-Denis* (1930s), Korovin again gives the viewer a wide angle view of the modern city with its inhabitants from all walks of life, coexisting within the newly reconstructed spaces of Haussmann's Paris. In the foreground of both paintings, there are upper class couples walking, and a multitude of carriages or other passersby in the background, but the sense of disconnect is prevalent in the picture. All the detached, non-communicative character of the figures occupying the intersection may indicate the master's disdain for the anonymous and anti-picturesque nature of Haussmann's boulevards.³⁵ Another typical aspect of Impressionist paintings, notably present in the *Parisian Light* series, is that this was probably the artist's own experience, which he was willing to share with viewers.

This kind of isolation pointed to another main topic depicted by the French artists at the turn of the century - modernity - a phenomenon created by metropolitan development in which, as explained by Charles Baudelaire, artists represented "the transitory, the fugitive, the contingent."³⁶ The Realist painter Gustave Caillebotte, for instance, gave it a prominent position

³⁵ Раиса Власова, *Константин Коровин, Жизнь и Творчество*, Москва, Художник РСФСР, 1969, с. 102-117. (Raisa Vlasova, *Konstantin Korovin, Life and Art*, Moscow: 1969, p. 102-117).

³⁶ Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, translated by P.E. Charvet, Penguin Classics, 1972, pp. 395-422.

on his painting without trying to blur or ignore it, as Claude Monet or Pierre-Auguste Renoir would have done.³⁷ Playing along, Konstantin Korovin, in his depiction of Saint-Denis, also added the gas lights in the very middle of his composition dividing the picture plane, as well showing as the newly constructed, wide boulevards, products of the industrial innovations of the time period. Korovin's treatment of atmosphere and weather conditions here differs from his Impressionist colleagues, getting closer to Caillebotte's great depiction of their desolate state of mind. In *Paris, Saint-Denis Arc (1930s)*, the street lights seem to reinforce the sense of detachment giving each person their own space. No one is truly communicating with another; they all seem to be in their own world. The bourgeois gentleman in the front seems to represent Baudelaire's *flaneur*, the exquisitely turned out, well mannered, gentleman stroller, detached observer. Unlike most other Impressionists, especially Renoir or Monet, Korovin did not represent modernity by ignoring or blurring it but instead giving it a prominent position in his painting. The gas light in the very middle of his composition dividing the picture plane, as well as the newly constructed, wide boulevards, were all products of the industrial innovations of the time period. Korovin's treatment of atmosphere and weather conditions also differs from his Impressionist colleagues. He pictured the rain by an overcast sky and manipulating different grays, reds and greens to represent the wet cobblestone street. It is not a matter of light reflections and broken brush strokes, but highly finished elements establishing very deliberately constructed perspective. This is why in this painting Korovin appeared to be a prolific artist whose style could sometimes be found to be closer to the school of Realism due to his exacting technique and structured spatial compositions. Other views of urban Paris, from earlier or the same periods, like *Paris (1907)* or *Paris (1933)*, although there the master was obviously applying different techniques, seem to confirm the idea of modernity, also featuring isolated figures of people co-existing on the grand boulevards of the city without close connections with

³⁷Douglas W. Druick and Gloria Groom, *The Age of French Impressionism, Masterpieces from the Art Institute of Chicago*, p. 57.

each other. Nevertheless, it is crucial to underline that even portraying the French modernity, Korovin did not quite bring in isolation as a key idea in his art, as other artists depicting French modernity had. Although people in his paintings do not seem to be closely connected, the general air of joy and brightness of the compositions does not allow any depressive or sad thoughts.

All of the characteristics mentioned above seem to be the elements that could then be found in the paintings of the Impressionist artists, eagerly interpreting what they were seeing. The world around was changing and they captured those transitory moments and specific places, and in many ways the artists were similar in recording the impressions of transformations they observed. For instance, Claude Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines* and Korovin's *Parisian Morning* or *Paris: Boulevard des Capucines* (1911) are the master's impressions of what he saw out of the window of his studio. Both paintings capture the grand boulevards revealing the order of the city where everyone and everything has a place, their own zone - pedestrians, trees, carriages, while the viewer has a bird's eye-view of the street. While Korovin was painting the modern Paris with its grand boulevards, carriages and aligned trees, he is using atmospheric perspective as well as concentrating on the light effects at the dawn or on a warm summer evening. It is the immediate vision that is blurred and has a sketchy quality; certain areas on the canvas are very hard to clearly differentiate, and the light effects reflect off the roofs and the store fronts of the buildings. In comparison, Monet wanted to depict light the way it reflected off things; his treatment of the city in *Boulevard des Capucines, Paris*, on a cold, wintry day presents the city as a landscape that he could use to capture the reflections of light.³⁸ Actually, in terms of its composition and choice of tones, Monet's masterpiece is close to Korovin's *Parisian Morning* (1906). Korovin's style was thought to be very radical by the Russian critics, and the painting was judged by them as looking unfinished and sketchy. However, this blurry technique and transitory effects together could stand for the idea of modernity, which was, actually very

³⁸ Mary Tompkins Lewis, *Critical Readings in Impressionism and Post-Impressionism*, (University of California Press, 2007), pp. 78-80.

close to what Claude Monet tried to do in his painting of the *Boulevard des Capucines*, also corresponding to the understanding of modernity given by Charles Baudelaire, who in his essay *The Painter of Modern Life* published first in *Le Figaro* in 1863 described it as ephemeral, fugitive, and contingent.³⁹

Another interesting point was that except for only a few paintings of morning or day time (*Parisian Morning*, *Paris This Morning*, *Paris*, and *Autumn*), the majority of paintings depicted Paris strictly in the evening (*Paris: Madeleine*, *Evening on the Boulevard* and *Evening in Paris*) or at night time, starting with *Paris: Night Street* from 1902 and finishing with *Boulevard in Paris* painted in 1939, the year of the artist's death. A few dozen paintings on the same subject produced in between vary only in the angle of the view, and depict the same brightly lit streets, shop windows and rushing and hurrying people. These pictures, despite portraying night time, are full of light, and all show the center of a wide boulevard filled with people, lit lanterns, advertising signs of shops and cafés flickering in the twilight haze of fluffy tree crowns, shining windows of high buildings. The sky, dark and thick, also seems to be lit up with multicolored lights, shining in yellow, pink and green tones. For more expressiveness of color, Korovin never applied oil paints with the new, lighter and softer palette created by the Impressionists in order to depict nature more precisely. Instead, specifically for night time series of pictures, the artist bought very expensive Swedish paints characterized by excellent quality and brightness, called by others “peacocks”.⁴⁰ Korovin was never afraid of using too many colors for depicting Paris at night or boldly bringing in black (which was neglected by the French masters, who preferred substituting it with grey or brown). Black for him was the color that made all the other shades, like red, green and orange lights of displays and street lamps shine brighter. As a whole, it created a magnificent, moving kaleidoscope of colors applied by brush strokes different in size,

³⁹ Charles Baudelaire, “The Painter of Modern Life” in *Selected Writings on Art and Literature*, translated by P.E. Charvet, Penguin Classics, 1972, pp. 395-422.

⁴⁰ Нина Молева, *Жизнь моя — живопись (Константин Коровин в Москве)*, Москва: Московский рабочий, 1977, с. 176. (Nina Moleva, *My Life Is Painting (Konstantin Korovin in Moscow)*, Moscow: Moscow Worker, 1977, p. 176).

length and thickness. The series of paintings *Parisian lights* is indeed the most romantic one, bringing the spectator into the mysterious colorful world of the city at night: torches and brightly lit department store displays, creating a kaleidoscope of lights and shadows. Artificial lights of city streets intensified the spectacular aspect of the moment, adding the fantastic pattern to the reality of the painting. Even taking into consideration that the artist borrowed the bird-eye view idea from the French Impressionists in his scenes of city life from the window of his apartment, this way of building a composition starts playing a different role. Monet and Pissarro usually emphasized the structure and shade of air and light depending on the time of the day, changing the color of objects in the street; while Korovin, for instance, in his paintings *Paris. Boulevard des Capucines* from both 1906 and 1911, or *Paris at Night. Boulevard des Italiens* from 1908, just used the technique of color contrasts in order to stress that the viewer is not a participant of the scene depicted, but takes the role of the spectator in the theater by not taking part in whatever is happening on the stage. Alexander Benois, a famous Russian art critic and artist, was the first one to notice this element in Korovin's work:

Korovin had a passion to deliver his impressions of the Parisian street, and, in particular, its night life. Is this not also a wonderful theater, a spectacle we are used to since we see it every day, which, however, constitutes the most charming and magical performance of our time? Should such a performance in the first place attract the artist, since theater and life, life and theater are equal for him?⁴¹

Apart from the social aspects, the question of culture should be highlighted as well, since at the end of nineteenth century it took a new turn. It is clear that cultural life around Europe at that time varied from upper to lower social classes. High culture at the turn of the century belonged to the aristocracy and was represented by opera houses and theaters with their buildings traditionally being quite magnificent and impressive. Inevitably, they became subjects of Impressionist paintings, which is proved by Konsantin Korovin's masterpieces *L'Opera*, where the grandiosity of the fabulous neo-baroque construction of the *Palais Garnier* points to the role the opera played in society. Sarah Hibberd, in her monograph *French Grand Opera and*

⁴¹Alexander Benois' memories of Korovin, retrieved from http://kkorovin.ru/benua_korovin.php in May 2012.

the Historical Imagination addresses a question of how the historical events used to be reflected in contemporary opera productions and explains the complicated nature of the relationship between the elite art form, history and politics. In her study, Hibberd, a specialist in nineteenth century French musical culture, claims that opera was not only a genre of music popular among upper bourgeois society, but offered a revealing perspective, playing a role that cannot be disregarded. Being “the heart of cultural and political activity” at the end of nineteenth century, opera reported on the problematic issues of the day, expressed diverse opinions on the current events, and possessed a more diverse political discourse, contributing to the reassessment of historical and political experience.⁴²

Nevertheless, despite the great popularity of opera and later, the operetta, a lighter and more frivolous musical genre, these kinds of entertainment belonged exclusively to the elite classes; and their culture greatly contrasted and even conflicted, to a certain extent, with the low culture of less-educated masses. The lower class also needed places to go to spend leisure time. Traditional or popular culture of the nineteenth century Paris occurred in cafe-concerts, cabarets, music halls, and dance halls. By the early twentieth century, when the higher styles, such as opera and operetta, had begun to lose its mainstream appeal in France, the initiative passed elsewhere, especially after 1881, “the year in which the first and most famous cabaret of all, the *Chat Noir*, was established.”⁴³ From that year on, dance halls and cabarets were open not only to aristocracy, but also to a less pretentious public. In their day, French operetta composers only had some brief moments of glory amid the inevitable disappointments. As it is stated by J. G. Prod’homme in *A Musical Map of Paris*, at the turn of the century, when dramatic music was represented only by the *Academie Royal de Musique* (Opera) and was not accessible to the

⁴²Sarah Hibberd, *French Grand Opera and the Historical Imagination*, Routledge: 2009, pp. 12-180.

⁴³ Harold B. Segel, *Turn of the Century Cabaret: Paris, Barcelona, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Zurich* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

general public, secular music of a lower, “popular nature” possessed a rather important status, and it found its admirers in the street open cafes and cabarets.⁴⁴

Describing the situation with entertainment in Paris, it is crucial to speak of the night life of Montmartre, which was perhaps the most vivid district of the city at that time. While it was centered on cafe-concerts, music halls, and dance halls which were very popular on Sunday afternoons when families residing in nearby districts came to eat and dance, they were not the only form of entertainment. Konstantin Korovin’s depictions of Montmartre at night perfectly reflect the festive nature of the district, a subject of popular culture he liked to dwell on. Out of the cafe-concert was born a cabaret, another public place where *chansons* continued to be the main source of attracting people, but the patrons changed from the bourgeoisie to artists and writers, the so-called Bohemia, which meant that while the cafe-concert maintained an audience large in quantity, the cabaret maintained an audience high in quality. The cabaret that used to attract the widest range of public in great amounts and still does so nowadays, was the *Moulin Rouge* opened on October 15, 1889 as a long gallery lined with paintings, photographs, posters, and tapestries, leading to the spacious dance hall. Initially advertised to husbands as a place to bring their wives, it soon became a place for customers to forget and enjoy and obtained a reputation of a market for love. Dancers, acrobats and singers joined together in presenting a wild display, encouraging the audience to step on the dance floor. Young women would sit in a section of the bar waiting for men to buy them drinks. Outside, in the garden, a full orchestra played while a French *can-can* was performed, and the other various entertainments included belly dancing, clowns, fortune tellers, and a shooting gallery.⁴⁵ Korovin, again, offers his interpretation of the cabaret culture by depicting *Moulin Rouge*, both paintings representing a blur of bright beautiful colors, at the look of which the viewer almost hears the loud music and

⁴⁴ J. G. Prod’homme, “A Musical Map of Paris” in *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Oxford University Press, October 1939), pp. 611-612.

⁴⁵ “Au Moulin Rouge” and “Toulouse Lautrec and the Moulin Rouge” in *The Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* (Chicago, 1907-1951).

feels the unforgettable joyful atmosphere of freedom and a non-stop holiday, calling and attracting people from all around Europe and the world.

So, cafe-concerts, cabarets, and dance halls became the places where another type of culture blossomed, where Parisians from all walks of life came to listen, watch, or even perform. Music, however, was not the only form of entertainment. There were also poetry readings, clowns, dancers, and even monkeys at some of these places. For lower classes, cafes were places to bring families, meet friends and have some drinks and food. W. Scott Haine in *The World of the Paris Café* also underlines that under Haussmann's modernization of Paris when "a dazzling new boulevard culture filled with theaters, shops, cafes and music halls" led to a decrease in domesticity, café became a unique transitional space, "an informal institution that bridged the distance between the public and private life, leisure and work, the individual and the family".⁴⁶ At this stage, painters constituted the most significant part of the cabaret public, and used the place to find models and meet with each other to talk about art. Many Impressionists found inspiration from café (which was later called the birthplace of the movement, since Monet, Cezanne and Renoir all met in *Café Guerbois* and produced many paintings devoted to the cafe-concert, together with Toulouse-Lautrec who also painted many scenes and portraits with the popular culture motif.⁴⁷ This discussion points to the interesting fact that places like cabarets and cafes were not only representative of the popular culture at the turn of the century, but also stimulated the growth and further development of this culture.

Clearly, such an important medium of cultural development could not go unnoticed by the artists of the time, which is proved by an impressive number of paintings dedicated to the alluring world of Parisian café. Konstantin Korovin also made an important contribution on his part by producing three different paintings on this subject during his very first short trips to Paris.

⁴⁶ W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Socialbility among the French Working Class, 1789-1914* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 236.

⁴⁷ Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 336-365.

Extremely elegant color theme and abundance of light proves that the paintings were made during Korovin's early years in Paris, and light. The most famous one named *Parisian Café* (1890s), the study for it completed in 1885, and the painting *Parisian Café Scene* all depict a place for families, which we can conclude by observing the two women in the center of the composition. Obviously, this was already the time when café stopped being an exclusively male public space, but also accepted women and children. Korovin's depiction of *Parisian Café* with its choice of bright colors was one of the scenes of modern life that had the air of *joie de vivre*.

This is an open air café with a few visitors, comfortably situated in a shady park. It is hard to guess who is pictured there, local residents or foreigners, since the figures of visitors, especially their faces, are barely outlined. It is two women, talking, eating breakfast and having a good time. Korovin was an optimist and this painting, alone could probably be looked at as the primary evidence of this. All the components of the painting from the composition to the color pallet to the brush strokes evoke a joyous, optimistic feeling. The master used intense, vibrant colors, hues that are associated with a happy and positive mood. His typical, lively and easily applied brushwork adds to the energy of the composition and create a fresh, translucent and natural scene. Upon closer examination one can hardly find here two identical strokes, although the color difference sometimes barely perceptible. At the same time, the artist provides a bright colorful range of activity by making the umbrella of the lady sitting in the background almost too bright for the light painting. All the colors here live a difficult life of the finest half-tones, and depending on the light and air, and from the neighboring colors, actively participate in the harmonization of the overall flavor, in which the artist demonstrated his brilliance in aerial perspective.

This painting along with *Parisian Café* painted during the end of the 1890s, when Konstantin Korovin first identified himself as an Impressionist, brought to life all the principles the Impressionists based their style and technique on. Both works showed half empty cafés

during morning hours, when not so many visitors came there. The objects are almost dissolved in the glittering silver shades of morning light, which make the contours very unclear. The air softens the colors, even the bright red umbrella in the first painting does not jump out. It looks like a short episode of life accidentally witnessed and later captured by the master along with many other impressions, yet he was able to capture the poetry of the summer morning, and the city's special atmosphere, full of light, color and joy, at this point still resembling the depictions of street life by Monet and Pissarro.

It is crucial to emphasize, however, that even being influenced by the French, Korovin did not follow them blindly, but was looking for a specific elegance and subtlety of color, using bigger brush strokes, and being bold enough to add to "morning" images brown, sienna and ochre to get new shades of gray. As in his night views of the city of Paris, here he also uses black (for instance, in people's dresses), however, being sharp enough to be denied by the French masters, black here does not create any disharmony and does not destroy the composition by making it heavy or dirty, but instead adds a flow of fresh air to it. Together with silvery pavement, spots of sunlight and the green of the tree leaves make both paintings look very refreshing, which even now makes them the greatest and most admired of Korovin's works

Taking a closer look at the painting *Café de la Paix* from 1906, as well as *Café de la Paix* depictions from 1930s, one may notice at first sight that it seems to be a portrayal of another aspect of modernity rather than the one in the previous pictures. *Café Restaurant de la Paix* at *Place de l'Opera*, the "last remaining grand boulevard café in the vital center of Paris", opened in 1872, the same year as the Opera House and its interior was designed also by Charles Garnier.⁴⁸ It was attended by the representatives of the French and Russian Bohemia: writers like Guy de Maupassant or Emile Zola, composers like Ilya Tchaikovsky, the famous Serge Diaghilev, who brought Russian Ballet dancers to Paris, and even some royalties, like Prince of

⁴⁸ Noel R. Fitch, *Grand Literary Cafés of Europe*, London: 2006, pp. 28-30.

Wales.⁴⁹ The atmosphere of a place attracting so many famous clients, of course, was more formal and sophisticated, which is shown in darker, more “serious” colors of the painting. Often the individuals, sitting side by side in the crowded rooms were disconnected from one another, not communicating in any way, wallowing in their isolation, just like the protagonists of the views of the Parisian boulevards at night. Café Cardinal at the corner of *Boulevard des Italiens*, famous for its music performances,⁵⁰ Café La Marine at canal Saint-Martin even nowadays known for great sea food and beautiful view, *Café des Sports* and *Café la Mandolin*, although they were less significant in comparison with *Café de la Paix*, still found their place in Korovin’s canvases. More simple establishments, they were points for making new connections and friendships for middle class bourgeoisie. Korovin here takes on the role of both an artist and a reporter observing the scene without making any kind of a commentary. There is solidity to the compositions of all paintings that belong to the artist later period. The front of the picture plane is very clear, with easily readable café signs, and figures of Parisian strollers, so typical for late Korovin. Sometimes, he uses trees to hide the façades of surrounding houses. In these later productions, his outlines and contours are more solid, although the theme of night scenes still persists, with its combination of vibrant colors giving the paintings a lively dynamism. This is yet another perfect example of the Impressionists' depiction of everyday life of individuals from the bourgeoisie or even working class taking their pleasure in a drinking establishment. The subjects of the last discussed paintings prove once more that Impressionists were very interested in depicting the urban lifestyle lived in the cafés.

The artist’s activities along with the produced images during his visits to Paris occupy an important place in his biography and are considered to be very informative. His artistic life at the moment was rather complicated, as he was torn between different influences and ideas, balancing to see how much he could break down the tradition, looking for himself, missing

⁴⁹ Jacques Hillairet, *Dictionnaire Historique des Rues de Paris*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1985, Volume 1, p. 265.

⁵⁰ David Bogue, *Guides for Travelers: Paris and Its Environs*, London: 1885, pp. 51-56.

Russia and at the same time being in love with Paris, which offered him acceptance and fulfillment of his dreams.⁵¹ As Alexander Benois confirmed, it was a fact, that Korovin's art during this era was the most advanced and most European.⁵² Almost a century later Korovin's biographer Vera Domiteeva echoes the words of the prominent art critic, also calling Konstantin Korovin one of the most advanced artists, not discouraged by any difficulties. The main feature of Korovin's art is underlined by Domiteeva:

In search of his own artistic techniques [he] realized that if one could not convey the feeling of a happy long contemplation (in the detailed depiction nature on the canvas appears dry, dead), one should get around the obstacle, and reduce the time of contemplation, in order to catch the feeling of admiration of the first general view, not quite embracing the details,⁵³

It shows the artist's everlasting search for the new and the undiscovered, a quality, which perhaps, made his name so known and loved among the public.

