

Sotheby's

Press Release

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SWISS ART / SWISS MADE

A POWERFUL EXPRESSIONIST MASTERWORK

ERNST LUDWIG KIRCHNER'S *SCHNEEBERGE MIT SKILÄUFERN*



APPEARING FOR THE FIRST TIME AT AUCTION SOTHEBY'S ZURICH - 5 DECEMBER

ESTIMATE: CHF 1,000,000 – 1,500,000

Zurich, 12 October 2017 – Sotheby's autumn auction, *Swiss Art/Swiss Made* will feature an outstanding example of 20th-century avant-garde painting: Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's powerful expressionist winter landscape, *Schneeberge mit Skiläufern*.

This depiction of winter scenery was realised in the countryside surrounding the **Swiss mountain town of Davos**, where Kirchner settled in 1917. The work is characterised by a high degree of abstraction: alongside the range of intense colour and the flat planes of the composition, the effects of light and shadow capture the atmosphere of sunset in the expressionist painter's distinctive style.

This masterpiece will be offered for the very first time at auction as the leading highlight of the Swiss Art/Swiss Made sale in Zurich on **5 December**, with an estimate of **CHF 1,000,000 – 1,500,000**.

Speaking ahead of the sale, **Co-Directors of Sotheby's Swiss Art Department, Stephanie Schleining and Urs Lanter, said**, "Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's time in Davos resulted in a series of masterworks and it is a privilege for us to showcase *Schneeberge mit Skiläufern*, a testament to the way the influence of German expressionism extended into Switzerland. This painting – which has never before been offered at auction and has remained in the same family for nearly 60 years – would be an impressive addition to a private or institutional collection, in Switzerland or abroad."

DAVOS: SANCTUARY FOR A TROUBLED ARTIST

In 1917, at the age of 37, German painter Ernst Ludwig Kirchner moved from Berlin to Davos. After undergoing various treatments in a number of sanatoriums to treat his mental health issues, as well as alcohol and drug addiction, Kirchner hoped that the medical treatment and physical activity he would undertake in Graubünden's Alpine mountains would help him to recover mentally and gain physical strength. From then on, the area surrounding the Landwasser valley shaped the motifs of his paintings and his artistic output until his death by suicide in 1938.

"I am so happy to be allowed to be here, and through hard work I should like to thank the people for the kindness they have shown me."

Extract from a letter to psychiatrist Dr Binswanger, 1918



A UNIQUE PAINTERLY STYLE

Executed in 1928, Kirchner's large-scale painting *Schneeberge mit Skiläufern* shows two skiers on wooden skis against the backdrop of what is thought to be the Tinzenhorn. The artist captures the atmosphere of a scenic winter's evening, distilling the image of a setting sun against imposing mountains, his distinctive style – tending towards abstraction - coming to the fore with bright colour and bold lines.

The painting has been referenced in numerous publications and has also been exhibited in a number of national and international exhibitions, including major Kirchner retrospectives at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1933, the Kunsthalle Bremen, the Seattle Art Museum, The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Kunstverein, Hamburg.

SWISS ART / SWISS MADE

AUCTION

Sotheby's Zurich, Talstrasse 83
Tuesday, 5 December 2017 at 6pm

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS

Sotheby's Zurich, Talstrasse 83, Zurich
14 & 15 October 2017

Sotheby's Geneva, rue François-Diday 2, 1204 Genève
30 October & 1 November 2017

Sotheby's Zurich, Talstrasse 83, Zurich
1-3 December, 2017

Swiss Art at Sotheby's

Sotheby's Zurich has been holding Swiss Art sales twice a year (in spring and autumn) since the early 1980s. Covering Swiss artistic production from the 19th century until present day, the sales regularly offer major works by leading Swiss artists, including Ferdinand Hodler, Félix Vallotton, Giovanni Giacometti, Cuno Amiet and Giovanni Segantini. Internationally recognised, these artists played an important role in the European avant-garde and took part in key movements of the 20th century. In the past 20 years, Sotheby's Swiss Art auctions set numerous records for these artists and have contributed to their international recognition.

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Sotheby's has been uniting collectors with world-class works of art since 1744. Sotheby's became the first international auction house when it expanded from London to New York (1955), the first to conduct sales in Hong Kong (1973), India (1992) and France (2001), and the first international fine art auction house in China (2012). Today, Sotheby's presents auctions in 10 different salesrooms, including New York, London, Hong Kong and Paris, and Sotheby's BidNow program allows visitors to view all auctions live online and place bids from anywhere in the world. Sotheby's offers collectors the resources of Sotheby's Financial Services, the world's only full-service art financing company, as well as private sale opportunities in more than 70 categories, including S|2, the gallery arm of Sotheby's Contemporary Art department, and two retail businesses, Sotheby's Diamonds and Sotheby's Wine. Sotheby's has a global network of 80 offices in 40 countries and is the oldest company listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE).

**Estimates do not include buyer's premium. Prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium and are net of any fees paid to the purchaser where the purchaser provided an irrevocable bid.*

Images are available upon request

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