

# *Sam Hyde Harris, Seeing the Unusual*



**NOVEMBER 19, 2021 – FEBRUARY 27, 2022**

 **CASA ROMANTICA**  
CULTURAL CENTER AND GARDENS



***Santa Fe - Grand Canyon (Commercial Advertising for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company), c. 1930***

*Original promotional poster, mixed medium (watercolor and tempera) on artist board.*

*Collection of Charles N. Mauch*



# *Sam Hyde Harris, Seeing the Unusual*

November 19, 2021 – February 27, 2022  
at Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens

*curated by*  
*Maurine St. Gaudens Studios*

*Sam Hyde Harris, Seeing the Unusual* is underwritten by

**Yvonne Boseker**  
with support from  
**John and Barbara Hazeltine,**  
**Harris Fine Art,**  
and an **anonymous donor**

# Curators' Statement

*Sam Hyde Harris, Seeing the Unusual* explores the diverse oeuvre of this noted twentieth century California artist. Although widely known for the fine art compositions, few people realize the extent of Harris' commercial advertising work. Harris' designs shaped the consciousness of early to mid-twentieth century consumers and travelers. I really was quite surprised that so little attention had been paid to Harris the commercial artist. This exhibition explores this complex aspect of the artist's career.

My personal association with Sam Hyde Harris actually began more than thirty years ago when I was contacted by Harris' widow, Marion Dodge Harris, to catalogue the artist's estate. In the process I discovered examples of work the artist had created for a who's who of clients, not only in California, but across the western United States and nationally. It's the commercial work that today represents an historical record of product lines and services that were a part of everyday life from the 1920s - 1950s.

On a national level, Harris had a long and highly creative relationship with the railroad industry, specifically the Santa Fe, Southern Pacific and Union Pacific rail lines. His iconic Art Deco themed *Southern Pacific's New Daylight* poster has become one of the most recognizable images of this art form and one that has become highly praised by railroad and design enthusiasts alike.

Unfortunately, over the years, as is common with many commercial artists, their work has gone unaccredited, and Harris is no exception. Although, with new research and recent discoveries, this oversight is now being corrected, and Harris' commercial designs are being recognized by a new generation of historians.

It is with great pleasure that my co-curator, Joseph Morsman, and I can now bring these extraordinary works to the public's attention. We want to thank the staff at the Casa Romantica for allowing us this opportunity and to the various public institutions and collectors who have graciously loaned paintings and artwork to this exhibition. We hope this exhibition will further the appreciation of Harris' work and serve as a testament to his creative legacy.

Maurine St. Gaudens  
November 2021



# Sam Hyde Harris (1889-1977)

In discussing the award winning early California artist, Sam Hyde Harris (1889-1977) and his decade's long career, art critics and historians have basically concentrated on his fine art, or what is known as his en plein air painting. However, rarely do any of these discussions of his oeuvre consider the breadth of his commercial work, particularly his storied career creating iconic images for the railroad industry. Harris was in fact a multi-talented artist who was able to work at both his chosen professions; commercial and fine art, for over seventy years.

Harris' career, although closely related to California and the American West, began in his native England. It was in London, prior to moving to California with his family in 1903, that Harris as a youth, found employment in the Artists Department of André & Sleigh, Ltd., Photo-Engravers, Bushey, Herts, London (England). And as he said of himself, "I have made a living with pen, pencil, and brush since the age of fourteen." Once in California he gained employment in 1906 with Charles R. Mogel and Aaron E. Kilpatrick as a painter of everything from signs, designing billboards to hand-lettering show cards. Among his assignments, he decorated walls of buildings sometimes six stories high with lettering six feet tall. In a short time, due to the quality of his work, which was of such a high standard that it gained recognition from many in the commercial art field - particularly for skills shown in his calligraphy and exquisite lettering, he was able to establish his own commercial art business at 113 West 6th Street in Los Angeles.

From a historical standpoint, the promotional poster is probably one of the oldest forms of advertising. Throughout history, the pictorial symbol was used and understood by those unable to read. Quite possibly in no other field has the poster played such an important role as in the field of travel and transportation. The poster has to speak quickly, deliver its idea or its message in a brilliant forceful fashion, establishing itself in an indelible manner in the mind of the observer.

