

VAN HAM

Press release



Special sale: From a Universal Collector – The Olbricht Collection | 26 September 2020

From a Universal Collector – The Olbricht Collection

For ten years Prof. Thomas Olbricht, one of the truly great and universal collectors, presented parts of his collection in 21 exhibitions at his private museum, “me Collectors Room”, in Berlin. When the premises closed in May, this came as a major surprise for the art scene. Now Van Ham Kunstauktionen can announce the sale of part of the Olbricht Collection. This part will be auctioned on Saturday, 26 September 2020.

In addition to all media of contemporary art as well as magnificent works of Classical Modernity, the collection is fascinating for its numerous objects from the cabinet of curiosities.

Prof. Thomas Olbricht is one of the great universal collectors of our time. With approximately 500 items, the sale offers a journey through the entire world and through time – in other words, the entire universe of the Olbricht Collection.

The collector Thomas Olbricht (b. 1948), an Essen-based professor of medicine, endocrinologist and chemist, created one of the most complex and renowned collections in Europe which is known for its quality and the numerous stories behind the different exhibits. Olbricht found inspiration in the big and celebrated stars of the art scene, but also in the wonders of nature, the curiosities of art history and the feats of craftsmanship which already fascinated kings and princes who collected them for

For questions
VAN HAM Art Auctions
Elisa Dorin
Press and Public Relations
Hitzelerstraße 2
50968 Köln
Tel. +49 (221) 92 58 62-110
Fax +49 (221) 92 58 62-4
e.dorin@van-ham.com
www.van-ham.com

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their cabinets of curiosities. For Prof. Olbricht, all these objects contain energy flows which he calls “moving energies” and which the “me” in his Collectors Room referred to.

The main focus of the collection and the sale is on contemporary art, with paintings, sculptures, photographs and installations. Impressive works by **George Condo**, **John M. Armleder** and **Cindy Sherman**, among other artists, characterize the offerings. Museum-quality individual works from Classical Modernity complement this focus.

Prof. Olbricht extends the concept of the cabinet of curiosities in his collection by including works created as late as the 20th century. Classical contents such as precious works of art (Artificialia), rare objects of nature (Naturalia), scientific instruments (Scientifica), items from foreign worlds (Exotica) and wondrous objects (Mirabilia) distinguish this all-inclusive collection. They represent the centuries-old tradition of the cabinets of curiosities. The focus is on the sheer interest in rare, often scientific objects. Extraordinary materials are combined with high-quality craftsmanship. An essential part of this collection is the medical background of many objects which refers to the history of research into the human body.

The magic of these objects is now to spark the curiosity of others. We learn from the universal collector to trust the power of things, their “metamorphic potency”, as art historian Horst Bredekamp called it in his book on cabinets of curiosities. This might also turn into a crystallization point for young collectors and beginners from which new collections could originate, according to Prof. Olbricht. With his last exhibition and the review of “10 years of me Collectors Room Berlin” he concluded his project of his own museum in order to open a new chapter. Those who read the personal words of his most recent exhibition catalogue carefully realized that one reason it is not hard for Olbricht to part with his exhibits is that he wants to step up his involvement in the cultural education of children and adolescents.

Since such a famous collection has never been auctioned in Germany before, Van Ham is especially pleased it can open the Autumn season with this sale.

August 2020

Van Ham Art Auctions, founded in 1959, is a family business, which is managed in the second generation by Markus Eisenbeis. Every year, VAN HAM organizes about 18 internationally renowned presence auctions, as well as the most extensive ONLINE ONLY program in Germany (with about 20 online auctions). In the areas of Modern, Post War & Contemporary, Fine Art, European Applied Arts, Jewellery and Watches, as well as Asian Art, VAN HAM achieved a turnover of around 35 million euros in 2019 and regularly achieved international auction records. This makes Van Ham one of the leading auction houses in Germany

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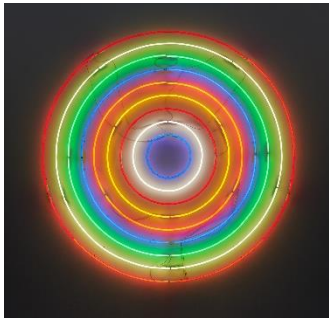
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George Condo (b. 1957)
Screaming Couple | 2005
Oil on canvas | 81.5 x 71 cm
Estimate: 300,000–500,000 euros



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880–1938)
Two Female Nudes | 1908
Pastel on hand-made paper | 34.5 x 43 cm
Estimate: 60,000–80,000 euros



John M. Armleder (b. 1948)
Untitled (target) | 2001
Neon installation with filter glass tubes | Ø 300 cm
Estimate: 80,000–120,000 euros



Cindy Sherman (b. 1954)
Untitled Film Still # 39 | 1979
Gelatine silver print on Kapa board | 89 x 70 cm
Estimate: 80,000–120,000 euros



Objects from the Cabinet of Curiosities

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