

UNBELIEVABLE: NOLDE'S NADJA HAS REAPPEARED

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Press release from: [Ketterer Kunst](#)

Agency: **Ketterer Kunst**



Munich, 10 May 2007, (kk) - For nearly 30 years the whereabouts of Emil Nolde's world-famous portrait "Nadja" was unknown. Now it is up for sale at Ketterer Kunst's auction Modern Art on 12 June 2007 in Munich, a world sensation.

The story reads like the plot of a detective story: In the late 1970s the painting was stored in the depot of a shipping agent from where it disappeared. It was rediscovered in an attic by an unnamed art collector late in 2006 after the death of his daughter, who had presumably played a role in the theft. The art collector arranged for the painting to be handed to the police in the Ladenburg/Rhein-Neckar district for clarification of ownership. By this time, however, the statutory period of limitation for the theft had expired.

The provenance turned out to be extraordinary: According to Emil Nolde's own records, the oil painting, which he had painted in 1919, belonged to the murdered foreign minister of the Weimar Republic and son of the AEG founder, Dr. Walther Rathenau. We now know that Nolde must have made a mistake here. It is certain, however, that the work belonged to Dr. Ernst Rathenau, the founder and former owner of the publishing companies Euphorion and Ernest Rathenau, New York. He

considered “Nadja”, which had been in the possession of the Rathenau family since the 1920s, the most important painting in his collection. When Dr. Ernst Rathenau had to emigrate to the USA, his secretary saved “Nadja” from the National Socialists by depositing the oil painting in a safe deposit box at the bank Merck Finck & Co in Berlin. “Nadja” was thus spared the fate of so many other works, which did not survive the War and the period after National Socialism.

The small portrait gives evidence of the extraordinary talent of Emil Nolde, who is also praised as a “colour magician” and who was declared a degenerate artist by the National Socialists. It is furthermore an important piece of German history and art history.

All the more reason for Robert Ketterer to be proud to present such an important work - it is estimated at € 1,2 to 1,8 million - in his sale. The firm’s owner and auctioneer remarked: “It was by no means easy to obtain this work, which was much sought-after among all the important international auction houses. Our house’s reputation over the past 50 years, particularly in the field of Expressionist art, convinced the heirs, however. It was, after all, Ketterer, then at the Kunstkabinett in Stuttgart, who arranged the first auction of works by Expressionist artists.”

Noteworthy is also that Nolde’s “Nadja” is one of the first works valued over € 1 million to be auctioned in Germany since the partial standardisation of the directive on the resale right in the EU. A comparable work has hitherto only come on the market in the USA or in London.

Further information about Emil Nolde and “Nadja”: www.kettererkunst.com/emil-nolde-nadja.shtml.

Two auctions will take place on this day: the auction Modern Art & Post War, with highly valued works by important artists such as Wladimir G. von Bechthejeff, Natalia S. Goncharova, Jörg Immendorff, Anselm Kiefer, Paul Klee, Markus Lüpertz, Wilhelm Morgner, Otto Mueller, Gabriele Münter, Hermann Max Pechstein and Leo Putz, Gerhard Richter, Christian Rohlf, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, and Pierre Soulages. The second sale is the special auction Expressive Realism, which includes works by Albert Birkle, Otto Dix and others.

The three catalogues can be ordered for € 45 under telephone +49-(0)89-55244-0 or in the internet under www.kettererkunst.com/artauctions/catalog.shtml.

The press conference will take place on 15 May at 11 am at Bankhaus Merck Finck & Co, Pacellistr. 16, 80333 Munich.

The preview dates in Germany are:

24-26 May 11 am - 6 pm
Ketterer Kunst, Meißberg 1, Hamburg, (selected works)

02 June, 11 am - 6 pm
03-06 June, 11 am - 7 pm
Ketterer Kunst, Fasanenstr. 70, Berlin, (selected works)

07-08 June, 11 am - 6 pm
09-10 June, 11 am - 5 pm
11 June, 11 am - 3 pm
Ketterer Kunst, Prinzregentenstr. 61, Munich, (all works)

Emil Nolde’s “Nadja” will also be shown in Switzerland and in the USA.

The auction venue is the Gartensaal of the Prinzregententheater, Prinzregentenplatz 12 in Munich.

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Since its foundation in 1954 Ketterer Kunst has established itself as one of the leading art and book auction houses. While the main house in the Munich Prinz-Alfons-Palais hosts the two traditional annual auctions Modern Art & Post War, the Hamburg Meßberghof arranges two auctions each year in each of the following sectors: Old and New Masters/Maritime Art and Rare Books - Autographs - Manuscripts - Decorative Graphic Art as well as Modern Art & Post War, the latter with a particular focus on works on paper. Furthermore, there are regular exhibitions, special sales and charity sales as well as live online auctions.

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