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Walter Helbig (1878-1968), Adoration Of The Magi, 1918



420 EUR

Signature : Walter Helbig (1878-1968)

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Material : Paper

Width : 50 cm

Height : 35 cm

Description

Walter
Helbig (1878 Falkenstein - 1968 Ascona),
Adoration of the Magi, 1918.
Hand-colored linocut, 30 cm x 22.5 cm
(depiction), 50 cm x 35 cm (sheet size),
signed "W.[alter] Helbig" in pencil lower right,
inscribed "Adoration of the
Magi" lower left and dated "1918". Below this a
handwritten dedication "with
heartfelt Christmas greetings".
- Paper
somewhat darkened and with slight creases,
thumbtack holes in the corners

- The Rider
of the Sun -
The

Dealer

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'apocalypse' of World War I brought about a return to sacred art. Walter Helbig belonged to the circle of the 'Brücke' and the 'Blauer Reiter'. With his reinterpretation of religious themes in an expressionist formal language, Helbig shaped an avant-garde neo-sacred art. This is symbolically expressed in the silhouette of the rider against the sun-like yellow background. It refers to the awakening initiated by the Blue Riding, which is now linked back to the sacred. The rider and horse "look" at Mary and the Christ Child, who occupy the entire field. Opposite them are the three kings, the eldest of whom kneels before Christ and offers him a gold-filled casket. The expressionist lines give rise to a tower that rises into the "sun", so that the gift has become a Gothic church, expressing the hope that the fallen world will be resurrected in the name of Christ. This dimension of meaning is emphasized by the magical effect of the color scheme.

About the artist

In 1895, Walter Helbig began studying at the Dresden Academy of Art, where he became friends with the future Brücke artist Otto Müller, with whom he lived in Dresden from 1903 to 1905. While studying in Italy from 1897 to 1899, he met Arnold Böcklin and Adolf von Hildebrand. After completing his studies, he first worked for Otto Gussmann, painting churches. From 1905 to 1909 he worked as a freelance painter in Hamburg. In 1909, through the mediation of Otto Müller,

Helbig made the acquaintance of artists from the 'Brücke'. In 1910 he exhibited at the founding exhibition of the Berlin 'Neue Sezession'. In the same year, he moved to Switzerland, where, together with Hans Arp and Oscar Lüthy, he founded the 'Moderne Bund' in Weggis, to which Cuno Amiet and Giovanni Giacometti also belonged. At the second exhibition of the 'Moderne Bund' in Zurich in 1911, Henri Matisse and Robert Delaunay were represented alongside artists from the 'Blauer Reiter'. In 1913, Helbig traveled to Paris with Arp and Lüthy. After the dissolution of the 'Moderne Bund', Helbig was represented at the first Dada exhibition in Zurich in 1914. In 1919, he joined the Berlin 'Novembergruppe'.
After the devastation of World War I, Helbig turned increasingly to religious themes in his work. In 1924, like many other artists of his time, he moved to Ascona for financial reasons, where he became a naturalized citizen in 1938.
There he founded the artists' association "The Great Bear", to which Marianne von Werefkin also belonged. The group organized annual exhibitions from 1924 to 1940. Helbig also maintained a studio in Berlin until 1933, where he painted portraits of Tilla Durieux, among others. When the Nazis came to power, many of his works were removed from museums as "degenerate art. Helbig's first major solo exhibition took place in Zurich in 1948, and after the Second World War he opened up to current trends in art.