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## THE GOLDEN AGE OF RAIL



### Souvenirs of the International Sleeper-Train Company

**Tuesday 27 September 2011**

**Paris** - Christie's is honoured to announce the sale of souvenirs from the international sleeper-train company, including prints, posters, works of Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary art, Furniture and Works of Art, Porcelain and Silver. An icon of the Art Deco movement, the legendary Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train epitomized the early 20<sup>th</sup> century voyage, in a time where grace rhymed with elegance. The "Orient-Express" style knew its peak in the 1920s, with the collaboration of artists-decorators such as Prou and René Lalique. With its comfortable cabins, real écrins trimmed thin inlays, and gleaming brasses, the company of the sleeping car porters of the Orient Express, insured the connection between Paris, Vienna, Istanbul and several capitals across Europe, since 1883 and reflected the excellence of 20th century design.

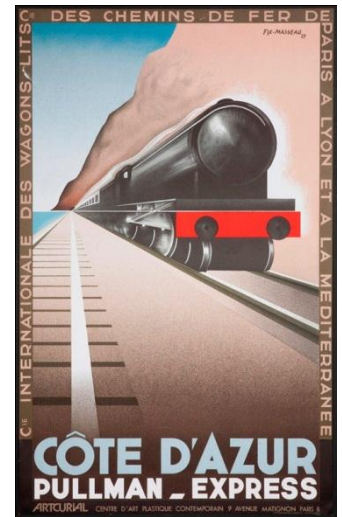
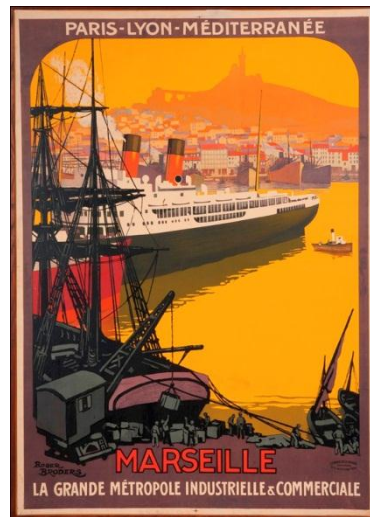
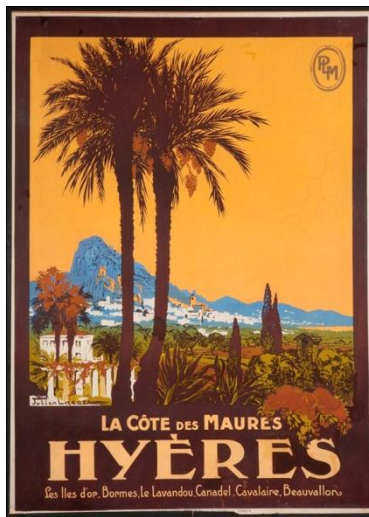


From the Cote d'Azur Pullman Express train, which was in service in 1929, comes several decorative panels in molded white glass, pressed on a silver background, and signed René Lalique; such as two remarkable triptychs with female and male silhouettes along with grape patterns (estimate: €40,000-60,000). Other panels by Lalique are bunches of flowers encased in a sycamore trim (estimates ranging from €7,000 to €35,000).



Catering on board the trains was always of the highest standard, and an example of a set of porcelain tableware, marked with the letters WL, and other dishes in silver gilt metal will be also put to auction at a range of price levels.

The theme of travelling embodied the leisure class of the 1920s and was widely seen in important advertising campaigns and abundant promotional lithographs in color. Examples of these vibrant designs, dating from the late 19th century to the 1930s, will be available at auction: *Hyères, la Côte des Maures*, 1920, by Julien Lacaze (estimate: €700-1,000), *Chemin de fer de Genève* by Frédéric Hugo of Alesi (estimate: €500-700), *Venise*, 1921 by Georges Dorival (estimate: €1,500-2,000).



Iconic slogans depict sleeper trains such as these fine examples of advertisements : *Enjoy life, travel in wagon-lits* (estimate: €500-700), *Save a day - Sleep on way* (estimate: €500-700), *Sleep well, eat well, enjoy your journey* (estimate: €100-150). The second and third classes also benefited from advertising campaigns : *Wagon-lits Touriste, avec un billet de 2ème classe*, 1960 (estimate: €200-300) and *Voyagez en wagons-lits de troisième classe*, 1930 (estimate: €200-300).

Many artists were inspired by the railway and we will offer seven works by Theo Van Rysselberghe, amongst them, a portrait of Mister Nagelmacker executive in 1897, who was the founder of the international Company of sleeping cars (estimate: € 70,000-90,000). Several oil sketches, including one for the North-South, Brenner Express poster and another for Ostend Trieste Express are estimated each €80,000-120,000. The contemporary artist, Valerio Adami, signed four works entitled *Wagons-lits*, estimated each €20,000-30,000 – echoing the work of Pierre Alechinsky, Eduardo Arroyo, Corneilles, Peter Klasen and Jacques Monory.

A set of small-scale models and models will be presented. Amongst them will include three in scale 1 car Pullman lounge, whose panels by René Lalique were decorated floral design (estimate:€ 40,000-60,000), a dining car, furnished with armchairs entitled "bridge", again with panels ornamented with inlaid design (estimate: €15,000-25,000) and another one with inlaid and mahogany (estimate: €12,000-18,000).

### **A few dates :**

**In 1869**, Georges Nagelmackers visits the United States of America, by travelling in cars invented by the industrialist George Pullman, inventor of the sleeper cars. Inspired, after the 1874 agreement of traffic for the sleepers from Paris to Vienna, he founded on December 4, 1876 the international company of the sleeping car porters, which would become the international company of sleeping cars and the major European express. Two years later they introduced the first sleeping cars on the line joining Vienna to Ostrava.

**October 10, 1882** a first luxury train service was implemented, the lightning Train, on the Paris-Vienna axis, which connected in express both capitals distant from 1350 kilometers, in 27 hours and 53 minutes. The first train, called The Orient Express was inaugurated on June 5, 1883, circulated twice a week between Paris and Constantinople (today Istanbul) via Strasbourg, Munich, Vienna, Budapest and Bucharest. This train was not direct: it stopped in Romania, the crossing of the Danube to Bulgaria was made on a ferry, and then a second train assured the route to the Black Sea. From there, a steam train drove passengers in fourteen hours to Istanbul.

**In 1885**, the service became daily to Vienna. From 1889, the line was completed to Istanbul and the train became direct.

**In 1918**, Marshal Foch signed the armistice asked by the German Empire, in the car n ° 2419.

**In 1929**, the Orient-Express was blocked by snow in Turkey. The train having five days of delay, the passengers had to hunt and eat wolves to survive; this adventure inspired Agatha Christie one of his most famous novels a "no exit railway" the Crime of the Orient-Express.

This train also inspired one of the most memorable passages of the eleven thousand yards of Guillaume Apollinaire, which takes place in a sleeping car of the Orient-Express, leading the prince Vibescu from Paris to Bucharest.

**Exhibitions : Friday 23, Saturday 24 and Monday 26 September 2011**

**Sale : Tuesday 27 September 2011**

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*Images available on request*

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