

# VAN HAM

## **SPOT ON: Neue Wilde - One of the Last Great Art Movements of the 20th century**

In 1980, the Neue Galerie/Sammlung Ludwig - later the Ludwig Forum in Aachen - organised a pioneering exhibition entitled "Les Nouveaux Fauves - Die Neuen Wilden" featuring young artists who had set out to counter the prevailing Conceptual Art and Minimal Art. A term was born for a new, young art movement that caused a sensation in the 1980s with its neo-expressive painting and marked an important chapter in art history.

The 'Neue Wilden' were a generation of artists born around 1950 who left the art academies at the end of the 1970s. Influenced by their teachers, including Karl Horst Hödicke in Berlin and Joseph Beuys in Düsseldorf, and the socio-political mood of the time, there was a desire for change and a spirit of optimism in the air. The changing metropolitan scenes, music and film as well as youth and popular culture characterised the individual attitude to life and the new reality of life and demanded a new artistic expression.

The movement first became visible in Berlin. Martin Kippenberger was certainly one of the pacesetters. For a time, he owned the legendary Kreuzberg club SO 36, where people had been meeting since the late 1970s to watch the latest punk and new wave bands. The club quickly became a melting pot for the rock, punk, homosexual and foreign scene. The protagonists of the young art scene, including Helmut Middendorff, Rainer Fetting, Salomé, Elvira Bach and Bernd Zimmer, came and went here. Middendorff captured the interior of the club in his large-format painting of the same name from 1981 (lot 559).

In Cologne and Düsseldorf, art developed from the same attitude. In Cologne, the artists' group "Mülheimer Freiheit" was founded, which included Jiri Dokoupil, Walter Dahn and Hans Peter Adamski. In Düsseldorf, the "Ratinger Hof", similar to SO 36 in Berlin, was a meeting point for the local art scene, including Markus Oehlen, Albert Oehlen and Werner Büttner. But there were also similar endeavours in Austria and Switzerland. Martin Disler and Leiko Ikemura, who were living in Switzerland at the time, took part in many group exhibitions in Germany. The art of the 'Neue Wilde' stood for a revival of figurative painting, characterised by expressiveness and emotionality. Using strong, vibrant colours and broad, quick brushstrokes, the artists captured stories on their mostly oversized canvases, which ranged between realism and surrealism and exhibited great stylistic diversity. Today, the 'Neue Wilde' are regarded as one of the last great artistic movements of the twentieth century.

We are delighted to be able to offer a wide range of works by the main protagonists of the art movement in the "Postwar" auction on June 6, 2024. Some of the works were exhibited in the groundbreaking exhibition "Deep Views - Art of the 1980s from the Federal Republic of Germany, the GDR, Austria and Switzerland" at the Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt in 1985, including works by Helmut Middendorff (lot 559) Leiko Ikemura (lot 560), Werner Büttner (lot 564) and Salome (lot 566).