

Inaugural auction at Ketterer Kunst – Optimistic forecasts surpassed

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Munich, 23 June 2009 (kk) - “It was an outstanding auction, an exhilarating auction,” was the comment made by auctioneer Robert Ketterer on the auctions he held on 19/20 June to officially inaugurate the new Ketterer Kunst headquarters. “The sales quotient by lot numbers was comparable to the best results achieved in the golden age of the past three years. With post-auction sales it will probably even surpass them,” adds the owner of Ketterer Kunst.

The auctions focused on:

1. Modern Art (1900-1945)
2. Bauhaus (special auction)
3. Post War/Contemporary Art
4. Old Masters/Art of the 19th Century

on 1. Modern Art (1900-1945)

The fierce bidding skirmish that broke out over Franz Radziwill’s “Gespräch über einen Paragraphen” [“Conversation about a Paragraph”] set the tone. What is probably the most sensuous presentation of the discussion that raged over Paragraph 218 and abortions under German law became the most high-priced work of this artist’s in the past 15 years (achieved: € 355.000*).* “It’s just like ping-pong,” thus the auctioneer, who kept alternating between two front-row bidders on the far fringes of the auction room who were determined to have this masterpiece with its cryptic message. The German collector seated on the left showed the most stamina.

The Top 5

- No. 245: Franz Radziwill - A Conversation about ... – Called at: € 140.000 – result € 355.000*
- No. 17: Josef Albers - Study for... – Called at: € 180.000 – result € 220.000*
- No. 253: Ernst Barlach - Spirit Fighter – Called at: € 150.000 – result € 180.000*
- No. 219: Emil Nolde - Peonies in a Blue Vase – Called at: € 60.000 – result € 145.000*
- No. 124: Lucio Fontana - Concetto Spaziale – Called at: € 70.000 – result € 145.000*

With overall auction proceeds amounting to € 4.5 million, Modern Art above all scored a big success: at the start of the auction, the Emil Nolde watercolour “Pfungstrosen in blauer Vase” [“Peonies in a Blue Vase”], called at € 80.000, achieved € 145.000*. A German private collection with a sealed bid fought off several dealers bidding on the telephone.

A Hanns Bolz oil painting (c. 1909/11), “Dame mit Hut” [“Lady Wearing a Hat”], achieved a record-breaking € 130.000* (estimate: € 20.000), the highest price ever paid for a work by this artist. As the Hanns Bolz “Portrait of the Art Dealer Alfred Flechtheim” sold for € 77.000* (estimate: € 18.000) in December 2008, the bidding for this second work by the artist more than matched expectations: an Austrian private collection bidding on the telephone outstripped a tenacious bidder from Greece in the auction room and also sealed bids in writing.

Along with good results for Max Liebermann’s “Liebespaar auf einem Spaziergang im Grunewald” [“Couple Strolling in

Grunewald”] in oils (estimate: € 50.000; sold for: € 61.000*) and “Blumenrabatte im Wannseegarten” [“Flower Borders in the Garden at Wannsee”] (estimate: € 24.000; achieved: € 41.000*), eight works by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner grabbed centre stage. Without exception, they all exceeded their estimates, some by large margins, notably “Staffelalp” (c. 1917-19); called at € 20.000, it climbed to a dizzying € 68.000*.

Sculpture was headed at € 180.000* by the Ernst Barlach bronze “Der Geistkämpfer” [“Spirit Fighter”]. According to the Ernst Barlach licence administration, it was probably one of the only two casts made during the artist’s lifetime in 1937. That must have been a major inducement for a German private collection to acquire this important work.

The same collection also bought Ewald Mataré’s “Große liegende Kuh” [“Large Cow, Lying Down”] for a thumping € 104.000*. It had entered the lists with high sealed bids followed by numerous telephone bids, primarily from Germany.

Other works of sculpture that far exceeded their estimates were by August Rodin (after) and Fritz Klimsch. Whereas the Rodin female torso “La Prière” achieved a meteoric rise from € 35.000 to € 68.000*, the sole known cast of Fritz Klimsch’s “Elegie” [“Elegy”] nearly trebled the € 23.000 at which it was called to fetch € 67.000*.

