

Press release

Follow-Up Report on the **Kasper König Collection – His Private Choice**
on 1 + 2 October 2024



A collection to remember

No other auction this year has received as much and as positive feedback as the sale of the collection of the legendary exhibition organizer, Professor Kasper König. The high-calibre evening sale turned into a white glove sale – all works were sold, sometimes with remarkable price increases. With a sales ratio of about 94 per cent, the day sale was also extremely successful. The 250 lots earned almost €6 million – which translates into a strong sales ratio of 234 per cent. Kasper König initiated the project of presenting and selling his private collection at Van Ham in Cologne back in 2023. He carefully planned the catalogue and formulated his vision for the exhibition. Tragically, he passed away before the auction could take place.

The highest hammer price of the evening was achieved for the luminous red painting *MAY 7, 1967* by **On Kawara**, which had also received the highest estimated price. The hammer price in the amount of €800,000 – which was granted by a British collector – signifies the new **international auction record** for a date painting **of this format**. Including the buyer's premium, it passed the million mark (result: €1,056,000). On Kawara's black date painting *21 NOV. 2003* went to Switzerland for a total of €290,000. Kasper König had received it from his friend of many years for his 60th birthday on that 21 November 2003.

William Nelson Copley and Kasper König had also been good friends since 1972. The work *Lady Be Good* from 1953 has an impressive exhibition history: it was exhibited at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, at the Museum Frieder Burda in Baden-Baden and the Fondazione Prada in Milan. This was appreciated by a private collection in Berlin, which acquired the work in a thrilling bidding war for a total of €172,000.

Thomas Schütte was a long-standing companion of Kasper König's. His red garland also accompanied König since the famous 1981 "Westkunst" exhibition at the latest, where it adorned his curator's office. After numerous further exhibitions, it most recently had a prominent position in König's Berlin flat and was

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now sold for €132,000. Its counterpart in black is currently shown as part of the major Thomas Schütte retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The “Skulpturer och teckningar, 1963–1966” exhibition at the Moderne Museet Stockholm in September 1966 started the lifelong friendship between **Claes Oldenburg** and Kasper König, in the course of which they collaborated on numerous further projects. Oldenburg’s work *Ghost Wardrobe for M. M.* was presented at the Sidney Jannis Gallery in New York in December 1967, was later displayed in Kasper König’s bedroom and is now becoming part of a private collection in the UK for €343,000.

Kasper König met **Richard Artschwager** in New York during the late 1960s, and the two became close friends. The great appreciation Kasper König had for the works of Richard Artschwager is also evident in the fact that no less than three important and characteristic works by the American artist were part of the collection. Artschwager’s combined work *Portrait I* is now augmenting a private collection in North Rhine-Westphalia for a total of €211,000. The price for the ambivalent work *Handle I* from 1962 was raised to a total of €198,000 and the work is now becoming part of a private collection in Berlin.

Thomas Bayrle and Kasper König knew one another from their years in Frankfurt, where they worked together at the Städel School. Bayrle’s oeuvre is marked by his reflections on mass production and consumer culture. This inspiration by Pop Art is noticeable in the work *Glückskleedosenurm* (Lucky Clover Tin Can Tower) from 1969. The lucky clover tin cans used – similar to Andy Warhol’s Campbell tin cans – met with keen interest and climbed from an estimated €20,000 to a total of €112,000. The numerous bids resulted in the new **international auction record for a sculpture** by Thomas Bayrle – a private collection from North Rhine-Westphalia is now delighted about its new acquisition.

Van Ham also set an **international auction record** for concept artist **Stanley Brouwn**. The four drawings from the 12-part series *This Way Brouwn* from 1964 attracted international bidders who raised the price from an estimated €6,000 to a total of €79,000. A collector from New York had the last word, outbidding the competition.

Sigmar Polke’s *Meisterwerk als Ramsch versteigert* (Masterpiece Auctioned Off as Junk) assumed a special role in the private collection and Kasper König selected it for the cover of the auction catalogue. In 2008 König acquired the work at Art Cologne at Erhard Klein’s booth. He snatched the work from under the nose of a collector even as the customer was still in the process of haggling over the price. At the sale, the price climbed considerably: it was only at the €73,000 mark that a German collector prevailed against the other bidders.

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Highlights of "The Kasper König Collection – His Private Choice" on 1 + 2 October 2024



Claes Oldenburg (1929–2022)
Ghost Wardrobe for M. M. | 4 parts | 1967–1983
Mixed media | C. 178 x 107 x 60 cm
Result: €343,000



On Kawara (1932–2014)
MAY 7, 1967 | 1967
Acrylic on canvas | 33.5 x 44 cm
Result: €1,056,000
Int'l auction record for a date painting of this format*



Richard Artschwager (1924–2013)
Portrait I | 2 parts | 1962
Wooden chest of drawers and framed acrylic work
Result: €211,000



Thomas Schütte (b. 1954)
Rote Girlande | 5 parts | 1979
Red fabric | Total: 30 x 4138 cm
Result: €132,000

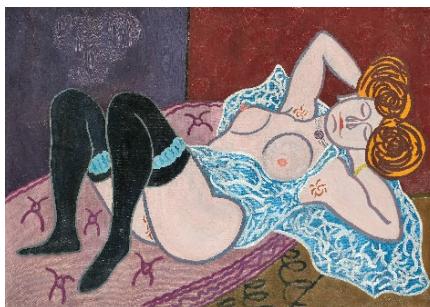


Sigmar Polke (1941–2010)
Meisterwerk als Ramsch versteigert
Mixed technique on canvas | 39.5 x 49.5 cm
Result: €73,000



Franz West (1947–2012)
Prototype of the auditorium divans | 1991 | Steel, foam, cardboard, carpet | 110 x 208 x 80 cm
Result: €205,000

Int'l auction record for this edition*



William Nelson Copley (1919–1996)
Lady Be Good | 1953
Oil on canvas | 114 x 162 cm
Result: €172,000



Thomas Demand (b. 1937)
Untitled (Glückskleedosenturm) | 1969 | 40 milk tin cans | 179.5 x Ø 5 cm
Result: €112,000

Int'l auction record for a sculpture by this artist*



On Kawara (1932–2014)
21 NOV. 2003 | 2003
Acrylic on canvas | 20.5 x 26.5 cm
Result: €290,000

All amounts are inclusive of the buyer's premium.

*Auction records according to artprice.com as of 02 October 2024.

Van Ham – About us

Founded in 1959, the Cologne-based auction house Van Ham is a family business run by Markus Eisenbeis, now in its second generation. The internationally acclaimed auctions cover the areas of Modern & Contemporary Art, Old Masters & Impressionism, Works of Art & Art Nouveau as well as Fine Jewels & Watches. In 2023, Van Ham achieved the best result in its history with a total turnover of around 53.8 million euros, putting it in second place among German auction houses. Van Ham is the market leader among art auction houses in Germany in the Jewels & Watches segment and is also the leader for online sales with over 40 curated Online Only auctions per year.

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