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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). His oeuvre consists largely of still lifes as well as 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. Mangold's painting style displays a well-balanced and orderly composition bathed in a cool and clear light which conveys the impression of profound calm and prudence.

The simple clarity of the composition's visual language reveals earlier artistic models, from the late Middle Ages and Renaissance. The reduction of space, forms, and colours is entirely at the service of the delicate

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flowers, whose fragility is thereby emphasized. With their sharp, contouring lines, Mangold's still lifes reproduce with exactitude every minute detail of the plants. The influence of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance in his work is also seen in that of his contemporaries, 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 both modern in feel and also rooted in the moment when they were painted.

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



Fig. 1: Josef Mangold, *Wildflowers in vase*, oil on panel, 18 x 14 ⁷/₈ in. (45.8 x 37.7cm.).