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Art Nouveau to Andy Warhol: Graphic Design Shines at Swann Galleries

New York—Swann Galleries' May 25 auction of **Graphic Design** offered a cornucopia of inspired design spanning fin de siècle Art Nouveau masters to psychedelic concert posters.

The top lot of the sale was *Col Van Heusen*, 1928, one of the most elegant, Cubist-style designs created by Charles Loupot. The strikingly colored work, which was intended to advertise men's collars, displays some of the richest inking seen in the artist's work; it sold for \$50,000*, far exceeding its pre-sale high estimate of \$30,000. Works by Loupot performed well overall, with several claiming places in the top lots. The verdant 1923 advertisement for *Voisin Automobiles* reached \$30,000, while his 1919 poster for *Sato / Cigarettes Egyptiennes* went to a collector for \$7,500.

Several works reached new heights at auction, most notably Ludwig Hohlwein's charming life-size image of a baby zebra and a macaw, intended to promote the opening of the new Munich Zoo; *Besuchet den Tiergarten*, 1912, which was purchased by a collector for \$22,500, a record for the work. Another record went to a Soviet propaganda poster captioned in Russian, *Let's Build a Fleet of Airships in Lenin's Name!*, 1931, by Georgij Kibardin (\$5,250).

Making its auction debut was the monumental poster *Auto Races / World's Greatest Drivers*, standing more than 12 feet tall, which sold for \$6,250. The previously unrecorded Art Deco *Fete de Nuit aux Folies Bergere*, 1928, by Maurice Picault, reached \$7,250 in its first auction appearance.

The sale featured a premier selection of Art Nouveau and Wiener Werkstätte material, led by Bertold Löffler's bold poster *Kunstschau Wien*, 1908, which reached \$42,500. Additional highlights included *Secession 49 – Ausstellung*, a 1918 exhibition poster by Egon Schiele into which he incorporated a self portrait (\$22,500).

Works by the poster-world icon Adolphe Mouron Cassandre performed well, with two major works confirming his position as a design visionary; the monumental 1935 poster *Normandie*, emphasizing the incredible size of the transatlantic ship, reached \$22,500, while *Miniwatt / Philips Radio*, 1931, which shines in primary hues, sold for \$6,000. Ottokar Mascha's *Österreichische Plakatkunst*, circa 1914, was the only comprehensive book published about Austrian posters during their golden age; the rare tome doubled its estimate, selling for \$18,750.

More recent works included the promotional flyer for *Andy Warhol's / My Hustler*, a 1966 film by the artist; the typographical work sold to a collector for \$6,250. The prismatic poster for *The Electric Factory / Jimi Hendrix Experience*, 1968, by Icabod (Rob Stewart) and Snake (Karl Howard), reached \$4,750.

Swann President and Director of Vintage Posters, Nicholas D. Lowry, said of the sale, "This buoyant sale showed just how desirable good graphic design is to collectors. It covered an array of styles and eras, and in each there were impressive results. Perhaps most astounding was how the top twenty lots were split almost evenly between dealers and collectors. To have so many dealers participate at such a robust level clearly indicates that even their clients were showing an increased interest in the material."

The next sale of Vintage Posters at Swann Galleries will be on August 2, 2017. For more information or consign quality materials, contact Nicholas D. Lowry at posters@swann galleries.com.

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