

STOP 8: Bookshop Eduard Sagot 1891, Jules CHERET



Music: Erik Satie, from his *Gnossiennes* or Saint Saens *Carnival of the Animals – Aquarium or Fossils*

Narrator

In this advertisement for Sagot's bookshop, the young woman's fresh features and playful pose epitomize the optimism of Belle Époque Paris. Jules Chéret, the artist who created this image, was a master of French poster art. His vivid designs advertised shops, cabarets, music halls and theatres - including the Folies Bergère and the Moulin Rouge. The women in Chéret's posters were joyous, elegant

and lively. *Cherettes*, as they became known, heralded a more open atmosphere in Paris, where women were able to engage in previously taboo activities - such as wearing low-cut bodices, and smoking in public. One contemporary writer said that *it is difficult to conceive of Paris without its Cherettes*.

It might seem strange that in this poster, a young woman carrying a flower basket is being used to advertise a bookstore. But she's here because Chéret originally drew up the design for the department store, La Belle Jardinière - The Beautiful Gardener. Management chose not to use the design, and Edmond Sagot snapped it up for a bargain price, using it to promote his first poster catalogue. Sagot's entrepreneurship cashed in on the growing demand for colour prints.

Chéret trained in lithography in London, where he was strongly influenced by the British approach to poster design and printing. His works also looked to the scenes of frivolity depicted by French Rococo artists, such as Jean-Honoré Fragonard and Antoine Watteau. Chéret even expanded his

business by making advertisements for consumer products such as drinks and soaps.