

Lot 30



Auction Modern | Post War | Contemporary | Galerie Thomas | The Jagdfeld Collection

Date 03.12.2025, ca. 18:22

Preview 28.11.2025 - 16:18:00 bis
01.12.2025 - 16:19:00

ALBERS, JOSEF
1888 Bottrop - 1976 New Haven/Connecticut

Title: Study for Homage to the Square "Morning Sight".

Date: 1969.

Technique: Oil on masonite.

Measurement: 81 x 81cm.

Notation: Monogrammed and dated lower right (engraved in the wet paint): A69. Titled, signed and dated verso top right: Study for Homage to the Square "Morning Sight" Albers 1969. Here additionally equipped with work details and dedication.

Frame/Pedestal: Framed.

- One of the rare and highly sought-after larger paintings, which are rarely found in comparable quality on the German auction market
- The arrangement of colors evokes a sensual impression of morning twilight transitioning to sun-drenched brightness
- Romantic mood created by delicate, nuanced colors

"Interaction of Color"

Josef Albers is one of the most influential artists of the 20th century. His groundbreaking color theory and teaching had a significant impact on the development of American painting. Born in Bottrop in 1888, Albers painted his first abstract painting, inspired by Piet Mondrian, in 1913. After studying art in Berlin, Essen, and Munich, Albers first attended Johannes Itten's basic course in craft design at the Bauhaus in Weimar. Albers, who was influenced by Catholicism and had a preference for the symbolism of glass as a material, later headed the workshop for glass painting and furniture there. In his teaching, which included courses in drawing and writing, forms and functions always arose from the properties of materials and their possibilities. In 1930, he was Mies van der Rohe's deputy as director of the Bauhaus. After the Nazis seized power and closed the Bauhaus in 1933, Albers emigrated to the USA with his wife, textile designer Anni Albers, and taught at Black Mountain College. There he introduced his legendary color course, which culminated in his epoch-making book "Interaction of Color" in 1963 and was based on direct observation of color behavior. In simple exercises, one aspect of color interaction was isolated in order to observe the interaction in detail.

Endless variability of colors

In contrast to the scientific color theories that had prevailed until then, Albers distinguished between the physical

properties and visual perception of color. According to Albers in "Interaction of Color," the fact that objective knowledge and subjective perception sometimes diverge makes "color the most relative medium in art." Albers' experimental method "for investigating and communicating colors" is particularly evident in his famous series "Homage to the Square." The numerous variations in the series illustrate the essential variable quality of colors and their associated deceptive nature. According to Albers, the effect of color always unfolds in direct dependence on its respective environment: In connection with different neighboring colors, a color develops deviating variations of its basic value.

Meticulous investigation and romantic mood

Like all works in the important series "Homage to the Square," the present study "Morning Sight" consists of nested squares applied to the picture ground in a single layer of unmixed colors. Albers notes the exact procedure on the back of the picture carrier - "all in one primary coat directly from the tube." He also meticulously notes the names of the colors used in order to make the variety of possible perceptions of a specific color tone within the entire group of works comprehensible. Here, the colors "Ultramarine Yellow" from the manufacturer Levebre and "Schweninger Yellow" from Old Holland interact with the tone value of "Reilly's Grey II G," a specific shade of graduated gray tones developed by illustrator Frank J. Reilly in the 1940s. At the core of the triad, "Schweninger Yellow," whose name refers to the flag that indicates dangerous conditions such as strong winds or currents in the coastal town, shines particularly intensely. Its warm effect unfolds from within: just as the sun radiates light and warmth, here too the intensity of the middle square reaches the color values of the cool, milky-white ultramarine yellow and the more distant gray—and transforms them. The color chord refers to the early hours of the awakening day: when the pale brightness of the rising sun penetrates the gray veil of the fading nighttime darkness and slowly intensifies into powerful daylight. With his abstract representation, Albers explores the effect of the colors he uses, linking them to sensory experiences to evoke an almost romantic mood full of light and air.

Bettina Haiss

Estimate: 300.000 € - 500.000 €