To conclude, I would like to repeat that for more than a century now Impressionism, the influential artistic movement in France of the second half of nineteenth century, has been the subject of writing for many researchers. It is widely known that this style had significant impact on the development of art not only in France, but also outside of it. However, even though most of its aspects have been reflected in scholarly works, Impressionist movement in Eastern Europe has not been fully covered, and needs further analysis. This brings us back to the question of my research, which is how the new tendencies born in Paris influenced the formation of individuals coming from Russia at the end of the nineteenth – beginning of the twentieth century. In the following chapter of my thesis, I intend to look into the life and works by Nicholas Tarkhoff, another Russian painter, who at the same period of time lived in the French capital and whose bonds with France were much stronger. Through analyzing Tarkhoff's paintings and the articles of the Alexander Benois and his other contemporaries, much more can be learned about the ways

⁵¹Константин Коровин вспоминает..., Составители И. С. Зильберштейн, В. А. Самков. Москва, «Изобразительное искусство», 199. (*Konstantin Korovin remembers...* Edited by I. Zilberstein, V. Samkov. Moscow: Visual Art, 1990).

⁵²Александр Бенуа, *Александр Бенуа размышляет*, Москва: 1968, с. 209. (Alexander Benois, *Alexander Benois' Reflections*, Moscow: 1968, p.209).

⁵³Вера Домитеева, *Константин Коровин*, Москва: 2007, с. 133. (Vera Domiteeva, *Konstantin Korovin*, Moscow: 2007, p. 133).

Eastern European artists perceived Paris and reflected reality, which differed from the perspective that local artists had.

Chapter 2: Nicolas Tarkhoff and the Artist's Path in Paris. The Image of the City.

In this research chapter, I narrow my focus to the life of one of the least studied and popular figures – the Russian painter Nicolas Tarkhoff (1871-1930). My intention is to take a look at the work of Nicolas Tarkhoff in the context of Western European art at the beginning of the twentieth century. This perspective is dictated by the peculiarities of the biography of the master, who had spent most of his life in France, where he emerged as an artist under the influence of a variety of styles existing at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although his initial steps in painting were made in Russia, he failed to attend the Academy of Arts as he had not been accepted, which in the end allowed his talent to develop rather independently from traditional styles and approaches. Unfortunately, none of his works painted in Russia before his leaving for France are preserved now, and the only legacy left is the paintings produced in Paris. Now very few of them are found in Russia, the majority of them are kept in France or Switzerland, and for this reason the Russian art lovers are not too familiar with his work.

The importance of the study of Tarkhoff's work is due, first of all, to the rapidly developing interest of contemporary art critics towards the community of Russian immigrant artists in the West. Secondly, Tarkhoff's artistic heritage is found on the edge between two great national cultures, Russian and French, which makes its consideration and close analysis relevant in the context of the processes taking place in the cultural and visual arts development of both countries.⁵⁴ It also helps to reveal and explore the way the national identity of the artist is connected with these European schools and trends. In addition, the study of Tarkhoff's paintings is valuable from the point of view of the study of the national heritage. An exhibition held in

⁵⁴Валентина Бялик, *Николай Тархов*, Италия: Искусство - XXI век, 2006, с. 22. (Valentina Byalik, *Nicolas Tarkhoff*, Italy: Art – XXI Century, 2006, p. 22).

2003 in the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow, which took place 20 years after the last exhibition of Nicolas Tarkhoff in Russia, demonstrated the versatility of the artist's talent, showed a demand of his paintings in Russia, and led to the re-evaluation of his place and role in the history of Russian art.⁵⁵ However, the main subject of this study is not the relationship of Tarkhoff's paintings to European art in the context of establishment and development of artistic styles at beginning of the twentieth century, though a few words will be said about that, too. Given the fact that the turn of the century was a period of changing traditions and the emergence of new trends in European painting, it is fascinating to examine the place Tarkhoff's art occupied in the overall process. However, along with the exploration of the life of one of the least studied Russian artists, the main purpose of this chapter will be to look specifically into the depictions of the city of Paris and analyze the way they resembled or differed from the ones produced by his French colleagues in terms of chosen themes, colors and attitudes.

Since Russian artist Nicolas Tarkhoff left his motherland in 1898 and lived most of his life in France, under the influence of art trends emerging in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, he developed his own very unique painting manner, which art critics define as a mixture of various styles.⁵⁶ Impressionism, attuned to the artist's worldview based on humanistic perception of reality, had the greatest impact in shaping the personal style of the master. Noting the fact that Tarkhoff's painting style had many characteristics of Impressionism, critics have not sought to identify the reasons for his interest in the school, or the reasons why he preferred to follow that direction, which was in decline in Europe already (the history of Impressionism covers a total of 12 years during which eight exhibitions were held, from the first one in 1874 to the last one in 1886). However, identifying these factors will allow

⁵⁵“Николай Тархов в Третьяковской галерее” в журнале *Коммерсантъ Weekend*, Март 2003, №53 (2656). (“Nicolas Tarkhoff in the Tertyakov Gallery” in *Kommersant Weekend*, March 2003, Volume 53).

⁵⁶Валентина Бялик, «Забытый и Воскрешенный Николай Тархов» в журнале «Русское Искусство», Март, 2005. (Valentina Byalik, “Forgotten and Risen Nicolas Tarkhoff” in *Russian Art Journal*, March, 2005).

understanding the concept of the artist's works and help to recreate the sequence of formation of Tarkhoff's style, define his targets and assess the extent of his talent.

As previously mentioned, the artist's legacy in Russia and abroad is not very well studied, and there are very few sources that can be named in relation with Tarkhoff. The most significant writings giving a comprehensive analysis of his works belong to Gaston Diehl, Marius-Ary Leblond, and V. Volodarsky. The small book by Gaston Diehl, a French art historian and critic, could be considered the most valuable study, giving insights of the work of the artist and raising questions about the reasons of change of his style and its origins, as well as providing detailed information about the life of Tarkhoff. Diehl's work is of great interest for those studying Tarkhoff's paintings, and was of significant importance for this research. One should also mention the book written by Marius-Ary Leblond, two prominent historians, who described him as an "enthusiastic man from the land of Turgenev and Gogol, with a soul on fire and a wild, refreshing talent, who came to discover the festive Paris... and transmitted his enthusiasm on canvas".⁵⁷ They were the artist's contemporaries, and thus, their detailed account of his life is of great value. In their monumental investigation of the peculiarities of immigrant artists who came to France, they dedicated a separate chapter to Nicolas Tarkhoff, providing evidence of his outstanding talent, so different from that of those he lived and communicated with. In addition, the Leblond cousins can be considered his first biographers. Another significant survey was conducted by the Russian art historian Vsevolod Volodarsky. In addition to the logical and literate exposition of his own thoughts and facts, Volodarsky offers a periodization of Tarkhoff's works, and a clear listing of Tarkhoff's heritage. The recently released monograph on the life and art of Tarkhoff by Valentina Byalik is the first fundamental work, published in the Russian language, dedicated to the life and art of the artist. It sheds light on specific aspects of the life of the artist, includes the letters he exchanged with his friends, contains excellent quality

⁵⁷Marius-Ary Leblond, *Peintres de Races*, Bruxelles: 1909, c. 81-97. (Marius-Ary Leblond, *National Artists*, Brussels:1909, pp. 81-97).

reproductions of his paintings, which were completely disregarded during Communism. This study explains how in developing a balance between Impressionism, Fauvism and Symbolism, Tarkhoff was able to develop his own unique style, which he applied in his depiction of fin-de-siècle Paris.⁵⁸

The above mentioned works, with *National Artists* by the Leblond cousins being the only exception, were published decades after his death. The authors, of course, relied on the material from his era, such as articles about his exhibitions in *Apollon* and *World of Art* magazines, *The Speech* newspaper, or letters of contemporaries, which not only clarify the details of Tarkhoff's biography, but also highlight issues related to the organization of exhibitions, transfer of his works, and include requests to acquaint Russian connoisseurs and collectors with his paintings. Also, they demonstrate the artist's own ability to analyze the paintings, which makes them more special for art critics today. Selected publications should be considered in the process of studying of Tarkhoff's heritage, though even these are fragmentary, contain minimal descriptions and remain poorly understood today. The question of the place occupied by Tarkhoff's humanistic art in the context of destructive tendencies, emerging in the art of the twentieth century, should definitely be also addressed.

From the obvious stylistic differences of works created by the artist during his life and obtaining traits and features of Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism and Primitivism, it is clear that they are related to different periods. The most specific and reliable systematization of Tarkhoff's heritage was suggested by Volodarsky, describing three stages of his work: 1900-1905, 1905-1910 and 1911-1930.⁵⁹ The first period (1900-1905) was influenced by the Impressionists - including Monet, Pissarro, and Sisley, and even later Van Gogh, whose expressionist impact on Tarkhoff's art was only limited to five years. It seems that Tarkhoff did

⁵⁸Валентина Бялик, *Николай Тархов*, Италия: Искусство - XXI век, 2006, с. 71-95. (Valentina Byalik, *Nicolas Tarkhoff*, Italy: Art – XXI Century, 2006, pp. 71-95).

⁵⁹Всеволод Володарский *Н.А. Тархов. Творческий путь художника*. Москва: Музей Пушкина, 1983. (Vsevolod Volodarsky, *N. A. Tarkhoff. The Path of the Artist*, Pushkin's Museum of Fine Arts: Moscow, 1973).

not neglect the lessons of Cézanne, however the artist's impact in his work is not so clear. It should be noted that the characteristics of Impressionism passed from one period to another. In some genres like portrait, he explicitly used new techniques, fauvist mood, reflecting the next period of his development as artist, but still returned to the Impressionist way of depicting cityscape, for instance, in *Street Maine and Montparnasse Station*. The year 1905 can be considered a year of transition, as at that time the artist began to experiment with color in the spirit of the Fauves, his style changed, but Impressionism always remained the core part of his technique.

Critical analysis of Tarkhoff's paintings traces the formation of the artist's style as it proves his connection with the Impressionist movement and its further reconsideration, which led the artist to the adequate perception of Fauvism. Comparative analysis provides a better understanding of the foundations of his art. Comparing his early depictions of Paris like *The Day of Carnival in Paris* to previous works and analyzing the structure of the paintings, one may learn about changes of methods in the artist's manner, expressed through gradual transition from sharp staccato strokes to the smooth spots of colors, which was the evidence of experiments in Fauvism.

The artist created numerous cycles of works, the study of which is complicated due to their significant amounts, mixed dates, limited analysis, especially in his country of origin. It should be mentioned that Tarkhoff arrived to Paris being prepared to accept the new art. This preparation was his training in Konstantin Korovin's workshop in Russia,⁶⁰ evidenced by Tarkhoff's best biographers – Diehl and Volodarsky. This was a period that played a significant role in Tarkhoff's self-determination - self-recognition as an artist different from the current academic school.⁶¹ The period was when Tarkhoff learned valuable lessons about drawing,

⁶⁰Николай Киселев, "Выставка Тархова", *Аполлон*, № 10, 1910, с. 22-25. (Nikolay Kisselev, "Tarkhoff's Exhibition" in *Apollon* magazine, Volume 10, 1910, pp. 22-25).

⁶¹Из воспоминаний П. Кузнецова, Константин Коровин. Жизнь и творчество. М., 1963, с. 266-267. (P. Kuznetsov, "Konstantin Korovin. Life and Art" in *Memoirs*, Moscow: 1963, pp. 266-267).

composition and color. In fact, Korovin, to whom the previous chapter is dedicated, was one of the Impressionists in Russia.⁶² At that time, his paintings greatly contrasted with conventional works of the Academy of Arts, and were quite advanced, thanks to Korovin's own many visits to Europe and participation in the World Exhibition in 1900. Critics, however, question Korovin's influence on the style of Tarkhoff, and claim that although Tarkhoff attended Korovin's workshop, his future works did not resemble the style of the other artist, and even if they were done in the same Impressionistic manner, one does not find the same motifs on Tarkhoff's canvases.⁶³ Korovin's impact was setting the artist free and letting his own style evolve. As Volodarsky explains,

In Paris, where Tarkhoff went to study, the seeds planted in him by Korovin, helped him learn from the experience of French Impressionism, which was not so well-known in Russia and only began to attract the young Russian artists, who were looking for new directions in art.⁶⁴

At the same time, appealing to the art of Claude Monet, one may come to the conclusion that it was an orienting point for Tarkhoff. This is confirmed by the similarity of compositions, for instance Tarkhoff's *Day of Carnival in Paris* and Monet's *Boulevard des Capucines*, which share the general solution of the problem of light and air, as well as the subjects: children, flowers, landscapes, embankments and railway stations. Both artists created cycles: Monet painted Rouen Cathedral, poplars, haystacks and water lilies; Tarkhoff depicted maternity, Chimeras and the city. All this can be attributed to the fact that Impressionists had the same feeling about what surrounded them. It followed that all the paintings were alike. The classic Impressionist, Claude Monet was the standard of perception of the world, and no matter how modern and progressive Tarkhoff's art was, its foundation laid in the paintings of Monet and other French Impressionists, although Tarkhoff's painting style was not imitative. In terms of imitation, Volodarsky notes:

⁶²Абрам Эфрос, *Два века русского искусства*, Москва: Профили, 1969, с. 255. (Abram Efros, *Two Centuries of Russian Art*, Moscow: Profiles, 1969, p. 255).

⁶³Валентина Бялик, *Николай Тархов*, Италия: Искусство XXI век, 2006, с. 40-43. (Valentina Byalik, *Nicolas Tarkhoff*, Italy: Art XXI Century, 2006, pp. 40-43).

⁶⁴Всеволод Володарский *Н.А. Тархов. Творческий путь художника*. Москва: Музей Пушкина, 1983, с.7. (Vsevolod Volodarsky, *N. A. Tarkhoff. The Path of the Artist*, Pushkin's Museum of Fine Arts: Moscow, 1973, p. 7).

The basic principle of Impressionism as it instantly captures the poetic beauty of the world corresponded to the very nature of Tarkhoff's talent. It allowed him to avoid joining the crowd of numerous imitators, and to become a painter, for whom the method and technique of Impressionism came late, as if they were his own discovery. Thus, there come the often noted by critics sincerity, organic expression, which allowed, according to Alexander Benois, unerringly distinguish his work at the gigantic Independent Paris Salon exhibitions Independent and exhibitions of *Salon d'Automne*.⁶⁵

The specificity of Tarkhoff's style is connected with the humanistic perception of the world. He did not deny, and did not try to revise the basics of classical art, which has always been the desire for harmony. Despite the fact that Impressionism was gradually disappearing, giving way to the avant-garde, the newly emerged styles in arts that shook the turn of the century, did not seduce Tarkhoff, who was creating his masterpieces based on the principles of traditional humanistic positive art. The artist felt closer connected to sensuality and sincerity of the Impressionism, rather than to logic and rationality of modernism. Tarkhoff was one of the "last artists of the modern era, who managed to have kept in their art the peace and joy of the golden age,"⁶⁶ claiming that the joy of living was the key to balance in the universe.

In summary, Nicolas Tarkhoff's painting style from fractional rushing and intuitive stroke gradually calmed and became more conscious, subject to the general plan of the composition. Under its influence formed other stylistic features of his art, flexible brush strokes, sketchy character of compositions, and selection of topics), the artist was freed from the pressure of the academic tradition and claimed the right for intuitive need to paint "the joy of life." Tarkhoff's Impressionism was special and unique. As Alexander Benois wrote in his article for *The Speech* newspaper,

This is not true that Tarkhoff is a poor and weak copy of the French Impressionism. Tarkhoff could be recognized among thousands of paintings at Paris Salons instantly.⁶⁷

Later, neglecting sketchy impression and the desire to understand the value of color expression led the master to a stage of experimenting with new trends in French painting.

⁶⁵Всеволод Володарский *Н.А. Тархов. Творческий путь художника*. Москва: Музей Пушкина, 1983, с. 9. (Vsevolod Volodarsky, *N. A. Tarkhoff. The Path of the Artist*, Pushkin's Museum of Fine Arts: Moscow, 1973, p. 9).

⁶⁶М. Герман, *Импрессионисты. Судьбы, искусство, время*, М., 2004, с. 282-283. (M. German, *Impressionists. Fates, Art, Time*, Moscow:2004, pp. 282-283).

⁶⁷Александр Бенуа. *Выставка Тархова*, Газета «Речь», 1910, 22 октября. (Alexander Benois, "Tarkhoff's Exhibition" in *The Speech* newspaper, October 22, 1910).

The new stage was Fauvism, adding to it sometimes the traits of primitivism, simplifying the forms, but still strongly expressing opinions and impressions.

Now, moving to the subject of Tarkhoff's favorite themes in his art, it is clear that one of the most notable ones was the city of Paris, at that time a sophisticated and elegant world, a vibrant fashionable place, and a trend-setter for the rest of Europe. The legitimate question rising here is: How did Nicolas Tarkhoff represent Paris to us? Landscapes and cityscapes, which had become the main genre of the first period, demonstrate the characteristic features of Impressionist movement: the desire to overcome the static nature of architectural forms through the mobility of the brush strokes that creating a vibrant texture, strengthening of the decorative elements, showing interest in respect of lights and shadows, transmitted through the play of colors, creating series of favorite motifs and the desire to capture the moment. Tarkhoff was drawn to the dynamic nature of big city life, the vibration of light and color. At the same time, the author discovered a new Paris – the one with its chimeras, embankments, streets, arcades and boulevards. On his canvases, there is modern Paris, combining the spirit of a capital city with still preserved “provinciality” of the suburbs, revealing not only the novelty and progressiveness of the city, but its medieval character as well, reflected in depictions of churches, their stained glass and sculpture. Trips taken to Parisian suburbs enriched the artist's palette with vivid colors, and his composition with spatiality. The panoramic Seine in his *Bridge behind the Trees, View of Paris from the Rooftops* or *Morning over Water* is perceived by Tarkhoff differently⁶⁸ than seascapes. For instance, the choice of colors in *The Sunset* differs greatly, though the new technique borrowed from Pointillism is evident; similarly, in *The Seine and Gare de Lyon at Night* and *The Seine and the Notre Dame*. Judging from *The Sunset*, Tarkhoff's seascapes are expressive and transparent, giving room for his color gift to bloom. In *The Sunset* the sun melting in the clouds pours red glow of multi-colored foaming waves, touching the

⁶⁸Юрий Герчук, “Русский парижанин Николай Тархов. Живописец, открытый заново” в газете *Первое Сентября*, №40, Москва, 2003. (Yuri Gerchouk, “Russian Parisian Nicolas Tarkhoff. An Artist Rediscovered” in *September, First newspaper*, Volume 40, Moscow: 2003).

coast with whitecaps. This motif was one of the artist's favorite, and ranged repeatedly. It is also interesting that in seascapes he stood committed to pointillism arriving eventually to greater freedom in expression and a sincere depiction of his own attitude.

However, returning to the theme of Paris, it should be noted that Tarkhoff started with paying close attention to details. On the account of Tarkhoff's view of details of the city, Valentina Byalik, who dedicated part of her life to the thorough study of the artist's life, writes,

A shocking impression is given by Tarkhoff's *Chimeras*. They are inanimate, made of stone, ascending over the huge Paris, each in its own way, sitting on the Notre Dame cathedral, looking warily down. They are natural parts of the cathedral that the viewers even find their description in the famous novel by Victor Hugo. Yet today, they are only copies of those that appeared in the second half of nineteenth century.⁶⁹

The massive restoration of the cathedral, conducted by Eugene Viollet-le-Duc from 1844 to 1864, allowed him, the historian and theorist of architecture, but above all, a talented architect, to give way to fantasy. Tarkhoff, fascinated by the magic figures, created a surreal world of chimeras, demons, observing thoughtfully and ironically the city spread out far below; grotesque figures of evil monsters looking out from the most unexpected points. Perched on the Gothic Pinnacle, hiding behind a spire, or hanging over the edge of the stone wall, these chimeras seem to be there for centuries, still immersed in thoughts about the fate of humanity. They lurk in the wide gallery between the towers, striking the twentieth century viewer,

I was just fascinated by the expressiveness of the Chimeras, as I was standing before them for a long time unable to go away,

recalls her first visit to Paris in 1925 the worker of the Pushkin Museum, Nina Yavorskaya.⁷⁰

Despite the fact that the artist depicts the seemingly soulless statue, his chimeras possess human emotions. In one painting, a chimera is angry, aggressive, in the other is frozen under snow, cautiously quiet, clasping the knees with arms. In every creative person, chimeras awaked a range of associations and desires. Marc Chagall, a famous painter, exclaimed in his memoirs,

⁶⁹Валентина Бялик, *Николай Тархов*, Италия: Искусство XXI век, 2006, с.71. (Valentina Byalik, *Nicolas Tarkhoff*, Italy: Art XXI Century, 2006, p. 71).

