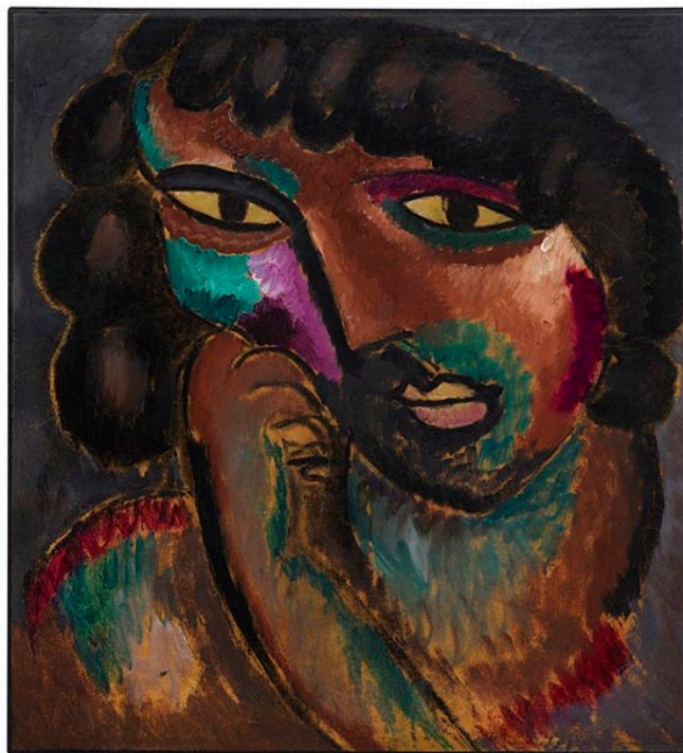


Auction Preview - Evening Sale - June 6, 2025

A PERFECT MOMENT

Rare Jawlensky Sacharoff Portrait Auctioned June 6.



Alexej von Jawlensky
Kopf in Bronzefarben – Bildnis Sacharoff. 1913.

Oil on paper, laminated on cardboard.
Signed and dated in the upper right. 55.5 x 51 cm.
Estimate price: € 1.5 to 2.5 million.

PRESS RELEASE | Munich, March 3, 2025

realizing € 8.3 million, Alexej von Jawlensky's portrait of his young lover Helene (Spanische Tänzerin, 1909) was the top lot in our last spring auction, while the magnificent landscape "Berge in Oberstdorf" (1912) also yielded an excellent result of

€ 1.1 million previous autumn. The upcoming highlight is [“Kopf in Bronzefarben – Bildnis Sacharoff”](#) (1913), one of the few verified portraits of the dancer Alexander Sacharoff, which will be auctioned at Ketterer Kunst in Munich in June.

A painting like a promise. The promise of steering Modernism toward an artistic future reorganized in terms of style and content, of bidding farewell to the Neo-Impressionist sensibilities of light and form. For the sake of a more radical pictorial language. 1913 was a pivotal year; today, we would speak of a historical turn. It was the eve of World War I, a time imbued with a spirit of naive hope and a sense of new beginnings before the merciless realities of war crippled the continent. Alexej von Jawlensky addressed the artistic challenges of the time without detours. He was fascinated with the Japonism emerging during years of artistic transformation; he had already turned to expressive colors and reduced motifs. Color fields applied with broad brushstrokes dominated. The color harmony was the only subtle element.

Jawlensky created works that radiate an inimitable power. Despite his exquisite abilities as a landscape artist, he was primarily interested in human figures. He combined vibrant colors and an almost exaggerated account of the subject's character in this case. Unsurprisingly, he was captivated by the mystic presence of the dancer Alexander Sacharoff, who had been his friend since 1905. Perfectly disguised in makeup and an androgynous costume, the dancer performed exalted, eccentric pieces for his friends. He also enjoyed increasing success in Munich's famous Odeon concert hall, where his performances never failed to electrify audiences. Jawlensky painted him for the first time in 1906 in an unsurpassedly congenial half-length portrait in a red robe with a mouth made up in glaring red, dark-rimmed, wide-open eyes. The painting, which is exceptionally important for his oeuvre and Expressionism, is an iconographic visitor magnet at the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus in Munich.

A later portrait of Sacharoff, painted in 1913 and today part of the collection of the Kunsthalle Wiesbaden, almost unsparingly captures the famous dancer with an intense, penetrating gaze in a formally reduced fashion.

“Our almost equally sized portrait of Sacharoff, also dated 1913, is undoubtedly the matching piece and should also be titled 'Portrait of Sacharoff' [...].

Even if it remains unclear which of the two paintings was created first, they must have been painted around [...] the same perfect moment.”

Dr. Roman Zieglgänsberger,

Member of the academic advisory board of the Alexej von Jawlensky Archive,
Muralto/Switzerland, curator of Modern Art, Museum Wiesbaden.

