

## international events

# Something to shout about

■ Poster to promote a French newspaper sets a new high for popular designer Cassandre



Anne Crane reports

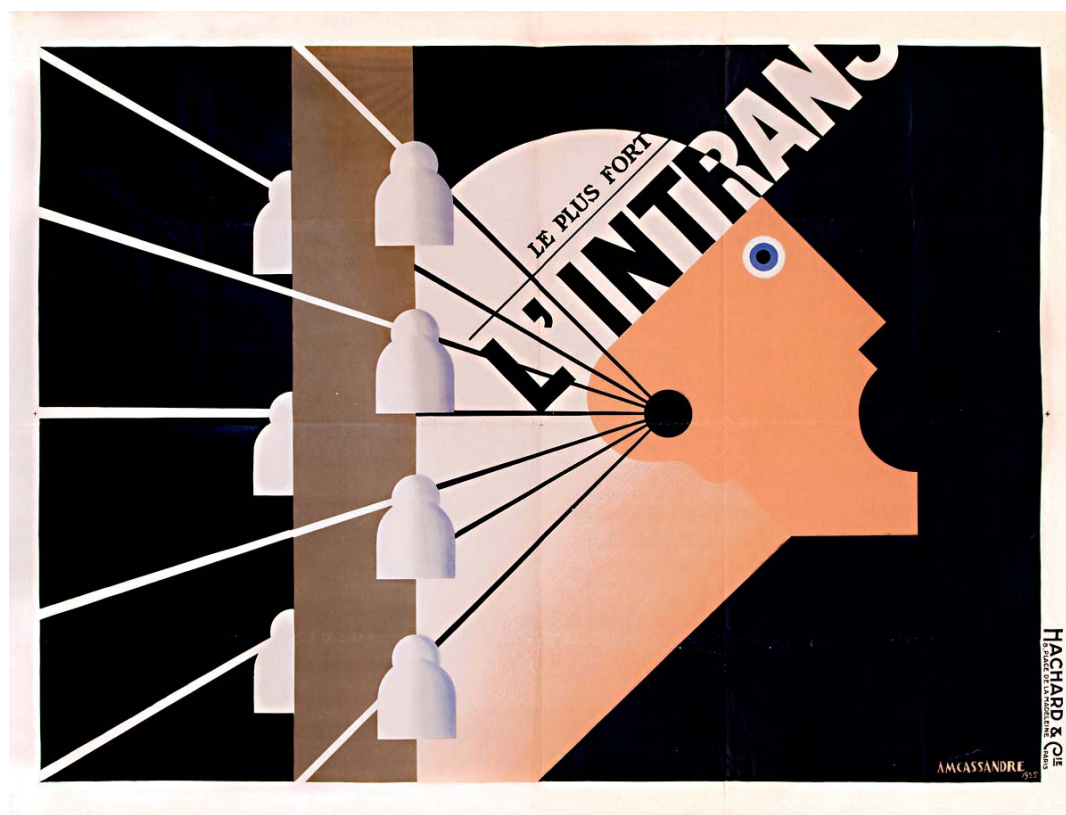
£1 = €1.2

**A STRIKING image by poster great A.M. Cassandre (1901-68) was the runaway star of Van Sabben's sale in the Netherlands.**

Considered the rarest of all the posters Cassandre designed, the 4ft 11in x 3ft 11in (1.5 x 1.2m) work had been consigned to the specialist auction house for the November 15 line-up in Horn from a local source unaware of its value.

Udo Boersma, owner of Van Sabben, said he had initially received the poster in the summer, and had "been smiling for five months" prior to the November sale as word got round and interest grew among poster dealers and collectors abroad. He believed it to be the first time this design by Cassandre had ever been seen on the market, with only a handful known in museum collections.

The poster had been the commission of Leon Bielby, editor of *L'Intransigeant*, a right-wing Parisian evening newspaper which at the time was selling a million



**Left:** the Cassandre poster sold at Van Sabben on November 15 for €210,000 (£175,000), setting a new high for the designer at auction.

copies every day. In 1925, Bielby asked Cassandre to produce a design which reflected the ambitions of the paper.

Cassandre based the composition around the profile of a newspaper boy shouting the day's top stories with a convergence of lines into his ear which had passed through simplified forms representing the ceramic insulators of

telegraph wires. The words *Le Plus Fort* ('the biggest and best', or 'the strongest') is placed above the bold lettering of the paper's name.

A pair of bidders in the room and seven phone lines with participants from America, Japan and the UK all took part. Bidding started at €25,000 and rose to €32,000, at which point a jump bid of

€100,000 was made.

In the end it sold to one of the phone bidders, a private collector, for €210,000 (£175,000) plus premium – a record for Cassandre at auction. It easily eclipsed the previous \$130,000 (£85,500) high for the 1928 design *L.M.S./Best way* at Swanns of New York in November 2012.



### MASK IN DEMAND

**Left:** the Amsterdam auction house **de Zwaan** featured a carved ivory Lega mask from the former Belgian Congo in their sale series held from October 28-November 11. The vendor's grandfather found the mask in the Belgian Congo around 1920 and it had never before been on the market. There was very keen competition for this piece from several phone lines but the mask eventually sold to a private buyer in the saleroom for €300,000 (£250,000).



### LUMINISM IN LOKEREN

**Above:** the Lokeren-based Belgian auctioneers **de Vuyst** held their third fine art sale of the year on October 25, bringing the usual mix of Old Masters, 19th century and contemporary art. Among the sale highlights was this landscape by the Belgian artist Emile Claus (1849-1924) in the Impressionist-influenced style he expounded that was known as Luminism. The 3ft 2in x 4ft 8in (98cm x 1.4m) oil on canvas titled *Soleil d'Hiver après midi* (Winter sun, Afternoon) is signed and monogrammed *January JB* on the reverse. Featured in a 1985 retrospective on the artist in Waregem and with a provenance to the Galerie Georges Giroux in Brussels, it sold for €240,000 (£200,000).

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