⁷⁰Нина Яворская. *Из воспоминаний о поездке в 1925 году в Париж. Проблемы искусства Франции XX века*. М., 1989, Выпуск 27, с. 144–145. (Nina Yavorskaya, *Memoirs of Visiting Paris. The Problems of French Art in the XX Century*, Volume 27, Moscow: 1989, pp.144-145).

“Oh, I wish to ride a stone chimera of Notre Dame, to hug her and fly high!”⁷¹, while a Russian writer Alexei Remizov wrote: “And remember when I was leaving, saying farewells, I did not want to abandon them ...Farewell, stone animals, my precious rocks! And bowed before the cathedral...”⁷² Could it be that Chimeras expressed and depicted emotions of the people in the city? Could the expressions on their faces reflect the mood of the artist while he was painting them?

According to Byalik, it was common for the artists of the time to look for symbols in order to share their attitudes and moods towards certain issues, and for Tarkhoff, the symbol of the city of Paris became the Notre Dame Chimera with its range of emotions. This fact also shows that the master was making small steps towards symbolism in his art; working in sketches and fragments, like all Impressionists did, he grasped the whole world in one glance, and still focused on the detail, and used it to tell the viewers more.⁷³ However, Nicolas Tarkhoff's paintings and sketches of *Chimera of Notre Dame* and *The Chimera of Notre Dame, Hanging over the City* (1902) are not only the portraits of grotesque stone Chimeras, melancholically contemplating Paris rustling down below. In the background, there is always the most important topic of the master's pictures, the image of the city, painted in all seasons, either covered with snow, shining in the sunset rays, glimmering in the starry night or wet in the rain.

As in the beginning of the 1900s Tarkhoff just came from Russia, most time of the year a cold and snow covered land, winter landscapes had a special appeal and charm for him. He still remembered the frosty white and blue panorama out of his studio in Moscow, and this resulted in the paintings *Chimera of Notre Dame, Hanging over the City*, and *Boulevard Saint-Denis*, and later in *Winter Paris covered with Snow*, as well as a few others, like *Montparnasse Rooftops Covered with Snow*. Interestingly enough, the master's different talents were reflected in every

⁷¹ Марк Шагал, *Моя жизнь*, М., 1994, с.113. (Marc Chagall, *My Life*, Moscow: 1994, p. 113).

⁷² Алексей Ремизов, *Париж накануне войны*, Петроград, 1916, с. 70. (Alexei Remizov, *Paris Before War*, Petrograd:1916, p.70).

⁷³ Валентина Бялик, *Николай Тархов*, Италия: Искусство XXI век, 2006, с. 74. (Valentina Byalik, *Nicolas Tarkhoff*, Italy: Art XXI Century, 2006), p. 74.

picture. The artist's great ability and understanding of proportions is represented in the painting of *Chimera*, where he was able to masterfully combine the bigger figures of the front with the background perspective of the snowy city lying far and below. In this painting, the familiar contours of the embankment, houses along the Seine and boats on the river surface are highlighted by long strokes made in white. The painting of *Boulevard Saint-Denis* depicting the windy weather is characterized by its cold light tones and moving, flexible brush strokes, creating the effect of movement on the canvas, a record of his one quick impression. However, in the lower part of the canvas the viewers may see purple splashes, colorful reflections of lights, part of people's outfits, pictured in the blurry technique of Impressionism. In the next two paintings, the artist chose warmer tones and colors, still able, though, to preserve the atmosphere of winter, but making it more cheerful and joyous. The blurry Impressionist style suddenly gives place to cubistic features: clear and sharp geometric contours of edifices and their roofs, almost reminding of the contours of staircase. It is, by the way, the view from the artist's workshop window (which is reminding immediately about Monet's *Boulevard the Capucines*, also painted from photographer Nadar's apartment, where his studio was placed). However, Tarkhoff does not paint the bird view on the street below; instead, he is focusing on what he sees in front - the rooftops, the horizon and the panorama - seen from the window, a reality, re-created on the canvas, transformed and simplified through the artistic approach of the master, not focusing on tiny details, but grasping the overall effect of what was observed.

It is beneficial to note here that the subject of winter and snow was extremely rare for the artists residing in France, since the climate there does not suggest "real" cold and the snowy winter the Russian masters had experienced at home. A number of artists, writers and art critics often complained about the lack of winter in Paris, replaced by the wet, more autumn-like weather: they called it "fake winter", one that was not even able to bring ice to the Seine, or

freeze the still working fountains of *Palais Royal*.⁷⁴ The fact that Tarkhoff, who never painted his homeland after he had moved to France (unlike Repin or Korovin, always bringing up the Russian motifs into his pictures produced abroad), was suddenly willing to depict winter on his canvases, could actually serve as one of the only factors pointing to the truth that he was missing and thinking of home.

It is crucial to point out that Nicolas Tarkhoff's affection clearly belonged to Paris, which can be discovered through looking at all his studies and sketches of the many details of the city where he lived and grew as an artist. Since Tarkhoff moved to Paris, it was a time of many discoveries for him, he delved into the mysteries of the grand city, and its many moods and faces, making morning and evening skies, the sun over the city, its blue-green river his subject of interest, which he transmitted on canvas and paper. It is interesting that focusing on other cycles of his work, like *Maternity*, not too many authors writing about Tarkhoff's life highlight his ability to note the fuss and hectic atmosphere of the big city, which he so brilliantly depicted. His paintings from the beginning of 1900s, such as *The Gates of Saint-Denis in Paris*, *Traffic on the Boulevard and the Porte Saint-Denis*, *Boulevard Saint-Denis in Paris*, *Paris: Saint-Denis*, *Paris: Crowd*, and *Crowd at the Boulevard* reflect the bustle of the everyday life, organic on his canvases, with hurriedly rushing people and transport in the streets, captured by the artist's quick, attentive, and deep glance. The Porte Saint-Denis paintings surprise the viewer with a new compositional solution, a different angle. The massive arch of the gates dominates the front, highlighting the depth of the boulevard. It is clear from the look at the works listed above, that Tarkhoff's favorite theme was the Parisian boulevards, filled with moving crowds, carriages moving, flickering lights, iridescent reflections on wet pavement as well as walls and roofs merging into a single mass of tall buildings.

⁷⁴Павел Анненков, Парижские письма, М., 1984, с. 55. (Pavel Annenkov, *Parisian Letters*, Moscow: 1984, p. 55).

On Tarkhoff's canvases there are boulevards, embankments, and squares of Paris, with their chaotic motion, and colorful flashing and changing light, the street life of a huge, strange, beautiful city, where a foreigner feels lost and in love,⁷⁵

This is how expressed his attitude towards Tarkhoff's art by one of the brightest art critics of his time Sergei Makovsky.

Interestingly, the master did not find it essential to focus on the central areas, like the Tuileries gardens, a Royal public park where in nineteenth century were held concerts and other entertaining activities of riding and puppy theaters, or *Boulevard des Italiens*, “a meeting place for the elegant elite classes during the nineteenth century”, home for famous Cafés, and one of the four grand avenues of Paris along with *Boulevard des Capucines*, *Boulevard de Montmartre*, and *Boulevard de la Madeleine*, “the busiest and the brightest part” of the capital, as described by Honore de Balzac.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, his other paintings give justice to the glamorous appeal of the elite areas. by concentrating on the topic of the suburbs. He started from the centrally located area of Saint-Denis and Saint-Martin, called by Eric Hazan “well-mannered and maintaining the tradition, lively and varied.”⁷⁷ Further, as if telling the story of the city, the artist moved to a less fashionable area, faubourg Saint-Antoine. According to the definition given by Louis Chevalier, “faubourg means all the working class districts of Paris,” combining “degrading, insecure, underpaid jobs, and poverty and crime,” inhabited by people “different from those in the city,” *les misérables*.⁷⁸ Ann-Louise Shapiro in her book *Housing the Poor of Paris 1850-1902* gives a more detailed account of *faubourg Saint-Antoine*, also placing the emphasis on the fact that during the days of the Second Empire it was the “peripheral district,” where the disadvantaged laboring population dwelled in tiny quarters, housing too many tenants at the same time.⁷⁹ However, despite the dark picture emerging in mind at the mention of the *faubourg*, Tarkhoff's

⁷⁵ Сергей Маковский, *Страницы художественной критики*, СПб., 1913, с. 132. (Sergei Makovsky, *Pages of Art Criticism*, St. Petersburg: 1913, p. 132.

⁷⁶ Esther Singleton, *Paris as Seen and Described by Famous Writers*, Dodd, Mead & Co.:1912, p.317.

⁷⁷ Eric Hazan, *The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps*, London: Verso, 2010, pp. 133-135.

⁷⁸ Louis Chevalier, *Laboring Classes and Dangerous Classes in Paris during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, London: Routledge, 1973, p. 115.

⁷⁹ Ann-Louise Shapiro, *Housing the Poor of Paris 1850-1902*, The University of Wisconsin Press: 1985, p. 45.

depiction of it prevails in bright joyous colors, almost telling us, that towards the beginning of twentieth century, the life even at such miserable places could have improved and been enjoyed.

In two other paintings, *Vue de Paris* and *Parisian Boulevard* (both not dated), Tarkhoff's choice of palette is reminiscent of Pissarro or Sisley. The pictures are less fuzzy, much calmer, and it could be suggested that this was the period when the artist just got acquainted with the style of the Impressionists, and just like in their masterpieces, Tarkhoff's paintings of streets and boulevards are full of moving figures, some rushing in different directions, some strolling slowly down the streets. Their appearance in the paintings is due to the existing phenomenon of the end of nineteenth century, the much discussed *flânerie* first described by Charles Baudelaire, the famous poet and art critic, who contemplated on the image of nineteenth century Paris and was the one who identified the *flaneur* as the protagonist of modernity and integrated the figure of the modern artist into the social, cultural and aesthetic context,⁸⁰ and afterwards mentioned by practically every author turning to the subject of fin-de-siècle Paris. Mary Gluck, in her study *The Flaneur and the Aesthetic: Appropriation of Urban Culture in Mid-nineteenth Century Paris*, gives a more detailed account on the phenomenon, emphasizing that there was a clear connection between *flânerie* and the urban landscape of modernity, and a "close and insistent association" between the public landscape of Paris and the *flaneur*, the hero of modernity, "unthinkable in interior spaces" such as salons and theaters, and incompatible with "private life and interiority."⁸¹ The flaneur, this French dandy, observing the goings-on, was the protagonist of most depictions of urban life at that time; however, although Gluck calls him "unthinkable in interior spaces", there were still interiors where he was willing to spend time.

The development of the social phenomenon of *flânerie* led to one of the most significant transformations in the cultural scene of the city. It is easy to imagine that, tired from walking

⁸⁰Mary Gluck, "Theorizing the Cultural Roots of the Bohemian Artist" in *Modernism/Modernity*, Volume 7, № 3, 2000, pp. 351-378.

⁸¹Mary Gluck, *The Flaneur and the Aesthetic Appropriation of Urban Culture in Mid-nineteenth Century Paris* in *Theory, Culture and Society* 20 (5), 2003, pp. 53-80.

along the wide avenues, the gentlemen wanted to sit down, and discuss whatever they had observed during their strolls, which adds to the explanation of the appearance of cafés. Just as broad boulevards, cafés then were meant for “display and diversion.”⁸² W. Scott Haine in *The World of the Paris Café* agrees with Mary Gluck on this matter and underlines that under Haussmann’s modernization of Paris, “a dazzling new boulevard culture filled with theaters, shops, cafes and music halls” led to a decrease in domesticity; instead, the café became a unique transitional space, “an informal institution that bridged the distance between the public and private life, leisure and work, the individual and the family.”⁸³

Obviously, Nicolas Tarkhoff was not able to ignore a place like that, considering also the fact that painters constituted the most significant part of the café’s public, and used the place to find models and meet with each other to talk about art. Many Impressionists found inspiration from the café (which was later called the birthplace of the movement, since Monet, Cezanne and Renoir all met in *Café Guerbois* until 1875 or *Nouvelle-Athenes*, an established café, where Degas painted *L’Absinthe* in 1876), which, for instance, was reflected in the works by Manet and Degas who produced many paintings devoted to the cafe-concert, together with Toulouse-Lautrec who also painted many scenes and portraits with the popular culture motif.⁸⁴ Not to stay behind those great names, Tarkhoff also offered his own interpretation of the Parisian café. Interestingly enough, he chose a technique, different from his traditional oil paints. *Parisian Outdoor Café*, a powerful modern painting, is done in pastel crayons on paper, creating a cheerful atmosphere. Different from Edgar Degas, who used his painting of a café to draw attention to the problematic issues of the day, Tarkhoff offered the viewer a “fragrant of life” through colorful space “glittering under the sun’s flood breaking through the leafage of the shade

⁸²W. Scott Haine, “Café Friend: Friendship and Fraternity in Parisian Working Class Cafés, 1850-1914” in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Volume 27, (Sage: London, 1992), pp. 607-623.

⁸³W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Café: Socialbility among the French Working Class, 1789-1914* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 236.

⁸⁴Jerrold Seigel, *Bohemian Paris: Culture, Politics, and the Boundaries of Bourgeois Life, 1830-1930*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 336-365.

from the trees under which the tables are set.”⁸⁵ This lyrical depiction of a café as a peaceful urban setting expresses the good mood and coziness reflected in every line, demonstrating, perhaps, the master’s attitude to the phenomenon. Depicting people engaged in a vivid discussion, Tarkhoff also gives a hint that the Parisian café was definitely not only a drinking establishment attracting the widest range of public, but also a networking source and a place of great influence on political and cultural movements of the period.

In his art, Tarkhoff also turned to other urban spaces, one of them being the market, always a vibrant, energetic place. In his other oil pastel drawing *Parisian Market in the Popular Quarter* (1910), the spectators also find a multicolored city, possessing a major theatricality. The same is depicted in the earlier masterpiece *Au Marche Populaire (Rue Belloni, Paris)* from 1907. In this piece, the artist painted the street at which he was staying. Loud and colorful masses, crowds of people fill the entire space of both paintings, giving a noisy image of not only the streets and houses, but also the sky above Paris. The artist revels in the movement - everything in the painting seems to be running, rushing, showing people’s light-mindedness and vanity, making the whole place look like a fair, where adults like children are willing to learn, perceive the world with open arms and open hearts. Obviously, the market here is not only a place to shop, it is a social establishment, a place for families to spend time together. The market’s joyful atmosphere is reflected in the blur of the brightest colors of the artist’s palette.

A very similar atmosphere of exciting city life is found in Tarkhoff’s *Day of Carnival in Paris* and *Street Carnival in Paris*, describing the event enjoyed by most residents of Paris. Produced around the same period *Carrousel, Le manège à Montparnasse: Fête de foraine (The Wheel of Montparnasse: the Fair Celebration)* and *Mi-Carême (Mid-Lent)* illustrate a celebration started in Europe during the Middle Ages involving masks, street theater performances, jokes and laughter, and joyful spirit. These are depictions of the much loved *fêtes*

⁸⁵Haldane MacFall, *A History of Painting: The Modern Genius*, Part 8, (London: 1907), p. 289.

(markets, fairs, and celebrations), the famous *joie de vivre*, often a subject of artistic interest, especially among the Impressionists. This air of light-mindedness, joy and laughter fills another painting, *Place du Maine (Square Maine)*, portraying the market square, where Parisians enjoyed attractions. The master did not focus on the faces of people moving, dancing, and having fun in the streets; as he wanted to show only one face – the face of the city itself. What one finds here is the unpredictability of manifestations of life, with the focus falling on the “here and now”, which corresponds perfectly to the master’s desire to capture the fleeting moments of life. This can be considered another factor that points to Tarkhoff’s ties with the late Impressionists. The naturalness of the composition, all decorative elements and their colorfulness, the whole vibrating air created by large, fast strokes, were at that period characteristic for painters in 1910, the year of the peak of his creativity. Critics at that time point to the striking sincerity and originality of his works, showing simple and new Paris. Later the quality of his paintings became the reason for his methods and techniques to be adopted by the French artists, which was a very rare kind of honor towards the work of a foreigner.⁸⁶

Among other scenes depicted by European Impressionist painters, whose goal was “seeking out and portraying the contemporary life,” could often be found the Industrial Revolution and the possibilities it had brought. According to the *Topical Dictionary of European Art*, Impressionists were “particularly adept at incorporating the railroad theme into their works”, and, for instance, *Gare Saint Lazare*, an iron-glass building in steam clouds, a symbol of modernity,⁸⁷ was painted by both Edouard Manet, who lived a short walk away, at *Rue St. Petersbourg*, and Claude Monet, who dedicated the whole series of a dozen paintings to the chosen subject. While Manet with his Realist approach focused on the people and their

⁸⁶Николай Киселев, “Выставка Тархова”, *Аполлон*, № 10, 1910, p. 22. (Nikolay Kisselev, “Tarkhoff’s Exhibition” in *Apollon* magazine, Volume 10, 1910, p 22).

⁸⁷Terry W. Strieter, *Nineteenth Century European Art: A Topical Dictionary*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999, p. 202-203.

emotions, and the station served only as a background in his paintings, Manet, as it is revealed by Juliet W. Bareau, the author of *Manet, Monet, and the Gare Saint-Lazare*,

concentrated on specific sites and differing conditions of atmosphere. Although these were focused extensively on one motif, they were differing perspectives some showing the trains under the shed, some showing the building behind the shed and in some smoke covering and rendering the shed invisible. Some could even be classified as an interior space while others had the outside and inside feeling at the same time.⁸⁸

Interestingly enough, the life of the Russian community for some reason concentrated around another train station – the *Gare Montparnasse*. It is known that Russian Silver Age poet Nikolay Goumylev stayed close to this station during his visits to Paris in the first decade of the nineteenth century, and the famous art critic Alexander Benois, who lived at *Boulevard Montparnasse*, also mentioned the public space often in his diaries.⁸⁹ Nicolas Tarkhoff, who was close friends with Benois, also suggested his own interpretation of the railroad subject in the cycle of paintings dedicated to the *Gare Montparnasse*.

Before proceeding to the discussion of these paintings, it is crucial to point out that since 1905, the master's works featured new techniques and the paintings had changed in the range of topics portrayed, as well as the unusual compositions that were produced, all indicative of the birth of a new period of his work. At numerous exhibitions the artist got acquainted with new trends formed in the art. His basic Impressionist style has been enriched by the new discoveries of modern times, the influence of Van Gogh, Cezanne, and contact with Fauvism, which attracted Tarkhoff at the *Salon d'Automne* in 1905. From 1906 onwards, new city views were produced, different from the ones produced before. Deliberately using wild and contrasting color combinations in the spirit of Fauvism, the master now connected dissimilar tonal color palettes, reminding viewers of Cezanne's style. Additionally to Fauvism, the paintings featured a vivid colorful spirit found in Primitivism, while not contradicting Fauvism. This movement added more expressiveness to his works, leading to

⁸⁸ Juliet W. Bareau, *Manet, Monet, and the Gare Saint-Lazare*, National Gallery of Art: 1998, p. 118.

