



PAUL KLEE

(Münchenbuchsee 1879–1940 Muralto)

Kleine Landschaft, Hauptsächlich mit Farb=Quadraten. 1915.

Watercolour and pencil on chalk-primed paper on artist's board.

Signed lower left: Klee. Dated and inscribed lower left on artist's board: 1915 / 252.

13.5 x 11.5 cm.

Provenance: - Berggruen & Cie, Paris. - Galerie Georges Moos, Geneva, no. 4021 (label on the reverse), acquired from the above gallery. - Swiss private collection, by descent from the above and owned by the same family for three generations. Exhibited: Geneva 1973, Art du XXe siècle – Collections genevoises, Musée Rath et Cabinet des Estampes, 28 June–23 September 1973, no. 71

(label on the reverse). Literature: - Paul-Klee-Stiftung and Kunstmuseum Bern (ed.): Catalogue raisonné Paul Klee, vol. 2 (1913–1918), Bern 2000, p. 324, no. 1587 (with ill.). - Exhib. cat. Paul Klee. Im Zeichen der Teilung, ed. by Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen and Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart 1995 (ill. p. 330). "But I've learned that it's important to reduce" (Paul Klee) Paul Klee, one of the most important representatives of modern art, a pioneer of nonrepresentational art and a formative teacher at the Bauhaus, is unique in his turn to abstraction in regards to his approach to division, combination, reduction and harmony. In the present watercolour, the process of abstraction is not only expressed beyond a linear reading of the title 'Kl. Landschaft, hauptsächlich m. Farb=Quadraten', it is also visible in the compositional structure and the design of the fields of colour. Inspired by his encounter with Wassily Kandinsky and Robert Delaunay, Paul Klee successfully made his breakthrough to abstraction and brightly coloured compositions during his famous journey to Tunisia in 1914. Together with August Macke and Louis Moilliet, he travelled on a three-week study trip to Tunisia, during which the artists each inspired one another. The intense light and colours of the southern land exerted a lasting influence on their subsequent work, especially for Paul Klee. "Colour possesses me. I don't have to pursue it. It will always possess me, I know it. That is the meaning of this happy hour: colour and I are one. I am a painter" The process of abstracting what he has seen — primarily city and landscape views — into flat geometric structures formed on the picture surface is exemplified in the present watercolour, created in 1915 between the trip to Tunisia and his entry into World War I as a soldier. The structured composition and the rejection of perspective is also informed by Paul Cézanne's work, which Klee highly valued for its reduction. Two years before his memorable trip to North Africa, Paul Klee had already developed the grid pattern that he used in a modified form time and again over the next three decades. The impressionistic principle of cropping the pictorial space employed in the present work condenses the colour composition developed in Tunisia. Forming the centre of the picture is a pink element, framed by varying black-shaded cubes, which in a tightly connected network allow the

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surrounding colours to glow. The association possibilities between the colours of nature and the building-like forms, and the analogy of organic phenomena and the architectural composition, playfully allow moments of the narrative and object reference to continually filter through the abstracting reduction.

CHF 250 000 / 350 000

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