



WALTER DEXEL

(Munich 1890–1973 Brunswick)

Komposition 26. 1926.

Oil on canvas.

Signed lower right: WDEXEL. Signed, titled and dated on the reverse: W DEXEL  
KOMPOSITION 26.

66.2 × 58 cm.

Provenance: - Artist's studio. - Siegfried Poppe collection, Hamburg, acquired directly from the artist. - Galerie von Bartha, Basel. - Swiss private collection, acquired from the above gallery and by descent to the present owners. Exhibited: - Hanover 1974, Internationale Grafik und Malerei des 20. Jahrhunderts, Junior Galerie Hannover, 25.1.–3.3.1974. - Münster 1979, Bilder, Aquarelle, Collagen, Leuchtreklame, Typographie, Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte,

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27.5.–29.7.1979. - Berlin 1983, Kunstamt Wedding von Berlin, 3.9.–6.10.1983. - Bremen 1990/91, Walter Dexel. Bild Zeichen Raum. Retrospektive. Ausstellung zum 100. Geburtstag, Kunsthalle Bremen, 11.11.1990–13.1.1991. Literature: Ruth Wöbkemeier and der Kunstverein in Bremen (ed.): Walter Dexel (1890–1973). Werkverzeichnis. Gemälde, Hinterglasbilder, Gouachen, Aquarelle, Collagen, Ölstudien, Entwürfe zu Bühnenbildern, Heidelberg 1995, p. 249, no. 298 (with b/w ill.). In 1918 Walter Dexel accepted a role as the head of exhibitions at the Kunstverein in Jena. In addition to expanding the in-house collection, Dexel organised exhibitions of diverse artistic movements. This direct exchange with the artists, especially his encounters with the Bauhaus artist Moholy-Nagy and later with the De Stijl founder Theo van Doesburg, had a decisive influence on Dexel's painterly work. In 1922 Dexel finally detached himself from representational art and found his own distinct Constructivist idiom following strict, mathematical-rational rules. Dexel was interested in the relationship between colour, form and line within an almost square or rectangular picture plane. In order to explore the various arrangements and formations, the artist frequently employed the technique of collage, upon which the final paintings or reverse glass paintings would then be based (see lots 3234, 3236, 3237 and 3240). The collage for the present work was auctioned at a German auction house last year. 'Komposition 26' was created at the height of Dexel's artistic production and is exemplary of the artist's work. The black ground of the canvas is complemented by a carefully balanced configuration of white rectangles and four smaller blocks of colour. According to the catalogue raisonné by Wöbkemeier, Dexel almost exclusively created smaller collages, studies and some reverse glass paintings in 1926. Only two oil paintings on canvas are listed: the present 'Komposition 26' and a second work titled 'Figuration 26A'. The works follow one another in immediate succession and were undoubtedly made in the same creative process. In terms of composition, the two works are identical except for minimal differences; in the second painting, which could also be viewed as a counterpart, the canvas is contrastingly provided with a white, instead of black background. 'Figuration 26A' is part of the Riklis Collection of McCrory Corporation, one of the largest

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collections of geometric abstract art. The work has been held in the Museum of Modern Art in New York since the donation of the collection in 1984. Many of Dexel's paintings appearing on the art market date from the 1960s, a period when Dexel revisited his early work. It is therefore relatively rare for such early works from the 1920s to come onto the market, which underscores the importance of 'Komposition 26'.

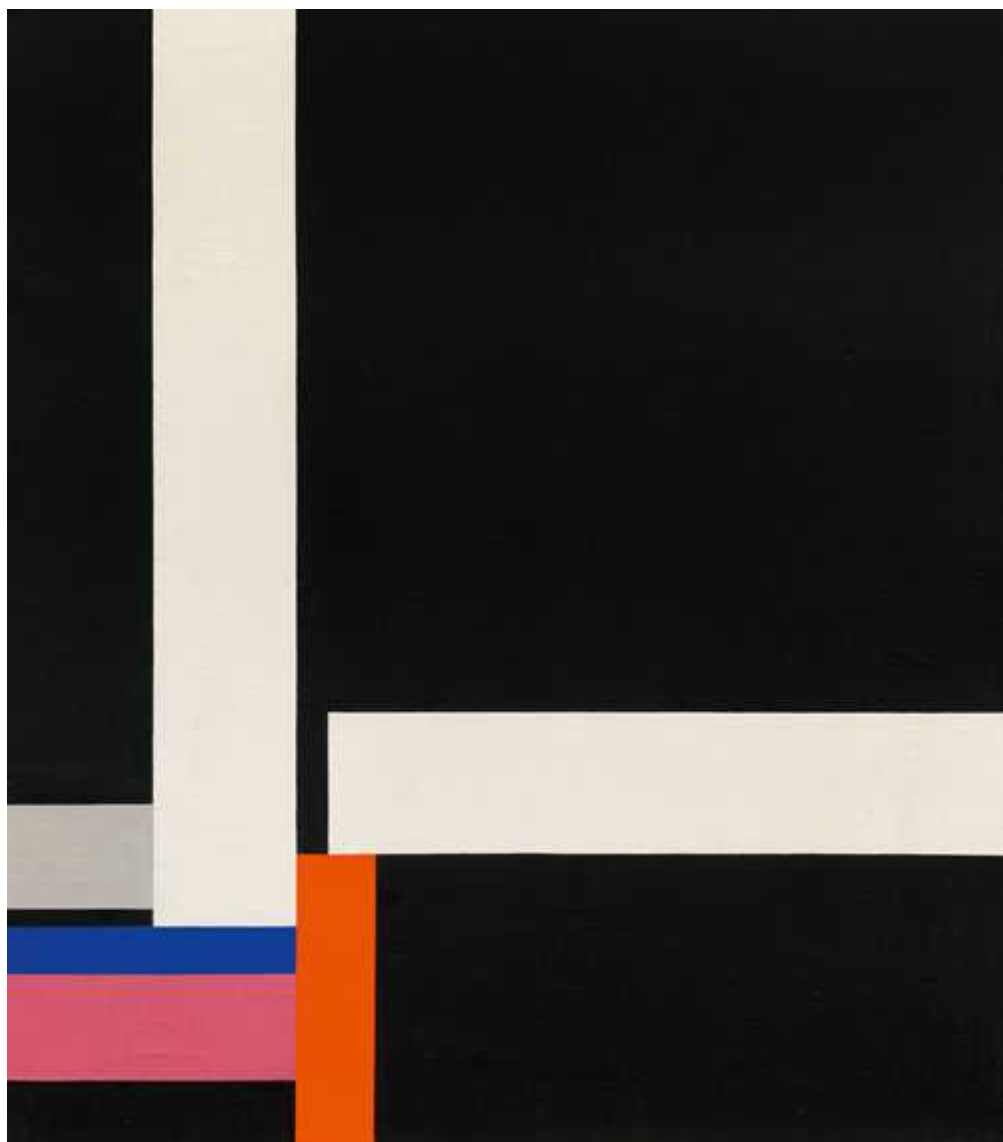
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