The opening of the twentieth century saw the development of a growing middle class, an increase in leisure and vacation time and the rise in competition from the automobile,



*Sam Hyde Harris, c. 1945*



*Sam Hyde Harris Self-sketch, c. 1950, pencil on paper. Private collection*

prompting the railroad to increase its network of ticket offices and to accelerate the marketing of its product, with the rallying cry, *"Take the train."*

Harris' commercial career received a tremendous boost when, in 1920, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company, known as the Santa Fe, resumed its poster advertising, following the lifting of

government control during WWI, and hired him to work in Los Angeles. The Santa Fe had a colorful history dating back to the 1830s of providing announcements of destinations, schedules, and timetables. By the late 1890s more decorative designs, which were larger and more colorful, were possible due to the use of a large 30 x 40 inch lithography stone which created a standard dimension for the single sheet poster.

Harris developed a style and design distinctly his own by 1925, which used brilliant red, blue and yellow highlights to dramatize the concepts which Santa Fe reproduced in its advertising booklets, posters, and newspaper ads. While the majority of railroad advertising appeared in brochures, magazines and newspapers, the more local advertising took the form of billboards and hand-painted posters most of which appeared in department stores, banks, window displays, and bulletin boards in ticket offices and lobbies.

As with Santa Fe, Harris had a long involvement with Southern Pacific Railroad. He continued his association with Southern Pacific throughout World War II with some of the most striking posters being those relating to Southern Pacific's wartime promotional images. One, for example, depicts a young soldier carrying a rifle with a backpack and the wording on the poster states, *"Think before you travel. You can speed his visit home by giving up your summer train trips."*

From the 1910s continuing through the 1950s, Harris' commercial business concerned itself mainly with assignments from the major railroad companies. Harris realized that his commercial work had a great influence on those who viewed it.

He understood that pictures spoke to the universal language of positive advertising and promotion regardless of the product. Some of his most iconic designs were created for the railroads; however, Harris' name is also associated with both regional and national product lines, including: Caterpillar Tractor Company, Gilmore Oil Company, Los Angeles Brewing Co. and Van de Kamp's Holland Dutch Bakeries.

Harris' commercial business was located near the office of Van de Kamp's co-founder Lawrence L. Frank. It was Frank who approached Harris and requested an advertising display for the company's windows. From this collaboration Harris redesigned the signature style of the company name and created the Dutch Blue Windmill which was conceived and incorporated into the famous trademark of the company. The first Van de Kamp's store, which opened in 1921, was designed by motion picture art director Harry Oliver (1888-1973) inspired by and based on Harris' original windmill design.

Not unlike some of his contemporaries such as Maynard Dixon, Maurice Logan, and Hernando Villa, Harris was a creative artist who could master both the disciplines of commercial art and fine art at the same time. He started exhibiting his paintings of early California by 1918 and continued to exhibit and win awards until the late 1960s. He loved to teach and spent many fruitful years instructing other artist on the fundamentals of proportion, depth and color; he taught them to learn to see.

From his early beginnings in England throughout the better part of the century, Harris' designs shaped the consciousness of early to mid-twentieth century consumers and travelers.

*Sam Hyde Harris, Seeing the Unusual* reveals the importance of revisiting the historical aspect of consumerism which is found in Harris' work now being viewed within the context of his lengthy and highly creative career.

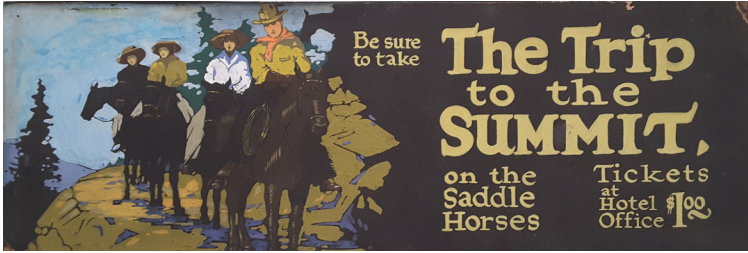
*Maurine St. Gaudens and Joseph Morsman*



*Indian, c. 1918, oil on canvas on board. Private Collection*



# Exhibition Catalog



***The Trip to the Summit - Mt. Lowe (Commercial Advertising for the Pacific Electric Railway), c. 1920***

Tempera on board

Collection of Richard Trader



***Granite Gate – Mt Lowe, c. 1918***

Tempera maquette on wood bark patterned design wallpaper used to create the tree trunk

