

For Immediate Release

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***CHRISTIE'S CELEBRATES GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN ART THIS
FEBRUARY***



Emil Nolde, Sonnenblumen I, (estimate £900,000-1,200,000)

German and Austrian Art Evening Sale

3 February 2003, 5pm

London - Christie's was the first major auction house to host sales dedicated to German and Austrian Art a decade ago, in 1993. From this February onwards, and to commemorate the tenth sale of German and Austrian Art, the auction will be held alongside the February evening sales, exposing this sale to a wider and international audience. In the past ten years, sale turnover has grown by 250% and well over 20 world-record prices have been established. Auction prices for German and Austrian artists are currently on a level with those previously associated with traditionally dominant schools such as Impressionism. Christie's is delighted to be offering two further works from the outstanding collection of

Hans Ravenborg, Sonnenblumenbild I (estimate: £900,000–1,200,000) by Emil Nolde (1867–1956), and a painting by Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Leuchtturm an der Ostsee (estimate: £600,000–800,000). In 1997 Christie's offered 10 works of art from this important collection of German Expressionist paintings, and, in 2001, six works were auctioned from the same collection. Sonnenblumenbild I, is one of a series of five paintings of sunflowers that Nolde painted in 1928, and in common with his finest flower pictures, all environmental relationships are removed from the canvas. Nolde presents us only with petals, stamens, pistils, and perhaps a few leaves. Like waves seen without coastlines, the flowers are painted without soil or vase. Leuchtturm an der Ostsee was painted in 1913 and is a remarkably bold landscape painting from the height of Schmidt-Rottluff's maturity. It depicts the outskirts of the small fishing village of Nidden on the Baltic coast with its celebrated lighthouse highlighted in the distance. His paintings of this period mark a new departure in his art – one distinguished by the heavy influence of African sculpture.

Max Pechstein (1881–1955) is represented by two important works, Sommer (estimate: £700,000–1,000,000) and Sonnenuntergang über blauer Brücke in Leba (estimate: £120,000–160,000), circa 1922. Sommer was executed during his stay at the Moritzburg lakes in the summer of 1910, where a group of artists attempted to “return to nature”. The foremost characteristic of this Moritzburg style is a directness and immediacy – undoubtedly the result of the group's plein air activities – that manifests itself in a series of gestural brushstrokes of intense colour and raw individuality. The brushstrokes molding the forms of the four naked figures standing in the tall grass results probably in the finest and certainly the most vividly atmospheric of all of Pechstein's Moritzburg canvases.

The sale also boasts Max Liebermann's (1847–1935) Der Papageienmann (The Parrot Man) painted in 1902 (estimate: £500,000–700,000). This work belongs to a major group of paintings by Liebermann depicting the parrots at Artis, a zoo in Amsterdam, which were exhibited for the first time in 1903 at the Berlin Secession exhibition. Two other works from the series are housed in German Institutions, Papageienallee in the Kunsthalle Bremen and Papageienmann in the Museum Folkwang, Essen. The parrots began to interest Liebermann as subject matter in 1881 during one of his first visits to the Amsterdam zoo. Der Papageienmann depicts the parrot keeper taking the parrots back to their cages, from the zoo's public display area, in the early evening. Rather than being interested principally in the movement of the bird, the series of parrot paintings heralds his new-found freedom of colour and bold handling of paint.

The sale includes three works by Conrad Felixmüller (1897–1922), Herbstabend Klotszche (estimate: £150,000–250,000), a oil on canvas from 1921, Heimweg (estimate: £400,000–

600,000), painted the same year, and a work on paper, *Selbstbildnis mit meiner Frau Londa und meinem Sohn Titus*, executed in 1923 (estimate: £150,000–250,000). In 1920 Felixmüller won the “Sächsische Stadtpreis”, which enabled the recipient to spend two years in Rome. Instead of travelling to Italy, Felixmüller chose to stay in Germany amongst the proletarian working families of the heavy industrial area of the river Ruhr, where those two paintings were executed. The resulting paintings of the Ruhrgebiet are widely regarded as the finest of his career. Marking the culmination of the Expressionist tendency in his work these gritty heart-felt works attempt to accentuate and contrast the raw humanity of the workers against the dark mechanised landscape of the Ruhr and the grim working conditions that characterised these people’s daily struggle for existence.

Kiosk-Architektur by Paul Klee (1879–1940), painted in 1920 (estimate: £600,000–800,000) was between 1934–1939 in the private possession of Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler, and is a further highlight of the sale. Paul Klee presents a vision of a complete universe through a series of box-like compartments that combine together into a pictorial unity to create a mosaic-like whole. He uses a simple technique of painting in white lines over a radiating network of still wet coloured squares which results in a cohesive and playful architectural tapestry.

A wonderful painting by Heinrich Campendonk (1889–1957), *Der blaue Mäher*, (estimate: £500,000–700,000), from 1914, will also be offered. It is one of the best paintings he executed during his “Blaue Reiter” years and has been rarely seen since it was acquired for a private collection in 1916. *Der blaue Mäher* with its blue, abstract male figure transcending and ordering the wild radiating red and yellow forms and forces of nature surrounding him clearly seems to stand as a metaphor for the transcendence of the man over his environment. The muscular blue figure stands as an icon of the idealised New Man of the mystical New Age first advocated by Nietzsche.

An important work by George Grosz (1893–1959) will be included in the sale. *Quer durch Berlin N.*, a watercolour dating from December 1919 (estimate: £100,000–150,000) was originally sold via his Munich based dealer in May 1920 for DM 1,500. Like many of Grosz’s works from this period, the painting shows the darker side of the city, with the poor and shabby interiors of the houses and the rough reality of the streets.

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These auctions will be featured on www.christies.com. A complete illustrated online catalogue will be published with hard copies available to purchase via the site. If a collector

is interested in finding any specific works of art for their collection Christie's online search engine Lotfinder® Assistant can immediately source specific forthcoming items of interest.

Exhibitions

Highlights of the German and Austrian art sale will be on view at Christie's Düsseldorf on 15 January 2003. Selected works from the 19th and 20th century evening sales will go on view at Christie's in New York between 22-25 January and selected highlights from the 19th and 20th century day sales will go on view at Christie's Paris between 21-23 January 2003.

19TH & 20TH CENTURY ART AUCTIONS AT CHRISTIE'S LONDON IN FEBRUARY 2003

German and Austrian Art (evening sale), 3 February at 5pm

Impressionist and Modern Art (evening sale), 3 February at 7pm

The Art of the Surreal (evening sale), 3 February following Impressionist and Modern Art

Impressionist and Modern Art (day sale), 4 February at 2pm

Post-War and Contemporary (evening sale), 5 February at 7pm

Impressionist and Modern Works on Paper, 6 February at 11am

Post-War and Contemporary (day sale), 6 February at 2pm