



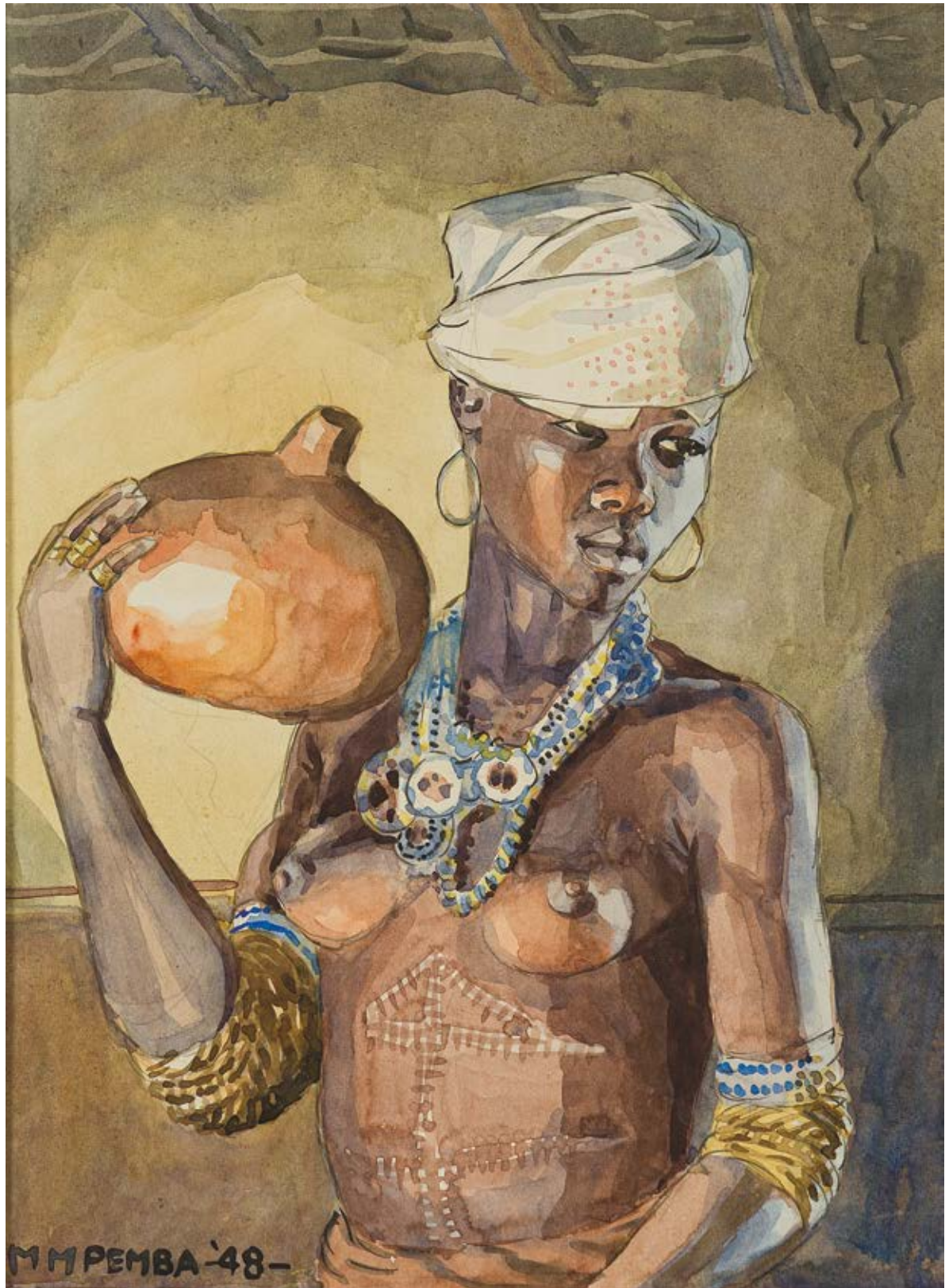
Wednesday 11 November 2020

Session 8 at 7.00pm

**Modern, Post-War and
Contemporary Art Part II
Including works from the
Late Desmond Fisher Collection
and the Küpper Family Collection**

Lots 831–928

Lot 910 Robert Hodgins *Girl at a Window* (detail)



831

**George Milwa
Mnyaluza Pemba**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1912–2001

Xhosa Girl with Kalabash

signed and dated '48; inscribed with the title on the reverse of the paper; inscribed with the artist's name and the title on a Michael Stevenson Gallery label adhered to the reverse of the frame

watercolour on paper laid down on board
29,5 by 21,5 cm

R100 000 – 120 000

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER

832

**George Milwa
Mnyaluza Pemba**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1912–2001

Young Girl

signed and dated 47; inscribed with 'Location Youth' on the reverse of the paper; inscribed with the artist's name and the title on a Michael Stevenson and Deon Viljoen label adhered to the reverse of the frame watercolour on paper
33,5 by 23,5 cm

R100 000 – 120 000



833

**George Milwa
Mnyaluza Pemba**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1912–2001

Makoti

signed, dated 1944 and inscribed with the title; inscribed with the artist's name and the title on a Michael Stevenson Gallery label adhered to the reverse watercolour on paper
33 by 22,5 cm

R100 000 – 120 000



George Pemba's career spanned 70-odd years, and his vibrant pictures, shot through with glowing yellows, springtime greens and spotless sky blues, or animated by a cross-generational cast of healers, dancers, poets, tribesmen, hawkers, jazzy urbanites, storytellers, dreamers and beer-swillers, are familiar, admired, pioneering and beloved. Having been encouraged to work in oils in 1941 by Gerard Sekoto, Pemba's stirring, neighbourly and often profound pictures now hold pride of place in so many institutional and private collections. He is less well known, however, for his exquisite and early-career mastery of watercolour, and there is no more convincing evidence of the artist's dazzling skill and touch in the medium than the group of works he produced in the 1940s and early 1950s. To be able to show together three remarkable

examples from this period is exciting, revealing and rare.

Although clearly talented as a teenager, Pemba's only early patrons were his father's impressed employers at the Cuthbert's shoe depot in Port Elizabeth. Using photographs and cheap watercolours, he produced convincing portraits of these blue- and white-collar workers. After an appendectomy at Victoria Hospital in Alice, however, where the then matron noted his ability, he was introduced to Ethel Smythe, an art teacher at Fort Hare University. 'She taught me how to mix my colours', Pemba later admitted, 'and how to use specialised wash techniques'.¹ He went on to train as an art teacher himself, at Lovedale College in Alice, graduating in 1934. Enrolled as an *external* student, and thanks to a grant from the Bantu Welfare Trust, he spent four months in 1937 under

the sway of Professor Austin Winter Moore at Rhodes University. Working primarily in watercolour, his confidence and prowess grew immeasurably under Winter Moore's guidance, and that year he took first prize in the May Esther Bedford Art Competition, famously edging Sekoto's entry into second.

While employed at the New Brighton Department of Native Administration in Port Elizabeth, and having contributed illustrations to a number of publications during the War years, Pemba made a career-affirming painting trip late in 1944 to Johannesburg, Durban, rural Natal, Basutoland and Umtata, recording en route – in assured, flashy, layered washes – the people, indigenous culture and traditional dress he encountered. His newfound *raison d'être* – to 'capture the soul of the South African peoples in their natural surroundings'² – provides

the immediate context for these three beautiful, museum-grade watercolours: the artist captures a red-blooded Xhosa maiden, her belly marked, her headscarf carefully speckled, balancing a kalabash on her shoulder (lot 831); a young girl, apprehensive and bathed in yellow shadow, dropping her hands to her lap (lot 832); and a serene Xhosa bride posing formally, her eyes lowered and her beads glistening in the sun (lot 833).

Perhaps surprisingly, Pemba's work was introduced to the broader South African art public only in the 1990s, and he was given a much overdue retrospective exhibition at the South African National Gallery in 1996.

1. Sarah Hudleston (1996) *George Pemba: Against All Odds*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, referenced in text on page 25.

2. *Ibid*, page 40.



834

**George Milwa
Mnyaluza Pemba**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1912–2001

**Assassination
of Shaka Zulu**

signed and dated 73
oil on canvas board
55 by 75 cm

R400 000 – 600 000

George Pemba is widely appreciated for the technical skill and sensitivity of his portraits and scenes of everyday life, but his historical paintings, that come onto the market more rarely, are a particularly important and significant contribution to South African art and cultural history.

In the present lot, Pemba depicts the death of the historical king Shaka Zulu (c.1787–1828) at the hands of his half-brothers, Dingane and Mhlangana, and a fellow conspirator Mbopha. The artist Cecil Skotnes produced a portfolio of colour woodcuts dealing with the life and assassination of Shaka and shows both Mhlangana and Mbopha in the act of stabbing the king. In contrast, Pemba avoids the gruesome act itself and depicts a moment after Shaka's death. The three perpetrators still lurk in the background,

one holding a bloodied spear, but the picture plane is dominated by a woman (wearing an *isicholo*, the hat denoting her married status), grieving over Shaka's lifeless body. There is a traditional Zulu grass hut in the background, with Shaka's cow-hide war shield (*isihlangu*), stabbing spear (*iklwa*), and knobkierie (*iwisa*) on the right, testifying to his status as the great warrior who developed the Zulu chieftainship into a powerful, wide-ranging empire.

A life-long lack of funds prevented Pemba fulfilling his dream of travelling to Europe to see the works of artists he admired – Velásquez, Rembrandt and the Impressionists – but with the help of a grant from the Bantu Welfare Trust in 1944, he was able to embark on a 'grand tour' of South Africa, travelling from his home in Port Elizabeth through the Transkei,

KwaZulu-Natal, and Lesotho. He used this opportunity to study traditional dress and cultural practices and the impressions gained on this trip no doubt continued to inform his later depictions of rural village life and historical southern African events. In addition to being a painter, Pemba was a playwright, writing and staging at least two plays, one on the life of the prophet Ntsikana, who brought the gospel to Xhosa communities, and one on the Xhosa visionary Nongqawuse, whose prophecies resulted in the cattle-killings of the 1850s. The events surrounding Nongqawuse also appear in a series of paintings by Pemba, including *The Girl who Killed to Save*, 1976, (the title drawn from HIE Dhlomo's 1935 play) and *The Dream II*, 1985.



835

**Mmakgabo Mmapula
Helen Sebidi**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1943–

***Searching for the Loss
of Old Traditions***

signed and dated 2005; inscribed
with the date and the title on the
frame; inscribed with the artist's
name, the title and the medium on
an Everard Read label adhered to
the reverse
oil on canvas
103 by 67 cm

R300 000 – 400 000

LITERATURE

Juliette Lieb-du Toit (2009)
Mmakgabo Mmapula Mmankgato
Helen Sebidi, Taxi-014 Johannesburg:
David Krut, illustrated in colour on
page 6.



836

Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911–1975

Iliad, triptych

each signed and dated '68; each inscribed with the artist's name and the title on a Pretoria Art Museum *Alexis Preller Retrospective* label adhered to the reverse
oil and gold leaf on board
12 by 12,5 cm; 12,5 by 11 cm; 13,5 by 11,5 cm

R450 000 – 550 000

EXHIBITED

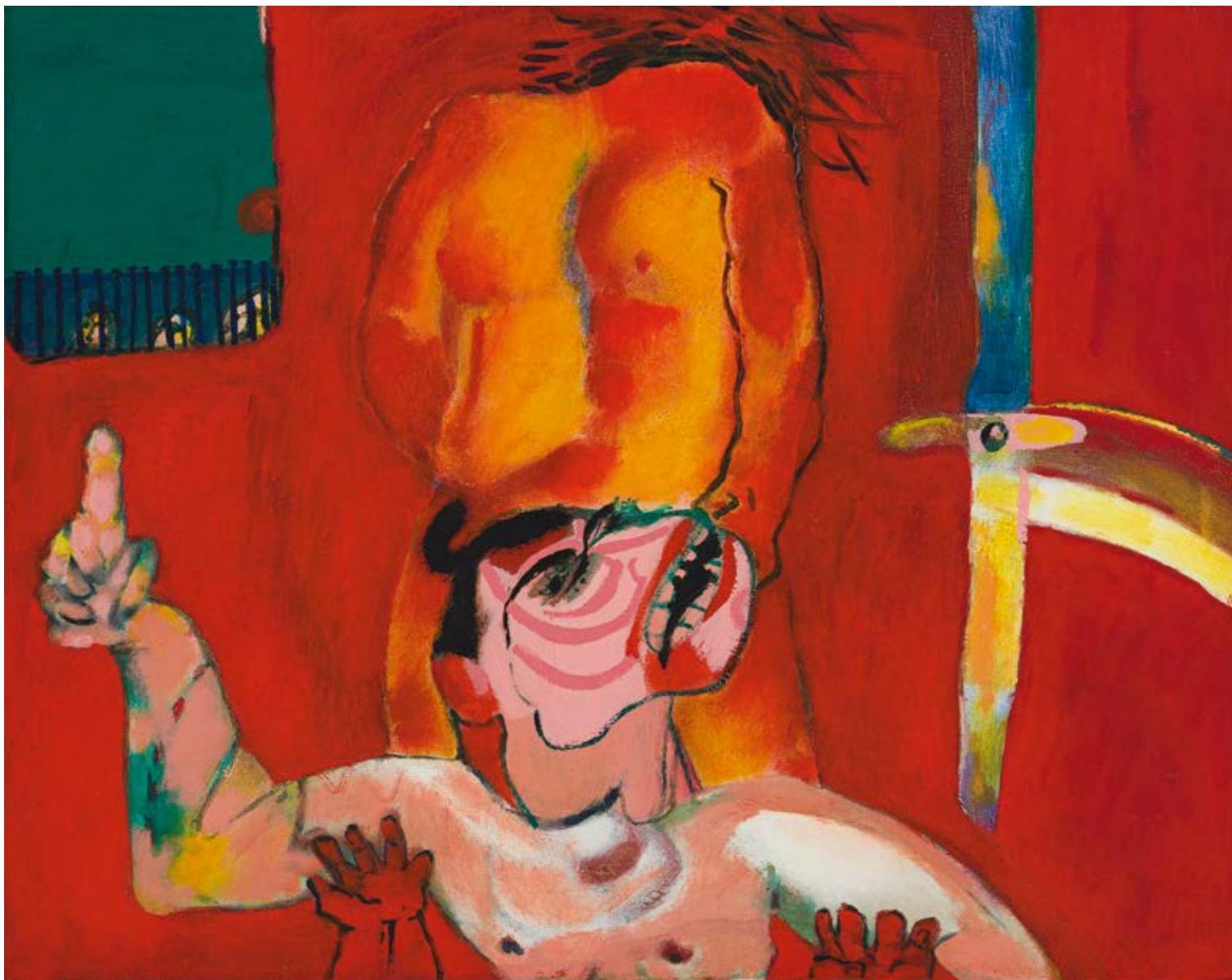
Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, *Alexis Preller Retrospective*, 24 October to 26 November 1972.

