Stephen Ongpin Fine Art

Percy Drake Brookshaw (1907 - 1993)

Boat Race

Gouache on paper.
Signed DRAKE BROOKSHAW at the lower left.
257 x 385 mm. (10 1/8 x 15 1/8 in.) [image]
315 x 435 mm. (12 3/8 x 17 1/8 in.) [sheet]

The present sheet is likely to have been a design for a poster, possibly for the Henley Royal Regatta or the University Boat Race. The artist here depicts the boat race from overhead, emphasizing in particular the decorative effect of the action of the oars and the ripples caused by them in the water. Brookshaw produced a number of posters of the annual University Boat Race for the London Underground in the 1920's and 1930's, two examples of which - for the Boat Race in 1928 and 1937 - are today in the collection of the London Transport Museum.

The first London Underground poster advertising the annual Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Race was produced in 1911. Although the earliest examples were fairly traditional in appearance, this changed in later years. As one scholar has written, 'Throughout the 1920's, the London Underground continued to distribute posters advertising the Boat Race, many of which were now produced by more innovative and modernist-inspired artists brought in under the leadership of Frank Pick. Among these were Charles Paine and Percy Drake Brookshaw, both of whom produced posters featuring boats seen from an aerial perspective and with a strong emphasis on the geometrical forms made by the boats as they sped through the water.'

Provenance:

The family of the artist, and thence by descent.

Exhibitions

London, Darnley Fine Art, The Art of Travel, 2014.

Artist description:

Born in Southwark in London, Percy Drake Brookshaw studied at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. A painter in oils and watercolours as well as a lithographer, he was encouraged by the poster and textile designer F. Gregory Brown to turn his hand to working as an illustrator, poster designer and graphic artist. Brookshaw designed advertising posters for London Transport and the Underground Group between 1928 and 1958, often depicting such annual sporting events as the Lawn Tennis Finals at Wimbledon, the cricket at Lords, football Cup Finals at Wembley1 and the Oxford and Cambridge University Boat Race on the river Thames. Brookshaw taught lithography at Goldsmith's College School of Art in London in the late 1940's and early 1950's, and was a member of the Art Workers Guild and the Senefelder Club. He also worked occasionally as an illustrator, notably providing illustrations for an edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's Kidnapped, published in 1925.