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london selection

From Nelson to Jutland... m

■ Specialist maritime sale at Olympia scores success in today's selective market



Gabriel Berner reports

SHIP models, as ever, were the stars of *Charles Miller's* (20% buyer's premium) bi-annual Maritime and Scientific sale at Olympia.

The 33-lot model section contributed almost half of the £329,654 sale total on October 31, where a total of 282 lots offered. Ships also made up five of the top ten prices including the sale topper.

The market remains a highly selective one says Mr Miller, but the 75% selling rate (excluding after-sales) showed there is still demand for interesting pieces with a good provenance.

The top price was for the builder's model of the torpedo destroyer *HMS Marksman*, a Lightfoot class flotilla leader built by Hawthorn Leslie on Tyneside in 1915 in time to be deployed at the Battle of Jutland a year later.



Above: a builder's 1915 model of *HMS Marksman* – £64,000 at Charles Miller.

More than 7ft (2.13m) long, the 1:48 scale model, consigned by the Wellesley Nautical School Charity, was one of just two torpedo boat destroyers from the period Mr Miller had handled in his 20-year career, but he knew this was a "rippingly good example".

Kept out of sunlight for almost 40 years, it had retained its colour well and had barely been touched since it was made. Pursued by four telephones well above the £15,000-25,000 estimate, it was eventually secured by a private Canadian buyer at £64,000.

At that price, the destroyer outshone what had been the sale's potential

highest flyer – a 2ft-long (61cm) model of Nelson's *HMS Victory* as she was at 3.45pm on January 19, 1805 anchored off Agincourt Sound, Sardinia complete with the captains of the *Active* and *Seahorse* approaching in a rowing boat to report.

Considered the most complex and accurately detailed ever undertaken of *Victory*, the 1:96 scale model was a labour of love for Tim Davies who spent years on the project starting in 2005 – the year of Nelson's bicentenary.

His extraordinary dedication to precision included three years experimenting with the sea surrounding

Right: in a bespoke, temperature controlled case, a modern 2ft-long (61cm) model of *HMS Victory* as she was at 3.45pm on January 19, 1805 anchored off Sardinia – £20,000 at the same Olympia sale.

the ship model, accurately reproducing the correct light refraction on the hull and anchor cable to appear as it would have been when Nelson gave the order from the poop deck to set sail. The backdrop, created from period pictures, was painted by the marine artist Geoff Hunt.

Battleship Potemkin helps Stenberg brothers to new heights



Record-setting avant garde posters by Vladimir and Georgi Stenberg at Christie's South Kensington.

Above: the 2ft 3in x 3ft (69 x 91cm) poster for the 1925 cinematic masterpiece piece *Battleship Potemkin* – £85,000.

Left: the 3ft 7in x 2ft 3in (1.07m x 69cm) poster for the 1929 film *The Man with the Movie Camera* – £90,000.

A PAIR of striking Constructivist film posters by the renowned Russian graphic design brothers Vladimir (1899-1982) and Georgi (1900-1933) Stenberg have set what is believed to be a new high for avant-garde posters at auction.

Promoting the famous Soviet propaganda films *Battleship Potemkin* and *The Man with the Movie Camera*, the 1929 posters were consigned from the same source into **Christie's** (25/20/12% buyer's premium) vintage posters sale at South Kensington on November 1.

The £60,000-80,000 estimates were pitched about right as a telephone bidder secured both posters at £85,000 and £90,000 respectively.

According to *Artnet*, the previous auction record for a work by the Stenberg brothers was the £35,500 bid at Poster Auctions International of New York in 1999 for a poster design from the film *Odinnadstaty* (The eleventh).

The brothers were successful theatrical designers, architects and draughtsmen but their Constructivist advertising posters for Soviet Russia's burgeoning cinema culture are