



19th & 20th Century Paintings and Works on Paper, including Portrait Miniatures (30 Mar 2021 B)

Tue, 30th Mar 2021

Lot 330 §

Estimate: £6000 - £8000 + Fees

MARIE-LOUISE VON MOTESICZKY (AUSTRIAN 1906-1996)

Property from the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust

MARIE-LOUISE VON MOTESICZKY (AUSTRIAN 1906-1996)

The Magic Fish

oil on canvas

76.2 x 101.6 cm (30 x 40 in)

EXHIBITED

Vienna, Wiener Secession; Linz, Neue Galerie der Stadt, Wolfgang Gurlitt Museum; Munich, Galerie Günter Franke; Bremen, Kunsthalle, *Marie-Louise Motesiczky*, 1966-68, no. 37, illustrated in the catalogue
London, Goethe-Institut; Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, *Marie-Louise von Motesiczky. Paintings Vienna 1925-London 1985*, 1985-1986 no. 42, illustrated in the catalogue
Liverpool, Tate; Frankfurt am Main, Museum Giersch, *Marie-Louise von Motesiczky*, 2006, no. 52, illustrated in the catalogue

LITERATURE:

E. Freundlich, "'Trotz alledem ein guter Ort'. Die wiener Secession stellt Bilder von Marie-Louise Motesiczky aus', in *Mannheimer Morgen*, 25 May 1966, n.p.
G. Helfgott, 'Bilder von Menschen und Schicksalen', in *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), 13 May 1966, n.p.
H. Spiel, 'Die Malerin Marie-Louise Motesiczky. Einer Ausstellung, in *der Wiener Secession*, 19 May 1966, n.p.
Dr S., 'Rätsel des lebens im Selbstpoträt. Marie-Louise von Motesiczky eine Schülerin Beckmanns', in *Wimme-Zeitung*, (Lilienthal), 1 November 1968, n.p.
J Wdt, 'Später Expressionismus. Marie-Louise Motesiczky in Bremen', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 November 1968, n.p.
J. Russell Taylor, 'Painting unparalleled for love and tender precision', in *The Times*, 2 September 1985, n.p.
K. Winterbottom, 'Marie-Louise von Motesiczky', in *Art & Artists*, no. 240, September 1986, p. 11
Marie Louise von Motesiczky, exh. cat., Österreichische Galerie, Oberes Belvedere, Vienna, 1994, pp. 9-12, illustrated
S. Plakolm-Forsthuber, *Künstlerinnen in Osterreich 1897-1938. Malerei, Plastik, Architektur*, Vienna, 1994, p. 169
E. Michel, *Marie-Louise von Motesiczky 1906-1996. Eine österreichische Schülerin von Max Beckmann*, diploma thesis, University of Vienna, 2003, pp. 66 & 82; p. 96, illustrated
L. Davies, 'Art Review. Marie-Louise von Motesiczky', in *Metro*, 21 April 2006, n.p.
J. Lloyd, *The Undiscovered Expressionist. A Life of Marie-*

Louise von Motesiczky, Newhaven/London, 2007, p. 162, discussed

I. Schlenker, *Marie-Louise von Motesiczky 1906-1996, A Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings*, New York, 2009, p. 270, no. 146, illustrated

Painted in 1956, the intended message of the present work - a semi-nude woman, on a chaise-longue wielding a long-handled implement to ward off a flying fish - has long remained a mystery. It has been suggested that the figure is Marie-Louise, and that the subject is both inspired by a dream and the influence of her mentor Max Beckmann. Schlenker notes how the artist regularly recorded her dreams, sharing their absurdity in letters to Elias Canetti. Schlenker comments: 'In several dreams individual fish or a large number of them play a role... although none would directly explain *The Magic Fish*.'

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Beckmann had painted several large-scale canvases featuring women with fish. But whilst Beckmann's female figures were clearly at ease with their catch, here the protagonist wants to repel the creature. Yet, as Schlenker notes, when first exhibited critics widely admired its cryptic symbolism, remarking how it represented 'something enigmatic, mysterious, something fateful... behind which, in reality stand impressions of human fates.' and praised the 'strangely uncanny fairytale world... which puts the viewer in its spell' (Schlenker p. 270).

See introduction to lot 328.