

MBA Seattle Auction House will hold An Online-Only Modernism: Art and Object Auction on Sep 29th

News-Press Release

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Summary

The online-only auction, starting at 5 pm Pacific time, will also feature works by Alden Mason, Morris Graves, Dale Chihuly, Z. Z. Wei, Kenjiro Nomura and other art world luminaries.

Message

Renton, WA, USA, September 3, 2022 -- An Andy Warhol original acrylic and screenprint on canvas titled Flowers (1965), plus vibrant original artworks by Alden Mason, Morris Graves, Dale Chihuly, Z. Z. Wei, Kenjiro Nomura and other art world notables will come up for bid in an online-only Modernism: Art and Object auction scheduled for Thursday, September 29th, by MBA Seattle Auction House. "This is one of the finest groupings of Modern artworks, objects and Northwest Modernism we've had to date," said Michael Mroczek, an auctioneer with MBA Seattle Auction House. Warhol's Flowers is the undisputed headliner of the auction, with a robust but appropriate pre-sale estimate of \$200,000-\$400,000. The work, in excellent original condition, has a canvas of 14 inches by 14 inches and is signed and dated on verso overlap. It's also noted "Andy Warhol / 65 Billy" on verso (with Billy believed to be Warhol's boyfriend at the time, Billy Name). "It's a dream to find an original Andy Warhol on canvas locally, especially one that's been in a private collection since its original purchase," Mr. Mroczek said. "His market is as strong as it has ever been with the recent sale of Shot Blue Sage Blue Marilyn (1964), which set an all-time record when it gaveled for \$195 million at auction." Flowers was originally purchased from Gordon Locksley of the Locksley/Shea Gallery in Minneapolis for \$250. The buyer was Dr. Herbert W. Johnson of St. Paul, Minn. Dr. Walker also purchased ten of Warhol's Campbell's Soup Can screenprints for \$675 that he later donated to the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in 1993. Flowers, however, has remained in the family. The painting was kept at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Johnson until their death in 2008. It was then transferred to a daughter, who held it until 2017, when it went to another family member who is serving as the family's consignee for the auction. A 1970s color photograph of a family member sitting at a piano with one of the soup can prints behind them is being included for provenance. A museum-quality oil on canvas abstract painting by Alden Mason (Wash., 1919-2013), titled Orange Goofer, from the artist's coveted Burpee Garden Series (1972-1977), large at 90 inches by 75 inches (canvas, less frame), is expected to realize \$50,000-\$70,000. The signed and titled work (on verso) features an array of eye-dazzling colors and is in excellent original condition. "We're very excited to handle one of the finest Alden Mason Burpee Garden Series paintings that has ever been offered," Mr. Mroczek said. "The Burpee Garden Series is so highly coveted because Alden diluted his oils in paint thinner and turpentine. This became a toxic mix, one that Alden would inhale for hours painting over large canvases. He was forced to quit the series, as the toxins were killing him, bringing an end to these gorgeous, colorful translucent abstractions." Lots 30-32 are tondo (circular) tempera on paper mystic bird compositions by Morris Graves (Wash., 1910-2001), all three from 1979, signed, with an image area of 13 inches by 13 inches (minus the frames) and each with an estimate of \$20,000-\$30,000. The titles are Hen Blue Jay with Pomegranate, Young Blue Jay with Persimmon and Cock Blue Jay Wrecking an Apple. A large and impressive deep blue seaform blown glass creation by Dale Chihuly (Wash., b. 1941), titled Ultramarine Blue Seaform with Red Orange Lip Wrap (1995), is expected to change hands for \$6,000-\$9,000. The work, signed and dated on the bottom, is 11 inches by 21 inches by 12 inches and is accompanied by a copy of the original receipt from Chihuly Studio, from 1995. Lots 44 and 45 are original paintings by Kenjiro Nomura (Wash., 1896-1956). Both are rare and are featured in a recently published book on the artist. One is a gouache on cardboard from 1952 titled City Lights (est. \$5,000-\$7,000). The 19 inch by 24 inch (image area, less frame), museum-quality, Mark Tobey-esque white writing abstraction is unsigned but verified by Nomura's son. The other is an oil on Masonite, also, from 1952, titled Fish Market, a scarce Northwest Seafood still life abstraction with price tags reminiscent of the Pike Place Market (est. \$3,000-\$5,000). The gallery framed (25 inches by 30 inches) is signed and dated lower right. Nomura entered the painting into the Tupperware Art Fund, an art competition sponsored by Tupperware Company. Kenjiro Nomura immigrated to the United States from Japan as a boy and became a well-known artist in the Pacific Northwest in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1942, during the Second World War, Nomura and his family were incarcerated in the Minidoka Relocation Center. The sketches and paintings he made there over the next three years continue to be exhibited as an important record of the Japanese-American wartime experience. Nomura eventually moved into abstract painting. A classic dreamy oil on canvas landscape composition by Z. Z. Wei (Wash., b. 1957), titled Favorite Drive, signed lower right and housed in the original frame measuring 37 1/2 inches by 33 1/2 inches, is estimated to command \$5,000-\$7,000. The painting is in excellent

