



# 12+1 SELECT WORKS

AUCTION PREVIEW DECEMBER 2017

KETTERER  KUNST

# AUCTIONS IN MUNICH

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## Modern Art

07 + 08 December 2017

## Post War / Contemporary Art

08 + 09 December 2017

## PREVIEW

### SELECT WORKS

#### HAMBURG

02 December 5 pm – 8 pm

03 + 04 December 10 am – 6 pm

Ketterer Kunst · Holstenwall 5 · +49 (0) 40 37 49 61 0

#### ZURICH

14 November 4 pm – 8 pm

Galerie Römerapotheke · Rämistrasse 18 · +49 (0) 89 55 244 0

#### FRANKFURT

15 November 11 am – 6 pm

Galerie Schwind · Fahrgasse 8 · +49 (0) 89 55 244 0

#### DÜSSELDORF

17 November 5 pm – 8 pm

18 – 20 November 11 am – 4 pm

Ketterer Kunst · Malkastenstraße 11 · +49 (0) 211 36 77 94 60

#### BERLIN

24 November 10 am – 8 pm

25 – 29 November 10 am – 6 pm

30 November 10 am – 8 pm

Ketterer Kunst · Fasanenstraße 70 · +49 (0) 30 88 67 53 63

### ALL WORKS

#### MUNICH

03 December 11 am – 5 pm

04 + 05 December 10 am – 6 pm

06 December 10 am – 5 pm

07 + 08 December 10 am – 5 pm (select works)

Ketterer Kunst · Joseph-Wild-Straße 18 · +49 (0) 89 55 244 0

**Cover:** OSKAR KOKOSCHKA  
Hamburg III · 1961 · oil on canvas · 50 x 60 cm (19.6 x 23.6 in)  
€ 200,000 - 300,000

**Right:** ROBERT LONGO  
Untitled (Shark 15) · 2008 · charcoal drawing · 133 x 198 cm (52.3 x 77.9 in)  
€ 320,000 - 380,000





1

ERNST WILHELM NAY  
Scheiben und Halbscheiben, 1955  
Oil on canvas, 120 x 161 cm (47.2 x 63.3 in)  
€ 250.000 - 350.000



"Initially my illusory idea was of a purely artistic nature. While the composer sets sounds, I want to set colors by combining them with rhythm, quanta, dynamics, and series in order to form surfaces. This was the right way to go, as I invented a kind of absolute painting."

Ernst Wilhelm Nay

From 1954 up into the early 1960s Ernst Wilhelm Nay was intensively occupied with his ‚Scheibenbilder‘ (Disc Pictures), of which this work is a very fine example. In this group of works the artist uses round color fields to organize subtle space- and color modulations.

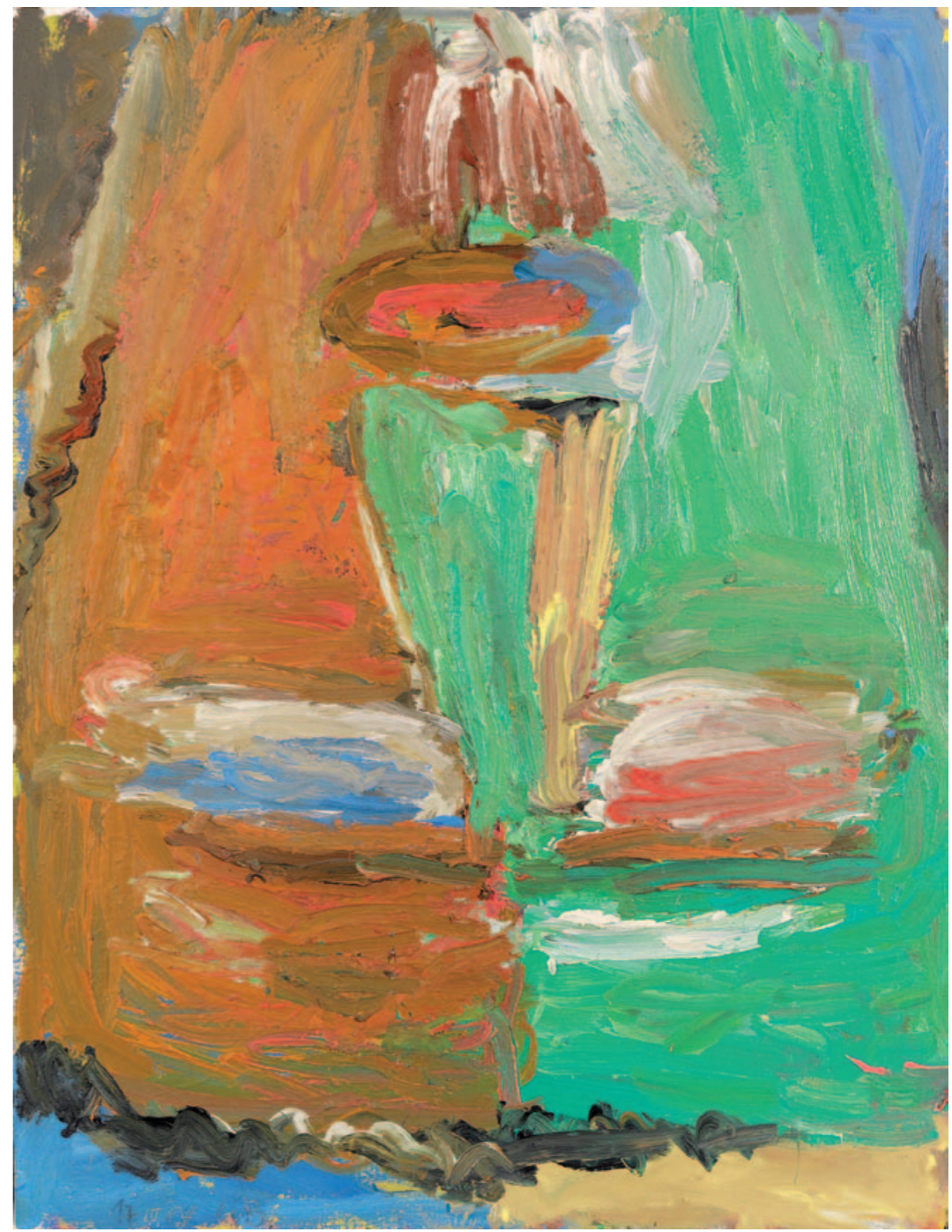
Paul Wember, former director of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Museum in Kre-

feld, most fittingly describes Ernst Wilhelm Nay's painting as follows: "Suddenly we see the color's pure qualities. The liberated color appears free from figuration, free from object, free from representation, clear, bright and cheerful. Nothing interrupts the orderly succession that is well intensified by accentuations in black." (P. Wember, Malerei in unserem Jahrhundert, Krefeld 1963, p.106)



2

GEORG BASELITZ  
Das Abgarbild, 1984  
Oil on canvas, 130 x 97 cm (51.1 x 38.1 in)  
€ 180.000 - 240.000



The motif of the "Abgarkopf" (Abgar Head) is part of a small series of similar Abgar pictures from 1984 in which Baselitz confronts us with Christ's visage in the upside-down manner that became characteristic of his paintings from 1969 on. In the early 1980s Baselitz found decisive input in early Christian art, less for its iconographic contents but for

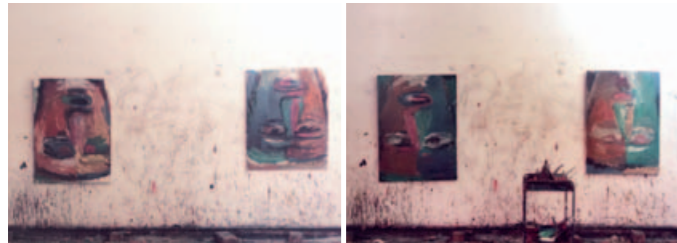
the occupation with the origin of images itself. In this context the artist examined the image of Christ, as well as other Christian motifs, such as the "Crucifixion" or "The Veil of Veronica". Just as it is the case with the sudarium of St. Veronica, the Abgar picture is also a "Vera Icon" – a true image of Christ and not manmade.

