



Plakat, Papier à cigarettes Job, 1896
Erscheinungsland: Frankreich
Gestaltung: Jane Atché
Auftrag: Job, Toulouse, FR
Material/Technik: Lithografie
138 × 101.5 cm
Eigentümer: Museum für Gestaltung Zürich / ZHdK

Around 1900, the cigarette paper manufacturer Job commissioned famous artists like Jules Chéret (1836–1932), Alfons Maria Mucha (1860–1929), and Manuel Orazi (1860–1934) to design posters for its products. And yet arguably one of the most impressive Job posters was the work of a woman, Jane Atché (1872–1927). Only six posters by her are known, and the first retrospective of her work was not held until the beginning of this millennium, shedding some light on her formerly obscure biography.

Jiří Mucha (1915–1991) mentioned the largely unknown artist Jane Atché in a biography of his father. In his account, she is of the male sex, however, and is accused of having illegally stolen Mucha's pictorial ideas for her Job poster. Mucha's famous poster for the cigarette paper producer also dates from 1896. Apart from similarities in motif—the profile of a woman holding a cigarette in her right hand and billows of smoke swirling around the brand name—the two posters could hardly be more different. Atché went beyond the Art Nouveau style typical of the time. Instead of a profusion of decorative elements, she relied on formal reduction and a limited color scheme,

anticipating the rules for media meant to have a long-distance impact. The sophistication of her composition stems from the woman's black cape, which divides the poster vertically and guides the eye of the viewer. The striking flatness of the cape and the fine line drawing of the figure betray the influence of Japanese woodcuts. But it is above all Atché's image of woman that appeals to the emotions. The posters of her contemporaries are dominated by sensual and lascivious females with long, flowing hair. They glorify the seductive but wicked femme fatale who indulges in immoral pleasures. By contrast, Atché's self-confident smoker wears a dress with a high neckline and has tied her hair back in a bun. The poster displays a composed woman facing away from the viewer who is sufficient unto herself and has no need to beguile with her feminine charms. (Bettina Richter)

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