

Lot 1208



Auction Fine Art

Date 19.11.2020, ca. 16:06

Preview 13.11.2020 - 10:00:00 bis
16.11.2020 - 18:00:00

KALLMORGEN, FRIEDRICH
1856 Altona - 1924 Grötzingen

Title: Siechenhäuser in Lübeck.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Measurement: 162 x 229cm.

Notation: Signed and dated lower left: Fr. Kallmorgen 1908.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Literature:

Exhib. cat.: Friedrich Kallmorgen 1865-1924. Malerei zwischen Realismus und Impressionismus, Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe 19.03. - 26.06.2016, Petersberg 2016, ill. p. 134;

Eder, Irene: Friedrich Kallmorgen 1856-1924. Monographie und Werkverzeichnis der Gemälde und Druckgraphik, Karlsruhe 1991, cat. rais. no. G 618.

Provenance:

Kaletta collection, Hamburg.

Collecting in itself has probably always been a characteristic of man.

Among contemporaries there are those who are more addicted to this "drive" than others, once the subject of the collection, the focusing interest, has been found. From the universal compilation of a "Kunst- und Wunderkammer" to an absolutely limited specialisation in a narrowly defined field, the creative spirit of the collector creates a superior work of art in the selection itself.

Rolf Kaletta from Hamburg was such a collector's specialist. Even before his sudden death in September 2020, he also managed to let go and hand over his works, which he had meticulously brought together in a phase of his life - this was certainly not an easy step, as each object has a personal history of finds. We are all the more pleased that he has repeatedly placed his trust in us over the past years to sell his museum collection of works by the painter Friedrich Kallmorgen, which has been assembled over several decades, in our house.

When Rolf Kaletta "discovered" his first painting by Friedrich Kallmorgen in the 1970s, he had no idea how much space this painter and his work would make room in his own life. Rolf Kaletta, who was born in Altona, liked a view of

Hamburg by Kallmorgen, who lived in the Hanseatic city, so much that he raved about it; a generous family and a generous circle of friends surprised the jubilant at an upcoming round birthday with a gift that was to have consequences. Living together with this wonderful work aroused Rolf Kaletta's curiosity and spirit of research. He wanted to know more about the creator of this work and met people in the Hamburg art trade and in the Städtische Galerie Karlsruhe, who opened the doors for him and arranged the decisive contact to Kallmorgen's grandson, Hans Knab. In the meantime some paintings from the art trade had already joined the first view of Hamburg, but now Rolf Kaletta was with Hans Knab, who was at first somewhat reserved, at the most immediate source to research Friedrich Kallmorgen and to expand the collection he had begun.

Giesela Nehring-Knab, the wife of Hans Knab, initially mediated between the so different personalities of the Hanseatic collector and the older, Baden artist grandson, but soon the spell was broken and a lifelong, close friendship between the two Kallmorgen enthusiasts developed. Regular encounters lasting several days with innumerable conversations and access to Hans Knab's private archive made Rolf Kaletta an expert, who trained his view of the painter's work ever more finely, but who was also able to distance himself from his "mentor" Hans Knab in terms of taste. If the grandson loved his grandfather's finer and more precisely executed, more graphic paintings, Rolf Kaletta's heart beat especially for the freer, impressionistic and impasto works, but without limiting himself to these in his collection.

Among the paintings masterfully executed with a light brush in our current auction are "Brand im Dorf" from 1901 (lot 1211), "Vesper in der Werkstatt" from 1907 (lot 1210), "Lieselotte nascht Johannisbeeren" from 1911 (lot 1217) or "Sonnenuntergang" from 1919 (lot 1214). The dates show that Kallmorgen cultivated this relaxed, impressionistic style throughout, parallel to the more austere, emblematic one. Occasionally, such free works are also studies for larger, sometimes more austere versions of the same motif. But the studies are also fully signed and exist on an equal footing within the oeuvre.

The "Brand im Dorf" (Lot 1211) shows the painter as a village chronicler: In 1901 the community barn in Grötzing, the village near Karlsruhe, where the Kallmorgen couple had owned a "refuge" for decades, was destroyed in a night-time fire. Under the immediate impression of this event Kallmorgen created the present work. The flickering blaze of the flames, the dramatic struggle of the firemen illuminated by the glow of the fire, the nocturnal inferno, so charming for the painter and so rich in contrast, was captured by Kallmorgen with rapid, impressionistic brushstrokes.

Lot 1208, "Siechenhäuser in Lübeck", also appears to have been painted by the hand of an exact chronicler, with a very expressive composition: Seen close up, a house wall with a door and two windows running diagonally into the image space blocks the view. The detail of the image is chosen low, so that the door and window are cut off at the upper edge of the image. Five old people, staggered one behind the other, sit on chairs, stools or steps and look ahead. Four of them look towards the right edge of the image. Only the middle old woman in the middle looks out of the image at the viewer. The space in the image, so narrowed by the angle of view, the passive posture and the empty facial expressions of the five old people, but also the smallest details, such as a slightly protruding tongue of one woman or the thinning hair of another, make this large-format work so impressive. As narrow the pictorial space is, as limited are the possibilities of the short remaining life, when material possibilities do not open up spaces.

There are magnificent images of the creation of this painting, which show Friedrich Kallmorgen and his students at work in front of their easels. In fact, the photos and also Kallmorgen's own sketches for this painting were not taken in Lübeck, but during an excursion with his students to Havelberg near Berlin in 1905.

Friedrich Kallmorgen travelled a lot and was always looking for impressions, landscapes and motives, which he then - as it was usual in his time - composed into large works in his studio. On the spot, in nature, he made studies, created a repertoire of staff and landscapes and sometimes he collaged several of such elements to a narrative whole of a painting.

A wonderful proof of this working method is the painting "Feierstunde" from 1913 (lot 1215). Already in 1911 Kallmorgen had worked out the motif of the deserted "Plauer Schleuse" with its atmospheric water reflections into a smaller painting. From the same year dates another small work "Heimkehrende Fischer". Two years later the painter "weaved" these two images and created the present large-format painting. The four fishermen standing in the boat as they glide through the mirror-smooth water towards the people waiting at the lock actually radiate an atmosphere which, in combination with the mighty, colourful trees in the background and the charming reflection in the water, is exaggerated to a solemnity.

Friedrich Kallmorgen's favourite travel destinations were in Holland, and it was there that he created the earliest painting offered here, "The Narrator" from 1892 (lot 1209), which stylistically also belongs to the more austere, more

graphic works. On a street at a Dutch harbour a group of young women and children listen to a man sitting on the ground. Another man smoking a pipe is leaning against the fence next to the narrator. The background with buildings and the hustle and bustle of the harbour, although elaborated in detail, becomes quite secondary. The small group of people, which is so closely knit and so concentrated on each other, captivates the viewer.

The variety of Kallmorgen's thirteen works on offer here from the various style and motif groups shows impressively the high quality standards with which Rolf Kaletta has built up his collection. Starting with a first image of Hamburg, he has, with the help of Hans Knab, developed a holistic approach to the artist Friedrich Kallmorgen.

Estimate: 20.000 € - 30.000 €