# BASELITZ · Das Abgarbild

The legend of Abgar is about the healing of Abgarus V. of Edessa with a cloth with an impression of Christ's face, today the Vatican considers it the oldest known representation of Jesus Christ. In addition, the image is also regarded an "acheiropoieton", an image not created by the hand of man. Baselitz uses it as a kind of legend for the origins of painting and shapes it as an independent image type, which, due to the formal reduction to the essential elements, call reminiscence of the faces in Jawlensky's famous Meditations, however, only as far as the dynamic brushstrokes are concerned. The artist refined this concept to abstraction in his small format (see illu.). Baselitz' monumental painting "Abgar Head" treats the art-historical tradition of the image of Christ playfully and takes the original image of art to Modernism: By making the image of Christ subject to his own pictorial language, presenting it not only in a monumental format but also upside-down, Baselitz breaks with precedent in the most striking manner, creating a visual manifestation of his own artistic progressiveness that is of epic significance for art history.

"I was occupied with it (the Abgar head) when I suddenly did something in my pictures that I had never done before, when I painted a head the size of the canvas, and I realized that the head showed no physical contour, no volume, that it was flat and larger than life, the nose at the image's center, the left and the right side of the face separated and the separation emphasized by contrary colors."

Baselitz, quote after: Ex. cat. Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Georg Baselitz – Vier Wände, published by Ulrich Weisner, Bielefeld 1985, p. 14.



I. Four "Abgarbilder" at Baselitz' studio



II. Alexej von Jawlensky, "Große Meditation: Fegfeuer I", 1937. this work will also be part of our Modern Art auction on 9 December 2017.





"Nobody ever recognized the romantic nature of my works. They are, indeed, romantic in a tragic manner."

Robert Longo

Longo gained great fame through his series "Perfect Gods" (made as of 2007) of which our monumental sheet is a wonderful example. The impressive chalk drawings, today partly in possession of museums (MAMAC, Nice) and shown at widely acknowledged exhibitions (traveling exhibition in Nice and Lisbon in 2009), render homage to an American legend: the great white shark. In our sheet the animal dashes forward from the black background, menacing, the jaw with the rows of sharp teeth wide open. Life-size, photo-realistic and seen from the perspective of a doomed, Longo's shark demonstrates the inevitability of the own death - shattering and of compelling beauty. The philosophical category of the sublime takes immediate form in this picture's eerie fascination: The much-quoted "delightful horror" (Edmund Burke) seizes the observer with full force. Robert Longo found inspiration for the shark drawings in popular culture. The great white shark became a national legend in the USA after a series of shark attacks in 1916, long before Steven Spielberg's film "Jaws". Among surfers the "great white" is regarded a "Perfect God" – a mysterious force from the sea that unites fascination and horror.

3

ROBERT LONGO  
Untitled (Shark 15), 2008  
Charcoal drawing, 133 x 198 cm (52.3 x 77.9 in)  
€ 320.000 - 380.000



4

SÉRGIO DE CAMARGO  
Untitled (n°349), 1971  
Relief. Oil on wood, 50 x 50 cm (19.6 x 19.6 in)  
€ 140.000 - 180.000

Lucio Fontana, "Concetto spaziale, Attesa",  
1964/65, Milan, Fondazione Lucio Fontana

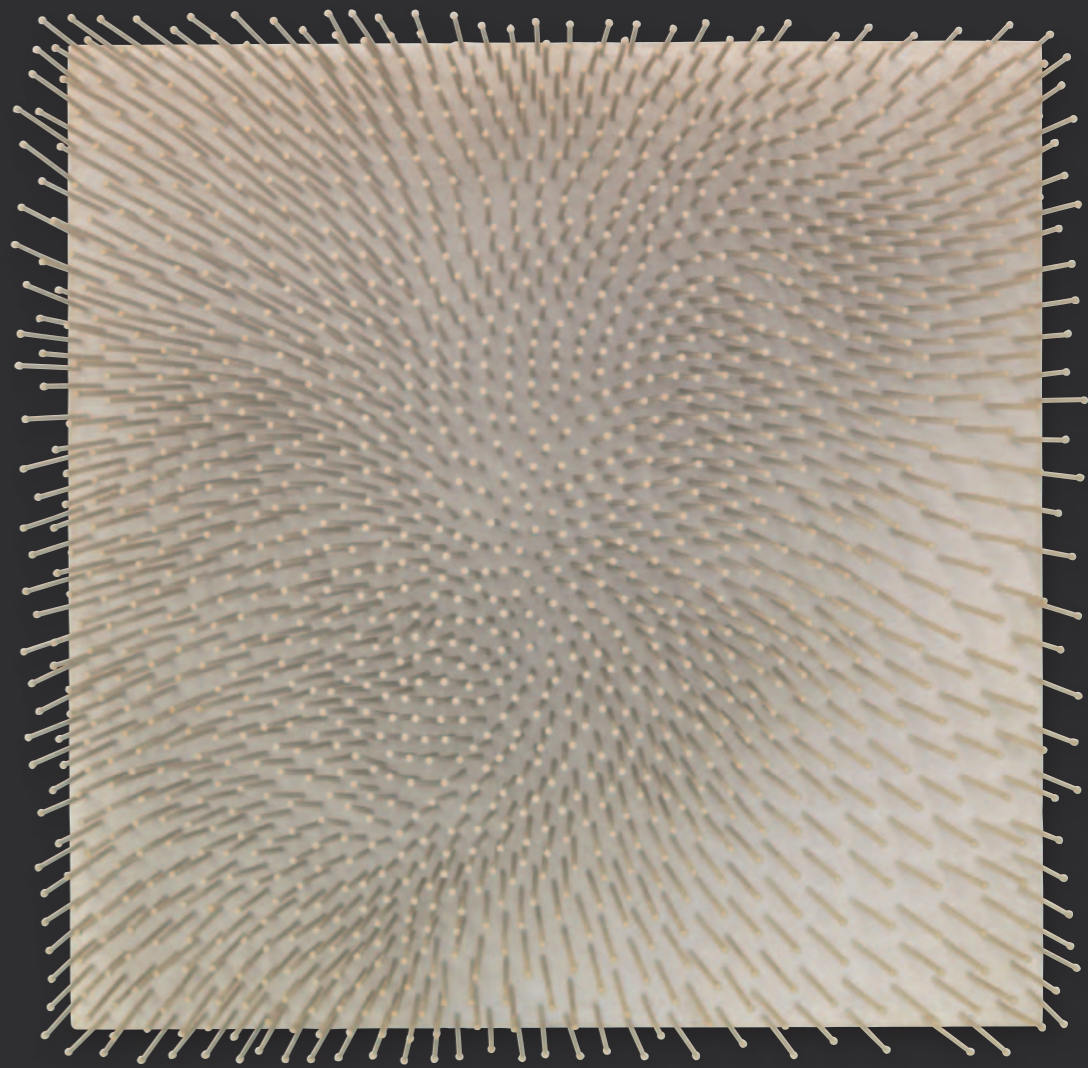
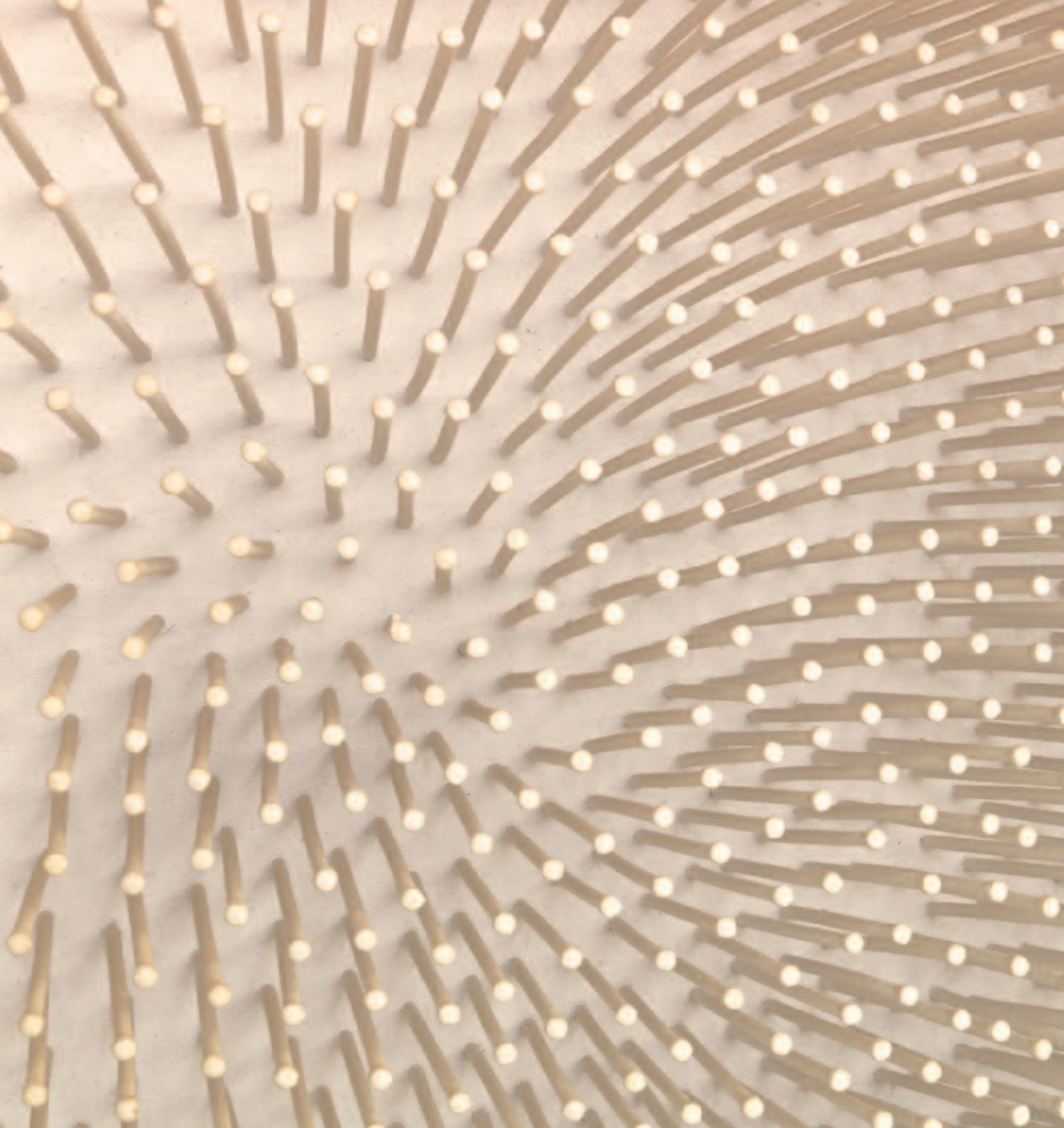


