

Vintage Posters Up for Auction

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Stenberg brothers used the avant-garde art of the time in their work.

Christie's will auction off more than 20 prewar Russian movie posters Thursday, including two rare avant-garde film posters that are expected to go for more than \$60,000.

All the posters come from the 1920s and early 1930s, a time of creative flourishing amid the turmoil of post-revolutionary Russia.

Posters from two of the most famous films of that time, Sergei Eisenstein's "Battleship Potemkin" and Dziga Vertov's "The Man with the Movie Camera" are the most interesting posters, both done by the prolific poster artists the Stenberg brothers, Vladimir and Georgy.

"Both of these films are really highly influential and incredibly innovative," Sophie Churcher, specialist in vintage posters at Christie's, said in a telephone interview from London. "It was a period of creative freedom in Russia, and the brothers were able to produce posters to show the innovative and experimental nature of the films."

In "Battleship Potemkin," the Stenbergs' poster uses the diagonal compositions favored by Suprematist artists as it reflects the revolutionary propaganda of the film by showing a sailor standing on the ship's guns as an officer plunges from the boat.

The poster for Vertov's film, a groundbreaking movie that first used many of the techniques seen in today's film world, shows a woman falling between high-rise buildings, a female version of the opening title of the TV series "Mad Men."

The design creates an instant feeling of vertigo, Churcher said.

Christie's estimated the value of each poster at between \$60,000 and \$80,000.

The Stenberg brothers were part of the avant-garde scene of the time and made numerous posters. Vladimir was also a painter and sculptor. In 1997, New York's Museum of Modern Art ran an exhibit dedicated to the pair.

One of the other highlights is an original gouache-pencil design by the brothers for a film called "The Eyes of Love," Churcher said. The poster shows an intimidating man's face for a foreign film of unknown origin.

Foreign films were very popular after the revolution, when there was little censorship in cinemas. Hollywood darlings Douglas Fairbanks and his wife, Mary Pickford, were mobbed by fans on a visit to Moscow in 1926, and a silent film, "The Kiss of Mary Pickford," was made about their visit.

Other highlights include a film poster for Fritz Lang's "Die Nibelungen," a film that helped him finance his masterpiece, "Metropolis."

The posters will be on display at Christie's South Kensington from Saturday to Wednesday.

Christie's South Kensington. 85 Old Brompton Road, London. www.christies.com

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