

Contacts : Capucine Milliot  
Carine Decroi

+331 40 76 84 08  
+331 40 76 85 88

cmilliot@christies.com  
cdecroi@christies.com

## THE COLLECTION OF WOLFGANG JOOP: OEUVRES CHOISIES



***"As a collector, I was always most interested in the ones that allow for conflict"***

**Paris** - Christie's is delighted to offer a remarkable selection of 20<sup>th</sup> century decorative art from the Wolfgang Joop Collection in Potsdam, reflecting his exceptional eye and taste, on 26 November 2010, in Paris. Wolfgang Joop has gained worldwide fame not only as a fashion designer but for his artistic passion, intuition and the perfection of his craft which has yielded results in various genres of fine and applied art, duly honoured by numerous exhibitions.

The interior of the Villa Wunderkind in Potsdam – just outside of Berlin and remodelled by the museum architect Josef Kleihues - shows off Wolfgang Joop's eclectic collection including 1930s and 1940s furniture, old masters and contemporary art. Over the last two decades, he has been a tremendously focused and passionate collector of French Decorative Arts.

One of the main focal points in Wolfgang Joop's eclectic collection is the work of the French designer Alexandre Noll. Along with this, iconic names range from Jean Royère, André Arbus and Eugène Printz to George Nakashima. This ensemble comprises over 30 lots, which are estimated to realise in the region of 1.5 million euros.

### **Wolfgang Joop and Potsdam**

Born in Potsdam in 1944, close to the grounds of Sanssouci Palace, Wolfgang Joop has always maintained a close relationship with the region where he was brought up, including the renovation of two important villas in his hometown of Potsdam. Both the Villa Metz built in 1904, now Villa Wunderkind and his home, and the Villa Rumpf, previously owned by the artist Fritz Rumpf and have been thoughtfully restored, keeping the era and aesthetics of the building.

### **Alexandre Noll**

Wolfgang found designers whose work he believed in and collected only the best examples of the highest quality. He was primarily interested in work that he found aesthetically and intellectually challenging; pursuing the paradigm of finding the fine line between sculpture and utilitarian object. The strongest examples in the present collection are Alexandre Noll's extremely rare carved pieces. Joop's passion for Noll's work resulted in the first Alexandre Noll (1890-1970) retrospective exhibition in Germany, held in Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin in 2000. Many of these wonderful works are included in the forthcoming sale.

Alexandre Noll's ambition was to create "furniture sculpture", "carved right out of the wood". The furniture and the objects were designed to reveal an organic unity which gives the work a natural sacredness. The original form of the wood itself is therefore fundamental to the final design for pieces such as a rare carved ebony champagne bottle cabinet (estimate: €250,000-350,000) or a carved wood chest of drawers, circa 1945 (estimate: €35,000-40,000).

On the other hand Noll's relationship to sculptures seems to be founded on a close communion with nature and life in reaction against the era of industrialization and mass production. His art implies a personal relation guided by a poetic inspiration and deepened by philosophy. The present sculptures and the small utilitarian objects perfectly illustrate this feeling and include carved ebony sculptures of abstract forms, trays and boxes (estimate: from 1,000 to 12,000 euros).

## **French mid-20<sup>th</sup> century design**

Wolfgang's interest was drawn toward furniture which had strong architectural form. Therefore, it was not surprising that he was attracted to the visual vocabulary of French mid-20<sup>th</sup> century design. His commitment to finding several of the best examples of each designer's oeuvre resulted in the purchase of **Jean Royère's** "Boule" sofa and matching armchair (estimate: €150,000-200,000) and armchairs (estimate: €80,000-120,000) and also a pair of leather-upholstered "Shah of Iran" armchairs by the artist (estimate: €15,000-20,000). Part of the great versatility of his collection is a burr-wood low table, circa 1950-1960 by **George Nakashima** (estimate: €40.000-60.000).

Another significant example from the 1930's is a palmwood sideboard by **Eugène Printz** and the concertina doors with etched decoration of animals by **Jean Dunand** and **Jean Lambert-Rucki** (estimate: €300,000-500,000). These animals were used in some accessories patterns for the Autumn/Winter 2009 collection for the Wunderkind fashion label, Wolfgang Joop exclusive women's wear collection.

## **Photography**

Presented alongside this superb collection is a remarkable group of 20 photographic works by **Helmar Lerski** (1871-1956) which will be sold as one lot (estimate: €120,000-160,000). Lerski was a photographer who laid some of the important foundations of modern photography. His works are now on display in the USA, Germany, Israel and Switzerland. He focused mainly on portraits and the technique of photography with mirrors.

In 1888, Lerski immigrated to the US where he worked as an actor. Around 1910, he began to take photographs; in 1915, he returned to Europe and worked as a cameraman and expert for special effects for many films; by the end of the 1920s, he made a name as an avant-garde portrait photographer and in 1932, he immigrated with his second wife to Palestine where he continued to work as a photographer, cameraman, and film director. This series illustrates his migration in Palestine and comprises portraits of both European and Palestinian people.

## **Auction**

**26 November – Paris**

**Christie's – 9 avenue Matignon – 75008 Paris**

\*\*\*