"... what I wanted to reveal in the work ...  
was revealed through beams of light."

Sérgio de Camargo

Between 1961 and 1974 Sérgio de Camargo called Paris his home and joined the group of Kinetic artists called "Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel". The group was founded by artists such as François Morellet, Julio Le Parc, Francisco Sobrino and Jean-Pierre Vasarely in 1960. It was during those years in Paris that Camargo began to focus on the structurization of monochrome white surfaces by means of cylindrical wooden slats positioned on the surface according to a certain rhythm. These works count among his internationally most sought-after accomplishments. Just as it is the case with works from the German ZERO protagonists Günther Uecker and Heinz Mack, they make the light, instead of the color, the key element of de-

sign. Depending on illumination and the observer's perspective, the structured surface offers ever new shadow plays. Camargo's monochrome creations, minimalistic in terms of their formal means, draw their unique artistic strength and presence alone from the structure. The longer one observes the relief in this work, the more the eye captures a particular orderliness in the supposed chaos, such as the interplay between large and small forms which covers the surface in vertical alignment, additionally, the two parallel aisles that interrupt the surface's vertical rhythm become obvious. They seem like an homage to the famous series "Concetti spaziali" from his teacher Lucio Fontana.



"The field's motion  
The shimmering light  
The wind on the water  
Language of the dissolving signs of beauty  
Hovering clouds  
The white beach  
Where the visible, crowned by light,  
goes lost in the invisible."

Günter Uecker, 1964

In Uecker's oeuvre the nail, commonly an anonymous industrial product, is a medium with a deeply spiritual expression. The nail is normally associated with its function to fixate, however, Uecker employs the material in his nail pictures to illustrate and articulate motion. In this work "Weißes Feld" the light and shade of the whirl of nails create a rhythmic dynamic structure on the surface that changes with the observer's position. The monochrome wave of nails appears to unfold weightlessly across the canvas, the nails expand the medium painting by a third dimension. In his early nail pictures, which are of great

art-historical significance, Uecker challenged an apparent paradox. Owed to the nails' dense arrangement in a certain pattern and the play of light, he took the material-dependent rigidity from the nail and sets the surface in motion right in front of our eyes. Uecker's early nail pictures are not only particularly convincing for their unrivaled artistic innovation, but also because of their timeless aesthetic, which lets the white nail heads hover in front of the monochrome canvas and entirely liberates the work's optical effect from the enormous weightiness of its formation process.

