

Anniversary Auction June 7/8, 2024

Rhythm and Rebellion



Alexej von Jawlensky
„Spanische Tänzerin“ 1909
Oil on cardboard, 100 x 69.5 cm
Estimate price: € 7,000,000 -
10,000,000

PRESS RELEASE | Munich, May 15, 2024

In our auction on June 7/8 to celebrate the company's seventieth anniversary, the top lot Alexey von Jawlenskys „Spanische Tänzerin“ (Spanish Dancer) 1909 stands for the pinnacle of German Expressionism, and for the core competence of our house. The large-scale painting is testimony to the avant-garde's fascination with dance in its unique and flamboyant style. The work was privately owned for decades and is being offered on the auction market for the first time. „Spanische Tänzerin“ is simply one of those few masterpieces that account for Jawlensky's worldwide fame today.

“There are only very few paintings by Alexej von Jawlensky showcasing this level of quality [...] and most of them have been museum-owned for many decades.”

Dr. Roman Zieglgänsberger (Jawlensky expert)*

Alexej von Jawlensky's "Spanische Tänzerin" (Spanish Dancer) can rightly be called a key work. In 1909, when he made the painting that is also one of his largest works (100 x 69.5 cm), he worked, as he would later say, "... with tremendous power from an inner ecstasy". He described the period between 1908 and 1910 as a pivotal point in his art. On previous visits to France, he had encountered the Fauves Matisse, Derain, and Vlaminck, as well as the first Cubist works by Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. Encounters with a lasting effect that ultimately led to a radical reorientation. In 1908, Wassily Kandinsky, Gabriele Münter, Alexej von Jawlensky, and his partner Marianne von Werefkin discovered the area around the Upper Bavarian town of Murnau as a source of inspiration, and it was Jawlensky in particular who came up with bold interpretations in terms of form and color. In 1909, the fellow painters founded the Neue Künstlervereinigung München (New Munich Artists' Association), from which The Blue Rider emerged in 1911.

Hence, "Spanische Tänzerin" is a milestone in Jawlensky's oeuvre and on a par with the brilliant works "Bildnis des Tänzers Alexander Sacharoff" (Portrait of the Dancer Alexandr Sakharov), 1909 (Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus), "Schokko", 1910



„Schokko“, 1910



„Bildnis des Tänzers Alexander Sacharoff“, 1909

(auctioned at Sotheby's in London in February 2008) and other motifs and compositions from this creative period, most of which are owned by international museums and public institutions. This array also includes portraits of his lover Helene, who gave birth to their son in 1902. As a maid in the Jawlensky/Werefkin household, the three lived in a "ménage à trois" that wasn't always easy.

Helene, his later wife, was the artist's favorite model. Especially in comparison with the paintings "Helene mit buntem Turban", 1910, in the Guggenheim Museum, New York and "Dunkelblauer Turban (Helene mit dunkelblauem Turban)" in the Merzbacher Collection in the Kunsthaus Zürich, it is clear that our „Spanische Tänzerin“ is his mistress. The perfect projection surface for his “love of Spain” in those years was the cultivated travesty scene with its expressive dance and frivolous costumes, which was popular in artist circles. The “Spanische Tänzerin”, however, unites a concise form reduced to surface and contour with an exuberant radiance of color, beyond all tendencies typical of the time and with the highest degree of artistic perfection. Flamenco, temperament, exoticism and eroticism stand in an ecstatic, radical contrast to Helene's elegiac pose. The tilted head and closed eyes suggest melancholy. Or perhaps a dreamy longing? A precious, slightly eccentric moment, captured in the ideal expressionist manner.



Jawlensky's painting "Spanish Dancer" with the "Murnau Landscape" on the reverse is not only one of these fascinating pinnacles of modern European art but also an exceptional example of the complex emotional expressiveness that lies at the heart of painting.

A powerful avant-gardist double dose: the radiant and highly abstract oil study on the reverse is a reference to the 1909 “Murnau Landschaft” executed in a smaller format the same year and today at 'Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus' in Munich. A closer look at works by Kandinsky and Münter from this period clearly shows how much more advanced Jawlensky was in terms of a free expressionist grasp of color and form.

Shortly after it was made, this masterpiece, estimated at 7 to 10 million euros, became part of the collection of the Rhenish industrialist Josef Gottschalk in Düsseldorf, which he compiled between the end of World War I and the late 1920s. With close ties to the art scene in the Rhineland, he was devoted to the avant-garde and acquired around sixty works by artists such as Kandinsky, Macke, and Munch. Following his death in 1941, they were fortunately saved during the Nazi era, and in 1946, the Kunstsammlung Düsseldorf contacted Gottschalk's widow to make the collection accessible to the public. The work remained in the family for over nine decades. To this day, it has only been published on a black-and-white image in the catalogue raisonné.

- “Spanische Tänzerin“ (Spanish Dancer) - an exuberant, expressionist masterpiece of the highest quality, comparable to Jawlensky's famous “Bildnis des Tänzers Alexander Sacharoff“ (Portrait of the Dancer Alexandr Sakharov), 1909, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich
- Paintings from this short creative phase are almost exclusively owned by international museums today
- Both sides are documents from Jawlensky's best creative period: the reverse shows a radiant abstracted Murnau landscape from 1909
- Estimate price: € 7 - 10 million.

* Dr. Roman Zieglgänsberger is Member of the academic council of the Alexej von Jawlensky-Archive in Muralto/Switzerland, Curator for Modern Art, Museum Wiesbaden

Find more information and more artworks in the [preview on our website](#).

AUCTION DATES:

May 27, 2024 Rare Books Auction in Hamburg (www.ketterer-rarebooks.de)

June 7, 2024 Contemporary Art Day Sale, Evening Sale in Munich

June 8, 2024 19th Century Art, Modern Art Day Sale in Munich

Until June 15, 2024 Online Sale - parallel to the room auction

70 JAHRE KETTERER KUNST

Ketterer Kunst with its headquarters in Munich and branches in Hamburg, Cologne and Berlin, as well as with a global network of experts, was founded in 1954. Robert Ketterer runs the family business in second generation. The auction house has a focus on Contemporary, Modern and 19th Century Art and on Rare Books from five centuries. In its market segment, Ketterer Kunst is the number 1 in the German language region and is in the global top ten of the strongest-selling art auction houses (artprice.com).

PRESS INQUIRIES

Anja Häse

Tel.: +49-(0)89-552 441 25

E-Mail: presse@kettererkunst.de

www.kettererkunst.com

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