





The Vineyard Hotel, Newlands, Cape Town  
30 March – 7.30pm

**19th Century, Modern, Post-War  
and Contemporary Art**

Evening Sale  
Lots 541–656

Lot 557 Jacob Hendrik Pierneef *Bushveld Game Reserve* (detail)



541

### Robert Gwelo Goodman

SOUTH AFRICAN 1871-1939

#### *Rio de (sic) Mendicanti, Venice*

signed; signed and inscribed with the title on a Pastel Society label accompanying the work  
pastel

48 by 62cm

R200 000 - 300 000

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired from The Pastel Society Exhibition by the current owner's mother.

#### EXHIBITED

The Pastel Society, London, 1915.

This pastel by Robert Gwelo Goodman depicts the Ponte del Cavallo, a bridge that spans the Venetian canal, Rio dei Mendicanti. To the right of the composition is the Scuola Grande di San Marco that borders the square of Campo San Giovanni e Paolo. Executed *en plein air*, presumably from the Ponte Rosso, a bridge downstream famously painted by Canaletto in 1724, Goodman's work follows in the tradition of *vedute*, a genre

of vista painting originating in Flanders and later adopted by the 18th century Venetian *vedutisti*.

Goodman visited Venice in 1910, recording his experience predominantly in pastels which were then exhibited later in London. Most significant was his 1915 showing at the Pastel Society, where he was given "practically a one-man show, two rooms being allotted to his work alone." The critical reception was equally favourable with one writer noting: "He employs pastel with an assurance that gives this drawings a freshness and vivacity which will remain after contemporary oil paintings have become opaque and dull",<sup>1</sup> further asserting that "He ranks now among the

albeit young painters of landscape and open-air subjects"<sup>2</sup>

Goodman was known for his command of the medium, which provided the immediacy required to work outdoors. He would write memorably that "Pastel is capable of a richness and velvety depth of colour impossible in any other medium" that manages to "convey the illusion of holding and reflecting actual light"<sup>3</sup>

1. Joyce Newton Thompson (1951) Gwelo Goodman: South African Artist, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, page 39.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*



542

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*The Arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape*

signed and dated 1933  
watercolour and charcoal heightened  
with gouache  
68 by 90cm

**R200 000 - 300 000**

543

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*Extensive Mountain Landscape with Pine Trees*

signed and dated London 1934  
charcoal on paper laid down on card  
150 by 60cm

**R300 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz and Co in Association  
with Sotheby's, *The IGI Collection  
of Paintings, Prints and Sculpture*,  
Johannesburg, 15 February 1994,  
lot 26.  
Private Collection.

**LITERATURE**

Stephan Welz (1996) *Art at Auction  
in South Africa: The Art Market Review  
1969 to 1995*, Johannesburg: Art Link,  
illustrated on page 179.

In 1933 Pierneef was commissioned  
to paint murals for South Africa  
House, London. He spent two years  
in London, returning to South Africa  
in 1935.



544

**Gregoire Boonzaier**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1909-2005

*Die Geel Huis, Distrik Ses, Kaapstad*

signed and dated 1951; inscribed with the title on the stretcher  
oil on canvas  
39,5 by 60cm

**R180 000 - 240 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz & Co in Association with Sotheby's, Johannesburg, 8-9 July 1991, lot 308.



545

**Gregoire Boonzaier**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1909-2005

*Street View*

signed and dated 1956  
oil on canvas  
39,5 by 50cm

**R150 000 - 200 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz & Co in Association with Sotheby's, Johannesburg, 8-9 July 1991, lot 307.

**LITERATURE**

Stephan Welz (1996) *Art at Auction in South Africa: The Art Market Review 1969 to 1995*, Johannesburg: Art Link, illustrated in colour on page 119 with the title *District Six*.



546

**Hugo Naudé**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1868-1941

*Namaqualand*

signed  
oil on canvas  
33,5 by 40cm

R150 000 - 200 000

LITERATURE

cf. Esmé Berman (1996) *Art & Artists of South Africa*, Third Edition, Western Cape: Southern Book Publishers, a similar example illustrated in colour on page 302.



547

**Hugo Naudé**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1868-1941

*Namaqualand in Spring*

signed; inscribed with the title on a  
label on the reverse  
oil on panel  
23,5 by 34cm

R180 000 - 240 000

PROVENANCE

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town,  
December 1998.  
Private Collection.



548

**Maggie Laubser**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1973

**Portrait of Mena**

signed with the artist's initials and dated '24

oil on board  
47 by 35,5cm

**R250 000 - 300 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Sotheby Parke Bernet, Johannesburg,  
October 1974, catalogue number  
156.

**EXHIBITED**

South African National Gallery, Cape  
Town, *Maggie Laubser Retrospective*,  
1969.

**LITERATURE**

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser:  
Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*,  
Johannesburg and Cape Town:  
Perskor, illustrated on page 186,  
catalogue number 535, where the  
title *Portrait of a Woman with Head  
Scarf* is given.

549

**Maggie Laubser**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1973

**Still Life with an Orange,  
a Lemon, Pot and Tray**

signed; inscribed with the artist's  
name and title on a South African  
National Gallery label adhered to the  
reverse

oil on cardboard  
33,5 by 40,5cm

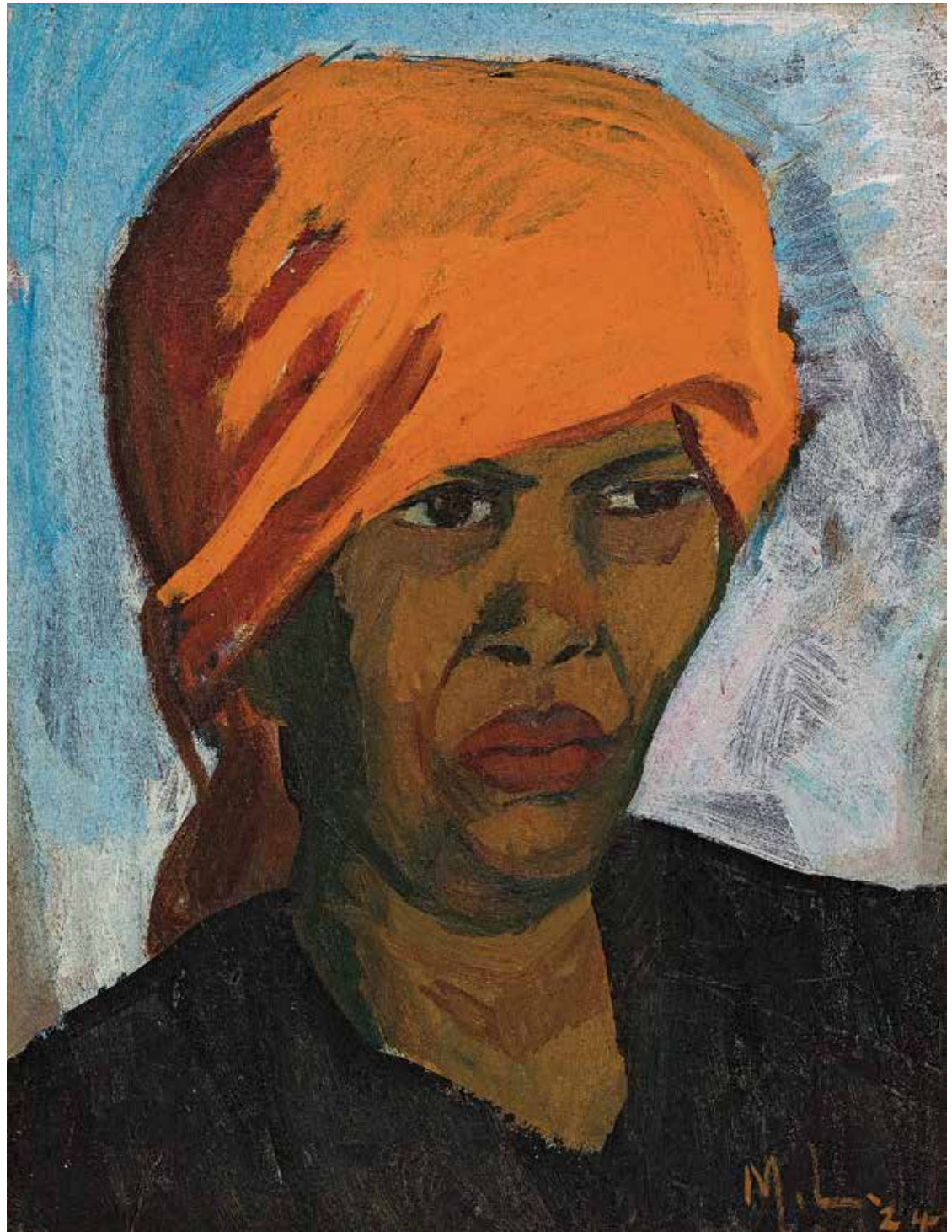
**R180 000 - 240 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Purchased at Maggie Laubser's  
Stellenbosch exhibition in 1930 by  
Mrs A E Malherbe, Stellenbosch.

**EXHIBITED**

Federasie van Afrikaanse  
Kultuurverenigings, Stellenbosch,  
*Maggie Laubser*, October 1930.  
South African Association of Arts  
Gallery, Cape Town, *Works by Maggie  
Laubser*, 26 April to 8 May 1965,  
catalogue number 45.





South African National Gallery, Cape Town, *Maggie Laubser Retrospective*, 3 July to 2 September 1969, catalogue number 3.

South African National Gallery, Cape Town, *Paris and South African Art*, unknown date, catalogue number 151.

#### LITERATURE

Johann Van Rooyen (1965) 'Development Over Four Decades Seen in Painter's Show', *Cape Times*, 28 April: page 4.

F.L. Alexander (1969) 'In die S A Nasionale Kunsmuseum Maggie Laubser Sing Lof van Boland en Al Sy Mense', *Burger*, 5 July: page 2.

E. Green (1969) 'A Fully Representative Collection of Pictures', *Cape Argus*, 7 July: page 15.

Nico Van Rensburg, (1969), 'Maggie Laubser - 'n Retrospektiewe Uitstalling', *Die Vaderland*, 11 Nov : page 2.

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*, Johannesburg and Cape Town: Perskor, illustrated on page 134, catalogue number 246.

It is suggested that the present lot was painted in 1921, due to its subject matter and rendering.<sup>1</sup> In this year Maggie received a book from her benefactor, Jan Balwe, of letters that Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother, Theo, and friend, Emile Bernard. Maggie had encountered Van Gogh's work a few years prior and was struck by his art and spirituality,

which had a notable influence on Maggie both personally and artistically. In an excerpt from one of his letters to Bernard published in the book, Van Gogh wrote "There is no blue without yellow and orange, and when you paint blue, paint yellow and orange as well."<sup>2</sup> In the present lot Maggie has dutifully followed Van Gogh's words, pointillistically painting a royal blue jug alongside a sharp yellow lemon and a vibrant orange. Maggie would have learned about the pointillist technique from images of works by its pioneers, Georges Seurat and Paul Signac and its brief follower, Van Gogh, that were reproduced in her art books. Pointillism, a movement that grew out of Impressionism, is the placement

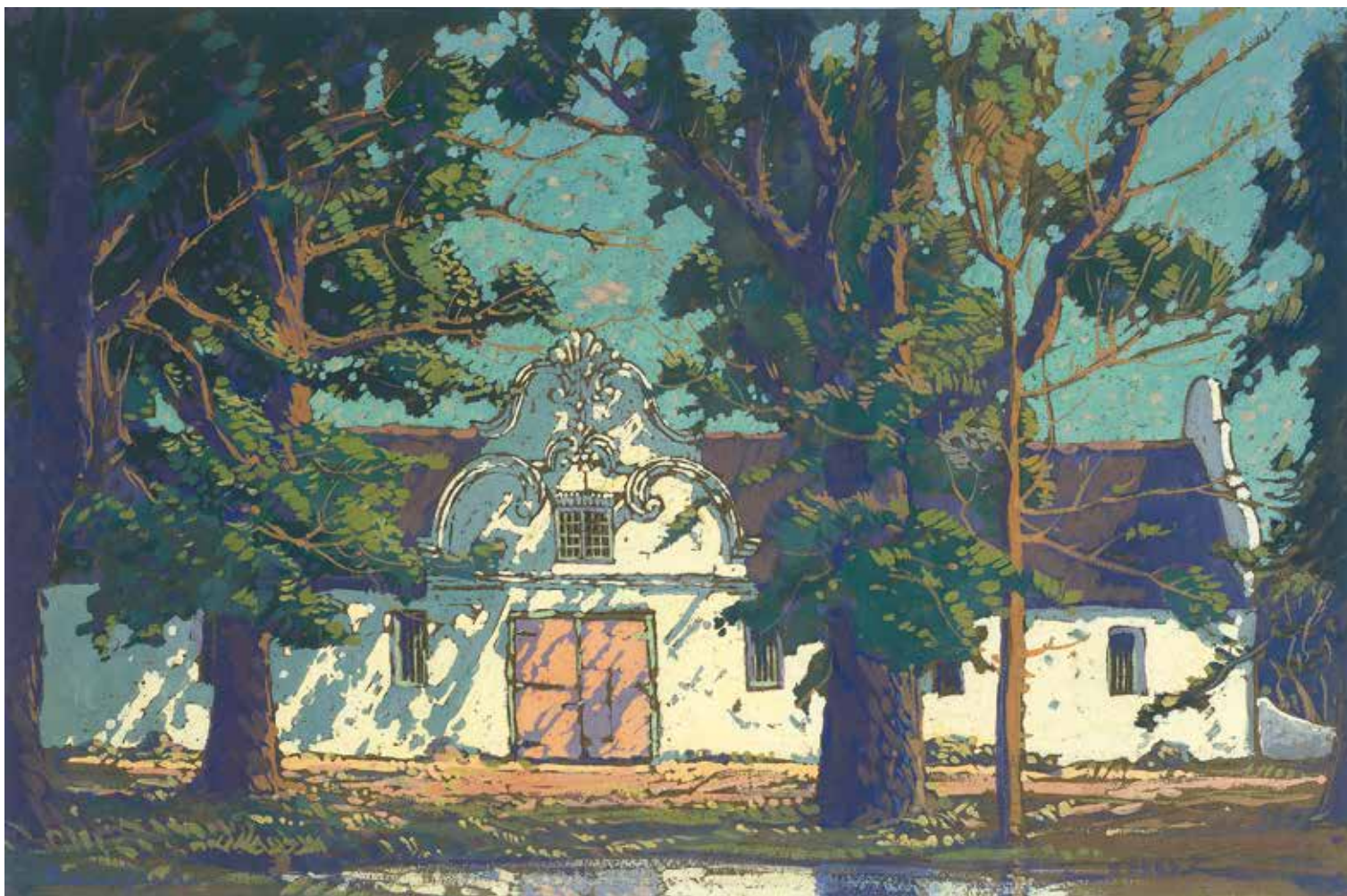
of broken brushstrokes or dots of pure, unmixed colour next to each other; allowing a viewers' eyes to mix or blend the colours together to form a complete image. The present lot is believed to be the only true work of pointillism that Maggie produced and is a thoughtful testament to the movement and its artists.<sup>3</sup>

1. Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*. Johannesburg: Perskor, page 134.

2. Muller Ballot (2016) *Maggie Laubser: A Window on Always Light*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, page 92.

3. *Ibid*, page 90.





550

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*Die Wynkelder by Du Toits Plaas,  
Krommerivier, Stellenbosch*

signed and dated 1923

casein on paper

36,5 by 54,5cm

R300 000 - 500 000

551

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*Jonkershoek: Stellenbosch*

signed and dated 24; inscribed  
with the artist's name, title and  
provenance on the reverse

casein

26 by 35,5cm

R600 000 - 800 000

PROVENANCE

Dr HG Schweickerdt (brother of Emil  
Heinrich Schweickerdt) and thence  
by descent.

Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 16 October  
2017, lot 591.

Private Collection.



A singularly important casein by Pieneef, dated 1924, the present lot is arguably the first complete rendering of the famous peaks of Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch, a subject that the artist explored virtually throughout his life. He made numerous sketches of the peaks in preparation for one of the four scenes of the Cape of Good Hope that form part of the eponymous Johannesburg Railway Station panels he painted between 1929 and 1932. The other scenes are of Hermanus, Table Mountain, and Lion's Head. *Jonkershoek Farm near Stellenbosch*, 1928, a painting referencing the same location, sold at Strauss & Co for a world record price of R20 462 400.

Deviating from his usual structural elements, such as the framing device of the trees on the left and right hand side

of the scene, similar to the proscenium arch of a theatre stage, and featuring the homestead as focal point of the composition, Pieneef was much more adventurous when he composed this angle of the Jonkershoek peaks in the present lot. He renders the peaks with a dramatic diagonal which runs from the top right to the centre of the picture plane. In addition, he places the viewer on an elevated level in the foreground, with a deep valley looming in the middle ground for a heightened experience of this majestic mountain range. This is nature in its purest sense, devoid of the cultivated land of the surrounding wine farms.

The sense of drama is intensified by the use of colour contrasts between the rather dark greens and purples of the fore- and middle grounds, and the

bright pinks and oranges of the peaks in the background. This was a period in Pieneef's artistic development that Esmé Berman labelled as experimentation and exploration, and the adventurous composition is a worthy testament to this.

To strengthen what Berman calls the experimental nature of Pieneef's work at this time, is the wide range of styles he employed in this one work, ranging from the flat reduction of forms rendering the work rather abstract like many of the early-20th century modernist styles in Europe, to a detailed, impressionistic rendering of the vegetation and trees, and even using a pointillist style in the depiction of the peaks and the clouds in the background. This intimate casein constitutes a veritable jewel in Pieneef's crown of creative output.

Also innovative and experimental, is his use of an unusual medium, that of the casein, that Pieneef explored at this stage while he was awaiting art supplies ordered through the Schweickerdt company in Pretoria. Casein is a curd-based medium, akin to that of poster paint or gouache, the proteins in the curd acting as binding agent, in which grinded colour pigment is mixed. Fleeting in nature, the casein medium dries extremely quickly, compelling the artist to work rather fast and quite accurately, leaving no margin for errors that can be corrected, erased or painted over in any way. It constitutes a true test of an artist's dexterity with the paint brush. The result is often an overall glowing quality that surrounds the complete work, unlike gouache or poster paint that tend to be rather dull.

