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## **Monographs & Magazines: 20th Century Artists Dominate Swann Galleries' December Art Books Auction**

**New York**—Works by and about twentieth century artists dominated the scene at Swann Galleries' biannual sale of **Art, Press & Illustrated Books** on Thursday, December 1. Of the top 20 lots in the sale, only two were published before 1900. The sale also broke several auction records.

The highlight of the sale was a rare limited edition of *Das Werk von Gustav Klimt*, 1918, the only monograph published in the artist's lifetime. The retrospective work, with richly printed colotype plates, ten in color with gold and silver highlights, sold to a collector for \$60,000\*. Another outstanding lot was a preparatory proof of László Moholy-Nagy's *Composition* which was published in the Belgian avant-garde magazine *Het Overzicht*, circa 1924. The print sold after competitive bidding for \$17,500, a record for the work.

The most complete set ever to come to auction of the Mexican Stridentist journal *Horizonte*, 1926-27, made its debut. The periodical was edited by Leopoldo Méndez and Ramón Alva de la Canal, and contributors included Diego Rivera and Rufino Tamayo. Stridentism was a radical avant-garde art movement founded in Mexico City in 1921, formed out of the momentum of the Mexican Revolution; *Horizonte* was their outlet. The set sold for \$22,500.

Auction records were set for a scarce first edition of *Die Farbenklaviaturen von Le Corbusier*, 1931, a wallpaper sample book designed by the artist to allow people to create harmonious color combinations in their homes (\$6,000). The first limited edition of *Five Poems*, 2002, by Kara Walker and Toni Morrison broke its previous auction record to sell for \$1,000.

Several works made their auction debuts, including Percy Bysshe Shelley's *The Sensitive Plant*, 1898, one of ten copies printed on vellum for the Guild of Women Binders, which sold to a collector for \$5,250. The ornate Insel-Verlag edition of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, 1908, designed and bound by Eleanore Ramsey, also went to a collector for \$15,000.

Further highlights included a first edition of the satirical alphabet book skewering the 1913 Armory show, titled *The Cubies' ABC*, by Mary M. and Earl H. Lyall, which sold for \$4,750. *Douze Quatrains*, 1930, by Pierre Bragenell, with 12 erotic pochoirs attributed to Gerda Wegener, was purchased by a collector for a record \$5,500. Another record was set for a scholarly compilation by Hsiang Yüan-Pien titled *Noted Porcelains of Successive Dynasties*, 1931, which garnered \$5,250. Kurt Schwitters's *Die Silbergäule, Merz 8. Die Kathedrale*, 1920, with seven lithographs, also performed well, selling to a collector for \$4,420.

Modern fairy mythology performed well in the sale, including *Fairyland*, 1926, an Australian picture book by Ida Rentoul Outhwaite, which sold for a record-breaking \$4,250. Similarly, the first English trade edition of *The Book of Fairy Poetry*, 1920, sold for nearly four times the high estimate at \$1,750. The book contains the first illustrated version of J.R.R. Tolkien's poem *Goblin Feet*. While not strictly fairy-related, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, illustrated and signed by Salvador Dalí, brought \$5,750.

Christine von der Linn, Swann Galleries' Art, Press & Illustrated Book specialist said, "I was overjoyed at the amount of excitement and active participation from bidders around the world for the lots on offer in this small but powerpacked sale. This auction was curated very specifically, with small, strong selections of European Avant-Garde books and prints, fine illustrated books, and works by artists featured in major museum exhibitions this year. In particular, the enthusiasm surrounding the Moholy-Nagy shows at the Guggenheim and The Art Institute of Chicago, and the Mexican Modernism show at the Philadelphia Museum of Art has actively sparked rediscovery of important artists. That was definitely reflected in the interest in those lots this week." She added, "I haven't had so much fun in a sale in a long time."

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