

Koller Auktionen - Lot 3432

A185 PostWar & Contemporary - Saturday 30 June 2018, 02.00 PM



THEODOROS STAMOS

(New York 1922–1997 Ioannina)

Cheops Sun-Box # I. 1969.

Acrylic on canvas.

Signed, dated and titled on the overlap: "CHEOPS SUN-BOX" # 1 STAMOS 1969, also with directional arrow.

182.9 x 152.4 cm.

Provenance: - André Emmerich Gallery, New York (verso with the label). - Marlborough Galerie, Zurich (verso with the label). - Turske & Turske, Zurich (verso with the label). - Purchased from the above by the present owner, since then private collection Switzerland. Theodoros Stamos was born in New York in 1922, the son of a Greek immigrant. A bursary enabled him to attend the American Artist School, where he studied sculpture until

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1939. Through his acquaintance with the artist group "The Ten" and having studied the works of Milton Avery and Marsden Hartley, shortly before his graduation he turned to painting and abandoned his studies. He found refuge in various studios and quickly made the acquaintance of artists such as Arshile Gorky, Adolph Gottlieb and Barnett Newman. His initial figurative works show the influence of Surrealism, his fascination with amorphous figures and his interest in the primeval and mythology. In 1943 he had his first exhibition at the Wakefield Gallery, so that his works became known to a broad range of collectors and he came into contact with Abstract Expressionism which was then slowly developing. From the mid-1940s he increasingly took on teaching assignments, for example at the progressive Black Mountain College. Around 1954 Stamos began to work predominantly in series, which were increasingly dominated by colour surfaces. Numerous journeys through the US and Europe expanded his horizons and brought new facets to his work. Often his oeuvre is compared to that of Mark Rothko, in that Stamos has an articulated painting style, with its origins in nature and not in metaphysics. He and Mark Rothko enjoyed a close friendship, which meant that after Rothko's suicide, he was named as executor of his will and became entangled in the untold machinations of the estate administrator. In the subsequent court case brought by the Rothko children in 1971, Stamos lost a large part of his wealth and his reputation. He returned to Greece and died there in 1997 of chronic lung disease. The three works presented here demonstrate powerfully the autonomy of his series, which are striking for their unique characteristics and offer the viewer a most diverse range of experiences. In the "Sun-Boxes", of which we have the "Cheops Sun-Box" from 1969, the focus is on large-scale compositions, dominated by the box and its heightened relationship with the rest of the composition. With the harmonious, but dramatic choice and application of colour, the "Sun-Boxes" exude calm and energy. The two other works (Lot 3430 and 3431) are from the "Infinity Fields" series, which in turn are divided into different strands. Our two works belong to the "Torino Series" from the second half of the 1980s. Stamos leaves behind pure colour field painting and turns again to a more expressive, dynamic representation. "Torino Series III No.

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2" evokes a vortex, which develops on the canvas and, through an extreme reduction of the composition, produces an immense dynamic energy. In the second painting of this series, the dynamics are produced through the opposition and layering of red and brown tones: this ignites a battle for supremacy in the composition and for the perception of the viewer. Thus, the dynamism of this work is something different, but no less impressive.

CHF 70 000 / 90 000

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