552

**Victor Binet**

FRENCH 1849-1924

*Children Picking Wild Flowers*

signed

oil on canvas

71,5 by 113,5cm

R 50 000 - 70 000



553

**Benjamin Williams Leader**

BRITISH 1831-1923

*Worcester Cathedral*

signed and dated 1888

oil on canvas

60 by 90cm

R100 000 - 120 000



554

**Adriaan Boshoff**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935-2007

*Landscape with Cattle*

signed

oil on canvas laid down on board  
70 by 121 cm

R200 000 - 300 000



555

**Adriaan Boshoff**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935-2007

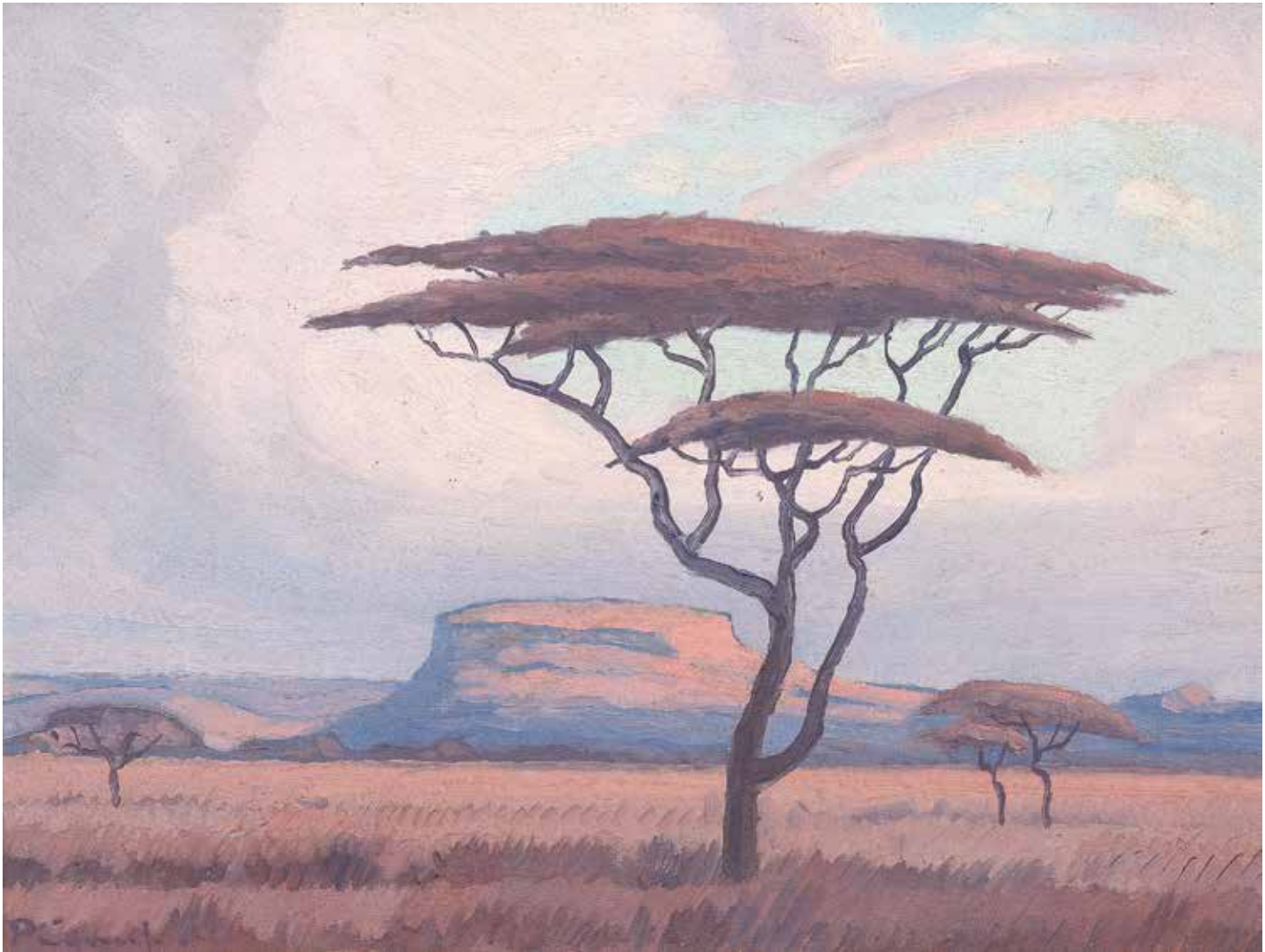
*Children Playing on the Beach*

signed

oil on canvasboard  
121 by 159,5cm

R300 000 - 500 000





556

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

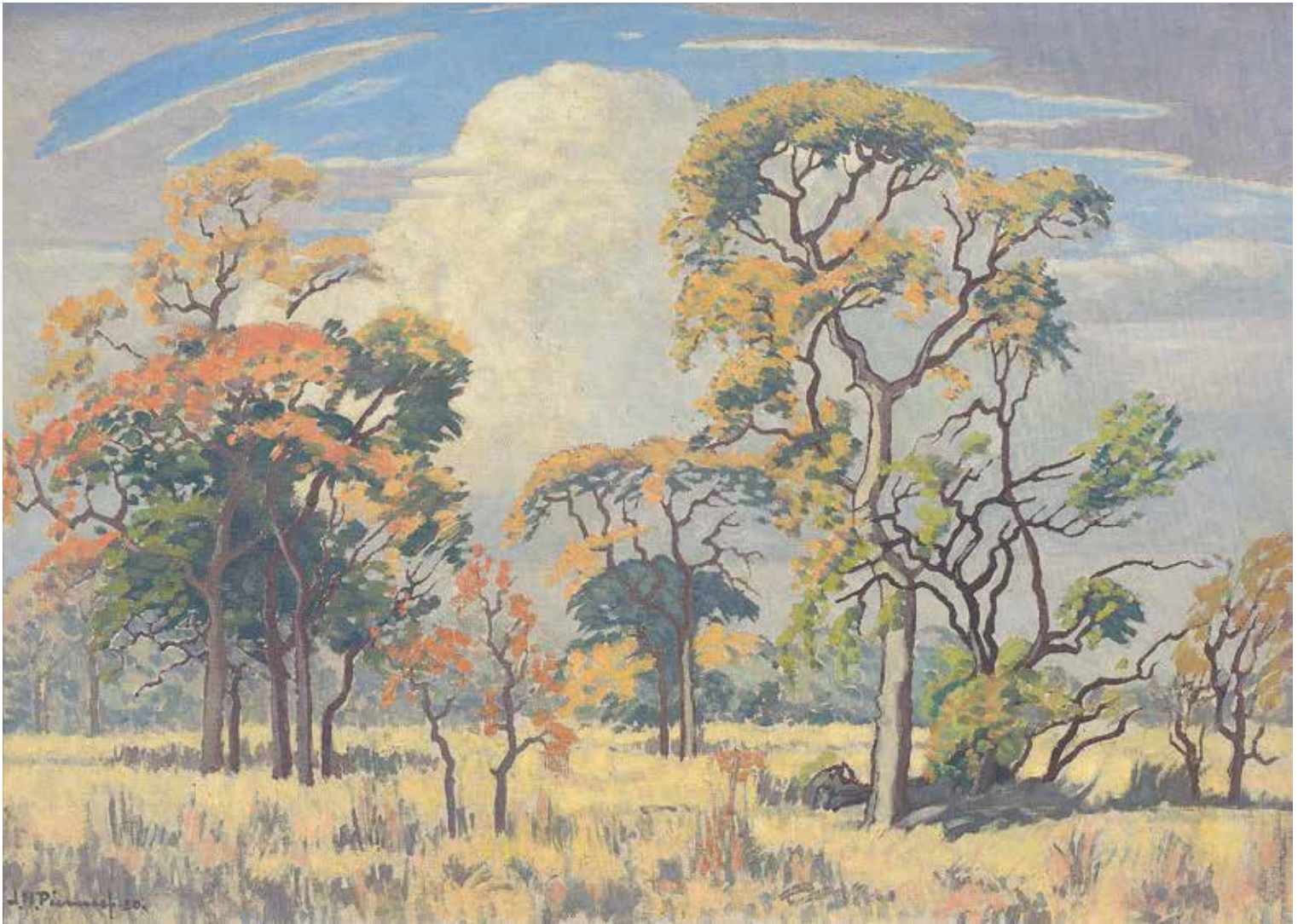
*Landscape with Acacia Tree*

signed; signed and inscribed 'Aan my vriend Roux, van Oom Hendrik. 27 Sept 44' on the reverse

oil on board

21 by 28cm

R250 000 - 350 000



557

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

***Bushveld Game Reserve***

signed and dated 50; inscribed with the title on the reverse  
oil on canvas  
40 by 55cm

**R2 000 000 - 3 000 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from the artist by the current owner's grandfather and thence by descent.

Painted in 1950, this landscape, titled *Bushveld Game Reserve*, is part of a theme and body of work which occupied the artist throughout his life. These bushveld landscapes from the 1940s and 1950s have certain formal compositional similarities but retain their unique distinctions, some with marked variations on that theme. This work, rendered in a lively palette of green, ochre, yellow, orange and red against a blue and grey sky, alludes to the time of year it was painted. Springtime also heralds the arrival of summer rains illustrated by the rising cumulonimbus cloud in the background.



558

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

**Yekiwe**

signed, dated 1929 and inscribed  
with the title  
charcoal on paper  
43 by 33cm

**R150 000 - 200 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, 1998.  
Private Collection.



559

**Anton van Wouw**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1862-1945

***The Mieliepap Eater***

signed and inscribed 'SA Joh-burg'  
and 'G Nisini fusé Roma'  
bronze with a dark brown patina,  
mounted on a marble base  
height: 17cm including base;  
base: 2,5cm

R350 000 - 450 000

**LITERATURE**

AE Duffey (2008) *Anton van Wouw:  
The Smaller Works*, Pretoria: Pretoria  
Book House. Another cast from the  
edition is illustrated on pages 71  
and 72.



560

**Maggie Laubser**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1973

*Portrait of a Youth*

signed

oil on cardboard laid down on board  
43 by 33,5cm

**R180 000 - 240 000**

**PROVENANCE**

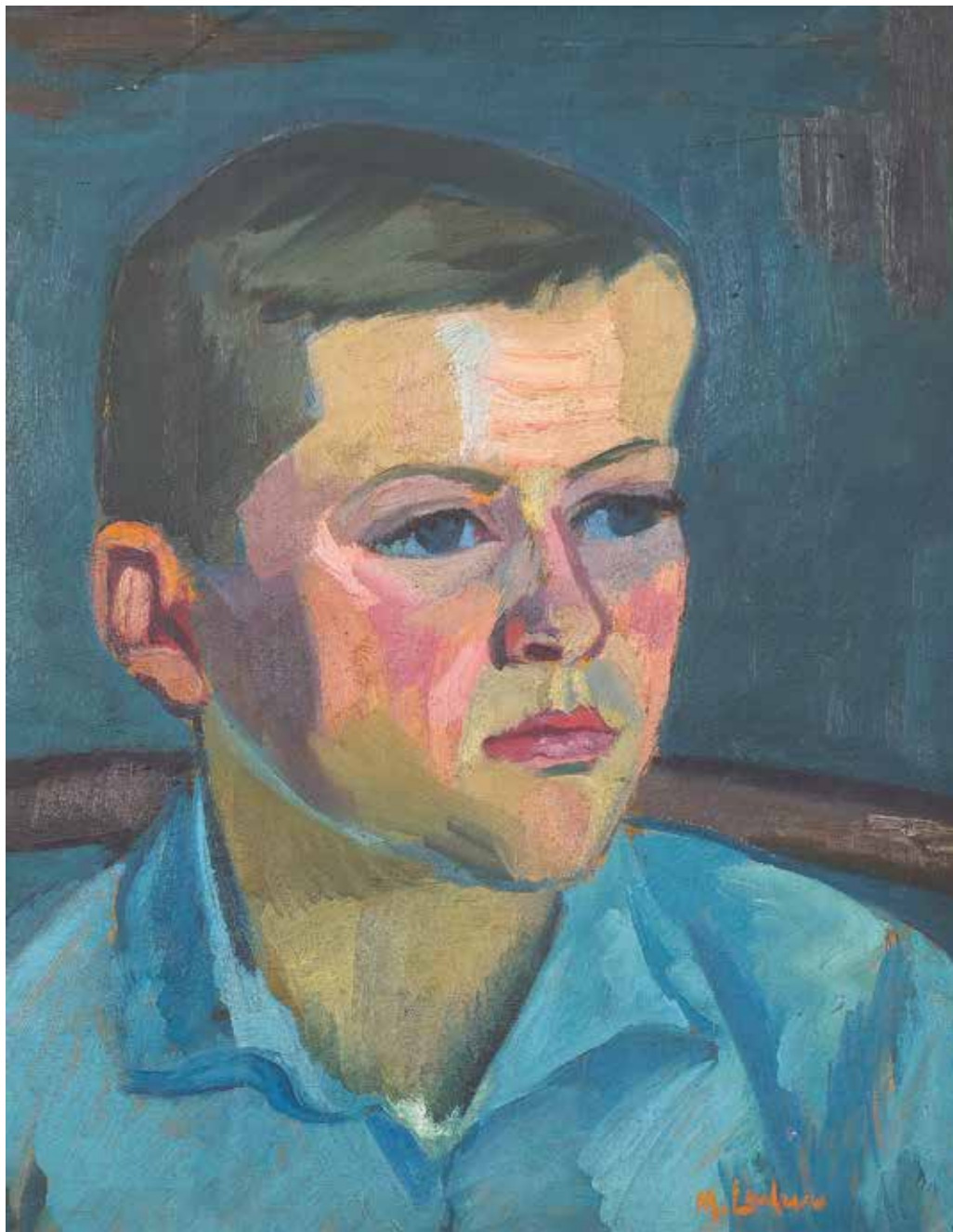
Kevin B Quinlivan, Cape Town.  
Mr and Mrs P Goldberg, Pretoria.  
Dr HK Silberberg, Tullbagh.  
Sanlam, Cape Town.  
Sotheby's, Johannesburg,  
3 December 1980, lot 89.  
Private Collection.

**EXHIBITED**

South African National Gallery, Cape  
Town, 1969, catalogue number 82.

**LITERATURE**

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser:  
Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*,  
Johannesburg and Cape Town:  
Perskor, illustrated on page 205,  
catalogue number 652.





561

**Maggie Laubser**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1973

***Birds on Water***

signed and dated '53 in pencil  
gouache on paper laid down on card  
33,5 by 45,5cm

R250 000 - 350 000

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from the artist by the current owner's mother and thence by descent.

**LITERATURE**

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*. Johannesburg and Cape Town: Perskor, illustrated on page 355, catalogue number 1562.

For an article in *Trek* magazine, artist May Hillhouse wrote of Laubser: "In her portrayal of the South African countryside, Maggie Laubser has drawn upon a deep human understanding to recreate for us her paintings of the ducks, the geese, the peasants surrounding her. It is the essence of the material thing that she offers us, a deep sense of the inner reality which transcends natural appearance. There is a stressing of essential form in the subjects chosen

rather than the accidental differences of one being and thing from another. The paintings of ducks and geese are in a sense all ducks and geese ... It is in this regard that Maggie Laubser shows creative and visual force ... there is a union of the artist with her motif, harmonising the expression into a concrete unity of subject and feeling."<sup>1</sup>

1. Muller Ballot (2016) *Maggie Laubser: A Window on Always Light*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, page 232.



562

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*Mountain Landscape  
with Clouds*

signed and dated 45

oil on board

39,5 by 49,5cm

R400 000 - 600 000

563

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

***Mountain Landscape***

signed  
oil on canvas  
64,5 by 49,5cm

**R2 000 000 - 3 000 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from the artist by the current owner's family in the 1930s.

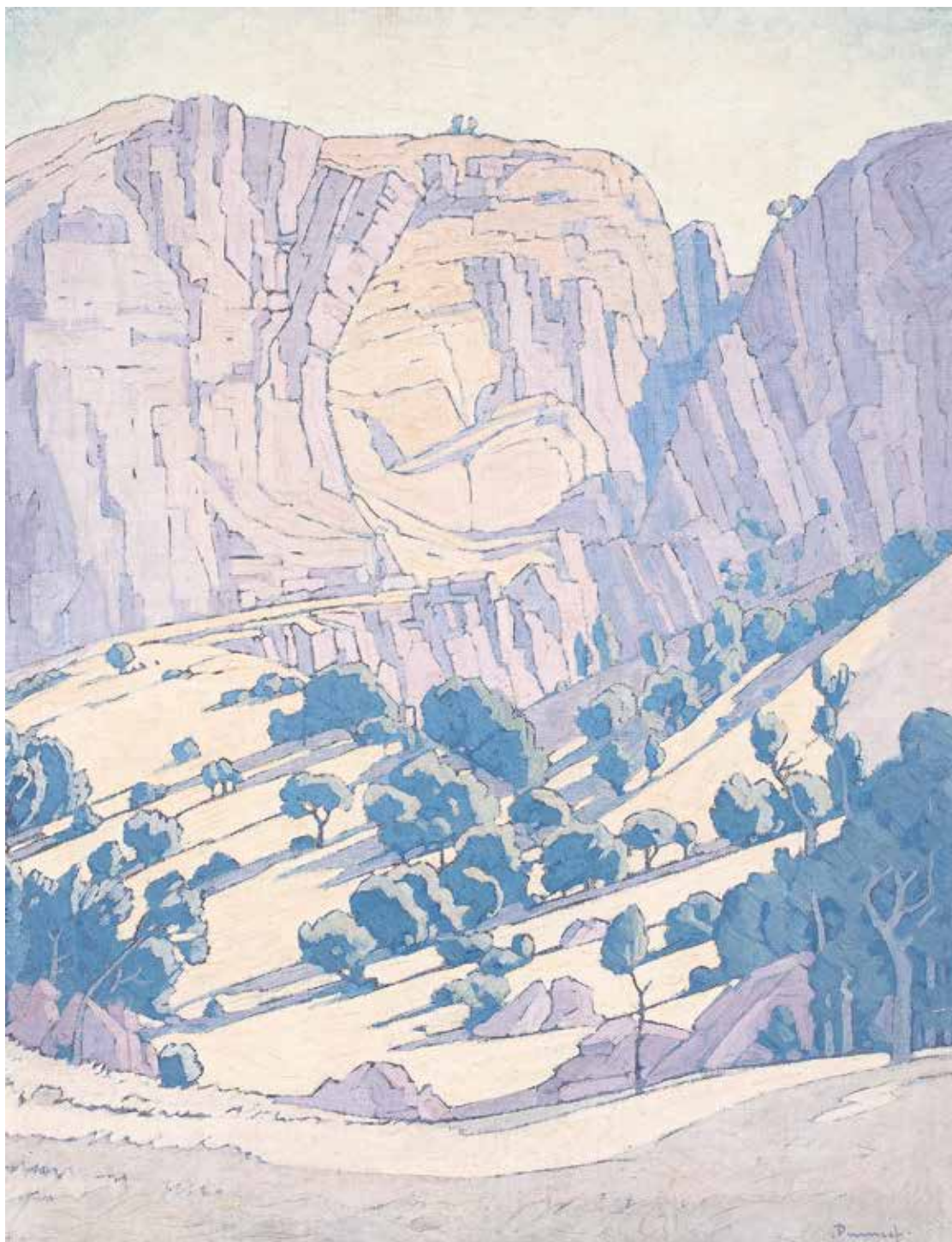
Painted during the early to mid-1930s at the time of the Station Panels and the South Africa House commission, this work originates from the artist's most celebrated stylistic period of production.

In order to fulfil the deadline of the Station Panel commission, the artist undertook a nationwide tour to capture a diverse and rich variety of pictorial splendour reflective of the South African landscape.

Such a project required great energy and discipline to conceive and complete 28 large scale works. Pierneef recorded these compositional candidates in drawings and paintings from which he would work in the studio. Whilst the drawings are fairly plentiful, paintings in this style and from this period are rare. The artist's style evolved, due to these time constraints and scale of the project, into what has been described as *massive monumental* and can be identified by generally large, flatly-painted dramatic compositions employing subtle, faceted tonal graduations, unifying the composition with precise and eloquent linear expression.

This work invites the viewer to wander into the composition and explore the varied textures and topography; from the soft grassy foreground and lightly wooded slopes to the majestic folded rocky cliff face above.

This work viewed from the artist's low vantage point makes full use of architectonic natural forms to generate a powerful ascending composition.





