

Report on alleged Hitler watercolor “Archway in a city”

lot 583

**offered at an auction by
Thies Militaria Auctions, LLC,
Fredericksburg, Virginia, USA,
September 21, 2020
Start price \$ 12,000 (€ 10,155)**

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(text in blue is clickable)**

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Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog
Nijmegen / Eenrum
Version 1.4
September 20, 2020

Description and photos by auctioneer



Lot 583: Original Adolf Hitler Watercolour

Image of archway in a City.

Signed in lower right hand corner "A. Hitler and "1909".

45 x 35 cm (including frame).

Painted image is mounted in gilt period frame.

Andreas Thies: "Hitler's style was very calculated when representing architecture in his paintings. Instead of progressing in his artistic influence, his works copied the artists of the nineteenth century and other masters preceding him.

He claimed to be the synthesis of many artistic movements but drew primarily from Greco Roman classicism, the Italian Renaissance and Neoclassicism. He liked the technical ability of these artists, as well as the understandable symbolism.

Rudolf von Alt was his greatest teacher, as he called him. The two show similar subject matter and use of color, but Alt displays fantastical landscapes giving equal if not more attention to nature and the surrounding environment than to the architecture.



Report on alleged Hitler watercolor 'Archway in a city, 1909'. Page 3/13

The watercolor in its frame. The back side contains no information.

Provenance: from the succesion¹ of a private family in France.”

Condition 2 [= excellent].

Start price: \$ 12,000 (€ 10,155)

Buyer's premium 26%

Source:

<https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/original-adolf-hitler-watercolour-583-c-7fe4bf9823>

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¹ Must be “succession”. Mistake by Thies.

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(...)

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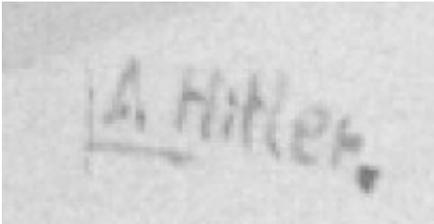
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Comments by Van den Born and Droog

The work is a cityscape and a watercolor – and that's the only similarity with thought to be authentic Hitler “watercolors”.

This work is supposedly made in 1909, a year in which – as far as is known – Hitler produced nothing at all. One believed to be authentic “watercolor” from 1906 is known², all others were made in 1910-1914.



Believed to be authentic, 1906



Believed to be authentic, 1914



The signature on the work doesn't resemble the ones on the believed to be authentic Hitlers. Now signatures can change in time and a strange signature is not definitive proof of the false nature of a work, but it certainly is suspect.

The signature is not written, but painted and can therefore never be authenticated by a handwriting examiner. This one does not resemble the only two known authentic ‘paintings’ from Hitler in this period and proves nothing. Hitler mostly signed in a painted print letter, easy to forge.

Andreas Thies wrote, in his description of lot 583:

“Hitler's style was very calculated when representing architecture in his paintings. Instead of progressing in his artistic influence, his works copied the artists of the nineteenth century and other masters preceding him. He claimed to be the synthesis of many artistic movements but drew primarily from Greco Roman classicism, the Italian Renaissance and Neoclassicism. He liked the technical ability of these artists, as well as the understandable symbolism. Rudolf von Alt was his greatest teacher, as he called him. The two show similar subject matter and use of color, but Alt displays fantastical landscapes giving equal if not more attention to nature and the

² Der Pöstlingberg, watercolor from the Kubizek collection. Until recently in the Oberösterreichisches Landesarchiv, Linz. Price 27, List of lists K1.

surrounding environment than to the architecture.”

Hitler had no style, he merely copied existing postcards from Viennese and Munich buildings to sell to framemakers, without caring who made the originals.

He never claimed to be a synthesis of artistic movements and never called Rudolf von Alt his greatest teacher: He explicitly stated in *Mein Kampf* that the works he made during this period had no artistic value: “I did not live to paint, I painted for a living”.³

Even though Hitler, as a copiiist, had no real style, the few figures to be seen on the believed to be authentic ones, are clearly different from the figure on the foreground on “Archway in a City”.⁴



Believed to be authentic, 1912 Believed to be authentic, 1912 Figure on the Thies-Hitler

The empty sky is also very suspect too – as the skies on the believed to be authentic ones are mostly filled with clouds.

The provenance

According to Thies it originates from the succession of a private family in France. Basically, that's no provenance at all. Since when did this family possess the work? Who did they get it. From whom? When was this work first spotted? And by whom?

3 “So lebte ich ja nicht, um malen zu können, sondern malte, um mir dadurch nur die Möglichkeit meines Lebens zu sichern.”- Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Zentralverlag der NSDAP, München, edition 1943 [first edition 1925], page 139.

4 On Penzing – St. Rochuskapelle and Ruprechtskirche. Both survived the war, present location unknown. Depicted in color in Price. Price page v56 and 150, #263 and 264. List of lists W8 and W9.

No earlier traces

The work isn't depicted in *Adolf Hitler als Maler und Zeichner* (1983); the alleged catalogue raisonné of (fake) Hitlers. This might be an indication that this particular work was made after 1982.

