

Report 2019-01-03 Alleged Hitler painting 'Blumen im Zimmer' / 'Flowers in the room'

To be auctioned by Milestone Auctions, Willoughby (Ohio, USA), January 19, 2019.

Owner: unknown.

Title/Description: 'Blumen im Zimmer' / 'Flowers in the room'. Still life, oil.

Artist: unknown.

Date of Creation: unknown.

Place of Creation: unknown.

Dimensions (h x w): Primary support: 17 x 12,5 inch / 43,18 x 31,75 cm

Technical details based on the photos from Milestone Auctions

Report by Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog, January 8, 2019.

Technical details

Remarks

Hitler's technique

Hitler in München

NSDAP Hauptarchiv

Milestone Auctions

The provenance

Conclusion



Technical details

Technical details based on the photos and information from Milestone Auctions, unless otherwise stated.

Primary support: The primary support appears to be hardboard (in American-English 'masonite' or 'board').

Secondary support: Absent.

Medium: According to Milestone Auctions the medium used is oil paint.

Inscriptions: painted or written on the primary support, in the dark part, right bottom, in an unknown medium, "Blumen im Zimmer".



On the back side of the primary support a piece of white paper is attached, with modern looking adhesive tape. On this paper is written, with ballpoint(?): "DER FELDSTRAUSS / BLUMEN IM ZIMMER / A.H. 1914 / "FLOWERS IN THE ROOM".

Signature: Primary support, recto, unknown medium, "Adolf Hitler - 1914".

Theme: Flowers in a vase, still life.

Description by Milestone Auctions: "ADOLF HITLER (1889-1945) 1914 "Flowers In The Room" Oil Painting On Board. Signed Adolf Hitler 1914 and Titled "Blumen Im Zimmer". A very rare original Still Life Painting of Flowers. An unusual subject for Hitler who painted more landscapes and architecture. The date of 1914 is a significant date in Hitler's life. Its when his dreams of being a professional artist fades and he joins the German Army. This work could be one of the last painting done by Hitler before his life took a complete turn and he started on his path of becoming one of history's most powerful and notorious leaders. Painting has minor edge wear that looks from being previously framed. 17" x 12 1/2". Excellent."

To be auctioned as lot # 564 by Milestone Auctions on January 19, 2019.

<https://milestoneauctions.hibid.com/lot/47347871/adolf-hitler--flowers-in-the-room--oil-painting?q=hitler&cat=true>

Remarks on technical details

Primary support: Hardboard, invented by the Englishman Daniel Manson Sutherland in 1898, is used as primary support by artists since at least 1910. In the United States hardboard is called 'masonite', after the first American producer, William H. Mason.¹ However, none of the paintings of Hitler which might be authentic were painted on hardboard.

Medium: As far as is known Hitler never made oil paintings. All existing oil paintings attributed to Hitler are - to our knowledge - forgeries. The NSDAP Hauptarchiv bought in 1938 three oilpaintings attributed to Hitler from Dr. Alfred Detig, but when we looked into the provenance of these works, we reached the conclusion that these must be considered as forgeries.²

Signature: From the signature almost no conclusions can be drawn: signatures on watercolors are easily forged, and it can't be judged if a signature is painted on a work shortly after it was finished or years later.³ Signatures in oil paint on an oil painting can sometimes be dated, but are also easily forged.



The name used however, "Adolf Hitler", corresponds *not* with the signatures used by Hitler on the watercolors believed to be authentic, which were "A. Hitler" and "A.H."⁴

Paper on the back: As adhesive tape and paper 'age', this piece of paper was written and attached quite recently.

1 Factsheet. Masonite Hardboard Siding. Balanced inspections.com. [seen 04-01-2019]

<http://balancedinspections.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/balanced-inspections-masonite-siding-fact-sheet.pdf>

2 Correspondence Dr. Schirmer - NSDAP Hauptarchiv, 1935, and correspondence Dr. Detig with NSDAP Hauptarchiv, Bundesarchiv Berlin, NS 26/19-33 and NS 26/34-43. List 'Münchener Bilder', NSDAP Hauptarchiv, [1939], NS 26/34-43.

3 According to a former employee of the Netherlands Forensic Institute and Dr. Luc Megens of the Netherlands National Institute for Cultural Heritage [Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed], who is also involved in the authentication of Vincent van Gogh's paintings. We spoke to both in December 2017, whilst investigating a watercolor attributed to Adolf Hitler.

