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I Want You to Keep Calm & Carry On: Wartime Posters Lead Sale at Swann

New York— More than 600 colorful advertisements and announcements crossed the block at Swann Auction Galleries' sale of **Vintage Posters** on **Wednesday, August 2**. The encyclopedic selection represented a century's worth of development in graphic design, history and technology.

In honor of the centennial anniversary of the U.S.'s entry into WWI, the sale featured the largest selection of war propaganda the house has ever offered. According to Nicholas D. Lowry, Swann Galleries' President and Director of Vintage Posters, the varied designs from 1917 are the result of the government giving illustrators free rein to create striking imagery that continues to resonate today. Highlights from this category include works by James Montgomery Flagg, lead by *I Want You for U.S. Army*, which sold for \$14,300*, and *Wake Up America Day* (\$5,250).

The top lot was the iconic British directive *Keep Calm and Carry On*, 1939, which was purchased by a collector for \$15,000. Additional highlights from WWII included *Join the ATS*, 1941, a poster by Abram Games considered so scandalous it was never published (\$6,500), and a suite of patriotic works by Leo Lionni, titled *Keep 'Em Rolling!*, 1941, purchased by an institution for \$8,750. Lowry added, "As expected, the war posters and propaganda sold exceptionally well, with nearly 80% of lots offered finding buyers." War poster sales accounted for nearly half of the total revenue of the auction.

Fin de siècle works performed well, with a pencil drawing by Alphonse Mucha nearly doubling its estimate to sell for \$10,400. The Art Nouveau master was also represented by *Zodiac*, 1900, *Job*, 1898, and *Salon des Cent*, 1896 (\$11,250, \$6,563 and \$6,500, respectively). A monumental circa 1905 advertisement for *Abricotine* liqueur by Eugène Grasset reached \$8,125, while *Ausstellung für Amateur – Photographie*, a 1908 ad for cameras by Burkhard Mangold, was purchased for \$4,750, a record for the work. Walter Schackenberg's complete 1920 portfolio of striking costume designs, *Ballet und Pantomine*, reached \$11,250.

Posters promoting performers spanned a century and encompassed a variety of acts. One of the oldest works in the sale depicted the heavily tattooed *Captain Constantenus* at P.T. Barnum's New American Museum in 1876; it reached more than five times its high estimate, finally selling to a buyer on the phone for \$6,750. Nearly 100 years later, Rick Griffin created the well-known eyeball design for the *Jimi Hendrix Experience*, 1968 (\$11,875). An undated, life-size advertisement for Danté, often considered the last Golden Age magician, was purchased by a collector for \$12,500.

The next sale of Vintage Posters at Swann Galleries will be Rare & Important Travel Posters on October 26, 2017. For more information or consign quality materials, contact Nicholas D. Lowry at posters@swann galleries.com.

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