Or, also possible, that somebody painted the signature on this work – which might be a painting by an unknown artist from circa 1900, after 1933 – the year in which works attributed to Hitler became fashionable.

Conclusion

There's no evidence at all that this work is an authentic Hitler watercolor.

Yet the auctioneer, “Thies Militaria Auctions, LLC (henceforth "auction house"), represented by the primary partner, Andreas Thies, along with the VA licensed auctioneer, Michael Everett” offers this work as an “original Adolf Hitler watercolour”, in “excellent” condition.

Doing so is, in our opinion, plain fraud.

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The US Thies 'Hitlers' are probably stored in Germany

Now, earlier this year the same auctioneer offered 47 obvious fake Hitlers. This happened in April 2020, via his US online auction house. We contacted the company in the US, and we received a reply from Mr. Andreas Thies, from Germany.

He wrote, a.o.:

“Also I have a „Hitler“ Watercolour from a private source in France which I think is original.”⁵

And:

“I still have about 300 [alleged Hitler] works from the Mertschinsky collection and would be happy to receive you to have you look at them. It would be very interesting to publish all these fakers activities in a book to protect future buyers.”⁶

From this can be deduced that the Hitlers offered by Mr. Thies via a United States based online auction house, are stored in Germany, in a warehouse in or near Kirchheim unter Teck, in Landkreis Esslingen, Baden-Württemberg.

Thies writes us too, regarding the “Hitlers” he was selling in April 2020, and were partly made by Konrad Kujau⁷: “We did not feel that the attribution of certain works to Kujau is justified since this would oblige us to guarantee this attribution and the subject is certainly still open to research. My education as an art historian teaches me that scientific research and solid proof can never be replaced by the expression of an opinion only.”

In the light of the upcoming auction this is a very significant statement. There's no evidence at all lot 583 is an “Original Adolf Hitler Watercolour”, yet Thies claims it is authentic.

Given his previous remarks, he must be aware that the work is not authentic.

5 Andreas Thies, e-mail to Bart FM Droog, 16-06-2020, 12:16 hrs.

6 Ibidem.

7 The “Hitlers” offered at the April auction, originated from the Mertschinsky collection. Wolfgang Schulze von Mertschinsky was the American agent of the German forger Konrad Kujau. See: Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. Report on the 47 alleged 'Hitlers' from the Schulze von Mertschinsky collection auctioned by Thies Military Auctions, Fredericksburg, USA, April 16, 2020. *Droog Magazine*, Eerum, 16-06-2020.

<https://www.droog-mag.nl/hitler/2020/report-on-auction-of-hitlers-from-schulze-von-mertschinsky-collection.pdf>

To make it even more suspect: we asked in June Mr. Thies for photos of the alleged “Hitler” he claimed came from a private source in France – a work which presumably is the same work as the one now to be auctioned.

Mr. Thies didn't send us the photos.

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Appendix 1 - Addresses Thies in USA and Germany

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Umsatzsteuer-Identifikationsnummer: DE-813698476

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Appendix 2 – E-mail by Andreas Thies, 16-06-2020

From: afthies@t-online.de

Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2020 12:15 PM

To: Bart FM Droog

Subject: Re: Possibility to react on report on Thies auction with paintings and drawings allegedly made by Adolf Hitler (1889-1945)

Dear Mr. Droog,

I find your article very interesting but you put us in the wrong light.

We have been fighting against fakes and forgery's for many years and unlike all other auction houses guarantee authenticity of our items in our conditions of business unless otherwise stated.

I cannot see how we could have made our serious doubt and concern on authenticity of the Mertschinsky items more clear than with the comment we put with each lot.

We did not feel that the attribution of certain works to Kujau is justified since this would oblige us to guarantee this attribution and the subject is certainly still open to research. My education as an art historian teaches me that scientific research and solid proof can never be replaced by the expression of an opinion only.

We picked up your remark though in a newsletter we sent out to all registered customers before that auction saying that indeed many of these works might be by Konrad Kujau and whatever they are certainly worth what we estimated them at . If nothing else they are very interesting to study Kujaus work.

We recently were the first auction house to describe Allach figures with post war Colour painting as such (Repainted) and changed the awareness for those almost overnight .

My publication on fake award documents of the higher grades of the Knights Cross (auction catalog 64) based on Frieda Thiersch's and Gerdy Troost's archive made these fakes disappear from the market almost instantly.

I therefore find the conclusion you express at the end of your article very misleading and ask you to alter it.

I am one of only very few truly knowledgeable experts on high end 3rd Reich items and my integrity and reputation is widely acknowledged.

I still have about 300 works from the Mertschinsky collection and would be happy to receive you to have you look at them. It would be very interesting to publish all these fakers activities in a book to protect future buyers.

Do you know Petra Cichos's book on the subject?

Also I have a „Hitler“ Watercolour from a private source in France which I think is original.

Lastly in my archive I have a number of drawings that are copies of originals by Hitler done by art students during the 3rd Reich. They have some most interesting remarks on techniques written on the reverse.

Let's join forces to stop these criminal activities so widely practiced in the world of arts and antiques and especially 3rd Reich collectibles.

I expect your feedback before your publication and hope you will not force me to pursue this legally. I can and will not tolerate anyone questioning my integrity.

Best Wishes

AndreasThies