E. Mcknight Kauffer
Design
Brian Webb
Peyton Skipwith

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- The designer of some of the most striking and influential advertising graphics of the 1920s and 30s
- 150 illustrations, including McKnight Kauffer's outstanding work for Shell, London Underground and the Post Office
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Edward McKnight Kauffer (1890-1954) was the most celebrated graphic designer working in Britain in the twentieth century. Born in Montana, he left America before the first world war to travel throughout Europe absorbing the influences of the Cubists and the German poster artist Ludwig Hohlwein. At the onset of war he settled in London. Seeing himself as a painter, he allied himself with the London Group and the Vorticists. He worked at Roger Fry's Omega Workshops with Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, and in 1915 was commissioned by Frank Pick, then the publicity manager at London Underground. This was the beginning of a client-designer relationship that lasted throughout the 1920s and '30s, only ending when Kauffer returned to New York in 1940. His posters, brilliantly coloured and strikingly modern, struck London like a Cubist thunderbolt. Soon other clients, Jack Beddington at Shell, Sir Colin Anderson at the Orient Shipping line, the *Daily Herald* (the instantly recognisable *Birds in Flight* poster), and the Post Office were commissioning posters, brochures, book covers and illustrations. The V&A began collecting Kauffer's posters in 1915 and he was given a retrospective exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 1937.

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