

For Immediate Release

24 May 2012

Contact: Leonie Pitts

+44 (0)20 7752 3121

lpitts@christies.com

ORIGINAL LONDON UNDERGROUND POSTERS

OFFERED FOR SALE AT CHRISTIE'S DIRECTLY FROM THE ARCHIVES OF LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM

- Over 300 original Underground advertising posters on offer
- Estimates from £800



MARC FERNAND SEVERIN (1906-1987)
The Way Home
lithograph in colours, 1938,
printed by Waterlow & Sons, Limited, London,
40 x 25in. (102 x 64cm.)
Estimate: £1,500-2,000

South Kensington – Christie's is pleased to announce an unrivalled and never-to-be-repeated opportunity to acquire iconic London Underground posters direct from the archives of London Transport Museum (LTM). The auction, featuring over 300 original advertising posters dating from 1913 to 1955, will be held at Christie's South Kensington saleroom on 4th October 2012. Fifty highlights from the Collection will be on public preview at Christie's saleroom on 8 King Street, St. James' during the Olympic period, from Monday, 16 July to Friday, 24 August 2012. Estimates for individual lots range from £800 to £15,000, with the Collection as a whole expected to realise in excess of £500,000. All lots to be offered at Christie's are duplicate copies from the Collection, and all monies raised from the auction will be held in trust by LTM for dedicated use in connection with future acquisition, conservation and restoration.

Sam Mullins, Director of London Transport Museum, said, "Having worked very closely with the Museums Association and TfL over many months to ensure that the LTM sale meets professional standards regarding the ethical disposal of collection items, we are excited to finally be able to announce this unrivalled opportunity for the public to purchase works from the archives of London Transport Museum. The complete LTM collection comprises over 40,500 posters and artworks, and offering this carefully curated duplicate selection will help us to sustain and care for the core collection for future generations."

Nicolette Tomkinson, Director, Christie's commented, "Christie's is privileged to have been entrusted with the London Transport Museum sale of duplicates, featuring some of the most recognizable and sought-after designs in the history of vintage posters, in pristine condition. We hope that the King Street exhibition of highlights in July and August, as well as the full sale exhibition pre-sale, will provide insight into the often forgotten rich artistic past of the London Underground."

“The longest art gallery in the world”

London Transport Museum manages one of the greatest poster collections in the world, thanks largely to the vision and legacy of one man: Frank Pick (1878-1941). In 1908, Pick was given responsibility for promoting the services of the *Underground Electric Railways of London (UERL)*. He initiated a modern, colourful, poster campaign to encourage off peak travel, which has been actively continued ever since.

In 1908, in an effort to increase passenger numbers, the six independent underground railway operators agreed to promote their services jointly as “the Underground”, publishing joint advertisements and creating a free publicity map of the network for the purpose. From the outset, the Underground commissioned the very best designers of the day to promote everything from off-peak travel, leisure trips, seasonal sales and sporting fixtures, to the reliability of the Tube itself. The designs proved hugely popular with the travelling public, who soon petitioned the Underground for copies they could purchase – encouraged in part by exhibitions of Tube posters at London art galleries, the first of which was held in 1917 at the *Mansard Gallery* above *Heal’s* furniture store on Tottenham Court Road. Following a public demand, around 150 copies of each poster were available to purchase at the company’s head office for between 2 and 5 shillings depending on the printing cost.

By the 1920s and 30s, the status of winning a commission with the Underground was such that the company had no problem in attracting the leading poster designers of the time such as Fred Taylor and Austin Cooper, together with well-known cutting edge modernists such as Man Ray, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Julius Klinger. Many other commercial artists also achieved their ‘big break’ on the Underground’s hoardings, including Edward McKnight Kauffer (probably the greatest poster designer working in inter-war Britain) as well as Edward Bawden, Tom Eckersley, David Gentleman, Abram Games and a host of other giants of twentieth century design. Fine artists, too, like Edward Wadsworth, Paul Nash and William Roberts were equally keen to see their work displayed on what was soon termed “the longest art gallery in the world”. This commitment to outstanding quality continues to the present day with Transport for London’s Art on the Underground commissioning programme.

