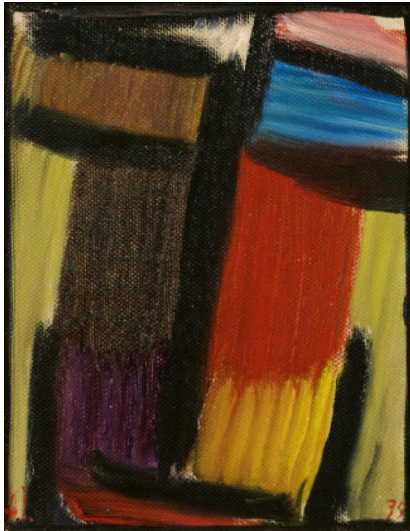


Lot 28



Auction Modern, Post War & Contemporary, Evening Sale

Date 27.11.2024, ca. 18:21

Preview 22.11.2024 - 10:00:00 bis
25.11.2024 - 18:00:00

JAWLENSKY, ALEXEJ
1867 Twer/Moscow - 1941 Wiesbaden

Title: Meditation.

Date: 1935.

Technique: Oil on paper with linen embossing.

Mounting: Mounted on card.

Measurement: 17,5 x 13,5cm.

Notation: Monogrammed lower left: A.J. Dated lower right: 35. Additionally signed, dated and inscribed verso centre: A. Jawlensky 1935 N.70 J. Below with dedication: An abscheuliche Lisa.

Frame/Pedestal: Craftman's frame.

Provenance:

- Studio of the artist
- Lisa Kümmel, Wiesbaden
- Olaf Hudtwalcker, Frankfurt
- Private collection Barcelona
- Miguel M. de Augustin
- Hauswedell and Nolte, Hamburg, auction 9.6.2000, lot 1529
- Ludorff Gallery, Düsseldorf
- Private collection North Rhine-Westphalia

Literature:

- Jawlensky, Maria/Pieroni-Jawlensky, Lucia/Jawlensky, Angelica: Alexej von Jawlensky - Catalogue Raisonné of the Oil Paintings, Vol. III, 1934-1937, Munich 1993, cat. rais. no. 1737, ill.

- Late work from his most famous series of works with beautiful, luminous colours
- His "Meditations", reduced to the essentials, testify to a mysterious magic and are touching in a special way
- Complete provenance

Paths to Abstraction

From 1914 onwards, Jawlensky pursued his artistic path to abstraction with great determination. Step by step, he

reduced the forms of the motif to a basic pattern, within which he constantly transformed and recombined individual components.

A central feature of his abstraction is the reduction of forms and the deliberate use of colors to express emotions and spiritual states, rather than to create narrative representations. His works are variations on a theme that he now seeks to develop in the sense of a transcendental expansion. It is a deeply religious art whose aspects go beyond the purely visual. This examination of spirituality and meditation is in line with the philosophical and artistic trends of the time, such as expressionism and symbolism.

There is no other subject that illustrates his path to abstraction, via several intermediate stages, more vividly than his series of paintings of the human face. (See fig. 1-3)

"Then it became necessary for me to find a form for the face, because I had understood that great art should only be painted with a religious feeling. And I could only bring that into the human face." (Jawlensky, quoted in exhib. cat. Pinacoteca Comunale Casa Rusca, Locarno et al., 1989/90, p. 80)

The late work of the "Meditations"

Starting from his spiritual and religious impulses and his struggle for the expressiveness of the human face, Jawlensky arrived at his final abstraction of the face in 1934, his fifth cycle of pictures: the small-format heads known as "Meditations".

Most of the works created around 1935/36 are very austere in composition due to the pronounced vertical brushwork and the darker colors, which are almost reminiscent of stained glass windows. The striking facial lines, symbolizing reduced heads of saints, are characteristic of this series. This development can also be traced back to Jawlensky's painful arthritis. Although it physically restricted the artist, his meditations testify to mysterious magic, human maturity and deep radiance.

The "Meditations" represent an abstract and spiritual examination of inner feelings and states and capture the artist's aspiration to find access to a higher, inner truth through art. They are less concrete, but aim to express emotions and meditative experiences through form and color. The works are created in a kind of limbo, removed from the plagues of earthly existence, and have a universal, almost iconographic quality.

Jawlensky himself regarded them as a kind of completion of his pictorial life's work. In his memoirs, the artist writes: "My last period of work has very small formats, but the pictures are even deeper and more spiritual, just in terms of color. Since I felt that I would no longer be able to work in the future as a result of my illness, I am working like a man possessed on these small meditations [sic!]. And now I am leaving these small but significant works for the future of people who love art." (Jawlensky, quoted in exhib. cat. Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund 1998, p. 119)

The version of a meditation from 1935 offered here, with complete provenance, is a wonderful example of his late work. The genderless face, the highly reduced forms and dark colors convey his meditative message. The head, en face, occupies the entire pictorial space and illustrates Jawlensky's search for a meditative and transcendental dimension of art.

Estimate: 70.000 € - 100.000 €; Hammer: 80.000 €

