

# *'Chevalier du Bracelet'*

**GEORGE BARBIER**

**AND HIS ILLUSTRATED WORKS**

Exhibition & catalogue by Arthur M. Smith

**THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**

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## Foreword

When Arthur Smith first proposed curating an exhibition on the graphic work of George Barbier at the Fisher Library, I was not familiar with the work of this French Art Deco artist, and I knew our own holdings were not strong. What was obvious however, was Arthur's passion for the subject and when I later had a chance to examine some of the works themselves I could understand why. The prints are so vibrant in both design and colour that they seem to jump off the page. They are superb examples of the stenciling or pochoir method, created at a time when that technique was at its peak. I was familiar with the technique because the Fisher Library has outstanding contemporary examples of works using this labour intensive process by the Canadian artist and book-maker Walter Bachinski. This proved to be just one of many connections that exist between the Barbier exhibition and the broader Fisher collections.

In the fall of 2011 George Grant contacted the Fine Art Library about a possible donation of Barbier material, and his inquiry was fortunately redirected to us at Fisher. Our own holdings were not large at that time, and being aware of Arthur's exhibition proposal I was delighted at the chance to secure this donation for Fisher. It was a most fortuitous acquisition and we are very grateful to Mr Grant, and also to the Toronto Public Library and the Royal Ontario Museum for loaning material to the exhibition. Support for the printing of this catalogue has been generously given by Janet Dewan and Barbara Tangney in memory of their mother, Marian Ade, who was an enthusiastic supporter of the Fisher Library and a lifelong devotee of fashion. As always, we are grateful to the Friends of the Fisher Library for their ongoing support of our publications program.

It was through Arthur that I made the acquaintance of Robert Wu, the Toronto-based paper marbler and designer bookbinder. I saw examples of Robert's bindings at the Kelmscott Bookshop booth at the Toronto Antiquarian book fair last fall, and with the help of a donation from the Donner Foundation we later purchased two of

his bindings for Fisher. It turns out that Barbier is one of Robert Wu's favourite artists, and it seemed a perfect partnership to ask him to design a binding for one of Barbier's works, which could then be included in the exhibition. The lavish binding Robert created for *Personnages de comedie* surpassed all expectations and is a highlight of this show. Robert will discuss the process of creating the binding later this fall when he delivers the Alexander C. Pathy Lecture on the Book Arts. The seed of Arthur's original idea has generated a number of new shoots, and it is a great pleasure to have it come to fruition this fall in the Fisher Library.

Anne Dondertman

Associate Librarian for Special Collections and Director, Fisher Library

## Introduction

Although we know little about his personal life, George Barbier has left us with a magnificent graphic legacy. His varied output made him both an Art Deco version of the Parisian ‘painter of modern life,’ to use Charles Baudelaire’s expression, and a dandified Aesthete dreaming of an eroticized and decadent past. Barbier captured the modern but rarified world of haute couture fashion, illustrating the chic hats and the changing silhouettes of the best French houses, including Worth, Paquin, and Poiret. His colourful, sophisticated tableaux commissioned by the elite fashion publications of his era show young, elegant Dianas skiing at St. Moritz or being twirled in arms of Tango dancers, but also indolent *femmes fatales* reclining on pillows while smoking in their Asian-inspired silk evening pyjamas. He ventured into jewellery design for the famous Cartier firm, creating their famous panther motif which is still in use today. The artist’s love for the world of avant-garde dance and music allowed him to portray the staging and costumes of the star dancers of the Ballets Russes. Nijinsky and Tamar Karsavina pirouette and prance through his prints. His links with figures in the literary world led to book illustrations for famous authors and poets. Plates for *Les Liaisons dangeureuses*, *Les Chansons de Bilitis*, and *Makeda, Reine de Saba* transported the viewer to fantasy landscapes. Whether it was the amorous intrigues of eighteenth-century French court life, the Sapphic adventures of a fictional ancient Greek poetess, or the saga of the Ethiopian Queen of Sheba, Barbier conjured up fictional historical, Classical, or Orientalized *mises-en-scène*.

Barbier achieved his stunning colour palette using the technique of *pochoir* printing, which was developed to its highest expression during the Art Deco period. Those fortunate enough to admire these prints in person will marvel at the vibrant oranges, acid greens, and blue *dégradé* skies and seascapes inspired by Japanese *Ukiyo-e* print techniques. Close observers may catch the glint of precious golds and silvers picked out in metallic paints, adding a surprising and literal richness to the images. It is hard, if not impossible, to capture these colours and highlights in reproduction. That is why it is so important to bring these works out from storage and into the public eye.

While the original works were seen only by a few wealthy connoisseurs, collectors, and couture consumers, they are now on display for everyone. We are fortunate to have an exhibition of the works of George Barbier and his contemporaries at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in Toronto. The donations, loans, and active collection of Barbier's works by various institutions and individuals are a testament to a great deal of generosity and years of work behind the scenes. Special recognition should go to Arthur Smith, Head Librarian at the Royal Ontario Museum, for his tireless dedication to this project. The years between 1912-25 can be called a 'Golden age' of illustration. This magnificent exhibition, catalogue essay, and illustrations contribute to a growing knowledge of George Barbier's work and times. They bring this elusive man's career back to life and, I hope, will inspire future generations of illustrators, designers, and dreamers in turn.

Alison Matthews David  
Ryerson University



### **‘Chevalier du Bracelet’: George Barbier and his illustrated works**

In 2008 the Museo Fortuny in Venice, Italy, hosted the first major exhibition devoted solely to the French illustrator and designer George Barbier (1882-1932), accompanied by an extensive catalogue edited by curator Barbara Martorelli entitled *George Barbier: The Birth of Art Deco*. This retrospective show featured many of Barbier’s original drawings as well as some of his printed works. Toronto is home to an

extensive collection of Barbier’s published illustrations, housed in the collections of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, the Special Collections of the Library and Archives at the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Special Collections of the Toronto Public Library. The Venice show inspired this new exhibition at the Thomas Fisher Library, marking the first occasion for a Barbier retrospective in North America. Unlike the Barbier exhibition in Venice, this new display focuses on his printed and published opus drawn from public and private collections in Toronto. The Thomas Fisher Library’s holdings of Barbier originated with the donation of George Grant’s personal collection of the artist’s works in 2010. The ROM’s collection of Barbier fashion prints was significantly enriched by the acquisition of the complete set of the Paris fashion journal *Gazette du bon ton* in 2007 and *La Guirlande des mois* in 2010, funded by major grants from the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust. Combined with its earlier holdings of *Journal des dames et des modes*, the ROM’s collection of Barbier fashion prints is one of the most extensive in North America.

The life of one of the most prolific illustrators in Paris during the transition from Art Nouveau to Art Deco periods is somewhat shrouded in mystery owing to a lack of personal documentation. Barbier is perhaps most fully revealed through his opus. One particular illustration exemplifies this point. In 1916 he completed a drawing

captioned *Laquelle préférer?* for the fashion house of Gros, Roman & Cie located in Wesserling in the Alsace region. It portrayed three fashionably dressed ladies and a child grouped together in a garden scene. Observing from the side, but obviously removed from the gathering, is a distinguished dapper gentleman. It is a self-portrait of Barbier inserted into the scene, where he functioned as a keen witness to the tastes and fashions of the day. Through his illustrations and writings Barbier revealed himself as an advocate for the arts and designs of the Art Deco era. The Fisher exhibition is an opportunity for the viewer to experience those exuberant times in French culture through Barbier's optic. His works were not expressions of the avant-garde in the manner of Cubism, but rather embraced traditional elements such as classical figures and forms juxtaposed with the new styles and fashions – an exquisite blending of the old with the new. Barbier was an astute observer of his times, and his drawings are a window into his world. The exhibition highlights Barbier's accomplishments as a *décorateur* and illustrator of books, fashion, and costume. A segment of the exhibition is devoted to the influences of his writings and personal library on his art and design. Augmenting the exhibition is a selection of exquisite *pochoir* prints by Barbier's contemporaries. Through this exhibition the *personnage* of Barbier comes partially to life, but much more research and study remain for the art historian and serious bibliophile.

Georges Augustin Barbier was born on 16 October 1882 in the provincial city of Nantes, situated on the Loire River in the northwest of France. He was the son of a successful and well-to-do import/export *négociant* Charles Barbier and his wife Marie Mathilde Ertaud. Nothing is known of his early interest and instruction in art. His first known dated work is from 28 July 1899 when he painted *Étude de chardon bleu* (Study of blue thistle).<sup>1</sup>

At the age of twenty Barbier became a student at the École régionale du dessin et des beaux-arts in Nantes, under the instruction of artists Alexandre Jacques Chantron (1842-1918), Alexis Louis de Broca (1868-1948) and Pierre Alexis Lesage (1872-1932), and where he won annual awards for drawing. His teachers were part of a rich artistic community in Nantes led by the Société des amis des arts de Nantes. Barbier was known to frequent the local Musée des beaux-arts, based on a letter held in the museum's archives in which Broca sought the approval of the museum's director for



Barbier to practise his drawing.<sup>2</sup> He would have derived inspiration from the museum's collection of paintings and sculpture which included works by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867). Barbier also enjoyed the patronage of Alphonse Lotz-Brissonneau (1840-1921), a wealthy eclectic Nantes industrialist who was a prominent member of the Société des amis des arts

and an avid print collector. Lotz-Brissonneau is widely thought to have been responsible for introducing Barbier to the artistic community in Paris.

Barbier is believed to have relocated to Paris in 1905 to further his studies in art. However, he did not enroll in the studio of Jean-Paul Laurens (1838-1921) at the Académie Julien until 1908 where he was instructed in the French academic style. The Académie was a private studio school for art students preparing for exams at the prestigious École des beaux-arts. The intervening three years remain a mystery, but Museo Fortuny curator Barbara Martorelli has suggested some of this time was spent in England<sup>3</sup>. During this period he contributed illustrations to two French magazines, *Le Frou-frou* and *L'Humoriste*. Barbier was so impressed by the works of the English illustrator Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) that, in addition to a number of the English artist's illustrated texts in his personal library, he owned some of his correspondence and a rare collection of Beardsley drawings for stories by Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) which he mentioned in a letter to his patron Lotz-Brissonneau. Although Beardsley had died prematurely at the early age of twenty-six, Martorelli believes that Barbier became acquainted with Beardsley's social circle while visiting London.<sup>4</sup>

Early in his artistic career Barbier opted for the pseudonym Edward William Larry, and many of his youthful works bear variations on the signature "E. W. Larry". The earliest published illustration by Barbier in the Fisher exhibition, a reproduction of his 1910 watercolour acquired by Baron Robert de Rothschild captioned *Shéhérazade (Aquarelle)*, appeared in the April 1911 issue of *L'Art et les artistes* bearing the Larry signature, as do his illustrations for *Le Frou-frou* and *L'Humoriste*. Due to the risqué nature of the latter two magazines, Barbier may have adopted the *E. W. Larry* alias to avoid embarrassment to his family. When he exhibited ninety-two of his works in a solo debut exhibition from 15 to 31 March 1911 at the Galeries de l'Art moderne at

GEORGE BARBIER (LARRY)



*App. à M. le Baron Robert de Rothakid.*

Shéhérazade (Aquarelle)

*L'Art et les Artistes, n° 73.*

18 rue Tronchet, Barbier employed an anglicized version of his name, *George* rather than *Georges*, that appeared on the invitation card alongside his *Larry* pseudonym. Similarly, the May 1911 issue of *L'Art et les artistes* carried an announcement of the *exposition* using the same attribution. From this time forward Barbier used the anglicized version almost exclusively for the duration of his career and life. The *exposition* was presented in three sections: Le Groupe des danseuses, Les Ballets Russes, and Schéhérazade. The catalogue for the exhibition, printed by La Belle édition, included a preface by his admirer, the infamous French author Pierre Louÿs (1870-1925). The previous year Barbier had illustrated a single volume of Louÿs' erotic Greek poem *Chansons de Bilitis*. Louÿs described Barbier as “*un jeune peintre vraiment grec*”<sup>5</sup> with whom he shared a passion for classical art. In a 1922 article published in *L'Illustration*, Barbier attributed his early interest in classical art to viewing a reproduction of an Etruscan tomb painting from Cornet. Neo-classical elements and themes were evident in many literary and artistic works emanating from Paris at the turn of the twentieth century. Barbier was quickly embraced by this thriving community of artists and writers. He devoted much of his career to incorporating neo-classicism into his illustrations, in addition to illustrating a number of classical myths.