LITERATURE

Esmé Berman (1972) *Alexis Preller Retrospective*, exhibition catalogue, Pretoria: Pretoria Art Museum, illustrated in black and white on page 38 as figure 141a, c and c.

Alexis Preller owned a much-loved volume of the epic tales of Greek mythology from childhood and his work references these exciting narratives throughout his life. This series of three, small, jewel-like works, is named after Homer's ancient Greek epic poem, *The Iliad*, which tells of the adventures of the kings, warriors, gods and heroes of the Trojan War. The city of Troy, under King Priam, is besieged by the Greek army commanded by Agamemnon, and the epic poem is a chaotic melee of pitched battles, bloodshed, bravery, plague, treachery, betrayal, fickle gods, feats of heroism on the part of the famed Greek warrior Achilles and the valiant Hector, Prince of Troy, and perfidy on the part of weak Paris, Hector's brother. Preller's panels are all but abstract – there is a fragment of a war horse in

the right-hand-panel and the suggestion of a swishing tale and rump of a horse in the left. But this perhaps conveys the sense of the conflict better than more representational means, which might show little more than a single event, a moment frozen in time. Instead, the accent colours that Preller uses – his favourite turquoise, perhaps standing here for both the ocean and the realm of the gods (for paradise in near-Eastern belief systems), and his much-used coral red, perhaps referencing the burning Greek ships set alight by the Trojans, the watchfires of the Greek soldiers' encampments on the plain outside the city walls, and the blood and gore of the seemingly interminable battles and gruesome deaths – evoke more completely the heat, dust, sweat and noise that the epic poem narrates.



837

Robert Hodgins

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920–2010

Samurai

signed, dated 1996 and inscribed with the artist's name, the title and the medium on the reverse oil on canvas laid down on board 62 by 75 cm

R450 000 – 550 000

PROVENANCE

Everard Read, Johannesburg.
Private Collection, Johannesburg.

Samurai, 1986, encapsulates Robert Hodgins's mastery of the figurative, of colour, complex visual and emotional subject matter and his preferred medium of expression, painting.

Three years prior to painting *Samurai*, Hodgins, at the age of 63, left teaching to become a full-time artist, and with his keen observation of life, great vigour, wit and energy, produced a compelling body of work over the following almost three decades.

For Hodgins, the rapacious male figure in authority is a recurring subject, whether it's Alfred Jarry's *Ubu*, a pin-striped businessman, politician, military man, or, as in this case, a warrior from pre-modern Japan, a samurai.

Hodgins melds 'innumerable conflicting elements that communicate beyond the rules of the visual!' The apparently

omnipotent warrior is theatrically set against a plane of flaming red, gold and orange hues alluding to beauty, power and destructiveness. In contrast to the typically hyper masculine samurai, here he is rendered in shades of dusky and pale pink and comes across as pasty and weak while sandwiched impotently between the radiant physical presence of the somewhat androgynous headless figure and the blood red hands of a child poignantly reaching out for protection. The warrior responds by pointing a phallic first finger upwards towards the prison-like window, while his hybrid predator-human face seems to be remonstrating with the symbolically charged gleaming gold and blue sword.

1. Brenda Atkinson (2002) 'New Loves, Old Affairs', in Brenda Atkinson, *Robert Hodgins*, Cape Town: Tafelberg, page 13.

838

Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1957

Bushveld

signed and dated 25

oil on artist's board

14 by 24 cm

R150 000 – 200 000



839

Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1957

Landscape with Wetland

signed

oil on board

34,5 by 45 cm

R350 000 – 500 000





840

Sidney Nolan

AUSTRALIAN 1917–1992

Central Australia

signed; inscribed with the artist's name and the title on the reverse
oil on board
90 by 120 cm

R300 000 – 500 000

The Australian artist Sydney Nolan grew up in Melbourne and lived for the first half of his life in Australia before relocating to the UK in 1951. He is most widely known in his home country for his large series of paintings that depict the life of the bushranger/outlaw Ned Kelly, which have become defining symbols of Australian nationalism. Elsewhere he is better known for his diverse and prolific art practice, which includes expansive outback landscapes, such as the present lot, set designs for theatre and ballet, book cover illustrations, photography and site-specific installations such as the monumental murals *Paradise Garden* (1968–70) and *Rainbow Serpent* (1970–72).

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER

841

Hugo Naudé

SOUTH AFRICAN 1868–1941

Wood Carriers

signed; Die Kunsamer gallery label bearing artist's name and title adhered to the reverse
oil on canvas
57,5 by 50 cm

R250 000 – 350 000

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist by
NC Krone.
Thence by descent to the
current owner.



Naudé was the first South African artist to study overseas, doing so at the Slade School of Fine Art in London and the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Although this academic training took the form primarily of figural work, focusing on portraiture, he was exposed to Romanticism and Realism which were the prevailing art movements of the time.

After his time in Munich, in 1895 while painting at Fontainebleau, Naudé began to gravitate towards Realism as it

was driven by social reform and strong humanistic sentiment. Many of his paintings of figures in landscapes can be traced to this movement. In the manner of Courbet and Millet, Naudé's *Wood Carriers* (lot 841) makes heroic the labour of workers through the monumental scale of the women in their billowing drapery and the vivid palette employed. By comparison in the way of a rare departure, *Satyrs in a Forest* (lot 842) is a Romantic painting informed by the

popular resurgence in Victorian times of antique myths. Presumably painted at Fontainebleau with European light and atmosphere and dated in Worcester a year after his return from Europe in 1897, it speaks of the bohemian life he left behind at France.

Wildepad in die Knysna Bos (lot 843) is painted in the artist's more characteristic style, which he developed over his long career and through exposure to the Impressionists and Post Impressionists

while visiting England and Europe in 1913 with his nephew, Philip du Toit, as well as with NC Krone, on their Grand Tour of Europe. This large-scale work, illuminated by morning light, awakens in great contrast under the vibrancy of Naudé's brush marks and dynamic paint application.

The present lot and the two on the opposite page were acquired by NC Krone from the artist and display the artist's evolving style from his early influences to maturity.



842

Hugo Naudé

SOUTH AFRICAN 1868–1941

Satyrs in the Forest

signed and dated 97

oil on canvas

49,5 by 49,5 cm

R120 000 – 160 000

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist by NC Krone.
Thence by descent to the current owner.



843

Hugo Naudé

SOUTH AFRICAN 1868–1941

Wildepad in die Knysna Bos

signed; inscribed with the title
on the reverse

oil on canvas

70 by 44,5 cm

R350 000 – 500 000

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist by NC Krone.
Thence by descent to the current owner.

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER



844

Anton van Wouw

SOUTH AFRICAN 1862–1945

Kruger on the Station

signed, inscribed 'SJP Kruger', 'SA' and bears the foundry mark bronze with a brown patina on a wooden base; cast by the Massa foundry, Rome height: 33,5 cm

R200 000 – 300 000

LITERATURE

AE Duffey (2008) *Anton van Wouw: The Smaller Works*, Pretoria: Protea Books, another cast from the edition illustrated on page 104.



845

Fanie Eloff

SOUTH AFRICAN 1885–1947

Standing Nude

signed bronze with a dark brown patina height: 70 cm

R300 000 – 500 000

LITERATURE

Gerard de Kamper and Chris de Klerk (2011) *Sculptured: The Complete Works of Fanie Eloff*, Pretoria: Department of Arts, University of Pretoria, illustrated on page 106.

846

Jean Welz

SOUTH AFRICAN 1900–1975

Blue Nude

signed and dated 49
oil on board
45 by 37,5 cm

R600 000 – 800 000

PROVENANCE

Property of Mrs E Kerby.
Sotheby Parke Bernet South Africa,
Johannesburg, 2 May 1984, lot 306,
with the title *Seated Nude*.
Stephan Welz & Co in association
with Sotheby's, Johannesburg, 7 June
1993, lot 40, with the title *Seated Nude*.
The Shill Collection.

LITERATURE

Stephan Welz (1989) *Art at Auction in South Africa: Twenty Years of Sotheby's/ Stephan Welz & Co, 1969 to 1989*, Johannesburg: AD Donker, illustrated in colour on page 138.
Stephan Welz (1996) *Art at Auction in South Africa: The Art Market Review 1969 to 1995*, Johannesburg: Art Link, page 94 and illustrated in colour on page 95.
Elza Miles (1997) *The World of Jean Welz*, Cape Town: Fernwood Press, illustrated in colour on page 120 as figure 2, with the title *Blue Nude*.



In the mid to late 1940s, Jean Welz focused his concentration on painting nudes. *Blue Nude*, dating from this period, has characteristically bold line, gestural brush strokes and lively mark-making, placing this painting – the product of years of determined observation and mastery of technique – amongst the finest of his creative output. Welz's skilful artistic alchemy, transforming reality into the poetic realm and uniting intellect and emotion, imbues the image with life in a way that is both timeless and enigmatic. This self-challenging search for pictorial truth became a lifetime obsession and is perhaps one of the reasons his works retain their great vitality today. In the

present lot the artist describes the reflective quality of flesh by the use of colour, using the glowing highlights of layered yellow and orange hues and shadow areas of blue and green tints to define the form. This rich interplay of observation, application and colour, merge the model and studio surrounds into a perfect moment in time.

'Probably each of the single nude figures in Welz's world is an Aphrodite, who bewitches everyone with whom she comes into contact like the goddess of love. She is both the Great Mother and the seductress.'

1. Elza Miles (1997) *The World of Jean Welz*, Cape Town: Fernwood Press, page 86.

847

Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1957

Kaap Bloubergstrand

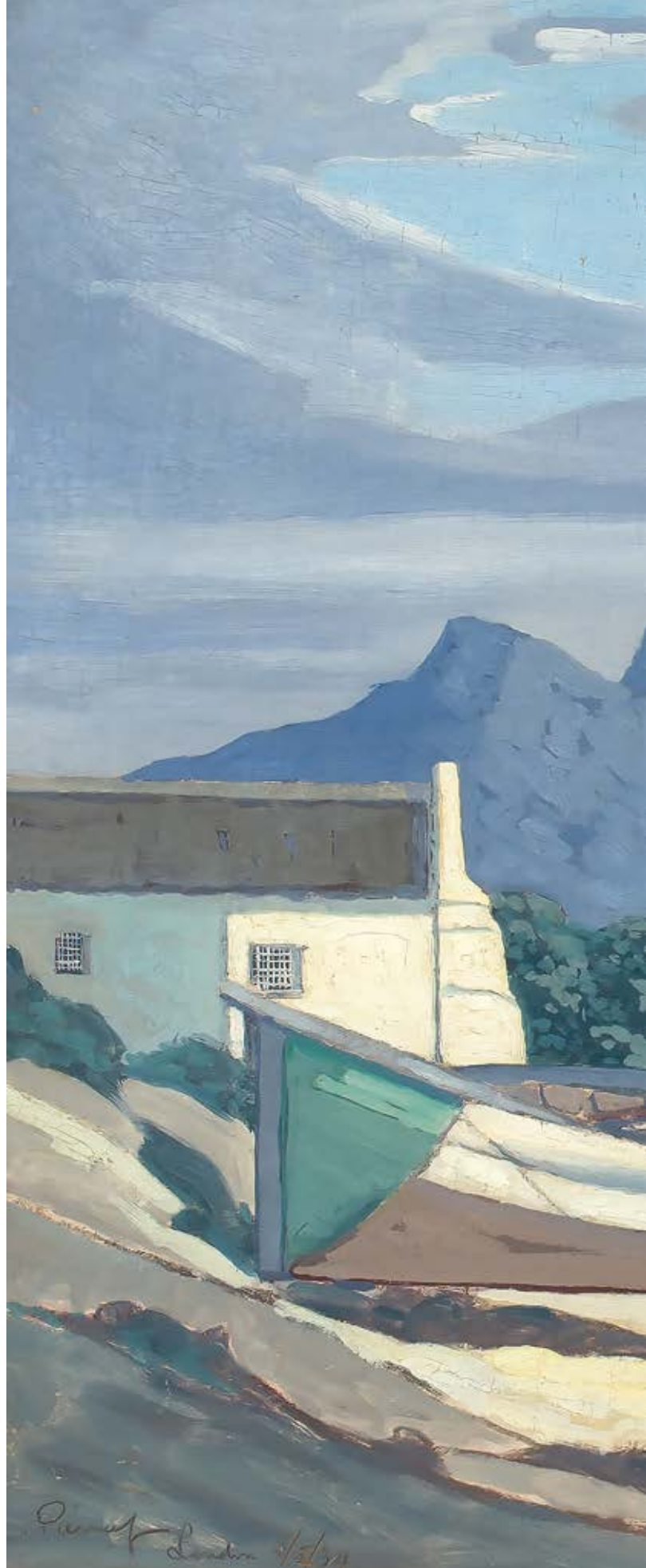
signed, dated 5/5/34 and inscribed
with the title and 'London'
oil on artist's board
43,5 by 58,5 cm

R2 000 000 – 3 000 000

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist at his house in
Pretoria by the current owner's father.

This complex composition was painted during the artist's stay in London in 1934 while he was engaged with the mural commission for South Africa House on Trafalgar Square, presumably based on sketches or photographs. This points to Pierneef's extraordinary ability to create and generate finished studio paintings by the masterful deployment of colour, form and light. The use of warm ochre, green and cream tones in the foreground is played off against cool blues and greys in the background. The artist invites the viewer to wander between small dune undulations and fishing boats, alongside the historic houses of General Janssen Street and Stadler Road flanking the coastline, against the extensive backdrop of Table Mountain. A light blue halo, formed by the parting grey clouds, makes apparent the artist's reverence for the sublime quality of the natural world. This work, rendered in the artist's mature style, has been engineered to convey quiet contemplation of a scene whose panoramic splendour is now world-renowned.





Bloubaai



848

Edoardo Villa

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Interlocking Figures

signed, dated 1969
and numbered 5/6
bronze

height: 34,5 cm

R120 000 – 160 000

PROVENANCE

The Late Desmond Fisher Collection.



The Late Desmond Fisher Collection

Desmond Fisher (1942–1997) was a Johannesburg businessman and brother of the artist Berenice Michelow (see lot 813). He was an ardent entrepreneur, with unbridled energy for projects and people. He started his collection by buying pieces directly from artists such as Sydney Kumalo, Cecil Skotnes and Ezrom Legae, and assisted Dumile Feni by buying a small school suitcase from the artist, which contained a number of drawings, when he went into exile in 1968. Fisher's interest in South African art was further sparked in the 1970s by his friendship with Edoardo Villa, a member of the Amadlozi group. He purchased many works from the Henry Lidchi Gallery and received encouragement from Linda Goodman, of the Goodman Gallery, another friend and advisor, and from whom he purchased a large part of his

collection. In 1970, the Goodman Gallery held the 51 Club Winter Art Exhibition and exhibited the Desmond Fisher Collection, and, in 1991 Fisher and Goodman co-curated the Dumile Feni exhibition at the Standard Bank Arts Festival in Grahamstown.