564

**Gregoire Boonzaier**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1909-2005

*Wasdag Dist. Ses*

signed and dated 1979; signed and  
inscribed with the title and 'No. 4' on  
the reverse

oil on canvas

65 by 86cm

R200 000 - 300 000

565

**Gregoire Boonzaier**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1909-2005

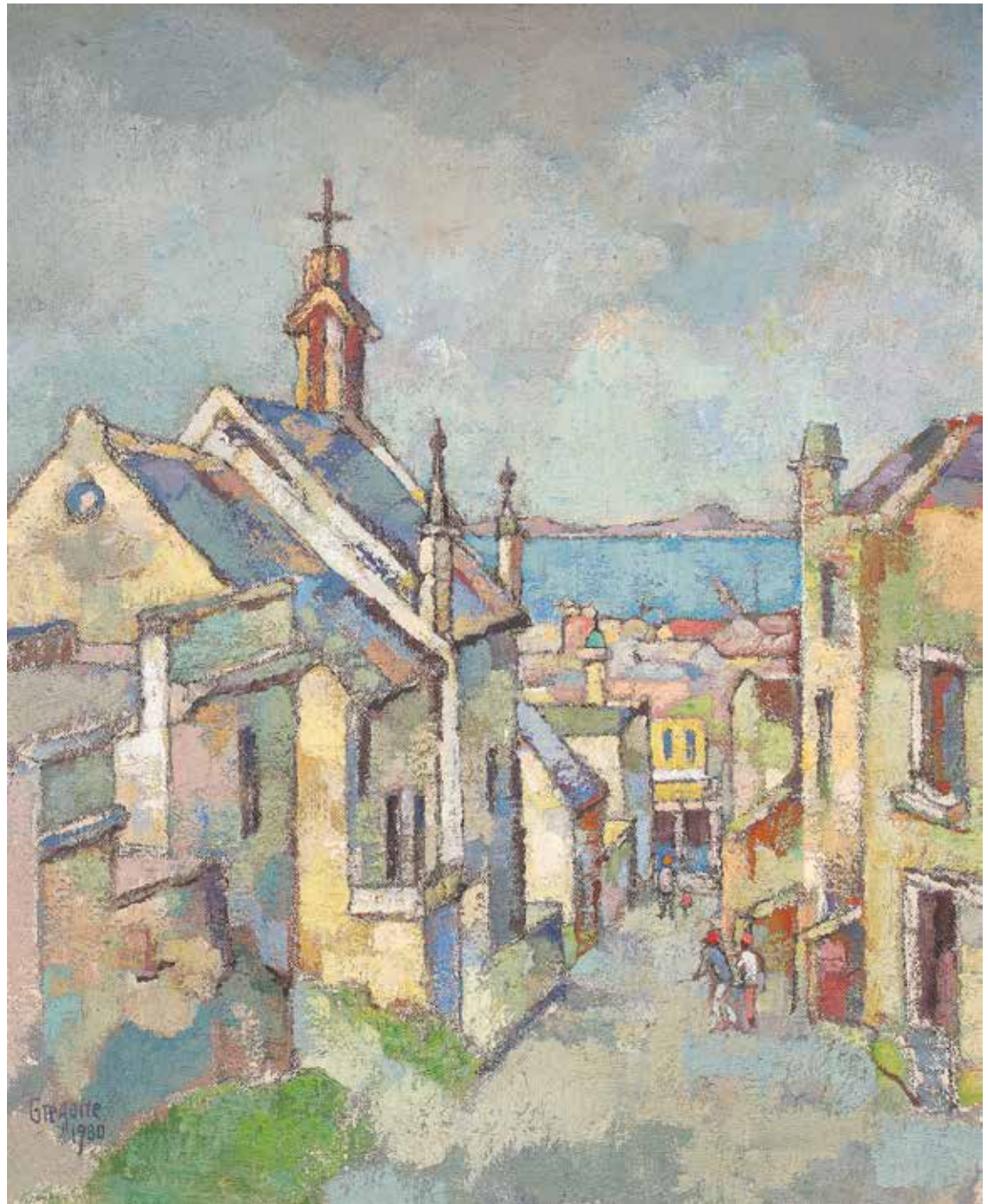
*Morawiese Kerk Dist. Ses*

signed and dated 1980; inscribed  
with the title and 'No.7' on the reverse

oil on canvas

75 by 62,5cm

R100 000 - 150 000



566

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

*Street Scene, Madeira*

signed and dated 1931

gouache on paper

48 by 37,5cm

R400 000 - 600 000



567

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

*In the Harem*

signed and dated 1945  
mixed media on paper, with raffia  
mount  
39 by 32cm, including mount

R400 000 - 600 000

**PROVENANCE**

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, 21 May  
1992.  
Private Collection.





568

### Irma Stern

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

#### Zanzibar Arab

signed and dated 1939; inscribed with the artist's name on a Pretoria Art Museum exhibition label adhered to the reverse  
oil on canvas  
67 by 64,5cm

R10 000 000 - 12 000 000

#### PROVENANCE

The Ivan Katzen Collection.  
Curries Auctioneers, Johannesburg,  
The "Ivan Katzen Collection" of Pretoria;  
*Important Works by Leading South African Artists as well as by Picasso and Clavé*, 17 November 1971, lot 35.  
Private Collection.

#### EXHIBITED

Martin Melck House, Cape Town,  
*Irma Stern: Exhibition of Paintings from Zanzibar*, 12 to 26 February 1940,  
catalogue number 9.  
Gainsborough Galleries,  
Johannesburg, *Irma Stern: Exhibition of Paintings from Zanzibar*, 3 to 10  
December 1940, catalogue number 7.

Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, *The Ivan Katzen Collection*, April 1968,  
catalogue number 38.

Curries Auctioneers, The Duncan Hall,  
Main City Hall Block, Johannesburg,  
15 to 17 November 1971, catalogue  
number 35, with the title *Zanzibar Arab*.

#### LITERATURE

A.J. Werth (1968) *The Ivan Katzen Collection*, Pretoria Art Museum,  
illustrated, catalogue number 38.  
Marion Arnold (1995) *A Feast for the Eye*, Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press,  
illustrated in colour on page 117.

On 14 June 1939, Irma Stern set sail aboard the Duvenage Castle for the island of Zanzibar on the Swahili Coast of East Africa, returning to Cape Town in mid-October. She would visit the island again in 1945, documenting her experiences by way of her published travel diary titled *Zanzibar*.<sup>1</sup>

In an interview with HT Lawless she describes her decision to travel, saying; "This is how I went to Zanzibar ..., tired of this infernal wind, I was walking down Adderly Street one morning in 1938, remembering the stories told by our old Arab cook ... when I was a child (he) used to spend the time of day reminiscing about his island home". Then, appearing to make fun at her own naiveté that disguised a more impulsive nature, she continues "... so I walked into a travel bureau and asked 'Can I motor to Zanzibar?'"<sup>2</sup>

Stern's interest in African travel had undoubtedly been sparked by her visits to the Senegalese capital of Dakar on the west coast, while en route to Europe in 1937 and 1938. For her extended four

month stay on the east coast island of Zanzibar, a British protectorate since 1890, Stern would stay as a guest of the provincial commissioner, Captain John O'Brian before taking residence in a large house across from the bazaar.<sup>3</sup>

From there she would become intoxicated by the island, proceeding to paint its inhabitants with a keen observation and attention to detail that has come to define the Zanzibar portraits as Stern's golden period. To these highly focussed depictions of character Stern brought her distinct brand of expressionism evident in the subtle colours of the present lot. This is perhaps most striking in the sitter's headdress, known as a *feta*, which is a pre-wound turban of golden thread particular to the Bohra people of Zanzibar. Belonging to the Ismaili sect of Islam, the Bohra arrived on the East Coast of Africa in the 19th century; their name denoting "merchant" from the Gujarati word *vohorvu* meaning "to trade".<sup>4</sup>

The bearded figure represented here in his later years, seems more

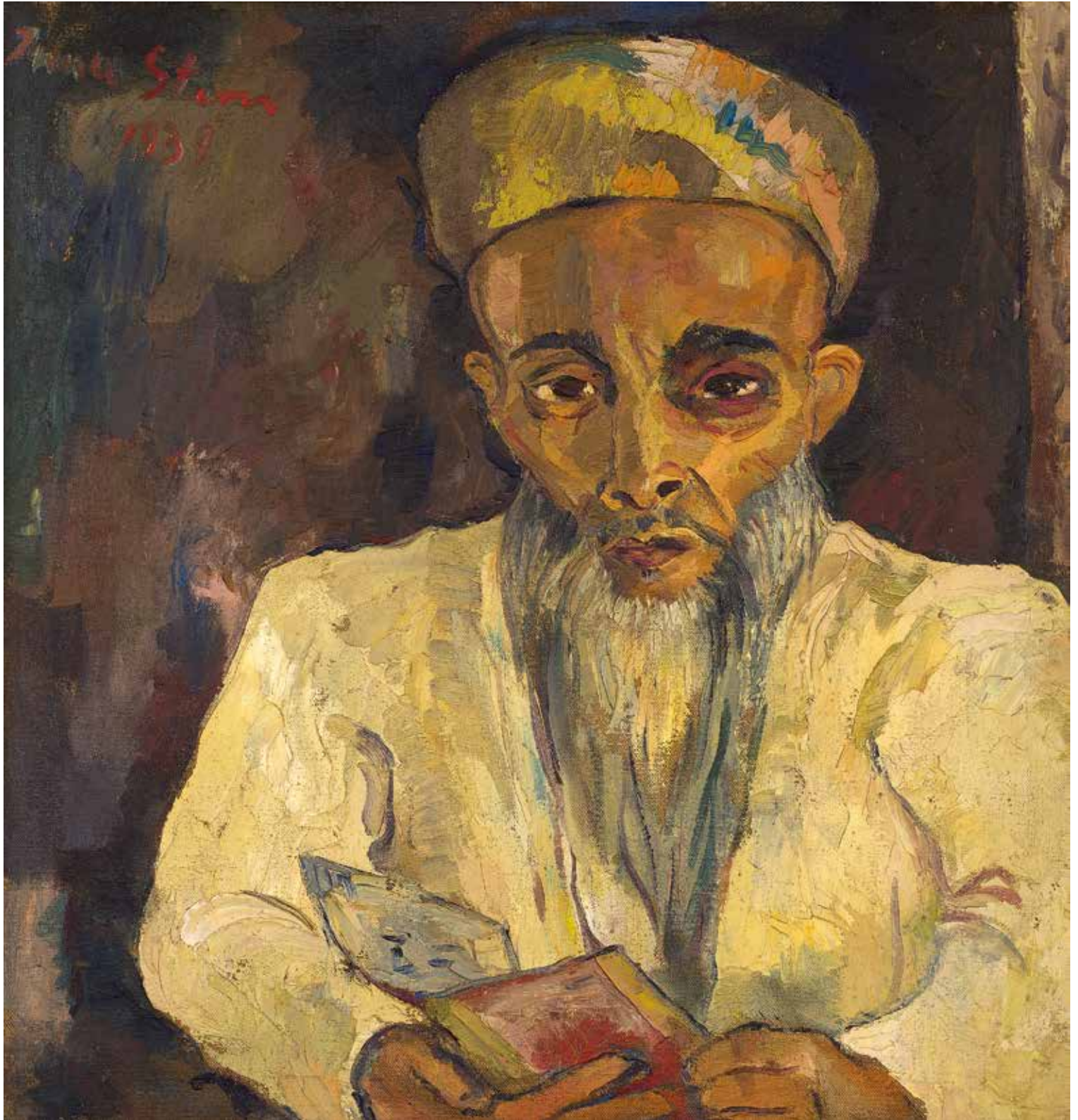
contemplative and is likely an Imam given the presence of a red bound manuscript resembling the Qu'ran. For Marion Arnold, Zanzibar offered Stern "contact with Islam and eastern customs ... with the paintings distinguished by the large number of portraits produced. These works indicate how successfully Stern was able to translate the exterior world into art when she trusted perception rather than imagination as the basis for making images."<sup>5</sup>

Enthusiastically received by critics and the general public alike, the work that Stern produced during these visits has come to define her as a portraitist. A commentator in the *Cape Times* would call her first exhibition of paintings from Zanzibar in February of 1940 a "veritable triumph for the artist".<sup>6</sup> Whilst the review in *Cape Argus* the next day would go further saying "The vitality and the sense of colour which you will find has always been implicit in Irma Stern's painting, but in the best work here there is an even greater sense of achievement".<sup>7</sup>

Describing Stern's process, Arnold

notes that "to render the human object life-like the artist has to locate visual devices to suggest non-visible attributes of character. As she gained experience, Stern developed a vocabulary that enabled her to fuse naturalistic detail with expressive mark and colour. In this way she particularises portraits, infusing outward appearance with a sense of inner energy and rendering reality persuasively"<sup>8</sup>

1. Irma Stern (1948) *Zanzibar*, Pretoria: Van Schaik publishers.
2. HT Lawless (15 March 1946) In the Limelight: Irma Stern, *Spotlight*.
3. *Ibid*.
4. Hatim Amiji (1975) The Bohras of East Africa, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol 7, no. 1, page 27.
5. Marion Arnold (1995) *Irma Stern: A Feast for the Eye*, Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, page 73.
6. E.R.P (Tuesday, 13 February 1940) Miss Irma Stern's Exhibition: Vital Pictures Inspired by Stay in Zanzibar, *The Cape Times*. Unpaginated.
7. (Monday, 12 February 1940) Irma Stern's Latest Exhibition; The Results of her Visit to Zanzibar, *The Cape Argus*, page 13.
8. Marion Arnold (1995) *Irma Stern: A Feast for the Eye*, Vlaeberg: Fernwood Press, page 99.





569

**Walter Battiss**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1982

*Figure in a Hadhramaut Cityscape*

signed

oil on canvas laid down on board

22,5 by 29,5cm

R150 000 - 200 000



570

**Walter Battiss**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1982

*Group of Figures*

signed

oil on canvas

50 by 61cm

R280 000 - 340 000

**PROVENANCE**

Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 16 October

2017, lot 609.

Private Collection.



*Luba figure*, image courtesy of The Irma Stern Museum.



Irma Stern, *Nude with Still Life*, 1948, image courtesy of The Irma Stern Museum.



Irma Stern, *Arum Lilies*, 1951, image courtesy of the Iziko South African National Gallery.

571

## Irma Stern

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

### *Nativ (sic) Idol*

signed and dated 1952  
oil on board  
90 by 60cm

**R1 800 000 - 2 400 000**

#### PROVENANCE

Stephan Welz & Co in Association with Sotheby's, Johannesburg, 2 November 1992, lot 432.

Illustrated and inscribed with the title in Irma Stern scrapbook, Irma Stern Museum Collection, Rosebank.

In the 1950s Irma Stern was in the mood for experimentation. Perhaps this was brought about by regular exposure to the continent of Europe which she had so longed for during the isolating years of the war.

In 1950, she exhibited at the Venice Biennale, and this exposure, together with the visits to Europe that followed, bear testimony to this desire to create a new mood in her work.

A greater tend to abstraction and a calligraphic use of the brush, with areas of the canvas played up and down, in texture and painterly weight, are characteristics of this time. This work portrays these aspects to an excellent degree, with the mysterious spaces in the background forming a dramatic contrast to the sensuality of the foreground.

The distortion of form, in this case of one of her favourite Luba figures, is brutally realised with a vertical

downward thrust to the supporting arm. The luscious split paw paw in a bowl adjoining the figure makes a dizzying organic statement which successfully celebrates the female form. The mysterious orange and green content of the supported bowl are either decorative or edible or both.

In the early 1950s, the artist painted several works focused on this Luba figure as well as the now famous Luba caryatid stool by the Master of Buli, a region of South East Congo made famous by this master carver of the late 19th, early 20th century.

These works, together with works featuring the masks from her Congolese collection, are formally realised with fruit and flowers and foliage, creating dramatic compositions which speak to the mystery and drama of the objects.

The Luba figure depicted here is in the Irma Stern Trust collection in the UCT Irma Stern Museum.

A gouache figure study of 1948, *Nude with Still Life*, in the Irma Stern Trust collection features this Luba item with a nude female model. The characteristic presence of fruit is central to the theme. The model and the figure are aligned in mood and form.

In the Iziko South African National Gallery collection we can see the masterful *Arum Lilies*, 1951, oil on canvas, which features the figure superbly enhanced by arum lilies and fruit.

Irma Stern was to make a third and final trip to the Congo in 1955.

Portraits and figure studies of this period are heavily influenced by the masks which she brought back, and which can be seen in the passage of the Museum where they were displayed in her day.

Christopher Peter  
*Irma Stern Museum*, 2017



572

**Maggie Laubser**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1973

*Landscape with Houses,  
a Figure and a Cow*

signed  
oil on board  
45 by 39,5cm

**R300 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Mr PJ Naudé, Durban.  
Thence by descent to the current  
owner.

**LITERATURE**

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser:  
Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*,  
Johannesburg and Cape Town:  
Perskor, illustrated on page 376,  
catalogue number 1692.

In the late 1940s, Laubser moved from her family's farm to a house in the Strand that she named 'Altyd Lig' (Always Light), where she would live for the rest of her life. After this move, she continued working within the various themes and tropes that she had become well known for such as in the present lot: landscapes with villages, women carrying bundles of sticks, and livestock. However, these works were now mostly constructed from memory as is the case here. Dalene Marais explains this: "Where figures are usually small in the landscapes, birds, trees, cattle, and houses are generally big. It is as if these diminishing figures become a symbol of Maggie's physical withdrawal from nature in this phase."<sup>1</sup>

1. Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser:  
Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*.  
Johannesburg: Perskor, page 55.



573

**Maggie Laubser**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1973

***Bird and Boats***

signed and dated '67

oil on board

50 by 39,5cm

**R400 000 - 600 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Mr PJ Naudé, Durban.

Thence by descent to the current owner.

**LITERATURE**

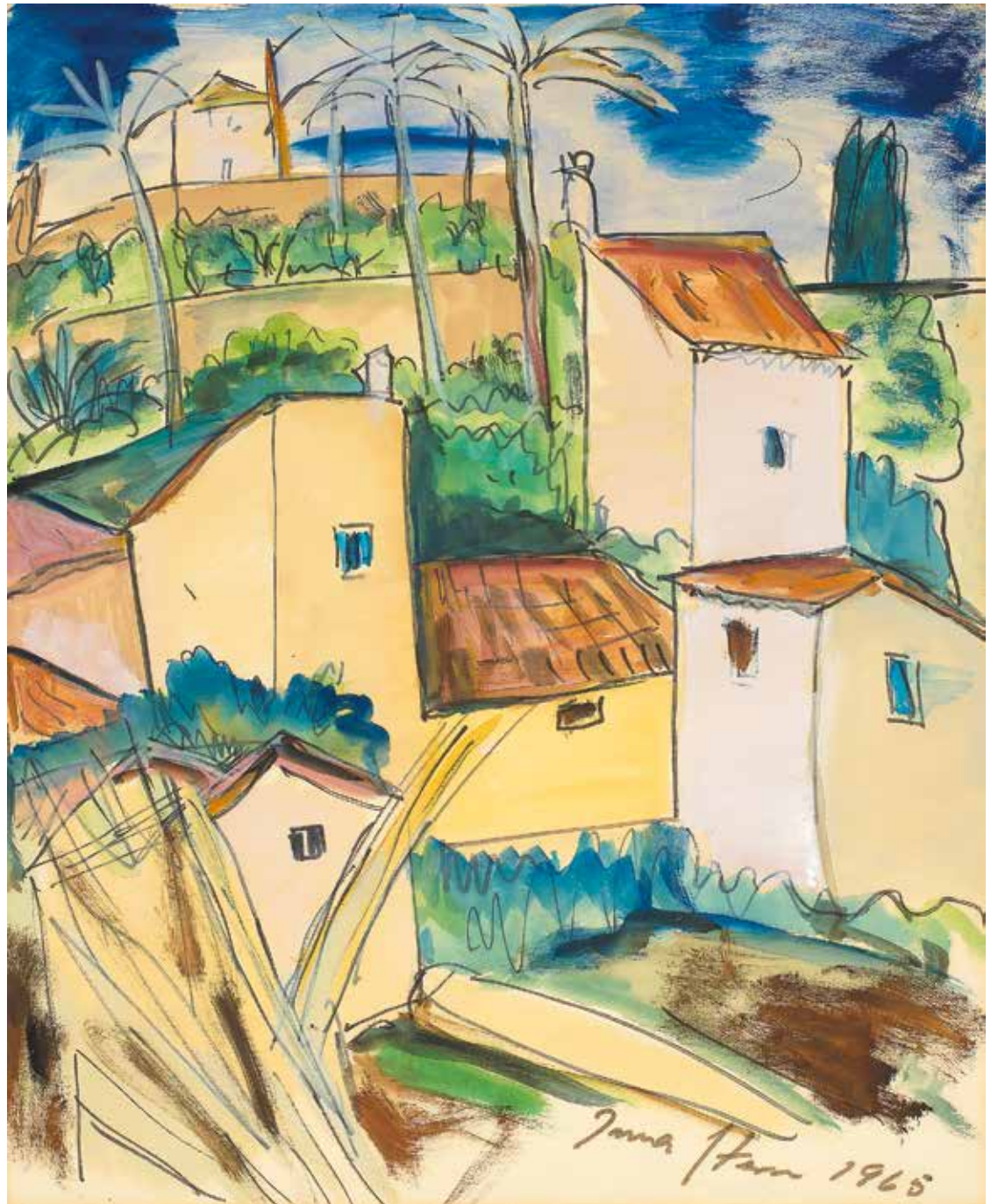
Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*, Johannesburg and Cape Town: Perskor, illustrated on page 362, catalogue number 1606.