5

GÜNTHER UECKER

Weißes Feld, 1965

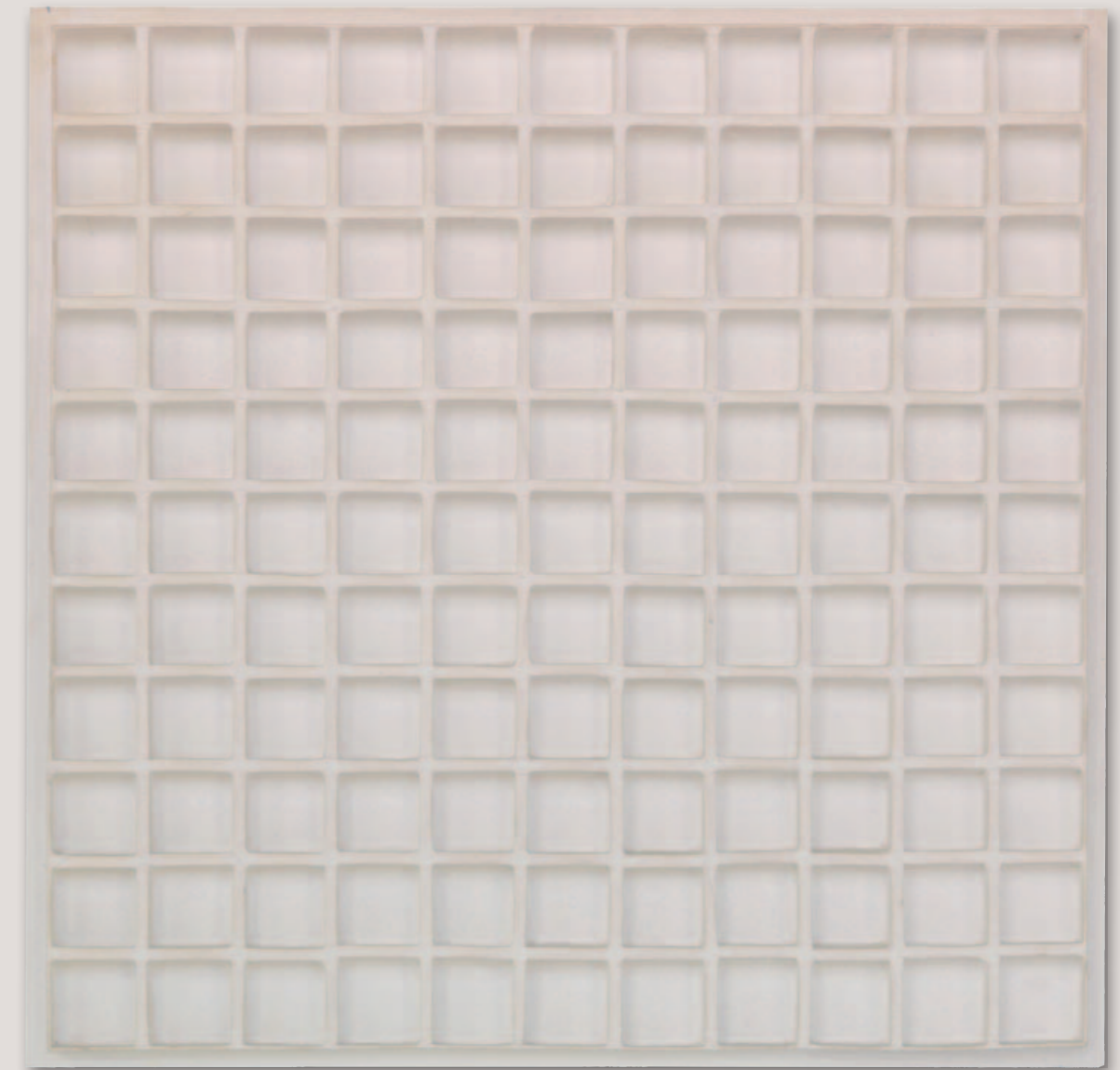
Object. Nails and white paint on canvas, on wood, 60,5 x 60,5 x 9 cm (23.8 x 23.8 x 3.5 in)

€ 200.000 - 300.000



"If I were an artist entirely free from form I would go mad. The order, the austerity is reflected in my relief. In the end their most striking qualities are organization, regularity and repetition."

Jan Schoonhoven



Working on a relief with 10 x 10 squares

Schoonhoven is fascinated by the serial relief which has a meditative moment both in the process of making as well as when observing it. This large-size work consists of 121 protruding squares arranged in 11 vertical columns and 11 horizontal rows constituting a square format as a whole. The radical reduction to the color white, which was not pure but slightly broken in his early works, allows the light to unfold its changeable play of light and shade on the strictly organized structure. "The white reliefs are three-dimensional and therefore tactile objects. They are objects, insofar they are what they are, meaning they don't represent or imitate what they are not.

[.] Schoonhoven's white reliefs are serial, grid-like systems with a number of identical and equal spatial recesses. The repetition of one and the same makes for the serial character." (Max Imdahl, quote after: *Künstler. Kritisches Lexikon der Gegenwartskunst*, edition 9, p. 7). Observing Schoonhoven's minimalistic reliefs one fathoms what the art historian Max Imdahl means with the phrase of "seeing view": Seeing is an aesthetic fundamental experience, unfettered by the recognition of an object. Accordingly, Schoonhoven's reliefs invite the observer to explore them and to rejoice in their changeable appearance over and over again.

6

JAN SCHOONHOVEN

R 43-4, 1973

Relief. Pigment and papier mâché on panel, 75 x 75 x 4,5 cm (29.5 x 29.5 x 1.7 in)

€ 140.000 - 180.000



7

OSKAR KOKOSCHKA  
Hamburg III, 1961  
Oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm (19.6 x 23.6 in)  
€ 200.000 - 300.000



"How much I loved the time in Hamburg [...], whenever I think back I feel homesick. No other city in the world was such a rich source of inspiration and nowhere did I meet such lovely and generous people."

cited from a letter by Oskar Kokoschka to Wilhelm Reinhold, November 2nd 1967

Kokoschka's inimitable depictions of the world's metropolises count among the artist's most sought-after works on the art market. All of the cityscapes were painted from an elevated position in order to capture a preferably detailed panorama view. This work shows a view of the Hamburg harbor from the Stülcken shipyard on the Elbe's southern banks. The architect and art collector

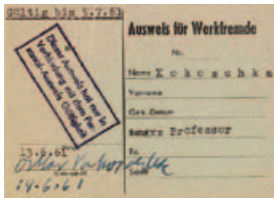
Edgar Horstmann personally selected a rather unusual place as Kokoschka's studio and noted the following: "This morning I was up on the big crane at the Stülcken yard, I wanted to see if this might be a good place for OK to paint. A bit breakneck, but it offers a remarkably complete view of Hamburg. - I am still waiting for his answer."

# OSKAR KOKOSCHKA · Hamburg III

Eventually Kokoschka set up his studio there, at a dizzy height of 60 meters above the water, accessible only with a small elevator (see illu. Kokoschka working on the painting "Hamburger Hafen II", which was made from the same position). For his uncommon studio the artist even needed his own shipyard identity card for non-employees (see illu.). He only had three weeks to complete the project. In a short period of time the paintings "Hamburger Hafen II", a commission work for the Hamburg art collector Wilhelm Reinhold and "Hamburger Hafen III" came into existence at this unusual workplace. Next to "Der Marktplatz zu Bremen", they are the only three paintings made in 1961.



III.: Claude Monet, "Houses of Parliament, Reflections on the Thames", 1905



I.: Kokoschka's shipyard identity card for the Stülcken shipyard

A look at the picture reveals that Kokoschka was happy and felt at home. It is literally bursting with bright summery colors that emphasize the bustling goings-on in the harbor. The whole composition emanates a tremendous airiness and transparency. The scene immediately calls reminiscence of the great masterworks of art history: Canaletto's Canale Grande in Venice or Monet's Houses of Parliaments appear in front of our mind's eye. Owed to the blaze of colors, this work is definitely one of the most beautiful accomplishments from his later period of creation.

II.: In his studio at the Stülcken shipyard



IV.: Antonio Canal (gen. Canaletto), "Canal Grande", ca. 1756





KARL HOFER  
Jünglinge mit Fahnen, 1935  
Oil on canvas, 159 x 106 cm (62.5 x 41.7 in)  
€ 140.000 - 180.000



Karl Hofer became occupied with the archaic motif of the standard bearer as early as in 1913, when he made a series of three paintings (Wohlert 260-262). They are in possession of, among others, the collections of the Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim and the Städtische Museen Chemnitz. While the dissolved contours and the swift brushstrokes are still documents of the artist's initial examination of El Greco's works, Hofer rendered the flag bearing young men in our

painting in his characteristic mature pictorial language and in a monumental format. The way the athletic bodies hold the flagpoles calls reminiscence of the well-known motif of ancient spear bearers. The melancholic look that seems to gaze into space and the shaded eyes can also be found in the two famous Hofer paintings "Zwei Mädchen" (Wohlert 1130, Städtische Kunsthalle Mannheim) and "Zwei Frauen" (Wohlert 1133, Museum für Neue Kunst, Freiburg i. Br.). Both were

# KARL HOFER · Jünglinge mit Fahnen

also made in 1935. While Hofer depicts the protagonists in his large number of portraits of young girls in a domestic and contemplative context, such as it is the case with "Mädchen mit Laute" (Wohlert 981; Busch Reisinger Museum, Cambridge) or with „Mädchen mit Brief" (Wohlert 1064, The Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland), Hofer devises an apparent paradox of a both athletic and active as well as highly contemplative idea of man in his rare portraits of young men from the 1930s – our bright painting and „Knabe mit Ball" from 1938 (Wohlert 1380, Museum für Neue Kunst, Freiburg i. Br.) count among them.