Fisher moved with his family to Cape Town in 1988 and, with inspiration from the award-winning Durban sculptor, Andries Botha, decided to hold an Art Festival at the newly developed Waterfront. This idea came to fruition in December 1992, when a marquee was erected in Dock Road alongside the Dock Road Café and the converted Pump House. This innovative project was the forerunner of what was to become one of the most important annual events on the arts calendar in South Africa, the Cape Town Art Festival.

849

Cecil Skotnes

SOUTH AFRICAN 1926–2009

Head

signed, dated 1969 and
inscribed
with the title on the reverse
incised and painted wood
panel
92 by 75,5 by 5 cm

R200 000 – 300 000

PROVENANCE

The Late Desmond Fisher
Collection.



849

© The Estate of Cecil Skotnes | DALRO

850

Dumile Feni

SOUTH AFRICAN 1942–1991

Untitled: Two Figures

blue pen on paper
33 by 23 cm

R20 000 – 30 000

PROVENANCE

The Late Desmond Fisher
Collection.



850

851

Dumile Feni

SOUTH AFRICAN 1942–1991

Untitled No. 57 (Woman and Child)

inscribed 'My Bowels, My Bowels, How Come?';
inscribed with the artist's name, the title, the medium
on a Goodman Gallery label adhered to the reverse
blue pen on paper laid down on paper
30 by 18 cm

R20 000 – 30 000

PROVENANCE

The Late Desmond Fisher
Collection.



851

852

Dumile Feni

SOUTH AFRICAN 1942–1991

Drawing No 22

bears the artist's signature stamp; inscribed with
the artist's name, the title and the medium on a
Goodman Gallery label adhered to the reverse
blue pen on paper laid down on backing board
24,5 by 16 cm

R20 000 – 30 000

PROVENANCE

The Late Desmond Fisher
Collection.



852

853

Sydney Kumalo

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Madala I

1966
signed with the artist's initial
and numbered I/X
bronze
height: 60 cm

R500 000 – 700 000

PROVENANCE

The Late Desmond Fisher Collection.

EXHIBITED

Transvaal Academy, Pretoria Art
Museum, 1967.

LITERATURE

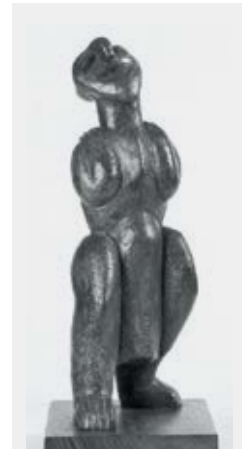
Lola Watter (1968) 'Sydney Kumalo:
Sculptor', *Lantern*, Volume XVIII,
illustrated on page 42.
Heine Toerien and Georges Duby (eds)
(1968) *Our Art 3*, Pretoria: Foundation
for Education, Science and Technology,
illustrated on page 72.

Thanks to Dr Gavin Watkins for his
assistance in cataloguing this lot.



Figure 1. *High Shoulders*, 1966Figure 2. *Beggar*, 1966Figure 3. *Tongue Out*, 1966

Figure 4. The present lot

Figure 5. *Madala II (hands on chin)*, 1967Figure 6. *Madala III (chin on knees)*, 1967Figure 7. *Madala IV (pierced ears)*, 1967Figure 8. *Madala V (big face)*, 1967Figure 9. *Madala VI (arms down, flat face)*, 1967Figure 10. *Madala VII*, 1967Figure 11. *Happy Madala*, 1968Figure 12. *The Listener*, 1968

The group of bronzes that Sydney Kumalo produced in the 1960s, when under the sway of Egon Guenther, is a high-point of South African modernism. Defined by elongated or squat forms, lacerated and hand-rasped surfaces, off-beat cylindrical volumes, poignant simplification, and rich, gorgeous patinas, these works won high acclaim. Powerful, ageless, landmark sculptures – *Seated Woman*, *Killed Horse*, *St Francis of Assisi*, *Black Leopard* (all 1962), *Cock* (1963), *Portrait of Egon* and *Beast* (both 1965), to name only a few – elevated his reputation, as did ground-breaking shows in Johannesburg and London. With his fellow Amadlozi artists,

moreover, he exhibited in Rome, Venice, Florence and Milan in 1962–63, and had work selected for the Venice Biennale in 1966. Critical and commercial success allowed him to vacate his teaching post at the Polly Street Art Centre in 1964 to focus fulltime on his career.

Between 1966 and 1968, riding a peak of creativity, Kumalo became drawn to the motif of the male elder. He developed the theme across twelve small yet monumental works, each as intense, stirring and memorable as the next: this fabled group came to be recognised as the artist's Madala Series (see figures 1–12). The first four of these sculptures, all conceived in 1966, were *High Shoulders*,

Beggar, *Tongue Out* and *Madala I*, the present lot, which was also the first to carry the madala appellation. Indebted to traditional African sculpture, and infused with the artist's own cultural loyalties, this madala figure holds an unusual pose: the weight of the body rests on the bent right knee, while the left heel is raised high on stiff toes; the arms are held close to a beautifully pocked and scarified belly; aged breasts droop; the neck is hidden; and the head, oversized and extended, with its long and barrelled nose, its conical chin, its reduced, pursed lips, and its deep-set and gently closed eyes, is angled upwards, as if catching the sun or happily lost in memory.

Under the careful watch of Guenther, *Madala I* was cast at the Vignali Foundry in Pretoria, and an edition of 10 planned. Only a single casting was produced, however: this unique bronze was shown in 1967 at the 14th annual exhibition of the Transvaal Academy at the Pretoria Art Museum, where it won the Bronze medal. Having remained a treasured part of the late Desmond Fisher collection for decades, the re-appearance of *Madala I*, a work of such charm, artistry and weight, is of great excitement to academics and collectors alike.



854

Sydney Kumalo

SOUTH AFRICAN 1935–1988

Kneeling Figure

signed

bronze on a wooden base

height: 34 cm

R80 000 – 100 000

Thanks to Dr Gavin Watkins for his assistance in cataloguing this lot.



855

Ezrom Legae

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938–1999

Lying Nude

signed with the artist's initials

and numbered I/IX

bronze on a wooden base

height: 10,5 cm

R60 000 – 80 000

Thanks to Dr Gavin Watkins for his assistance in cataloguing this lot.



856

856

Edoardo Villa

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Two Figures

signed and dated 1970
bronze
height: 45 cm

R120 000 – 150 000

857

Edoardo Villa

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Torso

signed, dated 1968 and
numbered 6/6
bronze on a wooden base
height: 43 cm

R80 000 – 120 000



857

Some spectacular aesthetic shifts took place on the Highveld in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Against a background of discriminatory politics, increasing international isolation, and eye-opening technological advancement, the careers of a remarkable group of artists – sculptors, in particular – overlapped in the 1950s and 1960s in Johannesburg. Although each came from a different cultural and artistic background to the next, all were loosely tied together by an interest in developing a distinctive African idiom, a similar commitment to quality craftsmanship, a joy in local motifs, and an appreciation of broad-minded gallerists and teachers. Cecil Skotnes, Edoardo Villa, Sydney Kumalo and Ezrom Legae, each mentoring or riffing

off the other, produced unique sets of masterpieces defined by an elegant reduction of form, characterised by a captivating tactility, and enlivened by an African spirit. All were inevitably drawn into the circle of German émigré art dealer Egon Guenther, in whose experience, careful eye, and exacting standards they came to trust.

While Guenther championed these artists under the banner of the Amadlozi Group (Legae was a later member), both locally and abroad, he helped them develop their styles and their reputations through solo and two-man shows at his eponymous gallery, first in Bree Street and then at his Linksfield home, with its purpose-built gallery wing laid out by Donald Turgel. Guenther arranged shows for Villa in 1962, 1963 and

1968; for Kumalo in 1962, 1963, 1966 and 1967; and for Legae in 1966. Some examples from this golden period are included here (lots 853–858): conceived in 1965, Legae's *Lying Nude* (lot 855), with its plump, segmented limbs and strained neck, suggests an uneasy balance between repose and suffering; Kumalo's *Kneeling Figure* (lot 854), from the same year, with its compressed limbs and dense flesh, is a study in stifled energy; while Villa's cylindrical *Torso* (lot 857), typical of his small, upright bronzes from 1968, relies on geometric incisions, angle-shifting facets, the interplay of volume and outline, as well as a certain degree of imagination.

858

Ezrom Legae

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938–1999

The Prisoner (Young Man)

signed and numbered AP2
bronze on a granite base
height: 64,5 cm

R800 000 – 1 000 000

LITERATURE

EJ de Jager (1973) *Contemporary Art in South Africa, Cape Town*: Struik, another cast from the edition illustrated in black and white, unpaginated.

Dina Katz (1974) 'A Man of Two Worlds: Ezrom Legae', *Lantern*, Volume XXIV, another cast from the edition illustrated in black and white on page 62.

Esmé Berman (1983) *Art and Artists of South Africa*, Cape Town: Balkema, another cast from the edition illustrated in black and white on page 405.

Elizabeth Burroughs and Karel Nel (eds) (1998) *Re/discovery and Memory: The Works of Kumalo, Legae, Nitegeka and Villa*, Cape Town: Norval Foundation, another cast from the edition illustrated in black and white on pages 181 and 182, and in colour on pages 200 and 201.

Elza Miles (2004) *Polly Street: The Story of an Art Centre*, Johannesburg: The Ampersand Foundation, another cast from the edition illustrated in colour on page 127.

Thanks to Dr Gavin Watkins for his assistance in cataloguing this lot.



Another casting of this quickening, magnificent and agonizing work was given pride of place in the artist's first retrospective exhibition, at the Norval Foundation, in 2018. In the crucial catalogue accompanying the exhibition, and within the chapter on the artist by Karel Nel and Elizabeth Burroughs subtitled *Political Edge*, the work was closely and movingly described:

'The sculpture, one of Legae's most famous, depicts a young man with his hands tied behind his back. His body is defined by a series of articulated cylindrical volumes, which represent the youth's bound arms, his thighs and neck. To some extent the torso itself seems to be formed by two parallel and conjoined cylinders, for a deep groove runs from the stylised penis at the base of the groin, cutting a vertical axis into the chest. At

the base of the neck, the groove transforms into a cylinder within the long column of the neck. The grooves on either side of the windpipe and the pronounced Adam's apple speak of the tensions in his body as he tilts his head to his right. Then, surprisingly, the axial groove reasserts itself in the face. This collapse of the features of the face into a deep V-shaped groove terminates at the forehead. When looked at face-on, this erosion of the face suggests deep dejection, and yet, in profile, the angle of the young man's head intimates a more subversive emotion, a quiet and dignified defiance of his situation.¹

1. Elizabeth Burroughs and Karel Nel (eds) (1998) *Re/discovery and Memory: The Works of Kumalo, Legae, Nitegeka and Villa*, Cape Town: Norval Foundation, pages 181 to 182.





Elisabeth Frink with *Blind Beggar and Dog*, 1957, from the Archive of Dame Elisabeth Frink at Dorset History Centre, courtesy of Tully and Bree Jammet.



Kenneth Armitage in his studio, 1954. Photography by Ida Kar, National Portrait Gallery, London.



859

Dame Elisabeth Jean Frink

BRITISH 1930–1993

Man Running I

signed and numbered 7/8
bronze on a wooden base
height: 37,5 cm

R350 000 – 500 000

LITERATURE

Jill Wilder (ed) (1984) *Elisabeth Frink Sculpture, Catalogue Raisonné*, London: Harpvale, catalogue number 223, another example from this edition illustrated in black and white on pages 184 and 185.

While the defining characteristic of the Amadlozi Group had been a dedication to a bold if admittedly diverse African aesthetic, from the mid-1960s a greater international influence on the work of these artists became evident. Villa, of course, already steeped in European modernism, was little affected, as was Skotnes who, in his role as teacher at Polly Street, had always kept an eye on international trends; Kumalo and Legae, however, were perhaps more receptive to new sources, particularly as their careers advanced and they became more sensitive to collectors' tastes.

A shift came in 1965 as the Grosvenor Gallery, the prestigious Mayfair landmark run by the American Eric Estorick, showed increasing interest in Egon

Guenther's stable of contemporary sculptors. He would have known the work of Villa, Skotnes and Kumalo in particular, as each had, in the decade prior, regularly shown at the Venice and São Paulo Biennales. Estorick, accompanied by his then assistant Linda Goodman, famously visited Guenther in 1964 and 1965 to negotiate the possibility of cross-gallery partnerships. This led that year to Kumalo participating in the Grosvenor Gallery's *Fifty Years of Sculpture* exhibition, as well as a Skotnes–Kumalo show in London the following year.

Back in Johannesburg, Goodman, still acting as an agent for Estorick, opened her eponymous gallery in Hyde Park in 1966. She exerted a greater influence from the late 1960s and into the 1970s

as Guenther began to withdraw from dealing, and in time her gallery became the new epicentre of the wider ex-Amadlozi circle. Villa had major solo shows at Goodman in 1970, 1971 and 1973; Kumalo showed there in 1972, 1975, 1977 and 1979; Skotnes in 1975, 1976 and 1977; while the gallery hosted Legae's important Chicken Series in 1978. Linda Goodman's international experience and her strong links to Estorick allowed her to handle examples by the likes of Picasso, Braque and Miró, and exhibit major British modernists such as David Hockney, Henry Moore, Kenneth Armitage and Lynn Chadwick. The latter three became a strong influence on Kumalo and Legae, as did Reg Butler and Elisabeth Frink (lot 859), and other British

sculptors from the so-called 'Geometry of Fear' group (see pages 94–95). Even if an African spirit remained inherent in their sculptures, Kumalo's head was certainly turned by Moore's voluptuous, organic and undulating forms, while Legae was clearly taken by the flattened and semi-abstract figures created by Butler, Frink, Armitage and Chadwick, with their thorn-like limbs, planar bodies, and ingot-smooth features. Legae's fabulous *African Goat* and *She Goat* (lot 863), late-career highlights, each borrow Chadwick's spiky, attenuated appendages (lot 862), as well as the gentle humour reminiscent of some of Armitage's work (lot 861).



860

860

Edoardo Villa

SOUTH AFRICAN 1915–2011

Disc Figures

signed and dated 1975

steel with a dark blue-green patina

height: 37 cm

R40 000 – 60 000

861

Kenneth Armitage

BRITISH 1916–2002

The Forest

inscribed with the artist's initials

bronze with a black patina

height: 35,5 cm

R250 000 – 350 000



861

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER



862

Lynn Chadwick

BRITISH 1914–2003

Standing Figure

stamped with the artist's monogram,
dated 77 and numbered 4/8 and 756
(should read 758)

bronze

height: 21 cm

R300 000 – 500 000

PROVENANCE

Joe Wolpe.

Thanks to the artist's estate for their
assistance in cataloguing this lot.



