

Press Release

Beckmann, Baselitz, Blechen New Perspectives, Passion and Emotions – Preview of the Winter Auctions at Grisebach

This winter, Grisebach will be offering an inspiring selection of 430 lots spanning three centuries. The following artworks are a small representative sample:

Max Beckmann

“Quappi mit grünem Sonnenschirm”. 1938

Oil on canvas. 110 x 65 cm

EUR 4,000,000 – 6,000,000

Once again, a masterwork by Max Beckmann will take center stage at the Winter Auctions when the artist’s 1938 portrait *Quappi mit grünem Sonnenschirm* is called up. The painting combines two central themes in Beckmann’s oeuvre: His wife Mathilde, whom he affectionately called “Quappi,” and his fascination for seascapes and beach scenes. Created during a time of extreme political and personal difficulties for the artist, the work testifies to his ability to cope with an exceptionally oppressive present by harking back to happier years. Among Beckmann’s images of women, our painting occupies a prominent rank and beguiles us as doubtlessly one of the most beautiful and erotic of the Quappi portraits. For the first time in over 50 years, the painting is on view to the public.

Max Beckmann

“Stilleben mit Orchideen und Birnen”. 1946

Oil on canvas. 90.5 x 90.5 cm

EUR 1,000,000 – 1,500,000

Still lifes are a highly intriguing and multifaceted genre in Max Beckmann’s oeuvre. The artist focuses on signs and symbols to imbue them with hidden meanings, using symbolically charged objects to convey coded visual messages. *Stilleben mit Orchideen und Birnen*, held in private hands for decades until now, casts a spotlight on the orchid, the “queen of flowers” that has been serving since time immemorial as a metaphor for seduction, passion, and erotic desire. The perishable pears and apples and other fruits in the image allude to the transience of things, much as in the vanitas paintings of the Baroque period. This intimate message was evidently addressed to Beckmann’s wife Mathilde, known as Quappi. So it was definitely for a reason that he

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gave her the painting as a present. Quappi was overjoyed: "Received a magnificent painting with orchids as a gift eight days ago! It's the most beautiful still life that T[iger] has ever made and [is] in my favourite colours jade-green and pink." She was to keep it in her possession for the rest of her life.

Wilhelm Lehmbruck

"Büste der Knienden (Geneigter Frauenkopf)". 1912/14

Cement cast made during the artist's lifetime, tinted red-brown. 43 x 46 x 27.5 cm

EUR 250,000–350,000

The striking work we are offering showcases the consummate mastery of this pioneer of Expressionist sculpture. The soulful melancholy of the bust tinted in a reddish brown, executed in cement stone during the artist's lifetime, conveys a delicate and poetically charged sense of introversion by the figure's elongated head and her downcast gaze. Lehmbruck developed the inclined head of the *Geneigter Frauenkopf* as an excerpt and distillation of his larger-than-life sculpture *Die Kniende*. Other versions of the bust, which the artist executed in various materials, are currently located in the collections of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, the Österreichische Galerie Belvedere in Vienna, and the Art Institute in Chicago, amongst others. The fact that Lehmbruck died relatively young makes it all the rarer to find a casting created during his lifetime.

Pablo Picasso

"La femme à la résille" ("Femme aux cheveux verts"). 1949

Painted printing plate: brush with lithographic India ink on zinc. 70.1 x 55.2 cm

EUR 200,000 – 300,000

Very few artists of the 20th century were as creative as Pablo Picasso. We cannot help but be fascinated by the range of variations with which Picasso could transform a single motif into ever-new compositions, particularly in his graphic prints. An object lesson in how his motifs evolved as he reworked his printing plates is the colour lithograph *La femme à la résille*, in which Picasso immortalized his lover Françoise Gilot, whom he had met in 1943. The workflow leading to the final printed version of this attractive likeness encompassed four black & white concepts and two colour concepts, thus resulting in a total of 13 printed variations in the combination of all printing plates. Seven of these folios have been consigned to our auction at Grisebach. Variants such as these afford us a unique insight into Picasso's artistic process and reveal how their impact was continually enhanced through experimentation. The painted printing plate likewise on offer is an exceptional rarity, given that it is one of the few original plates of its kind known to exist outside the collection of the Musée Picasso in Paris.