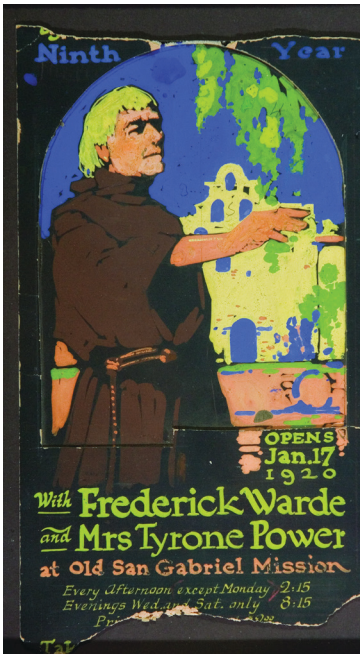
Private Collection



***Mt. Lowe Division 503, Order of Railroad Conductors of America (Commercial Advertising for the Pacific Electric Railway), c. 1925***

Tempera maquette on black poster board

Collection of Charles N. Mauch



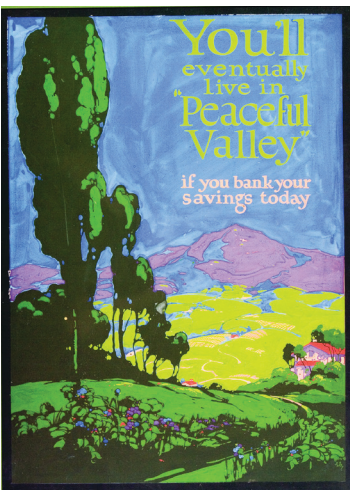
***"The Mission Play" Old San Gabriel Mission (Theatrical Poster), c. 1920***

Tempera on poster board  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***"The Mission Play" by John Steven McGroarty (Theatrical Program), c. 1920***

Original program  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Peaceful Valley (Commercial Advertising), c. 1920***

Tempera maquette on artist board  
Collection of Bryan Mead



***Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, c. 1923***

Pencil on paper

Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Sunset Limited (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), n/d***

Tempera maquette on artist board

Collection of Charles N. Mauch

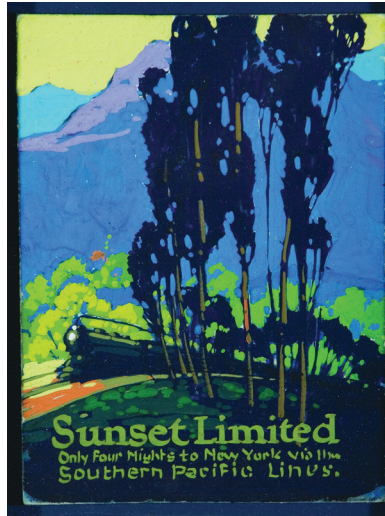


***Mission Paks (Commercial Advertising for Mission Pak Co.), c. 1925***

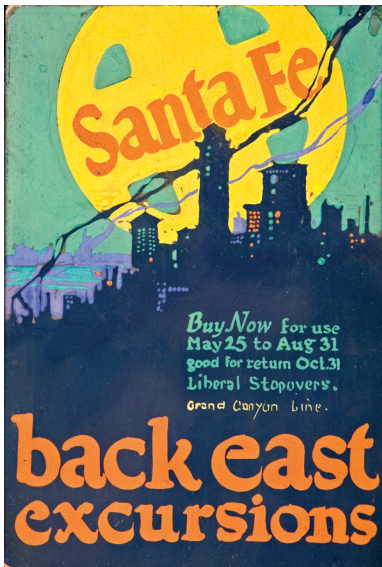
Mixed medium (crayon, tempera and pencil) maquette on artist board