863

Ezrom Legae

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938–1999

African Goat;

She Goat, two

1990

each signed, *African Goat* numbered 1/7;

She Goat numbered 4/7

bronze with a brown patina

African Goat, height: 66,5 cm;

She Goat, height: 57,5 cm

R2 500 000 – 3 000 000

LITERATURE

James Webb and Josh Ginsburg (2016)

Off the Wall: An 80th Birthday Celebration

with Linda Givon, Johannesburg: Wits Art Museum, exhibition catalogue.

Another cast from the edition of *African Goat* illustrated on page 18.

Elizabeth Burroughs and Karel Nel (2018)

Re/discovery and Memory: The Works of

Kumalo. Legae, Nitegeka and Villa, Cape

Town: Norval Foundation. Another

cast from the edition of *African Goat*

illustrated on page 192 as figure 38.

Each cast by the Vignali Foundry, Pretoria.

Number 3 from the edition of *African*

Goat is in the Iziko South African

National Gallery Collection, Cape Town.

Thanks to Dr Gavin Watkins for his assistance in cataloguing this lot.

‘Legae’s late goat sculptures have a faint science fictional quality about them. Their elegant, simplified and flattened forms are produced by the delicate antennae-like quality of their horns and the fragile phallic protuberances. The works have a humour and lightness of touch that sets them quite apart from the severity of his earlier work, and perhaps suggest something of a recovery of a less grim view of the world. Years previously he had spoken about his loving affection for goats in a conversation recorded by Lola Watter: ‘The goat fascinated me. Man, it was so comical and contrary that I felt its actions had to be deliberate. I even identified with it ... I think goats are very funny and humour is something I like to put into my work. I like to draw them as stupid and wise and, well ... quaint.’ There is tenderness in his observation of the animal, a quiet respect which suggests perhaps that – even if it were just for a while – Legae had regained a kind of peace with the world about him.’²

1. Dina Katz (1974) ‘Ezrom Legae: A man of two worlds’, in *Lantern*, September, page 59.

2. Karel Nel and Elizabeth Burroughs (2018) ‘Ezrom Legae: Political Edge’, in Elizabeth Burroughs and Karel Nel, *Re/discovery and Memory: The Works of Kumalo, Legae, Nitegeka and Villa*, Cape Town: Norval Foundation, pages 191 and 192.



864

Lucas Sithole

SOUTH AFRICAN 1931–1994

Cat Figure (LS 9301)

1993

signed

Rhodesian teak

height: 15,5 cm

R40 000 – 60 000

PROVENANCE

Private Collection, Pretoria.

Gallery 21, Johannesburg.

Private Collection, Cape Town.

EXHIBITED

Gallery 21, Johannesburg, 1993.



865

Speelman Mahlangu

SOUTH AFRICAN 1958–2004

Twins

2003

signed and numbered 2/3

bronze with a brown patina

height: 176cm

R 300 000 - 500 000



866

Stanley Nkosi

SOUTH AFRICAN 1945–1988

Man in Despair

bronze
height: 72,5 cm

R50 000 – 70 000

PROVENANCE

Originally purchased as a terracotta sculpture in 1973 in Johannesburg, the current owner had the work cast in bronze for the sake of permanence. Two further editioned copies were made from this casting.

LITERATURE

BANTU (1972) July, volume XIX number 12, pages 16 to 18, illustrated.

Thanks to Gavin Watkins and Fernand Haenggi for their assistance in cataloguing this lot.



867

Percy Ndithembile Konqobe

SOUTH AFRICAN 1938/1939–

Three Generations, two

the larger signed and numbered
1/5

bronze
height: 57 cm; height of head: 11 cm

R50 000 – 70 000



868

Louis Maqhubela

SOUTH AFRICAN 1939–

Figure and Lion

signed and dated 76
mixed media, charcoal
and pastel on paper
76 by 56 cm

R20 000 – 30 000



869

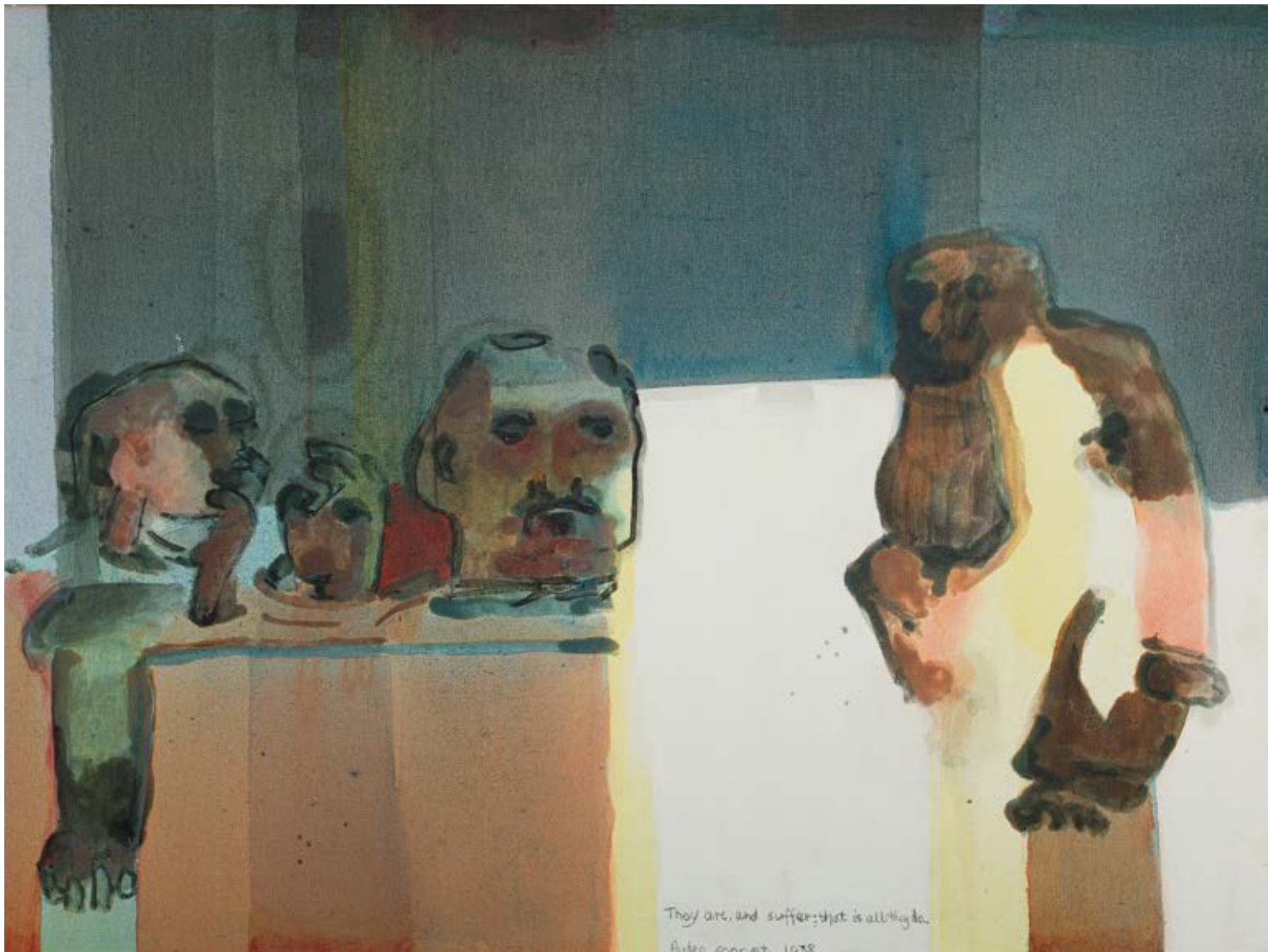
Douglas Portway

SOUTH AFRICAN 1922–1993

Abstract

signed
oil on canvas
98 by 72 cm

R80 000 – 100 000



870

Robert Hodgins

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920–2010

A Voice from the Thirties

inscribed with a line from a sonnet by the poet WH Auden (1938); signed, dated 2004 and inscribed with the title on the reverse

oil on canvas
90 by 120 cm

R700 000 – 900 000

The inscription at the bottom of Robert Hodgins' painting *A Voice from the Thirties*, 'They are, and suffer; that is all they do' is quoted from the first line of a well-known sonnet by WH Auden, a favourite poet of the artist's. It also appears at the bottom of an earlier work of a blood-soaked battlefield, exhibited at Goodman Gallery in 1996. The poem captured Auden's experiences during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) and was included in the 1939 anthology, *Journey to War*. Hodgins grew up in 1930s London, saying nostalgically 'I, ten, a country ten, a gentle, as yet unbullied ten, landed suddenly at Paddington for eight years of emotional, psychological, and often physical squalor: bed bugs, a sofa as often as a bed, being shopped about. Working-class life in the Depression thirties. It was grim, but it was in those eight years that I began to discover literature, music, the visual arts. I worked in a shop in Soho, the 'Librairie Populaire' in Dean Street. Soho was already haunted by the likes of Dylan Thomas, Francis Bacon, Auden, Isherwood and Co.¹ Apart from the literary allusion, Hodgins also references Vincent van Gogh's famous *Potato Eaters* in the composition of the present lot. Van Gogh, whose work he saw in the National Gallery in London in the Thirties was also signalled by Hodgins as one of his favourite artists.

They are, and suffer; that is all they do;
A bandage hides the place where each is living,
His knowledge of the world restricted to
The treatment that the instruments are giving.
And lie apart like epochs from each other.
Truth in their sense is how much they can bear.
It is not talk like ours, but groans they smother—
And are remote as plants; we stand elsewhere.
For who when healthy can become a foot?
Even a scratch we can't recall when cured ...
But are boist'rous in a moment and believe ...
In the common world of the uninjured, and cannot ...
Imagine isolation. Only happiness is shared ...
And anger, and the idea of love.

WH Auden

1. Robert Hodgins (2002) 'A String of Beads: An interview with Robert Hodgins', in Brenda Atkinson, *Robert Hodgins*, Cape Town: Tafelberg, pages 22 and 24.

871

Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911–1975

Craters

intaglio, oil on fibreglass
height: 60 cm

R1 800 000 – 2 400 000

PROVENANCE

Volks Auctioneers, Pretoria,
18 November 1977, lot 92.
Thence by descent to the
current owner.

The astonishing *Craters*, one of Preller's famed, late-career *intaglios*, is curious, memorable, and yet barely documented. Still in the artist's studio when he died in 1975, the work was sold at Volks Auctioneers in November 1977, along with numerous masterpieces that had very briefly passed into the hands of Guna Massyn, the artist's partner, before *he* also tragically died in a car accident. Bathed in midnight blues, dark violet and shadowy greens, bursts of blazing yellow suggest a searing subterranean heat under the work's surface. *Craters* certainly stands apart in the context of Preller's *intaglios* which, with the exception of the mesmerising and experimental *Apple I*, *Apple II* and *Original Sin* (all 1969), focused on *kouroi* forms and disembodied heads. Rather, from within its deeply concave fibreglass shell, the work at first evokes a hellish and mutilated landscape of burning pits and exploded trenches that light up an otherwise dark sky. Seemingly out of place in the artist's late-career iconography, which became increasingly classical, mysterious and Mediterranean, *Craters* conjures wartime carnage. If so, it must be one of the very few instances of the artist revisiting his World War II imagery late in life.

Preller, of course, had joined the South African Medical Corps in 1940, served in the frontline surgeries on the North African Campaign, and languished in prisoner-of-

war camps in Italy and Egypt before being repatriated late in 1943. The images he painted on his return, particularly between 1943 and 1947, were inevitably wrapped up in his recent experiences of inhumanity, panic, divinity and recovery. *Craters* brings to mind a number of milestone works from this period, albeit in different ways. It has something closely in common with the unforgettable *Revelation* (1945), for instance, which personified the landscape, and transformed swathes of lush tropical forest into ripped, torn and pink-dripping flesh (figure 1). In the present lot, moreover, the dark fang-like forms that protrude from the sky recall the drifting silhouettes of paratroopers that Preller found so potent a symbol (figure 2). Thematically, *Craters* also harks back to one of Preller's most beautiful and poetic wartime pictures: *Fleurs du Mal* (figure 3). In this iconic work, Preller conflated the appearance of swabs and wounded flesh with petals and butterfly wings, creating a powerful image of regeneration, and exploring the 'paradox of beauty in the midst of horror'.¹ The feat is repeated in *Craters*, some 25 years later, as Preller reimagined a bombed landscape using dazzlingly beautiful explosions of gold and flashing lavender.

1. Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Alexis Preller: Africa, the Sun and Shadows*, Johannesburg: Shelf, page 87.



Figure 1. *Revelation* (1945)



Figure 2. *Parachutists* (1944)



Figure 3. *Fleurs du Mal* (1944)



TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER



© The Estate of Peter Clarke | DALRO

872

Peter Clarke

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929–2014

We Can't Stay in Bed for Ever (sic)

signed and dated 28.3.1975;
inscribed with the title and the
medium on the reverse of the
paper
gouache and pastel on paper
46 by 64 cm

R350 000 – 500 000

Peter Clarke frequently painted embracing lovers, but whereas in *Love in a Bleak Landscape* (lot 768 on this sale), the lovers are fully clothed in an abstracted outdoor setting, as in other works on this subject in the artist's oeuvre, in the present lot they are naked, under the covers, in a vividly coloured bedroom. The bright sunny yellows, sky blues and cherry reds, the arrangement of the furniture, and the flattened perspective showing the artworks on the walls, all recall Vincent van Gogh's painting of his bedroom in the Yellow House in Arles, painted in 1888. While the mood in the Clarke is positive, even humorous, with the lovers' feet cheekily emerging at the bottom of the blanket, Van Gogh's sojourn in the south of France ended badly – friends found him in his bed, bleeding profusely after having cut off part of his ear, and he was institutionalised; the community of artists he had hoped to form with Paul Gauguin in Arles never materialised.



Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), *The Bedroom, Arles*, 1888, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Foundation)



873

Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906–1982

In Africa

1973
signed
oil on canvas
58 by 73,5 cm

R350 000 – 500 000

PROVENANCE
Private Collection Murray
Schoonraad.

LITERATURE

Karin Skawran (2005) *Walter Battiss: Gentle Anarchist*, Johannesburg: Standard Bank Gallery, illustrated in colour on page 101.

Karin Skawran and Michael Macnamara (eds) (1985) *Battiss*, Johannesburg: AD Donker, page 99 and illustrated in colour on page 97 as plate 19.

'A work such as his *In Africa* cannot be seen as erotic, despite the attention given to sexual characteristics. Scratched onto a background of broadly applied strokes of brightly coloured paint, the lines conjure up a fertile crowd of human beings, their proximity within the tight space emphasising their physical awareness of each other. This is a luscious painting. Its decorative qualities are as delightful as its content. And one smiles when, on reading through the ingeniously related figures, one comes upon a girl whose breasts have risen vertically in a mood of special exuberance.'¹

1. Raymund van Niekerk (1985) 'Humour in Battiss', in Karin Skawran and Michael Macnamara (eds) *Battiss*, Johannesburg: AD Donker, page 99.

