

Lot 30



Auction Modern, Post War & Contemporary, Evening Sale

Date 27.11.2024, ca. 18:22

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

APPEL, KAREL
1921 Amsterdam - 2006 Zurich

Title: Gelukkige dag.

Date: 1964.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Measurement: 114 x 146,5cm.

Notation: Signed lower centre: appel. Titled on the stretcher upper left: Gelukkige DAG.

Frame/Pedestal: Studio bar.

Provenance:

- De Beyerd, Breda (today: Stedelijk Museum Breda; directly from the artist)
- Christie's, Amsterdam, 2586th auction, 3rd June 2003, lot 381
- Private collection North Rhine-Westphalia

Exhibitions:

- Städtische Kunstgalerie Bochum, 1965, cat. no. 65 (label)
- Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen 1965, cat. no. 76 (label)

Literature:

- Exhib. cat. Karel Appel, paintings, Städtische Kunstgalerie Bochum, Bochum 1965, cat. no. 62 (here differently titled)
- Characteristic pictorial world of Appel from the early creative phase of his international breakthrough
- Multi-layered subject in bright colours

A post-war art revolutionary

Karel Appel, an important representative of European post-war art and co-founder of the CoBrA group of artists, created a distinctive oeuvre with his expressive, raw style that had a lasting influence on the art world. Particularly in the post-war period, marked by an existential need for freedom and the rejection of traditional conventions, Appel developed a style of art that was characterized by impulsive and untamed brushstrokes. He was inspired by "Art Brut", the art of outsiders and children, and rejected any form of academic design. This led to a deep examination of human existence and emotions, which he captured on canvas in the form of intense colors and wild compositions. In the

1960s, at the time of his international breakthrough, Appel began to exhibit more and more in the United States and Europe and found recognition for his impetuous imagery, which consistently eluded the rational and drew directly from intuition.

“Gelukkige dag - Happy Day”

In the depiction of the work, a blue-yellow-red structure can be seen in the left half of the picture, which can be interpreted as an abstract duck. This duck appears to be depicted frontally, while its head is tilted to the side. On the right, however, a figure appears whose open eyes and black, wide-open mouth create a disturbing, almost eerie effect. This visual tension contrasts with the cheerful title of the work, which indicates a deliberate juxtaposition on Appel's part. While the title suggests a serene scene, the figure on the right conveys an oppressive, almost surreal, nightmarish mood. This disconnect between external expectation and the painting's emotional content is typical of Appel's style, which often juxtaposes contradictions such as joy and unease. The figurative suggestions blur in an intense explosion of color, making the painting both fascinating and disturbing.

“Happy Day” challenges the viewer to explore beyond the surface harmony to the deeper, ambivalent layers of the painting, inviting the viewer to immerse themselves in Appel's emotional world and be carried away by the spontaneous energy of the work. This work is a striking example of why Appel is considered one of the most important artists of his generation: He created works that went beyond mere representation to become a profound, almost physical experience for the viewer.

Estimate: 150.000 € - 200.000 €

