

26 Hans Hartung

Leipzig 1904 – 1989 Antibes

"T 1962 – R 29". 1962

Oil on canvas. 92 × 73 cm (36 ¼ × 28 ¾ in.). Signed and dated in pen and black ink lower right: Hartung 62. Signed and dated in pencil on the reverse: Hartung 62. Signed and titled in black felt-tip pen on the stretcher: HARTUNG T 1962 – R 29. The painting is registered as number T-1962-R 29 in the Fondation Hartung et Anna-Eva Bergman, Antibes. The painting will be included in the catalogue raisonné of the artist of Fondation Hartung et Anna-Eva Bergman, Antibes (in preparation). [3077] Framed.

Provenance

Private Collection, Bavaria

EUR 80,000–120,000

USD 88,900–133,000

Writing in 1981, the art historian Jörn Merkert explained why Hans Hartung's art rightly should be called "European": "Because it vividly reflects the outlook of German Romanticism; because it also manifests the French ideal of 'clarté, given the purity and rationality that illuminate his paintings; and because it manifests both his yearning for beauty and his ability to conceive it." (quoted from: *Hans Hartung. Malerei, Zeichnung, Photographie*. Exhibition Catalogue of the *Akademie der Künste*, Berlin 1981, p. 11).

Each of the characteristics cited by Merkert also can be found in our featured work. For one thing, Hartung's painting is already "European" given that, depending on one's viewpoint, the painter is regarded as being either German or French, and more frequently is considered the latter. If one defines Romanticism as the attempt to grasp the world subjectively, beyond all fixed definitions, then Hartung especially qualifies as a Romantic. He is considered a leading exponent of *Tachisme*, of course, but his pictorial inventiveness still is imbued with the idiosyncratic subjectivity of a loner, and seems to arise primarily through inner reflection and independently of mainstream artistic trends. And what "purity" emanates from the image's luminous blue – this is the azure of the sky over Antibes shimmering above us. Here, on the Côte d'Azur, is where Hartung built the studio-cum-residence that would become the center of his life. The pure "beauty" that manifests itself in this blue is immediately obvious to every observer. Calm, delicate lines intensify the blue of the surface. In the left half of the picture, the calligraphic forms seem to coalesce into a dense thicket from which individual yellow and orange lines are pushing forth. Horizontal cross-hatchings give the image added depth. Like a veil, the entire meshwork seems to hang over a mysterious darkness – a deeply Romantic conceit.

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