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Object Lesson

Cabin in the Sky poster

BY JACKIE COOPERMAN, PUBLISHED ON 03/30/2010

OBJECT A 41-by-27-inch poster for *Cabin in the Sky*, the 1943 Vincente Minnelli movie starring Ethel Waters and Lena Horne, at The Reel Poster Gallery, a London dealer in vintage film posters.

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DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS Illustrated by Al Hirschfeld, the poster was printed in an edition of 1,000, but only six are known to exist, according to the gallery. The image of heaven and hell fighting for the soul of little Joe Jackson was actually an alternative to the movie's main poster, which showed the stars' faces and was mass-produced. Margaret Barrett, head of the popular arts department at Christie's, explains that the poster is valuable because it represents "a rare film, an all-black cast, and Hirschfeld's a known artist." Hirschfeld, who is still working, has illustrated approximately 500 film posters, beginning with *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* in 1921.

PROVENANCE Bruce Marchant, co-owner of The Reel Poster Gallery, bought the poster from a private American collector who had owned it for three decades. Previous copies in similar mint condition have sold at Christie's, for \$11,750 in 2001, and at Sotheby's, for \$10,200 in 2000.

ASKING PRICE \$23,500. At 72 Westbourne Grove; 44-207-727-4488;
www.reelposter.com.

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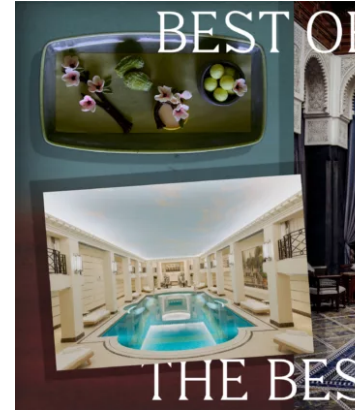
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