Collection of Charles N. Mauch

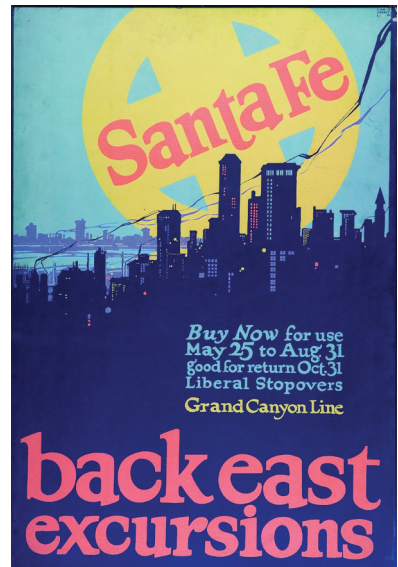




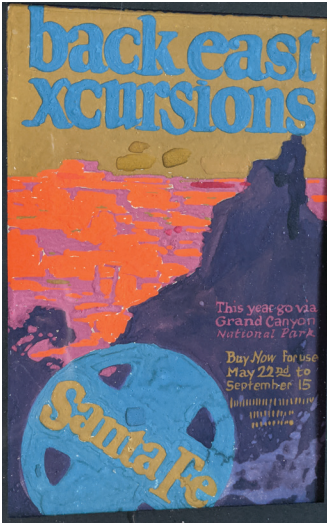
*Sunset Limited*  
 (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), n/d  
 Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



*Santa Fe - Back East Excursions*  
 (Commercial Advertising for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway, c. 1924)  
 Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Private collection

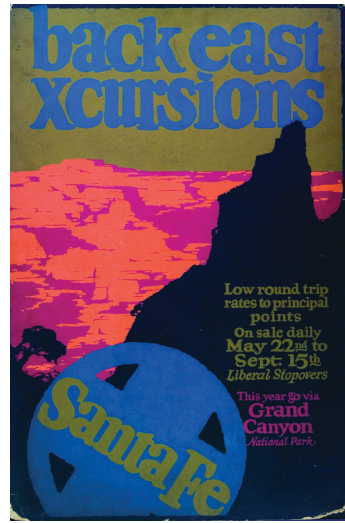


*Santa Fe - Back East Excursions*  
 (Commercial Advertising for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway, c. 1924)  
 Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Private collection



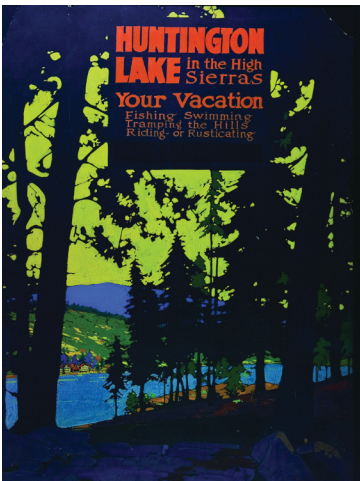
***Santa Fe - Back East Excursions - Grand Canyon Line (Commercial Advertising for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Company), c. 1924***

Tempera maquette on artist board  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Santa Fe - Back East Excursions (Commercial Advertising for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway, c. 1924***

Original promotional serigraph poster on board  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Huntington Lake in the High Sierras (Commercial Advertising Poster for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1925***

Original promotion poster, tempera on artist board  
Collection of Bryan Mead

*Huntington Lake, located within the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range of Central California, created as a reservoir in 1912 as part of the Big Creek Hydroelectric Project to bring electricity to Southern California. It was financed by and named for railroad magnate Henry Huntington. A resort community soon developed along its shore reachable by train via the Southern Pacific Railroad owned by Collis P. Huntington, Henry Huntington's uncle. Lakeshore Resort was built in 1922 and is one of the last remaining wooden structures of its kind in California.*



***Laguna*, c. 1925**  
 Oil on board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Monterey*, c. 1930**  
 Tempera maquette on board  
 Collection of Patt Morrison

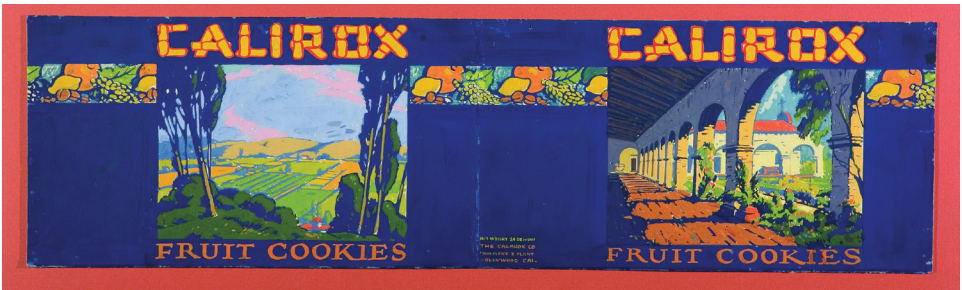


***Monterey*, c. 1930**  
 Linocut on paper  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch





**Richfield (Commercial Advertising for Richfield Oil Corporation), c. 1928**  
Tempera maquette on board  
Private collection



