



LULLO | PAMPOULIDES

WILHELM KUHNERT  
1865 - 1926

*MAN WEARING A FEATHERED HAT*

Oil/cardboard, signed and dated upper right 'Wilh. Kuhnert ... 86'; with a paper label to the reverse inscribed '4' and another "Wilhelm Kuhnert/ Werkeverzeichnis/ 07 01 00612 II"  
50.7 x 39.8 cm

PROVENANCE

Collection of the artist, and by descent; Sold Nagel, Stuttgart, Sammlung Wilhelm Kuhnert, 7 February, 2024, lot 2

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The interest in depictions of animals, which became the defining theme in his *oeuvre*, was first developed by studying exotic animals in Berlin Zoo. However, he soon developed the desire to observe and paint wild animals in their natural habitat: in 1891, aged just 26, he embarked on his first self-financed expedition to Africa, sponsored by Hans Meyer of the Bibliographic Institute in Leipzig. In total, Kuhnert travelled to Africa three times under his own initiative and at his own expense. He also visited Ceylon in 1906 and, in 1911, accompanied King Friedrich August of Saxony as an advisor on a trip to Egypt and Sudan.

Kuhnert's travels reshaped the Western perception of Africa like no other painter of his time. He was one of the first European artists to explore and document the then largely uncharted territories of German East Africa, including present-day Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, and parts of Mozambique. In often challenging conditions, Kuhnert sketched the local flora and fauna, using these drawings as the foundation for his monumental paintings, which he later completed in his Berlin studio and exhibited with great international success.

Kuhnert's work was notable for its almost scientific precision. His wildlife depictions became widely popular through zoological books, magazines, and even advertising. Less well-known, however, are his portraits, which are significantly rarer.

From the outset, Kuhnert's direct, reportage-like style stood in stark contrast to the academic painters of his day, particularly those specialising in Orientalist subjects. He was one of the first to provide Europeans with a naturalistic view of Africa. His versatility as an artist is further demonstrated by the portraits presented here, coming from the estate of the painter's heirs.



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