

CHRISTIE'S

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MASTERPIECES AND MILESTONES: CHRISTIE'S AMSTERDAM CELEBRATES CoBrA'S 75TH ANNIVERSARY

50 YEARS OF CHRISTIE'S IN AMSTERDAM



Constant, *Vogel* (1949, estimate: €70,000-90,000)
Karel Appel, *De boerderij (Le ferme)* (1950, estimate: €120,000-180,000)

Amsterdam – To mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of CoBrA (in Paris on 8 November 1949), Christie's will offer 18 works that represent the diverse, sometimes diametrically opposed perspectives of CoBrA in the 20th / 21st Century: Amsterdam online-only sale, live from 7 to 21 November. Leading artists including Pierre Alechinsky; Karel Appel; Constant; Corneille and Asger Jorn will be offered alongside Jan Schoonhoven, Ad Dekkers and Jef Verheyen from the Nul-groep. A Dutch counterpart to the Düsseldorf-based Zero, the Nul-groep's embrace of monochrome can be seen as a direct reaction to the exuberant Neo-Expressionism of CoBrA. The sale will also present works by leading artists across the 20th and 21st centuries, such as a rare painting by Raimund Girke. A selection of highlights will be on view at Christie's Amsterdam from 7 to 21 November 2023.

Spanning just over four feet in width, *De boerderij (Le ferme)* (1950, estimate: €120,000-180,000) is an exceptional example of Karel Appel's vehement mode of expression. In a richly textured array of wax crayon scribbles and thick gouache impasto, Appel's farm scene is charged with the rudimentary and playful vitality of CoBrA. It was in this year, 1950, that the artist moved from Amsterdam to Paris, the European epicentre of the group's activities, setting up a studio in an old hide warehouse with friend and fellow Dutch CoBrA artist Corneille.

Constant completed *Vogel* (1949, estimate: €70,000-90,000) in the second year of CoBrA's brief but prolific existence. One year prior to this, Constant wrote in what would become the manifesto for CoBrA: 'A painting is not a structure of colours and lines, but an animal, a night, a cry, a man, or all of these together'.

Jan Schoonhoven's *R70-18* (1970, estimate: €80,000-120,000, *illustrated below right*) is a three-dimensional geometric pattern of horizontal and vertical lines, which oscillate in a dynamic network of light and shadow. The work is executed in papier-mâché and painted entirely white.

Höhenflug (1996-98, estimate: €50,000-70,000, *illustrated below, centre*) is a monumental late painting by Raimund Girke, who is renowned for his masterful, dynamic explorations of the colour white. The painting recalls a bright, cloud-filled sky, while its darker lower reaches give the impression of a low horizon line. *Höhenflug* is poised to set a new world auction record for the artist. This is presented alongside Ad Dekkers' *Reliëf met 18 zaagsneden* (*Relief with 18 cuts*) (1965, estimate: €30,000-50,000, *illustrated below, left*).



The original CoBrA members included artists and poets from various European countries. The joy of complete spiritual and artistic freedom and spontaneity served as their counterbalance to their experiences of the Second World War. CoBrA initially caused an uproar in the Netherlands with Dutch media describing their work as 'scribble, claptrap and splotches'. To read more about the CoBrA movement, please read the Christie's Story [here](#).

PRESS CONTACTS:

Alexandra Kindermann | +41 44 268 10 19 | akindermann@christies.com
Sara Macdonald | +44 (0)20 7752 3136 | saramacdonald@christies.com

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* Please note when quoting estimates above that other fees will apply in addition to the hammer price - see Section D of the Conditions of Sale at the back of the sale catalogue.

*Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Sales totals are hammer price plus buyer's premium.

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