⁸⁹ "Победал в 8 часов вечера в трактирчике у Gare Montparnasse, в 10 часов — домой." ("Had dinner last night at 8pm at the tavern by the Gare Montparnasse.") Alexander Benois, *Diaries of the year 1906*, in Manuscript Department, State Russian Museum, Collection 137, Archive 64.

comparisons with Van Gogh. It also gained Tarkhoff popularity not only in the great Parisian Salons, but also at the exhibitions in Saint Petersburg and Frankfurt.⁹⁰

Gaston Diehl wrote that by 1910, Tarkhoff's art obtained features, which could not be investigated until now due to the problem of dating of several works of the artist.⁹¹ This is a series of images of the Montparnasse train station, where the features of primitivism could be clearly traced. The works in this series focus on the station Maine-Montparnasse at different times of day. As in Monet's series, in both of Tarkhoff's paintings, one may see steam clouds spreading in the air and the skies, although not as blurry, but having a more defined shape. The artist moves from fractional, nervous impressionistic strokes to more wide and freeing ones. The choice of colors is also different, not Monet's pale blue-grey palette, but bright, strong colors, especially in the paintings *Street Maine and Montparnasse Station*, and *Gare Montparnasse Under the Big Sun*, both from 1905. *Gare Montparnasse Under the Big Sun*, *Maine-Montparnasse Station at Night*, and *Street Maine and Montparnasse Station* (circa 1910) are very alike in their compositional solution. Interestingly, in these depictions, there is not a trace of human presence at supposedly such a fussy and vivid place. The stillness of the paintings leads to their parallel with Giorgio de Chirico's *Gare Montparnasse (The Melancholy of Departure)* painted about a decade later, but in its warm and bright color palette close to *Gare Montparnasse Under the Big Sun*. As Steve Plumb points out, de Chirico's metaphysical painting of a place "that ought to be filled with people, but there is no human involvement," was quite characteristic for that period when artists often abandoned "trappings of normal urban life":

the only clue that it is a railway station is the steam train far in the background. It is this silence and large spaces that makes the painting notable.⁹²

This description of de Chirico strikingly corresponds to the understanding of Tarkhoff's masterpiece, although Tarkhoff's work is determined by more vehement brush strokes and vivid

⁹⁰ Elena Pikhletskaya, "Formation of New Tendencies in Tarkhoff's Art" in *Philology and Art History*, Volume 40, №4, Chelyabinsk State University: 2010, pp. 178-180.

⁹¹ Gaston Diehl, *Nicolas Tarkhoff*, Geneva: 1982, pp.

⁹² Steve Plumb, *Neue Sachlichkeit 1918-33: Unity and Diversity of an Art Movement*, Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2006, pp. 64-65.

colors. Nevertheless, it still leads to the courageous thought that while the artist was experimenting with Fauvism and Primitivism, a part of him related to more shocking art of avant-garde.

However, those thoughts and early hints towards the avant garde did not last for a very long time. Having bought in 1911 property in Orsay, the country-like suburb of Paris, Tarkhoff with his family moved there. From that year on, the artist switched from the subject of Paris and the vibrance of the city life to depicting his family, the countryside and animals, and still-lives, which he continued to paint until his death in 1930. In the analysis of Tarkhoff's painting from 1900-1930 (since the ones the artist produced at home, were lost, the ones from that period are the only available), one may clearly trace the originality of the main stylistic features and his overall manner, which also clearly reveals the existence of several important subjects, as well as sources of influence, and shows patterns of their perception by the artist. However, his openness to a variety of destinations in the art that was largely represented in the peculiarity of his paintings of the city, with a blend of experiences of the Impressionists, the Post-Impressionists and the Fauves. At the same time, it is worth commending that the master did not merely focus on the most popular subjects of life in France and its enjoyable aspects, but turned to other topics as well.

He enthusiastically painted Paris, being its chronicler and biographer, telling the stories in paintings. Nicolas Tarkhoff painted the landscapes of Ile-de-France all year round with the same enthusiasm. Lively Parisian street scenes, rural festivals with fairs, carrousels and the moving crowd, more panoramic cityscapes and views of the Seine, and the sunsets over the water are a significant part of Nicolas Tarkhoff's heritage, providing us with invaluable insight of the life in the most fascinating European city. Maximilian Voloshin, Russian poet and art critic, wrote in his letters that Paris at that time was a burning, vibrant, atmospheric city, with history awaiting at every corner, alive and calling, captivating and attractive, and at the same

time destructive.⁹³ Tarkhoff, certainly, had the power and talent to understand the nature of the city he was living in, and to share it through his masterpieces. Tarkhoff was charmed by the boulevards, full of surprises, vivid, head spinning and crowded with carriages and people even on working days. His canvases showed streets as one grand carousel on a holiday square, and the square as the very city of Paris, full of sounds, colors, speed of red and purple coaches, green and yellow omnibuses, passers-by running in the splashes of paint.⁹⁴

The choices of themes for Tarkhoff's paintings could be deemed unusual for a person born and residing in Paris, but are absolutely justified for a person who had come from Russia. His works are the result of his own quest, the synthesis of influences of French schools, national identity and personal attitude. He was not the major artist in determining the development of Russian art of the early twentieth century, but clearly had contributed to the approval of new trends in the traditional Russian school of painting, as well as to recognition of the prestige of Russian painting in Western Europe, and demonstrated this by his example in his formation as an artist living in Paris, the center of cultural transformation, but still remaining faithful to his national and personal beliefs.

Conclusion

The characteristic feature of most studies on the identification of the image of the city is that the attention is focused on the collective image of the city during the life of the researcher. However, transformations in the image of the city throughout its historical development remain outside the view of the authors, although a retrospective analysis could expand the knowledge of how a city's image is formed. The main purpose of the thesis was to understand the relationship between urban and social development and culture, and see how significant developments in the historical and cultural landscape of the city were reflected and represented by the artists of the

⁹³Maximilian Voloshin's letter to A.S. Petrova from November 13, 1899, Department of Manuscripts of the Tretyakov Gallery, Collection 317.

⁹⁴Marius-Ary Leblond, *Peintres de Races*, Bruxelles: 1909, c. 84. (Marius-Ary Leblond, *National Artists*, Brussels: 1909, p. 84).

time. The study examined the main stages of the transformation of Paris at the of the nineteenth – beginning of the twentieth century and analyzed the visual representations of the city produced by two Russian immigrant artists, Nicolas Tarkhoff and Konstantin Korovin.

One of the major reasons why a city depiction became a separate artistic genre is related to the changes of the meaning of the image of the city. It is no longer perceived solely as an architectural environment or a panorama of industrial monuments, but also the scene where the private life of a man takes place. Genre scenes depicting the urban strollers or shopkeepers, open air coffee turned the city into the place where the vivid city life occurs, and this could not be ignored by the observing artists. For instance, both Korovin and Tarkhoff offered their own depictions of genre scenes by portraying the Parisian café life and its clientele. Korovin left behind many more extensive accounts of the café, allowing the viewers to judge about its purpose and its public, while there is only one painting by Tarkhoff dedicated to the subject. However, while Korovin completely ignored life outside the city center, Tarkhoff is quite famous for his symbolic scenes of agricultural workers inspired by the artist's later years spent in the Parisian suburb of Orsay, which give a glimpse into the country side lifestyle as well.

One of other important objectives of depicting the urban was to give a new interpretation of historical architectural monuments. Again, both Russian artists created images the famous sights, such as *Arc de Triomphe*, *Saint-Denis Gates*, or *La Bastille*. Along with the industrial objects, attributes of the modern city, the historical sites became the dominant element of the cityscape. It should be also noted that with the development of the Impressionist style there was a shift in thematic priorities of an image. While earlier artists were inclined to seek the most convenient point for panoramic views, the later masters preferred placing the focus on fragments and details, which fundamentally changed the language of art. An example of that could be depictions of Tarkhoff's *Chimeras of Notre-Dame*, where the artist chose to depict the elements of the famous cathedral.

Later on, with the growing industrialization, the artists' interest turned to other urban objects and symbols, such as the railways, railway stations, engineering designs, the process of construction, and renovation projects. In particular, the emergence of such themes could be seen in Tarkhoff's series of paintings of *Gare Montparnasse*, although Korovin only produced one image with the same motif, *Gare Saint-Lazare*, a very hazy picture in light tones, most definitely inspired by Claude Monet's in terms of the sketchy technique and choice of colors. This, again, points to the fact that the two Russian artists were focusing on different subjects in the art, finding some topics more appealing, while leaving other themes practically untouched.

Clearly, for Konstantin Korovin the central figures of the paintings were the upper class representatives, the clients of *Cafe de la Paix* and visitors of *Grand Opera*, or inhabitants of the Burgundy Hotel. In depicting the lifestyle of such characters, he created elegant and sophisticated images, while Tarkhoff, focusing on the ordinary people, whose faces and outfits are hard to distinguish, made them the main protagonists, as if trying to say that only the upper class Parisians deserve to be portrayed. Both Korovin and Tarkhoff had something to say about the cultural life, but while Korovin, again, spoke of the entertainment of the aristocracy, Tarkhoff's optimistic paintings of traditional celebrations and fairs tell the viewers about the culture of masses.

Oh, the beauty and joy of life... Delivering this joy is the essence of the painting, my piece of canvas, my own self,⁹⁵

This is how Konstantin Korovin described the purpose of his art. Over the following years Korovin was adding more pictures to the views of Paris; these were produced after the Russian Revolution of 1917 and continued the subject of the series, in many ways resembling cityscapes of the French Impressionist artists. Something that made him different from the French artists, fascinated by the effects of the sunlight, was his interest to the image of Paris at night. Korovin was unique in depicting the city when the sun went down, however, he did not give up on light effects - only in his paintings those lights were artificial. Looking at Korovin's

⁹⁵Korovin's *Notebooks* from 1890s in Manuscript Department, State Tretyakov Gallery, Collection 11, #58.

night cityscapes, the spectators are engaged in the mysterious and dynamic atmosphere of the city life with its brightly lit streets, chromatic car lights and their reflections on the wet pavement. The uniqueness of Korovin was that unlike the French painters mostly using lighter palette in depicting nature in the sunlight, he was willing to choose the more complex morning and evening lighting, in order to reveal the character of the city that was changing during the day. Like the Impressionists, he worked in series, but his paintings preserve the freshness and expressiveness of a rapidly done sketch. Compared to Korovin's works, Pissarro's cityscapes depicting the same places in the city seem to be academically designed and completed. In any case, Korovin's *Parisian Lights* series of nocturnal scenes is truly romantic with its colorful kaleidoscope of light and shadows. Artificial lighting of the city streets increases the impression of the atmosphere of entertainment, adding a fantastic touch to reality.

According to Sergei Makovsky, a gallery owner and art critic, Tarkhoff's paintings are not literary; he just paints what he sees - with enthusiastic perseverance, never quite finding the truth expressed by the familiar sight, without fear of repetition: after all, nature is not repeated.⁹⁶ Tarkhoff's canvases reflect the boulevards, embankments, and squares of Paris, with their chaotic motion, and colorful flashing lights of the street life portray the huge, strange, and beautiful city, that all together form a glittering mosaic where one may only guess the barely outlined figures, showing the Impressionist character of the artist, who preserved on the canvas the colorful moments of Parisian life.

Russian artists were captivated with the elegance and sophistication of life in the most attractive European capital. They skillfully captured the impression of multi-colored, bright, and ever-changing life of the city. At dusk or in the morning haze, when the color loses its solidity and sharpness, they applied vibrating strokes, making the objects lose their contours.

⁹⁶Сергей Маковский, *Страницы художественной критики*, СПб., 1913, с. 132-134. (Sergey Makovsky, *Pages on Art Criticism*, St. Petersburg, 1913, pp. 132-134).

However, the greatest achievement of both artists is that along with transmitting the emotional state of the whole city, they were able to portray its materiality, and tangible reality of things.

The meaning of the paintings could be expressed in three points. The artists created a complex image of the city combining the classical tradition and the modern view. Besides, the images analyzed explain to the viewers that the city implies an endless variation of traditional details, and the fascinating nature of the metropolis is not in the novelty of details and forms, but rather in their combinations. One may assume, then that the Russian school of artists in Paris was able to offer its own interpretation of the image of the city as an urban, architectural, social and cultural space.

Hopefully, by studying the Russian artists' depictions of the city of Paris, this research will add a fresh dimension to academic work on the subject, specifically by offering a broader perspective on the analysis of Paris at the turn of the century, and giving a new understanding to descriptions of historical events which have validity for both urban studies and art history. Obviously, those artists were not the only ones trying to save the memory of those days in their works: there were also writers who left behind a great number of books describing the life of different social classes. Later, especially at the turn of the century, with the development of photography, a lot more images were added to the catalogues of the modern urban life, which could become the subject of further research.

List of Illustrations.



