

Lot 46



Auction The Kasper König Collection - His Private Choice

Date 01.10.2024, ca. 18:34

Preview 27.09.2024 - 10:00:00 bis
30.09.2024 - 18:00:00

PENCK, A.R.
1939 Dresden - 2017 Zurich

Title: "aus der Serie Underground".

Date: 1972.

Technique: Acrylic on canvas.

Measurement: 30 x 30cm.

Notation: Signed, titled and dated verso: a.r. penck from the series Underground 72.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

Provenance:

- Kasper König Collection, Berlin (directly from the artist)

Underground artist

Rejected by the art academies and the Verband Bildender Künstler (Association of Visual Artists), the artist, whose real name is Ralf Winkler, is forced to dive into what he himself describes as the 'underground'. Inspired by the ice age researcher Albrecht Penck, he adopted the pseudonym A.R. Penck and initially worked unofficially with gallery owners such as Michael Werner, who smuggled his works across the German-German border to the West.

World star in the West

Shortly afterwards, his first exhibition took place in Cologne at the Galerie Hake in 1968. A few years later, although not present himself, he took part in documenta 5, which, under the direction of Harald Szeemann, broke with documenta's exhibition history, which was actually orientated towards abstract art. The theme is the confrontation between art and reality and divergent perceptions of reality at a time when reality is increasingly influenced by mass media, politics and religious values. Together with a group including Kasper König, Szeemann conceived an installation that thematised the expansion of the concept of art. Penck is categorised here in the section of individual mythologies, which is dedicated to introverted, hermetic artistic positions.

The underground series

The present work from the 'Underground' series was created during the period in which Penck covertly rebelled against the regulations of the GDR and became a symbol of resistance in his home town of Dresden. In the documentary 'Er

nannte sich Y', König talks about the artwork: '... this is the Cold War, so to speak. [...] And on the one hand it's really like a banal joke drawing [...] on the other hand you can see these tanks and I think it's a symbol of the Warsaw Pact and Nato, a confrontation so to speak, the Russians marching into Prague in '68/'69, there's a student revolt here, where a confrontation is taking place that used to create an unusual balance and suddenly: everything is on the move. [The work] is typical of the zeitgeist. Penck] was always about information, so to speak, and not about painting, not about artistic things, although he very much saw himself as an artist. There was a great radicalism there' (translated). As König already indicates in his statement, Penck's oeuvre represents the combination of archaic sign systems as well as analytical and artistic thinking based on theories of philosophy, natural sciences, technology and politics. With its thematisation of the Cold War and the use of simple forms such as the strokes, which König interprets as those of a prison inmate, the work can accordingly be seen as exemplary of Penck's oeuvre.

Penck and König

König describes the artist as 'perhaps the most intelligent artist of his time', whom he integrated into numerous of his exhibitions, including 'Von hier aus' in Düsseldorf in 1984, shortly after Penck's expulsion from the GDR. At the end of the 1980s, Penck also took part in the 'Skulptur Projekte Münster' exhibition with his work 'Konzept für Münster: eine Kleinplastik' (Concept for Münster: a small sculpture) from 1987, in which the significance of public space and its transfer to state institutions is explored, modelled on his written idea: 'Eine Kleinplastik (1 von 5) (von meinen eigenen) für den Tisch (Schreibtisch) des Ober-Bürgermeisters von Münster Westfalen [sic]'. And also in 2010, Penck exhibited his large-format work 'Ich in Deutschland (West)' at the Museum Ludwig, which he had already presented in Düsseldorf in 1984. 'The East has spat me out, the West hasn't eaten me yet', is a famous quote by Penck from 1982.

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

