

PRESS RELEASE

MUNICH, APRIL 2021

Animals and man in fine art and as artistic embellishment

"Works of Art, Antiquities" head the parade of lots at the Spring Auction on 26 May 2021

A wide lineup of rare, even unique, extraordinary objects of the highest quality and from all specialist areas represented by the auction house, is coming under the hammer in the 2021 auctions of Hermann Historica in Grasbrunn near Munich. Once again this year, the list is endless, ranging from exclusive statues from antiquity, antique arms and armour, religious depictions from the early modern period, stone artefacts from Asian culture, testaments to historical military careers and exquisite heirlooms from ruling houses, right through to extremely elaborate antique firearms.

The large Spring Auction is taking place with a live audience from 26 to 28 May and on 1 and 2 June, offering customers all over the world a diverse array, from objects for first-time buyers right up to inimitable pieces rarely found on the market for the most discerning collectors. All objects will be on display during the pre-sale viewing from 19 to 22 May and on 29 and 31 May.

Animals play many different roles; they are our companions and our enemies, our role models and our food. This ambivalence has characterised the close, existential relationship between man and beast since time immemorial. No wonder, then, that, apart from their fellow men, cave dwellers immortalised animals by painting them on their walls over 30,000 years ago – man's first foray into artistic expression. Throughout history, these motifs have been painted on every conceivable surface, carved in wood, cast in metal, formed of clay, hewn from rock and later documented in photographs and films.



Dating back over five millennia, the "Art and handcrafts, antiquities" catalogue presents a number of striking examples of the deep admiration for and fascination with the inhabitants of our planet. One archaic object from the early years of the Elamite Empire, originally located to the east of the Tigris in modern-day Iran, depicts a lion. The king of the beasts stands for dignity, power and strength. Dating from the third millennium B.C., the reclining animal is naturalistically carved in lapis lazuli: his maw gapes as though in a menacing roar, his splendid mane cascading down over his back. Standing just 5.8 centimetres tall, the delicate sculpture is an exceptionally rare testimony to the creative work of the Elamite Empire and has an asking price of 11,000 euros.

Depictions of sovereigns were designed to reinforce their presence in their kingdom and in the minds of their people. Of natural dimensions and made from opulent materials, these portraits showed ideal images of the subject. One such masterly likeness is the life-sized head of the Emperor Caracalla, 205 – 209 A. D., from the ancient Roman Empire. Carved in fine-grained, white stone, the realistic marble portrait was probably originally mounted on a statue body and shows the emperor as a young man. Bids from 200,000 euros are now invited for this outstanding work.

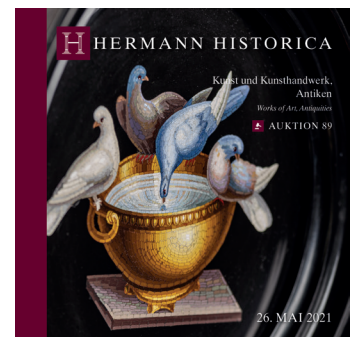


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Works of Art, Antiquities

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By contrast, the horse plays a central role in Chinese culture as a symbol of power. It was established as a separate and highly popular artistic theme, particularly during the Tang dynasty, 618 – 907 A.D. Horses were hard to come by, yet a vital commodity. Not only did they safeguard military supremacy, they served to amuse the élite. Emperor Taizong (599 – 649 A. D.) declared that the main task of his reign was to extend their number. To this day, the highly sought-after, elaborately wrought ceramic horses are named after this dynasty and are still symbols of prestige and power. This specimen is now offered for sale from 24,000 euros.

Dating from the same era, this Viking wooden sculpture, now estimated at 9,000 euros, originates unmistakably from a very different cultural background. The beautiful condition of the object alone is astonishing, given the perishable nature of the material. Yet the expressively carved wild boar's head is full of character, offering insight into the lives of the Scandinavian people. Observers would argue that it was originally part of the figurehead on a typical Viking longboat. Stern and intriguing, as an expression of strength and perseverance, an undeniable pièce de résistance such as this sculpture brings both myths and history to life.



Opening at 1,500 euros, a small-sized, 17th century Dutch painting depicts a particularly remarkable animal scene with a very peculiar subject. Although the work appears to show a friendly gathering of forest animals, a closer look reveals that it is actually a court tableau. Small animals and birds pronounce their verdict on the fox, sentencing their sworn enemy to be hanged with the active participation of the audience, as was customary at the time.

Next up, made of animal material and lavishly carved with images of men and beasts on every surface, is an imposing

Kunstkammer object from Paris. The exquisite ivory casket is embellished with gilt brass mounts and scenes from the hunt and heroic epics, such as warriors on horseback fighting a lion or hunters stalking a boar with their pack of hounds. The casket is expected to fetch 27,000 euros.



For all objects you can find detailed descriptions and numerous photos in best quality on the website of Hermann Historica. www.hermann-historica.com

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Live Auction May / June

26.05.2021
Works of Art, Antiquities

27.05.2021
Antique Arms & Armour from all over the world

28.05.2021
Fine Antique and Modern Firearms

01.06.2021
International Orders and Military Collectibles

02.06.2021
International Military History from 1919

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More highlights from our auction:



A large double-sided padlock with trick mechanism by G. Saelz, Nuremberg, 1859

Lot 224, Starting price € 2.000



A German anatomic model of a skull carved from ivory, 17th century

Lot 124, Starting price € 4.000



An Augsburg bronze plaque of the Virgin Mary on a throne from the workshop of Hans Schwarz, circa 1520

Lot 54, Starting price € 3.000



A small German carved ivory tankard, circa 1620

Lot 122, Starting price € 6.500



A rare inscribed underglaze blue and copper-red decorated brush-pot, China, Qing dynasty, probably Kangxi period

Lot 418, Starting price € 6.000



A large Chinese C-shaped jade dragon, Hongshan culture, circa 3000 B.C.

Lot 390, Starting price € 19.000

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The various objects are being offered for auction at the prices stated above. A premium amounting to 25% (incl. VAT) will be added to the final hammer price.

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