

# ARTCURIAL

Press



## PIERRE BOULEZ COLLECTION *A life in the beat of art*

Auction - 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023, Paris

Artcurial will be auctioning the works of the estate of the composer and conductor Pierre Boulez on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023. Comprising paintings, watercolours, drawings and prints, the collection bears witness to the links that the composer forged with painters throughout his long career: Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Alejandro Otero, Jean Tinguely, Alberto Giacometti, Joan Miró, Arnaldo Pomodoro, Zao Wou-Ki, as well as works by Paul Klee, Jean Cocteau, Philip Guston, Pierre Soulages, Francis Bacon, Bernard Saby and many others.

PARIS – On 8<sup>th</sup> June, Artcurial will auction the collection of the world-renowned composer and conductor Pierre Boulez.

The collection of paintings, drawings, watercolours and prints from his estate bears witness to the conductor's intense passion for 20th century artists and highlights the parallels that the composer liked to draw between music and painting.

Throughout his extensive career, he often drew inspiration from the creative processes of painters and transposed them to his own musings, thereby creating many links between these two artistic fields.

Rather than being directly influenced by a particular work of art, the composer was interested in the painter's reflections when conceiving a painting, and transferred them into the musical realm to develop new writing techniques. His discovery of Paul Klee had a profound effect on him and encouraged him to expand his thinking about musical space.

His works reflect a lifelong journey.

The sale includes a variety of media: a watercolour by Paul Klee estimated at €50,000 - 70,000, gouaches on paper and wood by Maria Helena Vieira Da Silva estimated at €8,000 - 12,000 and €40,000 - 60,000 respectively, as well as an oil on canvas by Alejandro Otero *El pote rojo III* from 1948 estimated at €70,000 - 90,000 and a portrait of Stravinsky by Alberto Giacometti estimated at €30,000 - 40,000.

***« Pierre Boulez was not strictly speaking a collector, but it was essential for him to live surrounded by the works of his painter and sculptor friends, as well as those of the great inspirational figures of twentieth century modernity, such as Klee and Kandinsky »***

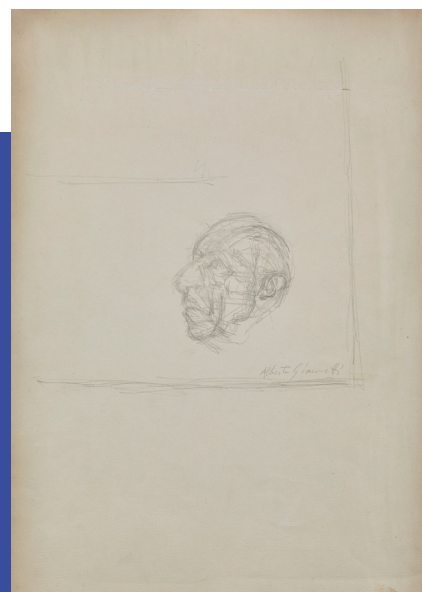
- Bruno Jaubert,  
Impressionist & Modern Art Director, Artcurial

***« xxxxx »***

- Hugues Sebilleau,  
Post-War and Contemporary Art Director, Artcurial



ZAO WOU-KI  
Untitled - circa 1958  
Ink and watercolour on paper  
Estimate : €20,000 - 30,000



Alberto GIACOMETTI  
Portrait of Stravinsky - 1957  
Pencil on paper  
Estimate : €30,000 - 40,000 €

Maria Hélena VIEIRA DA SILVA  
*Winter* - 1983  
 Oil on canvas  
 Estimate : €80,000 - 120,000



Alejandro OTERO  
*El pote rojo III* - 1948  
 Oil on canvas  
 Estimate : €70,000 - 90,000



## Music & painting

### *The waltz of the arts on a high note*

Pierre Boulez's life is characterised by a great commitment to the development and dissemination of contemporary music. He explored the relationship between music and painting, comparing the creative processes in these two artistic fields. He frequently drew parallels between painters and composers such as Paul Cézanne and Claude Debussy, as well as Piet Mondrian and Anton Webern.

His support for creation also extended to visual artists, and Pierre Boulez gravitated towards the inner circle of the greatest artists of his time, befriending, among others, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva and Zao Wou-Ki, whom he called upon to create the record covers for the «Les concerts du Domaine Musical» collection.