Even though the flags are not fully visible, a close observation shows that Hofer lets his melancholic standard bearers hold the flags of fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the Ukraine, which was suffering under Stalinist Soviet oppression at that time – an obvious pictorial comment on the depressing political situation by the banned artist.



I.: Karl Hofer, "Knabe mit Ball", 1913

II.: Karl Hofer, "Fahnenträger", 1913



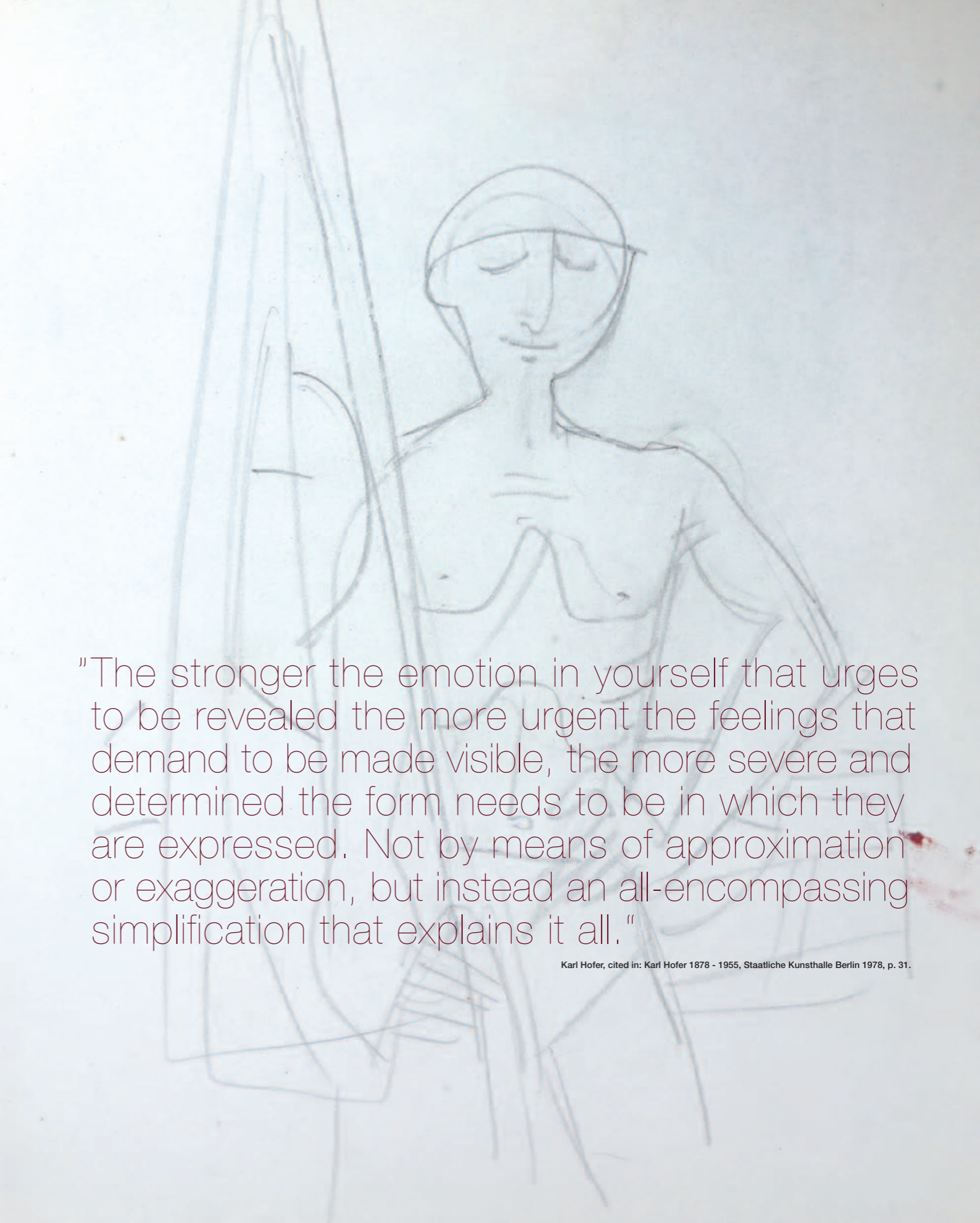
II.: Karl Hofer, "Fahnenträger", 1913

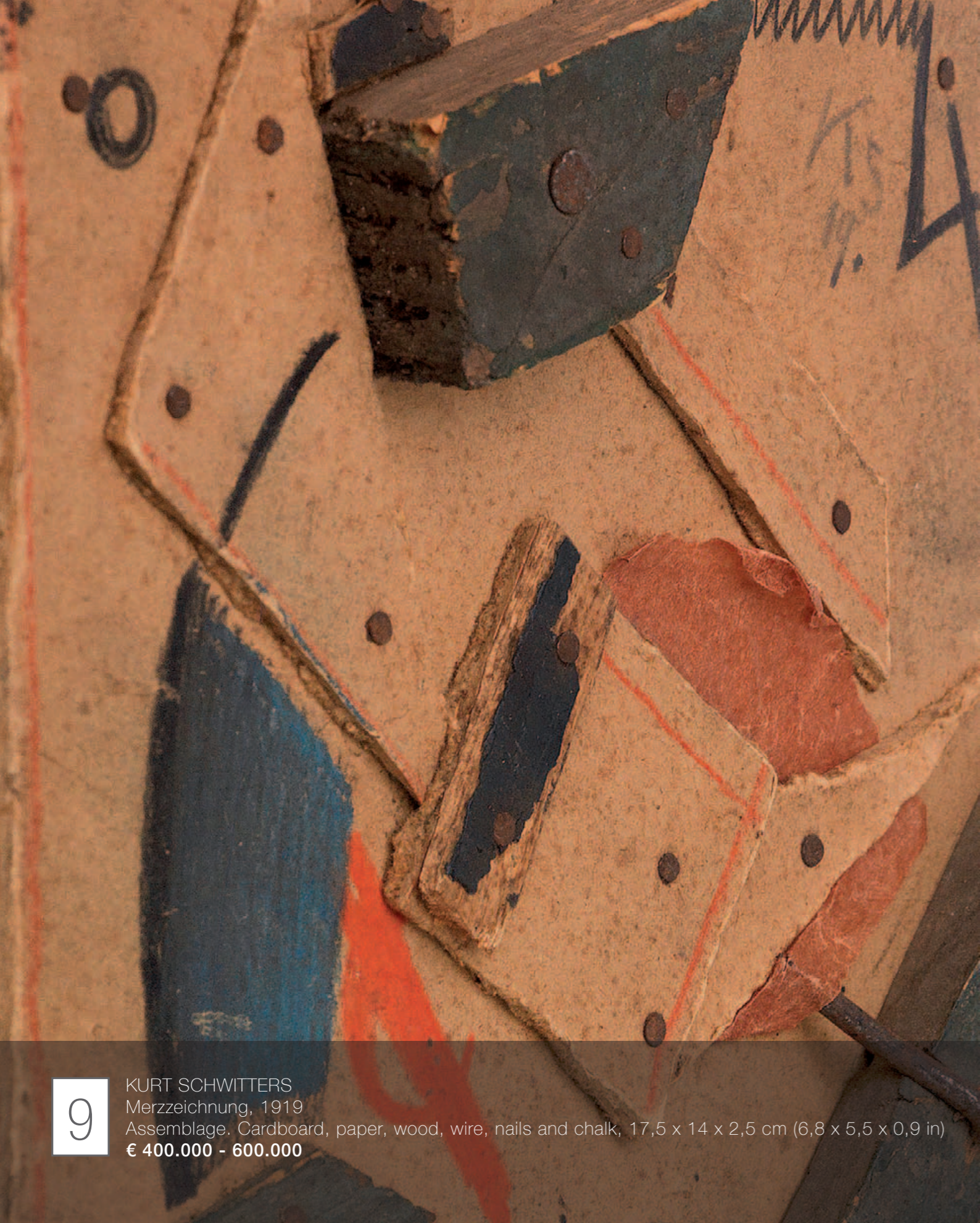


III. Karl Hofer, „Jüngling mit Fahne", sketch, taken from Hofer's sketchbook from the 1950s. (Presler PW 15-68).

"The stronger the emotion in yourself that urges to be revealed the more urgent the feelings that demand to be made visible, the more severe and determined the form needs to be in which they are expressed. Not by means of approximation or exaggeration, but instead an all-encompassing simplification that explains it all."

