



OTTO PIENE

(Laasphe 1928–2014 Berlin)

Black Siren. 1957/81/93.

Pigments, gouache and traces of fire on cardboard.

Signed, titled and dated lower left: "Black Siren Piene 57/81/93".

102 x 73 cm.

Provenance: - Charity auction 1993, Politischer Club Colonia, Cologne. - Purchased from the above by the present owner, since then private collection Southern Germany.

"Images of the sun became afterimages of the sun, a fire dance on the retina and a choreography of fire on the canvas. I set fire to solvents that otherwise would have dried to an existence of comfortable contemplation, and within seconds images were created on that boundary between destruction

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and survival – the “Fireflowers”. For me this was liberation from the rules of the optical use of geometry and a move towards organic forms, which resulted from the melting and technological processes.” Otto Piene Otto Piene, co-founder of the ZERO Group and one of the most influential artistic personalities of the post-war era, attained a new artistic freedom by turning away from the traditional medium of painting, and expanded the very paradigm of the concept of painting. In the work offered here at auction, "Black Siren", which was created as an ongoing process between 1957 and 1993, the gradual dominance of fire as a creative medium within his oeuvre is quite evident: In the 1950s, Piene subtly worked with soot in the form of grids applied by means of a burning candle. Later he moved on to using fire as the central design element and set light to the physical picture with its paint and solvents. The heat of the fire, which Piene lit on the picture ground, created rings, crusts and bubbles in the paint layer, which expanded and liberated the circular forms previously dominant in the composition. The rising smoke meanders along the central axis like a seductive woman, like the mythological sirens, beautiful and terrible at the same time. In "Black Siren" the symbiosis of man, technology and nature, which Otto Piene strove for, comes together. The picture has become a force field that bundles the energy of fire into a fundamental experience of seeing.

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