His commitment to the arts and creation was hailed a few years later by the Louvre, which held a major exhibition in his honour in 2008, called *Pierre Boulez, Œuvre fragment*. In 2015, on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Philharmonie de Paris also paid tribute to him through an exhibition bringing together masterpieces by major 20<sup>th</sup> century artists: Paul Cézanne, Paul Klee, Nicolas de Staël, Alberto Giacometti, Francis Bacon, Piet Mondrian and André Masson.

Jean TINGUELY  
 Untitled - 1979-83  
 Set of 12 works on  
 la Fontaine Stravinsky of 1983 in Paris  
 Estimate : €35,000 - 55,000





Pierre Boulez' piano salon in Baden-Baden  
© DR



Pierre Boulez's room in Baden-Baden  
© DR



## *Pierre Boulez (1925–2016)*

Born in 1925 in Montbrison in the Loire region, Pierre Boulez developed an interest in music from an early age, particularly the piano, which he began playing at the age of six. Although he studied mathematics at a high level under the guidance of his father, music remained his true passion. His greatest inspiration came from Claude Debussy, who embodied modernity for him.

In 1944 he was accepted at the Conservatoire and joined Olivier Messiaen's harmony class. This encounter was significant for the budding conductor and composer who, in the same year, became the director of the Compagnie Renaud Barrault, where he took his first steps as a conductor. His career was launched, and ten years later he was already conducting the greatest international orchestras.

In 1959, he left Paris for Baden-Baden in Germany when the famous music critic Heinrich Strobel offered him a job at Südwestfunk radio. In 1960 he signed the *Manifesto* of the 121 in support of Algerian independence. This highly political gesture resulted in his dismissal, and, like many French intellectuals, the boycott imposed on radio and television stations and show programmers.

Pierre Boulez then turned to teaching and joined the Basel Academy of Music where he analysed, among other things, Webern's *Cantatas*, Debussy's last works and Berg's *Wozzeck*. A seasoned academic, he was invited on a number of occasions to Harvard University where he gave several lecture series entitled *The Necessity of an Aesthetic Orientation*. At the same time, he conducted *Le Sacre du printemps* at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées for the 50th anniversary of the work, as well as the first production of *Wozzeck* by the Paris Opera.

In 1965 his career took on a new dimension: he toured the United States with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and was elected honorary president of the Paris Musicians' Union. As principal guest conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, permanent conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic, he performed extensively worldwide. This hectic pace was particularly stimulating for Pierre Boulez and led him back to his first love: composing. Established in the milieu, he now had sufficient means to satisfy his ambitions and to develop contemporary music. It was during this period that he composed *Éclat/Multiples* (1966) and *Figures-Doubles-Prismes* (1968).

In 1972, Pierre Boulez returned to France at the request of Georges Pompidou, who entrusted him with the task of creating and directing the IRCAM (*Institute for Acoustics and Music Research and Coordination*). The inauguration of the Pompidou Centre and the IRCAM was successfully celebrated with a major exhibition and concert event that publicly marked the composer's love of modern and contemporary art and his penchant for creating a dialogue between these two worlds. In the early 1980s, Pierre Boulez was considered the most influential French musician and one of the best international conductors. In addition to the numerous concerts, he gave and the many awards he received, he was also involved in several prestigious projects for the dissemination of music, such as the creations of the Opéra Bastille and the Cité de la musique at La Villette. An influential figure in the world of music, Pierre Boulez did not refrain from publicly expressing his disagreement with certain technical choices imposed by political decision-makers. The renowned composer, analyst, conductor, teacher, and animator died in 2016 in Baden-Baden, where he lived.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

Auction in Paris :  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Exhibitions :  
Artcurial Paris  
From Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> to Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> June

7 Rond-Point  
des Champs-Élysées  
75008 Paris

Artcurial Munich  
From Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2023  
Galeriestrasse 2 b  
DE-80539 Munich

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## PRESS MATERIAL

High resolution images available  
on request

Full catalogue available to view  
on [artcurial.com](http://artcurial.com)

### *About Artcurial*

Founded in 2002, multidisciplinary Paris based auction house Artcurial confirmed its leading position on the international art market scene in 2022.

With three sale venues in Paris, Monaco and Marrakech, the auction house achieved an overall sales total of 216,5 million euros in 2022. Artcurial covers all the major specialist fields including Fine Arts, Decorative Arts, Collectors' Cars, Jewellery, Watches, Fine Wines and Spirits...

With a strong international bias, Artcurial maintains its presence abroad with offices in Brussels, Milan, Monte-Carlo, Munich, Vienna and Spain. In October 2015, Artcurial held its first sale in Hong Kong and Morocco.

[artcurial.com](http://artcurial.com)

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