



Hermann Max Pechstein.
Die Ruhende. Öl auf Leinwand, 1911, 75 x 101 cm
Schätzpreis: € 1.200.000-1.800.000

AMICABLE SOLUTION IN RESTITUTION CLAIM

Ketterer Kunst Auctions Pechstein Painting with a Remarkable Provenance

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- For decades part of the collection of the Berlin Nationalgalerie
- Exceptional work of museum quality
- Formerly in the important progressive Dr. Ismar Littmann Collection
- From the time of Hermann Max Pechstein's artistic breakthrough

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SHORT VERSION

Munich, February 23, 2023 (KK) – **For decades, Hermann Max Pechstein’s “Die Ruhende” (Resting Woman) was a highlight in the collection of the Berlin Nationalgalerie. By mutual agreement, the work from 1911, which marks the breakthrough of the expressionist painter, will be restituted to the heirs of Dr. Ismar Littmann.**

In a next step, the painting will be sold at auction by Ketterer Kunst in Munich with an estimate price of € 1,200,000 – 1,800,000.

“Singular masterpieces like this with such an outstanding provenance have the potential to make for magic moments on the auction market“, says **Robert Ketterer**, auctioneer and owner of Ketterer Kunst. “The fact that the consignors put their trust in our house spurs our motivation to place this masterwork on the international stage that it deserves“, says Robert Ketterer, auctioneer and owner of Ketterer Kunst.

“Die Ruhende“ used to be part of the seminal modern art collection of Dr. Ismar Littmann, advocate and art patron from Breslau (today Wroclaw), who was driven into suicide by the Nazis in 1934. The painting served as a security transfer at the Dresdner Bank. Due to Nazi persecution, the family was not able to get the painting back. Thus, the painting was finally part of an unprecedented en bloc purchase made by the State of Prussia from the Dresdner Bank in 1935 and ended up in the National Gallery.

As a highlight of the preview exhibition tour, “Die Ruhende“ will be on display in Hamburg, Cologne, Frankfurt, Berlin and Munich in May/June of 2023, before it will be called up at Ketterer Kunst in Munich on June 9/10.

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LONG VERSION

Munich, February 1. 2023 (KK) – **Ketterer Kunst has held the world record for a work by Hermann Max Pechstein since 2011. Offering “Die Ruhende“ (Resting Woman) in its Evening Sale in context of the upcoming saleroom auctions in Munich on June 9/10, Germany’s leading auction house for art since 1900 once more presents an extraordinary masterpiece by the German expressionist.**

Just as Emil Nolde’s “Buchsbaumgarten“, which was sold for the top price of € 2,185,000 at Ketterer Kunst in December 2021, Hermann Max Pechstein’s “Die Ruhende“ also used to be part of the acclaimed Dr. Ismar Littmann Collection.

“Singular masterpieces like this with such an outstanding provenance have the potential to make for magic moments on the auction market“, says **Robert Ketterer**, auctioneer and owner of Ketterer Kunst. “The fact that the consignors put their trust in our house spurs our motivation to place this masterwork on the international stage that it deserves. In this context I am particularly happy that with this amicable restitution to the heirs of Dr. Ismar Littman a major German museum acknowledges a bank deposit as a loss due to persecution. This is a historically strong sign for the responsible way of dealing with artworks formerly in Jewish ownership.“

*“Magic Moments
on the Auction Market“*

THE WORK’S ORIGIN

As far as the subject is concerned, Edvard Munch and Paul Gauguin seem to have inspired their fellow German avant-garde painter Hermann Max Pechstein to paint the renowned work “Die Ruhende“. It was made in 1911 during the key phase of his breakthrough in Berlin, a time that the artist felt was exhilarating, especially because of Charlotte Kaprolat. He had met “Lotte“ in the studio of the sculptor Georg Kolbe and they soon moved in together. Eventually they got married the year “Die Ruhende“ was made. It was Lotte’s fascinating personality that inspired the artist to create such exceptional masterpieces.

THE WORK'S HISTORY

Up until September 23, 1934, Pechstein's "Die Ruhende" was part of the **Dr. Ismar Littmann Collection**, which had been accumulated since the late 1910s and also comprised significant works by Otto Mueller, Käthe Kollwitz, Emil Nolde, Alexander Kanoldt and Lovis Corinth, some of whom Littmann also had personal contact with. It was especially the acquisition of works by the "Brücke" artist Max Pechstein that provide proof of the keen eye he had for the art of his time. He bought his works at an early point when only very few private collectors appreciated his painting.

The advocate and notary was a luminary of the art scene in Breslau (today Wrocław) and his collection of Expressionism was one of the 20th century's most acclaimed ones. After the Nazi Assumption of Power, an occupational ban was imposed on the wealthy attorney and generous patron of progressive modern art and he got into dire financial straits that eventually drove him into suicide in 1934. As his widow and their four children faced persecution by the Nazi regime, they decided to sell the art collection to pay for their flight.

In February 1935, the Berlin **auction house Max Perl** sold around 200 works from the Littmann Collection, including those the family had used to safeguard loans at several banks in Breslau. In the course of the global financial crisis, Dr. Ismar Littmann was forced to leave parts of his collection to Breslau banks as securities, until May 1933 he was able to redeem one or the other painting. However, with the occupational ban things changed dramatically and most works remained with the banks. This was also the reason why "Die Ruhende" was offered in the auction at Max Perl.

Despite the dumping estimate price of 150 reichsmark it was offered for in the catalog, the work was not sold and went back to the bank. According to a sales contract from August 15, 1935, it then became part of an unprecedented art deal: The **Prussian State** acquired a bulk of more than 4000 objects from the bank, most of them loan securities from debtors who were victim of antisemitic persecution and thus unable to service their loans.

Eventually “Die Ruhende“ ended up a highlight in the collection of the **Berlin Nationalgalerie**. In 2022 it was, along with a “Selbstbildnis“ by **Wilhelm Schmid** - founding member of the “Novembergruppe“ and a pioneer of New Objectivity - from the same collection and also offered in the June auctions at Ketterer, restituted to the heirs of Dr. Ismar Littmann subject to an amicable agreement. Thus past injustice was not only acknowledged, but appropriate measures were also taken.

With the auction at **Ketterer Kunst** in June, a new chapter in the life of Hermann Max Pechstein’s masterpiece with the best provenance will be opened. Auctioneer Robert Ketterer is convinced: “This fantastic work with its eventful history and provenance has great potential in the auction and will continue its exciting journey.”

With **Paul Kleinschmidt’s** “Schloss Burgau bei Wasserburg am Inn“ from 1909 (estimate price: € 12,0000-15,000), **Wilhem Schmid’s** „Selbstbildnis“ (estimate price: @ 10.000-15.000) created around 1925 a total of four works from the Dr. Ismar Littmann Collection found their way into the auction.

AUCTION IN MUNICH

June 9 Contemporary Art / Evening Sale

June 10 19th Century Art / Modern Art

KETTERER KUNST

Ketterer Kunst (kettererkunst.com and onlineonly.kettererkunst.com) with headquarters in Munich and branches in Hamburg and Berlin, as well as with a global network of representatives in, among others, the USA and Brazil, was founded in 1954. The auction house has a focus on Fine Art from the 19th to the 21st Centuries and on Rare Books. In its market segment, Ketterer Kunst is the Number 1 in the German language region. Ketterer Kunst is the specialist for German art, as well as for many international artists highly sought-after in Europe, the USA and in Asia, and realizing record prices at Ketterer Kunst. According to the annual 2022 artprice database, Ketterer Kunst is on place 7 of the world’s strongest-selling art auction houses.

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