In her later life, Laubser revisited the many motifs with which her oeuvre had become synonymous. Both the sea and birds held a special place in her heart, as she was intrigued and energised by their freedom of movement.<sup>1</sup> During her last decade, many of Laubser's birds were an oversized focal point, becoming stylised and dominating the picture plane "while texture and descriptive colours appear in the background."<sup>2</sup> In the present lot, against a backdrop of mountains and billowing clouds, the bird wades in the surf where the reflections of the sailboats dance on placid water.

1. Muller Ballot (2016) *Maggie Laubser: A Window on Always Light*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press, page 266.
2. Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*, Johannesburg and Cape Town: Perskor, page 56.







574

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

*French Riviera*

signed and dated 1965

mixed media on paper

54 by 44,5cm

R180 000 - 240 000

PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by  
the current owner's mother and  
thence by descent.



575

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

*Repairing Fishing Nets on  
the Quay*

signed and dated 1963

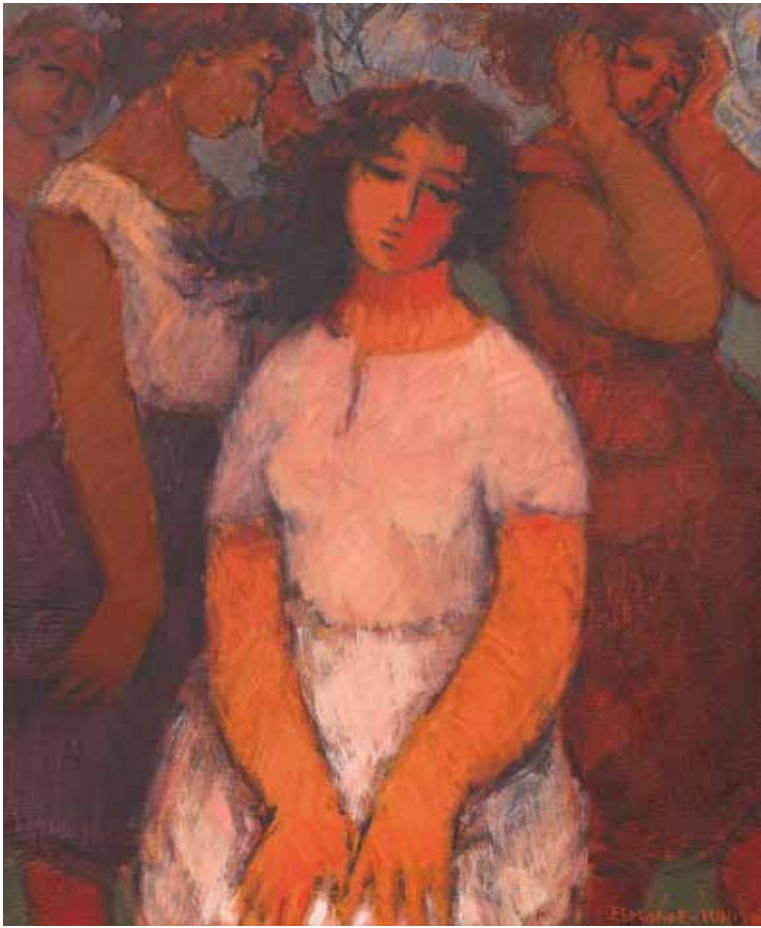
oil on canvas

89 by 69cm

R2 000 000 - 3 000 000

PROVENANCE

Strauss & Co, Johannesburg,  
1 November 2010, lot 210.



576

**Eleanor Esmonde-White**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1914-2007

*A Group of Women*

signed  
oil on canvas  
60 by 50cm

R120 000 - 160 000



577

**Andrew Verster**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1937-2020

*Seated Woman*

signed and dated 86  
oil on canvas  
147,5 by 111cm

R100 000 - 150 000



578

**Alexis Preller**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911-1975

***Woman in Blue***

signed and dated '39

oil on board

40 by 31,5cm

**R200 000 - 300 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Taffy Whipman Gallery,  
Johannesburg, circa 1960s.  
Private Collection.



579

**Edward Wolfe**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1897-1982

***Group of Women Beneath a Tree,  
Taxco, Mexico***

signed

oil on canvas

70 by 78cm

**R80 000 - 120 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephen Welz & Co in Association  
with Sotheby's, Johannesburg,  
6 November 1984, lot 129.  
Private Collection.

**LITERATURE**

Stephan Welz (1989) *Art at Auction in  
South Africa: Twenty Years of Sotheby's/  
Stephan Welz & Co 1969-1989*,  
Johannesburg: AD. Donker, illustrated  
in colour on page 170.

580

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

*Two Seated Women*

signed and dated 1959

oil on card  
62 by 49cm

R400 000 - 600 000





581

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

*Mother and Child*

signed and dated 1961

oil on canvas

72 by 53cm

**R1 200 000 - 1 600 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Strauss & Co, Johannesburg, 30 June  
2014, lot 204.

Private Collection.



582

**Maud Sumner**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902-1985

*Jeune fille près de la table rose*

signed and dated 34; inscribed with the artist's name, Paris address and title on a Salon des Tuileries label adhered to the reverse  
oil on canvas  
58,5 by 48cm

**R300 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Property of Kangra Group (Pty) Ltd.  
Assembled by the Late Graham and Rhona Beck.

583

**Jean Welz**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1900-1975

*Still Life with Fig Branch*

signed and dated 46; inscribed on the reverse in pencil 'To Sir Alfred Beit, Nov 1948'

oil on panel  
19,5 by 49,5cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz & Co in Association with Sotheby's, Cape Town, *The Collection of Sir Alfred and Lady Beit*, 27 May 1991, lot 625.

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, 13 January 1992.

Private Collection.



584

**Freida Lock**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902-1962

*A White Hyacinth on a Chair*

signed and dated 60

oil on board  
70 by 60cm

**R150 000 - 200 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz & Co in Association with Sotheby's, Johannesburg, 8 May 2000, lot 769.

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, 2000.  
Private Collection.



585

**Irma Stern**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894-1966

***Still Life with Lilies***

signed and dated 1947

oil on canvas

83 by 76,5cm

**R13 000 000 - 15 000 000**

**PROVENANCE**

A gift from the artist to her brother Rudi Stern, and thence by descent. Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 10 October 2016, lot 590. Private Collection.

**LITERATURE**

Marion I. Arnold (1995) *Irma Stern: A Feast for the Eye*, Cape Town: Fernwood Press, illustrated in colour on page 145.

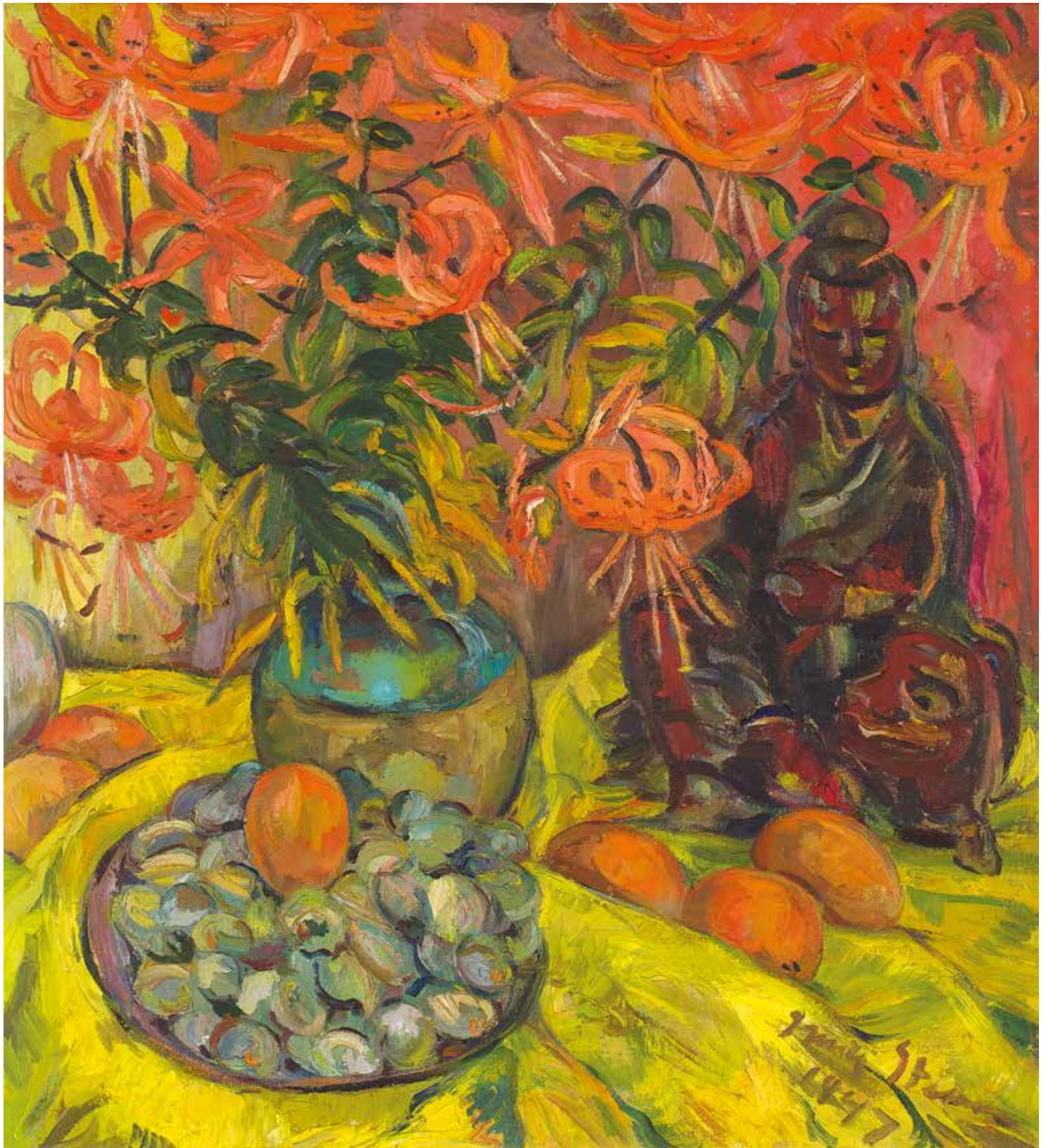
Irma Stern painted still-life scenes throughout her prolific career. These compositions served an important function in relation to her overall practice. "She did not attain the fluent and evocative style that characterizes her mature paintings, from about 1935, without effort," writes art historian Marion Arnold. "Object painting enabled her both to experiment with paint application and to determine how she related to empirical reality. The physicality of objects – their materials, surfaces and forms – presented a challenge: description had to be balanced with expression."<sup>1</sup> Stern would also use the genre of still life as a "testing ground for colour experiments", writes Arnold. Given the preponderance of figurative elements – here a Buddha sculpture – it is possible to infer a relationship with her understanding of the human form too. These formal considerations are, though, subsumed by a bias against botanical still lifes. The genre, writes Arnold, is viewed as a "popular, light-weight, purely decorative art".<sup>2</sup> Arnold has argued for a reappraisal of Stern's floral still lifes, stating that they

possess diverse meanings related to commercial enterprise and the ecology.<sup>3</sup> Stern's choice of ornamental tiger lilies in this painting is instructive. Tiger lilies flower in shades from salmon-orange to orange-red in late summer and autumn. They are not indigenous to South Africa. Their exuberant flowers are unlike the delicate blooms of the Southern Cape. Their "untidy leaf structure" and "wonderful abundance" were, however, perfectly suited to Stern's expressive style of painting.<sup>4</sup> Emil Nolde, an important German-Danish painter and member of Die Brücke group of expressionist painters, also painted tiger lilies. Nolde's reputation was partly staked on the "storms of colour" his works presented, which is an appropriate description for this brilliantly coloured canvas too. The vessels and objects in *Still Life with Lilies* merit description. The vase, a partly glazed Chinese storage jar thought to date from the Yuan dynasty, formed part of Irma Stern's personal collection. The Buddha figure, however, is of unknown provenance. It was not listed in the sale of Stern's estate at Ashbey's Galleries in 1968. It is thought to have

been disposed of earlier, or may have been loaned. Stern collected widely and her collection included several other Buddha statues, as well as religious artefacts from Africa, Asia and Europe. Stern attributed aesthetic – rather than religious – significance to these objects. Mona Berman writes: "Irma's eclectic but priceless collection had nothing to do with her religious beliefs or absence of them. She acquired the artworks as an artist and a collector, not for their religious associations."<sup>5</sup>

Strauss & Co achieved a record price for a Stern still life in May 2019. *Still Life with Fruit and Dahlias* (1946) sold for R16 157 600.

1. Marion I. Arnold (1995) *Irma Stern: A Feast for the Eye*, Cape Town: Fernwood Press, page 139.
2. Marion I. Arnold (2001) 'Petals and Stigmas', in *South African Botanical Art*, Cape Town: Fernwood, page 148.
3. *Ibid*, page 148.
4. Interview with Christopher Peter, Director, Irma Stern Museum, 25 August 2016.
5. Mona Berman (2003) *Remembering Irma: Irma Stern: A Memoir with Letters*, Cape Town: Double Storey Books, page 136.



586

**Gregoire Boonzaier**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1909-2005

*Ou Eikeboom op die Braak,  
Suurbraak, K.P.*

signed and dated 1966; inscribed  
with the artist's name and the title  
on the reverse

oil on canvas

40 by 50cm

R150 000 - 200 000



587

**Gregoire Boonzaier**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1909-2005

*Semi-detached Houses, Cape*

signed and dated 1951

oil on canvas

39 by 59,5cm

R100 000 - 150 000



588

**Maud Sumner**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902-1985

*Leaves and Flowers in a Grey Jug*

signed

oil on canvas

87 by 84,5cm

R250 000 - 350 000



589

**Maud Sumner**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902-1985

*Namibian Landscape*

signed  
oil on canvas  
53 by 63,5cm

R80 000 - 120 000



590

**Maud Sumner**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902-1985

*Brandberg*

signed; inscribed with the title and 'No 17' on the stretcher and further inscribed with the artist's name and title on an Everard Read Gallery label adhered to the reverse  
oil on canvas  
59 by 119cm

R120 000 - 160 000

**PROVENANCE**

Everard Read Gallery, Johannesburg.  
Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, 1998.  
Private Collection.



591

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*Landscape, South West Africa*

oil on canvas  
29,5 by 37cm

R120 000 - 180 000

PROVENANCE

Estate Late Erich Mayer.



592

**Erik Laubscher**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927-2013

*Rooi Heuwel*

signed and dated 98; signed, dated  
and inscribed with the title on the  
reverse

oil on canvas  
51 by 85cm

R80 000 - 120 000

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist by the  
current owner.





593

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*Stellenbosch Landscape*

signed and dated 21

oil on canvas

40 by 55cm

R450 000 - 650 000

Claude Monet's extensive collection of Japanese woodblock prints still hangs in the dining room of his house at Giverny, in France. The artists of "The Floating World", as the Japanese woodblock printers are often called, had had a profound influence of the manner in which Monet composed his landscapes, creating a veritable bird's-eye view of the French countryside.

George Smithard introduced JH Pierneef to Japanese woodblock prints when he showed the young artist the ropes of the linocut technique. Not only did these prints influence Pierneef's own linocuts, they also set the tone for many of the compositions of his varied and extensive landscapes.

In the present lot Pierneef seems to invite the viewer to "dive" into the

foreground of this Cape winelands scene, ending up in the middle ground among a clump of trees, only to be challenged to scale the mountains in the background – truly a roller coaster ride! The perception of this landscape is that of great movement, of virile animation.

In addition, the viewer is seemingly also given the choice of angle from which to approach this flight: pathways



are suggested in the three diagonals in the foreground: one on the left, another at the centre, in the form of a ploughed furrow, and a third on the right in the form of a green thicket along what appears to be a stream.

Beyond the trees these pathways seem to refract again but now in the opposite direction. In addition, the silhouette of the mountain range in

the background has its own network of diagonals.

Pierneef rejoiced in painting the farms in the Stellenbosch valley. He often visited the town, exhibiting in the local Town Hall in 1921, and staying with JFW Grosskopf, who wrote the very first Pierneef biography, published in 1945. Pierneef exhibited the same suite of paintings in the Ashbey Hall, Long

Street, Cape Town, in October 1921. Praising Pierneef, *Die Burger* stated that "... many people were amazed to see how successfully the painter captures the vastness and mystery of the African plains and mountains and friendly old farmhouse. Pierneef can be very proud of himself. He has given the people of the Cape something new and they have appreciated it."

594

**Jacob Hendrik Pierneef**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886-1957

*Extensive Mountain Landscape*

signed and dated 32  
oil on artist's board  
45,5 by 55cm

R600 000 - 800 000





595

**Adolph Jentsch**

GERMAN/NAMIBIAN 1888-1977

*Extensive Landscape*

signed with the artist's initials and  
dated 1943

oil on canvas

69 by 98cm

**R300 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz & Co in Association  
with Sotheby's, Johannesburg,  
8 October 1980, lot number 118.  
Private Collection.



596

**Adolph Jentsch**

GERMAN/NAMIBIAN 1888-1977

*South West African Landscape*

signed with the artist's initials and dated 1943; signed and numbered 12.96 twice and inscribed "Mitte Wind III" on the reverse

oil on canvas

69 by 99cm

**R500 000 - 700 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Strauss & Co, Johannesburg, 1 June 2015, lot 221.

Private Collection.



Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (*Luncheon on the Grass*), 1863

Image Courtesy: © RMN (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski



Walter Battiss, *The Early Men*, 1938

597

## Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1982

### *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*

signed, inscribed with the title in part on a Michael Stevenson Gallery label on the reverse  
oil on canvas  
41 by 50,5cm

**R500 000 - 700 000**

#### PROVENANCE

Acquired directly from the artist by Linda Givon, Goodman Gallery. Private Collection.  
Linda Givon, Goodman Gallery, circa 1980.  
Michael Stevenson, Cape Town, circa 2004.  
Property of Kangra Group (Pty) Ltd Assembled by the Late Graham and Rhona Beck, 2005.

