

## Lot 345



**Auction** From a Universal Collector - The Olbricht Collection

**Date** 26.09.2020, ca. 15:47

**Preview** 19.09.2020 - 10:00:00 bis  
24.09.2020 - 18:00:00

MATTON, CHARLES  
Paris 1931 - 2008

Title: Babel Library Homage to Borges II.  
Subtitle: Miniature room reconstruction.  
Date: 2006.  
Technique: Transcryl and mixed media in wood case, electrified.  
Measurement: 84 x 85 x 55cm.  
Frame/Pedestal: On steel construction (114 x 102 x 18,5cm).

The object is fully functional.

Exhibitions:

- Stadtmuseum Jena, 2010
- me Collectors Room, Berlin 2012/13

The French artist Charles Matton is known as a painter and sculptor, but he has also garnered attention as a director, writer, and illustrator. The depiction of empty, mysterious rooms is an important theme in Matton's artistic oeuvre. Starting in the mid- 1980s Charles Matton constructed the so-called boxes, which, built and designed like scenes from a film, take the viewer on a journey into outlandish, imaginary worlds through a multitude of single pieces. His works follow the early European tradition of handmade cabinet homes and trompe-l'oeil illusions in Dutch perspective boxes from the 17th century. His interiors, real and imagined, defy categorisation by contemporary standards. The work "Babel Library Homage to Borges II" from the year 2006 was made only two years before Matton's death, making it one of the final works of his life. With the miniature of an infinite library Matton refers to the story "The Library of Babel" by Jorge Luis Borges, published in 1941. In this short story, Borges describes the library as a world that contains an infinite number of books with every possible combination of all letters. The inhabitants of this world thus theoretically have access to omniscient knowledge via these books, but it is not possible for them to understand this knowledge. On the contrary: because of the sheer multitude of combination possibilities and languages, it is impossible for the inhabitants to discover even one coherent sentence. Matton creates the illusion of infinity through the clever use of mirrors, thus creating apparently endless aisles filled with books in his miniature. In Borges' infinite library some inhabitants dedicate their lives to finding certain books. In Matton's however, some familiar titles immediately catch the spectator's eye. The names of Rubens, Rembrandt and

Cezanne can be read on the backs of certain books.

With his homage to Borges, Matton not only deals with the question of infinity. He also questions the origins and influences of artists from various periods, while simultaneously answering the question from his perspective. By referencing different prominent figures from Art history, he returns to the statement Borges was making about literature in his short story, namely that infinity cannot exist for the aspects of form and content. Instead, a seeming endlessness exists, due to the ever-continual appearance of new combinations of, in Matton's view, a limited number of form and content.

Estimate: 15.000 € - 20.000 €; Hammer: 20.000 €

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