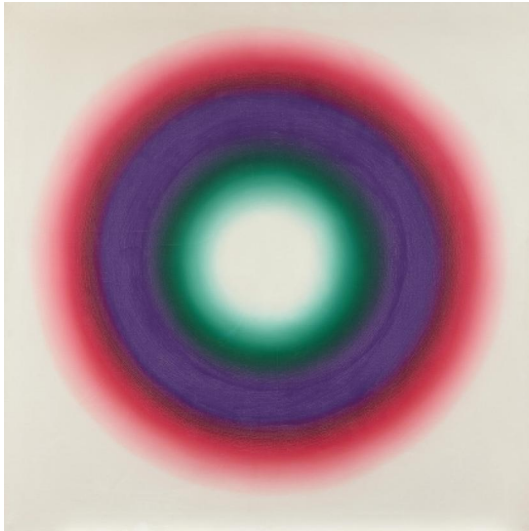


Lot 32



Auction Modern, Post War & Contemporary, Evening Sale

Date 27.11.2024, ca. 18:24

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

FANGOR, WOJCIECH
Warsaw 1922 - 2015

Title: B23.

Date: 1965.

Technique: Oil on canvas.

Measurement: 130 x 130cm.

Notation: Signed, titled and dated verso upper right: FANGOR B23 1965.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

The work is listed on the artist's official website.(www.fangorfoundation.org).

Provenance:

- Galerie Wilm Falazik, Bochum (label)
- Private collection Hesse

Exhibitions:

- Gallery Wilm Falazik, Bochum 1965

- Fascinating work by the great Polish Op Art artist
- In private family ownership for decades and offered on the art market again for the first time
- Typical illusionist work with a chromatic presence that extends into the room
- Works by the artist are represented in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Museum of Art in San Francisco and the National Museum in Warsaw, among others

The Path to Abstraction

As one of the most famous Polish artists of the 20th century, Wojciech Fangor gained international recognition as a representative of Op Art. His beginnings were devoted to figurative painting and were severely restricted during the Second World War. Despite the difficult conditions, Fangor took private painting lessons and received his diploma from the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1946. After this classically oriented academic training, his style was obliged to "Socialist Realism" until he developed his own pictorial language with the relaxation of the political climate after the death of Stalin. Thus, in the 1950s, he began to detach form and color from their representational assignment, while

exploring space as artistic material and making it an integral part of his work. Together with the architect Stanisław Zamecznik, Fangor devised a radical intervention entitled "Studium des Raums" (1958), in which abstract paintings were arranged on free-standing racks in an outdoor space in a kind of environment. The paintings were incorporated into the surroundings in order to structure the space according to phenomenological aspects and make it physically tangible.

As a co-founder of the Polish School of Poster Art, he explored graphic design tools until, finally, having fully arrived in abstract art, his work centered on optical effects and visual phenomena of perception. He emigrated to the United States in the mid-1960s and did not return to Poland until the fall of the Iron Curtain in the 1990s. His major painterly work was created during the 1960s and 1970s, when he pursued his fascination with optical illusions and made the interplay between space and color the subject of his artistic investigations.

Pulsating Circles and Space Outside the Picture

Based on experiments with sensory experiences, Fangor created fascinating and confusing effects to activate the pictorial space through color and light, which at the same time affected the subjective spatial impression of the viewer. Motifs such as circles, waves and stripes appear to have been sprayed on with an airbrush, but are in fact the product of the finest brushwork. In their arrangement, he repeatedly tested the effect of bright and muted colors in ever new ways, varying the degree of saturation and brightness. Surrounded by hazy, blurred edges, circles, for example, expand in a pulsating manner, only to retreat back to a core. Contours dissolve into diffuse, vibrant color gradients, creating moments of spatial uncertainty. Through this dynamization of forms between expansion and concentration, they interact with space: Fangor's works seem to overcome two-dimensionality and take on a "new dimension," as Josef Albers, Fangor's friend and most prominent advocate, recognized. (cited from Waleczek, Agata: "These pictures are a test for your optic nerve" in: Die Welt 24.09.2017, <https://www.welt.de/kultur/kunst/article168980866/> (10.10.2024)) When viewed for a long time, the rings in Fangor's painting "B23" change: they swell up and detach themselves from the white painting surface as independent, voluminous manifestations, to jump back and forth and float above it in isolation. The reality of Fangor's "positive illusory space", as he called it, can only be experienced physically and mentally, outside the boundaries of the image. The optical effects introduced by Fangor both irritate and heighten perception, corresponding to the psychedelic hallucinations widely used in the US counterculture at the time to expand consciousness.

In 1970, the Guggenheim Museum was the first to honor this innovative artist with a comprehensive solo exhibition. "If I have achieved anything in painting, it is not in the sense of a meaningful sign, but in the realm of sensual visual experience." (Wojciech Fangor in a letter to his wife Krystyna, 1969, quoted from: fangorfoundation.org).

Bettina Haiss.

Estimate: 80.000 € - 120.000 €; Hammer: 300.000 €