Karl Hofer, cited in: Karl Hofer 1878 - 1955, Staatliche Kunsthalle Berlin 1978, p. 31.





9

KURT SCHWITTERS  
Merzzeichnung, 1919  
Assemblage. Cardboard, paper, wood, wire, nails and chalk, 17,5 x 14 x 2,5 cm (6,8 x 5,5 x 0,9 in)  
€ 400.000 - 600.000



"I am a painter, I am nailing my pictures."

Kurt Schwitters

In 1918 Kurt Schwitters made the first assemblages from incidentally found materials. Based on his art concept and literary texts, he founded the Dada institution "Merz" in Hanover, for the name he uses a fragment from the word "Commerzbank" (lat. cum=with, merx=commodity). He did not employ conventional means of de-

sign, instead he used all perceptible materials and tools. What is particularly remarkable is the description "Merzzeichnung" (Merz Drawing) that Schwitters chose for the work, as he usually used this denomination for his two-dimensional color collages and compositions.

## KURT SCHWITTERS · Merzzeichnung

"The work comes from Schwitters early 'Merz' period, it shows, in terms of style, an extraordinary interplay of drawing and assemblage that is absolutely one-of-a-kind in Schwitters's oeuvre."

Dr. Isabel Schulz and Dr. Karin Orchard, February 27th 2014

Our work is the only Merz Drawing in which drawing and assemblage are united. The artist put a price of nothing less than 1000 Mark on the back of the small work – far more than Schwitters would usually ask for his works in 1919; perhaps this was his way to express his appreciation for this type of work in his oeuvre, well aware that it could not be realized.

The origin of our "Merzzeichnung" can be clearly localized on basis of records:

It was in those days that Schwitters was in contact with the circle around the artist Bernhard Hoetger, who worked and lived in the artist colony Worpswede. This assemblage came into existence in context of an artist meeting in Worpswede in 1919: Eugenie von Garvens, a direct neighbor of Hoetgers, gives account of an "art-work of wood and cardboard" that Kurt Schwitters "laid down" in her garden in Worpswede. Schwitters gave the work to the Worpswede artist Fritz Uphoff as a present, as he had provided him painting supplies. Through family relations the work got into Dutch ownership where it would remain until 1976. It was sold through Sotheby's and became property of Claude Givaudan, Geneva/ Paris. In 1981 it was acquired by the gallery Alice Adams from where the Merz Drawing made its way into a private collection in Chicago.



### Exhibitions:

Kurt Schwitters. Words and Works, Helen Serger Galerie La Boetie, New York, March 20th -May 10th 1985.

German Art in the 20th Century. Painting and Sculpture 1905-1985, Royal Academy of Arts, London October 11th-December 22nd 1985 / Staatsgalerie Stuttgart February 8th-April 27th 1986, color illu. 140.



10

MAX LIEBERMANN  
Junge Kuhhirtin, 1896  
Colour pastel on brown paper, mounted on stretcher at an early point, 55 x 77 cm (21.6 x 30.3 in)  
€ 150.000 - 180.000



Max Liebermann's stays in the Netherlands were of crucial importance for the artist's pictorial works. Not only did he make the local peasants subject of his paintings, he was also able to liberate his overall style from the constraints of historical Realism prevailing in the late 19th century. In Holland Liebermann paid very close

attention to his surroundings, particularly when observing countryfolk performing their everyday chores, which the artist depicted with great empathy. It's the unspectacular events, the daily routines, that Liebermann captures in a rather prosaic manner which allows him to add even more significance to the depiction.



# MAX LIEBERMANN · Junge Kuhhirtin



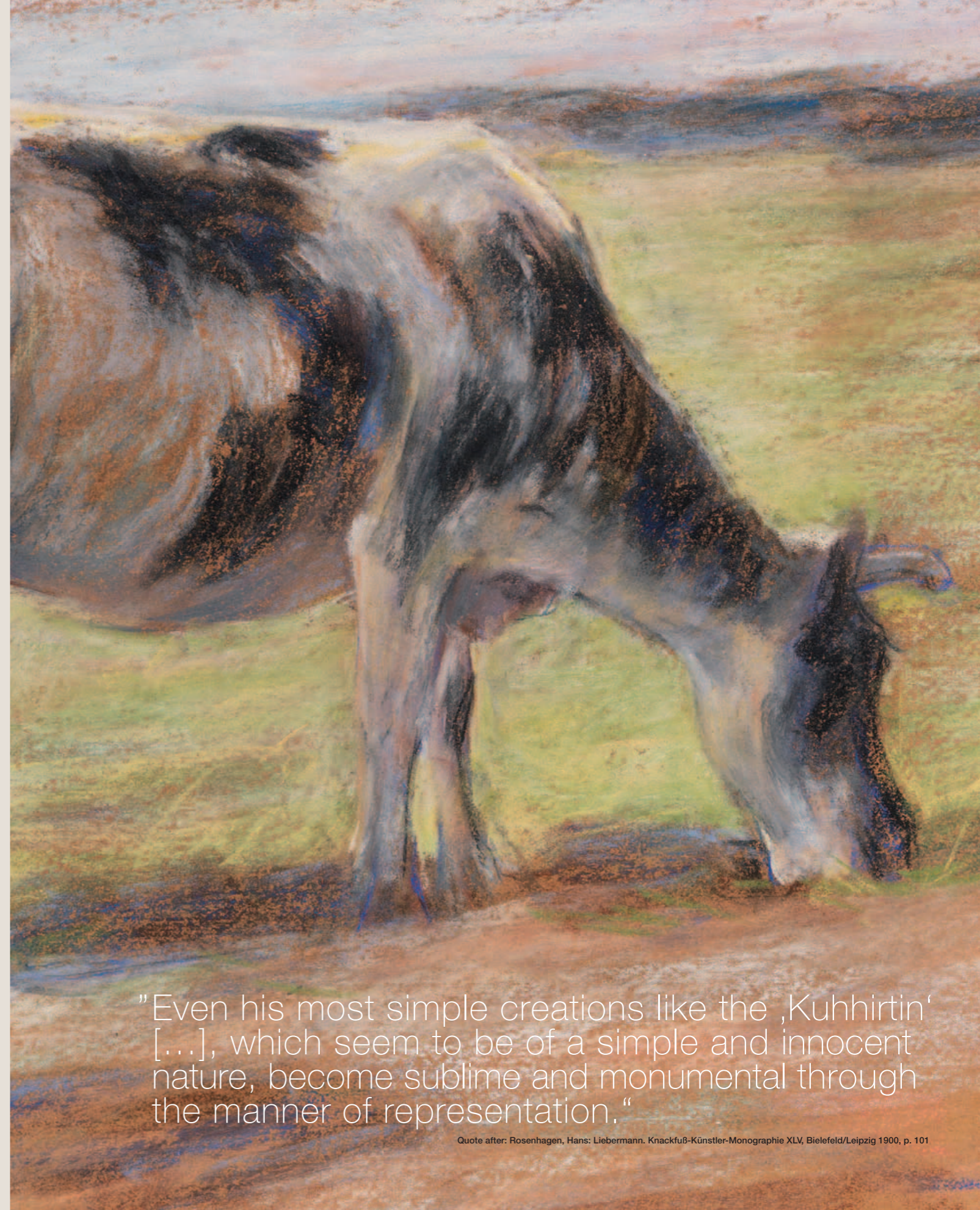
I. Max Liebermann, "Kuhhirtin", 1890, Kunsthalle Bremen

Liebermann had sketched the figure of the knitting cowgirl on many occasions, but the oil on board study from 1886 (Eberle 1886/12) is the actual model. With this work he renders a new interpretation in a new context, works by the Dutch painter Anton Mauve can be seen as a source of inspiration. He describes the heroism of the simple and natural country life, however, without any religious pathos as it is the case with, for instance, Jean François Millet. Max Liebermann's excellent technical skills become evident in this pastel, which, due to the strong presence of the subject - almost like in an oil painting - deserves a special place in the artist's oeuvre.