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Luc_Megens

4 According to Jakob Altenberg, statement to Viennese police, November 19, 1936. NS 26/2599/23-24, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

Hitler's technique

Hitler, who never followed any painting or drawing lessons, was not a very skilled artist. In fact, his watercolors are no real watercolors, but drawings which he colored in with watercolor. That he worked in this way was mentioned by August Kubizek (1888-1956), who was befriended with Hitler in 1905-1908.⁵

Kubizek is a very unreliable witness: he wrote about his common time with Hitler more than forty years after it happened. The very thorough Austrian Hitler biographer Franz Jetzinger (1882-1965), who had been in close contact with Kubizek, remarked that Kubizek made most things up. Yet on some minor points were his memories correct.⁶

We think this - Hitler's technique - is such a point. As Kubizek adored Hitler and owned from 1907 until his death an authentic Hitler watercolor, he can - in our opinion - be relied upon his remark on Hitler's painting/drawing technique.

During the conservation of two authentic Hitler paintings in the US Army Center for Military History in 2014, traces were found in these works that confirmed Kubizek's statements.⁷

Themes

As far as is known Hitler painted in 1910-1914 only city sights / buildings from Vienna⁸ and Munich⁹, which he copied from postcards. For this he used a very old and common technique, to enlarge his copy. He drew horizontal and vertical lines on his original, to divide it in squares. Then he repeated this process on a blanco piece of paper, but this time with larger squares. And then he first copied with pencil the outlines of buildings, and so on. This works reasonably well for buildings and no knowledge is required: proportions and perspective are always correct.

All alleged Hitler paintings with other themes than city sights from the 1910-1914 period, must therefore be considered as forgeries.

5 In his memoirs: August Kubizek. *Adolf Hitler, mein Jugendfreund*. Stocker, Graz/Göttingen, 1953. Special edition 2002, page 110.

6 Franz Jetzinger. *Hitlers Jugend. Phantasien, Lügen - und die Wahrheit. Mit 20 Tafeln*. Europa-Verlag, Wien, [1956].

7 Tamara Luzeckyj. Report on conservation CCN 2.53.50 (Ratzenstadl) and CCN 2.54.50 ("Alter Hof"), Olin Conservation Inc, Great Falls, (VA. USA), 2014.

8 According to Jakob Altenberg, statement to Viennese police, November 19, 1936. NS 26/2599/23-24, Bundesarchiv, Berlin.

9 List 'Münchener Bilder', NSDAP Hauptarchiv, [1939], NS 26/34-43.

Hitler in München (1913-1914)

Hitler moved on the 25th of May 1913 from Vienna to Munich. He had just received the inheritance of his father, 819 Austrian 'kronen' (crowns).¹⁰ This would be some \$ 125 (of 1913 value)¹¹, and would have allowed Hitler to live for a considerable time, without having the need to work.

He rented together with an Austrian young man called Rudolf Häusler a room at the Popp family. On his registration form for the Munich authorities his profession was listed as 'Kunstmaler' (art painter).¹²

Very little is known what Hitler did exactly in the year he lived in Munich, before he enlisted in the Bavarian army (August 16, 1914) and went to war.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler lied that he had moved to Munich in 1912 - very likely to conceal that he was a draft dodger from Austrian conscription. He wrote too, about his pre-war Munich time:

"Even if my earnings were still extremely meager, *I did not live to be able to paint, but painted only to be able to secure my livelihood* or rather to enable myself to go on studying."¹³

An interview with his landlady, Frau Popp, was published in 1934, in *Germany's Hitler*, a Nazi propaganda book intended for the English speaking world. That she is a very unreliable witness appears from these quotes:

"Yes, I remember it all as if it were yesterday. It was a fine Sunday afternoon in springtime, 1912, when somebody knocked and I went to open the door. A young man stood there and said he'd like to see the room we had to let."¹⁴

Hitler came first to Munich in 1913 and was accompanied by his friend Häusler. Hitler nor Frau Popp ever mentioned this companion.

10 Volker Ullrich. *Adolf Hitler Biographie. Die Jahre des Aufstiegs 1889-1939*. Fischer, Frankfurt am Main, 2013. page 60.

11 According to exchange rates in the *Nieuwe Veendammer Courant*, Veendam, 01-01-1913.

12 Ullrich, page 60.

13 Adolf Hitler. *Mein Kampf*, page 132. "Wenn auch mein Verdienst immer noch sehr kärglich war, so lebte ich ja auch nicht um malen zu können, sondern malte, um mir dadurch nur die Möglichkeit meines Lebens zu sichern, besser, um mir damit mein weiteres Studium zu gestatten." In: Hitler. *Mein Kampf. Eine kritische Edition*. Herausgegeben von Christian Hartmann, Thomas Vordermayer, Othmar Plöckinger, Roman Töppel. Im Auftrag des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte München-Berlin. 2016. Band 1, page 373.