In broad overview, French impressionism and German expressionism exerted the greatest influence on progressive South African painters in the earlier twentieth-century. As is evident from this late-career work by Walter Battiss, an effortless reimagining of Édouard Manet's well-known picnic scene, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1862-63), his allegiance remained steadfastly Gallic throughout his life. This assertion requires qualification. As a young artist Battiss revered post-impressionists like Paul Cézanne and Vincent van Gogh. In 1938, at age 32, he travelled abroad for the first time. His itinerary included a stopover in Paris. Painted shortly after his return home in a shock of insight, *The Early Men* (1938) announced his "break" with impressionism in favour of a style more directly influenced by South Africa's early rock artists.<sup>1</sup>

This posthumously announced divorce was never total. The subject of *The Early Men*, four naked figures in a landscape, reiterated a stock motif of classical and early modernist European painting: undressed bodies at leisure in nature. Battiss would return to this subject throughout his many stylistic periods. Works like *The Early Men*, *Figures and Rocks* (c.1940) and *Boys'*

*Swimming Pool* (1948-49) prefigure his late-career reinterpretations of Manet's *Le Déjeuner*. Battiss produced two nearly contemporaneous variations of Manet's work. Also undated, *Le Déjeuner*, *Millionaire with Two Nubile Girls* similarly depicts three naked figures in a woodland setting using the same casual brush style. This lot more directly riffs on Manet's original, particularly in the arrangement of figures. Most likely painted in the mid to late 1970s, when the hues of his palette softened, the work is an expression of the artist's lifelong vision of harmonious coexistence.

More than just a reiteration of Manet, Battiss used the work of an esteemed precursor to declare his break with tradition. In her 1971 book *Realism*, a study of later nineteenth-century French painting, art historian Linda Nochlin describes Manet's *Le Déjeuner* as a "straight-faced juxtaposition of classical elevation and contemporary banality" in which the cosmopolitan picnic presents itself as a juncture of "eternal nature and transitory worldly fashion".<sup>2</sup> Battiss, who abjured "the hot wheel of civilisation," rarely explored metropolitan insecurities in his work.<sup>3</sup> His art as a whole is the expression of a sensualist who paused to

appreciate the scent of grass, of leaves, of rocks, who celebrated sunbathing and nudism, and whose euphoric bush wanderings in the presence of "birds and fearless animals" offered him an opportunity, as he wrote in 1965, to encounter "the world as it was a million years ago".<sup>4</sup>

It bears noting that *Le Déjeuner*, besides being much debated has also been frequently imitated and parodied. In 1978, roughly the time period out which this work originated, Neville Dubow, a friend and work colleague of Battiss, produced a sequence of eight black and white photographs based on Manet's painting, titled *Déjeuner Variations 2, Reductive Luncheon*. Like Battiss, Dubow also undressed the notoriously clothed male protagonist in the foreground of *Le Déjeuner*.

1. Walter Battiss (1960), note affixed to rear of *The Early Men* dated 17 October 1960. *The Early Men* was sold at Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 16 October 2017, lot 598, for R511 560.
2. Linda Nochlin (1971) *Realism*, London: Penguin Books. Pages 19 & 137
3. Walter Battiss (1965) *Limpopo*, Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik. Page 20
4. *Ibid.*



598

**Alexis Preller**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911-1975

*The Kraal*

signed and dated '51  
oil on panel  
25,5 by 30,5cm

R800 000 - 1 200 000



*Mapogga Kraal*, photograph Constance Stuart  
Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art  
Smithsonian Institution



Alexis Preller, *The Kraal II*, 1948  
Image courtesy of the Iziko South African National Gallery

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz & Co in Association with Sotheby's, Johannesburg, 2 November 1992, lot 427.  
Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, 13 May 1993.  
Private Collection.

**LITERATURE**

Stephan Welz (1996) *Art at Auction in South Africa: The Art Market Review 1969 to 1995*, Johannesburg: Art Link, illustrated in colour on page 159.  
cf Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Africa, the Sun and Shadows*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, two similar examples illustrated on page 117, title *Kraal I* and *Kraal II*.  
cf Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Collected Images*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, a similar example illustrated on page 71, titled *Kraal II*.  
cf Esmé Berman (1983) *Art and Artist's of South Africa*, Cape Town: Southern Book Publishers, a similar example illustrated on page 71, titled *Kraal II*.

*Kraal II* is in the permanent collection of the Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town.

"Alexis Preller was captivated by the mystique of the 'Mapogga' [Ndebele] people. Their rituals, their architecture and their traditional dress seemed to him to have descended from the dawn of time. The Ndebele villages thus became enduring source material for his vision of eternal Africa."<sup>1</sup>

In 1948, Preller gave expression to his vision of a Ndebele village in a painting he called *The Kraal* and, even though it was selected to travel on the Overseas Exhibition of South African Art, Preller was not completely satisfied with the work. So, in the same year, he started over and produced a substantially larger work, also titled *The Kraal*, in which he transformed the reality of the homestead into a complex, brilliant and mysterious tableau, a poetic image of African life. It was one of the most ambitious and complex compositions that he had yet attempted.<sup>2</sup>

Then in 1951 he returned again to the same subject with a much smaller painting, the present lot, also titled *The Kraal*. At first glance this work appears to be a detail of the large 1948 painting. Yet this is a much more stylised, bolder and pared down rendition in comparison to the earlier paintings. Once again, Preller has placed the head of a woman at the bottom of the picture plane, in this instance a more sculptural bald head,

that establishes the initial viewpoint over the village complex.

As in the previous two paintings the most startling elements are the ritual objects. In complete defiance of the proportions of the people and architecture, these ritual objects have been scaled up to triumphal size. They objectify the community's belief system and they dominate the kraal. As Berman and Nel point out, none of these objects is actually of Ndebele origin. The bright red animal form is inspired by a Baga artefact from Guinea and is portrayed here as large enough to support the bowl-shaped drum that carries a lighted candle, a familiar Preller 'household god'.

In the distance beyond the irregular Ndebele houses, the artist places a huge egg, another Preller icon, in the enshrined stockade that is traditionally both a corral for cows and a burial ground for the ancestors. Preller scatters a number of highly stylised birds that allude to a Baga sculpture throughout this imagined village instead of his more typical egrets, which in some African belief systems are considered to harbour the spirits of the ancestors.

1. Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Volume II, Collected Images*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, page 71.
2. *Ibid.*





599

**Maurice van Essche**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1977

*Karoo*

signed and dated 65; inscribed with  
the artist's name and title on the  
reverse

oil on board

75,5 by 106cm

R180 000 - 240 000



600

**Maurice van Essche**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1977

*Still Life in the Artist's Studio*

signed and dated 68

oil on board

64 by 98cm

R250 000 - 350 000

Maurice van Essche settled in South Africa in 1940, when expressionist painting was still in its ascendancy. His training under James Ensor in Belgium and Henri Matisse in the French Riviera town of Cagnes uniquely equipped Van Essche to contribute towards the advancement of painting in a parochial art scene still awed by the theatrics of impressionist facility. A member of the New Group, Van Essche is best known for his stylised depictions of tall Congolese

women and stoic Coloured fishermen, although he also depicted clowns and still-life scenes. This lot dates from the final years of Van Essche's professorship (1962–70) at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, where he was first employed as a lecturer in 1952. Unlike his earliest still lifes, in which he attempted to rehearse the precision of Flemish painting, Van Essche's late-career works were expressive mood pieces. Loosely painted, albeit with a clear sense of

design and understanding of colour, Van Essche frequently juxtaposed art objects (brushes, tubes of paint, drawings, paintings, sculptures) with perishable comforts (fruit, vegetables, fish). Less consciously decorative than his figure paintings, these introspective genre pieces communicate a harmonious unity between the disparate elements – including, here, the cut apple, two playing cards and work-in-progress composition at left.





601

**Cecil Skotnes**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926-2009

*Head*

signed and dated 99; inscribed with the artist's name, title and 'No. 19' on the reverse

carved, painted and incised wood panel in the artist's handmade frame  
130 by 125 by 5cm including frame

**R250 000 - 350 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Property of Kangra Group (Pty) Ltd.  
Assembled by the Late Graham and  
Rhona Beck.



602

**Cecil Skotnes**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926-2009

***Brandenberg***

signed and dated 91  
oil on panel, in the artist's handmade  
frame

122 by 134cm, including artist's frame

R500 000 - 700 000

**PROVENANCE**

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town.  
Private Collection.



603

**Walter Battiss**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1982

*Abstract Figures*

signed

oil on canvas

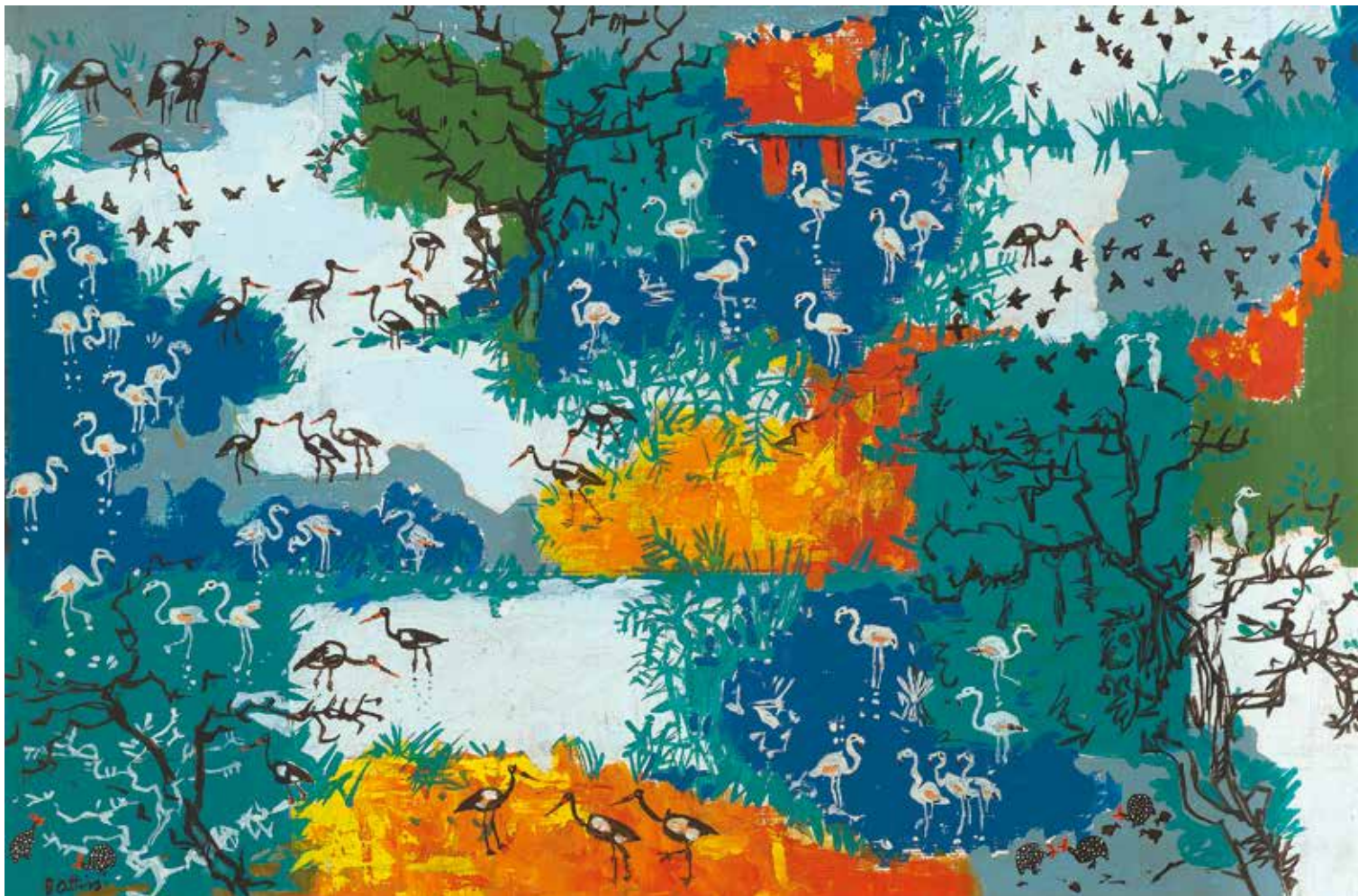
44,5 by 34,5cm

R300 000 - 500 000

PROVENANCE

Bonhams, London, 10 September  
2008, lot 402.

Property of Kangra Group (Pty) Ltd.  
Assembled by the Late Graham and  
Rhona Beck.



604

**Walter Battiss**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1982

**Birds**

signed  
oil on board  
40 by 60cm

**R300 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from the artist by the current owner's grandmother and thence by descent.

Birds recur as a fond subject in a number of drawings, prints, canvas paintings and tapestries by Walter Battiss. A skilled draughtsman capable of fine realistic depictions, Battiss nonetheless shunned the precision of encounter favoured by celebrated bird artists like John James Audubon and Edward Lear. His mature work translated the techniques of local rock painters, which Battiss in 1945 summarised as "the serenity and dignity of statement made with the machinery of form".<sup>1</sup> The artist's awareness of birds was primed by his Karoo upbringing and frequent bushveld rambles as an adult, initially to study and archive rock art

at various sites across Southern Africa, and in later years on camping trips in the Limpopo Valley. "Sometimes in the bush," Battiss wrote in 1965, "the world is full of birds. The sky is merely space between the birds, trees cease to exist as trees but as spaces in between birds."<sup>2</sup> This lot offers a fine distillation of his enraptured wonder at the bush and its avian inhabitants. The rich abundance of bird life described in this lot is also typical of his mature style, of presenting animal and/or human subjects in multitudes on flattened planes framed by vibrant colours. The watery colour palette, coupled with the dominance

of flamingos and saddle-billed storks (recognisable by their dappled plumage and red bill with a black band), suggests a riverine setting. Scenes depicting birds form an important component of the artist's output; the Pretoria Art Museum, Sasol Art Collection and Johannesburg Art Gallery all hold examples.

1. Walter Battiss, quoted in text panel (WBC/08/01, 1945) at exhibition "The Origins of Walter Battiss: Another Curious Palimpsest", Origins Centre, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2016.
2. Walter Battiss (1965) *Limpopo*, Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, page 17.



Alexis Preller, *Two Angels*, 1970

Image Courtesy: From the permanent collection of the Pretoria Art Museum

605

### Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911-1975

#### *Space Angel*

signed and dated '71  
oil and gesso on canvas  
111 by 121cm

**R5 000 000 - 7 000 000**

#### PROVENANCE

Strauss & Co, Johannesburg,  
7 November 2016, lot 234.  
Private Collection.

Preller's image of a disembodied head in aquiline profile, with sumptuous lips and a large Egyptian-like eye, became the prototype for an extended, seminal series of works to which *Space Angel* firmly belongs. The left-facing profile, animated by the sleekest, almond eye and stylised teardrops, merges spectacularly with a fragment of turquoise and sun-glow skull. A deep, empty eyesocket balances the composition, and the head is edged by a pharaonic beard and golden teeth.

Preller's unique motif appeared initially in a number of related intaglio works such as *Angel of the Lord* (1969) and *Angel King* (1971), while in 1970 the same image was transfigured in

*Two Angels*. The latter work, a large, square oil painting of heads floating in space, remains in the Pretoria Art Museum.

*Space Angel* shows Preller exploring the translation of this archaic or heiratic head into yet another technique; he used high relief gesso built up in a Tachist manner, and then over-painted to simulate an opulent and textured surface. The piece is testament to Preller's lifelong and ongoing process of working and reworking images that were significant to his iconographical vocabulary, with each version systematically attempting to release a new and nuanced reading of his original, iconic, and prototypical image.





606

**Cecil Skotnes**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926-2009

*Figures at the Coast*

signed and dated 04  
oil on panel  
117 by 120cm

R350 000 - 500 000

**PROVENANCE**

Property of Kangra Group (Pty) Ltd.  
Assembled by the Late Graham and  
Rhona Beck.

607

**Alexis Preller**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911-1975

*The Ship*

signed and dated '65  
oil on canvas  
60 by 75,5cm

R1 800 000 - 2 000 000

In the catalogue to the 1972 Alexis Preller retrospective exhibition at the Pretoria Art Museum, Esmé Berman writes of the process of “repetition, adaptation, variation and transformation that characterises the artist’s work”.<sup>1</sup> He reuses and reinvents familiar objects throughout his career – eggs, candles, mangoes, egrets, fish and less commonly, sailing vessels.

The boats are at times fully



representational, such as in *The Island, Seychelles* (1950) where the vessels are recognisably Seychelloise fishing pirogues, and in the large-scale mural *Discovery* (1959–1962) where a Portuguese caravel sails across the background. In the present lot, however, the vessel is largely abstracted, but given Preller's interest in archaic Greek art, the suggestion of hull, multiple masts and a bank of oars in the lower right

portion perhaps reference an ancient Mediterranean galley. The apparently impulsive black calligraphic flourishes, blots and scribbles that overwrite Preller's characteristic palette of turquoise, coral, emerald and orange, create a palimpsest of implied text and image.

After working in relative seclusion on the large-scale *Discovery* mural, Preller re-emerged, after an absence from the gallery scene of four years,

with an exhibition of new work at the Pieter Wenning Gallery in Johannesburg in 1962. The show included entirely abstract works, such as *The Golden Fleece* (1962), for the first time. This signalled a new direction for the artist, which he explored more fully the following year in the *Temple of the Sun* series. His interest in abstraction was spurred in part, according to Karel Nel, by news reports of Soviet and US space exploration,<sup>2</sup>

and this broadened his focus from the mythical African past that had dominated his subject matter in the 1950s and early 1960s, to celestial visions of an indeterminate universal future.

1. Esmé Berman (1972) *Alexis Preller*, exhibition catalogue, Pretoria: Pretoria Art Museum, page 1.
2. Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Volume II, Collected Images*, Johannesburg: Shelf Publishing, page 203.