More than honourable mention to the following:

- Lot 277 – Albert Birkle (oil), View (Upper Silesia). Estimate € 25.000, achieved € 63.000*
- Lot 264 – Chr. Rohlf (Tempera), View of Bad Sooden-Allendorf. Estimate € 30.000, achieved € 63.000*
- Lot 267 – Albert Birkle (oil), Self-portrait under... Estimate € 20.000, achieved € 50.000*
- Lot 280 – Willi Baumeister (oil), Scherzo (Scherzo linear). Estimate € 40.000, achieved € 50.000*
- Lot 256 – Arnold Topp (oil), Dark Sun. Estimate € 30.000, achieved € 50.000*

Nor should the world record price of € 33.000* paid by a German connoisseur for the museum-quality “Erik Satie” by Prosper de Troyer be passed over in silence. It sold for more than three times the estimate of € 10.000.

on 2. Bauhaus (special auction)

This auction held jointly by Ketterer Kunst and the auction house Quittenbaum achieved its high point with “Study for Homage to the Square: High Pasture” by Josef Albers (achieved: € 220.000*). This geometric work went to a German private collection.

Achieving € 49.000*, the portfolio “Bauhaus-Drucke. Neue Europäische Graphik. Italienische und Russische Künstler” [“Bauhaus Prints. New European Prints. Italian and Russian Artists”] went to Switzerland. The special auction started off with the Lyonel Feininger watercolour “Running before the wind”, that went to a north German private collection for € 22.000*.

on 3. Post War/Contemporary Art

This division also saw outstanding results, notably Lucio Fontana’s “Concetto Spaziale” (achieved: € 145.000*) in a small format in acrylic. A dealer from the UK won out against for bidders from around the world on the telephone and numerous bids in writing.

The following works also far exceeded their estimates: “20.01.1954” in mixed media by Karl Otto Götz (estimate: € 20.000; sold for: € 58.000*) and the Fritz Winter oil painting “Rote Klänge” [“Red Sounds”], which attracted a swarm of telephone bids. Carrying an estimate of € 15.000, the Fritz Winter ultimately went to an Austrian private collection for € 73.000*.

In the field of sculpture and objects, a c.1960 Norbert Kricke “Raumplastik” [“Spatial Sculpture”] rose from an estimate of € 40.000 to a lofty € 93.000*, finally going to a north German collection after a long-drawn-out bidding skirmish.

Whereas Diego Giacometti’s round table “Table-feuilles modèle de salle à manger aux grenouilles” (estimate: € 50.000) achieved € 58.000*, his “Console à plateaux, modèle aux grenouilles” made bidders dig deeper into their pockets, finally fetching € 74.000*. Both works remained in Germany.

Also definitely worth mentioning:

- Lot 114 – Emil Schumacher (oil), Ohne Titel [Untitled]. Estimate € 25.000, achieved € 53.000*

Lot 105 – Rupprecht Geiger (oil), Blue Form, Red and Black . Estimate € 30.000, achieved € 46.000*

Lot 177 – Markus Prachensky (oil), Solitude. Estimate € 30.000, achieved € 36.000*

on 4. Old Masters and Art of the 19th Century

Art of the 15th-19th Centuries started off the two-day main auction. From now on, it - like Modern and Contemporary Art - will feature at four Ketterer Kunst auctions a year in Munich. Outstanding results were achieved with works by Franz von Defregger (“Bäuerin am Spinnrocken” [“Peasant Woman at her Distaff”], called at € 30.000, achieved € 36.000*), Jean Baptiste Camille Corot (called at: € 24.000; achieved: € 28.000*) and Wilhelm Busch (called at: € 10.000; achieved: € 25.000*).

Objects unsold at the auction will be offered at post-auction sales running through 20 July 2009. Auction result lists available; please call +49-(0)89-55244-444. More information at www.kettererkunst.com.

* Sale price equals hammer price + 22 per cent surcharge.

** Source: www.artnet.de

Since it was founded in 1954, Ketterer Kunst has been firmly established in the front ranks of auction houses dealing in art and rare books with headquarters in Munich and a branch in Hamburg. Gallery rooms in Berlin as well as representatives in Heidelberg, Krefeld and Ravensburg have contributed substantially to our success. Ketterer Kunst has further rounded off its portfolio by acquiring the prestigious Ernest Rathenau Verlag, New York/Munich. In addition, exhibitions, special themed auctions and benefit auctions for charity as well as online auctions are regular events at Ketterer Kunst.

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