



19th & 20th Century Paintings, Works on Paper and Sculpture (23 Nov 2021)

Tue, 23rd Nov 2021

Viewing:

Viewings at our Chiswick Saleroom

Sat 20 Nov, 11am to 4.30pm

Sun 21 Nov, 11am to 4.30pm

Mon 22 Nov, 11am to 4.30pm

Lot 5

Estimate: £3000 - £5000 + Fees

KAREL ČAPEK (CZECH 1890-1938)

Property from a Private Collection

KAREL ČAPEK (CZECH 1890-1938)

Guitar Player

signed with the artist's initials and dated K.Č. 1913 (lower right)

gouache and pastel

31.2 x 23.3 cm (12 1/4 x 9 1/8 in)

PROVENANCE:

Auguste and Marie-Terese L'abbe, Zurich

Sale, Sotheby's, London, 12 July 2007, lot 333

Whitford Fine Art, London, purchased at the above sale

Purchased from the above by the present owner in 2007

Karel Čapek was a Czech writer, playwright and critic and the brother of the painter Josef Čapek. Karel has become best known for his science fiction literature, most famously his play *Rossum's Universal Robots* (1920) in which he invented the word robot. Although he is best remembered for his writing, Karel Čapek was also a skilled painter and fascinated in particular by Cubism, with his first paintings appearing in Prague in 1912. He was a member of the Tvrdošijní (The Obstinate Ones) group, and many of his works were shown at The Obstinate Ones' exhibitions.

Prague was arguably the most important centre for Cubism outside of Paris before the start of WWI, with its members most active between 1912 and 1914. Notable participants included Emil Filla, Josef Čapek, Otto Gutfreund and Pavel Janák. Influenced by the Cubist works of Picasso and Braque, the group aimed to extract components from the French masters' works for their own creations. Unlike the violent and fragmented French cubist works, Czech Cubism was clean, regular and harmonious.

Čapek's 1913 Cubist creation *Guitar Player* features a clearly delineated and simplistic half-length figure. The figure's arms and body are robotic and share qualities with the robot characters that would come to feature in his 1920 play.

Qty: 1