874

Irma Stern

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894–1966

Glass Fireplace Panels, two

one signed and dated 1943

oil on glass

horizontal panel height: 49 cm;

vertical panel height: 99 cm

R1 000 000 – 2 000 000

Even within Irma Stern's ever-surprising *oeuvre*, the present lot is thrillingly unique. Part mural and part architectural flourish, the multi-panel work, executed *in situ* in 1943, shows the artist's instinctive feel for design, rhythm and pattern, as well as her flair for the dramatic. On a late-night whim while staying at the Houghton home of her friends Richard and Freda Feldman, she painted spindly, Matisse-like figures directly onto the glass surrounds of her hosts' fireplace. Having clearly cared little for the original art deco trimmings, she replaced them with a frieze of lithe, primitive and rapturous bodies, set in motion by two nearby musicians.

Stern was a regular visitor at the Feldman's, having met Richard in 1926, and Freda in 1931. Their relationship, which lasted until the artist's death in 1966, was warm, unguarded and meaningful. In her engaging memoirs, supplemented by the

rich letters shared between her parents and Stern, Richard and Freda's daughter Mona, who was 8 years old at the time the panels were painted, remembered this particular episode vividly:

'I was awakened before dawn by the sound of furniture being moved around in our lounge ... We crept quietly downstairs to see an apparition standing in front of the fireplace ... There was Irma, in a large bathrobe and fluffy slippers, hair unruly and a cigarette in her mouth, paintbrushes in one hand and her wooden palette in the other. She was squinting at the art deco glass that framed the white fireplace, measuring it with her hands, walking away from it and coming towards it again, making rough marks on its surface – all the while mentally composing the images she was about to paint. We were astonished by this performance and about to summon

help when my mother crept up behind us and motioned us to be quiet. The three of us watched in amazement as Irma began to transform the coloured glass into a narrative picture ... Later, when we got to the end result, we were mesmerised. The cold, static decorative glass had been transformed into a vibrant descriptive story. Irma had first covered parts of the colourful glass with black oil paint, on top of which she had then painted seven dancing nudes that moved rhythmically over the horizontal panel, and two musicians – a flute and mandolin player – on the vertical panel. The scene was perfectly executed – the size, colours and proportions of the dancers and musicians.'

1. Mona Berman (2003) *Remembering Irma: Irma Stern, A Memoir with Letters*, Cape Town: Double Story, pages 25 to 27.



LEFT AND RIGHT The Feldman's breathtakingly modern pre-War lounge in Houghton, Johannesburg, with the original sand-blasted glass panels surrounding the fireplace.



LEFT Stern altered the panels entirely in 1943, leaving a playful line of dancing bodies against a black background. The artist's *Swahili Dhow Woman* (1945), with its imposing Zanzibari frame, hangs nearby.

RIGHT Henri Matisse (1869–1954), *La Danse* (Dance, 1909), image courtesy Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) New York/Scala Florence, © 2020.





TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER



875

Irma Stern

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894–1966

Strelitzias in a Black Urn

signed and dated 1936

gouache on paper

74,5 by 54,5 cm

R800 000 – 1 200 000

LITERATURE

Mona Berman (2003)

Remembering Irma: Irma Stern, A Memoir with Letters, Cape Town: Double Storey, illustrated in colour on page 75.

Wilhelm van Rensburg (2003)

Irma Stern: Expressions of a Journey, Johannesburg: Standard Bank Gallery, illustrated in colour on page 181.



876

William Kentridge

SOUTH AFRICAN 1955-

Black Iris

signed and dated 22/35 in
pencil in the margin
hand-coloured etching
image size: 102,5 by 78,5 cm

R400 000 – 600 000

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER

Artists and the Namibian Landscape

The Namibian landscape has profoundly inspired artists for far more than 100 years, but as these artworks are rarely seen together, their impact, splendour and importance have been overlooked in recent years.

The country's expansive natural beauty captivated a large and eminent group of painters who lived and worked in Namibia, as well as a diverse array of South African artists.

German-born Namibian artist Adolph Jentsch travelled widely in Namibia, producing a remarkable body of detailed and dazzling landscapes, although large-scale oil paintings by this artist are rare as the majority were lost when the barn they were stored in was destroyed by fire in 1975. Other notable Namibian artists include Fritz Krampe, Johannes Blatt, Axel Eriksson and Otto Schröder.

The Namibian landscape, with its uninterrupted horizons, dramatic shadows, pristine isolation and, most memorably, its rare, startling light, left a deep impression on South African landscape artist JH Pierneef, who visited the country in 1923 and again in 1924, and Maud Sumner, who was entranced by what she found when she first visited in the mid-1960s. Her extensive oil and watercolour paintings demonstrate her sensitivity to and appreciation of the inimitable landscape, particularly the Namib desert. These paintings are renowned for their subtly modulated colour fields and are considered the finest work of her last years as an active artist.

Few artists have captured the haunted isolation of abandoned desert towns more dramatically than Keith Alexander. He first visited the ghost towns in southern Namibia in 1980 and this intense encounter gave new impetus and direction to his work. Other South African artists who fell under the spell of the breathtaking Namib include Erik Laubscher, Gordon Vorster, Fleur Ferri, Otto Klar and Nico Roos.

877



878



877

Maud Sumner

SOUTH AFRICAN 1902–1985

A Ship at Anchor off the Namib Coast

signed
oil on canvas
49 by 98 cm

R100 000 – 150 000

PROVENANCE

Strauss & Co, Cape Town, 8 October 2009, lot 283.
Private Collection.

878

Erik Laubscher

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927–2013

Namib Woestyn

signed and dated 76; signed and inscribed with the title on the reverse
oil on canvas
63,5 by 90,5 cm

R350 000 – 500 000

PROVENANCE

Acquired from the artist by Professor Andre Brink.
Private Collection.



879



880



881

881**Fritz Krampe**

GERMAN/SOUTH AFRICAN 1913–1966

*A Pair of Oryx in a Mountainous Landscape, Namibia*signed, dated 53 and inscribed 'Namib'
watercolour on paper
62,5 by 95 cm**R40 000 – 60 000****879****Otto Klar**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1908–1994

*Spitzkoppe - Südwest Afrika*signed and dated 1943; inscribed
with the title on the reverse
oil on artist's board
40,5 by 59 cm**R40 000 – 60 000**

PROVENANCE

Stephan Welz & Co, in association
with Sotheby's, Cape Town,
10 October 2005, lot 270.
Private Collection.**880****Johannes Blatt**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1905–1972

*Spitzkoppe*signed
oil on panel
34,5 by 46 cm**R25 000 – 35 000**



882

Adolph Jentsch

GERMAN/NAMIBIAN 1888–1977

***Schafpferch am Abend*
(*Sheep Pen in the Evening*)**

signed with the artist's initials and dated 1941; inscribed with the artist's name and the title on a Die Kunsamer label adhered to the reverse
oil on canvas
70 by 101 by 3 cm

R700 000 – 900 000**LITERATURE**

Nico Roos (1978) *Art in South-West Africa*, Pretoria: JP van der Walt, illustrated in black and white on page 131.

Painted three years after his arrival in South West Africa from Germany in 1938, *Schafpferch am Abend (Sheep Pen in the Evening)* is a rare work in the oeuvre of Adolph Jentsch because of its inclusion of animals, namely Karakul sheep, seen here nestling at dusk in a man-made kraal constructed from the branches of thorn trees. As Nico Roos suggests, Jentsch's paintings of Karakul sheep are important because 'in both content and approach these works differ from anything done until this time in South West African art. In reality these are portrayals of the farming industry, an important aspect of human activity and even now largely neglected by artists!'

The inclusion of the animal in the landscape further emphasises the feeling of total freedom of nature in which the presence of man often remains peripheral, in contrast to the largely man-made landscape as he had known it in Germany. Roos continues: 'Although man does not appear in these pieces, his presence is always sensed and his handiwork is apparent in

kraals of thorn tree boughs ... These are mainly mood pieces in which Jentsch gives the landscape an important place. Sometimes we see the sheep huddled together in kraals of thorny boughs commonly used in South West Africa ... which served to protect the livestock from the predatory beasts of the veld!'²

Inspired and vivacious, works such as *Schafpferch am Abend* elevate Jentsch's early observations of the Karakul beyond mere scientific animal studies to include them as a constituent part of the arid landscape in which they thrive. However, his portrayal of animals was limited to the first few years after his arrival in South West Africa, not appearing in his art after 1943 and setting this work apart from his later paintings in which the unique light of the South West African landscape would become the sole subject of Jentsch's artistic focus and vision.

1. Nico Roos (1978) *Art in South-West Africa*, Pretoria: JP van der Walt, page 130.

2. *Ibid.*, page 134.



883

Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1957

Bushveld

signed and dated 50

oil on canvas

40 by 54 cm

R1 500 000 – 2 000 000

"What is a landscape? Is it the rough upper surface of the earth, or the effects of its internal construction? What is a tree? Is it a colourful play of sparks of light between moving roofs, or is it an organic form of life given expression in the balance of its branches and trunks?" The trees in *Bushveld* may well represent a whole life cycle of spring turning into summer, judging from the different shades of greens of the trees at centre, and autumn (the yellows and oranges of the trees on the left) into winter (the whites of trees on the right).

1. Gré van der Waal-Braaksma (1990) 'Pierneef: The Artist', in PG Nel (ed) *JH Pierneef: His Life and His Work*, Cape Town: Perskor, page 156.

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER

884

Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911–1975

Thrones of Heaven

signed and dated '66
oil and gesso on canvas
101,5 by 86,5 cm

R1 800 000 – 2 400 000

PROVENANCE

Die Kunsamer, Cape Town.
Private Collection.

EXHIBITED

Graham's Fine Art Gallery, Johannesburg,
Between Foothold and Flight, 30 March to
30 April 2006.

LITERATURE

Sean O'Toole (ed) (2006) *Between Foothold and
Flight*, catalogue number 3, Johannesburg:
Graham's Fine Art Gallery, page 84 and
illustrated in colour on pages 85 to 87.

In 1966 Preller was spending extended periods at his home, Dombeya, at Hartbeespoort, designed by his friend, architect Norman Eaton, and named after the indigenous wild pear trees with their rounded clusters of exquisitely perfumed flowers which hang beneath the leaves. He enjoyed inviting guests to the newly-built accommodation and opening up his studio for the viewing of his latest output, setting a theatrical scene with strutting peacocks and spotted guinea fowl.

'His paintings at this time were dominated by two themes: one being the myths of Ancient Greece; the other, the astral themes – the galaxies and constellations – that had captured the imagination of earthlings of the Space Age (see figures 1–3). Because the myths of most early cultures were created to explain the mysteries of the cosmos, there were

inevitable associations between the two themes. Stylistically, the emphasis was on non-figurative form and, technically, Alexis was continuing to explore procedures of using gold and silver leaf in conjunction with gestural application of impasto swirls of paint.'

The present lot, like *Gold Chariot of the Sun*, is typical of the works produced at this time, significant in that they did not begin with a drawing of any image. The forms are a product of the process. The jewel-like turquoise reflects the iridescent plumage displayed in the peacock's tail, a backdrop to the golden swirls of galaxies energetically punctuated by crimson and yellow orbs. 'How wonderful yellow is. It stands for the sun.' – *Vincent Van Gogh*.

1. Esmé Berman and Karel Nel (2009) *Africa, the Sun and Shadows* (vol. 1), Johannesburg: Shelf, page 266.



Figure 1. *Constellation*, 1966



Figure 2. *Stele*, 1956



Figure 3. *Constellation*, 1966



TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER



TWO VIEWS OF LOT 885

885

Neels Coetzee

SOUTH AFRICAN 1940–2013

Figure and Shield II

1977

signed with the artist's initials
and numbered 2/6
bronze with a dark brown
patina on a steel base
length: 22 cm

R200 000 – 300 000

LITERATURE

Heather Martienssen (1978) *Neels Coetzee*,
Johannesburg: Afrox, another cast from the
edition illustrated in colour on page 18.

Koulla Xinisteris (2015) *Neels Coetzee:*
Crucible, Johannesburg: Everard Read,
illustrated in colour on pages 45, 46, 47
and 51.

Linda Givon (2016) *Off the Wall*,
Johannesburg: Wits Art Museum, illustrated
in colour on page 19.

Cast by Sunet Ferreira, Pretoria.

'Conceptually, the Skull Series is concerned with the human condition in a broad sense and with the tragic nature of [wo/] man's destiny. There is not one work in the series which does not take on the character of either the whole body or parts of a body; the viewer can discern backs and heads, elements which hook and gauge. Tears, cracks and lacerations characterise these skulls repeatedly. The shield-like forms symbolising ineffectual defence are invariably dented and torn. The skulls, in their context of racks, grillers and tumbling structures, set up an interaction between solid and void that heightens the sense of emotional tension and conflict.'¹

1. Neels Coetzee (1985) *The Skull: Formal and Iconographical Sculptural Derivations*, unpublished Master's dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, page 40.



886

**Rosamund
Everard-Steenkamp**

SOUTH AFRICAN 1907–1946

Fugue in Colour

signed; dated July 1935 and
inscribed with the artist's name
and the title on the reverse
oil on canvas
26 by 33 cm

R300 000 – 350 000

EXHIBITED

Royal Institute Galleries, London, *Artists of
the British Empire Overseas Exhibition*,
8 to 29 May 1937.

Adler Fielding Gallery, Johannesburg, *The
Everard Group*, 1967.

Pretoria Art Museum, Pretoria, *The Everard
Group*, 1967.

Everard Read, Johannesburg, *The Everard
Group: Then & Now*, 12 to 29 October
2006.

LITERATURE

Anonymous (1937) *Artists of the British
Empire Overseas Exhibition*, exhibition
catalogue, London: Royal Institute
Galleries, catalogue number 230, page 37.

Anonymous (1967) *The Everard Group*,
exhibition catalogue, Johannesburg:
Adler Fielding Gallery, catalogue
number 51, illustrated in black and white,
unpaginated.

AJ Werth (1967) *Die Everard-Groep/The
Everard Group: Retrospective Exhibition*,
exhibition catalogue, Pretoria Art

Museum, catalogue number 69,
illustrated in colour, unpaginated.

Frieda Harmsen (1980) *The Women of
Bonnefoi: The Story of the Everard Group*,
Pretoria: Van Schaik, illustrated in black
and white on page 173.

Anonymous (1982) *The Everard Group*,
exhibition catalogue, Pietermaritzburg:
Tatham Art Gallery.

Alan Crump (2006) *The Everard Group.
Then & Now*, Johannesburg: Everard Read,
illustrated in colour on page 20.