**Calirox Fruit Cookies (Commercial Advertising Packaging for The Calirox Co.), c. 1923**  
Tempera maquette on artist board  
Private collection



Sam Hyde Harris' work in commercial advertising went beyond his designs for products and services. Additionally, throughout his career Harris' work encompassed promotional advertising for cultural and social events throughout Southern California as seen in the theatrical poster and pamphlet designs he created for the Mission Play, Treasure Island, and Ramona.

**The Play "Treasure Island," (Theatrical Poster), c. 1931**  
Original promotion poster, tempera on artist board  
Private collection



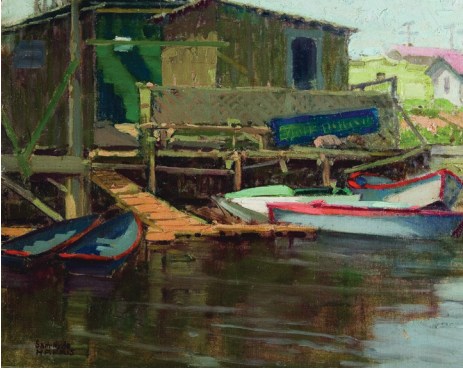
***Ramona (Theatrical Poster), c. 1931***  
 Relief print on poster board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Tournament of Roses, Pasadena, California  
 (parade float design), c. 1932***  
 Pencil on poster board  
 Private collection



***Industrial Romance (Long Beach,  
 California with the Ford Motor Co.  
 plant in background), c. 1932***  
 Oil on board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Depression Days***  
***(Sunset Beach, California), c. 1933***  
 Oil on board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch

***Ships Ahoy***  
***(Sunset Beach, California), c. 1933***  
 Oil on board  
 Collection of Terry Edward Lynch



***The Red Buoy, c. 1935***  
 Oil on board  
 Collection of Terry Edward Lynch

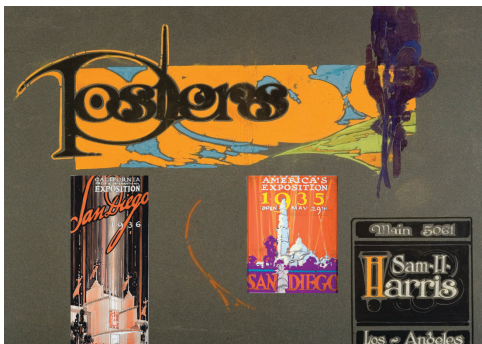




***Boats Moored (Long Beach, California with the Ford Motor Co. plant in background), c. 1935***

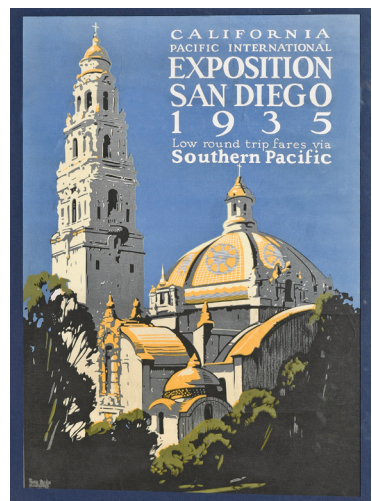
Oil on board

Collection of Terry Edward Lynch



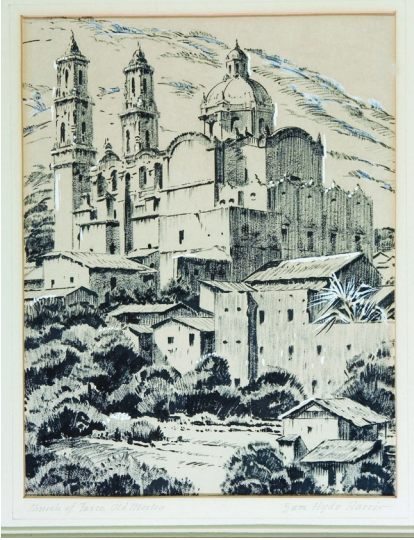
***Exposition Posters (Commercial Advertising for the California Pacific International Exposition San Diego), c. 1935 and 1936***