II. Jean Francois Millet, "Frau, die ihre Kuh weidet", 1858

III. Anton Mauve, "Frau mit Ziegen", 1885



"Even his most simple creations like the 'Kuhhirtin' [...], which seem to be of a simple and innocent nature, become sublime and monumental through the manner of representation."



1 1

MAX BECKMANN  
Stillleben mit Rosen, 1927  
Oil on canvas, 57 x 64 cm (22.4 x 25.1 in)  
€ 400.000 - 600.000



Other works worthwhile mentioning are, among others, the "Grosses Fisch-Stillleben" at Kunsthalle Hamburg (1927; Göpel 276), the "Stillleben mit Apfel und Birne" at Kunsthalle Bremen (1928; Göpel 283) and the "Stillleben mit Weingläsern und Katze" from 1929 in the collection of the Country Museum of Art, Los Angeles (Göpel 310). Just as it is the case with our "Stillleben mit Rosen" Beckmann often stages objects from his domestic surroundings in a remarkably balanced composition. Towards the bottom the composition is bordered by an arrangement of the artist's pipe and, presumably as a reference to the work's place of origin, an issue of the newspaper 'Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung'.

The work's special appeal lies in the contrast between the black background and the bright red bouquet of roses in the foreground. The truncated mirror in right, a common element in Beckmann's still lifes, provides the necessary connection between the abstract background and the detailed flower arrangement in the foreground, adding a suspenseful balance to the composition. From September 2014 to January 2015 the Kunsthalle Hamburg dedicated an extra exhibition to Max Beckmann's still lifes, which are a central theme in his work from the beginnings through the time of World War I, the Frankfurt days, the exile in Amsterdam up until his last years in the USA.

## MAX BECKMANN · Stilleben mit Rosen

”Space – space – and space again – the infinite divinity that surrounds us and of which we are part. This is what I seek to form through painting.”

Max Beckmann in his speech "About my painting", New Burlington Galleries London 1938, quote after: cat. Max Beckmann – Kleine Stilleben. Franz Marc Museum, Kochel am See. Published by Cathrin Klingsöhr-Leroy and Nina Peter, Kochel am See 2013, p. 27.

Next to apocalyptic figure scenes, still lifes have been a common genre in Beckmann's pictorial work since the end of World War I. In these works he decisively continued to develop the traditional art-historical subject, adopting it as his own with his typical summary style that is characterized by a broad and energetic brushstroke. Next to the large-size figure scenes, the still life is, from an art-historical perspective, regarded as Beckmann's key competence which would play a major role until the end of his life. By means of the still life Beckmann step by step explores the world around him pictorially, from that point on he also integrates the still life as an attribute in his multi figure scenes. For this reason it is little surprising that a large part of Beckmann's still lifes, through which the artist attained his characteristic style in the second half of the 1920s, is in possession of renowned public collections today, among them the "Grosses Stilleben mit Musikinstrumenten" from 1926 (Göpel 257; Städel Museum, Frankfurt a.M.). With "Stilleben mit Zigarrenkiste" (1926; Göpel 264), "Champagner-Stilleben" (1929; Göpel 311) and "Sonnenblume" (1930; Göpel 324) the Bavarian State Painting Collection is in possession of three still lifes from around 1930.

I. Max Beckmann, "Großes Fisch-Stilleben", 1930



II. Max Beckmann, "Sonnenblume", 1930



III. Max Beckmann, "Stilleben mit Zigarrenkiste", 1926





1 | 2

EMIL NOLDE  
Hohe See unter violetterm Himmel, ca. 1930/35  
Watercolour and opaque white on Japon, 36,5 x 50,3 cm (14.3 x 19.8 in)  
€ 100.000 – 150.000



„Everything primal entralls my senses. The giant, raging sea in its original state, the wind, the sun, even the starry sky almost as it appeared some fifty thousand years ago.“

Emil Nolde in his autobiography (II, 197)

Emil Nolde experienced and adopted the sea as an elemental force from an early point on. "Everything primal entralls my senses", noted the artist in his autobiography. This characteristic feature of the motif offered him infinite possibilities in his watercolors by employing the color, with all its rich diversity and unrestrained power, as an essential means of expression, unfolding the virtuous play as a natural event

