



JANNIS KOUNELLIS (1936-2017)

Untitled

iron, canvas and enamel

78 3/4 x 70 7/8 x 4 3/4 in.

2014

28895

PROVENANCE:

Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels

Private Collection

Private Collection

Phillips New York: Wednesday, November 15, 2017 [Lot 00343] 20th Century &

Contemporary Art Day Sale Afternoon Session

Private Collection, California, 2017

EXHIBITION:

Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels, Jannis Kounellis, March 13 - April 17, 2014

A leading artist of the Arte Povera movement in the 1960s and '70s, Jannis Kounellis challenged the traditional media of art making. His work often incorporates natural or everyday materials, installation, or performance. *Untitled* (2014) is a unique example of his sculptural work in iron, canvas, and enamel. A common thread in his work is a sense of isolation experienced in contemporary society, combining elements of the past and the present to address memory, detachment, history, and loss. Kounellis once explained, "[art] must be born of historical necessity: that is, it must be of a historical situation and constitute the indispensable language of that moment."

Kounellis was born in Piraeus, Greece in 1936. He lived in Greece during the Second World War and Greek Civil War before he moved to Rome in 1956.

From 1960 to 1966, Kounellis went through a period of only exhibiting paintings. In some of his first exhibitions, Kounellis began stenciling numbers, letters, and words onto his canvases, often reflecting advertisements and signs seen on the street. In 1960 he began to introduce found sculptural objects such as actual street signs into his work, exhibiting at Galleria La Tartaruga. This same year he donned one of his stencil paintings as a garment and created a performance in his studio to demonstrate himself literally becoming one with his painting.

This newfound convergence of painting, sculpture, and performance was Kounellis' way out of traditional art. By 1961 he began to paint on newspaper to reflect his feelings towards modern society and politics. From 1963, Kounellis introduced found objects in his artworks, among them live animals but also fire, earth, burlap sacks, and gold. He replaced the canvas with bed frames, doorways, windows or simply the gallery itself. Kounellis' work from the 1980s, which also consisted of sculptures and performances using unusual materials, traveled all over Europe. In 1974, he performed with Edward Kienholz, Wolf Vostell and other artists in Berlin at the ADA – Aktionen der Avantgarde. His work has become integral to numerous renowned, international museums' collections.

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