

## Tom Shuts Up Shop and Sells with Tim at Bay East

Tom Mathieson once had works by Norman Lindsay stolen from his gallery in a smash and grab<sup>1</sup>. Now aficionados of Lindsay, Pro Hart and David Boyd are being asked to attest to the enduring popularity of their work in the 22 November Bay East Art auction, which features a core of 80 works from the stock in trade of Tom Mathieson's recently closed Ramsgate based *Australian Art & Investment Gallery*.

The gallery's art consignment represents around 50% of the pre-sale value of the 300 lot Bay East Art auction. Mathieson is also selling his private library of over 200 volumes relating to Norman Lindsay in a separate Bay East sale on 16 November.



Mathieson has been dealing for over twenty five years and had operated his Ramsgate gallery since 1998. His success was largely tied to the steady and calculated rise in popularity for Lindsay's work amongst the demographic to which he sold. He has indicated an intention to continue to trade privately, and it is likely that works by the artist will feature among those being retained in his reserved collection.

With the exception of a pair of bookends (Lot 80, depicted), the sixteen works by Lindsay consigned to the art sale are inexpensive facsimile etchings and print reproductions of paintings. The most expensive Lindsay in the sale, a portrait of a woman *Untitled* (Lot 75) at \$18-25,000, does not carry his provenance

More substantial works from Mathieson's stable can be found amongst the offerings by other artists, including Charles Blackman (3 works), Ray Croke (2), David Boyd (19), David Bromley (3), Pro Hart (19), Elaine Haxton (1), Hugh Sawrey (1), Max Mannix (6), Sidney Nolan (1), and Robert Dickerson (4).

The majority of his works carry low-end estimates under \$10,000, while David Boyd earns the top lot mantle, with *The Orchard Angel's Dream* (Lot 193, depicted) estimated at \$22-35,000; followed by Pro Hart's *Bush Picnic* (Lot 63), at \$15-25,000.



The auction also features two groups of estate works, including that of Elizabeth Vassilieff; artist in her own right and wife of prominent Angry Penguins circle artist Danila. The Sydney Estate of the Late James Stephen Gerathy provides the second top lot of the sale, with an untitled work by British sporting picture and genre painter Heywood Hardy (Lot 49, depicted) estimated at \$20-30,000. A highlight from amongst the sale's other consignments, John Coburn's *Bushland After Fire* (Lot 130), is an attractive proposition at \$14-16,000.

In addition to the broad impact of the financial crisis Mathieson has acknowledged that the taint of the Ronald Coles 'investment art' scandal hurt his business over the last year<sup>2</sup>. Mathieson was a consistent buyer at the smaller Sydney auction rooms for his staple artists, and many of these same artists were pitched by Coles to his demographic. With the gallery's closure it can be expected that small auction firms will now need to look beyond their dealer comp lists to capture potential buyers unfettered by the removal from the market of the two biggest dealers of this self-styled investment portfolio.

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*Lots 80, 193 © the artists, courtesy of AASD [www.aasd.com.au](http://www.aasd.com.au)*

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<sup>1</sup> Les Kennedy, 'Dawn Nab Raids Lindsay Painting', Sydney Morning Herald, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Terry Ingram and Katrina Strickland, 'Gallery Closure Ends an Era', Australian Financial Review Thursday 22 October 2009.