Barbier's friendship with Louÿs extended over the duration of Barbier's life. Louÿs and the Romanian-French author Anna, the comtesse Mathieu de Noailles (1876-1933), are credited with introducing Barbier to the inner circle of the Paris literary and artistic world, including notables such as author Henri de Régnier (1864-1936), the Italian poet Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863-1938), writers Gérard d'Houville (1875-1963) (pseudonym for Marie de Régnier, wife of Henri, and Louÿs long-time lover) and Marcel Proust (1871-1922). Barbier would later illustrate texts by Henri de Régnier, and also work closely with Marie on several almanacs.

When Barbier moved to Paris he first took up residence at 31 rue Vanneau in the seventh *arrondissement* (now the Hôtel de Suède Saint-Germain), and later moved about 1912 to 31 rue Campagne Première in the Montparnasse district. Interior views of Barbier's later luxurious studio were published in *Harper's Bazaar* (later called *Harper's Bazaar*) in 1914 and in the French magazine *Femina* in 1919, revealing a taste for decoration that embraced both orientalism and neo-classicism. “The

artist's studio was a witness of his passion as a collector. Practically every country is represented in his collections, but without conflict of form or colour ... A unique old Venetian commode, lacquered in bright red and covered with Chinese figures in gold, is opposite an early 18th century armoire from Holland. Above a Louis XVI divan are six Chinese lacquered panels of early date, while on the walls there are also mirrors with old Persian paintings, rare Japanese prints, Chinese fans that were executed before the Christian era, etc. 'It is living in this atmosphere that made me an illustrator,' vouched the artist."<sup>6</sup> One of his neighbours was the famous American Surrealist artist and photographer Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitzky, 1890-1976), whose studio was at the same address.

Barbier's arrival in Paris coincided with a dramatic transition in Western style and fashion led in large part by the Paris *couturier* Paul Poiret (1879-1944). Poiret began his career in 1896 as an apprentice to *couturier* Jacques Doucet (1853-1929), later moving to the renowned fashion house of Maison Worth. Uninspired with designing casual wear for Worth, Poiret opened his own salon in 1903 on rue Auber in Paris. He quickly gained prominence, and his new designs were credited with revolutionizing fashion design during the first decade of the twentieth century. Bearing the title *pasha of Paris* in recognition of his personal taste for orientalism, Poiret hosted an elaborately themed party *Mille et deuxième nuit* at his grand residence on 24 June 1911. Persian carpets were spread out on the lawns, the trees were strung with lights shaped as berries, and Poiret presided over the affair in the garb of a sultan. Over three hundred costumed guests were entertained by leading actors and dancers. The sumptuous event received wide attention in the social press of the day.

The earlier fashions of the *belle époque* era favoured elaborate decorated gowns constructed of many yards of fabric, and styles that required the use of whalebone corsets to redefine the female form. Poiret's designs with his long flowing gowns that draped from the bust and followed the natural form of the body were the first to eliminate the need for corsets and petticoats. Poiret promoted his new style in a 250 limited edition album of ten designs entitled *Les Robes de Paul Poiret racontées par Paul Iribe* published in 1908 that sold for forty francs. He engaged Paul Iribe (1883-1935) to illustrate his designs with full-page plates which were hand-coloured using the stenciling technique known in France as *pochoir*, which will be discussed further

in this text. Poiret elevated fashion design to an art form by injecting it “with a dynamism that made them new and significant forces in the twentieth century.”<sup>7</sup> For *Les Robes de Paul Poiret*, Iribe used a monochrome background to accentuate the coloured fashion designs. While the illustrated fashions, inspired by the *élégantes* of the First Empire, were new and innovative, Iribe retained the traditional background props such as mirrors, neo-classical furniture and European paintings that were features found in earlier fashion plates of the late nineteenth century. Iribe also introduced the technique of half-profile or back views that would become a common feature of fashion illustration. Poiret distributed free copies of the album to the *crème de la crème* of European society. Not all of the elite were amused, for Queen Alexandra returned her copy with the message “The Queen of England does not read commercial catalogues. Kindly refrain from sending material of this kind.”<sup>8</sup> Her disdain was possibly motivated by the female nude on the portfolio cover.

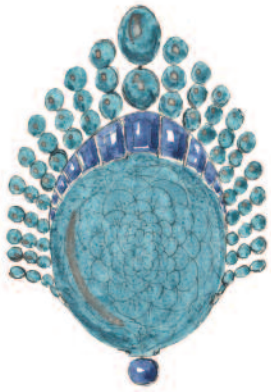
Poiret’s new designs were met with criticisms that went so far as to label them pornographic. The leading Parisian magazine *L’Illustration* exclaimed, “To think of it! ... under those straight gowns we could see their bodies!” A 1912 *Vogue* interview with *couturier* Jean-Phillipe Worth (1856-1926) proclaimed Poiret’s designs as “suitable for the women of uncivilized tribes. If we adopt them, let us ride on camels and ostriches.” But Poiret’s new vision for fashions prevailed. The leading fashion magazines in Paris during the first decade of the 1900s were laden with advertisements for corsets. By 1910 the frequency of such advertisements had slowed to a trickle. In 1911 Poiret commissioned the artist Georges Lepape (1887-1971) to illustrate a second limited edition *de luxe* album of fashion designs from his salon. One thousand copies were published on *papier de luxe*, and sold for fifty francs. Lepape’s beautiful illustrations for *Les Choses de Paul Poiret vues par Georges Lepape* were hand-coloured by the master of the *pochoir* technique, Jean Saudé. While Lepape employed some of Iribe’s techniques, gone were the references to nineteenth-century back drop scenery. Lepape’s images captured the sense of being in a theatre, with the modeled fashions poised on stage with an air of mystery, and the viewer compelled to gaze upwards to view Lepape’s settings. Lepape introduced the checkered floor to fashion illustration, a technique that enhanced the sense of being on a stage and would be copied by Art Deco illustrators and photographers in the years to come.



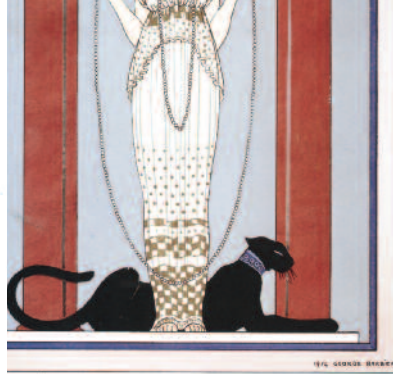


Poiret's dramatic impact on fashion and design was coupled with the arrival in Paris of the Ballets Russes under the direction of the Russian choreographer Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929). Their debut in May 1909 at the Théâtre du Châtelet conquered the Paris fashion world with the introduction of bold nudity and brilliantly-coloured Turkish-style costumes by designers such as Léon Bakst (1866-1924) who were inspired by the stories of *The Arabian Nights*. The 1909 performance featured the premiere of the Russian ballerina Ida Rubinstein (1885-1960) as the lead in *Cléopâtre*. The following year the Ballets Russes dazzled the Paris audience with even more exotic productions — Igor Stravinsky's *Firebird* (*L'Oiseau de feu*) starring Tamar Karsavina (1885-1976), and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Shéhérazade* starring Vaslav Nijinsky (1889 or 1890-1950) as the Ethiopian slave and Rubinstein as the sleeping princess Zobéide. Building on their success, the Ballets Russes performed *Le Spectre de la rose* and *L'Après-midi d'un faune* in 1912 in Paris, both featuring Nijinsky as the principal dancer. Barbier was a frequent presence at their performances, accompanied by his friend and biographer Jean-Louis Vaudoyer (1883-1963).

The two leading Russian dancers of the Ballets Russes, Nijinsky and Karsavina,



G. BARBIER,  
1911



1911 GEORGE BARBIER

captivated the attention of the young George Barbier, and inspired two of his earliest illustrated albums which were devoted to each of the dancers. *Dessins sur les danses* (1880-1959) and edited by Pierre Corrad (1877-1914), was published in Paris in 1913 by La Belle édition, while a London edition translated and published by Cyril William Beaumont (1891-1976) entitled *Designs on the Dances of Vaslav Nijinsky* appeared in the same year. *Album dédié à Tamar Karsavina*, with text by the French novelist, poet, and art historian Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, was published in 1914 by Pierre Corrad. In his illustrations for these albums, reminiscent of Greek vase painting and *commedia dell'arte*, Barbier focused on the individual performer and transformed the beautiful youthful dancers into divine figures worthy of worship. He captured Nijinsky's legendary leaps and bounds by accentuating his athletic form. When Nijinsky performed in Mikhail Fokine's (1880-1942) ballet *Le Spectre de la rose* in 1912, the Paris audience was so awed by his memorable entrance with a spectacular leap that they suspected he had been equipped with special shoes. Nijinsky's career as a dancer came to an abrupt end in 1917 at the age of twenty-nine, and shortly thereafter he succumbed to the mental illness that was to haunt him until his death in 1950. As for the album cover for the Karsavina folio, Barbier drew upon



the style of Aubrey Beardsley for his inspiration.