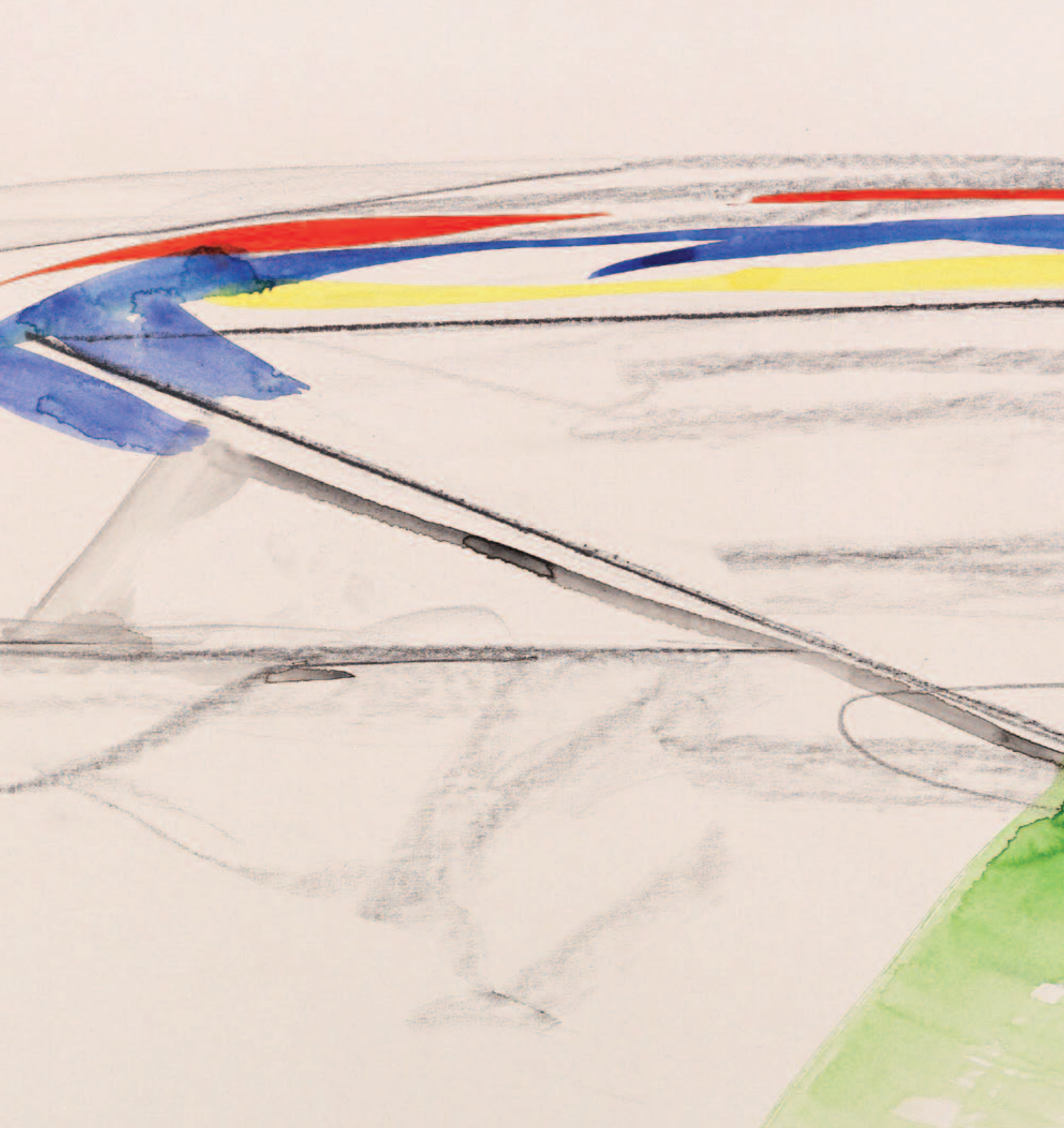
Prof. Manfred Reuther

Proceeds of this work will go to the benefit of a Buddhist world peace stupa in Grafenwörth, Lower Austria.



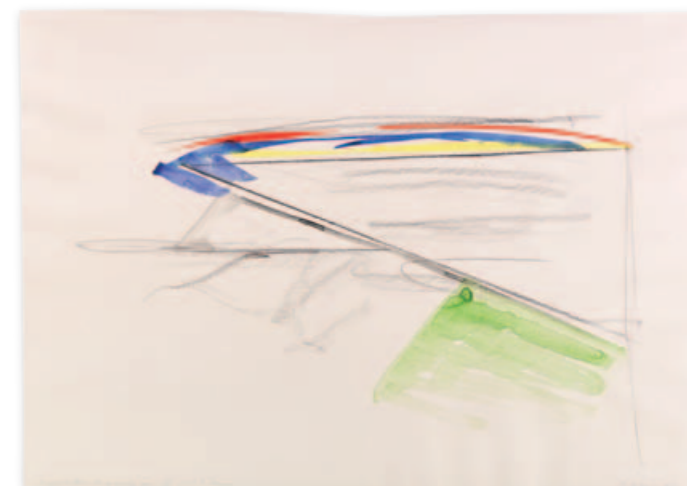
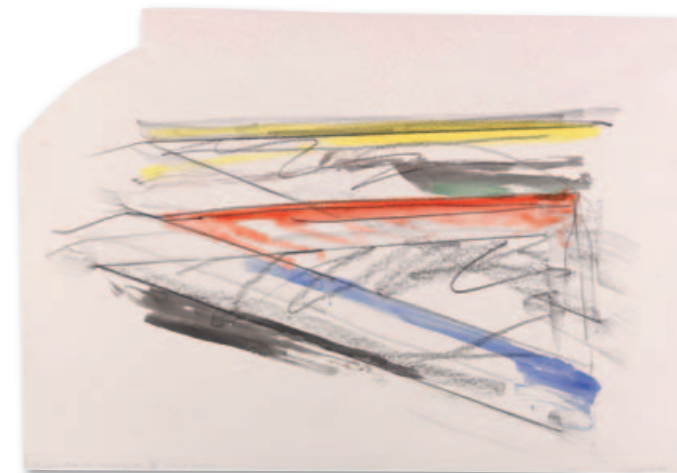
"Nolde knows the sea like no artist before him did. He does not see it from the beach or from aboard a ship, he sees it without any reference to man, in its eternal motion, always change-ful, living out the force of divine primal beings, which still have the uncurbed freedom from the first day of creation."

Max Sauerlandt 1921, art historian and close friend of Emil Nolde



1 | 2 + 1

BLINKY PALERMO  
 Happier than the Morning Sun (for S. Wonder) · 1974 · 4 parts  
 Coal, paper collage and watercolour · up to 58 x 91.5 cm (up to 58 x 91.5 cm)  
 € 200.000 – 300.000



Palermo's series are systems, fine webs of a dialog between surface and space, between the swift line and a second level of collaged colors.

The sheets of "Happier than the Morning Sun" have different formats – relate to one another irregularly. While I and II are connected by pasted red cardboard elements, III and IV share the same color tone of yellow, blue and red. Sparse charcoal lines on sheet I hint at the tip of a triangle as frottage, its closed form is only revealed in sheet IV.

Another series, another single sheet, a yellow triangle and even a multiple, a plywood triangle with 4 rust-red grano-lithographs complete the work group for "Happier than the Morning Sun" in 1975. The English title "Happier than the Morning Sun", unusual for Palermo, suggests in parentheses "to S. Wonder" both the addressee and the origin. Stevie Wonder's word bestseller album "Music of My Mind" was released in 1972. Palermo lived in New York City in 1973 and perhaps listened to the record on one or the other occasion.

Palermo had tried out four-part series as a special form of aggregating

paradigmatic ideas long before 1974. In 1970 he created a portfolio with 4 silkscreens by the title "4 Prototypes", a series combined by a gray disc and a black square, a green non-isosceles triangle and a blue isosceles triangle. The blue triangle – since 1966 ultramarine and, if possible, to be mounted above a door – became Palermo's trademark. With its irregular edges it is more of a talisman than a mathematical phenomenon.

With the series "Satyricon" Palermo had already liberated the series from the homogeneity of its formats and its regular outer shapes as early as in 1970. In "Happier than the Morning Sun" the image surface no longer is merely a trivial "ground" but as it has already become a select "space". The sheet's limits are "teammates" and no arbitrariness or even "mistakes".

In 1976, after his return to Düsseldorf, Palermo developed the magnificent conceptual series "To the People of New York City". Here, however, he had already moved on, away from the playful ease he had shown in his earlier work "Happier than the Morning Sun", created two years prior.

## BLINKY PALERMO · Happier than the Morning Sun

The remarkable progressiveness of Palermo's artistic creation can be fathomed on basis of the account of a visit to the studio by the art historian and museum director Dieter Ronte in 1973, the year this work was made: "A visit to Palermo's studio leaves me astonished. I actually did not see much; no real studio, no stacks of pictures, no smells of oil, jute or canvas [...] Somehow everything was unusual. We weren't even looking at artworks, we were discussing, pondering projects." (D. Ronte, in: Palermo. Bilder, Objekte, Zeichnungen, ex. cat. Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn 1995, p. 9). Ronte describes Palermo as a difficult artist, a "thinker, a philosopher of the visual". Accordingly, it is little surprising that Palermo's graphic work confronts us with this spontaneous intellectual impulse in such an immediate and direct manner. These graphic accomplishments "count among the internationally [...] greatest achievements of German artists in the second half of our century" (D. Ronte/K. Schwenk, in: ibidem).

Palermo's paper works are documents of the very intellectual process of creation that is crucial for an art that no longer seeks to represent and does not even accept signs in an iconic sense. Our four-part series of drawings "Happier than the Morning Sun" is a marvelous example from Palermo's small graphic oeuvre made from between 1967 and 1977. Works like this are very rare on the international auction market.

"The works from Palermo have to be experienced, have to be discussed, they are the pride that would have led other nations to great museums. The tragic his short life is, the relatively small amount of works, which, just as it is the case with the other geniuses of our century from Egon Schiele to murdered artists like Otto Freundlich, show that compression may lead to intellectual results that could else have been diluted."



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