

Koller Auktionen - Lot 3257

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HENRI ROUSSEAU LE DOUANIER

(Laval 1844 - 1910 Paris)

La petite Fille à la poupée et aux deux marguerites. Circa 1890.

Oil on canvas.

Signed lower left: H. Rousseau.

20 x 15 cm.

We would like to thank Yann le Pichon for the scientific support and for confirming the authenticity of the work, Sèvres, 3 April 2019. Provenance: - Galerie Benador, Geneva. - Private collection Switzerland, acquired circa 1955 from the above gallery. Henri Rousseau created several portraits of children that were produced upon the commission of the parents. A work very similar in composition is today located in the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris (L 'Enfant à la poupée,

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1892). Both works portray a child with a doll in one hand and a daisy in the other. Typical of Rousseau's naive painting, the portraits are not naturalistically rendered, but instead feature a highly flattened style. The works consciously lack spatial depth, creating direct proximity of all depicted elements. The flora, visible in the background of our portrait, also references the fantastical jungle paintings the artist was beginning to produce at this time, considered among his best works. The parents who commissioned the portraits of their children were not so appreciative of the manner in which their offspring were portrayed. Many myths exist about the respective whereabouts of the works. In one instance, the parents of the work "Pour Fêter le Bébé", today located in the Kunstmuseum Winterthur, gave the painting away as settlement of a laundry bill. These anecdotes show that the artist, converted from a customs officer to a painter, was a self-taught outsider far ahead of his times. Although his admiration was focused on the academic painters, he became a hero of the avant-garde. From Vallotton to Picasso, he was celebrated as a decisive innovator at the beginning of the twentieth century and, according to recent literature, is said to be the painter who, together with Paul Cézanne, gave the most decisive impulses to Cubism.

CHF 40 000 / 60 000

€ 35 090 / 52 630

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