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EST. 1817

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Josef Mangold (Cologne 1884 - 1937)

Red poppies in vase

Signed (lower right): 'Jos. Mangold'; dated on the reverse 'pinx. 1931'

Oil on unlined canvas

21 1/8 x 17 in. (53.8 x 43.2 cm.)



Provenance

Private collection, Germany.

Josef Mangold attended the School of Applied Arts in Cologne and Berlin, but was largely an autodidact in the field of painting. He was a member of the artist group *Rheinischen Sezession* (Rhenish Secession), which emerged in 1928 from the association *Das Junge Rheinland* (The Young Rhineland). He enjoyed painting still life, and also favoured landscapes and nudes. Mangold's painting is characterised by an emphatically objective approach to the depicted subject. The present still life *Red poppies in vase* is determined by basic geometric forms and a sharp contouring line. Entirely in the spirit of the *New Objectivity* (Neue Sachlichkeit), the artist succeeds in letting the subject of the picture speak through a sober presentation – without relying on more expressive means of design. As such, the *Red poppies in vase* unfolds its cool and clear radiance. Mangold celebrates the creed of his painting style through a well-balanced and orderly composition that conveys the impression of profound calm and prudence. It is the unconditioned clarity of a formal vocabulary.

The simple clarity of the composition's visual language reveals earlier artistic models, from the

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Renaissance and the late Middle Ages. The reduction of space, forms, and colours is entirely at the service of the delicate flowers, whose fragility is thereby emphasized. With their sharp, contouring lines, Mangold reproduces with exactitude every minute detail of the plants. The extensive influence of the Renaissance is also demonstrated in the works of contemporaries of the artist, such as Otto Dix and Georg Schrimpf. At the time, Dix was looking for a new style and worked with a fine glaze technique, in the manner of medieval models. And Schrimpf's counterpoint to Expressionism took in the ideals of the *Valori Plastici* and reduced his compositions to individual, essential elements. Despite their old-masterly brilliance, Mangold's works, which are formulated without pathos or narrative elements, are downright modern and bear the germ of their time of origin.

The present work compares to the panel sold by Agnew's in autumn 2019 from the early 1930 (fig. 1)



Fig. 1: Josef Mangold, *Wildflowers in vase*, oil on panel, 18 x 14 ⁷/₈ in. (45.8 x 37.7cm.), painted during the early 1930s, Agnew's Gallery 2019.