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Zao Wou-Ki

“Au petit jour”. 1957

Oil on canvas. 45.5 x 55 cm

EUR 500,000–700,000

Part of our exquisite international lineup for the Winter Auction is a work by the French artist Zao Wou-Ki, son of a respected banker from China whose family tree reached far back into that country's history. Zao Wou-Ki made his home in Paris from 1947 onwards, becoming a part of the European Avant-Garde within a matter of a few years. The small oil painting *Au petit jour* from 1957 gives no indication of its creator's geographic origins or artistic schooling. Zao Wou-Ki created his very own, unmistakable version of *peinture informelle*. Potentially, *Au petit jour* is one of his most free-spirited and dynamic paintings. We sense the enormous tension, intensity, and especially the concentration and focus with which Zao controls his painterly gesture – even as he takes the greatest expressive liberties, it never loses its centeredness or rootedness in the painting's grounding, which itself seems to exude a luminous glow from within.

Georg Baselitz

“schön gelb”. 2009

Oil on canvas. 250 x 200 cm

EUR 450,000 – 650,000

Georg Baselitz' large-format oil painting *schön gelb* from 2009 forms part of his “Remix” cycle of images and is a fascinating example of the artist's ability to repeatedly open up new creative horizons for himself, elevating his “material” to a new level of freedom, equanimity, and self-remove. In the case of our painting, the artist gives new form to his early “Hero” paintings of the 1960s that first made him famous. Seen in the light of this vibrant virtuosity, *schön gelb* draws our attention to the never quite solvable conundrum of remembering and forgetting.

Carl Blechen

“Mühlental von Amalfi”. Circa 1830

Oil on canvas. 74.5 x 99 cm

EUR 100,000–150,000

Carl Blechen's *Mühlental von Amalfi*, one of the most important of the artist's key works, marks an apogee of 19th century art. Until 1938, this landscape painting was owned by the Goldschmidts, a Jewish family from Berlin. Shortly after the Kristallnacht pogroms which had raged that November, the two Goldschmidt brothers, Dr. Arthur Jacques and Dr. Eugen Carl, both decided to end their lives by their own hand. Their estate passed to their nephew Edgar Jacques Moor, who emigrated to South Africa that same year. In 1942, the assets Moor had left behind in Berlin –

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almost certainly including *Mühlental von Amalfi* – were confiscated by the Gestapo secret police. In 1944, the Berlin art dealer Hans W. Lange brokered the painting to the Sonderauftrag Linz organization tasked with securing artworks for the “Führermuseum” that Adolf Hitler was planning for his hometown of Linz. Following the end of World War II, the painting resurfaced in 1946 at the Central Collecting Point (CCP) set up in Munich by the US military government and eventually passed into the possession of the German Federal Government. More than eight decades after the painting was seized, the Federal Art Administration (KVdB) has now returned *Mühlental von Amalfi* to the heirs of Edgar Moor as the beneficiaries of the restitution, who in turn have entrusted it to Grisebach for sale at auction (from the Press Release of 2 October 2024).

The Winter Auctions to be held on 28 & 29 November will see a total of 430 artworks with an aggregate lower estimate of nearly EUR 17 million being sold in four separate auctions.

The preview of all works will be held in Berlin from 21 to 27 November at Fasanenstrasse 25 and 27.

Preview of all works

Berlin, 21 to 27 November

Thursday, 21 November to Tuesday, 26 November, 10am to 6pm

Wednesday, 27 November, 10am to 3pm

Grisebach, Fasanenstraße 25 and 27

Winter Auctions

28 & 29 November 2024

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Carl Blechen. "Mühltal von Amalfi". Um 1830
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