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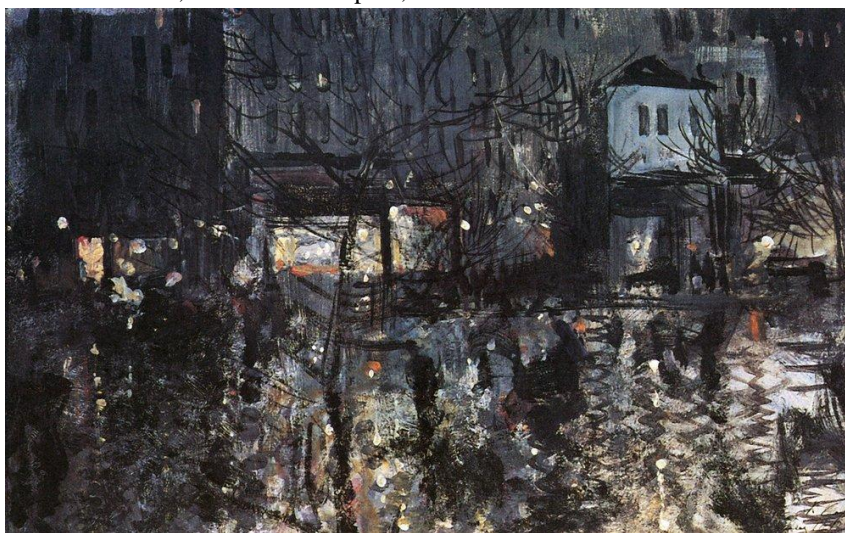
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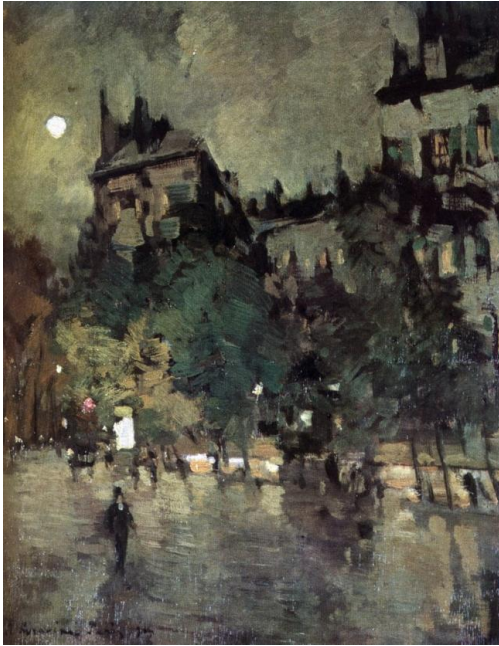
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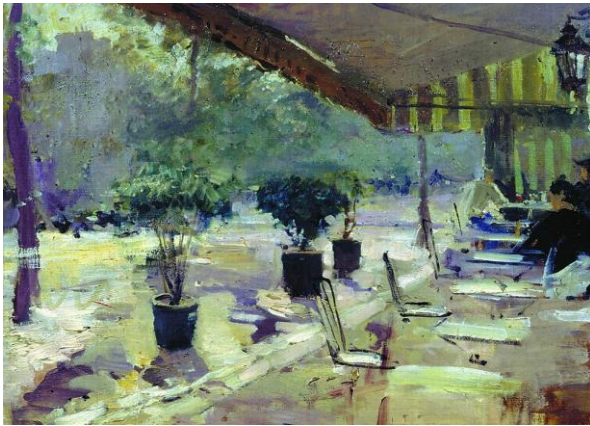
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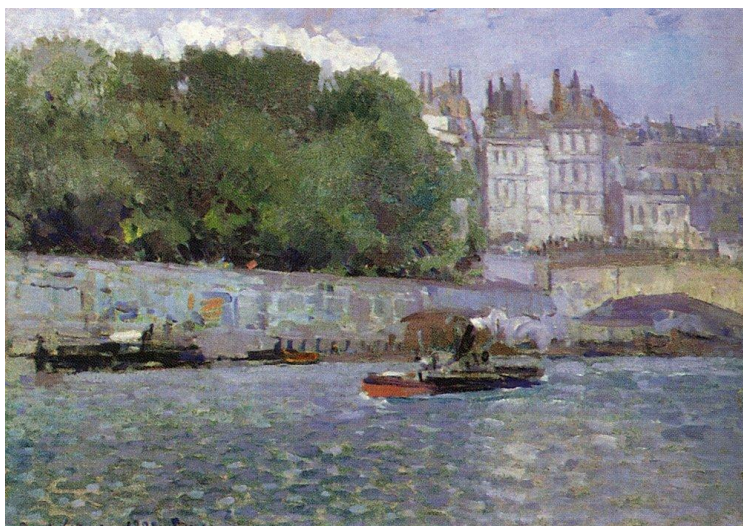
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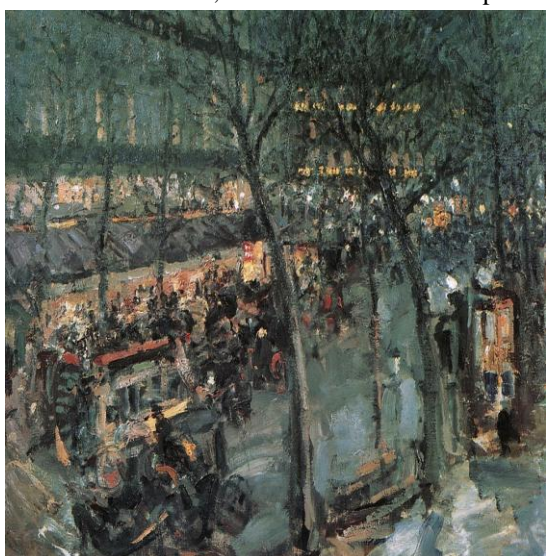
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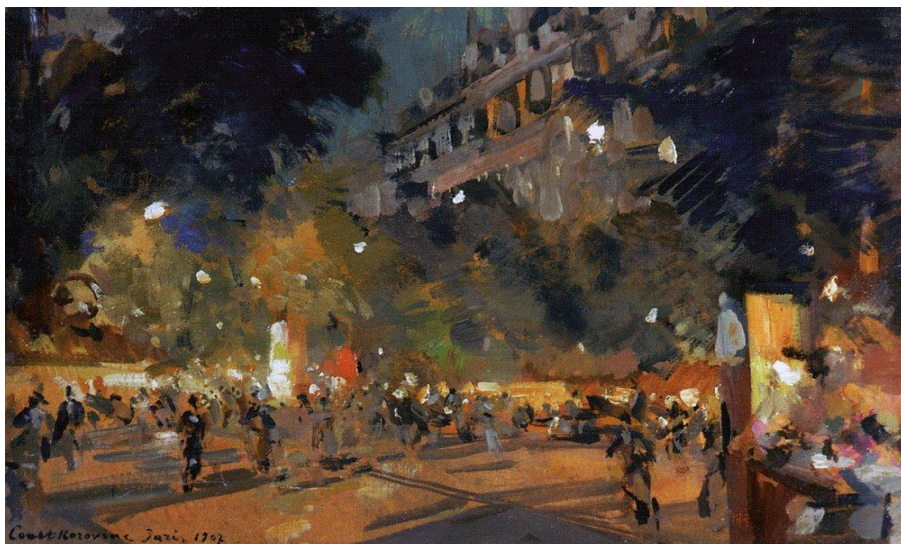
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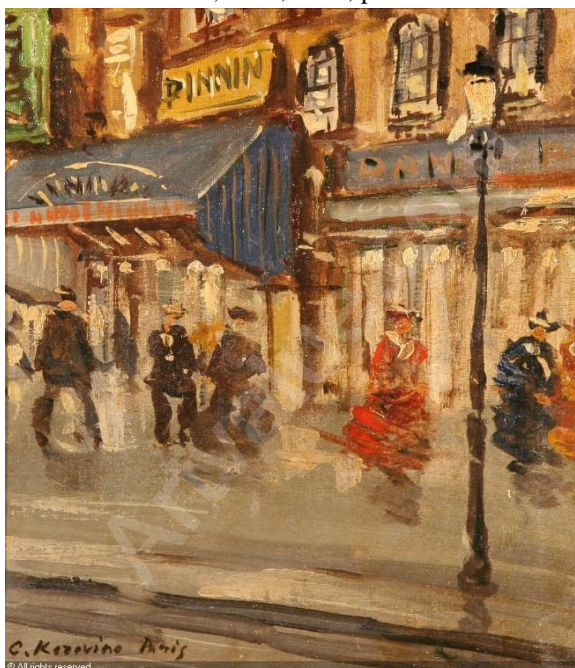
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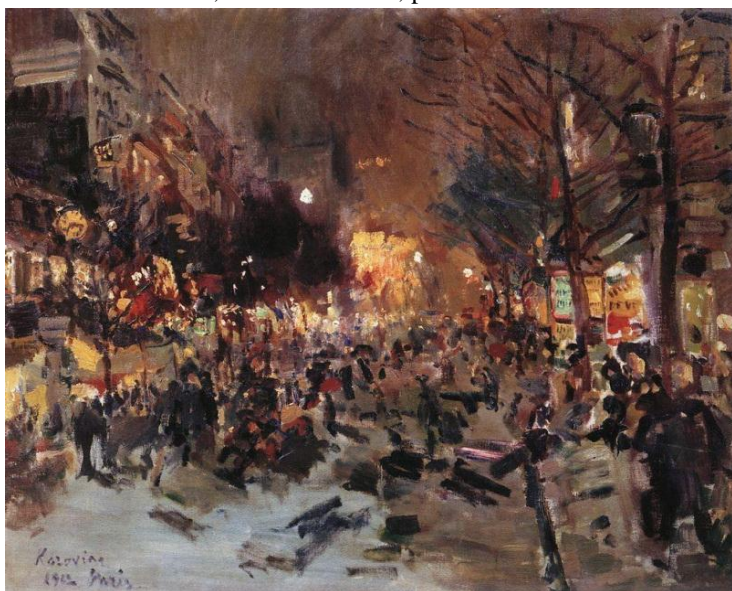
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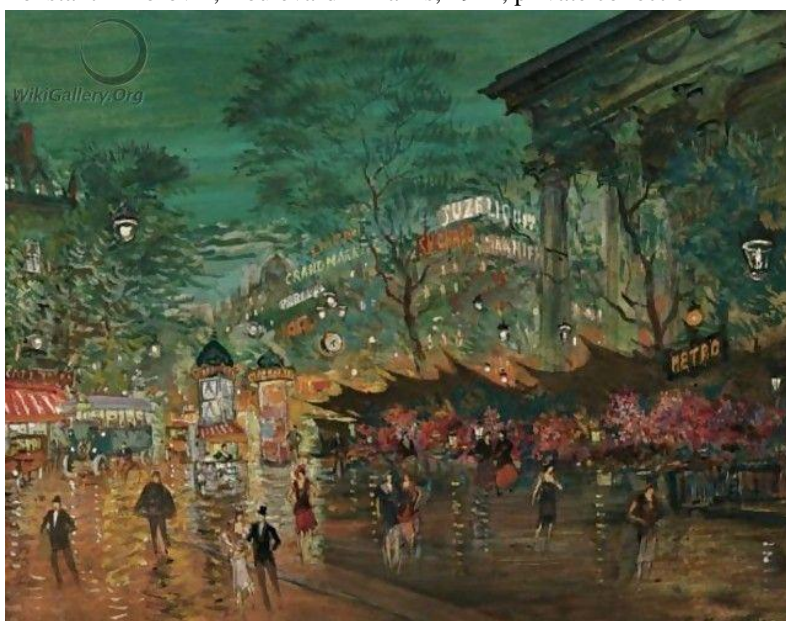
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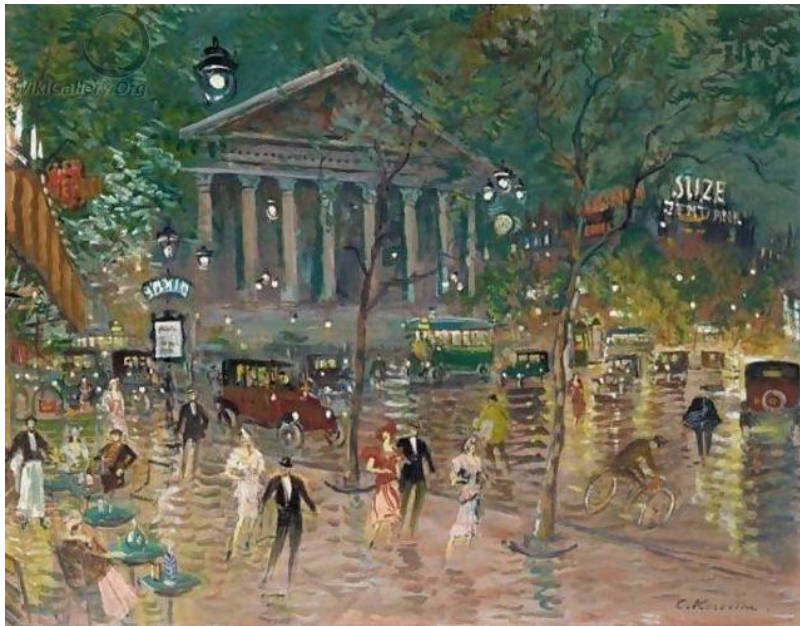
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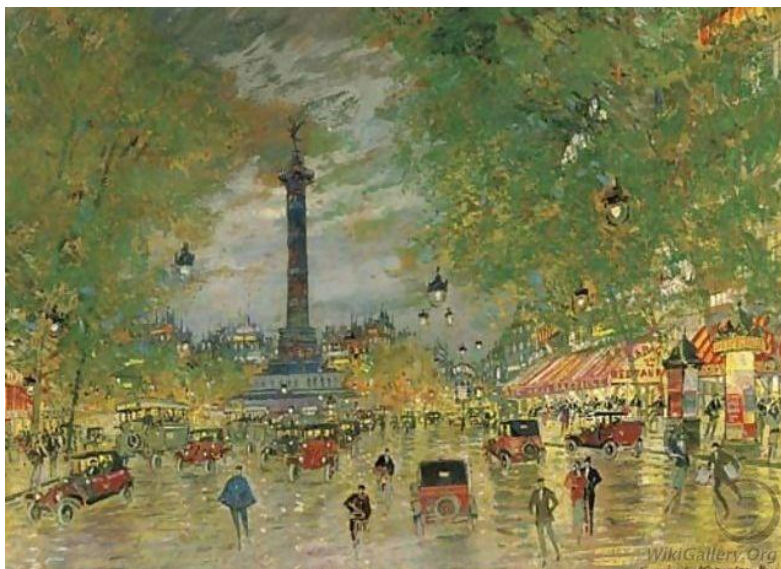
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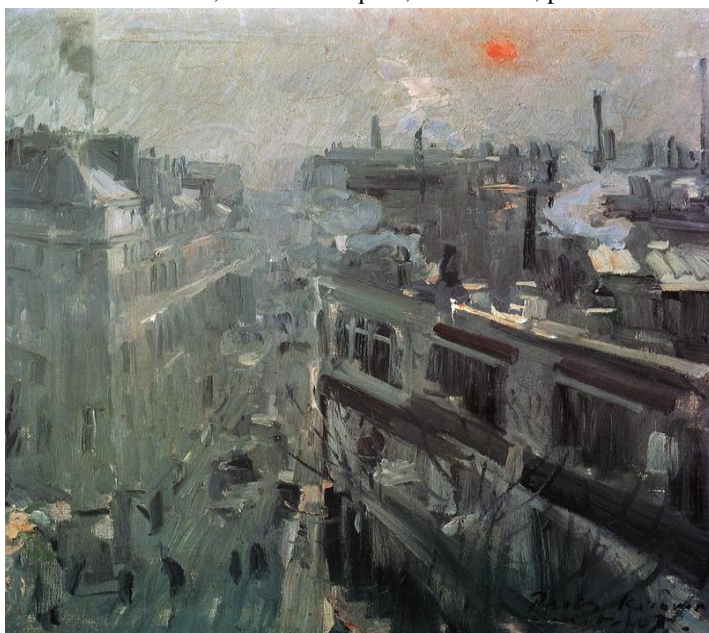
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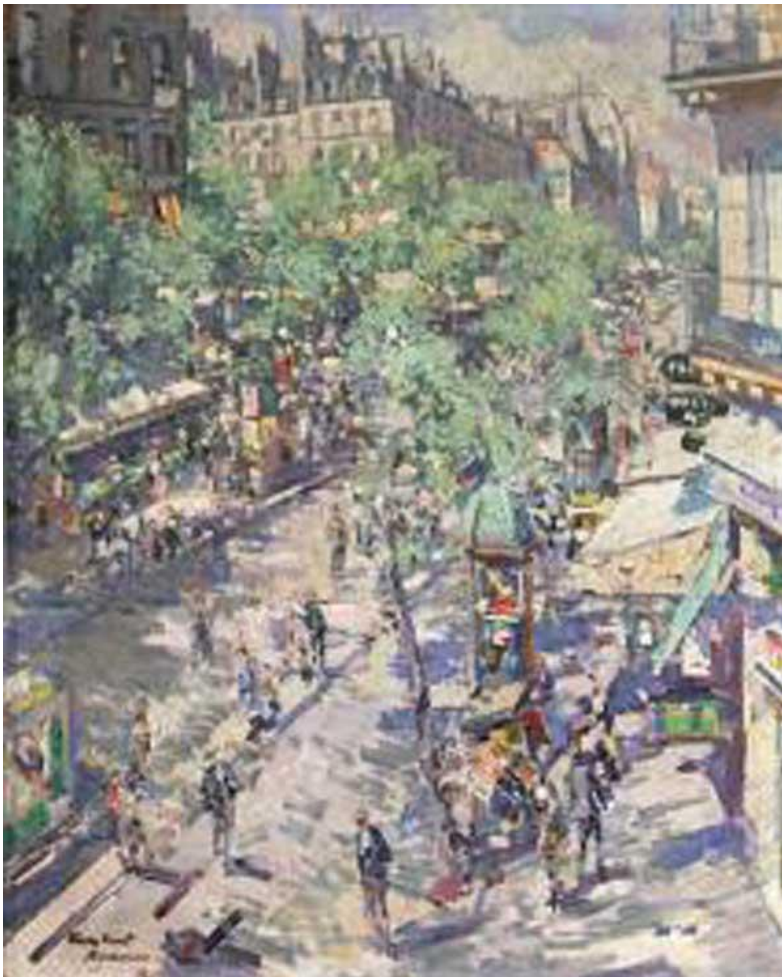
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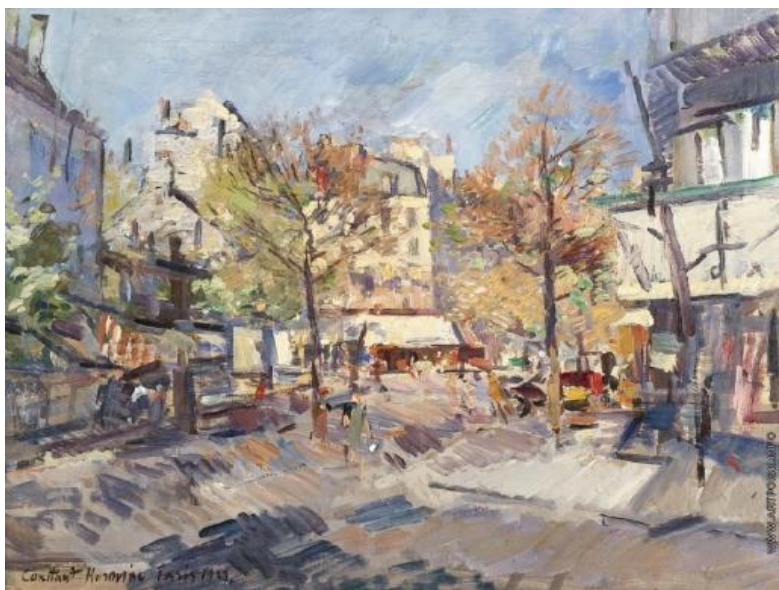
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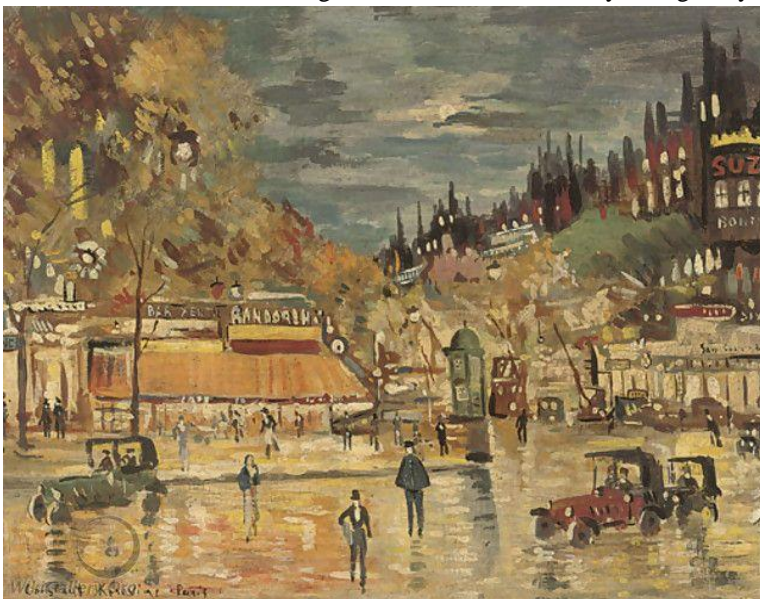
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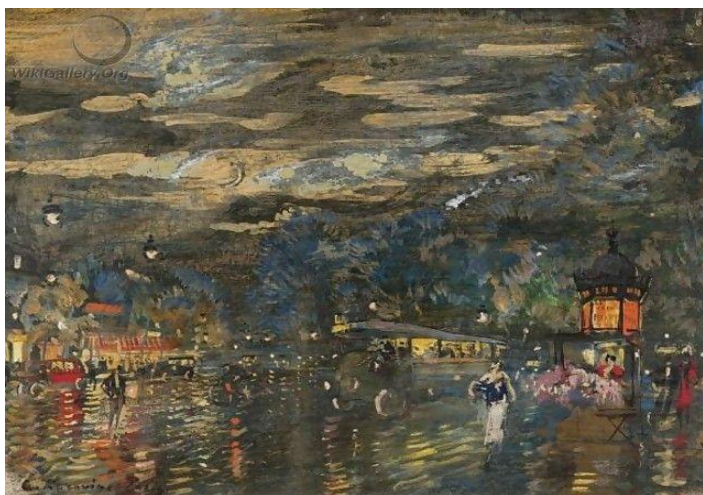
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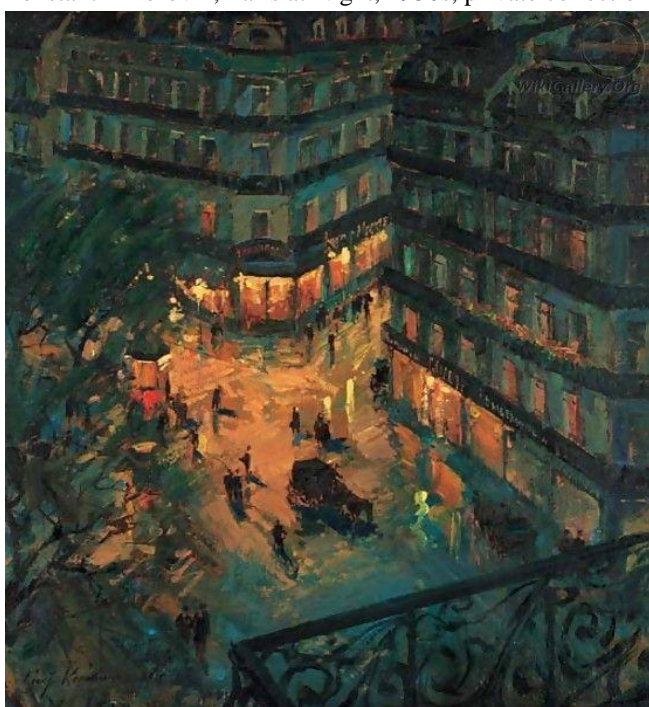
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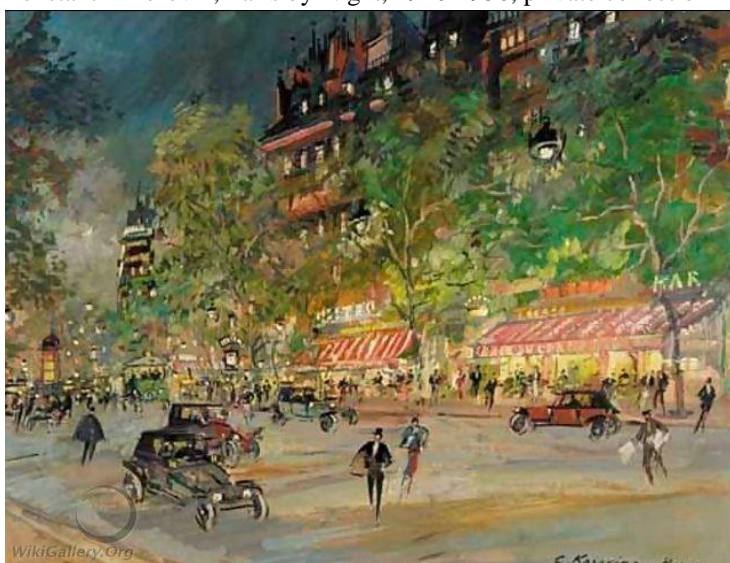
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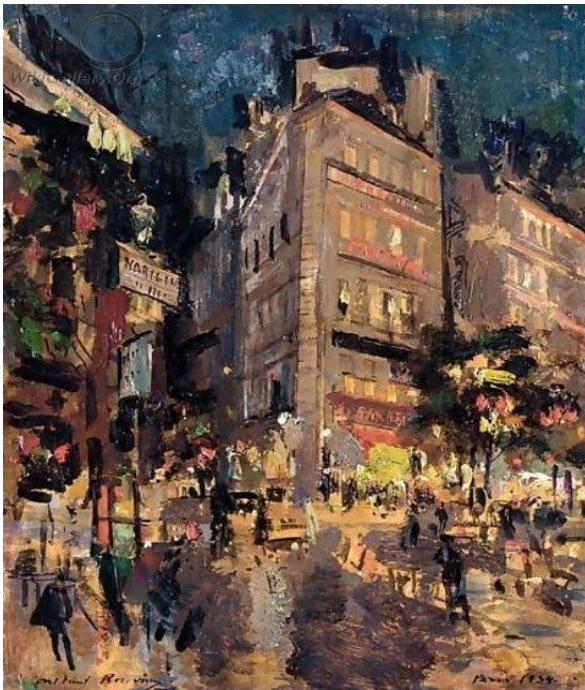
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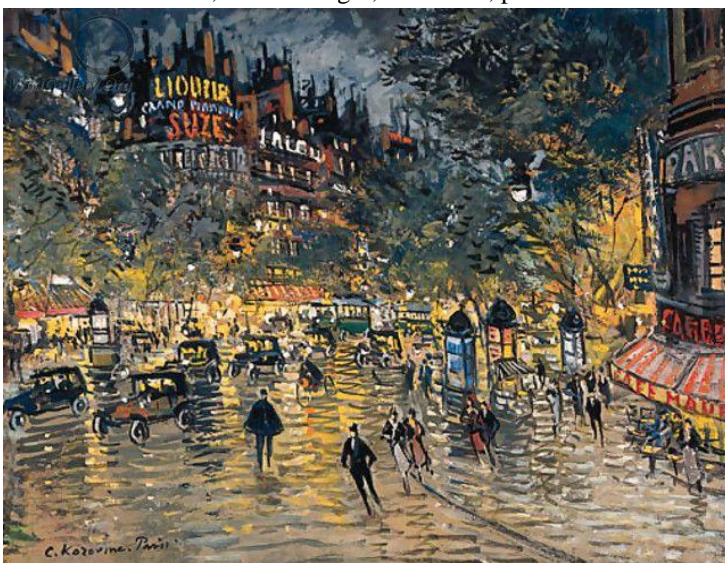
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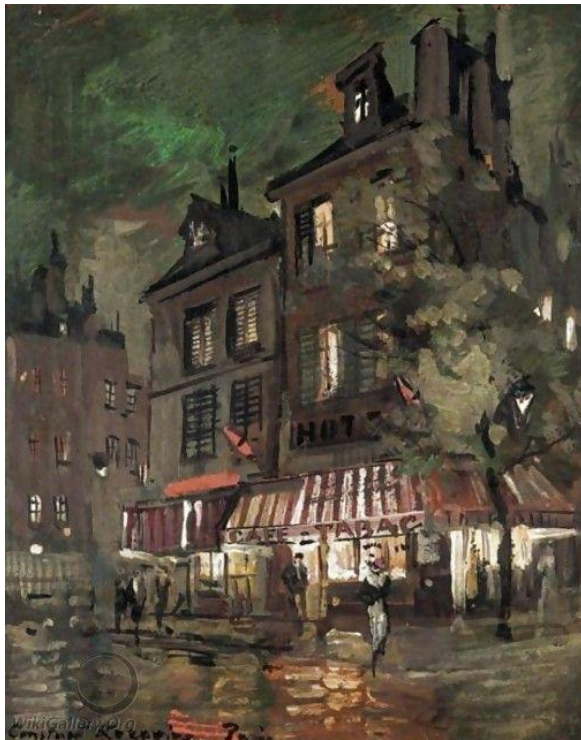
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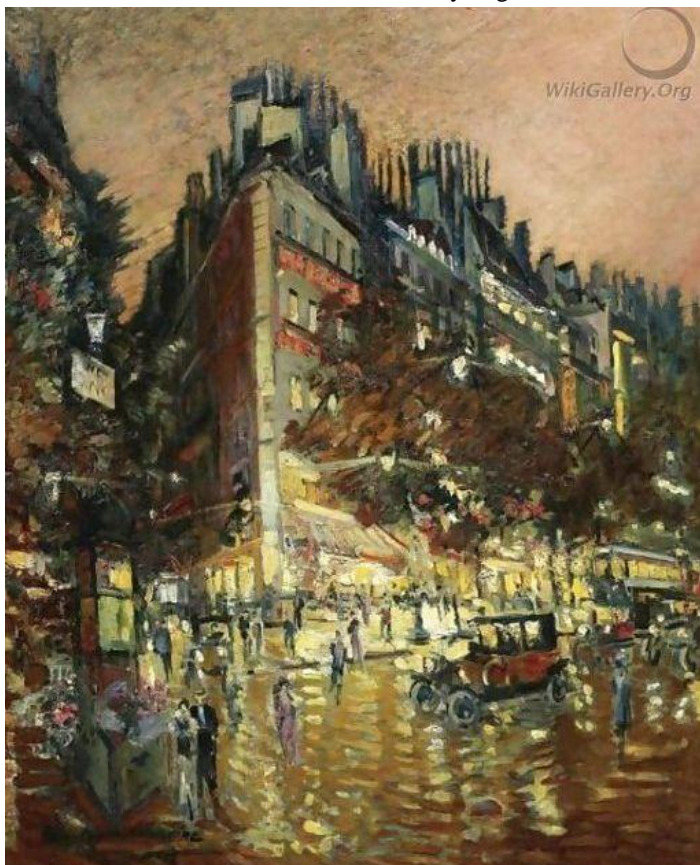
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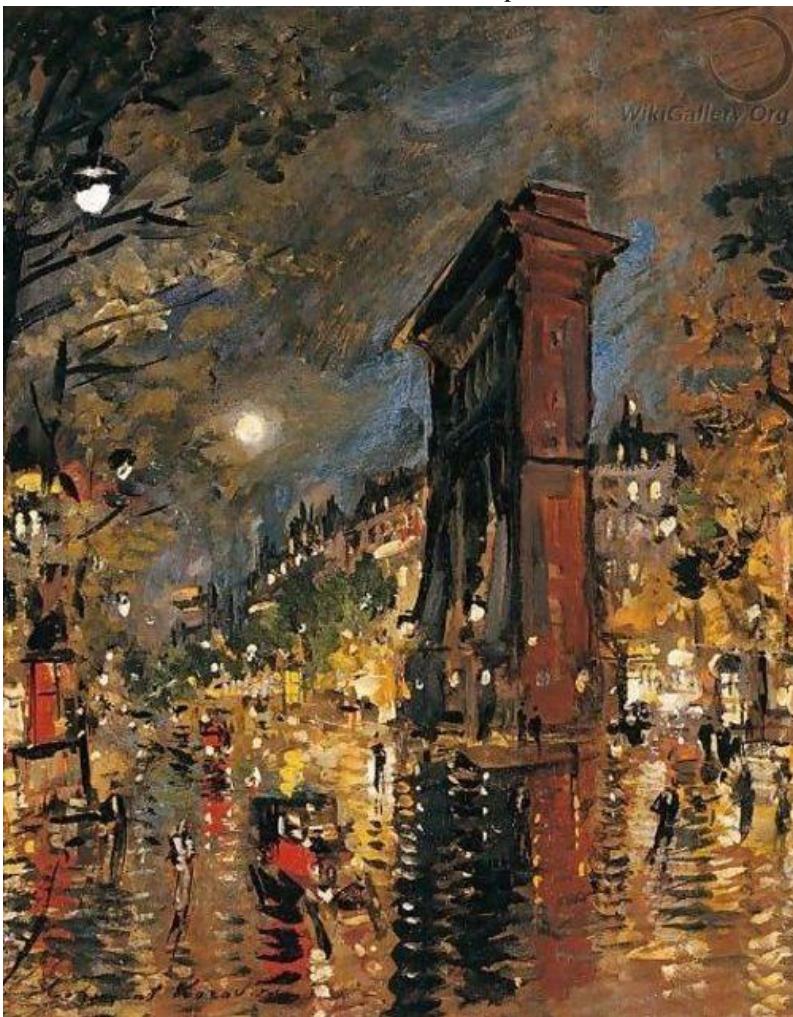
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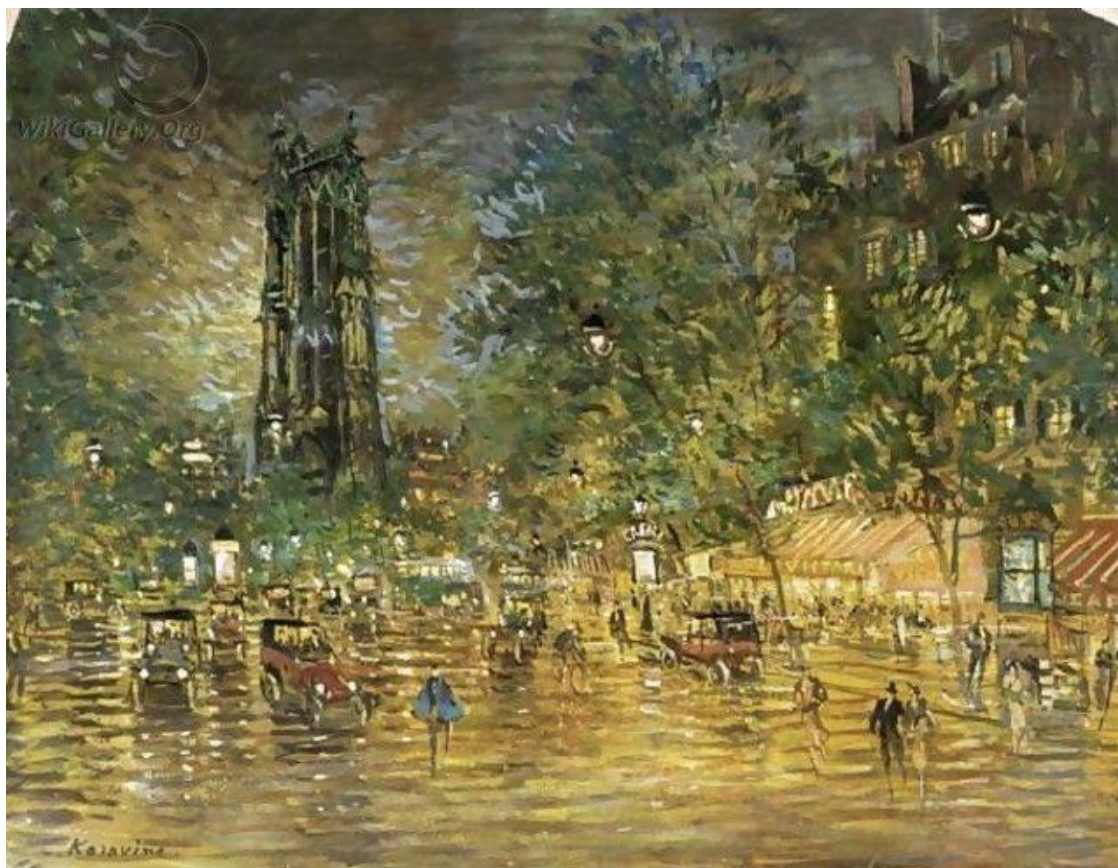
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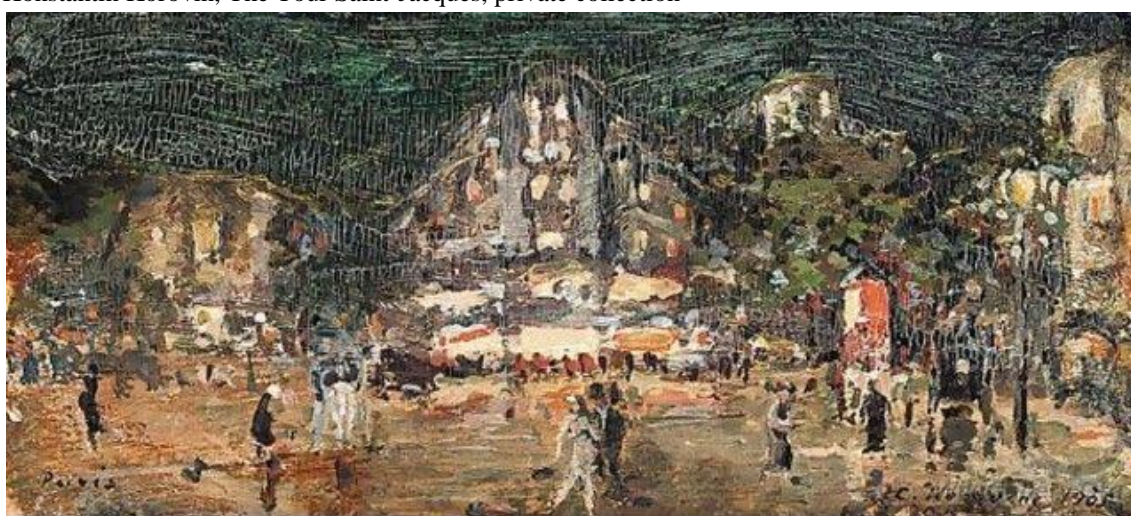
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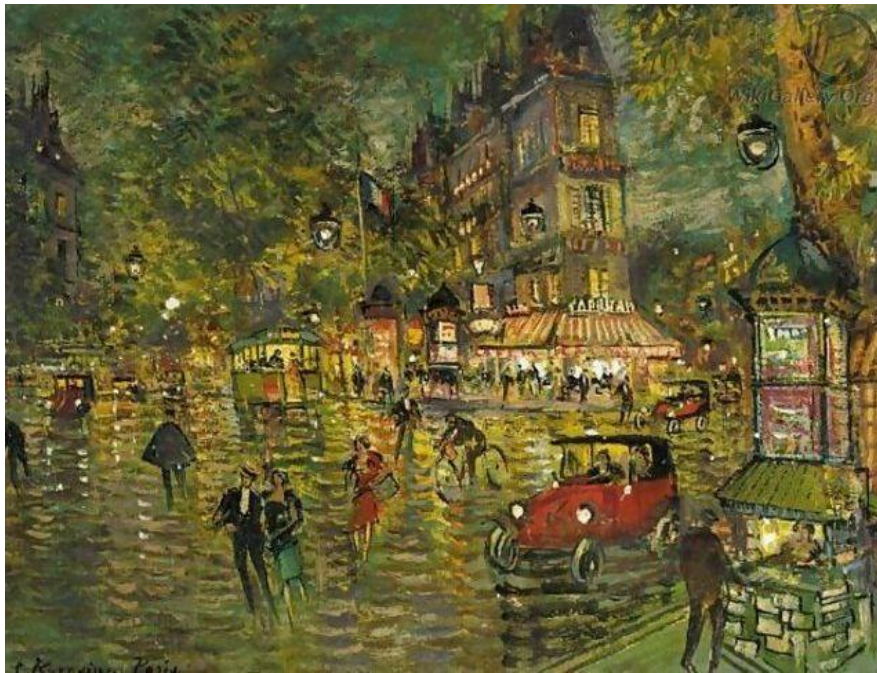
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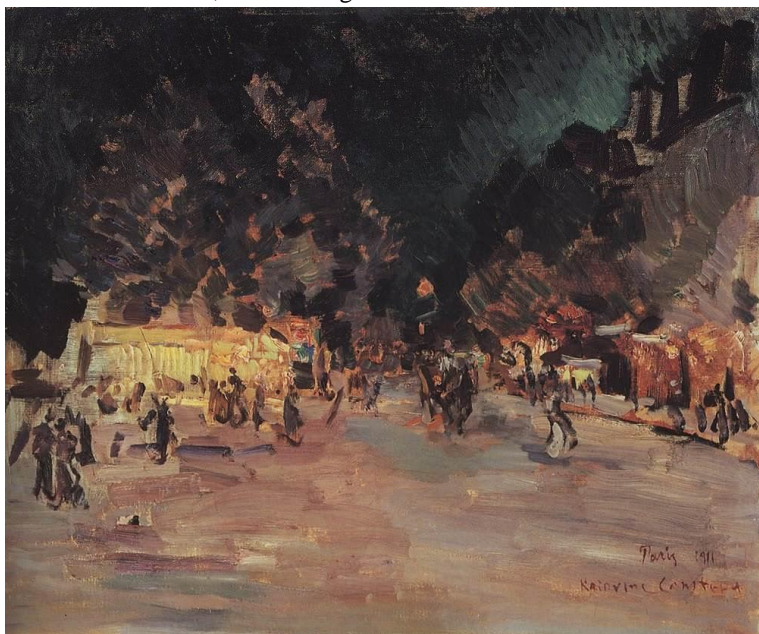
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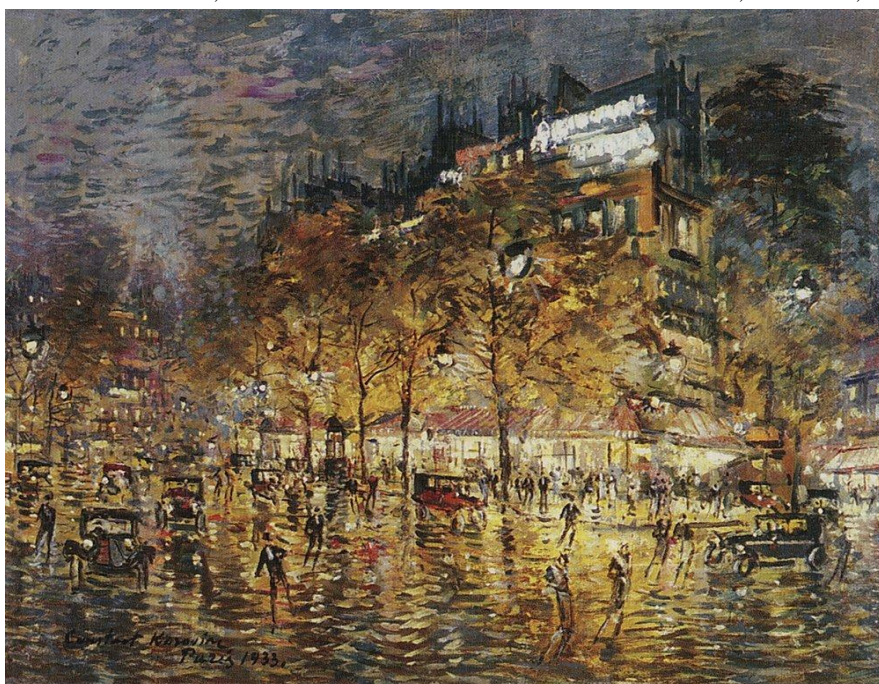
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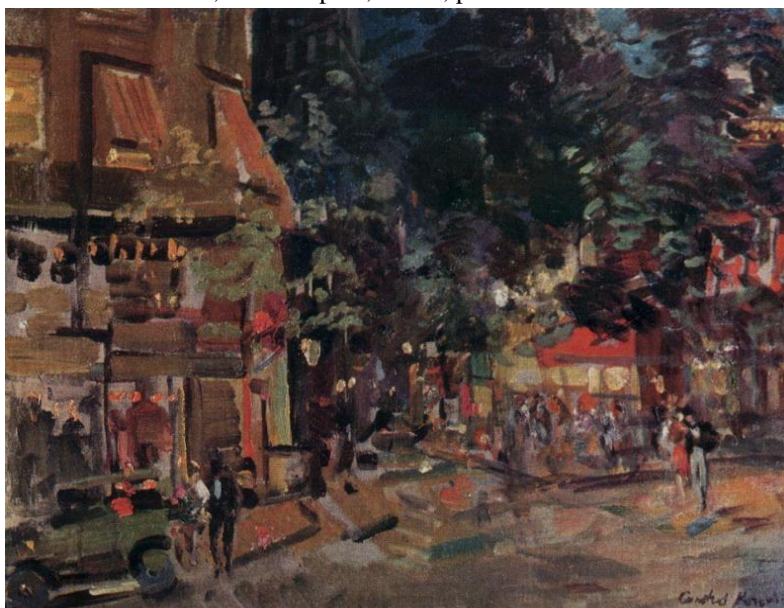
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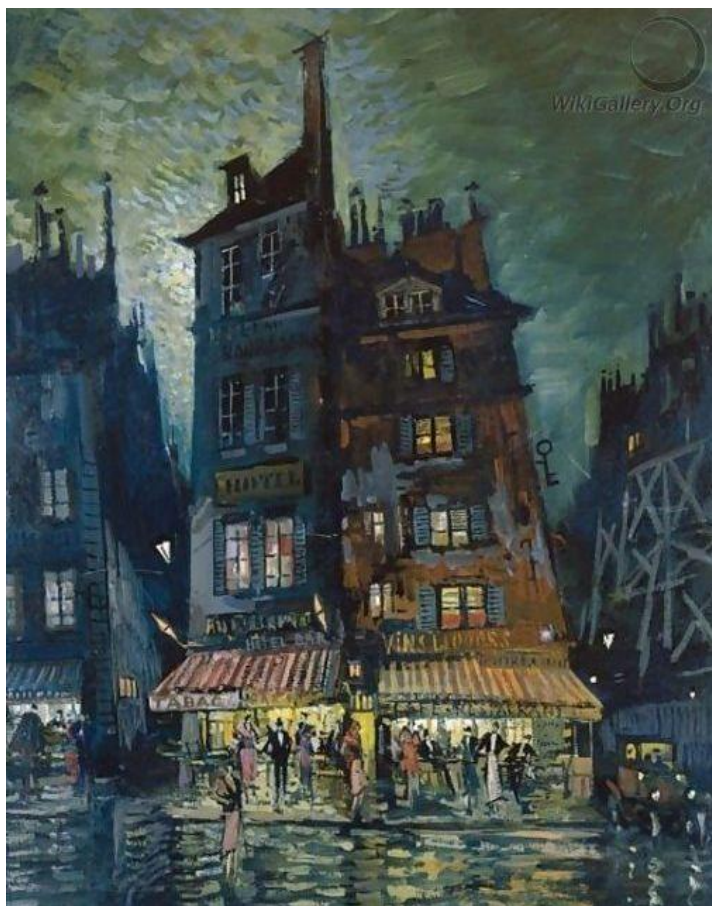
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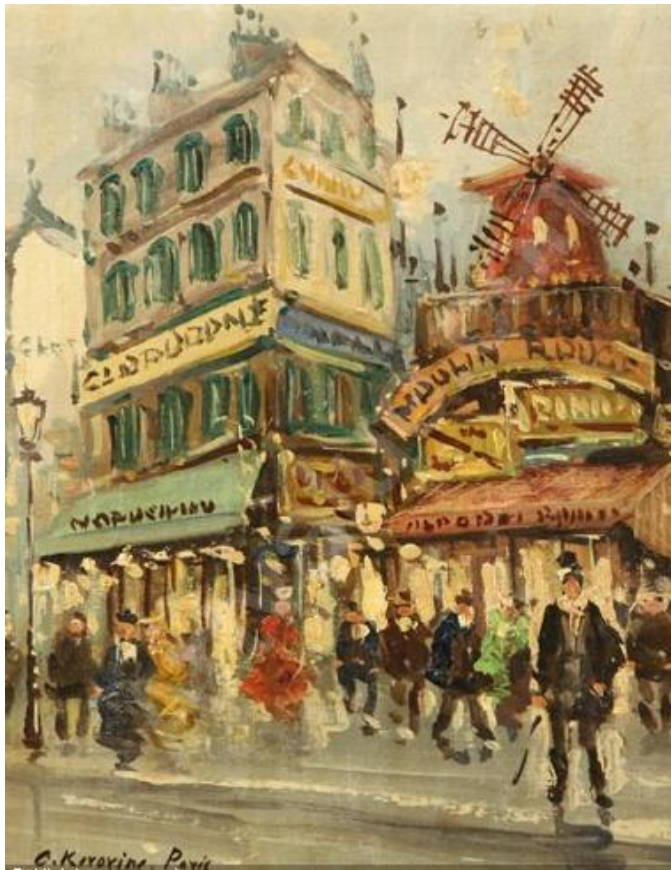
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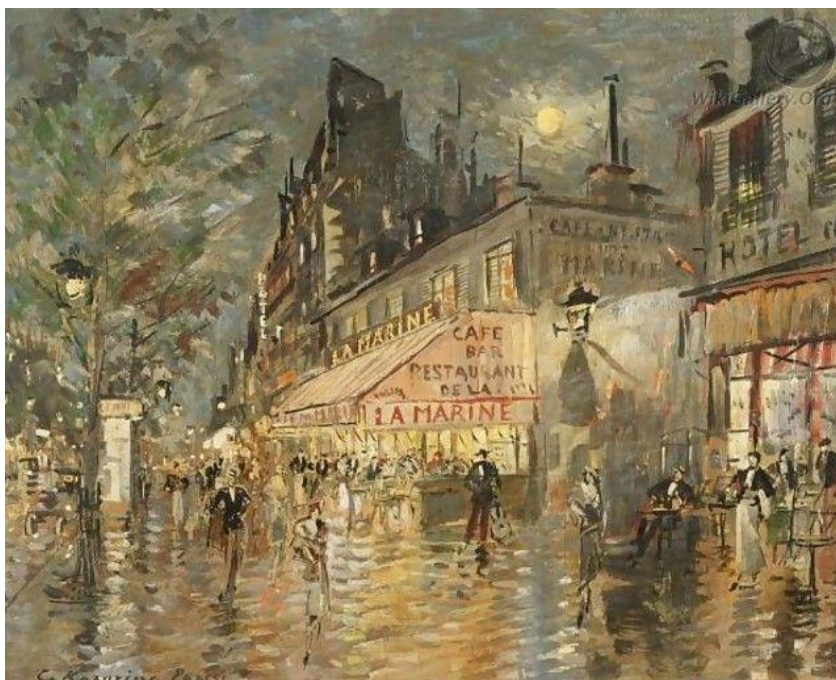
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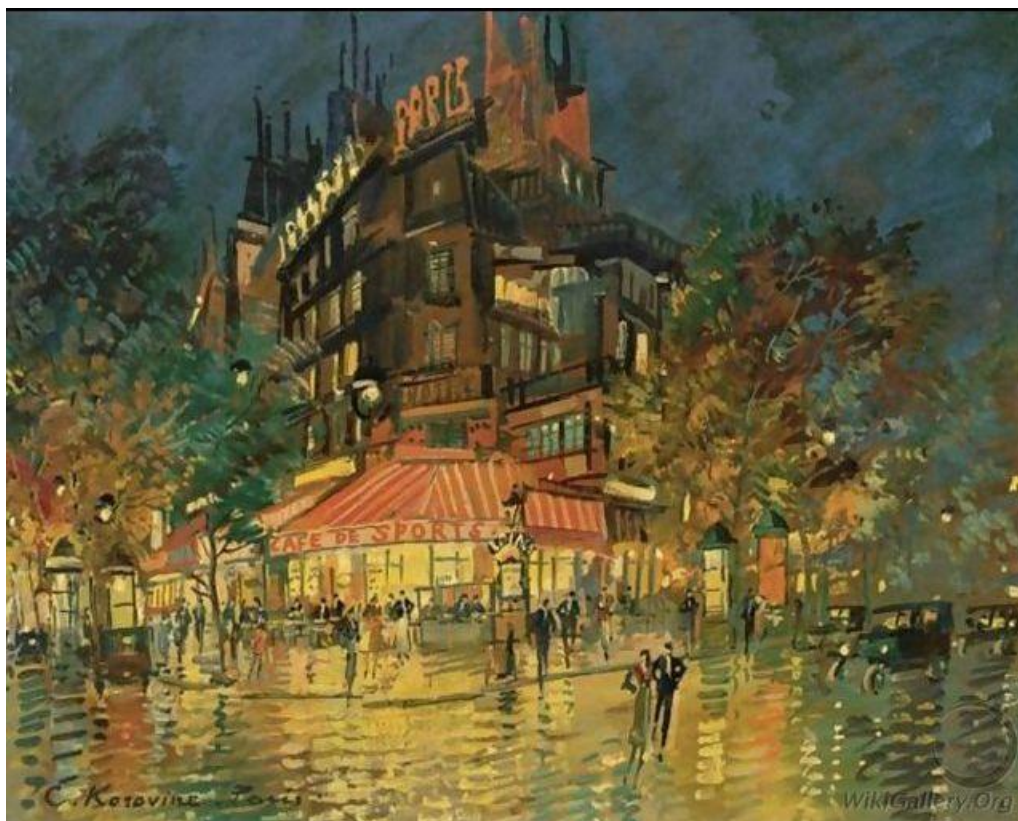
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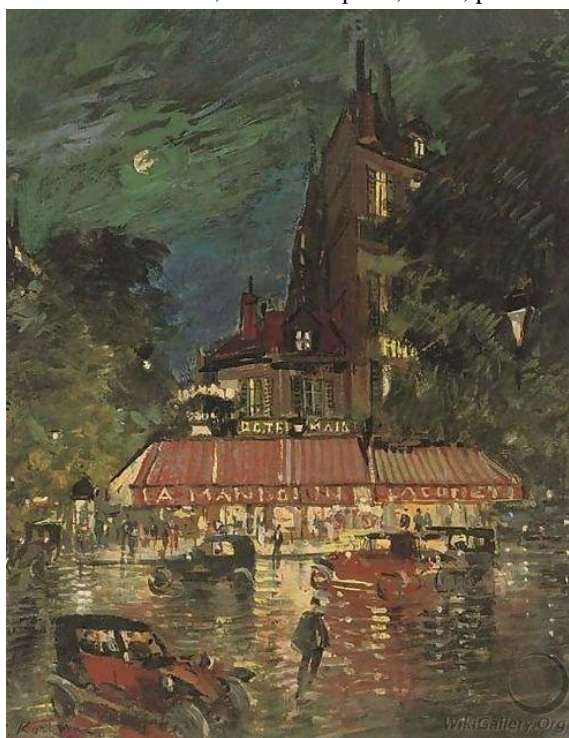
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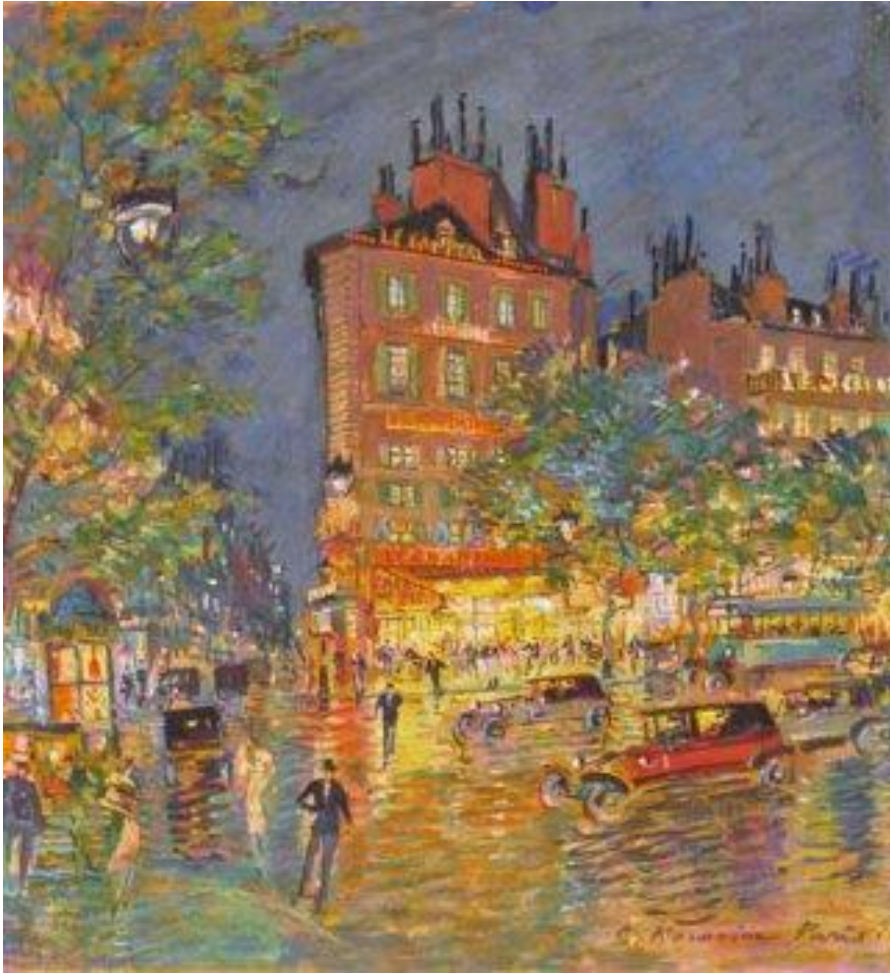
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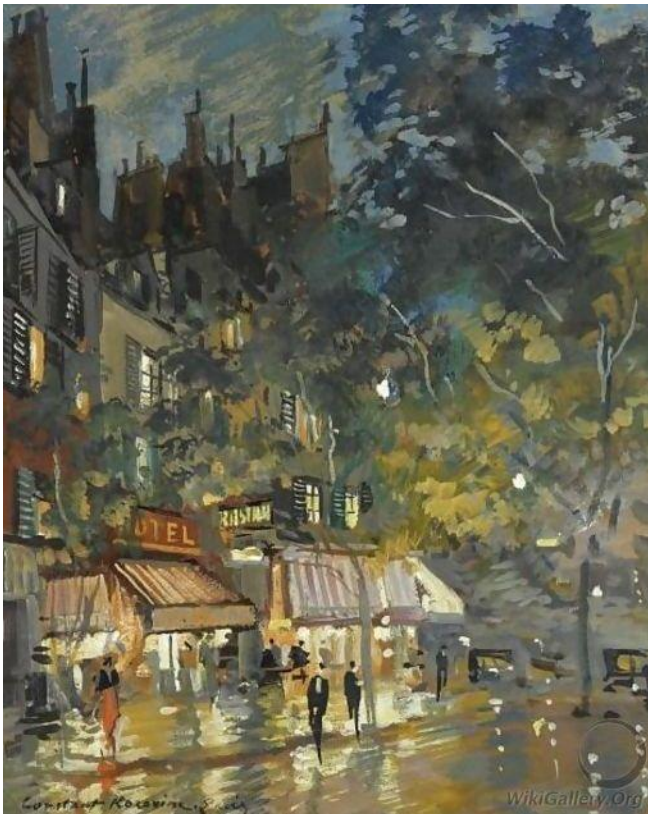
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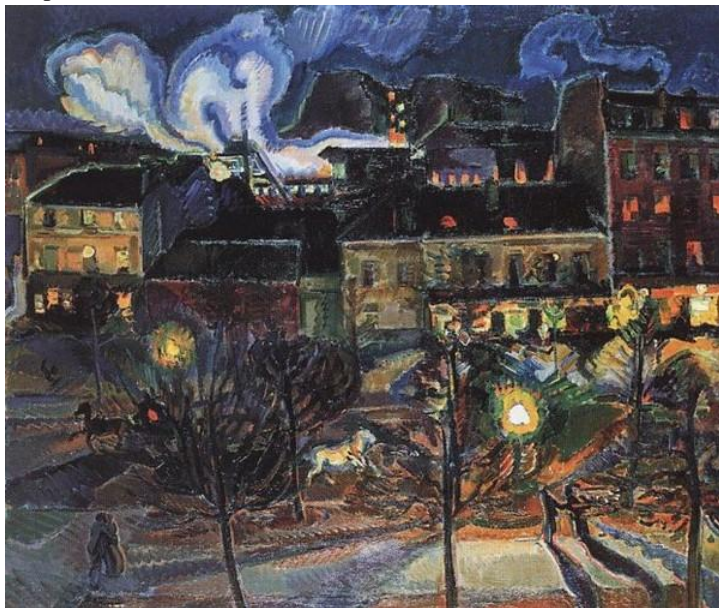