From the time of his arrival in Paris, Barbier was connected with influential designers. One of his earliest associates was André Groult (1884-1966), founder of one of the most prominent interior design studios in Paris, who shared Barbier's enthusiasm for neo-classicism. Groult's wife Nicole was the sister of Paul Poiret. Groult engaged fellow artists Raoul Dufy (1877-1953) and Jean-Émile Laboureur (1877-1943) to design furnishings and decoration that reflected a more simplistic taste and served everyday functions. Their studio work was exhibited at the Salon d'automne in 1912. Barbier's artistic skills were employed in designs for ceramics and glass, in addition to fabrics for the firm of Bianchini-Ferrier in Lyon. Barbier also developed a friendship with the famous Paris jeweller Louis Cartier (1875-1942) that dates to 1910 when he approached Cartier with a portfolio of jewellery designs. Cartier acquired a watercolour by Barbier entitled *Nijinsky and Ida Rubinstein in 'Schéhérazade'*.<sup>9</sup> Barbier designed more than a hundred pieces of jewellery for the House of Cartier, drawing upon the decorative styles of orientalism, Islam, and Egypt. An example of one of his designs for Cartier is an original 1911 colour drawing for a turban or-



nament entitled *Plume de paon: émeraudes et saphirs: destinée à le devant d'un turban ou à être pendue au col*, on loan to the exhibition from the Royal Ontario Museum. Barbier is credited with designing the first diadems for Cartier, but his iconic piece was the design of the panther that remains emblematic of the House of Cartier to the present day. The image of a classical figure, attired in a Poiret dress, and accessorized by the presence of a black panther, was used on an invitation card designed by Barbier for *L'exposition d'une collection unique de perles et de bijoux de décadence antique* hosted at La Maison Cartier from 27 May to 6 June 1914. The illustration bore the caption *La femme avec une panthère noire*, which was reproduced in a 1920s French magazine advertisement for Cartier. The Cartier commission for *La femme avec une panthère noire* was no doubt influenced by Louis Cartier's relationship with the director of their luxury jewellery department, Jeanne Toussaint (1887-1978), whose pet name was *Panther*, and whose apartment was decorated with panther carpets and a Cartier onyx panther vanity case.<sup>10</sup>

The first major monograph to include a Barbier illustration was *L'Éventail et la fourrure chez Paquin: dessins de Paul Iribe, George Barbier, Georges Lepape* published by Maquet in 1911. This *de luxe* folio album of designs for fans and furs, issued in a limited edition of three hundred copies, was commissioned by the Paris *couturier* Madame Jeanne Paquin (1869-1936) for her elite clients. Along with the two Poiret albums published in 1908 and 1911, it is considered one of the three great masterpieces of pre-war art books, due in large part to its vibrant use of colour using the *pochoir* technique. Madame Paquin had inherited the atelier upon her husband's death in 1907, and worked closely with the principal designer of Ballets Russes, Léon Bakst, to create colourful and stylish designs suitable for fashionable Parisians to wear to the theatre and tea-houses. Barbier's classical scene is designed as a fan, a popular vehicle for commercial advertising at the time. It reveals two women and a man, unclothed except for floating scarves, positioned on a Greek portico, and being serenaded by the kneeling figure of a youth playing a set of double pipes. It is worth noting that Barbier used the checkered flooring in his illustration, a feature noted earlier as a Lepape innovation, suggesting a close working relationship between the two artists. The illustration was accompanied by a note to the potential buyer stating that the fan with this design would be produced in ivory in a limited edition of four. The same fan design was reproduced for a *pochoir* plate in the 20 December 1912

issue of *Journal des dames et des modes*, along with a second Barbier fan design showing a woman picking grapes surrounded by golden butterflies. The original water-colour design for the Paquin album resides in the Barish Collection at the Fächer Museum in Bielefeld, Germany. A realized version of the fan is housed in the Fan Museum in Greenwich, England. Made from silk, it bears the signature ‘G. Barbier’ and is dated 1911. A second signed version of the fan from 1914 that was made using ivory brisé was acquired by Mrs. William Randolph Hearst, and may be found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The other Barbier design from the *Journal* was made into at least three fans, one of which is part of the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Barbier is known to have created a number of fan designs for Paquin which did not make it into her album, including one that featured an archer against a background of dark blue sky full of silver stars.

Another design for Paquin was published in the April 1914 issue of *Harper’s Bazar* as part of an article on Barbier. It portrayed a lady reclining on pillows under a tree and smelling a rose. Barbier also created fan designs for Paul Poiret for which there are no known extant copies. An early commercial project for Barbier was the 1912 contribution of an illustration to a promotional album *Fourrures, portraits, miniatures* for the Paris furrier Leroy & Schmid that showcased fur as a fashionable wrap and as trimming. In his illustration Barbier coiffed his ladies with turbans – a new fashion innovation attributed to Poiret and illustrated by Lepape in *Les Choses de Paul Poiret*. The text for the Leroy & Schmid album is by the French writer and 1900 Olympic bronze medalist in fencing, Marcel Jacques Boulenger (1873-1932).

The year 1912 was pivotal for Barbier’s career as an illustrator with the birth of two major fashion magazines for which he became a major contributor. The first issue of *Journal des dames et des modes* appeared on 1 June 1912. Its limited edition of twelve hundred and fifty copies was published three times per month until its early demise on 1 August 1914 as war loomed. Its seventy-nine issues featured literary articles, poems, society columns, and fashion reports in addition to its colourful unbound fashion plates entitled *Costumes Parisiens*, which were engraved on copper and coloured *au pochoir*. The plates were contributed by leading fashion illustrators of the day, including Barbier, Bernard Boutet de Monvel (1881-1949), Léon Bakst, Paul Iribe, Charles Martin (1884-1934), Adrian Drian (1885-1961), Armand Vallée (1884-



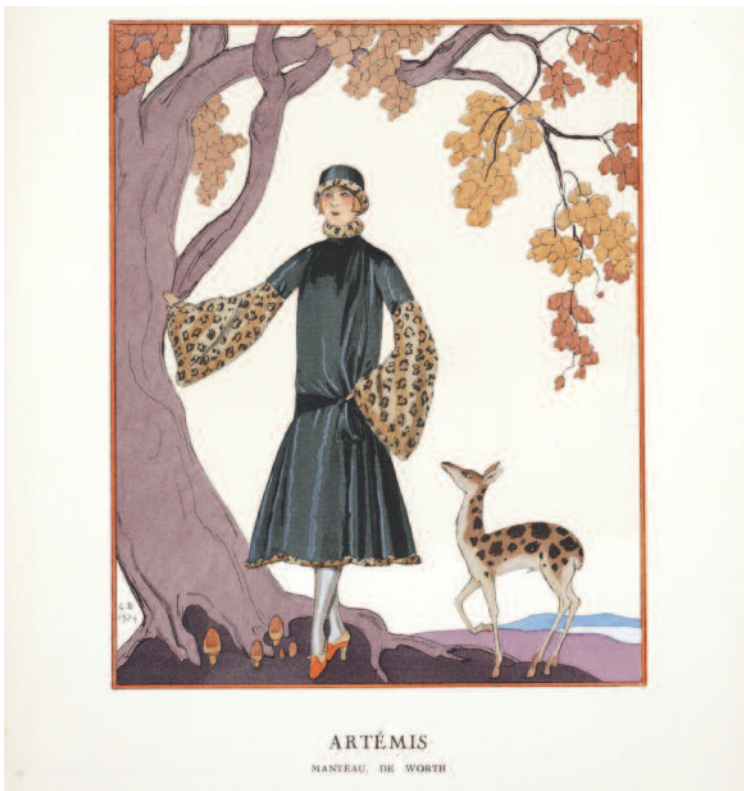
1960), Roger Broders (1883-1953), Fernand Siméon (1884-1928), Italian artist Umberto Brunelleschi (1879-1949), Danish female artist Gerda Wegener (1886-1940), and the Spanish artist Francisco Javier Gosé (1876-1915).

The *Journal* emulated a fashion magazine of the same name published from 1798 to 1839 by abbé Pierre de la Mésangère (1761-1831). The new journal was founded by Tom Antongini (1877-1967), secretary and friend of the Italian poet Gabriele d'Annunzio, and was co-edited by the experienced journalist Jacques de Nouvion. Antongini acknowledged the debt he owed to d'Annunzio for supporting his publishing venture: "D'Annunzio not only subscribed to our publication but was generous in giving me letters of recommendation and moral support. He took a great interest in it . . . and it was solely thanks to him that I was able to count from the first issue on the highly desired collaboration of Anatole France, Madame de Noailles, and other famous French writers of the time."<sup>11</sup> Numbered among its literary contributors were the French screenwriter Henri Duvernois (1875-1937), Marcel Boulenger, Paul Margueritte (1860-1918), René Boylesve (1867-1926), Henri Barbusse (1873-1935), Francis de Miomandre, Pierre Veber (b. 1869), Henri Lavedan (1859-1940), poet and critic Fernand Gregh (1873-1960), poet, novelist, and filmmaker Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), and poet Paul Géraudy. The *Journal* was an advocate for *élégance*, defined by Pierre Veber in issue number nine in translation: "Elegance resides in the perfect harmony of thoughts, words, acts, gestures, attitudes, and costume. It is through costume that elegance expresses itself most quickly. The elegant person should not wear anything conspicuous or extreme. He refrains from colours that are too crude, clothes of eccentric cut, perfumes that are too heavy, jewellery that is too rich, excessive gestures, vocal outbursts, and words that are too strong. The elegant person is the one who makes himself noticed by means of discretion."<sup>12</sup> The prints provided for the *Journal* by Barbier were his original fashion designs. Included in the Fisher exhibition is a bookplate designed by Barbier in 1913 for Nouvion's personal library.

The second and more famous fashion magazine launched in 1912 was *Gazette du bon ton*. Founded by art director, editor, and publisher Lucien Vogel (1886-1954) for an exclusive clientele, it quickly became the leading French fashion journal of its day. Vogel had studied at the *École alsacienne* with Pierre Brissaud (1885-1964) and

André Marty (1882-1974), and was introduced to Georges Lepape at a preview of Lepape's original drawings for *Les Choses de Paul Poiret* on 1 March 1911 at a gallery Poiret had opened next door to his townhouse. At the time Vogel was newly wed to Cosette de Brunhoff, whose father was the chief editor of the magazine *Comœdia illustré*, and Vogel was working with his father-in-law on the production of catalogues for the Ballets Russes. After encountering engravings from the original nineteenth-century *Journal des dames et des modes* while visiting the country home of a friend, Vogel decided to launch his own *de luxe* fashion magazine, *Gazette du bon ton*, in November 1912. In the first issue Henri Bidou offered a philosophy for the new journal that closely paralleled that of Veber's for the *Journal des dames et des modes* by articulating a definition of good breeding and good taste.

Through an arrangement with Condé Nast, publisher of the fashion magazine *Vogue*, the *Gazette du bon ton* was also distributed in the United States. Its sixty-nine issues were published from 1912 to 1914 and from 1920 to 1925, with a hiatus precip-







itated by World War I. Its diverse and witty articles on a wide range of topics, from literature to theatre to arranging centrepieces for the table, were intended to promote the elegant lifestyle of the period and entertain the reader. The highest standard of production was maintained using quality paper. Each of its issues included thirty pages of text accompanied by eight to ten *pochoir*-coloured prints which illustrated designs from such eminent Paris *couturiers* as Worth, Paquin, Beer, Lanvin, Redfern, and Vionnet. Vogel assembled a group of the best illustrators, most of whom had graduated from the *École des beaux-arts* in Paris. The core group was comprised of Barbier, his first cousins Bernard Boutet de Monvel and Pierre Brissaud, André Marty, Charles Martin, Paul Iribe, Georges Lepape, and augmented by such notables as Erté (1892-1990) and Henri Matisse (1869-1954).

Along with the ceramic artist Jean Besnard (1889–1958), the core group was nicknamed by *Vogue* the *chevaliers du bracelet* (knights of the bracelet) for their dandyish attire, flamboyant mannerisms, dapper appearance, and common practice of sporting a bracelet. They were also referred to as the *Beau Brummels of the Brush* in the 15 June 1914 issue of *Vogue*. Curiously the surviving images of Barbier himself do not reflect such an overly-affected style as personified by Oscar Wilde, but rather, they embody the definition of elegance defined by Veber. An undated photograph of a well-dressed and groomed Barbier was published in the Venice exhibition catalogue, along with an oil-on-canvas portrait, about 1918, by Clémentine Hélène Dufau (1869–1937) that mirrored the photograph image. In 1928 Barbier completed a watercolour self-portrait showing the artist at work drawing a costume worn by a model. Both paintings are in the Musée des beaux-arts in Nantes. Photographs of Barbier appeared in the 1914 *Harper's Bazaar* article devoted to him, and in the July 1921 issue of *Vanity Fair* which featured portraits of younger generation French illustrators. In 1916 Barbier incorporated an image of himself in an advertisement for a fashion house in Alsace. Another likeness of Barbier was sketched by his colleague and friend Charles Martin for publication in 1927 in Barbier's album *Vingt-cinq costumes pour le théâtre*, as well as a second sketch for Jean-Louis Vaudoyer's biographical tribute to Barbier published in 1929 by Henri Babou in his ten-volume series *Les Artistes du livre*. Vaudoyer first met Barbier in 1910 when his patron, art conservator Louis Metman (1862–1943), introduced them while visiting the Louvre. Vaudoyer described Barbier on that occasion as “*un élégant jeune homme blond, tranquille et réservé*”, and mistook him for an Englishman.<sup>13</sup>

Barbier's numerous illustrations for the *Gazette du bon ton* were strongly reflective of his love of oriental designs and classical themes. But they often went a step further by incorporating scenes that were suggestive of a story unfolding in the background. He used such devices as a mysterious letter, a flirtatious gesture, or a furtive gentleman lurking nearby. He also contributed at least a dozen review articles to the *Gazette* with titles such as “*Dialogue entre la chair et l'esprit*”, “*Fêtes dans le ciel*”, “*Lettre à la dame qui voulait 'Masquer'*”, “*Les Surprises de l'opéra*”, “*Portrait de Casanova*”, “*Le Ton de Paris*”, “*Variation sur des ruines Pompéï*”, “*Florence*”, “*Chinois de Paris*”, “*Lillian Gish*”, “*Venise*”, and “*Ida Rubinstein*”.