14 Heinz A. Heinz. *Germany's Hitler*. Hurst & Blackett, London, 1938. Revised edition (first edition published in 1934), page 50.

"Then later I went in again to ask the young man to fill up his registration particulars. In small somewhat cramped handwriting he scribbled: 'Adolf Hitler, Architekturmaler aus Wien' (Architectural painter from Vienna)."¹⁵

We know he registered as 'Kunstmaler' - Hitler's phenomenal knowledge of architecture and him being a gifted architectural painter is yet another lie by Hitler/Nazi propaganda.

Frau Popp also stated that he'd spent the livelong day painting and drawing (and only buildings!) and often sat up all night reading and studying.¹⁶

These statements of Frau Popp seem to have been edited to fit with the image that Hitler built about himself in *Mein Kampf*. But at the same time contradicts it, by exaggerating Hitler's paintings production, as he himself stated that he only painted (copied from postcards) when he needed money; and Hitler had sufficient money *not* to work when he came to Munich - having just received 819 *kronen* from his father's legacy.¹⁷

Hitler's companion, Rudolf Häusler, gave in 1939 a statement about his time with Hitler in München - he named nothing of any interest.¹⁸

In the second half of the 1930's several owners of Munich paintings attributed to Hitler were interviewed by the NSDAP Hauptarchiv about the provenance of these works. When one reads these interviews one immediately notices that some of them lied about when they first met Hitler in Munich. According to them the first meetings took place in 1911 or 1912 - long before Hitler ever was in Munich.¹⁹ One of them, the jeweler Paul Kerber, even claimed he had bought more than 20 paintings from the young Hitler.²⁰ Yet Kerber possessed in 1938 only two of these works, and we could only trace one other work that had been previously in his possession.²¹

15 Heinz, 50.

16 Heinz, 50-51.

17 Volker Ullrich. *Adolf Hitler. Biographie. Band 1. Die Jahre des Aufstiegs 1889-1939*. S. Fischer, Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2013. Page 60.

18 This statement was made by Häusler to the Deutsche Arbeits Front, October 9, 1939. Quoted by Anton Joachimsthaler. *Korrektur einer Biographie. Adolf Hitler 1908-1920*. Herbig, München., 1989. p. 80-81

19 Quoted by Anton Joachimsthaler. *Korrektur einer Biographie. Adolf Hitler 1908-1920*. Herbig, München., 1989. p. 84-89.

20 According to Dr. Alfred Detig, quoted by Anton Joachimsthaler. P. 87.

21 We noticed from the statements made to the NSDAP Hauptarchiv that quite a number of owners and traders of alleged Hitler paintings in the 1930's bragged about their collection or relationship with the young Hitler.

Summarizing what is known about Hitler in Munich, 1913-1914:

- He hired a room from the family Popp.
- He shared this room with Rudolf Häusler
- He made an unknown number of paintings - only watercolors.
- He had - certainly in his first six months - enough money not to have to work.
- He only depicted buildings on his paintings, with sometimes one or two human figures.
- He painted some objects at least twice (Alter Hof, Hofbrauhaus, Standesamt).
- He sold these for 5 tot 20 Reichsmark²² (in 1913 equivalent to 1.20 to 4.80 US dollar²³).

And:

- The NSDAP Hauptarchiv traced 20 paintings which Hitler apparently made in Munich, 1913-1914. But 3 works were oil paintings, and must therefore be considered to be forgeries.²⁴

Given the fact that Hitler became quite (in)famous in Munich in 1922, nine years after he made his Munich paintings, and given the fact that in the 1930's the NSDAP Hauptarchiv paid high prices²⁵ for - what they thought to be - authentic Hitler paintings, one may assume that most of his Munich paintings (including not as such recognized forgeries) were traced by the NSDAP Hauptarchiv.

None of these works was a still life.

²² Joachimsthaler, page 88-89

²³ Sources for establishing the value of money in 1913-1914 and ca. 1935, and calculating the present value:

Prijzen van Coupons. *Nieuwe Veendammer Courant*, Veendam, 01-03-1913.

