

Koller Auktionen - Lot 3436

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



SERGE POLIAKOFF

(Moscow 1900–1969 Paris)

Composition abstraite. 1964.

Gouache on paper.

Signed lower right: Serge Poliakoff.

49 x 62 cm. Tiny, professional restoration.

The work is recorded in the Archives Serge Poliakoff, Paris, under the number 864065. We thank Thaddée Poliakoff for his kind assistance. Provenance: - Galerie im Erker, St. Gallen. - Galerie Proarta, Zurich. - Purchased from the above by the present owner, since then private collection Switzerland. Literature: Poliakoff, Alexis: Catalogue raisonné de l'œuvre de Serge Poliakoff, vol. IV 1963-1965, Munich, no. 64-174, p. 201 (with ill.) The French artist of Russian descent, Serge

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Poliakoff, is one of the most important abstract painters of the post-war period and exponent of the Nouvelle École de Paris. Even during his lifetime, he gained a strong presence in the international art market. Serge Poliakoff was born in 1900, the thirteenth of fourteen children. His devout mother would go every day to church, which is where he discovered a fascination for Ikon painting. In 1914 he began his first drawing lessons, learned to play the guitar brilliantly and developed an enthusiasm for maths and algebra. In 1918 when the situation in Moscow became tense because of the Russian Revolution, Poliakoff's father decided to take his family to the safety of the countryside. During the train journey, Serge Poliakoff fled with the intention of joining the White Army and ended up in Constantinople, where he stayed with his aunt, the singer Nastia Poliakoff, and accompanied her on the guitar. After two years of travelling around Europe on concert tours, in 1923 Poliakoff decided to stay in Paris. Initially he earned his keep as a musician and at the same time he began an intensive study of painting; he studied at the Académie Frochot in Paris, at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière and also at the Chelsea School of Art and the Slade School of Art in London. His art was initially figurative and academic, until around 1935, back in Paris, he made the acquaintance of Kandinsky, whose art influenced him decisively and from then onwards he slowly found his way towards abstraction. His close circle of friends at this time consisted of Robert and Sonia Delaunay as well as Otto Freundlich. Serge Poliakoff developed his very own form of abstract painting. He did not strive for representational references, but used colour as colour. His colour compositions are possessed of a strong presence through what initially appears to be an almost simple arrangement of simultaneous contrasts between brightly coloured surfaces. These surfaces are placed together in irregular forms and are at the same time both pure and appear in a vibrating overlapping arrangement. He produced perfect, autonomous, complete pictures, which were guided only by the need to reproduce the vividness and emotive quality of the colours. Although in part his compositions may appear arbitrary, we recognise in his overall oeuvre certain lines, which reappear in many works: vertical, horizontal or diagonal axes, which divide the sheet, and

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which concentrate the colour surfaces on the centre. His early work in the 1940s is characterised if anything by brown-grey tones. Ten years later he expanded his palette and placed strong, colourful tones next to each other, until in the 1960s he gave himself over to a tendency towards monochrome compositions and again looked for unity in the choice of colour. His extensive oeuvre consists of over 3500 paintings and gouaches, which as early as the 1950s and 1960s were being shown in the most important European and American museums. Since his death in Paris in 1969, 11 retrospectives have been dedicated to his work.

CHF 50 000 / 70 000

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