In addition to his articles for the *Gazette*, Barbier contributed over one hundred and twenty *pochoir* fashion plates. A representative sampling of his *pochoirs* was selected for the exhibition, including *Le Tombeau des secrets: robe d'intérieur de Worth* from 1922. This *pochoir* illustrated Barbier's integration of 1920s Art Deco fashion with traditional styles exemplified by the European *chinoiserie* cabinet that reflected Chinese artistic influences. The gown Barbier illustrated in this *pochoir* is a design from the House of Worth, a leading Parisian fashion house that specialized in *haute couture*. It was founded by Charles Frederick Worth (1825-1895) in 1858 and operated until 1956. The brand name House of Worth was revived in 1999. Exhibited with this *pochoir* is Barbier's original drawing from the collections of the Royal Ontario Museum.





Coinciding with the appearance of the *Journal* and the *Gazette* in 1912 was the luxurious fashion yearbook *Modes et manières d'aujourd'hui*, published first by Pierre Corrad and later by Jules Meynial from 1912 to 1919 on fine Imperial *japon* paper. Its exclusiveness and expensive mode of production led to its early demise, and it was curtailed after only seven volumes. Each volume featured an individual illustrator, with plates coloured *au pochoir* by Jean Saudé. The *de luxe* copies were signed and numbered by the artist and the printer. Barbier was commissioned to contribute twelve illustrations for the 1914 volume, with accompanying poetry by his friend Henri de Régnier. For one of his images Barbier chose to depict the Persian tale of Sheherazade with the heroine attired in a typical Paul Poiret gown distinguished by its long flowing style and accessorized by a turban with ornament. He also incorpo-



rated elements of orientalism, inspired by the radical new sets and costumes of the Ballets Russes. Since no extant copies of this title may be found in Canada, the 2011 compendium limited edition reprint by Santo Alligo, with an introduction in Italian by Giuliano Ercoli, was selected for the Fisher exhibition.

The first major literary work to feature Barbier's illustrations was the volume *Antérôs: poèmes en prose* by Antoine Louis Armand Sanche de Gramont (1888-1918), published in 1913 by La Belle édition. It celebrated classical Greek themes and mythology, with the title derived from the myth of Anteros, son of Ares and Aphrodite, brother of Eros, the winged god of requited love. Included among the illustrated classical tales is the story of the Gorgon monster Medusa who was beheaded by Perseus. Barbier's five illustrations were uncoloured line drawings, except for a small limited edition accompanied by a second set of drawings that were partially coloured. The copy from the George Grant Collection includes the additional set of drawings.



Inspired by his passion for the Greek style, Barbier produced a limited edition volume in 1914 published by La Belle édition illustrating the *Song of Songs* using classical figures to accompany verses based on a 1316 French translation. The *pochoir* technique was used to render the thirteen illustrations, some full-page, for *Dix-sept dessins de George Barbier sur le Cantique des cantiques* in a combination of black and burnished gold. Greek vase paintings appear to have influenced elements of his illustrations, from the poses and simple lines to the style and draping of the gowns. Barbier also drew upon Egyptian influences early in his career with the illustrations for Hugues Le Roux's (1860–1925) *Makeda, reine de Saba*, a very scarce volume published in 1914 by Goupil et Cie of which no copies are known to exist in Canada.

During World War I Barbier's activities are unclear. It is believed that he held an administrative post in the Ministère de la Guerre, a suspicion supported by a number of his illustrations and manuscripts found on ministry letterhead.<sup>14</sup> *Journal* had ceased publication just before war was declared, and *Gazette* suspended publication during the war. Barbier produced several illustrations for the magazine *La Baïonnette*, often with serious military and nationalist overtones. The dramatic illus-





tration from *La Baïonnette* selected for the exhibition, revealing Barbier's strong sense of French nationalism, is captioned *La Jeune Amérique champion du droit et de la liberté*.

Beginning in 1916 Barbier commenced work on a new venture – the illustration of five exquisite little annual almanacs in octavo format entitled *La Guirlande des mois* published by Jules Meynial from 1917 to 1921. The early volumes often included images of men in military uniform. In addition to the *pochoir* illustrations, Barbier contributed articles from 1918 to 1921 on such diverse topics as the Ballets Russes, epigrams, opera,

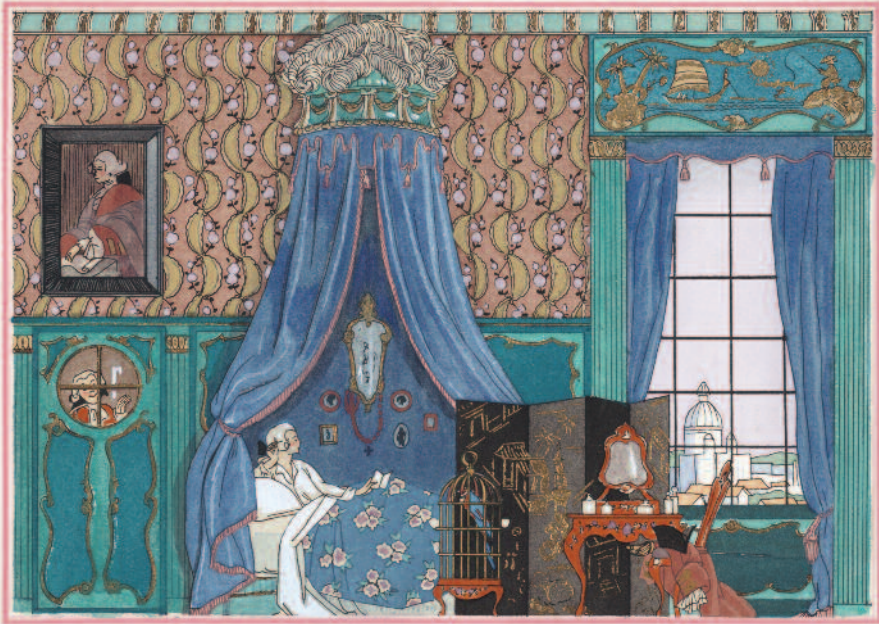
and the pleasures of love. His friends Henri and Marie de Régnier also wrote for the almanac, along with other notable French writers of the day. The fashions depicted by Barbier showed a radical post-war shift in style with the adoption of shorter and fuller skirts, backless gowns, and fabrics that accommodated the more risqué elements of the Tango. The little volumes were bound with Bodoni board covered with white satin and painted with Barbier illustrations, accompanied by dust jackets and slip cases. Each volume contained six *pochoir*-coloured plates. Those for the first three volumes were printed by Maquet, while the plates for the 1920 volume were printed by the greatly admired Swiss-born book artist François-Louis Schmied (1873-1941). The plates for the final volume were executed by the master printer Robert Coulouma.

Another project completed by Barbier during the war years was the six uncoloured illustrations and painted white satin binding design for *Livre de madame*, edited and printed by Maquet in 1917 as a marketing tool for the American merchant John Wanamaker (1838-1922) of Philadelphia. Regarded in America as the father of modern advertising, Wanamaker expanded his retail empire to include department



stores in New York, London, and Paris, where he also maintained residences. This volume is comprised of a calendar, pages for notes, and a collection of poems. The dust jacket design for this miniature book was created by Barbier, and bears the spine title *La Guirlande des mois*, which was also the title given to the set of five octavo almanacs of Barbier produced between 1917 and 1921.

A third undertaking by Barbier during the war was a series of illustrations for wood-engraved frontispieces by François-Louis Schmied in a rare limited edition of fifty portfolios published in 1918. Each portfolio was comprised of six fascicules contain-

Acte 1<sup>er</sup> - La chambre à coucher d'un libertin

ing ten wood engravings by Schmied, each bearing the signature of the artist. Only three extant copies are known to reside in public institutions, including the copy at Toronto Public Library. The pieces contributed by Barbier were captioned: *Œuvres, d'Aristophane*; *Les Liaisons dangereuses, de Laclos*; *Le Satyricon, de Pétrone*; *La Lampe de Psyché, de Marcel Schwob*; and *Les Lettres persanes, de Montesquieu*.

Another Barbier endeavour from the war era not previously identified was a series of five limited edition prints published in 1918 by Librairie Lutetia on the Boulevard Raspail in Paris. Two of the prints have been lent to the exhibition by Robert Wu. One print bears the inscription *Aggressus resurgo*, and illustrates the Battle of the Amazons. The inspiration for this illustration comes from Greek mythology. According to legend the Amazons were all-female warriors who were often depicted in classical art engaged in battle with Greek warriors. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus situated them in a region bordering modern day Ukraine. Other historiographers have placed them in Asia Minor and Libya. Their kingdom was governed



Illustration colori  
de Georges BarbierDOUTIS-LAS-DARRES  
Romano, 158, Paris I

by a queen, Hippolyta. This print was identified as the *artiste exemple*. The second print, number 107 of five hundred, is captioned *Le Cavalier blanc*. Barbier may have drawn his inspiration for this illustration from Fauvist painter Raoul Dufy's *Le Cavalier arabe* (*Le Cavalier blanc*), an oil painting completed in 1914.

With the end of the war in November 1918 Paris entered the era known in the francophone world as *les années folles*<sup>15</sup> – the crazy years – a period of cultural and intellectual vigour between the First and Second World Wars that cultivated the arts and design movement, later labeled the Art Deco era.<sup>16</sup> New inventions and

materials interspersed with new attitudes and morals flavoured the decade with major changes that crossed social classes. Paris became home to artists, writers, and performers from around the world. A proliferation of book clubs for bibliophiles spurred a market for finely-printed and beautifully illustrated volumes. The *Gazette du bon ton* was revived to promote the new fashions of the day such as *garçonne* or the *flapper*, as well as the vibrant Paris cultural scene. Once again the *Gazette* featured illustrations and articles by Barbier. He also contributed illustrations to two new short-lived art and fashion magazine ventures, *Les Feuilletts d'art* published 1919–1920 by Lucien Vogel and *La Guirlande* published from 1919 to 1921. *Vogue*'s publisher Condé Nast acquired controlling interest in the *Gazette du bon ton* in 1921, and in 1925 it was merged with *Vogue* and ceased publication, a victim of changing tastes in fashion and the expensive process of creating fashion plates *au pochoir*. While a number of the illustrators moved to *Vogue*, Barbier appears not to have done so. After the merger he is credited with only one contribution to *Vogue*, in 1929.<sup>17</sup>

After the war Barbier worked closely with a number of French authors to provide



decorative elements for their monographs. He provided a cover illustration for Marcel Boulenger's version of the 'beauty and the beast', *La Belle et la Bête*, published by La Renaissance du livre in 1919. Boulenger was noted for his satirical literary works and autobiographies of fictional characters. In the same year Barbier produced cover and title-page illustrations for the baronne Renée de Brimont's collection of poems entitled *Mirages*, published by Chez Émile-Paul frères. This little known work was made famous when Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) composed a musical score for it in 1919. The copy on exhibit is the author's presentation copy to the French writer André Billy (1882-1972). About the same time Barbier created an illustration for the wrapper flap of a player piano roll of Anton Dvorák's (1841-1904)





*Humoresque, op. 101, no. 7*, produced by Édition musicale perforée.