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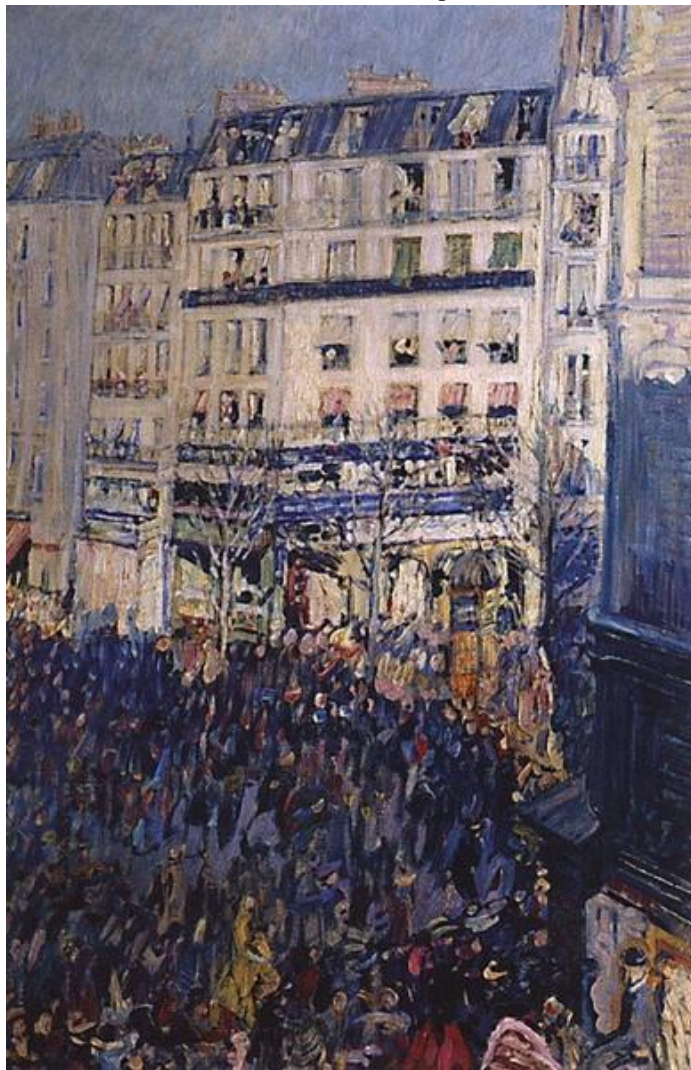