Nicola Gräfin Keglevich, Senior Director at Ketterer Kunst, is delighted that the meticulous research efforts of Ketterer Kunst's cataloging department and intensive discussions with leading expert Dr. Roman Zieglgänsberger have conclusively established that this work is one of the extremely rare portraits of the dancer Sacharoff.

The expressive painting provides an atmospheric and profound reflection of the difficult years in the artist's life before World War I. Around 1906, Jawlensky had settled in Munich in a residence of upper-class dimensions on Giselastraße in Schwabing with his teacher and patron Marianne von Werefkin. Werefkin organized art salons, and the local artists, the “Giselists” came to exchange ideas and make plans. This was where the Munich diaspora of Russian aristocrats and artists met. Alexander Sacharoff was a frequent guest. In 1909, the decision was made to join forces and form the Neue Künstlervereinigung München (New Artists' Association Munich). This endeavor went quite well for a time; exhibitions of Kubin, Bechtejeff, Kanoldt, and others graced the walls of Galerie Thannhauser. Later, in 1911, some of its members joined Franz Marc, Wassily Kandinsky, and Gabriele Münter to form the artist group “Der Blaue Reiter”. In the meantime, his relationship with his wealthy partner had grown noticeably cooler, not least because of his love affair with the young maid with whom he had a son. Werefkin traveled a lot. The fruitful discussions with his painter friends became increasingly controversial and even irreconcilable. Jawlensky, the bold pioneer with little willingness to compromise, encountered resistance.

The painting “Kopf in Bronzefarben – Bildnis Sacharoff” is defined by a subdued, almost gloomy palette; the much more reduced yet striking facial features form a strict concept, and only the melancholy, practically humble inclination of the head appears conciliatory and

yearning. The rigorous compression of the form intensifies the impact and points to the turn toward powerful stylization that Jawlensky would achieve in his later Abstract Heads.

The work remained in the artist's possession until 1921 and was regularly presented to the public, for example at the major Munich Secession exhibition in 1914. It is one of the most convincing contemporary documents of art in the 1910s, a period of extreme polarization in almost all areas of art. The avant-garde in the art capitals of Munich, Berlin and Paris oscillated between figuration and abstraction. German Expressionism had reached its pinnacle.

The market was booming. Edmund Fabry, the director of the Nassauischer Kunstverein in Wiesbaden and a close friend of the artist, bought several of his works, including our "Kopf in Bronzefarben – Bildnis Sacharoff". His widow was able to save the collection from the marauding Nazi hordes. After the war, she sold the collection. The Düsseldorf lawyer and art collector Hans Lühdorf acquired the painting and kept it. It changed hands only after his death in 1984, remaining in a private collection in Paris. For 25 years, the masterpiece has been part of a high-profile German private collection and will now be auctioned at Ketterer Kunst in Munich with an estimate of 1.5 to 2.5 million euros.

Evening Sale in Munich on June 6, 2025

Alexej von Jawlensky, Kopf in Bronzefarben – Bildnis Sacharoff. 1913.

Estimate price: € 1.5 to 2.5 million.

- “Kopf in Bronzefarben – Bildnis Sacharoff” (Bronze Head – Portrait Sacharoff, 1913) is a masterpiece from the heyday of the Blue Rider and European Modernism.
- The significant year 1913: Jawlensky painted his monumental “Heads”, Marc the “Tower of Blue Horses”, Kirchner the famous “Berlin Street Scenes” and Schiele made his most accomplished self-portraits on paper.
- One of wo closely related expressionist heads modeled on the dancer: the present work and “Bildnis Sacharoff”, today part of the important Jawlensky collection at the Museum Wiesbaden.
- On display at the first show of the New Munich Secession in 1914 and with a remarkable exhibition history.
- Significant provenance: formerly in possession of Edmund Fabry, art lover and friend of Jawlensky, in the following part of the collection of Dr. Hans Lühdorf, Düsseldorf, and finally part of a high profile German private collection for 25 years.

UPCOMING DATES:

May 26, 2025 Rare Books Auction in Hamburg

June 6, 2025 Evening Sale in Munich

June 7, 2025 Day Sale Contemporary Art, Modern Art, 19th Century Art
in Munich

ONLINE AUCTIONS

Find the current auction here: onlinesale.kettererkunst.de

The Auction ends March 15, 2025 at 3 p. m.

KETTERER KUNST

Ketterer Kunst, with headquarters in Munich, branches in Hamburg, Cologne, and Berlin, and a global network of experts, was founded in 1954. Robert Ketterer runs the family business in the second generation. The core activity of the auction house is Contemporary, Modern, and 19th Century Art, complemented by Rare Books from five centuries. For the sixth year in succession, Ketterer Kunst has been ranked number 1 in its market segment in the German language region. With numerous record results, it is among the world's ten top-selling auction houses (Artnet Analytics, Auction Houses by Total Sales Value for Fine Art Works Created after 1800).

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