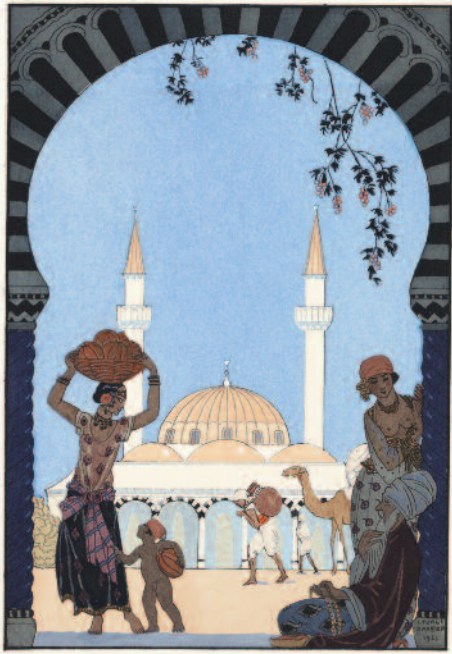
In a departure from his usual colourful illustrations, Barbier provided images for Alfred de Musset's (1810-1857) *Le Théâtre d'art* reprint edition in 1920 of *On ne badine pas avec l'amour: comédie en trois actes*. They were wood-engraved using two tones by Georges Aubert (1886-1961). The French dramatist, poet, and novelist Musset is more famously remembered for his autobiographical novel that celebrated his three-year love affair with George Sand, the Baroness Dudevant (1804-1876). The *Le Théâtre d'art series* was edited by Adolphe Van Bever (1871-1925).



Having proven successful as a fashion and book illustrator, the post-war period saw Barbier devote much of his career to the theatre and music halls where he was regarded as one of the leading costume designers in Paris. While his passion was costume design, he also engaged in set designs of which there are few surviving illustrations. His settings were restrained neutral backgrounds which allowed the elaborate and colourful costumes to stand out on stage. Barbier designed the costumes for two productions of *Casanova*, a play in three acts written by Maurice Rostand (1891-1968). In 1921 Lucien Vogel, who had founded the

*Gazette du bon ton*, published a portfolio of Barbier's costumes, *Casanova: décors et costumes: panorama dramatique*, which he had created for the production of *Casanova* performed on 2 February 1919 at the Bouffes-Parisiens. This portfolio of twenty-four loose plates incorporated two of Barbier's set designs: *La Chambre à coucher d'un libertin* and *Un salon dans une hôtellerie à Venise*. Barbier also designed the costumes for a posthumous production of Edmond Rostand's play *La Dernière nuit de Don Juan* performed at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin on 9 March 1922. This grand production was meant to honour the memory of Maurice's father, Edmond Rostand (1868-1918), who was revered by the French as a national treasure. Barbier's costumes for *Don Juan* were originally published in the February 1921 issue of the French art magazine *L'Illustration*, and re-published in 1922 by Pierre Lafitte (1872-1938) bound with another Rostand story *Le Cantique de l'aile*. Barbier's drawings for *Don Juan* are but one example of his love of the Rococo period from the eighteenth century, witnessed in his portrayals of aristocrats and courtiers, masked balls, ballet and opera, and love scenes in the garden.

Paris between the wars was the embodiment of the 'roaring twenties'. Its vibrant cultural life embraced the avant-garde with music halls and theatres that were at



times both innovative and risqué, with exotic performers, such as Argentine dancer and actress Paulette Duval (b. 1900) and the infamous Josephine Baker (1906-1975), who often performed on stage semi-nude. The Casino de Paris and the Folies-Bergère were two of the major venues for such performances. Barbier was part of this milieu as evidenced by his elegant limited edition album *Vingt-cinq costumes pour le théâtre* published in 1927 by Camille Bloch and Jules Meynial, with a preface by the French novelist Edmond Jaloux (1878-1949). Within the album were three costumes Barbier created for Duval,

including one labeled *L'Oiseau-fée* for her performance in *Le Tapis persan* at the Casino de Paris. The other two designs were Spanish dance costumes for Duval's performance at the Théâtre des ambassadeurs. Barbier's costumes were also created for theatre productions overseas. The album includes one such example — a design for Lorenzo Azertis's (pseudonym for Lorand Orbok, 1884-1924) *Casanova* performed at the Empire Theatre in New York in 1922. The last show for which Barbier is known to have designed costumes and sets was the *L'Oiseau des forêts* scene in the 1930 Casino de Paris revue *Paris qui remue*, created by Henri Varna (1887-1969) and Earl Leslie, and starring Josephine Baker. This revue featured Baker's classic rendering of Vincent Scotto's (1874-1952) *J'ai deux amours*, and proved so successful that it ran for more than five hundred performances.

Barbier collaborated on costume design projects with renowned Russian-born designer Romain de Tiroff, commonly known as Erté. Barbier wrote an essay entitled *Erté et le théâtre* for an exhibition catalogue of Erté's theatrical designs. The exhibition was on display from 27 May to 10 June 1929 at the Hôtel Jean Charpentier in Paris. While Erté opted to relocate to Hollywood in 1925 to work for MGM, Barbier remained in Paris. He provided his designs to his American clients through the costume and set design studio of Max Weldy, and they were manufactured in





*Le Jeu des Graces.*



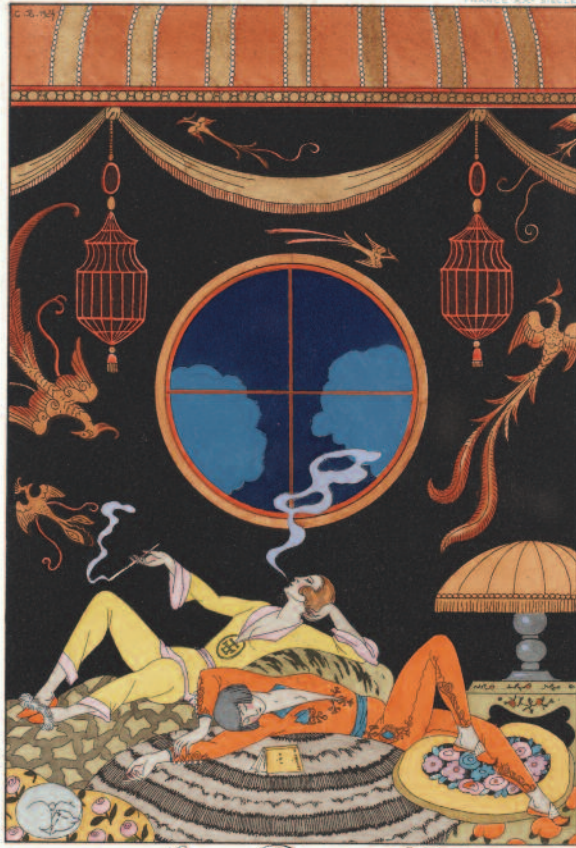
*Le long du Missouri.*



*L'Automne*



*L'Onie.*



## *La Paresse*

New York by the Brooks Costume Company. Barbier wrote of Erté: "I appreciate him above all when on the stage of the music-hall he brings out of the earth a network of diamonds throbbing on nude bodies, when he unfurls curtains embroidered with fantastic birds, or when again he raises curtains woven with ostrich feathers and heavy with fur, or harems afire, or on eastern cities built of snow, or nacre or metal."

Probably the more famous of two films for which Barbier created costumes was Paramount's 1924 silent film *Monsieur Beaucaire*, based on the story of an eighteenth-century French duke. It starred Rudolph Valentino (1895-1926), Doris Kenyon (1897-1979) and Paulette Duval. Barbier was hired by Valentino and his





L'Automne

second wife, the American-born costume and set designer Natacha Rambova (1897-1966), to design the costumes for *Monsieur Beaucaire* after they had observed his designs for a production of *Casanova* while on their honeymoon in Paris in 1923. The three hundred costumes for the film were made in Paris under the direction of Rambova, but the principal costumes are attributed to Barbier. The finished product was sewn in New York, and may have been altered somewhat by Rambova from Barbier's original designs. Barbier's designs for *Monsieur Beaucaire* can be seen in a 1924 theatre press book from the Colonial Theater in Big Rapids, Michigan, which features a close-up of

the famous kiss from the film between Valentino and Kenyon. The idolized Valentino was greatly admired by Barbier as the quintessential embodiment of the





eighteenth-century gentleman. He wrote of Valentino: “The face of the famous actor is light gold in colour; the eyes of velvet shine with charming guile. The attractiveness of this fine face lies not only in the regular features, but also in the caressing, sensual expression that veils his look, animates his nostrils, tightens his lips and leaves few women indifferent.”<sup>18</sup> While women swooned over Valentino, his American male audience was less captivated, and Valentino was challenged to defend his masculinity in a boxing match. He died very shortly thereafter from a ruptured appendix and a million New Yorkers lined the streets for his funeral.

Barbier worked with the French novelist René Boylesve on two books which were

published in 1921. The first, *Le Carrosse aux deux lézards verts: conte de fées*, published by Éditions de la Guirlande, retold an eighteenth-century fairy tale illustrated with eight full-page *pochoir* plates coloured by the master printmaker Jean Saudé. Barbier further embellished the text with a host of smaller vignettes, as well as numerous inhabited initials which introduced each chapter. The second volume Barbier illustrated for Boylesve was *Les Bains de Bade: petit roman d'aventures galantes et morales* published by G. Crès et Co. Its cover, title-page, textual vignettes, and seven full-page illustrations were wood-engraved in two tones by Georges Aubert.

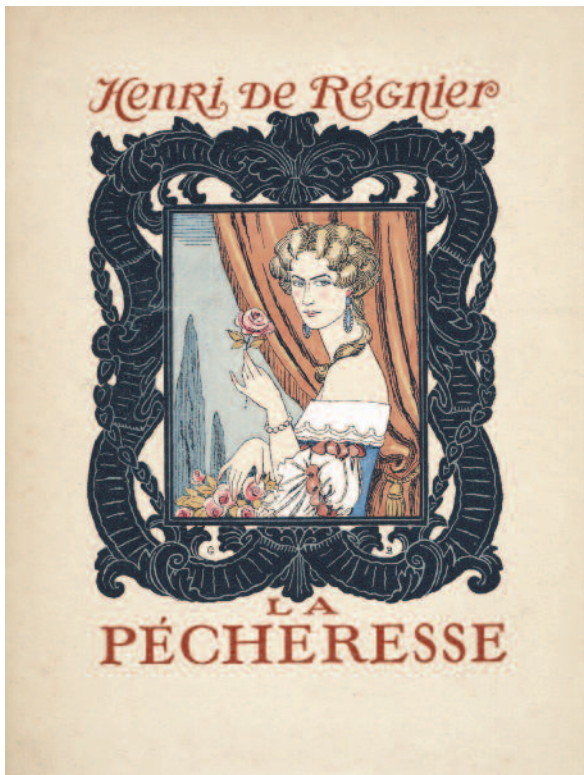
Following the publishing success of his petit almanac *La Guirlande des mois* from 1917 to 1921, Barbier continued his relationship with the publisher and bookseller Jules Meynial with a sequel. A larger-format five-volume almanac was published from 1922 to 1926 entitled *Falbalas et fanfreluches: almanach des modes présentes, passées et futures*. This new venture permitted Barbier to exercise his flights of fancy and sentimentality. His youthful images often portrayed hints of romance and





intrigue, with historical settings that were purely imaginative and whimsical. The 1925 volume was especially creative with its depictions of the seven deadly sins. One of the plates showed *L'Envie* represented by the maid gazing upon her mistress as she alights from a Rolls Royce. For the *pochoir* print captioned *Le Long du Missouri*, Barbier imagined the Indian princess Pocahontas in a canoe with the Englishman Captain John Smith, whose life she is alleged to have saved at Jamestown, Virginia, by laying her head on his as her father was about to execute him with a war club. Each of the five volumes of the almanac included twelve exquisite loose *pochoir* plates accompanied by an introductory text written by one of Barbier's friends. The 1922 almanac featured the comtesse Mathieu de Noailles (1876-1933). The text for 1923 was by the novelist Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette (1873-1954); 1924 by actress Cécile Sorel (1873-1966); 1925 by Gérard d'Houville (pen name for Marie de Régnier); and 1926 by the baronne de Brimont.