887

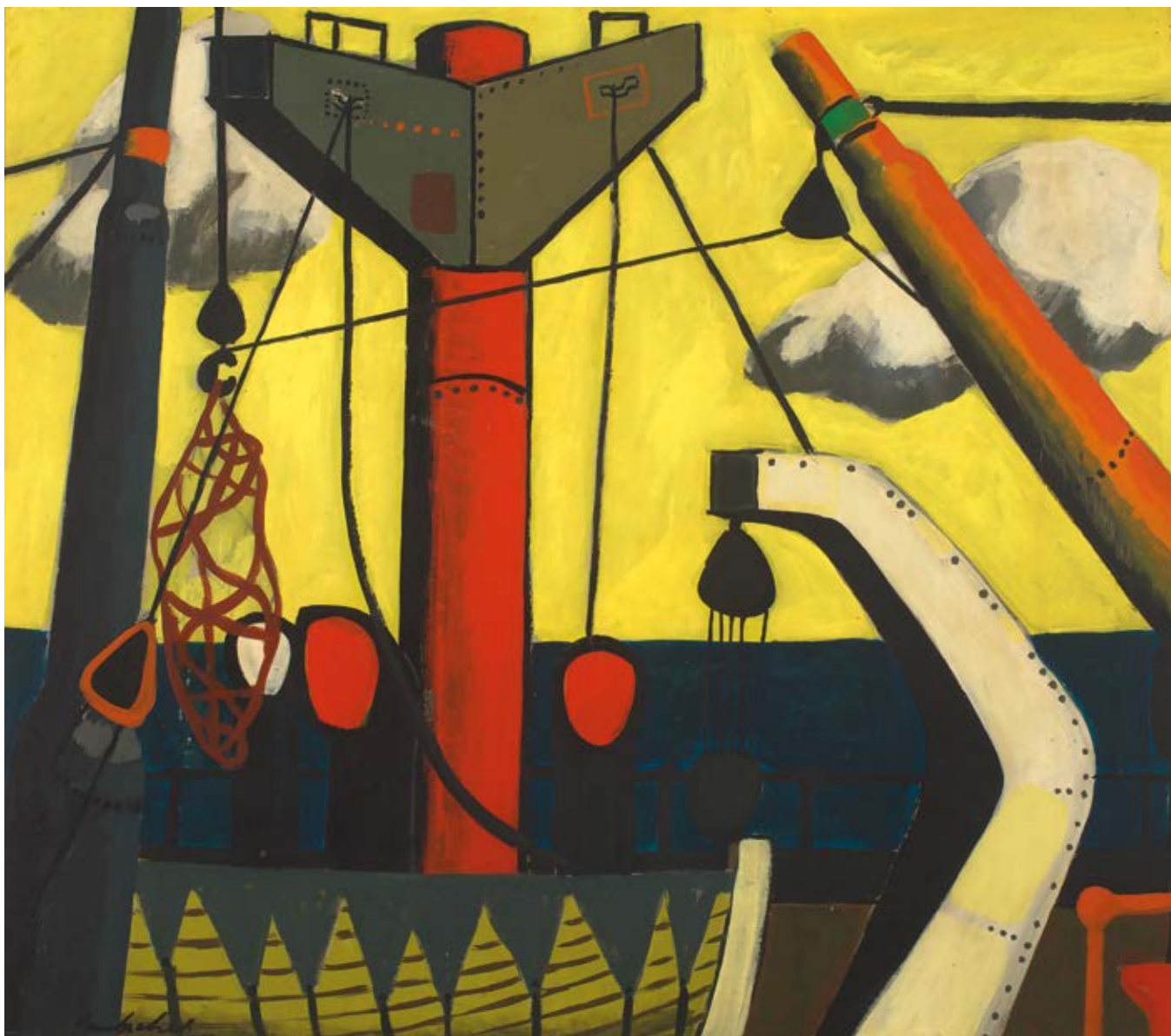
David Brown

SOUTH AFRICAN 1951–2016

Untitled

bronze and steel with
a dark brown patina
height: 158 cm

R600 000 – 800 000



888

Erik Laubscher

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927–2013

Harbour Construction

signed and dated 55
oil on board
60 by 69 cm

R700 000 – 1 000 000

LITERATURE

Hans Franssen (2009) *Erik Laubscher: A Life in Art*, Stellenbosch: SMAC, illustrated in colour on page 64.

After completing his art studies in London and Paris, Laubscher returned to Cape Town in 1950. In 1953 he was persuaded by Maurice van Essche and George de Leon to take over the Continental Art School in Dean Street, Cape Town, which he renamed the 'Contemporary School of Art'. Stanley Pinker and Alexander Podlashuc were students at the school. Although it was popular, well attended and it hosted many successful exhibitions, it could not support Laubscher and his growing family financially. In 1955, an opportunity arose to take a job as a 'colour consultant' at a Plascon Paint shop. This offered Laubscher a steady

income and the freedom to paint what he wanted to rather than painting to make sales.

During this time, Laubscher painted the present lot, *Harbour Construction*, with striking yellow sky and vibrant orange, contrasted with green and black, making a structurally appealing composition that reflects the artists interest in structured pictorial form. However, the subject of this piece is unusual, one of very few harbour scenes Laubscher painted during this time, and perhaps it represents new beginnings and reflects the new direction taken in the artist's professional life.



889

Gladys Mgudlandlu

SOUTH AFRICAN 1925–1979

Cattle on a Hillside

gouache on paper
27 by 39 cm

R30 000 – 40 000

EXHIBITED

RMB Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg,
*Gladys Mgudlandlu and Maggie Laubser:
Visionary Artists, Parallel Lives*, 28 August to
2 September 2020, illustrated in colour on
page 25 of the exhibition catalogue.

The uncanny relationship between very similar, yet very separate lives of two of South Africa's foremost artists, Gladys Mgudlandlu and Maggie Laubser was explored in a special Strauss & Co exhibition, mounted virtually during the 2020 RMB Turbine Art Fair in Johannesburg. The show focused on the visionary nature of their work, and the lives they led in parallel to each other.

Both Mgudlandlu and Laubser grew up in rural settings, in the Eastern and Western Cape respectively, and both artists' families and wider communities derided their artistic inclinations. Both artists' works and exhibitions were initially criticised. Mgudlandlu's were considered to be too innocent, naïve, and even escapist; Laubser's were deemed too modern initially, and later, not modern enough!

These two artists shared a common subject matter, especially, but not exclusively the use of birds as central motifs: Mgudlandlu focused most often on flocks of birds and Laubser on statuesque cranes and water birds. They were both fond of portrait painting, with Mgudlandlu portraying rural Xhosa women, and Laubser, the urban bohemia of Berlin, and the rural working class in South Africa. They both highlighted the nature of labour in the South African landscape, Mgudlandlu introducing a gender dimension to cattle herding, and Laubser depicting various aspects of harvesting.

Their painting styles were virtually synchronised, developing from strong, expressionist renderings, to highly abstract works. They shared a visionary, spiritual quality, both in their work and in their lives.



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890

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

Ou Lena

signed and dated '26
oil on cardboard laid down on board
40 by 34 cm

R300 000 – 500 000

PROVENANCE

Mrs A J Becker, Johannesburg.
Acquired from the artist by the current
owner's grandmother.

LITERATURE

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*, Johannesburg: Perskor, illustrated on page 188, catalogue number 546, with the title *Portrait of an Old Woman with Head Scarf*

In November 1924 Maggie Laubser moved to her parents' farm, Oortmanspost, near Klipheuwel in the Malmesbury district after living in Europe for the better part of eleven years. There she established a small studio and painted scenes from the farm and portraits of farm labourers such as Lena (lot 890). In this portrait Laubser uses the gaiety of the bright yellow headscarf as an antidote to the seriousness of Lena's countenance.

Laubser's first solo exhibition opened on 16 October 1930 in the Ou Hoofgebou of Stellenbosch University. In his review of this exhibition in *Die Huisgenoot*, AC Verloren van Themaat wrote: 'What these paintings convey to me is a love of people. They reveal to me something about South Africa that I have not yet discovered myself. The young women workers who are hanging there as paintings were born on the farm and grew up there; they are Hannie, the domestic servant, and Lena, who does small chores on the farm ... But they are spiritualised in a harmony of colours, grey and red, violet and green. They have been powerfully embodied and well drawn ... I get a sense of the compassion radiating from Maggie Laubser's work!'

1. AC Verloren van Themaat (1931) 'Een middag op die tentoonstelling van Maggie Laubser' (sic), *Die Huisgenoot*, 16 January.

891

Gladys Mgudlandlu

SOUTH AFRICAN 1925–1979

Portrait of a Woman in a Red Dress

gouache on paper
50 by 36 cm

R60 000 – 80 000

EXHIBITED

RMB Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg, *Gladys Mgudlandlu and Maggie Laubser: Visionary Artists, Parallel Lives*, 28 August to 2 September 2020, illustrated in colour on page 12 of the exhibition catalogue.

892

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

Bird in a Landscape with Rays

signed

oil on canvas laid down on board

45 by 40 cm

R500 000 – 700 000

PROVENANCE

From the Estate of a Gentleman.

EXHIBITED

South African Association of Arts,
Cape Town, 1960.

RMB Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg,
*Gladys Mgudlandlu and Maggie
Laubser: Visionary Artists, Parallel Lives*,
28 August to 2 September 2020,
illustrated in colour on page 8 of the
exhibition catalogue.

LITERATURE

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser:
Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*,
Johannesburg: Perskor, illustrated
in black and white on page 349,
catalogue number 1525.

In Europe, Maggie Laubser yearned for the wide open spaces of the South African landscape. Surely, she also longed for the wild birds with which she was familiar from roaming the fields as a child and collecting a variety of eggs. At that time, she also observed their habits and studied their behaviour. In 1924 when she finally returned to the country of her birth, it is not surprising that she took up the ties of her youth and birds became a major source of inspiration for her pictures.

The heron features in several of her landscape paintings, sometimes with



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ducks and sometimes with people that move into the distance. *Bird in a Landscape with Rays* differs from other compositions featuring herons as the bird's prominence is emphasised by a rainbow that seemingly splits into two rainbows: one on the left and the other on the right. Dramatically, the heron takes its position on the forefront of the picture plane, between the two rainbows that enshrine the bird. This configuration of the rainbow is suggestive of nature's cathedral and a Gothic arch is called to mind. Some of the rainbow colours

reflect on the bird's feathers linking the bird and the rainbow that connects heaven and earth. Therefore, it signifies 'as above, as below'. This heron embodies a heavenly messenger.

In addition to the colours reflected on the bird's feathers, which connect it to the rainbow, the elegant bearing of the bird enhances its regality. Enshrined by the rainbow arch, the bird becomes the ruler in this domain. That the earth where he treads is holy ground is confirmed by the double rainbow. In this domain there are barely any shadows, every colour is

luminous. The clouds become bulbous lights and the tracks of reddish brown that seemingly meander to and from the heron are energised to take on lives of their own. The track that emerges from the left corner moves into the middle distance where it swings down towards the heron where it stops. Its sweeping movement emulates the elegance of the bird. This is the domain of eternal light.

Elza Miles



893

Gladys Mgudlandlu

SOUTH AFRICAN 1925–1979

Brown Rocks

gouache on paper
57 by 29 cm

R30 000 – 40 000

EXHIBITED

RMB Turbine Art Fair, Johannesburg,
*Gladys Mgudlandlu and Maggie
Laubser: Visionary Artists, Parallel
Lives*, 28 August to 2 September
2020, illustrated in colour on the
inside front cover of the exhibition
catalogue.



894

Gladys Mgudlandlu

SOUTH AFRICAN 1925–1979

Blue Mountains and Trees

gouache on paper
50 by 37 cm

R50 000 – 70 000

EXHIBITED

RMB Turbine Art Fair,
Johannesburg, *Gladys
Mgudlandlu and Maggie Laubser:
Visionary Artists, Parallel Lives*, 28
August to 2 September 2020,
illustrated in colour on page 22
of the exhibition catalogue.

895

Gerard Sekoto

SOUTH AFRICAN 1913–1993

Head of a Young Woman

signed
gouache on paper laid down
on board
49 by 31 cm

R200 000 – 300 000

PROVENANCE

Strauss & Co, Johannesburg,
16 May 2011, lot 304.



895

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896

© The Estate of Peter Clarke | DALRO

896

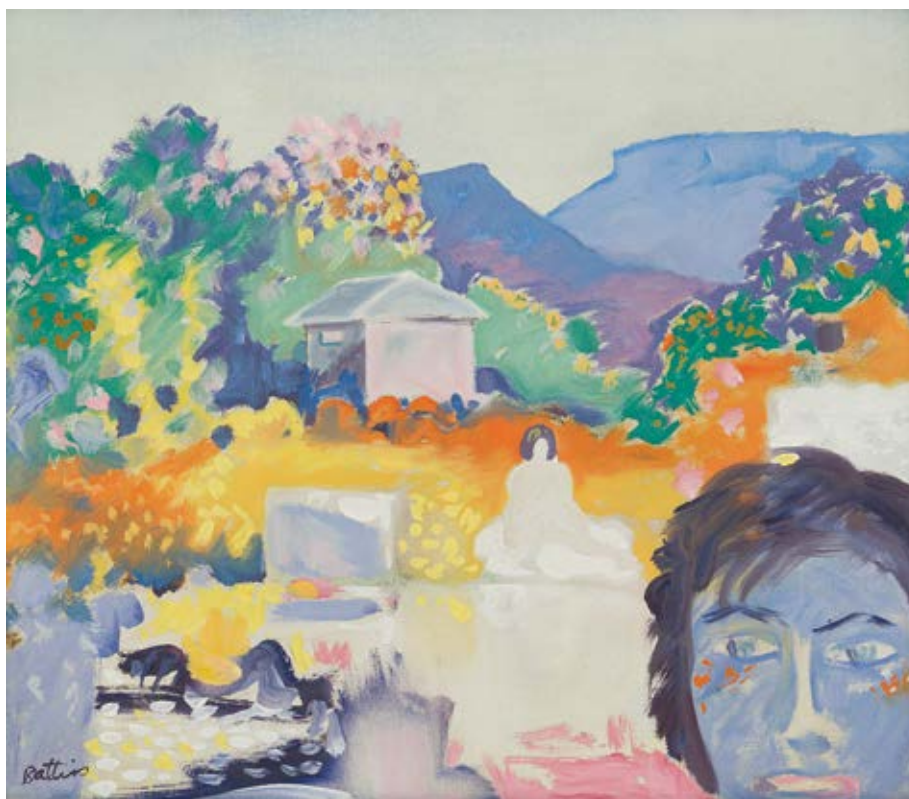
Peter Clarke

SOUTH AFRICAN 1929–2014

Woman with Basket

signed and dated June 1974;
inscribed with the title on
the reverse
pastel on paper
57,5 by 42 cm

R120 000 – 160 000



897

897

Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906–1982

Swimming Pool, Calvinia

signed; inscribed with the title
and 'acquired 1979' on the reverse
oil on canvas
35 by 39 cm

R100 000 – 150 000



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898

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

Woman with Headscarf

signed with the artist's initials
charcoal and pastel on paper
laid down on card
54 by 41 cm

R50 000 – 70 000

PROVENANCE

Gifted by the artist to the
current owner's family.



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899

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

Boy in a Fez

signed
oil on cardboard
44 by 35 cm

R500 000 – 700 000

PROVENANCE

Gifted by the artist to the
current owner's family.

