

Lot 31



Auction	Modern, Post War & Contemporary, Evening Sale
Date	27.11.2024, ca. 18:23
Preview	22.11.2024 - 10:00:00 bis 25.11.2024 - 18:00:00

POLIAKOFF, SERGE
1900 Moscow - 1969 Paris

Title: Composition.

Date: 1951/1954.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Measurement: 100 x 65cm.

Notation: Signed and dated lower left: SERGE PoLiAKoFF 1951 54. Once more signed and dated verso upper right: SERGE PoLiAKoFF 1951 54.

Frame/Pedestal: Craftman's frame.

Provenance:

- Sammlung Alexis Poliakoff, Paris
- Galerie Melki, Basel (label)
- Private collection Germany

Exhibitions:

- Creuzevault Gallery, Paris 1957
- Kunstverein Hamburg, 1958 (label)
- Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 1958
- Kunsthalle, Bern 1960
- Whitechapel Gallery, London 1963, cat. no. 11 (label)
- Kestner Society, Hanover 1963, cat. no. 11 (label)
- Kunstverein, Bremen 1963
- Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund 1963
- Overbeck Society, Lübeck 1963
- Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart 1964
- Municipal Museum, Trier 1963
- House of the Municipal Art Collections, Bonn 1964
- Musée Despiau-Wlérick, Mont-de-Marsan 1969
- Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris 1970
- Musée d'Unterlinden, Colmar 1971

- Musée de Tel-Aviv, 1971/72 (label)
- Musée des Beaux-Arts, Copenhagen 1972
- Kunsternes Hus, Oslo 1972
- Trondhjems Kunstforening, Trondheim 1972
- Lillehammer Bys painting collection, 1972
- Musée d'Art Moderne, Tampere 1972
- Galerie des Arts, Helsinki 1972
- Veranneman Gallery, Brussels 1973
- Musée Fabre, Ville de Montpellier 1974 (label)
- Musée des Beaux-Arts, La Chaux-de-Fonds 1975
- Gallery Melki, Paris 1975
- Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroi 1975
- Sonja Henje-Onstad Art Centre, Hovikodden 1976
- Musée Municipal, Vallauris 1978
- Campredon Art et Culture, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue 1986 (label)
- Fondation Pierre Gianadda, Martigny 1987
- The Seibu Museum of Art, Tokyo 1988 (label)
- Tsukashin Hall, Amagasaki 1988
- Galerie Melki, Paris 1991/92, cat. no. 13 (label)
- Museum Würth, Künzelsau 1997
- Künstlerhaus, Vienna 1998

Literature:

- Poliakoff, Alexis: Serge Poliakoff - Catalogue Raisonné, Volume II, 1966-1969, Paris 2004, cat. rais. no. 54-101, ill.
- Exhib. cat. Serge Poliakoff, Kunstverein Hamburg, Hamburg 1958, cat. no. 28 (here differently titled)
- Exhib. cat. Serge Poliakoff, Skulpturer, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen 1958, cat. no. 20 (here differently titled)
- Exhib. cat. Serge Poliakoff, Works from 1937-1960, Kunsthalle Bern, Berne 1960, cat. no. 38 (here differently titled)
- Exhib. cat. Serge Poliakoff, Kestner Gesellschaft, Hanover 1963, cat. no. 11 (here differently titled)
- Exhib. cat. Serge Poliakoff, Städtisches Museum, Trier 1963, cat. no. 7 (here differently titled)
- Exhib. cat. Serge Poliakoff, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris 1970, cat. no. 35, ill.
- Exhib. cat. Serge Poliakoff, Campredon Art et Culture, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue 1986, ill.
- Exhib. cat. Poliakoff, A Retrospective, Museum Würth, Sigmaringen 1997, p. 106, ill.

- Early work with interesting colours
- From a period in which Poliakoff found his own path to abstraction and expanded his palette with luminous tones
- Impressive exhibition history with important exhibitions in Europe and Asia

A global exhibition history

This painting is an extraordinary work by Serge Poliakoff in several respects: for one thing, the artist probably worked on it several times over a period of three years, between 1951 and 1954, and also dated it accordingly. For another, this painting has a global exhibition history. Between 1958 and 1998, this work was shown in eleven countries: from Norway to Switzerland and from Belgium to Japan, this work by the Russian-born French artist has been exhibited in galleries and museums. The back of this "globetrotter painting" with its many stickers and labels has a high aesthetic value in itself.

A striking painting from a positive period of change

But this painting as such is also enormously strong: the edge - the only real thing that color has to face - delimits three large blocks of color. Sienna ochre takes up almost half of the painting and dominates in quantity. The lower half is occupied by a somewhat larger ivory-white form and a blue-black color field. In the center, the triad of the border zone is condensed by a further triadic constellation: a pink form, below it another in sienna ochre, and a small black triangle meet here. All six fields show the main colors described, but they are not monochrome at all. The artist works intensively with overpainting, allowing deeper layers to show through and placing brushstrokes rich in contrast on the surface. The sienna field in the middle, for example, has a rich green at its edges. The pink field, on the other hand,

shows light ivory and darker pink pigment at its boundaries. The rich design of the border zones in particular creates the impression of a collage technique. A foreground and background is suggested to the eye.

It can also be observed that the visually so rich, organic-looking forms all have very pointed corners and angles, which seem to condense in the small black.

The years between 1951 and 1954 mark an existential turning point in Serge Poliakoff's life: from 1952, the artist was able to make a living from his visual art through a permanent gallery relationship. Before that, he had to earn a living as a guitarist to support his small family. Serge Poliakoff was already highly esteemed in artistic circles (Wassily Kandinsky is quoted as saying in 1938: "For the future, I'm backing Poliakoff", quoted from:

<https://www.lecoindesarts.com/de/biographie-serge-poliakoff>), and at the beginning of the 1950s, critics and collectors also began to take notice of him. In 1953, the artist was able to present his first major solo exhibition at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels; a first solo exhibition in the United States (Gallery Circle & Square, New York) followed later that same year.

It is only logical that museums and curators have repeatedly requested this painting, which is visually so striking and dates from such a positive period of change in the artist's career. This is a testament to its significance in the oeuvre of the master of the "École de Paris".

Alexandra Bresges-Jung.

Estimate: 180.000 € - 240.000 €; Hammer: 350.000 €