In another collaboration with publisher Meynial, Barbier beautifully illustrated a





1922 limited edition of Albert Flament's (1877-1956) *Personnages de comédie*, originally planned for publication in 1914 when Barbier initiated work on his illustrations for the text. Regarded as one of Barbier's finest works, his drawings for *Personnages* were engraved and signed by the master wood-engraver François-Louis Schmied with whom Barbier had a close working relationship. They were printed in colour by Pierre Bouchet, and enriched with silver and gold. Each leaf of text was bordered with a decorative frame. The volume included twenty-two wood-engraved initials as well as decorative devices throughout the text. One of the most attractive personages drawn by Barbier was Helen of Troy, identified in the *ordre de planches* at the back of the text with the title *La Belle Hélène*. In this print, a young Eros is suspended in mid-air to represent the loss of passion upon the death of Adonis. Barbier drew upon oriental influences to create the tree which symbolized the arboreal attributes of the cult of Helen. He juxtaposed this oriental element with a classical Greek column and two satyrs on the opposite side of the print. This is a superb example of the influence of orientalism and neo-classicism merged into one setting, a favourite technique of Barbier. The copy of this autographed album, numbered copy three, from the George Grant Collection at the Thomas Fisher Library, was given a contemporary Art Deco-style leather binding in 2013 commissioned from Toronto







bookbinder Robert Wu.

Also appearing in 1922 was one of Barbier's most memorable works, his illustrated edition of the exotic lesbian poem entitled *Les Chansons de Bilitis*. It was the fictional creation of his longtime friend Pierre Louÿs, who initially claimed it was a translation from the classical Greek of songs composed by a poet in the time of Sappho. Louÿs' close friend, composer Claude Debussy (1862-1918), had earlier set the story to music. Barbier illustrated a unique volume of *Les Chansons* in 1910 using his pseudonym of E.W. Larry owing to the

controversial content of the story. At the initiative of Pierre Corrad, Barbier began illustrating the text for publication early in his career. However, Corrad died in 1914 during the war, and the project came to a halt. It was revitalized by his widow Nicole Pierre Corrad and completed for publication in 1922. Barbier closely monitored its production, including insistence upon François-Louis Schmied as the printmaker. Considered to be one of his masterpieces, Barbier's 1922 edition is highly valued for its typography and layout by Schmied, as well as for its beautifully coloured sensual illustrations. Another rare limited edition of *Les Chansons* illustrated by Barbier was published anonymously at the Imprimé Mytilène for Les Amis de Bilitis in 1929. No extant copies of either edition are known to exist in Toronto. For the Fisher exhibition a *pochoir* reproduction of the 1922 plate *Le Bain* was selected from Vaudoyer's 1929 biography of Barbier, as well as a contemporary adaptation of the same image in enameled earthenware by the Belgian pottery Keralouve.

With the publication of *Les Plus belles heures d'amour de Casanova* in 1923 by G. Crès, Barbier revisited the story of this Italian adventurer and libertine, having published a portfolio of costumes for a 1919 theatrical performance of *Casanova* in 1921. Giovanni-Giacomo Casanova (1725-1798) wrote an autobiography detailing his



exploits, as well as describing eighteenth-century society in a number of major European cities, which was published posthumously. Édouard Maynard (b. 1897) drew upon Casanova's *Mémoires* to create a volume that celebrated Casanova's infamous passions and conquests, which Barbier illustrated with seven full-page illustrations and numerous textual vignettes. His illustrations were two-toned wood-engravings by Georges Aubert.

The Paris publisher A. & G. Mornay published a series of illustrated novels in its series *Les Beaux livres*. Barbier provided illustrations for five volumes,

beginning with Henri de Régnier's *La Pécheresse* in 1924. A close friend of the famous French risqué novelist, Barbier illustrated four of Régnier's books for Mornay's series, including *La Double maîtresse* in 1928, *Les Rencontres de Monsieur de Bréot* in 1930 and *L'Escapade* in 1931. The copy of *Les Rencontres de Monsieur de Bréot* on loan to the exhibition from the Royal Ontario Museum has an original Barbier coloured drawing of a dancer, inscribed by Barbier to the comtesse de Chevigné (Laure de Sade, 1859-1936) and dated 1931.

Barbier completed illustrations for another Mornay book in 1929, *Le Roman de la momie* by the French Romantic poet, novelist, and critic Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), which updated Gautier's 1858 version with the addition of Egyptian images and motifs inspired by the 1922 discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter (1874-1939). The engravings for *Le Roman de la momie* are by Gasperini based on Barbier's drawings. The Mornay series was admired for its integration of story and illustration, as well as its layout, which employed wrap-around text, inhabited initials, and textual vignettes. The copy of *Le Roman de la momie* in this exhibition, on loan from the Royal Ontario Museum, was rebound in leather in 2011





by Toronto book artist and binder Robert Wu with an Art Deco inspired design, marbled endpapers, and French-style chemise and slip case.

Another of Barbier's masterpieces was his *Le Bonheur du jour ou Les Grâces à la mode* published by Jules Meynial in 1924. This ambitious album took him four years to complete. Its sixteen engraved plates incorporated elements of Parisian high society, observed in a beach scene captioned *Au lido* and the conclusion of an evening party in *Au revoir*. Unfortunately no extant copies with its brilliant *pochoirs* are known to exist in Canada. A single *pochoir* plate from the album was recently acquired by the Fisher Library. *L'Amour est aveugle* is an excellent representation of the elements of Parisian high society that Barbier illustrated for this album. In the album's introduction Barbier gave a summary of fashion illustration since the sixteenth-century and wrote of his intention "to evoke the ostentatious pomp of the year of peace 1920 ... everything that glitters, everything that burns, everything that at once annoys and pleases." It was a successful attempt to cast off the gloom that had dominated Paris during wartime, and celebrate *les années folles*.



In 1928 Librairie Auguste Blaizot published an exquisite album of poems in prose by the French Symbolist poet Maurice de Guérin (1810-1839) based on two classical myths – *Le Centaure* and *La Bacchante*. *Poèmes en prose* featured thirty colour wood-block images drawn by Barbier and highlighted with gold and silver by Pierre Bouchet. This work allowed Barbier to return to a familiar theme, that of classical Greece with its emphasis on youth and physical beauty. The introductory essay was contributed by the French essayist and philosopher Paul Valéry (1871-1945), who is



remembered as the last of the great poets of the Symbolist movement in art and literature. The typography and book design were done by Barbier's long-time collaborator François-Louis Schmied. In addition to the plates, Barbier embellished the text with vignettes and inhabited initials.

The role of commercial artist was a major function of Barbier, with his illustrations and designs promoting a variety of merchandise. One such endeavour had a Canadian connection. In 1920 he

completed a watercolour for an Elizabeth Arden cosmetics premiere in New York that reflected once again his love of orientalism. Born Florence Nightingale Graham (1884-1966) in Woodbridge, Ontario, Arden founded the cosmetics empire of Elizabeth Arden Inc., which made her one of the world's wealthiest women during the 1920s. This was not Barbier's first commission for the cosmetics industry. He provided illustrations in 1914 for the promotional brochure *L'Art des parfums* produced for the perfumier Rigaud by André de Fouquières's (1874-1959), presented in story format accompanied by a list of perfumes available from the firm. The brochure was illustrated throughout by Barbier's colleague A.E. Marty, with individual plates by Barbier and several of his contemporaries. Barbier's major collaboration with the perfume industry was with the American cosmetics firm of Richard Hudnut (1855-1928), who maintained an elegant salon at 20 rue la Paix in Paris. In 1928 Hudnut, the first successful American perfumer, published *The Romance of Perfume*, with text by the English author and poet Richard Le Gallienne (1866-1947) that traced the history of perfume through the ages and across different cultures. Barbier provided full-page illustrated scenes showing the use of perfume in China, ancient Greece, ancient Rome, Egypt, India, Persia, Elizabethan England, and eighteenth-century France. His images were reproduced for the book using a photoengraving technique known as the Smithsonian Process, executed by the printing house of William Edwin Rudge (1876-1931) in Mount Vernon, New York.

The resulting plates, while not as vibrant in colour as *pochoirs* or hand-coloured wood engravings found in most of Barbier's published illustrations, are still rich pastel images.

Another commercial venture was Barbier's illustration of menus for Compagnie générale transatlantique (The French Line) generated between 1921 and 1931. The French Line's transatlantic ocean liners were noted for their luxury and high style. The *Île de France*, launched in 1927, was the first ship to be decorated in the Art Deco style. Its First Class restaurant was replicated in 1931 in the ninth-floor restaurant of Eaton's department store in Montreal. Each menu cover bearing a Barbier illustration of period fashions had a descriptive title. The one for 20 June 1921 on board the *SS La Savoie* was captioned "*Le Vin de Champagne*"; from 9 June 1928 on board the *SS Île de France* "*Voyageurs d'aujourd'hui 1927*"; from 10 June 1928 on board the *SS Île de France* "*Voyageurs d'hier 1907*"; and from 10 October 1931 on board the *SS Lafayette* "*Voyageurs d'autrefois 1867*."

During the 1920s the Paris clothier High Life Tailor published a commercial catalogue entitled *Danses de jadis*, with literary and artistic components. An undated volume from this period featured a classical dance scene in which Barbier drew upon Egyptian influences. The introductory text was written by the French writer Louis Marsolleau (1864-1935). Notable amongst Barbier's commercial design work is his 1928 catalogue illustration for Renault's Vivastella model, for which he contributed the original design in 1919. He also created at least one wallpaper design, based on an oriental theme, which was published in Léon Moussinac's (1890-1964) portfolio of fifty plates entitled *Étoffes imprimées et papiers peints*, published by Éditions Albert Lévy in 1924 in the series *Collection documentaire d'art moderne*. Moussinac was a member of the French Communist party and a prominent French film critic who promoted the showing of Soviet films in Paris during the 1920s.