Tempera maquettes on poster board  
Private collection



***California Pacific International Exposition San Diego 1935 (Commercial Advertising Poster), c. 1935***

Original relief print on paper  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



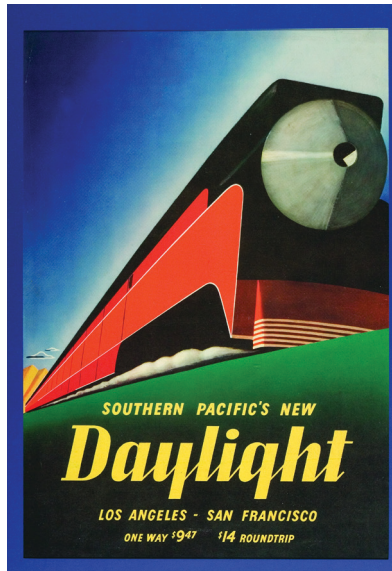
***Taxco Mission, Mexico***  
***(Commercial Advertising for the Southern***  
***Pacific Railroad), c. 1935***  
 Sketch with tempera and pencil on paper  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Taxco Mission, Mexico, c. 1935***  
 Oil on board  
 Private Collection



***Taxco, Mexico – Southern Pacific of***  
***Mexico (Commercial Advertising for the***  
***Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1935***  
 Original promotional serigraph poster  
 Private Collection



***Southern Pacific's New Daylight (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1937***

Original lithograph promotional poster  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Old Colony (Commercial Advertising for Old Colony Paint Company), c. 1937***

Tempera maquette on artist board  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch

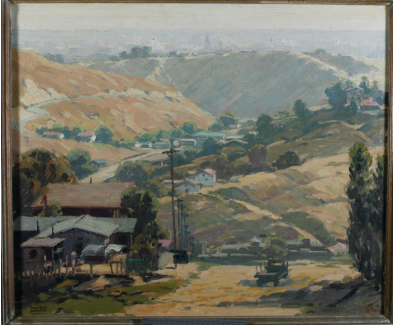
*This image contains a view of the old Pasadena Huntington Hotel in the background having been painted from Harris' early San Marino studio.*



***Caterpillar (Commercial Advertising for the Caterpillar Tractor Company), c. 1938***

Serigraph calendar minus calendar  
pad presented with original  
concept design pencil sketch  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch





