

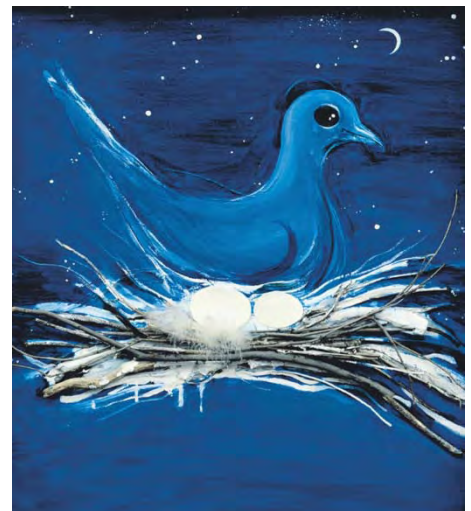
## SUMMER SNOW AND WESTERLY WINDS:

### *Menzies Art Brands' Final Front for the 2009 Season*



Fred Williams holds the mantle for Deutscher & Hackett with this year's top sale price, which bodes well for the top lot of the Menzies Brands 16 December Fine Art auction, *Summer Snow at Perisher* (Lot 33, illustrated), an unusually soft and snowy landscape by the artist, estimated at \$680–840,000. Should snow at Christmas fail to excite Antipodeans, Whiteley's rather brown picture of Lavender Bay in the heat of summer, *Westerly with Daisies* (Lot 32) is positioned to vie for the sale's top lot with expectations of \$600-800,000.

And if it turns out that the bay isn't blue enough, Menzies still has a bird in the hand (or two) with the other Whiteley offerings, which are also all fresh to the market. *The Dove and the Moon* (Lot 30, illustrated) and *The Blue Wren* (Lot 38) carry more reasonable price tags, estimated at \$250–350,000 and \$180–240,000 respectively.



The combined Deutscher/Lawson Menzies sale carries a low end total of \$6.384 million, but the shape and content of the sale would suggest they will struggle to best Sotheby's November performance, which brought in a hammer result around this level with a strong core of fresh works and very high clearance rates.

As with past sales, the Menzies auction is heavily loaded toward the top end, which is in itself heavily laden with recently traded works. This time around, the top 14 lots individually estimated over \$100,000 represent 62% of the sale's low end value; and half of which have reappeared following apparently successful sales at Menzies Brands' auctions last year.

Russell Drysdale and Rupert Bunny, whose portrait works sat side by side in 2008 with lots 25 and 26, are now snuggled up again as lots 34 and 35. Bunny's *Jeanne with her Terrier* (Lot 34) carries expectations of \$360–440,000; while Drysdale's more somber *Half-Caste Woman* (Lot 35, illustrated) is recast at \$300–360,000. In June 2008 they sold for \$480,000 and \$380,000 respectively. In contrast, Whiteley's *Portrait of John Singleton as a Surfie* (Lot 26) is fresh and fun and should find appeal at \$60–80,000.

## ABORIGINAL ART

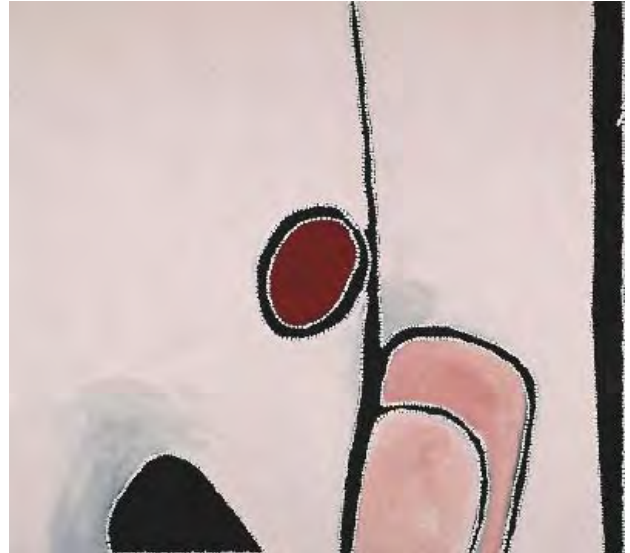


All of the sale's top five Aboriginal works of art, which represent 41% of the Lawson-Menzies low end component, were offered and sold at LM in March and June 2008, and the pattern continues on a smaller scale with lower priced work. Maggie Watson Napangardi's *Mina Mina Dreaming* (Lot 143, illustrated) is being offered with the same estimate as its 2008 presentation at \$250–320,000, where it made \$348,000 with Buyer Premium.

The other four amongst the top tier sold last year for prices akin to their current estimates, including BP. If they manage to resell Paddy Bedford's *Mad Gap* (Lot 140, illustrated) for \$150–180,000, it would break a dry streak for the artist's premier work. The

two paintings offered by competitors priced at this level since the LM 2008 sale did not sell; a record breaking enticement for Menzies, no doubt.

The balance of the auction's offerings suggest that Menzies is not, however, putting all his dove eggs in one basket, and that high fliers no longer rule the roost: the auction's 252 lots comprise 40% contemporary and traditional work valued under \$5,000; and a hefty 52% in the \$5–50,000 bracket. Unusual highlights include John Olsen's *Aboriginal Child Writing* (Lot 10) at \$4,500–6,500; and a quirky *Still Life* (Lot 70) with untitled bat by David Strachan for \$15–20,000.



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