

March 2017

Aspire Art Auctions' inaugural Cape Town sale on 27 March 2017 at the Avenue, V&A Waterfront attracted wide-spread interest from the media and collectors alike, inspired by the new vision which Aspire brings to the market.

Based on a curated approach, with fewer lots offered and a greater focus on quality, seasoned and new collectors competed to acquire significant works. The promotion of critically engaged art, assembled with the acknowledged expertise of Aspire's specialists, has increased the levels of interest amongst the pool of local and international collectors and curators. Aspire's strategy to expand into the global market resounded with fervent bidding from across the world.

As part of the company's ethos of accessibility and inclusivity, the centrally located venue in the thriving V&A Waterfront, flanked by the Aquarium and One & Only Hotel, drew crowds to the preview. The museum-quality display which presented the art in the best possible setting, received unanimously positive responses.

Aspire set various significant records: at estimates of R2,500,000–3,500,000, J H Pierneef's *A view across Fisherman's Cove, Seychelles* sold for an astonishing R4,547,200, reaching over four times the previous record for a non-South African subject by Pierneef. *Vrystaat Reën* achieved R2,046,240, also four times its low estimate of R500,000. The linocut, *Kasteelberg (Doringbome en Berge, S.W.A.)* sold for an impressive R51,156, considerably over estimates of R20,000–30,000. Equally noteworthy is Hugo Naude's *Kammanassie River, Oudtshoorn*, repatriated from Germany for this auction, fetching R704,816.

Emma Bedford, Senior Specialist and head of Aspire's Cape Town office, comments: "We have achieved a number of ground-breaking records with historical and contemporary works, proving that our vision of developing the market is not only achievable but enthusiastically supported by collectors, hungry for exciting new developments in the industry."

Amadlozi artists fared well, improving on the previous record set by Aspire Art Auctions in its inaugural Johannesburg sale in October 2016. Edoardo Villa's significant *Vertical Composition*, set a new record at R1,818,880. Similarly, the Skotnes market was affirmed with *Ravine Wall* selling for R795,760.

Gerard Bhengu's *Veld fire*, a rare work in the artist's oeuvre, achieved R181,888, six times the low estimate; a testimony to the increasing sophistication of the market and its appreciation for rare works of supreme quality. Louis Maqhubela's compelling *Exiled King*, a definitive, politically motivated work, sold for R341,040; at more than three times his previous record, this is a long-awaited and well-received recognition of this significant artist. Albert Adams *Untitled (Four Figures with Pitchforks)*, his first appearance at auction, sold for R136,416. This important artist will be honoured at the upcoming Rupert Museum exhibition, curated by the former Director of the IZIKO South African National Gallery, Marilyn Martin.

Experienced auctioneer, Director and Senior Art Specialist, Ruarc Peffers, comments: "The success of tonight's auction reflects the new vision, committed to and focused exclusively on fine art, that Aspire Art Auctions brings to the market."

Contemporary artwork also fared particularly well. David Brown's *Hanging Man* sold for a record price of R227,360, three times his previous record, while Steven Cohen's *Chandelier* sold for R176,204, seven times his previous record.

Mohau Modisakeng, who will be representing South Africa at the Venice Biennale 2017, achieved a record of R204,624 for his work *Ditaola XV*. Another major contemporary artist, Moshekwa Langa, doubled his previous record when his mixed media composition, *she thought of him often*, sold for R102,312. Brett Murray's work *Corporate Identity* achieved R68,208.

Joachim Schönfeldt's sculpture, *Maquette 5* made R159,152, an exciting development in the build-up to his career survey at the venerated Wits Art Museum later in 2017. Newcomer to the secondary market, Senzeni Marasela's work, *Untitled...*, acknowledging Sarah Baartman, sold for a record R51,156.

Internationally celebrated artist Mikhael Subotzky's work, *Cell 508, A Section, Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison*, achieved a record price of R107,996, trumping his recently achieved record, while Nandipha Mntambo's *Praça de Touros IV* (triptych) sold for R125,048, also a record.

Aspire Art Auction Director and Art Specialist, Mary-Jane Darroll concludes: "We, at Aspire Art Auctions, continue to pioneer the Artist Resale Right, affirming our abiding commitment to the development of the industry and support of emerging and established artists".

For further queries, or for gratis and obligation-free valuations, please contact:
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Upcoming Auction | 19 June 2017

The Park on 7 | Hyde Park Corner | Johannesburg
Consignments Close 24 April 2017

Image caption

Louis Maqhubela | *Exiled King* | conté on paper | 130.5 x 95 cm | Image: Repro Pictures