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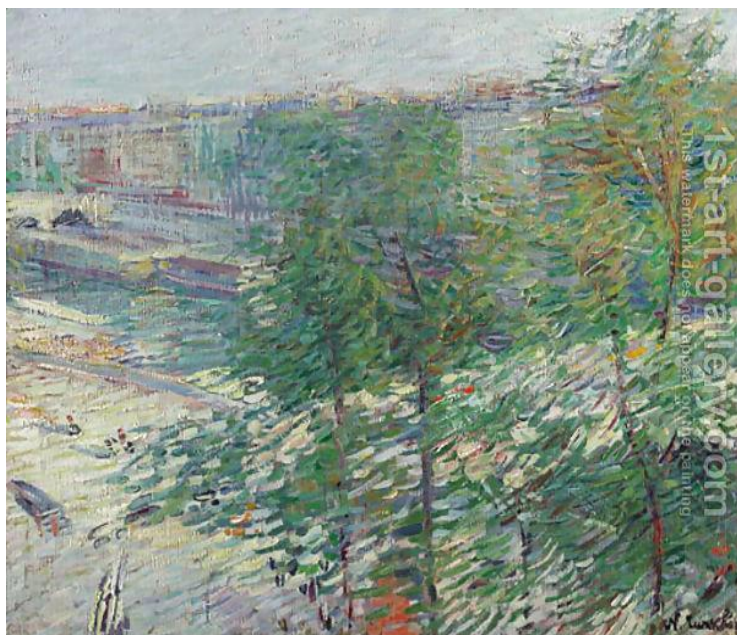
Chapter 2.



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Nicolas Tarkhoff, The Day of Carnival in Paris, 1900, oil on canvas, State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow



