



# INTERNATIONAL



Compiled By  
Antiques and The Arts Weekly  
Madelia Hickman Ring & Carly Timpson

## Armor & Antiquities Slay At Hermann Historica

GRASBRUNN, GERMANY — Hermann Historica offered more than 1,500 lots across two days of auctions: Art, Antiquities & Ancient Art on November 19 and Antique Arms and Armor on November 20.

Standing out among all of the lots and selling on the first day was a Tenth Century Viking

battle axe engraved with intricate, swirling animal-form details. According to the auction catalog, “The axe blade and the shaft tube [were] decorated with inlays of gold and silver in the highest quality, representing exquisite examples of Nordic animal ornamentation in the Jelling style.”

The axe, which came from a South German private collection inherited in the late 1990s, measured 8¼ inches long and the height of the cutting edge was 5½ inches. Significant pre-sale interest and early bidding took the price well beyond its €18,000 high estimate, ultimately going to a new collec-

tion for \$51,059 (€49,000).

Finishing within its €28/56,000 estimate range was a colorful Roman mosaic depicting a bust portrait of Orpheus in a tondo. The mosaic, which dated to the late Second or Third Century, comprised its original cubic tesserae and was later mounted on a concrete slab. In the central tondo, or circle, Orpheus was shown wearing a Phrygian cap while playing a lyre. The composition was from a Rhenish private collection, acquired from the Aachen, Germany, branch of a Brussels art dealer around 1990. It sold for \$38,555 (€37,000).

Two life-size Italian marble busts depicting a Black man and woman, each wearing a fully sculpted lion’s head hood, bested their €10,000 high estimate, drawing attention from art connoisseurs and bidders on all platforms, ultimately selling for \$14,067 (€13,500). The lions, with open mouths around the figures’ heads, were carved from white marble modeled with the front paws tied in front of the figures’ chests. Each figure was wearing a lion tooth necklace made from white-yellow marble. The Nineteenth Century sculptures came from a private owner in Hesse, Germany, but were once in the Valnes hunting lodge in southern Denmark.

Exceeding its €3,5/7,000 estimate to achieve \$11,035 (€10,600) was a silver-mounted nephrite table clock. This pale green Fabergé-style clock had a column-form body mounted with silver garlands and a beaded band above the base. The enamel clock face, at the slanted top of the column, was in a hinged silver bezel and had no maker’s marks or inscription.

Ysabel Benecken, art and antiques specialist, shared that there was “a very nice Meissen collection in this sale.” This collection was led by a six-piece Schneeballen (Snowball) tea set. The porcelain tea set

was characterized by raised porcelain details depicting small white flowers, arranged in round clusters, together resembling the compound inflorescence of the snowball viburnum. Accenting these clusters were applied vibrant green leaves. The circa 1890 set, which sold for \$7,294 (€7,000), included a teapot, cream jug, two teacups and saucers and a 17¼-inch-long tray (€2/4,000). The firm’s post-sale press release noted “The sales quota for Meissen porcelain in particular was testimony to its exceptional popularity among art collectors.”

The top price on November 20 was achieved by a two-handed sword wielded by the trabant guard of Prince-Archbishop Markus Sittikus. Forged circa 1612, the double-edged and undulating sword bore the clergyman’s personal coat of arms and was struck down for \$19,467 (€18,700), within its €12/24,000 estimate range. The blade, quillons, pommel and other metal details were all intricately engraved with both decorative and identifying embellishments. Further information about this distinguished sword and its history can be found in the auction catalog.

Several suits of armor graced the second day of the sale, with the selection being led by a horseman’s three-quarter armor. This circa 1580 suit was assembled from old parts with the helmet, breastplate and backplate originating from a “good quality suit of Nuremberg armor” and had the appropriate proof marks, per the auction catalog. In total, the suit measured approximately 56 inches high and it sold to a new owner for \$18,236 (€17,500), within its €9,6/19,200 estimate range. Making \$12,804 (€12,300) was a suit of black and white cavalry armor, also assembled from old Nuremberg components (€8,8/17,600). This armor was made circa 1560-1600 and it measured 47¼ inches high.

As the post-sale press release mentioned, “the more moderately priced pieces were also well received by the numerous buyers.” One such lot was an Omani jambiya — a type of dagger with a short curved blade with a metal ridge. Estimated €600-€1,200, this Nineteenth Century *jambiya* was bid to \$7,287 (€7,000). The curved dagger had a rhinoceros horn handle, finely embellished with silver, and a leather scabbard, also featuring silver embellishments as well as fine embroidery.

Prices quoted include the buyer’s premium as reported by the auction house. For information, [www.hermann-historica.de/en](http://www.hermann-historica.de/en).

### Auction Action In Grasbrunn, Germany



Soaring past estimates to become the top lot overall was this Viking battle axe lavishly decorated with animals, in the Jelling style, Tenth Century, 5½ by 8¼ inches; it was bid to \$51,059.



Two black marble busts with white marble lion hoods, Italian, 34½ by 21¼ inches each, sell together for \$14,067.



This suit of horseman’s three-quarter armor, Nuremberg, circa 1580, brought \$18,236.



Leading day two was this two-handed sword from the trabant guard of Prince-Archbishop Markus Sittikus (Austrian, 1574-1619), 68¾ inches long; it was bid to \$19,467.



This Omani *jambiya* dagger with rhinoceros horn handle, Nineteenth Century, 12½ inches long, bested its €1,200 high estimate to achieve \$7,287 (€7,000).



This Roman mosaic depicting Orpheus in a tondo, late Second to Third Century, 30 by 25½ inches, went out at \$38,555.



This six-piece Schneeballen tea set with gold edges, Meissen, circa 1890, led the porcelain offerings, bringing \$7,294.



This silver-mounted nephrite table clock in the style of Fabergé, enamel face, 5 by 4½ inches, struck \$11,035.



Review by  
Carly Timpson, Assistant Editor  
Photos Courtesy Hermann Historica