The Vintage Poster Market

Christie’s has led the way in the market of Vintage Posters at auction, holding the first ever sale dedicated to the category in 1982. Typically, the tri-annual auctions held in the South Kensington saleroom offer examples from various owners across the genres of travel, sport and ski. Editions of the most important posters garner attention from institutions, and there are now several established dealers in the market, however, for the most part, Christie’s sales welcome private collectors. Due to the accessibility of the medium, in terms of aesthetic quality as well as price range, the works are often used as an appealing addition to home décor. Rarity and condition are the two main factors which indicate the value of each poster – as they were not originally intended to be kept for any great length of time, those on the open market today were either ‘rescued’ from a billboard before being pasted-over by the advertising companies, or were purchased as one of the limited editions released for sale at the time of printing. The Underground and its successor from 1933 - London Transport kept duplicate copies of most posters it produced, and it is from this collection of spares that the selection offered for sale is drawn.

Christie’s holds the world record price for a travel poster sold at auction, which was achieved in 2007 when Man Ray’s iconic design for London Transport, *Keeps London Going* sold for £50,400.

###

Further sale details and highlights will be available in July 2012

[Please visit the Vintage Posters Department Page for further details on upcoming sales](#)

Notes to Editors:

ECATALOGUE

The sale catalogue will be available to view online from mid-July 2012 at www.christies.com/calendar

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

Highlights exhibition: Christie's, 8 King Street, St. James', London, SW1Y 6QT
Monday, 16 July – Friday, 24 August 2012

Full sale exhibition: Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7 3LD
Saturday, 29 September - Wednesday, 3 October 2012

AUCTION

Posters from the London Transport Museum – 4 October 2012, at 11am

Christie's South Kensington

Open seven days a week, Christie's South Kensington is one of the busiest salerooms in the UK attracting over 200,000 visitors each year. With over 100 sales and offering more than 20,000 lots annually, estimates start from £300. Interiors sales dedicated to home furnishings are held three times a month alongside regular Sunday sales of single-owner collections. Specialised sales for the avid collector are scheduled throughout the year according to category, and include Film Posters, Pop Memorabilia, Antiquities, Jewellery, 20th Century British Art and Chinese Works of Art, among others. In 2011 Christie's South Kensington realised the highest ever total for the second successive year with sales of £115.9 million / \$186.6 million.

About Christie's

Christie's, the world's leading art business, had global auction and private sales in 2011 that totaled £3.6 billion/\$5.7 billion. Christie's is a name and place that speaks of extraordinary art, unparalleled service and expertise, as well as international glamour. Founded in 1766 by James Christie, Christie's has since conducted the greatest and most celebrated auctions through the centuries providing a popular showcase for the unique and the beautiful. Christie's offers over 450 auctions annually in over 80 categories, including all areas of fine and decorative arts, jewellery, photographs, collectibles, wine, and more. Prices range from \$200 to over \$100 million. Christie's also has a long and successful history conducting private sales for its clients in all categories, with emphasis on Post-War and Contemporary, Impressionist and Modern, Old Masters and Jewellery. Private sales totaled £502 million / \$808.6m in 2011, an increase of 44% on the previous year.

Christie's has a global presence with 53 offices in 32 countries and 10 salerooms around the world including in London, New York, Paris, Geneva, Milan, Amsterdam, Dubai, Zürich, and Hong Kong. More recently, Christie's has led the market with expanded initiatives in emerging and new markets such as Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, with successful sales and exhibitions in Beijing, Mumbai and Dubai.

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium and do not reflect costs, financing fees or application of buyer's or seller's credits.*

About London Transport Museum

- For more information about LTM's outstanding collection please visit www.ltmuseum.co.uk where over 5,500 original posters and artwork designs are available to browse, together with background information and artist biographies. The Museum looks after over 40,000 individual posters, which includes duplicate copies.
- The Museum will celebrate the iconic status of Underground posters in a major exhibition **Poster Art 150: London Underground's Greatest Designs**, which opens in February 2013. The exhibition forms part of a year of events and activities to commemorate the 150th anniversary of London Underground.

London Transport Museum is a designated and accredited museum, and registered charity number is 1123122.

CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON

85 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7 3LD

OPENING SEVEN DAYS A WEEK

Monday: 9.00am – 7.30pm

Tuesday – Friday: 9.00am – 5.00pm

Saturday & Sunday: 11.00am - 5.00pm

WWW.CHRISTIES.COM

Prices do not include buyers' premium