***Old Chavez (Chavez Ravine neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles), c. 1938***

Oil on canvas

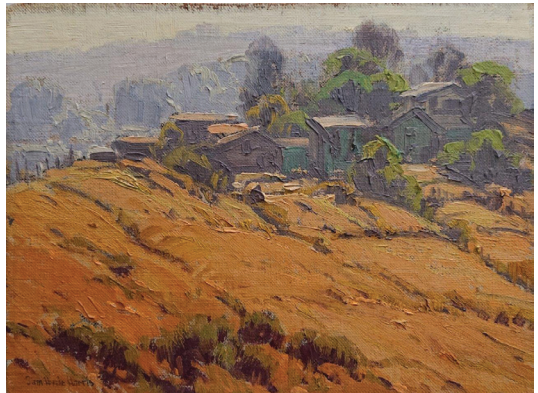
Collection of Harris Estate

***Chavez (Chavez Ravine neighborhood in the City of Los Angeles), c. 1938***

Oil on canvas

Collection of Richard Trader

Photo: Richard Trader

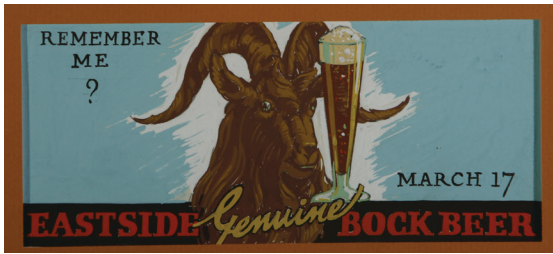


***Coaster (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1938***

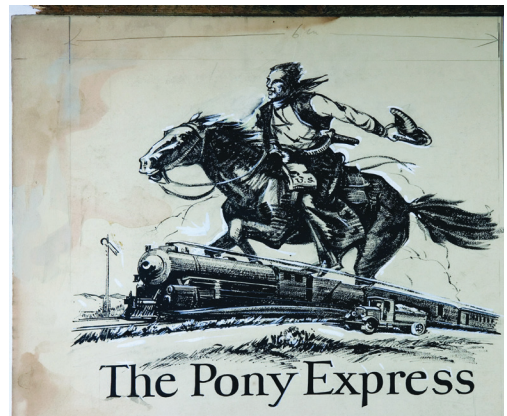
Tempera maquette on artist board

Collection of Charles N. Mauch





*Eastside Genuine Bock Beer (Commercial Advertising for Los Angeles Brewing Co.), c. 1940*  
 Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



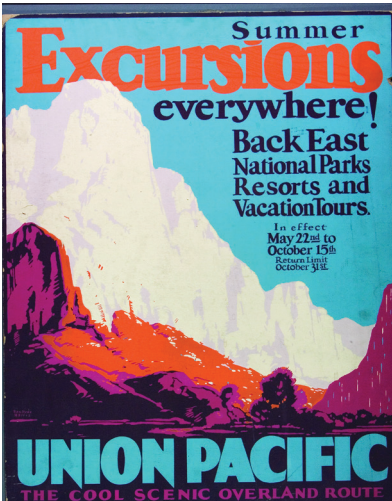
*Pony Express (Commercial Advertising for the Union Pacific Railroad), c. 1940*  
 Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



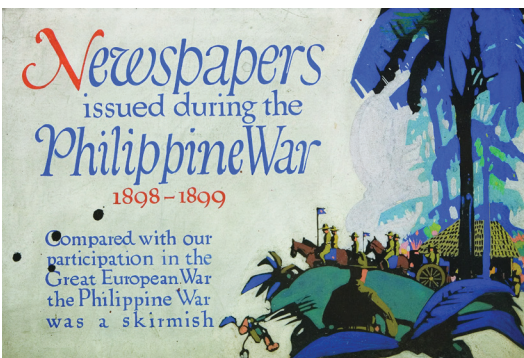
*Noon Daylight - Southern Pacific (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1940*  
 Maquette with artist's corrections/notations  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Weather Worn (Near Carlsbad, California),  
c. 1940***  
Oil on board  
Collection of Joel Pena



***Excursions - Union Pacific (Commercial  
Advertising for the Union Pacific Railroad), n/d***  
Original promotional serigraph poster on board  
Collection of Bryan Mead



***Newspapers issued during the  
Philippine War 1898 -1899  
(Commercial Advertising), n/d***  
Tempera maquette on artist board  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Main line to the Pacific War – Southern Pacific (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1942***

Original full size poster, tempera on artist board

Collection of Charles N. Mauch

***THINK before you travel***  
(Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1942

Tempera maquette on artist board

Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Parrots, c. 1945***

Tempera on heavy Epson board

Collection of Harris Estate





*Put SPRING in Your Car this FALL - Gilmore (Commercial Advertising for the Gilmore Oil Company), c. 1938*

Colored pencil on tissue paper  
Private collection

One of the most recognizable commercial trademark designs throughout the western United States was the Gilmore Oil Company's red lion logo. The company's use of the lion as an advertising motif dates from 1923 when it first entered retail marketing. At its peak, just before World War II, the company's operations included nearly 3,600 Gilmore retailers in California, Oregon and Washington. During the ensuing years, the image of a lion or baby lions continued to evolve and was incorporated into all areas of marketing until the company was sold in 1945.



*Gilmore Red Lion Gasoline Stretches Mileage*

*(Commercial Advertising for the Gilmore Oil Company), c. 1943*

Colored pencil on tissue paper maquette for promotional poster;  
with original 1944 ration card  
Private collection



**Gilmore Lion – the mascot (Commercial Advertising for the Gilmore Oil Company),  
c. 1936**

Colored pencil on tissue paper  
Private collection



**Cars are the Darndest Babies**  
(Commercial Advertising for the  
Gilmore Oil Company), c. 1942

Colored pencil on tissue paper  
maquette designed for the  
Gilmore Super Book of Comics  
Collection of Jo Dunn



**Red Lion Says . . .Here's How To  
Care For Your Car..For Your Country**  
(Commercial Advertising for the  
Gilmore Oil Company), c. 1942