LITERATURE

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings and Graphics*, Johannesburg: Perskor, similar examples illustrated in black and white on page 321, catalogue number 1351, and page 322, catalogue numbers 1353 and 1354

Accompanied by 3 books on the artist, 3 exhibition catalogues, an unopened newspaper, 2 letters, 3 postcards and an assortment of press clippings.

The Küpper Family Collection

Jan Hugo and Sophie Charlotte Küpper came to South Africa from Germany, as members of the Moravian Mission Society. In 1928, they settled at the society's mission station at Mamre, in the Western Cape, where Jan ran the Mission's general dealer store. At the time Maggie Laubser was living at Oortmanspost, the Laubser family farm, not far from Mamre, and she became acquainted with the Küppers. She stayed with them whenever she wanted to paint in the area and, in gratitude for the Küppers' hospitality during these visits, Maggie would give her hosts one or more paintings.

The six artworks (lots 898–903) by Maggie Laubser on this sale were acquired by the family in this way, and they act as both a testament to the friendship between the artist and the Küppers, and a time capsule of the era in which they were produced.

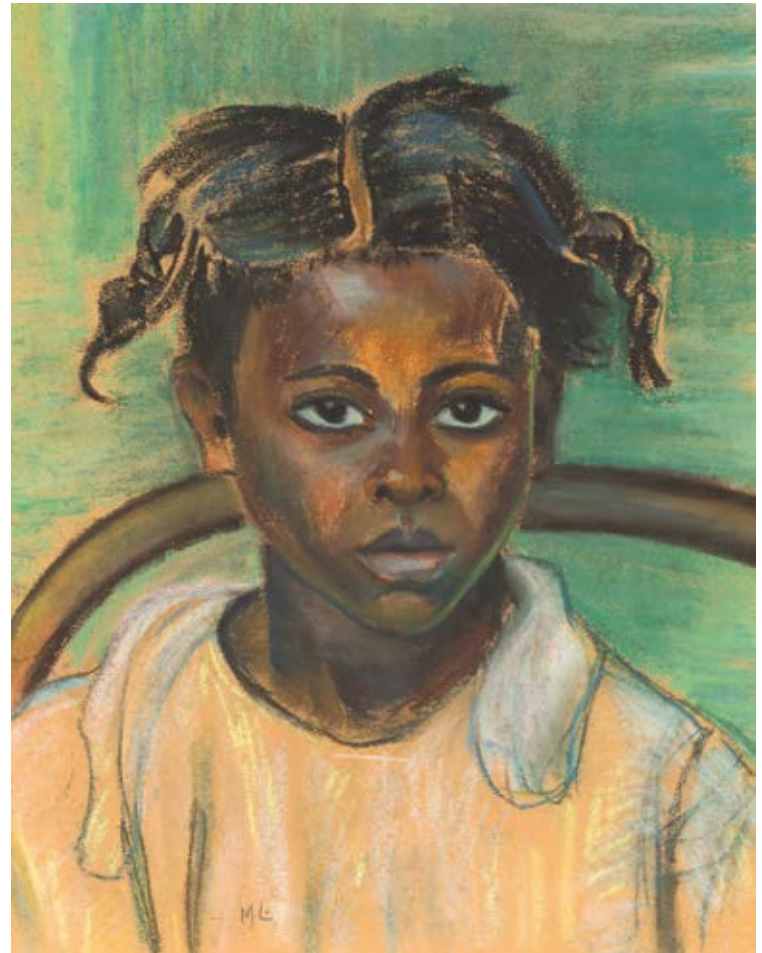


Sophie Charlotte Küpper and her two sons in their house in Mamre. Maggie Laubser's *Woman with Headscarf* (lot 898) is visible on the wall.



900

© The Estate of Maggie Laubser | DALRO



901

© The Estate of Maggie Laubser | DALRO

900

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

***Woman in Pink
Headscarf***

signed with the artist's initials
pencil and chalk pastel on
paper
34 by 25 cm

R150 000 – 200 000

PROVENANCE

Gifted by the artist to the
current owner's family.

901

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

Seated Girl

signed with the artist's initials
pastel on paper laid down on
card
37 by 29 cm

R150 000 – 200 000

PROVENANCE

Gifted by the artist to the current
owner's family.

LITERATURE

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie
Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings
and Graphics*, Johannesburg:
Perskor, a similar example
illustrated in black and white on
page 227, catalogue number 785.

902

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

Heron

signed
linocut
image size: 20 by 15,5 cm

R10 000 – 15 000

PROVENANCE

Gifted by the artist to the current
owner's family.

LITERATURE

Dalene Marais (1994) *Maggie
Laubser: Her Paintings, Drawings
and Graphics*. Johannesburg and
Cape Town: Perskor, illustrated
on page 280, catalogue number
1105, with the title *Bird in a Water
Surroundings*.



902

© The Estate of Maggie Laubser | DALRO



903

Maggie Laubser

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1973

*Still Life with Proteas,
Oranges and Apples*

signed with the artist's initials

oil on board

53 by 43,5 cm

R250 000 – 350 000

PROVENANCE

Gifted by the artist to the
current owner's family.

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TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER



904

Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1957

Evening Glow (Aandgloei)

signed and dated 45; inscribed
with the title on the reverse

oil on board

28 by 36,5 cm

R200 000 – 300 000



905

Jacob Hendrik Pierneef

SOUTH AFRICAN 1886–1957

Die Wolk

signed and dated 1920; inscribed with a dedication 'To dear Susan with fond love from Mams. Anne du Toit.' and bears an E Schweickert plaque on the reverse
oil on canvas
89,5 by 58,5 cm

R2 200 000 – 2 800 000

PROVENANCE

Bernardi Auctioneers, Pretoria,
6 May 2017, lot 281.
Private Collection.



906

Ruth Everard Haden

SOUTH AFRICAN 1904–1992

Red Landscape (Komati River)

signed; inscribed with the artist's
name and the title on the reverse
oil on canvas
60 by 81 cm

R350 000 – 450 000

PROVENANCE

Bonham's, London, 19 March 2014,
lot 39.
Private Collection.



907

Olivia Musgrave

IRISH 1958-

Two Figures on Horseback

signed and numbered 2/9
bronze with a verdigris patina
height: 94 cm

R300 000 – 400 000

A painted wood plinth, height: 76 cm,
accompanies the lot.

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER

908

Erik Laubscher

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927-2013

Abstract

signed and dated 58 Aug; dated
1958 and inscribed with the title
on the reverse
oil on canvas
45,5 by 61 cm

R 350 000 - 450 000

PROVENANCE

The artist's estate.
Thence by descent to
the current owner.



909

Erik Laubscher

SOUTH AFRICAN 1927-2013

Abstract Composition

signed, dated '58 Aug; signed, dated
Aug 1958 and inscribed with the title
on the reverse
oil on canvas laid down on board
75,5 by 60 cm

R500 000 – 700 000

LITERATURE

Hans Franssen (2009) *Erik Laubscher:
A Life in Art*, Stellenbosch: SMAC,
illustrated in colour on page 253.



910

Robert Hodgins

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920–2010

Girl at a Window

signed, dated 1997/8 and inscribed with the title and 'the artist's private collection' on the reverse
oil on canvas
122 by 91 cm

R700 000 – 900 000

This large canvas depicting a naked figure in a window rehearses many of the formal and thematic concerns that occupied Robert Hodgins during his later career. The lumpy pink figure at the centre of the composition epitomises his unflattering approach to the human form. A woman rather than a girl, his figure is redolent of numerous indelicately rendered female protagonists (including *Tart*, shown at the South African National Gallery in 1986), but also shares affinities with various older naked male figures. This ambiguity pervades the setting of his painting. The central figure occupies a recess within a band of purplish blue flanked on each side by wedges of black; further stripes of yellow and coral pink add to the verticality. Notwithstanding his figurative persuasions, Hodgins frequently rendered architectural space as a rudimentary choreography of bold colours. Sometimes additional line work locates the action in some or other interior or exterior setting. Is this an urban vista? Are the George Grosz-like male figures at bottom kerbside patrons? It is possible that the scene dramatises aspects of the artist's early London biography, when he worked as a factotum for a newsagent in Soho. His labours included delivering magazines to sex workers in their parlours. Commenting on the recurrence of these formative experiences in his late-career paintings, Hodgins in 2007 remarked: 'It isn't called up, but I suddenly recognise it – a Soho street, a Soho prostitute.'¹ Hodgins, though, was not a social realist painter. 'What interests me is a sense of the incongruity of the way we all live together in this world,' he said in 1984, at the start of his revival as a painter. 'One is in a way trying to find a metaphor for the wonder and horror of a world in which terrible things and beautiful things exist together.'²

1. Interview with artist by Sean O'Toole, November 2007, Menlo Park, Pretoria.

2. Ivor Powell (1984) 'One of My Own Fragments: An interview with Robert Hodgins', *De Arte* 31, page 42.



911

Norman Catherine

SOUTH AFRICAN 1949–

Who Zoo

signed and dated 2006
carved and painted wood
125 by 181 by 10 cm

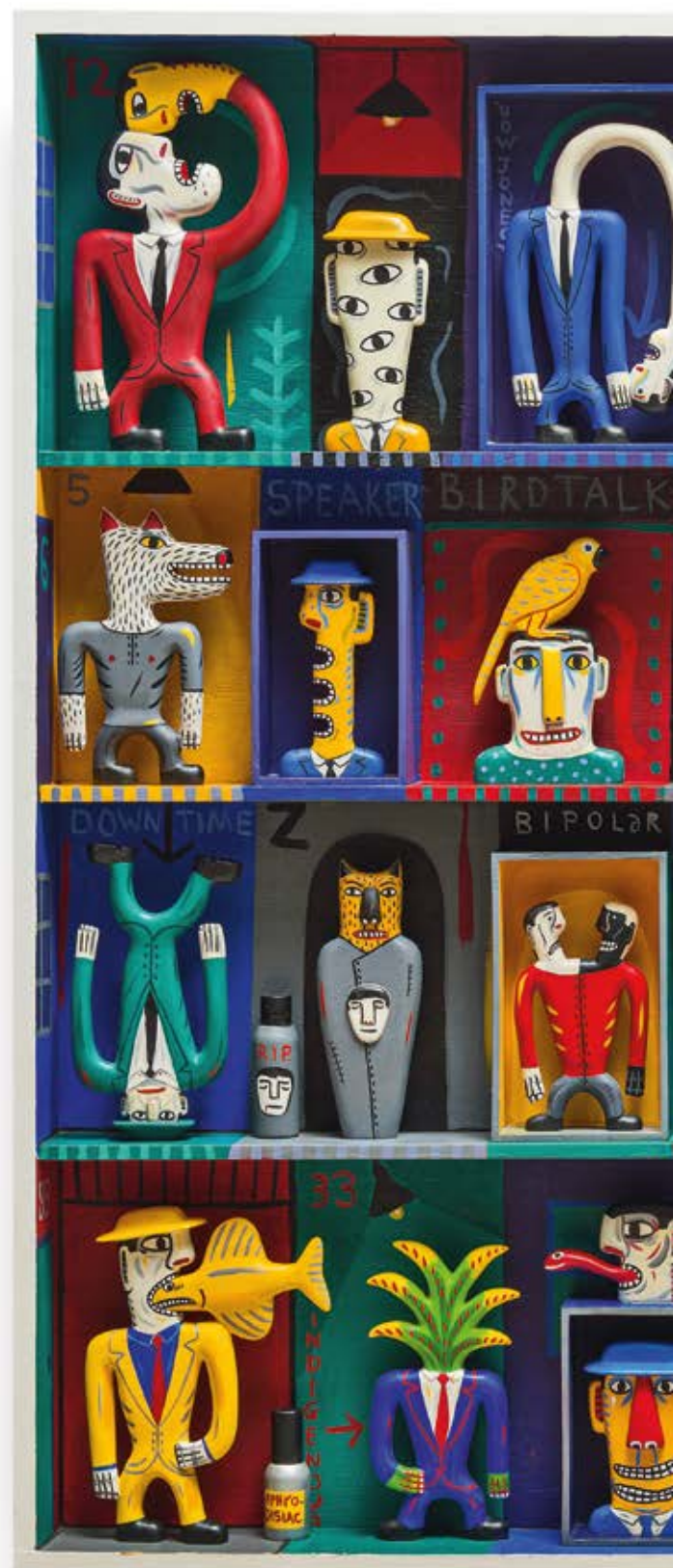
R800 000 – 1 200 000

Sculpture is integral to Norman Catherine's febrile brand of pop-expressionism. In 1973/74 he produced a series of surreal and anthropomorphic sculptures that pre-empted his subsequent interest in visualising psychological anxieties through hybrid human-animal forms. Catherine's method as an artist is evolutionary. His work typically progresses through series, fragments of earlier ideas often invoked and reworked in new pieces. This is true of the diminutive painted-wood sculptures he began showing in the mid-1990s, of which this includes more recent examples. The figures translated into three-dimensional form were birthed in his paintings of the late 1980s and early 1990s. They also owed a debt to his ensemble of pop-coloured characters – businessmen, policemen, skeletons, jollers – crafted from flat metal and sometimes presented in stylised tableaux and cabinets.

Slicker in form and finish than this earlier sculptural work, Catherine's wood figures gestured to the West African tradition of painted *colon figures* representing either European or African subjects in occupational attire. These popular tourist objects, which had recently become available in post-apartheid South Africa when this work was created, trace their lineage to divination figures produced by the Baule peoples of Côte d'Ivoire. The talismanic quality of Baule figures is key to an appreciation of Catherine's cabinet figures. 'Through these figurines, I try to capture as many of the characteristics and pathologies of human nature that I have come across and to expose the taboos behind different cultural superstitions.'

Musician David Bowie, who visited South Africa in 1995, was immediately taken by Catherine's vivid sculptures. At his advice dealer Bernard Jacobson staged a South Africa exhibition in London from which Bowie acquired Catherine's cabinet sculpture *Fanagalo Store* (1995). It was sold in 2016 at a London auction for £81 250. The present lot is bookend to the series started a decade earlier and contains, in miniature, many figures that Catherine has since monumentally cast in bronze, including *Piscivorous* and *Know Thyself* (both 2013).

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







912

Robert Hodgins

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920–2010

The Golem Girls

dated 2004 and inscribed with
the title and the medium on a
label adhered to the reverse

oil on canvas

60 by 90 cm

R400 000 – 600 000



913

Robert Hodgins

SOUTH AFRICAN 1920–2010

Sullen in Wall Street

signed, dated 2006 and inscribed
with the artist's name and the title
on the reverse

oil on canvas

60 by 60 cm

R350 000 – 500 000

PROVENANCE

Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg.
Private Collection, Johannesburg.