608

**Christo Coetzee**

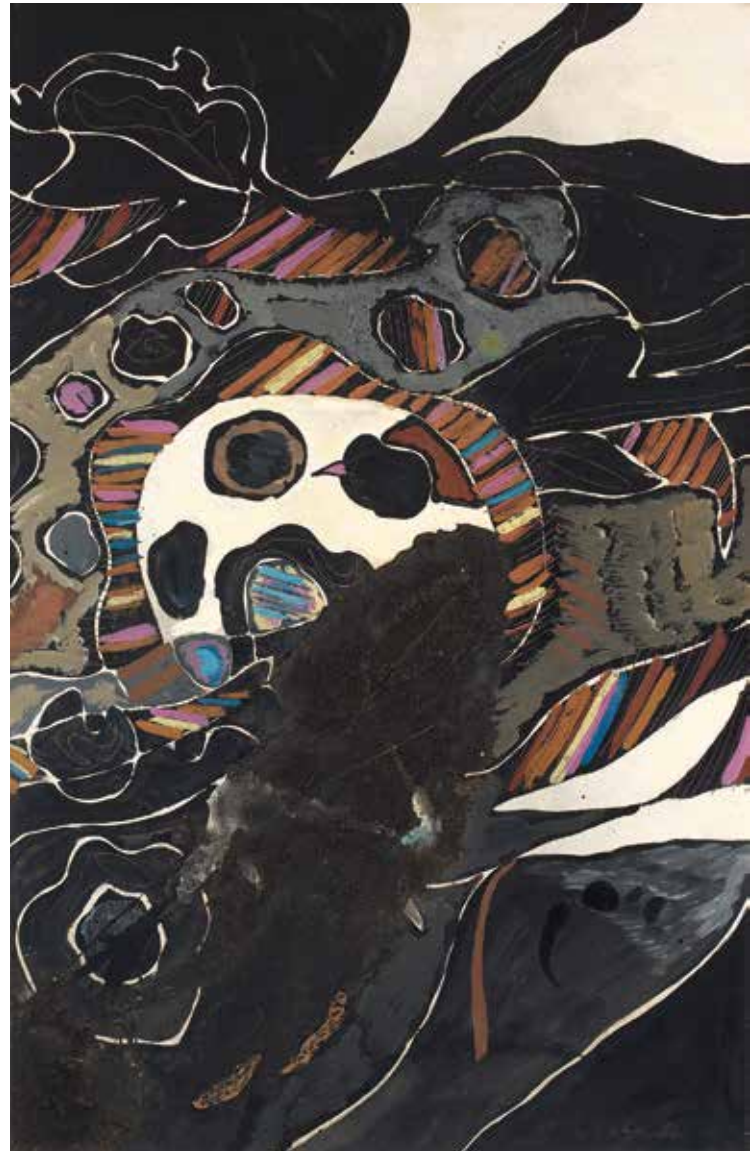
SOUTH AFRICAN 1929-2000

*Abstract*

signed and dated 64; signed, dated  
13/7/64 and inscribed 'Paris' on the  
reverse

mixed media on canvas  
99 by 49,5cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**



609

**Christo Coetzee**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929-2000

*Space Rock Flower*

signed and dated 70; signed, dated  
70 and inscribed with the title on the  
reverse

mixed media on board  
89,5 by 58cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**

610

**Christo Coetzee**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929-2000

*Untitled*

1956  
oil and assemblage on hessian  
91 by 91cm

**R90 000 - 120 000**



#### PROVENANCE

Stephan Welz & Co in Association with Sotheby's, Johannesburg, 12 May 2003, lot 509. Die Kunsamer, Cape Town. Private Collection.

#### EXHIBITED

Standard Bank Gallery, Johannesburg, *The Safest Place is the Knife's Edge: Christo Coetzee (1929-2000)*, 5 October to 1 December 2018.

#### LITERATURE

Willhelm van Rensburg (2018) *The Safest Place is the Knife's Edge*, Johannesburg: Standard Bank, illustrated in colour on page 72.

"It was during this time that Coetzee was fortunate to study in Japan on a British Council grant. He was introduced to the post-War Japanese avant-garde group, the Gutai Art Association, founded by Yoshihara Jiro in 1954. Yoshihara's manifesto of 1956 maintains that 'Gutai

art does not change the material; it brings it to life. Gutai art does not falsify the material. In Gutai art the human spirit and the material reach out their hands to each other even though they are otherwise opposed to each other.'

This exposure proved to have a lasting influence on Coetzee's art. He was in step with the Gutai's notion of embodiment of the materiality of the medium, as well as their experiments in installation art and/or performance art, which is evident in the slashing of his work in 1975...

What is of particular interest in his work at this time is the manner in which he assembled his paintings, using manufactured as well as natural objects such as bicycle parts, ping pong balls, egg trays, coins, wire mesh and even twigs and butterfly wings, creating assemblages that reside in the intersection of painting and sculpture."<sup>1</sup>

1. Willhelm van Rensburg (2018) *The Safest Place is the Knife's Edge*, Johannesburg: Standard Bank, page 57.

611

### Stanley Pinker

SOUTH AFRICAN 1924-2012

#### *His and Hers or Decline and Fall,* diptych

signed  
oil on canvas  
94 by 147cm

R2 000 000 - 3 000 000

#### PROVENANCE

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, 13 May  
1993.  
Private Collection.

#### EXHIBITED

University of Cape Town, The  
Chancellor Oppenheimer Library,  
2001, number 34.  
Welgemeend, Cape Town, *Satire and  
Irony: Robert Hodgins, Stanley Pinker  
and Alexander Podlaschuc from the  
Kilbourn, Bloch, Wiese & Podlaschuc  
Collections & Almost Forgotten: Peter  
Haden, a selection of works from private  
collections*, August 2019. Illustrated in  
colour on page 37 of the exhibition  
catalogue.

#### LITERATURE

Michael Stevenson (2004) *Stanley  
Pinker*, Cape Town: Michael Stevenson  
illustrated in colour on page 80.

"The couple is an anachronism, awkwardly and uncomfortably situated in a hostile landscape. They are relics from another era, much like the fallen Grecian column, and the prospect of their using the contemporary His and Hers exercise bikes seems most improbable. They are both dressed in mad and impractical white Victorian outfits; he wears a pith helmet and carries a felt-covered water bottle; she wears a boater hat and holds a parasol. The colonial colours of red, white and blue feature in small details. He has two walking sticks, one white which he taps against the edge of a pavement – a case of the blind leading the blind. We don't have to look very far to encounter that in our history. A snake emerges from a chamber pot on her lap, recalling the Indian snake-charmers in the old Empire who used to walk around with little baskets of snakes and perform, sitting cross legged. But here the snake rears up threateningly from the chamber pot, an object which travellers of their era would have had under their beds as an essential part of their equipment. She is a relic, a fossil, and her disconnected marble foot recalls the forms of Greek and Roman Sculpture, as does the drapery of her dress. The yellow crumpled form was

based on a child's plastic block that has been squashed. I used to walk along the beach and collect these objects, thinking 'I'm going to use this at some point'. Here I use it as a symbol that evokes decay and the temporal."<sup>1</sup>

"Pinker spent a decade living, studying and working in Europe between 1954 and 1964. In his intelligent translation of the formal conventions of modern art movements, especially Cubism, he explores the follies, pretensions and evils of colonial and post-colonial white society in South Africa. In this painting, which exemplifies Pinker's later work, the idea that this society is capable of transformation is gently mocked by the exercise machines that promise a new body, but not necessarily a new or changed mind. The fresh colour and decorative flatness of the work competes with a savage dryness of the line and fractured quality in the figurative elements. This results in a work where emotional and conceptual complexity is woven into a composition of exceptional formal elegance."<sup>2</sup>

1. Michael Stevenson (2004), *Stanley Pinker*, Cape Town: Michael Stevenson. Page 80.
2. Notes from University of Cape Town Exhibition catalogue.





612

**Robert Hodgins**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920-2010

*Man on a Wide Highway*

signed, dated 2002, inscribed with the artist's name and title on the reverse; inscribed with the artist's name, date and title on a João Ferreria Gallery label adhered to the reverse

oil on canvas  
40,5 by 50,5cm

R150 000 - 200 000

**PROVENANCE**

João Ferreria Gallery, Cape Town.  
Private Collection.

613

**Norman Catherine**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1949-

***Red Rubber Neck Too***

2006

signed; inscribed with the artist's name, title and date on a Goodman Gallery label adhered to the reverse  
oil on canvas  
150 by 120cm

**R300 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, 2006.  
Private Collection.

**EXHIBITED**

The Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, *Norman Catherine*, 16 September to 7 October 2006.

*Rubber Neck Too* was reproduced on the Goodman Gallery, *Norman Catherine*, 2006 exhibition poster.

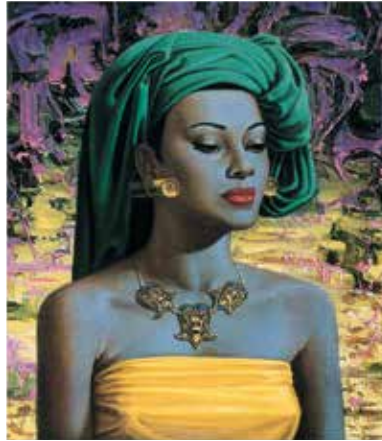
Throughout his many stylistic evolutions and creative detours as an artist, Norman Catherine has remained true to the human figure. Whether dismembered or restrained, deracinated or knotted, his human subjects also endure – sometimes with the help of bandages and here sutures. This optimism is central to negotiating Catherine's vivid panoply of characters. The contorted figure in a dapper yellow suit depicted in this lot traces his origins back to a series of psychologically themed paintings from the mid-1980s that portrayed spindly male characters with elongated limbs. In the subsequent decade these anxious and wounded Caucasian figures took on a more bulky physique, first in a series of paintings of menacing men in tight-fitting suits, and later in the 1990s in a series of diminutive sculptures that provided the template for the artist's current, mature practice. Versions of



this elastic man are discernable in works such as *Who Do Voodoo* (1995), a sculptural assembly of small, hand-painted fetish idols. Whether working on canvas or three-dimensionally Catherine's interest is in capturing the many "characteristics and pathologies of human nature,"<sup>1</sup> including

here the all too human habit of rubbernecking – or rudely gawking – which Catherine's energetic work thoroughly invites.

1. Hazel Friedman (2000) *Norman Catherine*, Johannesburg: Goodman Gallery Editions, page 123.



Vladimir Tretchikoff, *Balinese Girl*, 1959

Permission to include this image is granted by The Tretchikoff Project (Pty) Ltd., license holders to the artworks of Vladimir Tretchikoff.

614

### Vladimir Tretchikoff

SOUTH AFRICAN 1913-2006

#### *Portrait of Ellen Peters*

1974

signed

oil on canvas

75,5 by 65cm

**R900 000 - 1 200 000**

#### LITERATURE

Andrew Lamprecht (ed.) (2011) *Tretchikoff: The People's Painter*, Jonathan Ball Publishers: Johannesburg & Cape Town, illustrated on page 75.

In 1973, Ellen Peters, a teenage secretary from Kensington, Cape Town, was proclaimed 'Newsmaker of the Year' by the Cape Press, Radio and TV Club.

To celebrate the occasion, she appeared at their ball, a rare multiracial event, with other heroes of the day. Among them, mixing with the city mayor, the captain of the provincial rugby team and the queen of South African ballet, was the country's wealthiest artist, Vladimir Tretchikoff. After a recent series of lucrative British shows and the launch of his illustrated autobiography by Collins of London, the painter was very proud of himself.

Ellen, in her silver sequined dress, caught his eye. That year, the girl from a Coloured suburb, where she lived with her parents and seven brothers and sisters, won the title of Miss Africa South. It was the non-White equivalent of Miss South Africa.

The newly crowned beauty queen represented her country at the Miss World pageant. Ellen reached the semi-finals, saw London and New York, and socialised with Gregory Peck and Engelbert Humperdinck. For her it was a dream come true.

Tretchikoff, always seeking a multiracial ideal of female beauty, was so impressed by Ellen that he asked her to sit for this portrait. At his studio, as they were having tea served his favourite way, with a peeled apple, he studied her face. Her ancestors came from Scotland, France and Indonesia. Her grandfather was Jewish. Ellen had the intercontinental look that Tretchikoff found appealing.

Her portrait by Tretchikoff belongs to the same tradition as his famous *Balinese Girl* (1959). It is a view of a Western onlooker admiring female beauty and being fascinated with visual expressions of Asian culture which complement that beauty.

Sitters for his Balinese portraits made in the 1950s and onwards were South Africans of mixed ancestry, like Ellen Peters. Even the dress that she wears in this portrait is golden like that in the *Balinese Girl*.

What sets this work apart from the Balinese series is an absence of 'exotic' accessories: no heavy traditional earrings, no headscarf. Even in Tretchikoff's portraits of Coloured fruit-and-vegetable sellers, the models' heads are always

covered. Still, Ellen is clearly a modern girl, with her confident gaze, bold makeup and long hair hanging loose. Her complexion may be bluish, like that of Tretchikoff's famous *Miss Wong* or *Chinese Girl*, but it was purely an aesthetic choice for the artist. There is no timelessness in Ellen's look, no combination of the archaic and the new that we find in his most popular 'exotic' studies. The girl in this painting is obviously Tretchikoff's contemporary.

It is one of the last inspired portraits that Tretchikoff produced in that decade.

Tretchikoff's sitter was confident enough to change her life dramatically in the following years. Ellen met an Israeli businessman and chairman of Friends of Lubavitch of Tel Aviv. After a long wait, she converted to Judaism.

Her happy marriage lasted three decades. After the death of her husband, she returned to Cape Town. Ilana Skolnik-Kazarnovsky, as she is known today, is a South African motivational speaker, who has shared her story of spiritual transformation with Jewish women around the world.

*Boris Gorelik, 2020*







615

**Robert Hodgins**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920-2010

*The Witch in her Domain*

signed, dated 1995/7 and inscribed with the title and 'For Graham Flax on his 21st birthday' on the reverse oil on canvas 41 by 51cm

R120 000 - 160 000

This spare composition by Robert Hodgins typifies his economy of means as a painter. A barely human figure with aquiline nose, button-like blue eye and burnished-wood complexion is depicted in profile in a bland interior setting with a window ajar. The artist's approximation of a cat takes fright at the anthropomorphic shadow cast by the painting's imposing central figure in a pink dress. The air of domestic disquiet is complicated by the presence of a noose, which Hodgins emphatically delineates against an undifferentiated slab of red. What do all these elements together

amount to? Hodgins rarely painted with binding intent. His distinctive characters – pinstriped executives, decorated generals, punch-drunk boxers, cloistered wives – would often emerge from a smudge of marks and colours. Hodgins's associative way of arriving at a figure was informed by his love for Philip Guston, whose cartoonish style, formal restraint and gallows humour he much admired.<sup>1</sup> It was also guided by his enduring sense that "history is lived near the bone. It's not something that happens outside your studio."<sup>2</sup> Hodgins frequently depicted hangmen and gallows from

1985 onwards. This lot was started in the year capital punishment was abolished in South Africa. It was gifted to collector Graham Flax, a friend of the artist, around the time of Flax's fiftieth birthday. In 2013 a transgender woman murdered Flax in Sea Point.

1. Kathryn Smith (2012) 'Some General Rules: Robert Hodgins in Conversation with Kathryn Smith', in *A Lasting Impression: The Robert Hodgins Print Archive*, Johannesburg, Wits University Press, page 117
2. Ivor Powell (1984) 'One of my own fragments: An interview with Robert Hodgins' *De Arte*, No. 31, September, page 37.

616

**Robert Hodgins**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920-2010

*First Light*

signed, dated 1995 and inscribed  
with the title on the reverse

oil on canvas  
120,5 by 90cm

R400 000 - 600 000





617

**Walter Battiss**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1982

*Musician and Bathers*

signed

oil on canvas

34 by 44cm

R250 000 - 350 000

**PROVENANCE**

Property of Kangra Group (Pty) Ltd.  
Assembled by the Late Graham and  
Rhona Beck.



618

**Walter Battiss**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906-1982

*Gathering*

signed  
oil on canvas  
40 by 75cm

R450 000 - 550 000

**PROVENANCE**

Strauss & Co, Johannesburg,  
7 November 2016, lot 230.  
Private Collection.



619

**Norman Catherine**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1949-

*Fireman*

signed; inscribed with the title on a  
Strydom Gallery label on the reverse

oil on canvas

51 by 61cm

R100 000 - 150 000

PROVENANCE

Strydom Gallery, George.

Private Collection.



620

**Robert Hodgins**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920-2010

*The Death of Danton: Final Act*

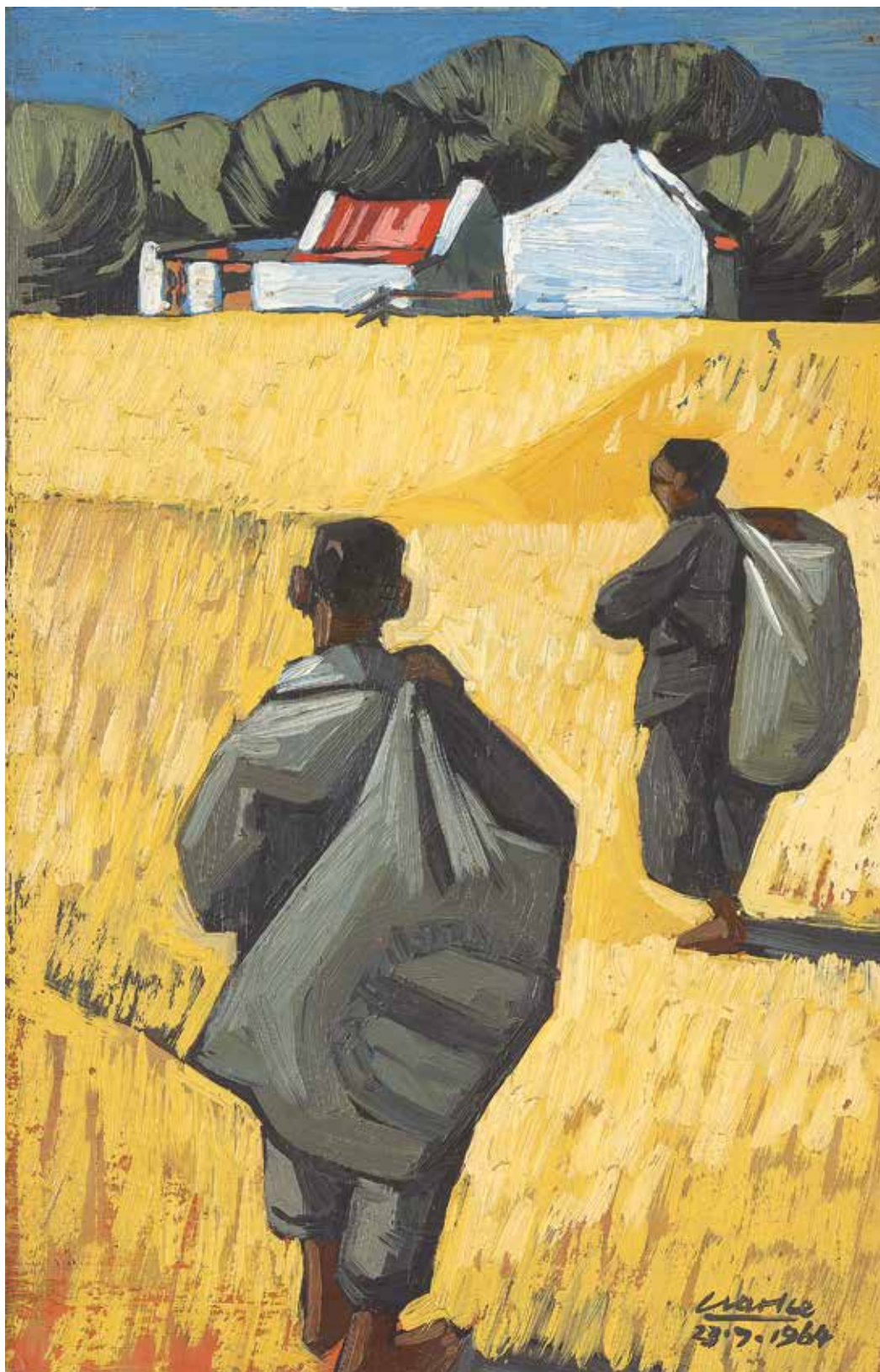
signed, dated 1990/91, inscribed with the medium, title and "Or if one wishes not to be Euro-Centric; The Death of Lumumba: The Final Act. For Madeleine von Biljon, Always with Love, Robin" on the reverse. Further signed, dated 1991, inscribed with the title and dedication on the stretcher.

oil on canvas  
60,5 by 76cm

**R300 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Stephan Welz & Co in Association  
with Sotheby's, 22 & 23 March 2005,  
lot 576.