The famous French poet Paul Verlaine (1844-1896), who was closely associated with the Symbolist movement, authored a volume of poems republished by H. Piazza in 1928 entitled *Fêtes galantes*. It was inspired by Edmond de Goncourt's (1822-1896) nineteenth-century multi-volume work *L'Art au dix-huitième siècle* (1859-1875), which had helped restore the public's appreciation for the Baroque paintings of Antoine Watteau, who was credited with formulating the genre of *fêtes galantes* that





celebrated idyllic scenes with a sense of theatre. While a young art student in Nantes, Barbier is believed to have copied some of Watteau's works housed in the local Musée des beaux-arts. Sharing Verlaine's appreciation for Watteau's style and period, Barbier incorporated elements in his illustrations for *Fêtes galantes* that demonstrated the Italian influences of ballet, comedy, and theatre found in Watteau's paintings. Some of Barbier's original artwork for this volume date back to 1920, and were reproduced in the publication as colour lithographs. One of the scenes illustrated by Barbier featured the *commedia dell'arte* characters Pierrot, Harlequin, and Columbine. Exhibited with this scene from *Fêtes galantes* is an original Barbier watercolour of the character Pierrot. He is often portrayed on stage and in art as the naïve but trusting sad clown figure that pines for the love of Columbine, but loses to



Harlequin. His character is usually performed unmasked, with a whitened face, and attired in a loose white blouse with large buttons, white pantaloons, and a frilled collaret. Pierrot is often interpreted as the alter-ego of the artist, a lonely fellow-sufferer whose only friend is the distant moon. The story of Pierrot, Harlequin, and Columbine was choreographed for the Ballets Russes by Mikhail Fokine in a production entitled *Carnival*. Scenes from the ballet were depicted by Barbier in his 1913 album *Dessins sur les danses de Vaslav Nijinsky*, with Tamara Karsavina as Columbine, Vaslav Nijinsky as Harlequin, and Adolph Bolm (1884-1951) as Pierrot.

One of the most impressive volumes illustrated by Barbier was a new edition of *Les Vies imaginaires* by the French Jewish writer Marcel Schwob (1867-1905), published by Le Livre contemporain in 1929. Its wood-engravings were coloured by Pierre Bouchet, while the typography and layout were the creation of Barbier's long-time collaborator François-Louis Schmied – their last project together. Schwob selected twenty-two historical characters, both famous and infamous, for his text. They included Petronius, Lucrèce, Captain Kidd, William Hare, William Burke, and Pocahontas. Barbier chose to recycle his image of Pocahontas in the canoe with Captain John Smith from its previous appearance in his 1923 almanac *Falbalas & fanfreluches*. No extant copies of this title may be found in Canada.

As early as 1926 Barbier complained to friends of being unwell. By 1930 he suffered from an illness which remains a mystery. He continued to work on one of his last projects throughout 1929 and 1930, the illustrations for a new two-volume edition of the novel *Les Liaisons dangereuses* by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos (1741-1803). For this endeavour Barbier revisited two of his beloved themes – sexual intrigue and eighteenth-century Rococo France prior to the Revolution, both of which were contexts for Laclos' novel. Barbier died on 15 March 1932 at the age of 50. The work was published posthumously two years later by Le Vasseur et Cie. The lack of Barbier's input in the final product is clearly evident in the quality of the images, which were printed by a mechanical process prior to being coloured by the *pochoir* technique. A comparison of Barbier's original compositions with the printed version reveals a lack of definition and a variation in the prescribed colours. In his other illustrated works, Barbier always took a hands-on approach to their production.

Barbier left behind an incomplete set of illustrations for *Aphrodite: mœurs antiques* by Pierre Louÿs. His colleague Georges Lepape was commissioned to complete the project, which was published over twenty years later in 1954 by Les Bibliophiles de l'Amérique latine.

A biographical article on Barbier by the French art historian Noël Clément-Janin (1862-1947) appeared in the 1929 issue of *Plaisier de bibliophile*. Published near the end of Barbier's career, it expressed great admiration for Barbier's work. In the bibliography accompanying the article, Clément-Janin identified three titles in preparation in 1929, including *Les Liaisons dangereuses* and *Aphrodite*, both of which were published posthumously. It also listed a third book Barbier was illustrating at the time, *La Péri* by Henry de Montherlant (1895-1972). The volume was never published. The 1930 manuscript with Barbier's illustrations is housed in the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Throughout his career Barbier was a prolific contributor of illustrations and articles to a number of popular French and English magazines of his day, in addition to those already mentioned in the exclusive *Journal des dames et des modes* and *Gazette du bon ton*. The Fisher Library exhibition features a selection of his illustrations from *La Vie parisienne*, *Les Feuilles d'art*, *Arts et métiers graphiques*, *L'Illustration*, *Art et décoration*, *Femina*, *L'Art et les artistes*, *The Studio*, *La Baïonnette*, *La Renaissance de l'art français et des industries de luxe*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *La Guirlande*. Of these, his work most frequently appeared in the popular risqué magazine *La Vie parisienne*, published weekly from 1863 to 1960. It featured witty cartoons, short stories, poetry, and celebrity gossip disguised by pseudonyms. Its titillating images often featured graceful semi-nude or scantily-clad women in compromising poses, erotic but never explicitly sexual. In addition to the numerous illustrations that Barbier contributed, he also published a number of social commentaries and art criticisms in *La Vie parisienne* under a variety of pseudonyms such as *Floranges*, besides those published under his real name, and was particularly well-known for his illustrated fashion column entitled *Élegances*. Other notable illustrators associated with the magazine were the Austrian-born Raphaël Kirchner (1876-1917), the Italian Enrico Sacchetti (1877-1967), Jacques Nam (1881-1974) (whose obsession with cats ensured one was always present in his illustrations), the erotic artist Gerda Wegener (wife of Danish land-



scape painter Einar Wegener), and the *chevaliers du bracelet* Charles Martin and Bernard Boutet de Monvel. Writers who contributed articles to the magazine included the Jewish author and playwright Ludovic Halévy (1834-1908), the French dramatist Henri Meilhac (1831-1897), the poet Charles Baudelaire, the subversive writer Maurice Dekobra (1885-1973), and the famous Colette.

The only book written by Barbier was a twenty page novella, *Le Carquois épuisé*, published by his long-time publisher Lucien Vogel in 1922. Only sixty copies were printed for distribution to his friends. Instead of illustrating it himself, Barbier chose Fernand Siméon to provide wood-engravings for his book. The actual manuscript was written on various hotel letter head from Toulon and Marseilles. There are no known copies of this book in public institutions except for the copy on exhibit from

the Royal Ontario Museum. This copy is number sixteen of sixty, and was inscribed to André Péreni by Barbier and dated 7 February 1931. *Le Carquois épuisé* was also published in September 1922 as an illustrated short story in the literary and art journal *Feuillets d'art: recueil de littérature et d'art contemporains* (deuxième année, no 6), produced by Lucien Vogel in collaboration with the American magazine publisher Condé Nast.

In his 1928 article on *pochoir* for *Arts et métiers graphiques*, Barbier revealed his passion for the *pochoir* technique so frequently used for colouring the engravings of his illustrations. He cited examples of *pochoir* and other arts that influenced his creations, including such works as *Le Jardin des caresses* by Franz Toussaint (1879-1955) published in 1921 with illustrations by Léon Carré (1878-1942), *Pot au noir* by Louis Chadourne (1890-1925) in 1922 with woodcuts by Pierre Falké (1884-1947), and *Le Chariot de terre cuite* by Victor Barrucand (1864-1934) in 1921 with illustrations by Carré. He identified the early influence from his childhood memories of the cheap *pochoir* engravings by François Georgin (1801-1863) and published by Pellerin & Cie at Épinal. He acknowledged the impact of the Japanese *pochoirs* of Kitao Sekkosai (active 1745-1780) in the large private collection of Henri Vever (1854-1942) to which he had access. Highlights from Vever's collection were published in an article *Estampes japonaises* by art historian Paul-André Lemoisne (1875-1964), director of the Cabinet des estampes at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, in the 1 December 1928 issue of *L'Illustration*. Paris jeweller, art collector, and bibliophile Henri Vever was an avid collector of Japanese prints. Henri, along with his older brother Paul, managed the family jewellery firm Maison Vever from 1881 to 1921. As one of the premiere jewellers in Paris, he was able to finance the acquisition of a large private collection of European, Asian, and Islamic art. The Japanese woodblock prints reproduced for the article and displayed in the exhibition were by the eighteenth-century artist Suzuki Harunobu (1725?-1770), one of the most famous creators of prints in the Ukiyo-e style.

Barbier was especially profuse in his praise of Jean Saudé who coloured Barbier's first drawings. Two of Saudé's *pochoirs*, originally completed for Jean Hugo's (1894-1984) *Le Miroir magique* were published with Barbier's article for *Arts et métiers graphiques*. The tradition of colouring prints using stencils, known in France as *au*



*pochoir*, dates to at least the fourteenth century in Western Europe. Its revival at the turn of the twentieth century saw *pochoir* prints routinely used to illustrate French fashion journals and *de luxe* editions of French books published between 1910 and 1930, influenced to a large degree by Saudé's mastering and promotion of the technique. Saudé wrote a major treatise entitled *Traité d'enluminure d'art au pochoir*, published by Éditions de l'ibis in 1925 to coincide with Saudé's exhibition of *pochoirs* at the *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* held in Paris. This exposition, celebrating post-war French decorative and applied arts, was an opportune occasion to emphasize the importance of *pochoir* for illustrating the French art books of the Art Deco period. By the time it closed in October 1925, over sixteen million people had attended the exposition.

Saudé's volume on *pochoir* is a testament to, and an advocate for, this technique of colour stenciling. It was both a technical and an historical treatment of the technique, and an album of examples of exquisite *pochoir* illustrations. It demonstrated the appropriateness of *pochoir* for colouring the *livre d'art*, which Saudé believed was the best method for interpreting an artist's original drawing. "To reproduce a colour image, whether done in watercolour gouache or wash, the basic design was first printed, and this would then serve as a foundation. A choice between photomechanical or engraving techniques then had to be made which would match the character of the original design as closely as possible. The composition was then analyzed and broken down into areas of different colour, making a *pochoir* (or *patron*) stencil for each cut-out of a thin sheet of zinc or copper. This was preferred to the oiled card which had been used earlier. Other *patrons* or stencils were used to conceal the joins, and small pieces (*tenons*) were saved to connect complex or excessively large cut-out areas. Once the cutting out of the stencils was complete, the designer took over the fine tuning of the colour tones and densities and then shared out the work among the craftsmen, each of whom was assigned a *patron*. The colouring was done with various-shaped brushes of different sizes (*brosses*, *pompons* and *goujons*), which were used with great skill to produce variations and effects of shading. The final hurdle for the craftsmen was the careful removal of the *patron* without smudging the image."<sup>19</sup> At the height of its popularity, before the advent of colour photography, over thirty graphic design studios in France employed upwards of six hundred workers to colour *pochoir* prints, which were especially favoured by the *décorateur-architect* for

presenting their interior designs in published works, for it allowed their colour palette to be more faithfully reproduced.

Several exquisite examples of *pochoirs* by major Art Deco illustrators have been incorporated into the Fisher exhibition. The print on display by painter, bookbinder, composer, fabric designer, and accomplished chemist Édouard Bénédictus (1879-1930) is from his portfolio *Variations: quatre-vingt six motifs décoratifs*, published by Albert Lévy in 1924. Its eighty-six designs hand-coloured by Jean Saudé marked a high point in Art Deco illustration. Bénédictus is known for his chemical work with glass. His close social circle included the French composer Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). He worked for the design houses of Tassinari & Chatel and Brunet-Meunie & Co.

Émile-Allain Séguy (often confused with the French entomologist Eugène Alain Séguy) drew upon his love of nature for inspiration for the *pochoir* prints from *Suggestions pour étoffes et tapis: 60 motifs en couleurs* published by Ch. Massin & Cie in 1923. The album comprised sixty designs printed on twenty folio plates. Séguy's creations were based on examples from the botanical world and were intended for use in upholstery and carpets. Other *pochoir* portfolios by Séguy illustrated Art Deco designs inspired by butterflies and insects. His illustrations were noted for their scientific accuracy.