Een kwakzalver verjaagd. *Haagsche Courant*, 's-Gravenhage, 02-01-1913

Konijnenteelt. *Nieuwsblad van Friesland*, Heerenveen, 02-01-1935.

<https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010760677:mpeg21:a0193>

Valuta's New York. *De Telegraaf*, Amsterdam, 03-01-1935; [https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?](https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110572509:mpeg21:a0116)

[urn=ddd:110572509:mpeg21:a0116](https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:110572509:mpeg21:a0116)

De waarde van de gulden / euro. Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis;

<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate-nl.php>

Currency Calculator, <https://www.x-rates.com/>

²⁴ "Münchener Bilder". List of alleged Hitler paintings made in München. NS26/34-43. BA Berlin.

²⁵ - In 1935-1938 the NSDAP Hauptarchiv paid 4000 to 8000 Reichsmark for what they believed to be authentic Hitlers. In the exchange rates of 1935 this would amount to 960 to 1920 US dollars or 2400 to 4800 Netherlands guilders. Anno 2016, after calculation of inflations rates, this would amount to some 23,000,- to 46,000,- euro, or 26,000,- to 52,000,- US dollars.

Sources:

'Aquarelle des Führers' List, NSDAP Hauptarchiv [ca. 1938]. NS 26/34-43. BA Berlin.

De waarde van de gulden / euro. Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, Amsterdam, [seen January 5, 2019].

<http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/calculate-nl.php>

NSDAP Hauptarchiv

In 1936-1940 the NSDAP Hauptarchiv (Main Archive) tried to trace and register all paintings made by Hitler. The aim was to make a catalog of all of his paintings. This project was never realized.

In the remaining files of the NSDAP Hauptarchiv (NSDAP-HA), which are stored in the Bundesarchiv (Federal archive) in Berlin, we found in May 2018 in the HA files traces of some 50 works attributed to Hitler. But we are quite sure that at least 7 of these were forgeries.

As no one working for the NSDAP-HA had any art education or art background, no one was able to distinguish the fake Hitlers from the authentic ones.

To complicate matters: the NSDAP-HA ordered at least two German professional artists to make 1:1 watercolor copies of the original watercolors. One of them used 'photo'-paper to distinguish the copies from the originals.²⁶ If the other artist did so too, we don't know. If more than the two artists we came across, Fritz Mühlbrecht and Heinrich Kraus, were involved in the NSDAP sanctioned copying of Hitler watercolors is something we don't know too.

Some of these copies were given to their previous owners (if they were loyal party members who had sold the originals to the NSDAP-HA). What was the fate of the other copies we don't know.

We found in the Bundesarchiv *no trace of any flower still life* attributed to Hitler.

²⁶ Lists of the copies in NS26/34-43, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

Milestone Auctions

Milestone Auctions is one of the auction houses in the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom responsible for flooding the market with alleged authentic Hitler and other Nazi material.²⁷

In 2017 Milestone offered a huge amount of paper material supposedly written by Hitler. Amongst it one poem 'written by Hitler'.²⁸ As we have investigated in 2016-2018 all poetry supposedly written by Hitler, we know for sure that the German dictator wasn't a poet. As far as is known he never wrote or published a poem. All poetry attributed to him was written by others.²⁹

Milestones Auctions and 'Blumen im Zimmer'

The estimated revenue of 30,000.- to 50,000.- US dollars for this painting, as stated by Milestone Auctions, serves in our opinion only one goal: to make people believe this work is a genuine Hitler.

In recent years other paintings attributed to Hitler (as far as is known all forgeries) were auctioned in Germany, the UK and in the US for 10,000.- to 130,000.- euro / 11,000.- to 140,000.- US dollar.³⁰ The estimated revenue of 'Blumen im Zimmer' seems to be based on these amounts.

No evidence *at all* is delivered. Milestone Auctions only suggests it is an original painting by Hitler, without really saying it:

- "Signed Adolf Hitler 1914" is correct, it *is* signed 'Adolf Hitler 1914', but they do not say 'painted by Adolf Hitler'.

- "A very rare original Still Life Painting of Flowers" means nothing more than it is a still life: 'original' is pointing to 'still life' not to Hitler.

- "This work could be one of the last painting done by Hitler."
"Could be" - yet another suggestion.

27 Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. Auction houses selling Hitler forgeries. The Fake Hitlers. Droog Magazine, Eenrum, February 4, 2018.

<https://www.bartfmdroog.com/droog/niod/veilinghuizen.html>

28 Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. 'Hitler'-gedicht en -tekeningen in Ohio (USA). [26-08-2017]. The Fake Hitlers. Droog Magazine, Eenrum, December 11, 2018.