914

Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906–1982

Gathering at the Market

signed

oil on board

29 by 21,5 cm

R150 000 – 200 000



915

Irma Stern

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894–1966

Street Scene, Madeira

signed and dated 1931

gouache on paper

48 by 37,5cm

R400 000 – 600 000

916

Irma Stern

SOUTH AFRICAN 1894–1966

Night

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

oil on canvas

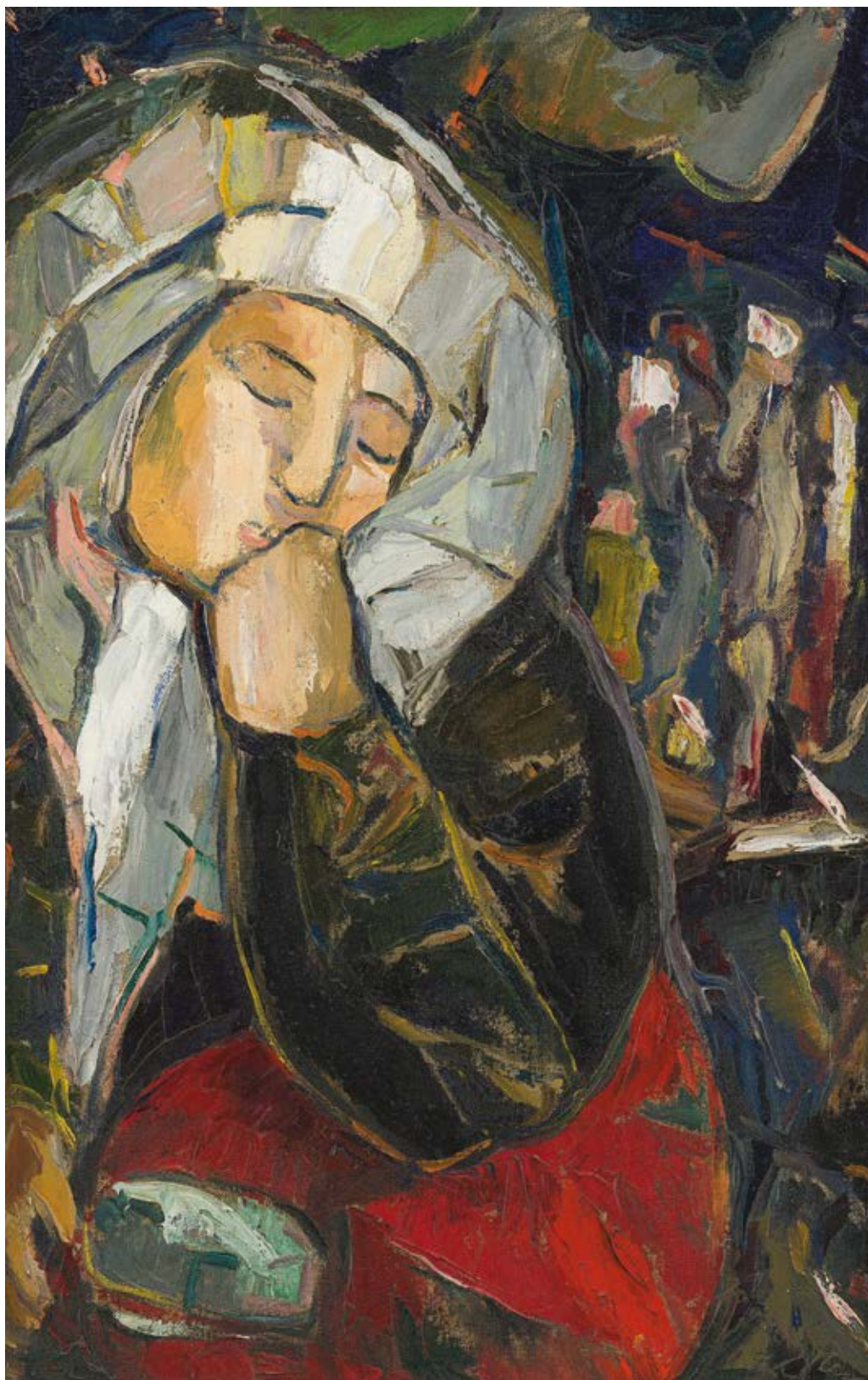
86 by 54 cm

R1 500 000 – 2 000 000

LITERATURE

Sean O'Toole (ed) (2006) *Between Foothold and Flight*, catalogue number 3, Johannesburg: Graham's Fine Art Gallery, and illustrated in colour on page 43 with the title *Flight*.

The veil, the headscarf, the turban all play an important part in Irma Stern's portraiture. Not only do they intimate social standing, cultural identity, and religious affiliation, but also femininity and domestic intimacy. In the present lot, which seems stylistically to date from the 1950s, the sitter is surrounded by a bright white halo-like headscarf, and appears to be asleep or in deep contemplation, her chin resting meditatively on her hand. The mood is sustained by muted colours and the dark tones of the figures in the nightly background, the red of her skirt only, lighting up the darkness around her. This portrait is reminiscent of another work, *Meditation*, that featured in the South African section of the Venice Biennale in 1958 and shares some formal affinities with *Woman with Hand to Head* (1952) in the UCT Irma Stern, Museum, Cape Town. Is the woman's costume in this work some sort of European traditional dress or could she perhaps be a member of a religious order, perhaps she's a nun? In the 1950s, Stern painted work inspired by what might be termed Mediterranean Catholicism. She was in Italy often in that decade, showing at four Venice Biennales, and she also spent summers in Alicante in Spain, into the early 1960s, on long painting sojourns prompted by her increasingly poor health.



917

Alexis Preller

SOUTH AFRICAN 1911–1975

Archangel

signed and dated '75

oil on canvas

70 by 60 cm

R1 500 000 – 2 000 000

EXHIBITED

Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, 12 to
29 November 1975, catalogue number 15.

Alexis Preller's *Archangel* was bought by the current owner from the artist's last exhibition during his lifetime, at the Goodman Gallery in 1975. The visitor asked the artist which work he should buy and Preller pointed unhesitatingly to *Archangel*. The exhibition was a triumph, but Preller unfortunately had little time to bask in the success as he died a few weeks later while undergoing surgery. The present lot was completed in that year, but it reworks themes and concerns begun many years earlier, as was typical of Preller's practice. The composition reproduces the idea of the disembodied,

isolated head first developed in the Urn and African head paintings of the 1940s, but here continues, specifically, the series of 'Angel' heads that depicts imaginary mythological god-kings (and king-gods) familiar from *Angel King* (1971) and *Space Angel* (1971), among others. Preller was a keen student of traditional African sculpture, and the outlined almond eyes, full lips and scarified cheeks in the present lot are reminiscent of Yoruba Ibeji figures from Nigeria, with which he was familiar. The ritual pharaonic beard has its origins further north, in Egypt, where it was a marker of kingly power

and divine authority, and the residual spiked helmet (visible also as worn by the band of warriors in the *All Africa* mural of 1953–55) derives from an imaginary archaic culture, whether African or Mediterranean. The work has an unusually monochromatic colour palette for Preller – none of the iridescent turquoises and luscious coral tones so characteristic of his work in the 1960s – and perhaps it speaks of a more sombre, introspective moment in the artist's life, when, weak from an energy-sapping illness, he depicts a spectral angel, a shadow of its earlier vivid manifestations.



Figure 1. Alexis Preller, *Angel King*, 1971



Figure 2. Alexis Preller, *Space Angel*, 1971



Figure 2. Alexis Preller, *Angel*, 1972



TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER

918

Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906–1982

A Crowd

signed

oil on canvas laid down on board
58 by 73,5 cm

R500 000 – 700 000

PROVENANCE

Strauss & Co, Johannesburg,
7 November 2011, lot 283.
Private Collection.



919

Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906–1982

Haitian Woman

signed; inscribed with
the title on the reverse
oil on canvas

49,5 by 58,5 cm

R300 000 – 400 000



920

Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906–1982

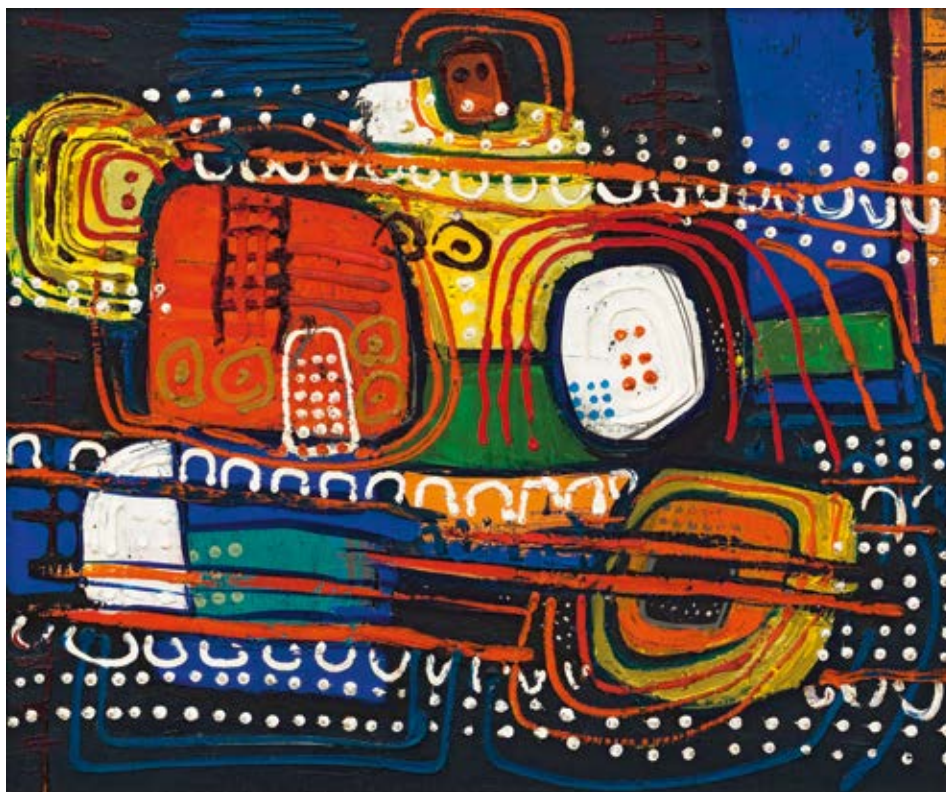
Abstract Composition

signed
oil on canvas
50 by 60 cm

R350 000 – 500 000

PROVENANCE

Gordon McIntosh, acquired
from the artist, mid-1960s.
Deneys Reitz.



921

Walter Battiss

SOUTH AFRICAN 1906–1982

Phemius

inscribed with the title; a certificate of
authenticity signed by the artist's son,
Giles Battiss, adhered to the reverse
oil on canvas
49 by 59 cm

R250 000 – 350 000





922

Fred Page

SOUTH AFRICAN 1908–1984

*All Signs Had Disappeared
Without a Trace*

signed and dated '68; signed,
inscribed with the title and 'PE 1968'
acrylic on board
57 by 88 cm

R140 000 – 180 000

LITERATURE

Jeanne Wright and Cecil Kerbel
(2011) *Fred Page: Ringmaster of the
Imagination*, Port Elizabeth: Cecil
Kerbel and Jeanne Wright, illustrated
in colour on page 44, plate 95.



923

Dylan Lewis

SOUTH AFRICAN 1964–

Trans-Figure XXI, maquette
(S282)

2010

signed and numbered 7/12
bronze with a verdigris patina
on a concrete base
height: 253 cm

R500 000 – 550 000

LITERATURE

Christie's (2019) *Shapeshifting*, auction catalogue, London, 10 September 2019, another work from the edition illustrated as lot 25 on page 26.

TWO VIEWS OF LOT 923



Photograph by Gerde Genis



The 'Big Cat' series, with variations on the theme ranging from domestic cats through to life-size and larger-than-life examples of wild cats, is amongst Dylan Lewis's most popular subjects.

Lewis's sculptures are initially conceived as drawings that capture the nature and the vitality of the subject he is recording. These sketch-book pages serve both as reference and inspiration for his sculptural compositions. These lively drawings, with responsive use of line and rhythm, capture the essence of what he seeks to express in clay where the modelling process transforms it into expressive and dynamic volume and vitalises the waking animal. These poses of cheetah and leopard, whether in repose or alert, demonstrate the interplay of muscular dynamism.

It is not surprising, therefore, that these embodiments of languid power and grace are to be found in many prominent collections, on golf courses and in botanical gardens.

'To me the Cat is the ancient guardian of wilderness, repository of elegance, sensuality and power.'¹

1. Dylan Lewis, in Laura Twiggs (ed) (2006) *Forces of Nature: The Sculpture of Dylan Lewis*, Pardus, page 42.



924

Dylan Lewis

SOUTH AFRICAN 1964–

Standing Leopard III maquette (S334)

2012

signed, numbered 10/15, stamped S334 and

with the Bronze Age foundry mark

bronze with a brown patina

height: 71 cm

R350 000 – 500 000



925

Dylan Lewis

SOUTH AFRICAN 1964–

Playing Cheetahs (S198)

2003

signed, numbered AP1 and S198,
and stamped with the foundry mark
bronze with a brown patina
height: 22,5 cm

R200 000 – 250 000

LITERATURE

Laura Twigg (ed) (2011) *Dylan
Lewis: Animal Bronzes 1989-2005:
The Collectors' Guide*, Cape Town:
Pardus, another cast from the
edition illustrated on page 149.

TO PLACE A BID CLICK ON THE RED LOT NUMBER



926

Dylan Lewis

SOUTH AFRICAN 1964–

Sitting Cheetah II (S238)

2005

signed, numbered 4/12 and S238
bronze with a dark brown patina
height: 125 cm

R1 000 000 – 1 500 000

LITERATURE

Laura Twiggs (ed) (2011) *Dylan Lewis:
Animal Bronzes 1989–2005: The
Collectors' Guide*, Cape Town: Pardus,
another cast from the edition
illustrated on page 177.



927

Dylan Lewis

SOUTH AFRICAN 1964–

Stretching Leopard (S47)

signed, dated 96 and numbered 5/8
bronze with a brown patina
height: 67 cm

R900 000 – 1 200 000

LITERATURE

Laura Twigg (ed) (2011) *Dylan Lewis: Animal Bronzes 1989-2005: The Collectors' Guide*, Cape Town: Pardus, another cast from the edition illustrated on page 41.

928

Dylan Lewis

SOUTH AFRICAN 1964–

***Awakening Leopard*
(S42)**

signed, dated 96 and
numbered 5/8
bronze with a brown patina
height: 39 cm

R900 000 – 1 200 000

LITERATURE

Laura Twiggs (ed) (2011)
*Dylan Lewis: Animal Bronzes
1989–2005: The Collectors' Guide*,
Cape Town: Pardus, another
cast from the edition illustrated
on page 38.

'This sculpture is from the
Leopard Creek set, a series
of 18 sculptures in which I
explore the leopard form in
a progression of different
attitudes (from a state of
repose through to awakening,
hunting, stalking and killing). It
was a project that allowed me
to explore the animal in depth
in terms of its form and what
it represented to me. Here I
explore the suppleness of the
relaxed cat, the curve of the
tail echoing in the form of the
stretched body.'

Dylan Lewis

