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Christie's SwissArt sale led by a rediscovered Giacometti painting

SwissArt

Zurich, 3 December 2007, 7 p.m.



Christie's SwissArt sale at the Zurich Kunsthaus Zurich on 3 December will for the first time be available for online bidding via Christie's LIVE. After having offered for the first time in New York's auction history a work by Ferdinand Hodler* in November 2006 Zurich's online availability is

another consequent move to make masterpieces of Swiss art available for international collectors.

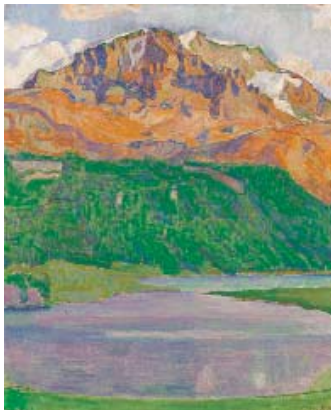
On offer on 3 December 2007 in Zurich are 230 works dating from the early 19th century to the present worth 21 to 30 Millionen Swiss francs,. 48 of these will be on view in Geneva 10 and 11 November 2007 at the Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues.

Amongst the highlights of the sale and exhibition are two important landscapes by Ferdinand Hodler (1853-1918) *Thunersee mit Stockhornkette im Winter / Thuner lake with the Stockhorn mountains in Winter* (1912/1913, estimate: CHF 4'000'000- 6'000'000) and *Piz Corvatsch* (1907, estimate: CHF 1'800'000-2'500'000). Landscapes are a subject that Hodler explored both at the beginning and the end of his career.

* Ferdinand Hodler, *Thuner lake with Niesen* (1910), sold for \$3,9 million, Christie's New York, 8 November 2006



The landscape around Thuner lake surrounded by the Stockhorn mountains was one of his favorite motifs, mainly because he spent most of his childhood in the area around the lake, but also because the subject was very popular with collectors. Only five versions of his large series of Stockhorn views show the mountains in Winter. The restrained use of black and white throws the mountains in strong relief and gives the picture a dramatic three dimensional feel. The painting was formerly part of the collection of the Geneva collector Willy Russ-Young as well as the Arthur Stoll collection.



Hodler's *Piz Corvatsch* (1907, estimate: CHF 1'800'000-2'500'000) is one six works he painted in situ the Silvaplana area during his travels to the Engadin in 1907. It is an outstanding example of how the painter focused on the natural beauty of the mountain and left out any traces of civilisation. The unusual choice of a portrait format reinforces the strong pyramidal form of the Piz Covatsch. Besides the strong geometric presence in the painting, Hodler was primarily interested in colour: "*Beautiful colours make the form even more beautiful*", he noted in his scrap book.

An early work by Ferdinand Holder shows a Geneva street scene: *The lightly coloured Strasse bei St. Georges / Street at St Georges* (circa 1890, estimate: CHF 600'000-800'000) sticks out from his early oeuvre, which is dominated by a dark palette. It also shows the beginning of Hodlers occupation with Parallelism.

A recently rediscovered painting, *Die Mutter / The mother* (circa 1911, estimate: CHF 1'200'000-1'800'000), by Giovanni Giacometti (1868-1933) will also be on view in Geneva. The painting, which shows Giacometti's wife Annetta with their youngest son Bruno in Stampa, was thought to be lost for many years. It is listed and accompanied by a sketch in Giacometti's personal work register *Registro dei quadri* as No. 199. It is also registered without illustration in Paul Müller und Viola Radlach's *Catalogue raisonné* as

being exhibited twice – first in 1912 at the Kunsthaus Zurich and 1913 in the Neue



Galerie in Munich. An intense examination of a fragmented sticker on the stretcher deciphered as saying „Kunsthaus Zurich, ‘Moderner Bund’ exhibition, 1912“ unveiled that *Die Mutter* / *The mother* (circa 1911) is the painting mentioned. In this museum quality work Giacometti concentrates on the monumental depiction of the nursing mother with child by referring to the Maria Lactans iconography. But for Giacometti the subject was not only a homage to his wife and mother of his

three sons but also a metaphor for life’s eternally renewing quality. In a letter to the textile trader and collector Richard Bühler he writes 1910: “*I just finished a new painting (...) a young mother feeding her child (...) it’s this exclusive moment only, in which life reveals its eternally renewing quality.*“

Swiss Expressionism is represented by Albert Müllers paintings *Bruststück eines schwarzen Mädchens* / *Torso of a black girl* (estimate: CHF 250'000–350'000) and *Das grüne Tal* / *The green valley* (estimate: CHF 150'000-200'000) as well as Hermann Scherer’s *Liegender Akt* / *Lying nude* (estimate: CHF 190'000-260'000) and the portrait of painter friend Müller *Porträt Albert Müller* (estimate: CHF 180'000-250'000).

Also presented in the exhibition are two of 31 works by Wolfgang-Adam Töpffer, which will be on offer at 3 December 2007 and come from one of the largest Töpffer collections in Switzerland. The large scale paintings *Foire de village* from 1815 (estimate: CHF 400'000–600'000) and *Fête villageoise* (estimate: CHF 500'000–700'000), painted a year later, are both part of from the same series and mark the high point of Töpffer’s career, when his works where collected by the likes of Emperess Joséphine of France.

Zurich viewing

Kunsthaus Zurich, Grosser Vortragssaal, Heimplatz 1, 8001 Zürich

30. November, 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.

1 December, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

2 December, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Auction

SwissArt

Kunsthau Zurich, Grosser Vortragssaal, Heimplatz 1, 8001 Zurich

3 December 2007, 6 p.m.

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Catalogue and images available on request.

Christie's online: www.christies.com

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