



SANTA BRINGS SOLID CLOSE to END of YEAR for MENZIES ART BRANDS SALES

The combined Deutscher/Lawson Menzies Sale made \$4,935,775 (hammer) against its presale total of \$6.384 million, with 197 from 252 lots snared by clients, providing Menzies with a solid clearance rate of 78% by lot and 77% by value. Presumably filled with the confidence the Government keeps spouting, high end collectors cleared all but one of the sale's twelve top lots over \$100,000.

As expected, Fred Williams' fresh *Summer Snow at Perisher* (Lot 33) was snapped up for \$700,000, just over its suggested \$680,000. Whiteley came in number 2, with his *Westerly with Daisies* (Lot 32, illustrated) clawing its way to make \$550,000 against a low-end expectation of \$600,000. The artist's *The Dove and the Moon* (Lot 30) estimated at \$250–350,000, made \$230,000, while *The Blue Wren* (Lot 38) did raise a whisker at \$180-240,000.

Cute and quirky won favour in the portraits, with Bunny's *Jeanne with her Terrier* (Lot 34) selling for \$330,000 (pre-sale \$360–440,000), and Whiteley's *Portrait of John Singleton as a Surfie* (Lot 26, illustrated) cresting at \$55,000 (pre-sale \$60–80,000). Drysdale's more sombre *Half-Caste Woman* (Lot 35) made \$260,000 against its \$300,000 pre-sale expectation.



ABORIGINAL ART

As with past sales, the top Aboriginal lots carried the Lawson Menzies component. All but two from five works circa \$100K sold, with Emily Kame Kngwarreye taking out honours with *Kame Colour* (Lot 144, illustrated) for \$132,500, albeit heavily discounted from its pre-sale of \$200-260,000.

Paddy Bedford's *Mad Gap* (Lot 140) broke this year's drought for major works by the artist, making \$120,000 against expectations of \$150–180,000, which was \$20K up on the hammer from its airing last year.

Maggie Watson Napangardi's *Mina Mina Dreaming* (Lot 143) failed to sell, despite being offered with the same estimate as its last presentation at \$250–320,000, where it made \$348,000 with BP.



The sale offered little drama, with most lots in the bread and butter core managing results just shy of their estimates. Notable exceptions included an early 'plant': John Passmore's *The Straight Tree* (Lot 7, illustrated) shot up to \$28,000 against its estimate of \$7,500-9,500; and this was repeated mid-sale, with Hans Heysen's *Sheltering Gum* (Lot 103) making \$9,500 against its modest pre-sale of \$3-4,000.

Works on paper by the moderns carried energy through to the end of the night, with Blackman's *Night* (Lot 183) attracting Dickerson fans to easily make \$16,000 against its estimate of \$9-12,000; and Whiteley's *Untitled (Dove)* (Lot 221) tripling its low-end estimate to sell at \$15,000.

Unsurprisingly, populist Aussie stocking fillers also sold well, with Hugh Sawrey's *Wedge-Tail Eagle's Nest* (Lot 165) surpassing its high end to make \$24,000.

With the Lawson-Menzies component separated from Deutscher-Menzies, the latter will report a greater clearance rate, but the tenor of the sale is more in line with the narrative offered by the reality of the Menzies Art Brands event's combined figures: solid, not startling. 2010 will bring change to the industry, and we all hope that the fresh competition will be matched by fresh works and renewed collector fervour.

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