Colored pencil on tissue paper  
maquette designed for the Gilmore  
Super Book of Comics  
Private collection



**Red Lion Say . . . Put Spring in Your Car this Fall (aka: Tomorrow)**  
(Commercial Advertising for the Gilmore Oil Company), c. 1942

Colored pencil on tissue paper  
maquette designed for the Gilmore  
Super Book of Comics; with original  
published comic book page  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



**Red Lion Says . . . Keep Your Car Fit! (Commercial Advertising for the Gilmore Oil Company),**  
c. 1942

Colored pencil on tissue paper  
maquette designed for the  
Gilmore Super Book of Comics.  
Private collection



**Boost your mileage and Boot the Axis . . . Gilmore Red Lion Gasoline**  
(Commercial Advertising for the Gilmore Oil Company), c. 1942

Colored pencil on tissue paper  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch





*A rarely discussed and little known history concerns Sam Hyde Harris and his long creative association with Van de Kamp's. Harris designed the graceful and sweeping lettering of the first Van de Kamp's "logo" in the 1920s and it was Harris who introduced an image of a windmill that was incorporated into the Company trade name design. The iconic Blue Windmill trademark remained and evolved in style and design as the company grew.*

***Van de Kamp's (Commercial Advertising for the Van de Kamp Holland Dutch Bakeries), n/d***

Pencil on tissue paper maquette for print advertisement; with original Los Angeles Times newspaper advertisement  
Private Collection

***Van de Kamp's (Commercial Advertising for the Van de Kamp Holland Dutch Bakeries), c. 1942***

Two pencil on tissue paper maquettes for print advertisement; with original Los Angeles Times newspaper advertisement.  
Private Collection



***Van de Kamp's (Commercial advertising for the Van de Kamp Holland Dutch Bakeries), c. 1942***

Pencil on tissue paper maquette for print advertisement; with original Los Angeles Times newspaper advertisement  
Private Collection





***Maquette No. 1 for Holiday Greetings***  
***(Commercial Advertising for the***  
***Southern Pacific Railroad), n/d***  
 Tempera on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Maquette No. 2 for Holiday Greetings***  
***(Commercial Advertising for the***  
***Southern Pacific Railroad), n/d***  
 Tempera on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Maquette No. 3 for Holiday***  
***Greetings (Commercial***  
***Advertising for the Southern***  
***Pacific Railroad), n/d***  
 Tempera on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Maquette No. 1 Christmas***  
***(Commercial Advertising for the***  
***Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1940***  
 Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



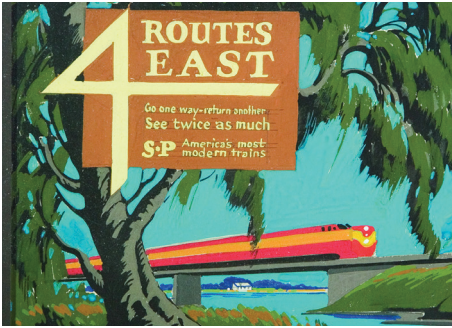
***Maquette No. 2 Christmas***  
***(Commercial Advertising for the***  
***Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1940***  
 Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch



***Maquette No. 3 Christmas - This Year Give a Trip - SP 1940***  
***(Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1940***

Tempera maquette on artist board  
 Collection of Charles N. Mauch





**4 Routes East (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1950**

Tempera maquette on board  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch  
The four routes were the Sunset Route, Golden State Route, Overland Route and Shasta Route.

When an idea, otherwise known as a maquette, was successful it was used in numerous ways. A perfect example is the commercial advertising created for The New Sunset Limited posters and promotional brochure which is an expanded version of the original 4 Routes East.



**The New Sunset Limited (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1950**  
Original (half format) promotional poster  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



**The New Sunset Limited (Commercial Advertising for the Southern Pacific Railroad), c. 1950**  
Original (full format) promotional poster  
Collection of Charles N. Mauch



# CASA ROMANTICA

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CULTURAL CENTER AND GARDENS

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization and is the historic home of the founder of the City of San Clemente.

Casa Romantica provides programs for all ages in arts, music, history, horticulture and literature, and is a premier award-winning Southern California cultural center.

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CASA ROMANTICA

CULTURAL CENTER AND GARDENS

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