<https://www.bartfmdroog.com/droog/niod/vervalsers.html#2017milestone>

29 Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. Hitler als Hollands exportproduct. Skepter 31.1, Utrecht, (2018).

<https://skepsis.nl/valse-hitleriana/>

30 Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog. De zwendel met 'Hitlers', post 2000. The Fake Hitlers. Droog Magazine, Eenrum, December 11, 2018.

<https://www.bartfmdroog.com/droog/niod/vervalsers.html#2000>

Lot #	564
Schatting	30.000,00 - 50.000,00 USD
Step - Categorie	Art & Galleries
Leiden	ADOLF HITLER "FLOWERS IN THE ROOM" OIL PAINTING
Beschrijving	ADOLF HITLER (1889-1945) 1914 "Flowers In The Room" Oil Painting On Board. Signed Adolf Hitler 1914 and Titled "Blumen Im Zimmer". A very rare original Still Life Painting of Flowers. An unusual subject for Hitler who painted more landscapes and architecture. The date of 1914 is a significant date in Hitler's life. Its when his dreams of being a professional artist fades and he joins the German Army. This work could be one of the last painting done by Hitler before his life took a complete turn and he started on his path of becoming one of history's most powerful and notorious leaders. Painting has minor edge wear that looks from being previously framed. 17" x 12 1/2". Excellent.

Text on site Milestone Auctions, as seen on January 4, 2019.

<https://milestoneauctions.hibid.com/lot/47347871/adolf-hitler--flowers-in-the-room--oil-painting?q=hitler&cat=true>

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Given these conditons we strongly advise **not to buy anything** from Milestone Auctions, as **absolutely no guarantees on authenticity issues** are provided.

Milestone Auctions
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 Site: www.milestoneauctions.com

The provenance of 2019-01-03 ('Blumen im Zimmer')

Almost nothing is known about the provenance of this work. The auctioneer could only tell that the person who offered it to be auctioned has passed away.³¹

When searching on Google 'Search by Image', we found no additional information about this painting. On auctionsite www.invaluable.co.uk / invaluable.com³² copies of the photos from Milestone Auctions could be found, but these served only as advertisement for the Ohio auction.

The painting is not depicted in *Adolf Hitler als Maler und Zeichner. Ein Werkkatalog der Ölgemälde, Aquarelle, Zeichnungen und Architekturskizzen* (Gallant Verlag, Zug, 1983); English edition: *Adolf Hitler. The unknown artist*. Billy F. Price Publishing House, Houston, 1984.³³

This book contains images of most of the forged Hitler paintings and drawings that existed in 1982, and a small number of authentic ones.

So, as far as we know, the painting 2019-01-03 ('Blumen im Zimmer') was first seen in December 2018 in Ohio.

31 Message from Milestone Auctions to interested party, December 28, 2019.

32 <https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/adolf-hitler-flowers-in-the-room-oil-painting-43045F9980>

33 A digitalized version can be found on: <https://www.bartfmdroog.com/droog/niod/price.html>

Conclusion

Given all factors, and based on the photo's provided by Milestone Auctions, the painting 2019-01-03 ('Blumen im Zimmer') is in our opinion *not* made by Adolf Hitler (1889-1945)

1. It is an oil painting. Adolf Hitler never made oil paintings.
2. It's a still life. Hitler never made still lifes. It requires schooling and a lot of exercise before an artist can produce a still life like this one. There's no period in Hitler's life to be found where he had lessons in making still lifes.
3. The painting was made by a skilled artist. Hitler was not. He was rejected by the School of Arts in 1907 for lack of talent. Which shows in his authentic drawings.
4. The provenance cannot be traced further back than December 2018.
5. The picture is signed with "Adolf Hitler". Hitler signed his paintings with "A. Hitler" or "A.H."

Miles Auctions presents this work as an authentic Adolf Hitler painting. In our opinion this borders to, or is, fraud.

Disclaimer

Our judgment is *not* based on forensic research of this painting. Given all factors, there exists no need however for expensive forensic research on this particular painting, as it is very clear that the name of the artist who made this work was *not* Adolf Hitler (1889-1945).

Forensic research *might* provide an answer to the question when 'Blumen im Zimmer' was painted, but will give no clues to the identity of its true maker.

Jaap van den Born and Bart FM Droog
Nijmegen / Eenrum (Netherlands),
January 8, 2019.