The Spanish-born artist Eduardo Garcia Benito (1891-1981) illustrated a portfolio of twelve designs from the Paris firm of Fournures Max. *La Dernière lettre persane, mise en français*, with text by Eduardo Zamacois (1873-1971) was published in 1922 by Draeger Frères. The plates were richly printed with gold leaf and highlighted using the *pochoir* technique. Benito's style was influenced by the famous Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920). This portfolio was designed to emulate an illustrated edition of the literary masterpiece, *Lettres persanes*, by the French philosopher Montesquieu (1689-1755), published in 1721.

An early application of Jean Saudé's skill is found in the 1910 portfolio *La Décoration moderne au pochoir*, by A. Charayon and Léon Durand, and published in Seine-et-Oise by Émile Thézard. This portfolio of Art Nouveau stencil designs for walls, ceil-



CARNET D'ARTISTE — 10<sup>e</sup> FASCICULE — (BLANC PARTOUT)



PUBLIE PAR LES MAGASINS **A PYGMALION** (G. URION FILS, PETIT & C<sup>o</sup>)



ings, and friezes is a fine example of *pochoir* by the master of the technique of stenciling. During the 1920s Saudé coloured a series of *pochoirs* for a set of five albums entitled *Répertoire du goût moderne* published by Albert Lévy. These albums featured interiors by eminent French architects of the Art Deco era, including Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann (1879-1933), Gabriel Guévrékian (1892?-1970), Étienne Kohlmann (1903-1988), Robert Mallet-Stevens (1886-1945), and Louis Sognot (1892-1970). The typography was by Louis Kaldor. Several examples from album number four in the set have been selected for the Fisher exhibition.

The final example of the art of *pochoir* selected for the exhibition is an unnumbered plate of a male costume designed by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) from the album *Trente-deux reproductions des masquettes en couleurs d'après les originaux des costumes & décor par Picasso pour le ballet "Le Tricorne"*, published in Paris in 1920 by Picasso's friend and official dealer Paul Rosenberg (1881-1959). Picasso was commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev to design the Spanish folkloric costumes and stage décor for the Ballets Russes performance of *Le Tricorne*, a one-act ballet based on a novella love





UN PEU...  
Petite robe de campagne de Paquin

story by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón y Ariza (1833-1891) set in an eighteenth-century Spanish village. It was first performed by the Ballets Russes at the Alhambra Theatre in London on 22 July 1919, and premiered in Paris on 23 January 1920, with music by the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), libretto by Gregorio Martínez Sierra (1881-1947), and choreography by Léonide Massine (1896-1979). The album was printed by the Ateliers André Marty, Daniel Jacomet et Cie, and was designed to mirror Picasso's original sketchbook, including untrimmed leaves

in a variety of sizes. In addition to the costumes, Picasso also designed the drop curtain and a stage set. The album was issued in a limited edition of 250, of which fifty included a signed Picasso etching. The *pochoir* on exhibit is from album number seventy-four of the two hundred lacking the signed etching. The album was recently acquired in Spring 2013 by the Royal Ontario Museum with the financial support of the Louise Hawley Stone Charitable Trust.

The Barbier article for *Arts et métiers graphiques* revealed other influences on his work, including his taste for libertinism, which advocated following one's own inclinations rather than social conventions. He admired the libertine works of nineteenth-century French artists Pierre Numa Bassaget (1802?-1872), Henri Grèvedon (1776-1860), and Achille Devéria (1800-1857) whose lithographs often portrayed scenes that were titillating, playful, and erotic. Their influence can be detected in many of Barbier's illustrations, which are often sexually suggestive without being pornographic. His article mentioned his appreciation for the decorative arts with particular reference to the ceramics of Jacob Petit (1796-1868) which Barbier believed matched well with the prints of Bassaget, Grèvedon, and Devéria. Petit was a master of French hard-paste porcelain, having worked for the famous Manufacture de Sèvres factory as a painter before joining with his brother to acquire their own



## LA FONTAINE DE COQUILLAGES

Robe du soir de Paquin

factory in Fontainebleau in 1830 and relocating to Paris in 1869. They were noted for their ornamental pieces, including clocks, vases, and statuettes.

While the exhibition has focused principally on Barbier's published illustrations, it has also been interspersed with several original drawings that have been noted

earlier in the catalogue, including the dancer bound with ROM's copy of *Les Rencontres de Monsieur de Bréot*, the character of Pierrot, the turban ornament design *Plume de paon* for Cartier, and the original drawing for *Le Tombeau des secrets* for *Gazette du bon ton*. A highlight of the exhibition is an album of twenty-five original drawings on loan from the Royal Ontario Museum, circa 1920. The drawings are mounted on twenty sheets of blue-grey laid paper and bound together by René Kieffer, with a gilded cover illustration based on a classic Barbier drawing of a Grecian woman at a fountain juxtaposed with fawn. The album includes a drawing for the cover title of *Cantique des cantiques*, as well as sketches for fashion plates, book illustrations, and designs for ballet and stage. On display is the original drawing for a cover illustration Barbier completed in 1913 for the tenth fascicule of *Carnet d'artiste*, a series of sales catalogues published by the Paris department store À Pygmalion. Operated by G. Urion Fils, Petit & Cie, it was an imposing multi-storey building located on rue Saint Denis. It was known as a novelties shop that marketed the latest fashions, jewellery, and fabrics to a well-to-do female clientele. The volume illustrated by Barbier featured table linens and elaborately trimmed undergarments, with vignettes of ladies engaged in such activities as playing tennis, boating, skiing, riding, golfing, and dining. Barbier's cover illustration is unique in that it lacks the young black servants that attend to the ladies in each of the vignettes within the text, reflecting the racial biases of the period.

With his death on 15 March 1932, Barbier passed into obscurity. His funeral was held four days later at 7:45 in the morning in his native city of Nantes. It was an unheralded ending to a truly remarkable life lived to its fullest among the high society and rich artistic scene that was Paris in the first quarter of the twentieth century. His extensive personal library of one thousand and ninety illustrated books and literary works was sold shortly after his death at two auctions in December 1932 and March 1933 at the Hôtel Drouot. It is not known who organized and benefited from the sales. The auction was documented with two sales catalogues, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de feu M. George Barbier*, which are invaluable sources for resurrecting some of the notable influences on Barbier's life and work. His collection included numerous illustrated books by such notable artists as William Blake (1757-1827), Charles de Sousy Ricketts (1866-1931), Gustave Doré (1832-1883), Arthur Rackham (1867-1939), and Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898), as well as multiple literary titles by André

Gide (1869-1951), Pierre Louÿs (1870-1925), and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900).

Prior to his death Barbier arranged for the donation of his significant collection of over five hundred erotic Japanese Shunga prints to the Bibliothèque nationale de France to insure their survival. His collection included *Ukiyo-e* and erotic Shunga wood block prints by artists such as Hokusai and Utamaro. A small collection of erotic titles were withdrawn from the auction of his library and given to the Bibliothèque nationale, eighteen of which were catalogued into the library's restricted *Enfer* section for works considered indecent and a threat to the morals of French society. No personal papers or photographs survived, suggesting his family may have censored his personal archives. It appears that his relatives from a more provincial Nantes were embarrassed by their accomplished cousin who had thrived in the heady urbane cultural scene of Paris, and were perhaps scandalized by his association with such a risqué lifestyle and the overt expressions of sexuality displayed in many of his illustrations. However, we know from the many autographed inscriptions in the books found in his personal library and from the 1929 biography by his friend Jean-Louis Vaudoyer that Barbier was highly esteemed by the Paris literary and artistic elite. In Barbier's copy of her book *Les Climats*, Anna, the comtesse Mathieu de Noailles, wrote "*à Monsieur George Barbier dont le grand talent, l'esprit et la grande tristesse me sont chers, bien amicalement.*" In one of his volumes inscribed to Barbier, René Boylesve wrote "*À George Barbier, mon excellent collaborateur dans le passé et je l'espère dans l'avenir.*"

Much of Barbier's personal life remains an enigma due to the loss of his personal archives. He was the son of a well-to-do Nantes businessman who left Barbier a ritzy apartment building in Paris and the means to maintain a comfortable Paris lifestyle. Barbier enjoyed a luxurious residence, a substantial income to finance his theatrical pursuits, and the resources to acquire an extensive personal library, valuable antiques, and works of art. He also possessed an automobile to facilitate his escapes into the French countryside. No records have come to light to reveal intimate personal relations. Letters to his friends have revealed an artist often overwhelmed with work, and who enjoyed hosting intimate gatherings at his home for his close friends. Much of what we know of Barbier is expressed through his art and designs, and his published cultural musings – a libertine lover of classical and sensuous artistic expression and a passionate supporter of the literary and cultural scene of the



early twentieth century. He lives on through the works that reveal his artistry, his passions, and his imagery of eternal youth. In the preface to his *Personnages de comédie*, the writer and close personal friend Albert Flament commented of Barbier that “When our times are lost . . . some of his water-colours and drawings will be all that is necessary to resurrect the taste and the spirit of the years in which we lived.” His images continue to be reproduced today in a variety of media to exemplify the Art Deco period. For the Fisher exhibition his *La Fontaine de coquillages* and *Un Peu . . . : petite robe de campagne de Paquin* from the *Gazette du Bon ton* have been reproduced on porcelain by Ontario potters Thomas Aitken and Kate Hyde to honour his memory. The former image was also used for the dust jacket for the Venice exhibition catalogue and a recent book on the Ballets Russes. Flament’s prediction has proven true as evidenced by the recent republication of books from the ‘roaring twenties’ by the London publisher Alma Classics with covers employing Barbier scenes to illustrate the period. Their reprint edition of *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940) uses Barbier’s image of *L’Envie* from the 1925 almanac *Falbalas et fanfreluches*. Thus, Barbier continues in our time to provide glimpses of a by-gone era with his vivid imagery.

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 Barbara Martorelli (ed.). *George Barbier: The Birth of Art Deco* (Venice: Musei Civici Veneziani, 2008), p. 18.
- 2 Martorelli, p. 18.
- 3 Martorelli, p. 21.
- 4 Martorelli, p. 21.
- 5 Martorelli, p. 21.
- 6 J.H. Duval. "Georges Barbier: the man who drew the cover." In *Harper's Bazaar* (April 1914), p. 42.
- 7 Cally Blackman. *100 Years of Fashion Illustration* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2007), p. 9.
- 8 Giuliano Ercoli. *Art Deco Prints* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), p. 7.
- 9 Hans Nadelhoffer. *Cartier: Jewellers Extraordinary* (New York: Harry Abrams, 1984), p. 188.
- 10 Nadelhoffer, p. 230.
- 11 Cristina Nuzzi. "Introduction" In *Fashion in Paris: from the 'Journal des Dames et des Modes' 1912-1913* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. [1].
- 12 Nuzzi, p. [7].
- 13 Jean-Louis Vaudoyer. *George Barbier* (Paris: Henry Babou, 1929), p. 8.
- 14 Martorelli, p. 27.
- 15 Gordon Kerr. *Art Deco Fashion: Masterpieces* (London: Flame Tree Publishing, 2012), p. 7.
- 16 The phrase *Art Deco* was applied for the first time in 1968 by the author Bevis Hillier to define the aesthetic period between 1909 and 1939, and is derived from the 1925 Paris *Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes*.
- 17 Martorelli, p. 157.
- 18 Alain Stœffler. "George Barbier as the theatre. The Shows" in Martorelli, p. 162.
- 19 Ercoli, p. 8-9.

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