621

**Peter Clarke**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929-2014

*Harvesters, Teslaarsdal*

signed and dated 23.7.1964

oil on board

26,5 by 17,5cm

R250 000 - 350 000



622

**Erik Laubscher**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927-2013

***Wheat Lands near Hermon***

signed and dated '96; signed, inscribed with the title and dated November 1996 on the reverse oil on canvas 100 by 144cm

**R450 000 - 600 000**

Writing in the catalogue accompanying his 1970 survey exhibition at the University of Stellenbosch, Erik Laubscher organised his early painting career into five developmental phases. Tellingly, three of the five phases dealt with his diverse treatment of the Western Cape's agricultural landscapes.<sup>1</sup> Laubscher was especially intrigued by the Swartland region, enough to list the paintings of this area, named for the colour of the endemic Renosterbos, as a distinct category in his development. His

fascination with the region endured throughout his life. This late-career work depicts the small village of Hermon. Located on the southeastern edge of the Swartland, between Wellington and Gouda, this settlement is surrounded by wheat fields, vineyards and olive groves. Laubscher's naturalistic painting relays aspects of this brochure description. Nonetheless, traces of his earlier interest in cubistic forms and intersecting planes of bright colour inform his organisation and description of the undulating

summer landscape. Repetition and change define Laubscher's practice as a landscape painter. "Once I have identified with a place that is visually stimulating, I find one or two paintings lead easily into a series, each one hopefully giving a new interpretation," he stated in a 1993 lecture.<sup>2</sup>

1. Muller Ballot (1994) *Erik Laubscher*, Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, page 7.
2. Erik Laubscher (1993) *Lesing: 25-jarige bestaansviering van die Strydom Kunstgalerie*, George.





623

**Maud Sumner**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902-1985

*Landscape*

signed

oil on canvas laid down on board

40 by 55cm

R120 000 - 160 000



624

**Stanley Pinker**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1924-2012

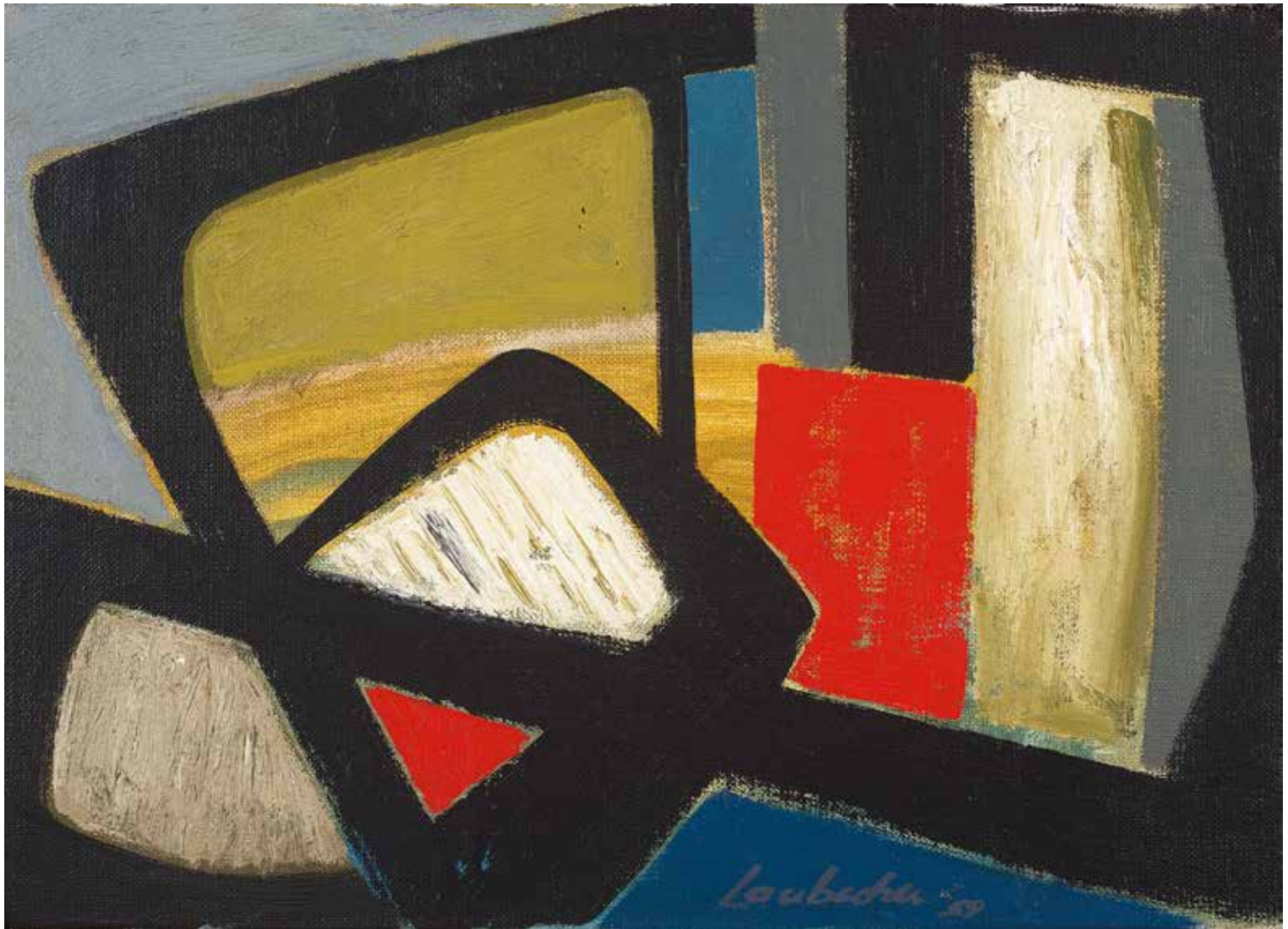
*Spanish Landscape*

signed  
oil and sand on canvas  
75 by 49cm

**R400 000 - 600 000**

PROVENANCE

Stephan Welz & Co, Cape Town,  
18 & 19 October 2011, lot 555.  
Private Collection.



625

**Erik Laubscher**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927-2013

***Abstract Vision***

signed and dated 59  
oil on canvas  
32 by 44,5cm

R100 000 - 150 000

**PROVENANCE**

Johan Coetzee, Stellenbosch,  
21 December 1990.  
Private Collection.

**EXHIBITED**

University of Cape Town, The Chancellor  
Oppenheimer Library, 2001, number 26.

**LITERATURE**

Hans Franssen (2009) *Erik Laubscher: A Life  
in Art*, Stellenbosch: SMAC ART Gallery,  
illustrated in colour on page 258.

As a young artist Laubscher studied extensively abroad, and the imprint of one of his most important mentors, Fernand Léger, is echoed in the geometrical forms of this painting. While the roots of this powerfully architectonic abstract composition are evident in the urban cityscapes preceding this work, Laubscher's abiding and quintessentially modernist concern with the formal integrity of painting would also underpin his later, more realistic landscape paintings.<sup>1</sup>

1. Notes from University of Cape Town Exhibition catalogue.



626

**Erik Laubscher**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927-2013

*Still Life with Fruit and a Blue Jug*

signed and dated 52

oil on canvas

54,5 by 54,5cm

**R500 000 - 700 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Wolpe Gallery, Cape Town.  
Private Collection.

Eric Laubscher's early career is a catalogue of still lifes. His compositions from this period are characterised by their graphic delineation of forms, flattened picture planes and bold use of colour. The formal styling of his paintings owed a debt of influence to Fernand Léger, Laubscher's teacher at the Académie Montmartre in Paris, as well as Bernard Buffet, a leading figure in the New Realist school of French expressionism. From Buffet he gained insights into how to choreograph

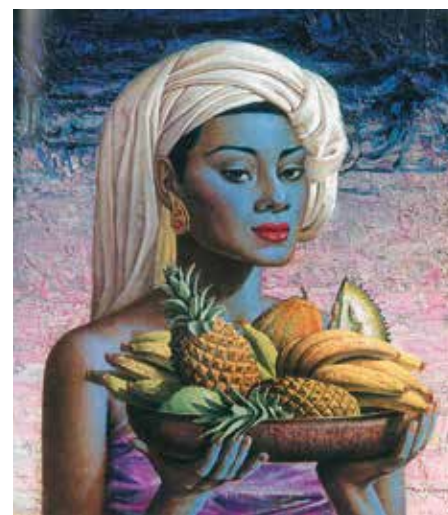
pictorial space and notate essentials. Produced in 1952, the year he returned to Cape Town, this lot registers Buffet's waning influence on Laubscher, who already in Paris had begun incorporating bolder colour treatments into his still-life compositions. Laubscher's contemporary style of painting made an immediate impact when he first exhibited in Cape Town. Writing in 1952, Walter Battiss described his work as "compelling", adding that Laubscher's ability to "paint big canvases with satisfying assurance"

represented "a challenge to stale ideas in the Cape".<sup>1</sup> Matthys Bokhorst, who later became director of the South African National Gallery, commended Laubscher's still lifes for their "stylised realism with strong cubistic elements".<sup>2</sup>

1. Walter Battiss (1952) "New Art and Old Art in South Africa", *The Studio*, Vol. 144, page 70.
2. Matthys Bokhorst (1955) "Exhibition by Erik Laubscher", *Cape Times*, 24 September.



Irma Stern, *African Woman*, 1945



Vladimir Tretchikoff, *Fruits of Bali*

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627

### Peter Clarke

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929-2014

#### *The Fruit Vendor*

signed and dated 1959

oil on card

47,5 by 39cm

R600 000 - 800 000

Peter Clarke fills the picture plain of the present lot with a young man or boy walking briskly towards the viewer, carrying a basket of brightly coloured fruit and vegetables on his head. He is confidently announcing his presence and advertising his delectable products. Behind him, a street runs diagonally to the left, and a few pedestrians are visible in the distance. Closer to the boy, the artist has depicted a woman with a baby, as well as a street vendor standing next to his barrow, holding a head of cabbage.

Apart from the occasional wood gatherer, washerwoman, road worker, farm worker, cattle herder and fishmonger, Clarke surprisingly seldom depicts the theme of labour, of people at work, in his art. His paintings *do* show people in a specific society dealing with the specific socio-economic and political situation in the South Africa of

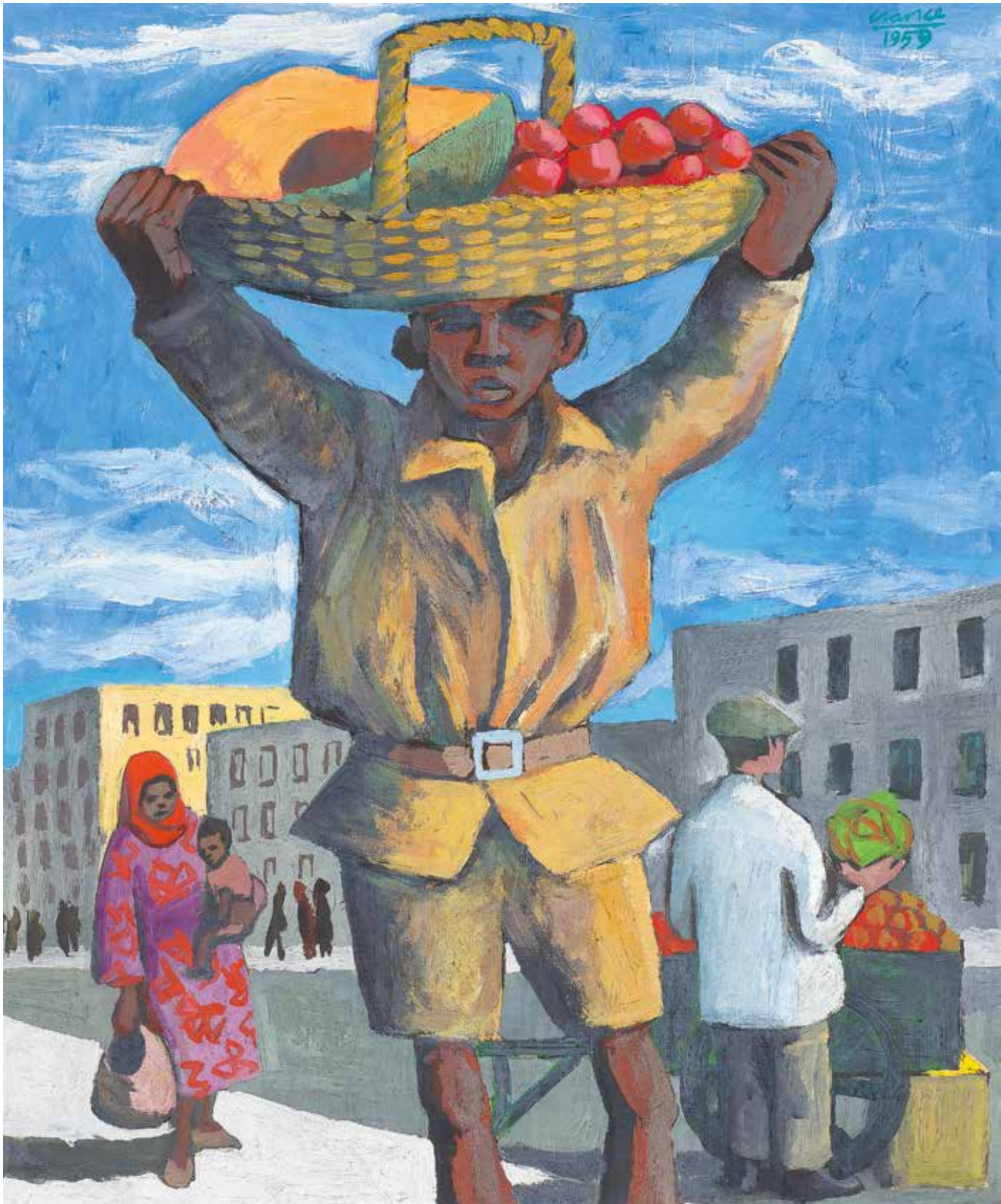
the 1950s and 60s. The fruit vendor does not draw attention to himself as some sort of symbol of the nobility of work, but does tell the viewer something about the society in this country at that time.

Many other prominent South African artists also created images of informal traders and street vendors earning their living: Irma Stern painted *African Woman* with the products dwarfing the seller, suggesting the fecundity of the earth; Vladimir Tretchikoff celebrated the abundance and exoticism of the East in his famous *Fruits of Bali*; and Rupert Shephard illustrated many informal traders, from basket sellers to flower sellers and fruit sellers, in one of his famous linocut artist's books, *Passing Scenes: Eighteen Images of Southern Africa*.

In Clarke's *The Fruit Vendor*, the prevailing social stratification is evident.

The boy is wearing a uniform of khaki shorts and shirt, commonly worn by those patronisingly known at the time as 'house boys'. Soon after his marriage to Grace Andersen, Walter Battiss wrote to his parents about how he had just appointed a 'house boy' and fitted him out with just such a uniform. This gives rise to another potential reading of Clarke's painting: is the boy in fact selling the contents of his basket, or has he just bought fruit and vegetables from the street vendor with the barrow and is now rushing back to his employer's kitchen?

This work is one of the most accomplished and significant oil paintings by a South African master perhaps better known for his gouaches. It is a high point in his Tesselarsdal period of the late 1950s and early 60s, and anticipates the more overtly political works of the 1970s and 80s.





628

**Ephraim Ngatane**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938-1971

***Jazz Band***

signed and dated '69  
oil on board  
61 by 91cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 6 March  
2017, lot 543.  
Private Collection.

Ephraim Ngatane was born in Lesotho and moved to Johannesburg in the early 1940s. He studied under Cecil Skotnes at the Polly Street Art Centre between 1952 and 1954. Although Ngatane earned a reputation for producing highly individual social-realist paintings descriptive of black urban life under apartheid, his output also records many instances of pleasure: boxing, jazz

performances, weddings and a 1967 snowstorm in Soweto. He held sell-out exhibitions throughout the 1960s and up to his premature death in 1971 and was an important figurehead, playing an important role in mentoring Dumile Feni, among others. An accomplished colourist, his work is marked by lyrical impressionism and a selective use of abstraction.

629

**Peter Clarke**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929-2014

*Blue Fantasy (Wall)*

signed and dated 20 Oct 1975;  
inscribed with the title and dated  
1975-1976 on the reverse  
mixed media and collage on paper  
laid down on cotton rag board  
42 by 34cm

R80 000 - 120 000



630

**Peter Clarke**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929-2014

*Burning Poem*

signed and dated Jan. 1981; inscribed  
with the title on the reverse  
mixed media and collage on paper  
laid down on cotton rag board  
76 by 100cm

R140 000 - 180 000







631

**George Pemba**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1912-2001

*Township Woman*

signed and dated 76; inscribed with  
the title on the reverse  
oil on canvas laid down on board  
45 by 35cm

R150 000 - 200 000

632

**George Pemba**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1912-2001

*Flight to Basutoland*

signed and dated 60; inscribed 'Fleeing' and 'The Flight' (to Basutoland)' on the reverse and further inscribed with the artist's name and title on a South African National Gallery label adhered to the reverse

oil on artist's board  
48,5 by 39cm

**R250 000 - 350 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Everard Read, Johannesburg,  
11 March 1992.  
Private Collection.

**EXHIBITED**

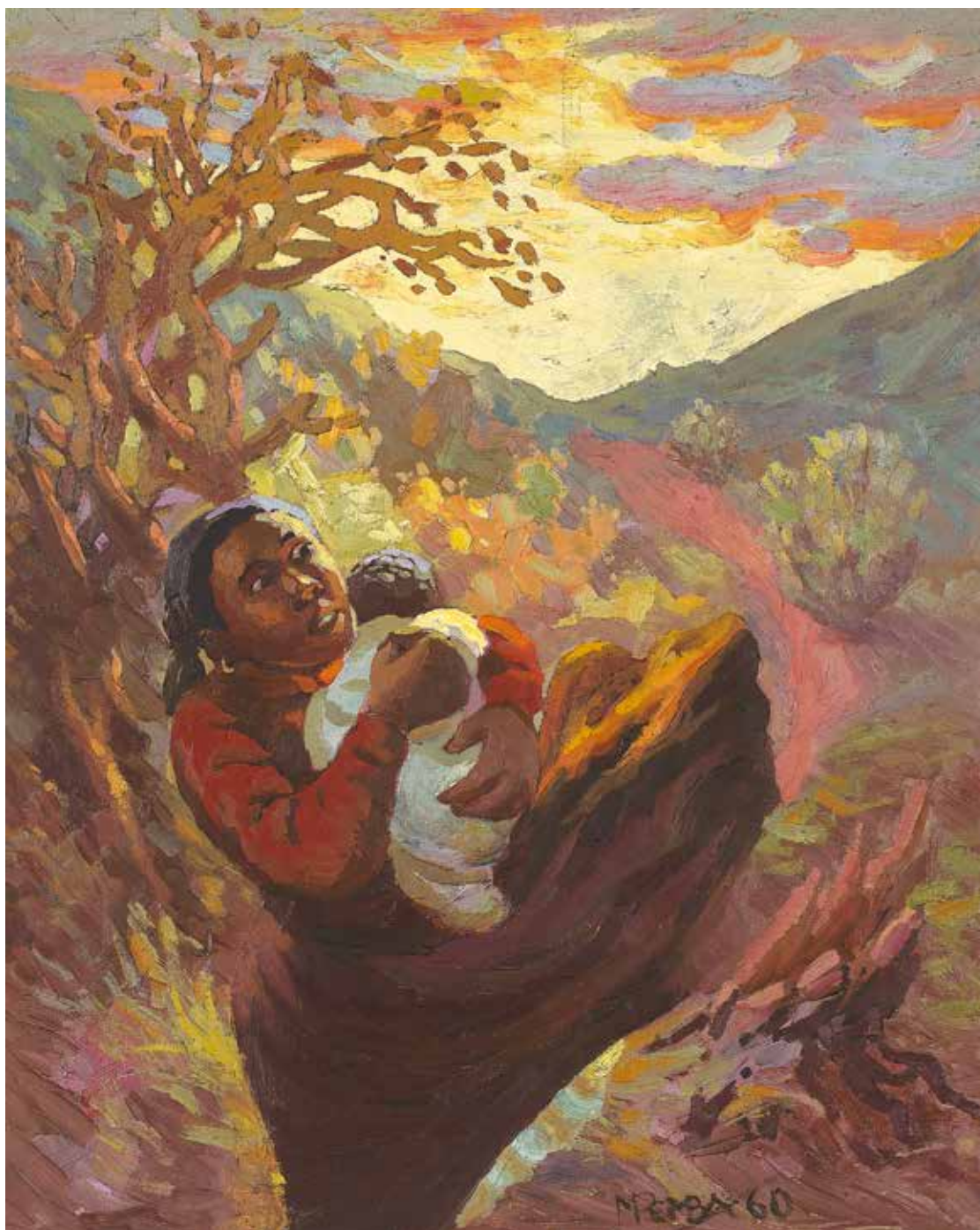
Iziko South African National Gallery,  
Cape Town, *The George Milwa Mnyaluza Pemba Retrospective Exhibition*, 27 April to 28 July, 1996, catalogue number 75, illustrated on page 102, number 20, of the exhibition catalogue.