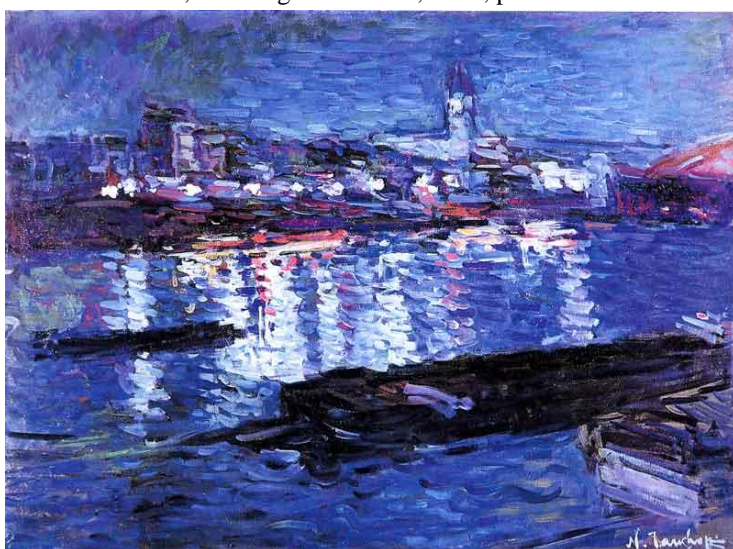
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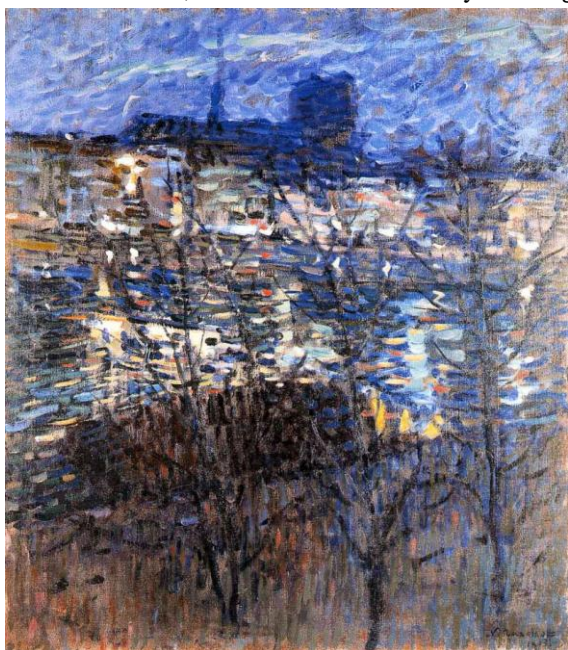
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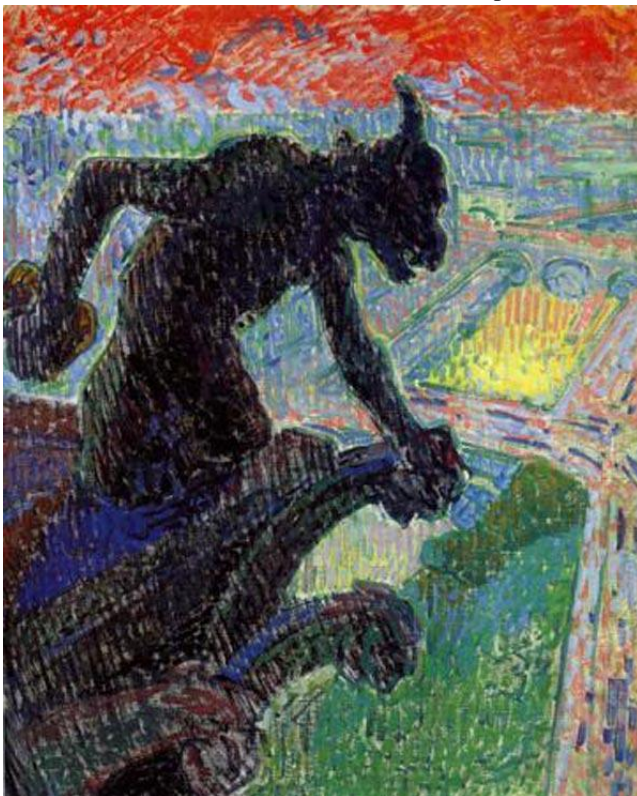
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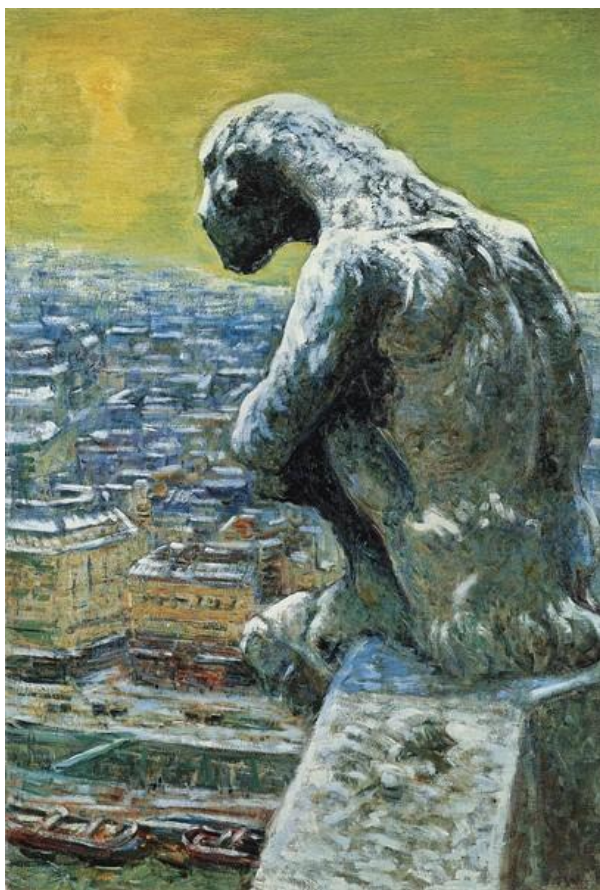
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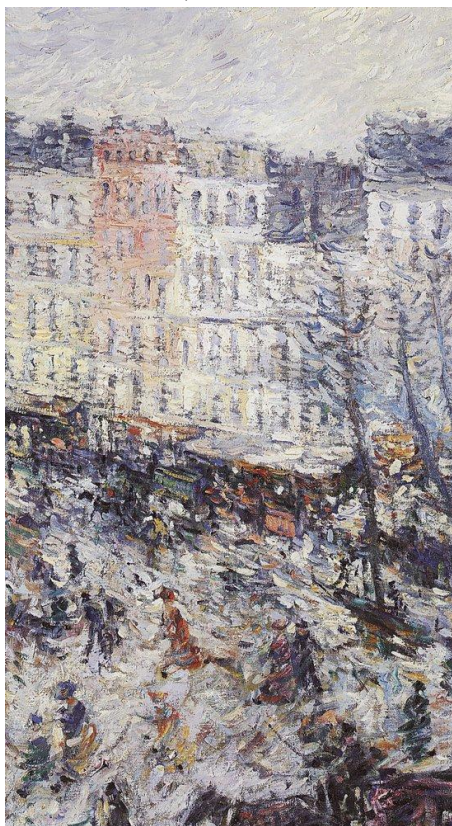
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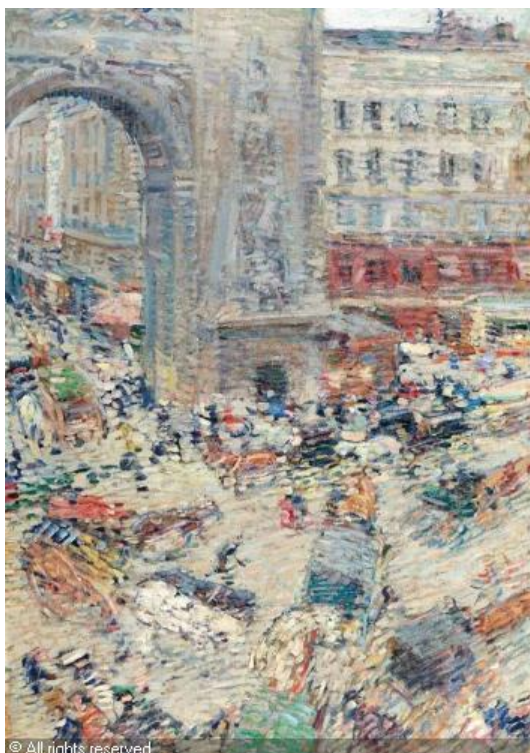
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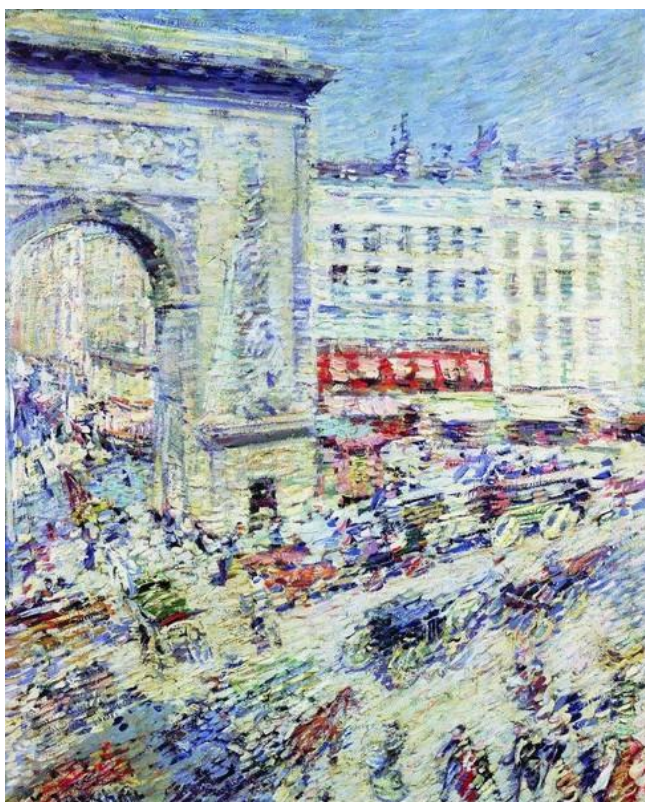
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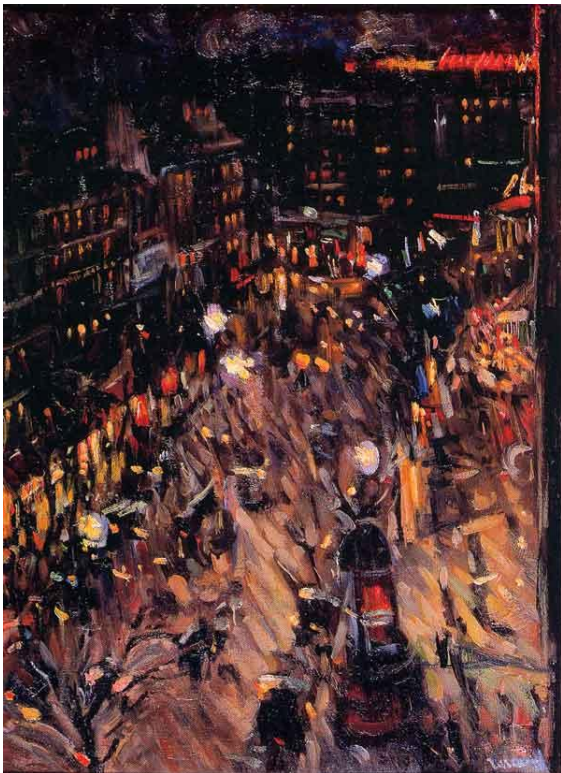
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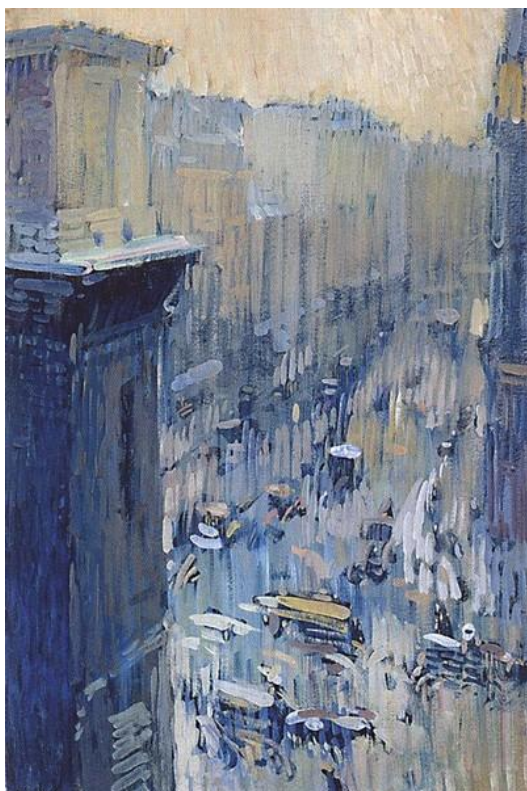
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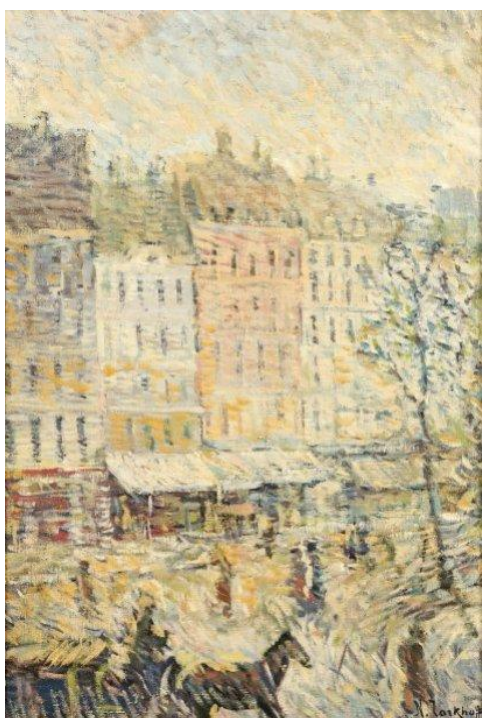
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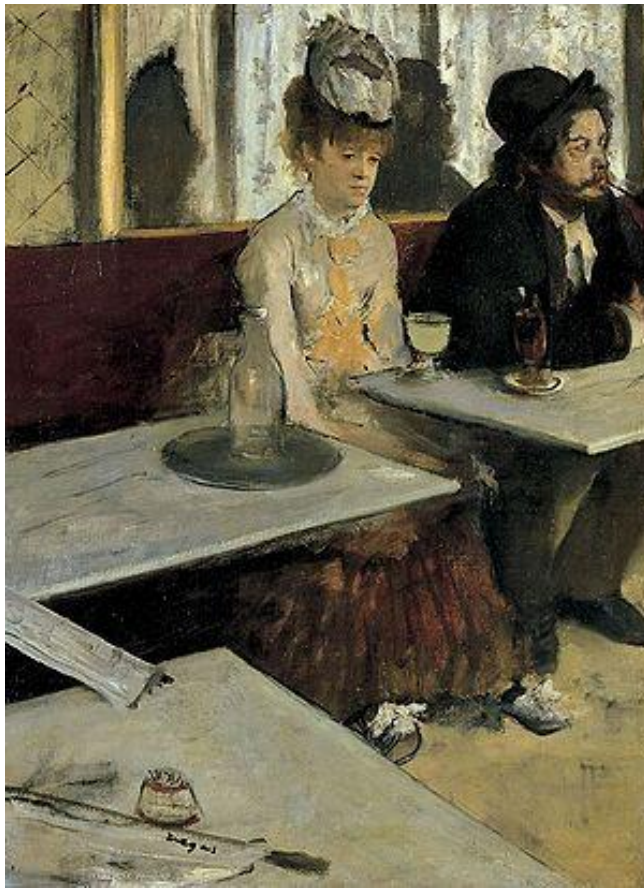
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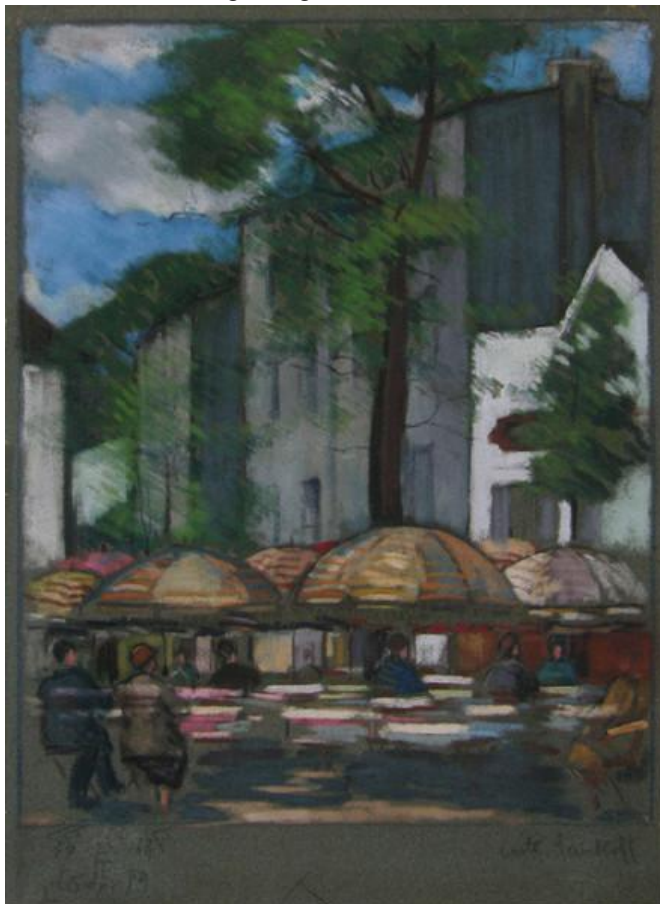
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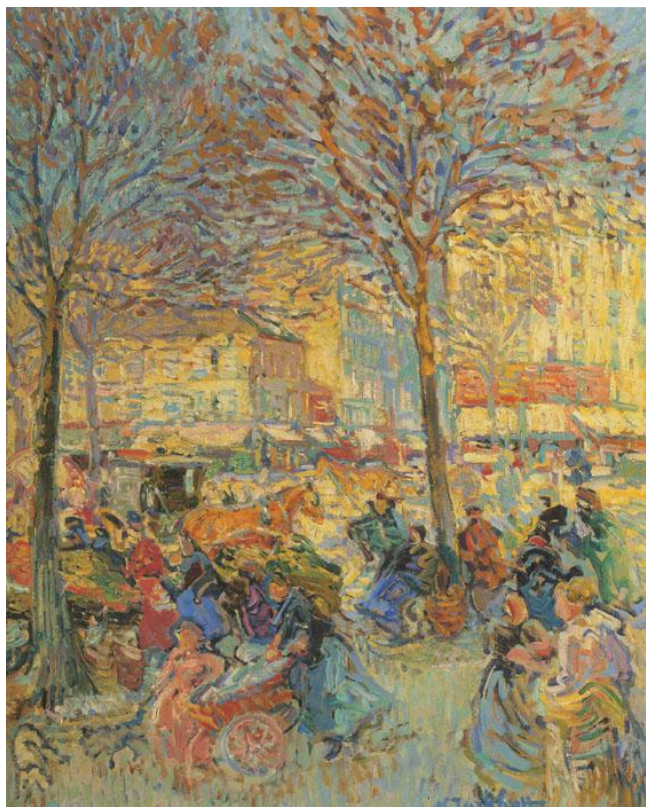
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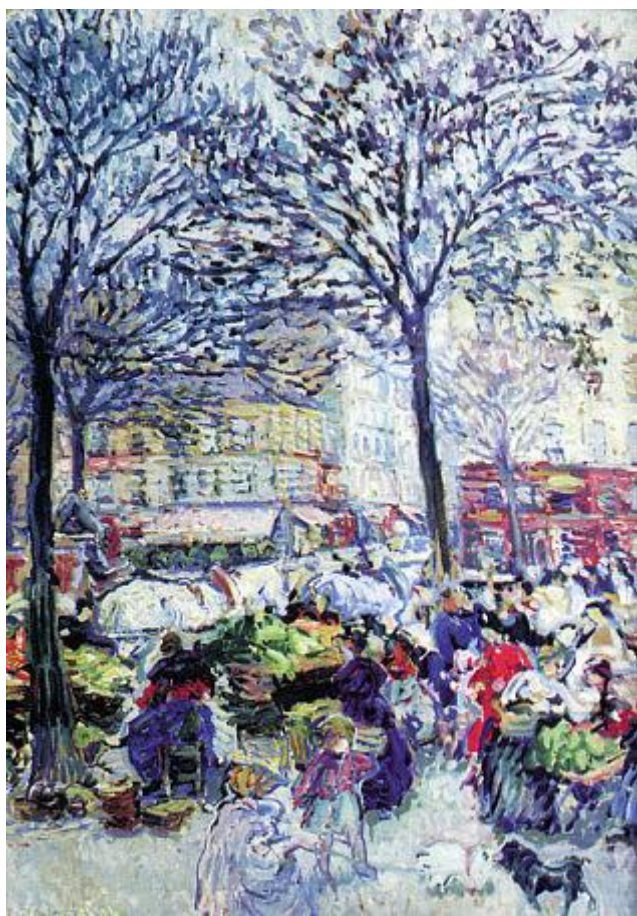
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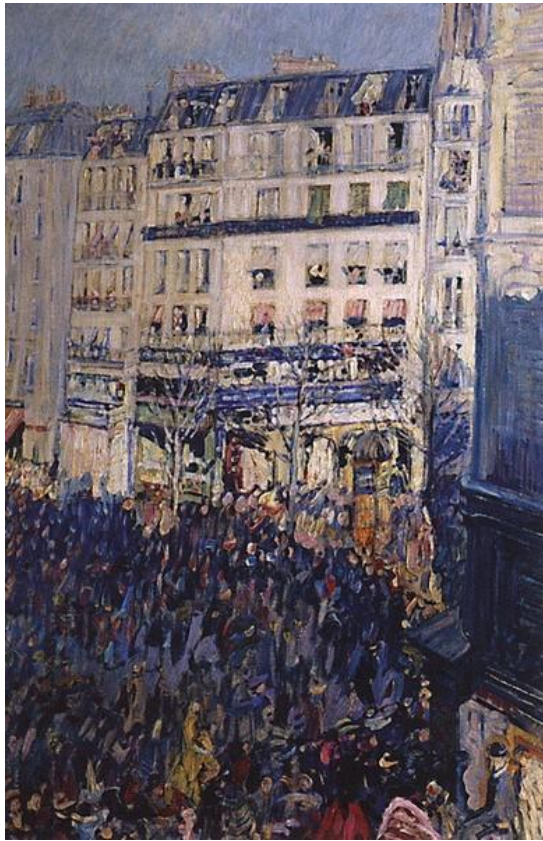


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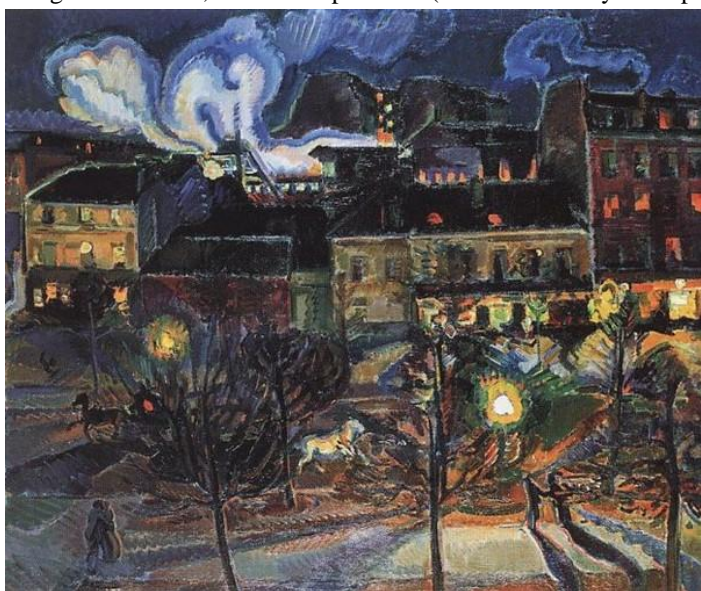
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Nicolas Tarkhoff, The Gare Montparnasse Under the Big Sun, 1905-1906, private collection.



Giorgio de Chirico, Gare Montparnasse (The Melancholy of Departure), 1914, MoMA, NY



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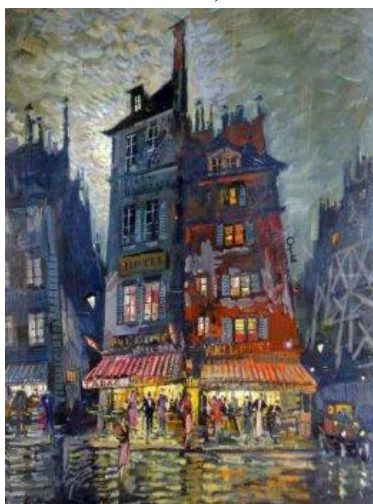


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Korovin, Paris, Hotel Burgundy, 1930s, private collection.

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