**LITERATURE**

Sarah Huddleston (1996) *Against All Odds: George Pemba: His Life and Words*, Jeppestown, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, illustrated in colour on page 115.

"Painted after the Sharpeville riots in 1960, this image of a woman fleeing to Basutoland from the security police, is evocative of the Holy Family's flight into Egypt to escape Herod."<sup>1</sup>

1. Sarah Huddleston (1996) *Against All Odds: George Pemba: His Life and Words*, Jeppestown, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers (Pty) Limited, page 115.



633

**John Meyer**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1942-

*Study for the Stairwell*

2005

signed, dated 2005 and inscribed  
with the title on the reverse

oil on board

50 by 39,5cm

**R80 000 - 120 000**

PROVENANCE

Everard Read, Cape Town, 2005.  
Private Collection.



634

**John Meyer**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1942-

*The Interview*

2000

signed; signed, inscribed with the  
title and 22.80 on the stretcher

mixed media on canvas

74,5 by 89,5cm

**R160 000 - 180 000**

LITERATURE

Brett Hilton-Barber (2003) *John Meyer*,  
Cape Town: Prime Origins, illustrated  
in colour on page 122 with a detail  
on page 123.





635

**Kevin Roberts**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1965-2009

*Lady and Shadow*

signed with the artist's initials and dated '2k'; inscribed with the title on the stretcher and further inscribed with the artist's name and title on an Everard Read gallery label adhered to the reverse

oil on panel

125 by 68cm

R150 000 - 200 000



636

**Neil Rodger**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1941-2013

*The Blue Settee*

signed; inscribed with the title on the stretcher, inscribed with the artist's name, the title and the medium on an Everard Read gallery label adhered to the reverse

oil on canvas

120,5 by 120,5cm

R180 000 - 240 000



637

**William Kentridge**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1955-

*Almost Don't Worry*

signed, numbered EV 33/40 in pencil  
and embossed with the Artist Proof  
Studio chopmark in the margin  
linocut

plate size: 100 by 98cm;  
sheet size: 118 by 107cm

R150 000 - 200 000

PROVENANCE

Stephan Welz & Co, Johannesburg,  
15, 16 & 17 November 2011, lot 764.



638

**William Kentridge**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1955-

*Olympia (53)*

2007

signed, numbered 6/25 and embossed with The Artists' Press chopmark  
single colour lithograph and collage  
sheet size: 75 by 93,5cm

R120 000 - 160 000

**PROVENANCE**

Rose Korber Art Gallery, Cape Town, 2009.

Private Collection.

This lithograph, produced by Mark Attwood of The Artists' Press, references Édouard Manet's well-known painting, *Olympia* (1863). First exhibited at the 1865 Paris Salon, Manet's nude with confrontational gaze and motifs linking her to the demimonde scandalised French society. The figure of the reclining nude is not new to art: Manet based

his work on a study of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538). This process of quotation and recycling is apt. William Kentridge's practice has long been energised by the modernisms that emerged in early twentieth-century Europe, notably German expressionism and Russian constructivism – he has frequently quoted these sources. Scholars of Kentridge do not discuss the influence of Manet, a proto-impressionist who rescued French painting from academicism. This is understandable: Kentridge has expressed dim views on

South Africa's strongly impressionist tradition of landscape painting. Yet Kentridge clearly holds Manet in high esteem. A 2008 chine collé lithograph, *Manet (Heating and Ventilation)*, references the barmaid in Manet's famous picture, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882). *Test for Manet* (2016), a hardground etching and aquatint, is based on *Bouquet of Flowers* (1882). Kentridge's exhibition *O Sentimental Machine* (2017) at Marian Goodman, Paris, included four ink drawings derived from Manet's late flower paintings.

639

**David Goldblatt**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1930-2018

*At the Voortrekker Monument,  
on the Day of the Covenant*

signed, dated 16/12/63 and inscribed  
with the title in pencil on the reverse  
silver gelatin print, hand printed  
image size: 30 by 20cm;  
sheet size: 35,5 by 28cm

R150 000 - 200 000

**PROVENANCE**

Gail Behrmann.  
Private Collection.

**EXHIBITED**

Stevenson, Cape Town, *David  
Goldblatt: Some Afrikaners Revisited*,  
24 October to 25 November 2006.

Another example from the edition  
in the permanent collection of the  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

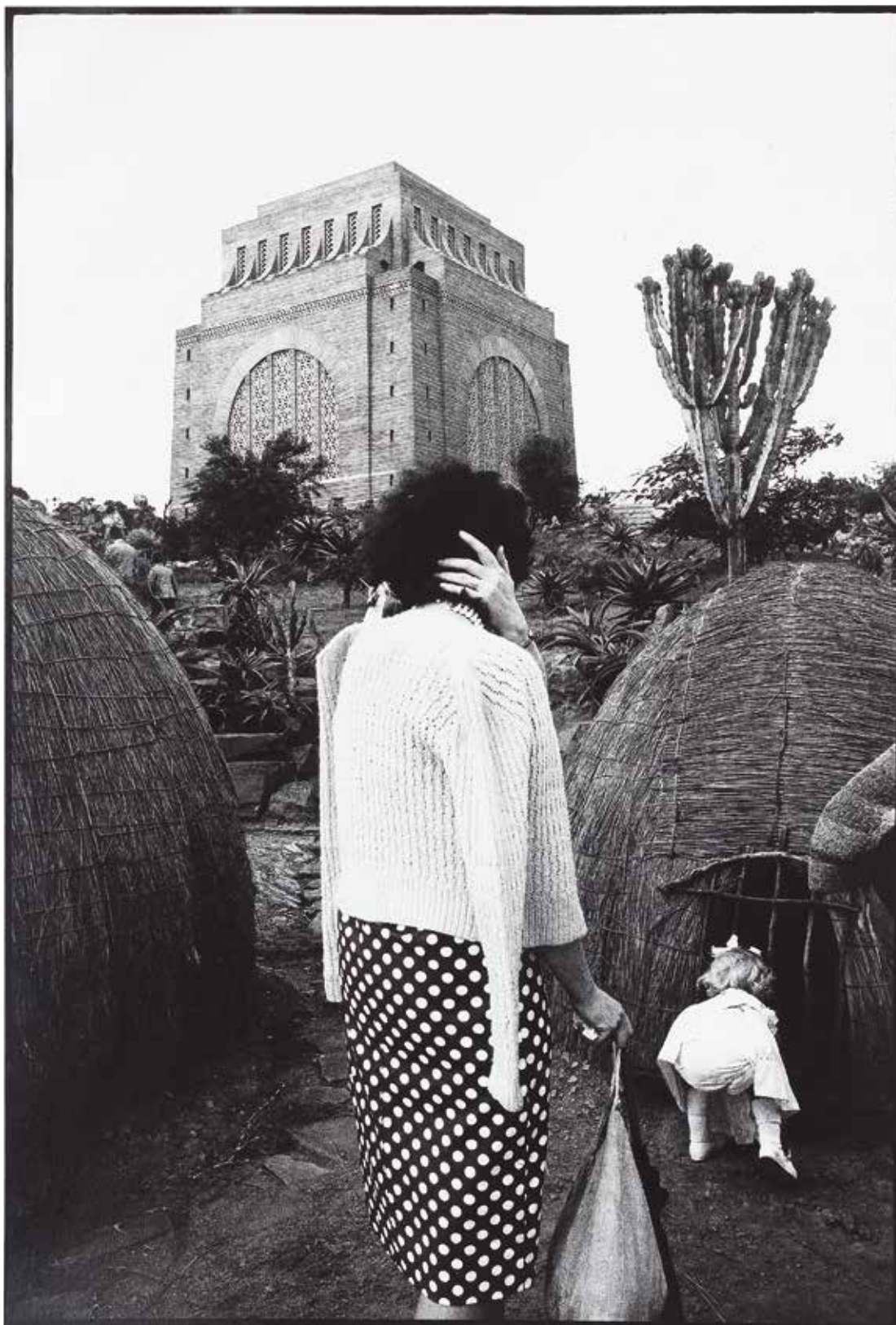
**LITERATURE**

David Goldblatt (1975) *David  
Goldblatt: Some Afrikaners  
Photographed*, Germany: Steidl  
Publishers.

Accompanied by a copy of the book  
David Goldblatt (1982) *In Boksburg*,  
The South African Photographic  
Gallery: 1, The Gallery Press, Cape  
Town, signed by the artist and  
numbered 36/50.

"Child with a replica of a Zulu hut  
at the Voortrekker Monument, on  
the Day of the Covenant. This day  
commemorated the vow taken by  
the Voortrekkers before the Battle  
of Blood River, that if God gave  
them victory over the Zulus, they  
would always keep this as a day of  
thanksgiving."<sup>1</sup>

1. Stevenson, [Online], Available: [http://  
archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/  
goldblatt/afrikaners/afrikaners61.htm](http://archive.stevenson.info/exhibitions/goldblatt/afrikaners/afrikaners61.htm) [10  
February 2020]





640

**Edoardo Villa**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915-2011

*Liberation*

signed and dated 1985

bronze and steel

height: 183cm including base;

base 90cm

R700 000 - 1 000 000





641

**Stella Shawzin**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1923-

*Reclining Figure*

signed with the artist's initials and  
numbered 1/8

bronze

height: 53cm; length: 83cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town,  
4 December 1996.  
Private Collection.



642

**Stella Shawzin**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1923-

*Acrobats*

signed with the artist's initials, and  
numbered 1/8

bronze, on a black slate base

height: 97cm including base;

base: 6cm

**R200 000 - 300 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town, February  
1995.  
Private Collection.



643

**Lionel Smit**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1982-

*Small Malay Girl*

signed, dated 2010, and numbered  
12/12

bronze, mounted on a steel base  
height: 78cm including base;  
base: 15,5cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**



644

**Dylan Lewis**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1964-

*S150 Standing Oriental Cat*

first cast in 2001

signed, numbered 2/15, S150 and  
stamped with a SCS foundry mark  
bronze with a dark brown patina  
height: 55,5cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**

"The spirited Oriental Cat in typical posture: vigilant, assured, primed for action, every fibre of its lithe body attuned to the moment. Pride, even arrogance is proclaimed by the high-held tail, anticipation by the raised foreleg."

*Dylan Lewis Studio, 2020*



645

**Lionel Smit**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1982-

*Yellow Boy*

signed and dated 2011

oil on canvas

100,5 by 100,5cm

R120 000 - 160 000



646

**Simon Stone**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1952-

*Chain*

signed; inscribed with the artist's name and title on a Knysna Fine Art label adhered to the stretcher

oil on canvas

114,5 by 91,5cm

R80 000 - 120 000

PROVENANCE

Knysna Fine Art, Knysna.

Private Collection.



647

**Lionel Smit**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1982-

*Grey Portrait*

signed and dated 2010

oil on canvas

200 by 149cm

R200 000 - 300 000



648

**Hennie Niemann Jnr**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1972-

*Friends*

signed with the artist's initials and dated '14; signed, dated 2014 and inscribed with the title on the reverse

oil on canvas

88,5 by 69cm

R140 000 - 160 000



649

**Hennie Niemann Jnr**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1972-

*Youth*

signed with the artist's initials and dated 16; signed, dated 2016 and inscribed with the title on the reverse

oil on canvas

150 by 130cm

R180 000 - 220 000



650

**Edoardo Villa**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915-2011

*Midnight Blue*

welded steel  
height: 230cm

**R200 000 - 300 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from the artist by the  
current owner.



651

**Edoardo Villa**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915-2011

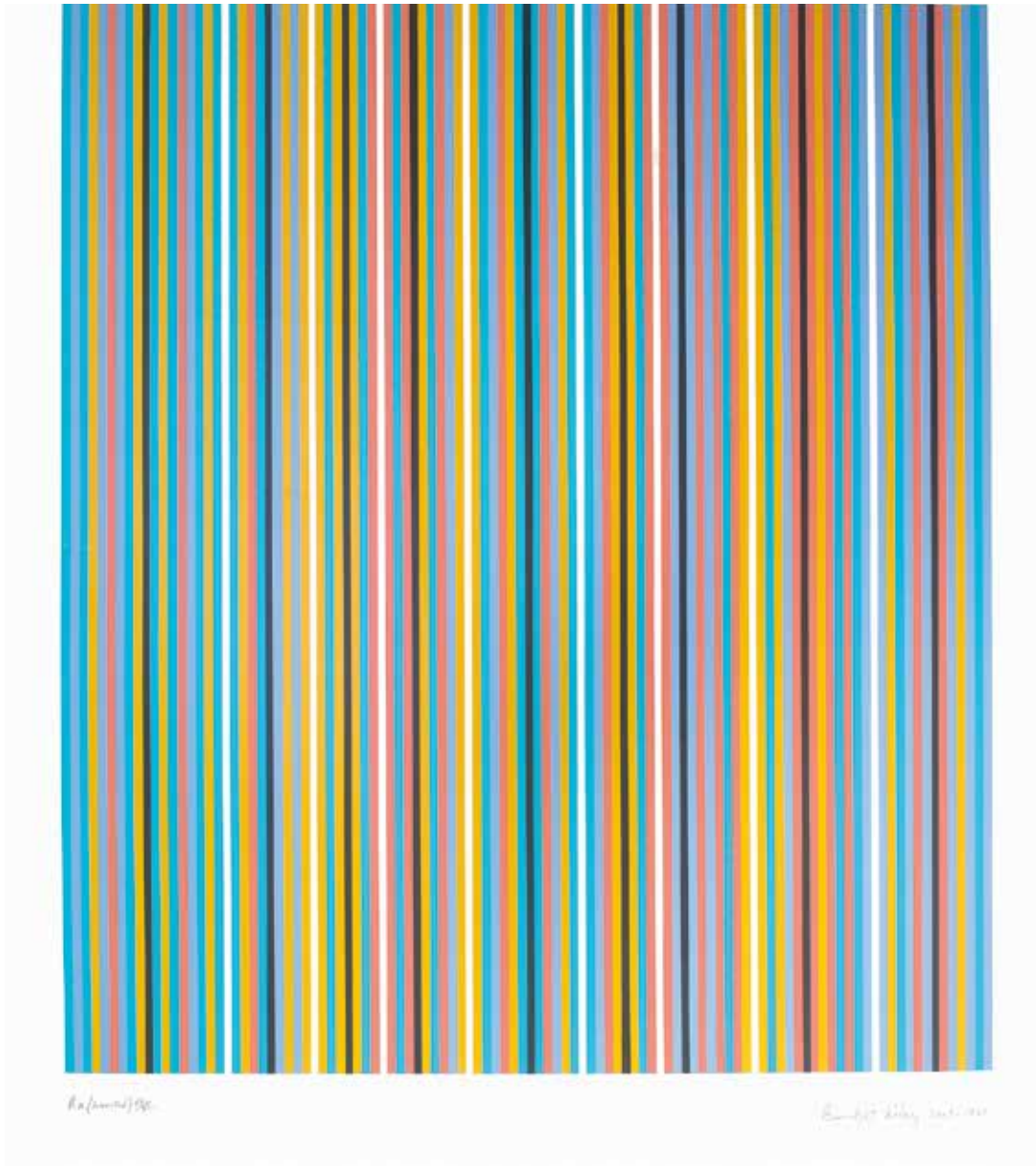
*Raw Form*

signed and dated 2002  
welded steel  
height: 158cm

**R350 000 - 500 000**

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired from the artist by the  
current owner.



652

**Bridget Riley**

BRITISH 1931-

***RA (Inverted)***

signed, dated 2009-1981, numbered

56/85 and inscribed with the title in

pencil in the margin

colour screenprint

image size: 115 by 98,5cm;

sheet size: 134 by 113,5cm

R150 000 - 200 000



653

**Robert Hodgins**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920-2010

*Out Shopping*

signed and inscribed with the title on  
the reverse

oil on canvas  
91,5 by 122cm

R500 000 - 700 000



654

## Georgina Gratrix

SOUTH AFRICAN 1982-

### *Crazy for You*

2012

oil on canvas

80 by 60cm

R80 000 - 120 000

#### EXHIBITED

SMAC, Cape Town, *PAINT I: Contemporary South African Painting 2002 – 2012*, 27 November 2012 to 26 January 2013.

Accompanied by a SMAC Certificate of Authenticity.

Georgina Gratrix is best known for her kitschy still lifes and sardonic portraits painted in an exaggerated, cartoonish style using lurid colours. Her subjects are often modelled with thick impasto paint, which the artist additionally gouges, scrapes and smears. Once dry, this encrustation forms the skin of her gaudy blooms, weeping belles and preening society figures. An encounter with Gratrix's delicious brand of tropical grotesque is meant to tickle. Delight, though, does not fully account for her motivations as an artist. This lot portraying a cheerful Caucasian woman with signifying gold jewellery and bulging left eye is exemplary. It recalls Pablo Picasso's countless figural distortions, of women with mismatching eyes and noses askew. Gratrix's casual notation also invokes Willem de Kooning, who used large, fluid strokes to describe his compositions *Woman, Sag Harbor* (1964) and *Woman* (1965). Two examples from art history suffice. Gratrix has said that the canon of painting is filled with "so many stodgy, stoic canvases by so many important men," and, further, that working in this revisionist moment she is able to "dig and have fun with historical representations".<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding her tendency to use a reference image to start, be it a tabloid photo or historical painting, her portraits are never straightforward likenesses. "I am never just painting one person. It is actually a jumble of references, motifs of a *type* of woman I paint. For instance, there is the garish, too-many teethed woman. She reappears in a lot of works – some of friends, others of cover girls." The outcome is always portrait that hovers between specificity and type, a compelling likeness and unreliable fiction.

1. Emily Friedman (2015), Georgina Gratrix, *The Editorial Magazine*, Issue 14, November 2015, page 62.

2. *Ibid.*



654



655

655

**Georgina Gratrix**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1982-

*Guard Dog*

signed and dated 2011 on the reverse, inscribed with the artist's name, date, and title on a SMAC Art Gallery label adhered to the reverse  
oil on canvas  
100 by 120cm

**R100 000 - 150 000**

**PROVENANCE**

SMAC, Cape Town, July 2012.  
Private Collection.

656

**Jake Aikman**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1978-

*The Island (Closer)*

signed, dated 2014 and inscribed with the title on the reverse  
oil on canvas  
175 by 175cm

**R140 000 - 180 000**

**PROVENANCE**

SMAC, Cape Town, December 2014.  
Private Collection.

**END OF SALE**

