

June 2017

## From Abramović to Xaba at Aspire

Aspire Art Auctions' upcoming July sale at The Park on 7, Hyde Park Corner, offers a selection of some of the best works produced by local and international artists available on the local market.

Amongst the stellar international artists, appearing for the first time locally, is Marina Abramović, possibly the world's highest profile living female artist, who has established a particular niche in performance art since the early 1970s, culminating in her most celebrated and discussed work in recent years *The Artist is Present*, at MoMA in New York. Her *Golden Mask*, presents the artist's face covered in illuminated gold leaf. The presence of such major contemporary international art on auction in South Africa, is cause for great excitement and anticipation.

Contemporary African art is well-represented by Cameroonian-born, Belgium-based, Pascale Marthine Tayou, who expands the serious subject of Marx's critique of political economy through his witty, subjective interpretation.

Exiled artists that shook our world include Dumile Feni, who devoted his life and his art to the struggle for freedom. In his powerful drawing, *Children under Apartheid*, he spoke out internationally against the degradation of his people. Louis Maqhubela's *Flight* is technically and stylistically comparable to his record-breaking, *Exiled King*, offered on Aspire's Cape Town auction earlier this year.

Locals who've made their mark internationally, include William Kentridge and Kendell Geers. Kentridge's *Theodolite drawing lovers in a pond*, made for his film *Felix in Exile* between late 1993 and early 1994, just before South Africa's first general elections, is eminently collectable. Geers' *Border Order*, first exhibited at the Migros Museum, Zurich in 2003, presents a work rarely encountered here.

An idyllic pastoral landscape by Maggie Laubser, painted in the mid-1950s on a visit to the Ficksburg area, represents a sought-after period in the artist's career, when she broke away from the depiction of Cape farm and fishing scenes in favour of these boldly coloured Free State rural scenes. Peter Clarke's *Figures on a path*, painted in 1960, shows a similarly bold reduction of form while portraying a couple making their way along a country road through the rural landscape of the South-Western Cape. Pierneef's *Bushveld* landscape was painted in 1925, the year he was awarded the commission to paint the Johannesburg station panels.

A selection of Irma Stern gouaches, a watercolour and a sculpture from the sought-after Feldman collection – the artist's closest life-long friends and supporters – includes works made in Madeira in 1931, a significant turning-point in her career.

The women of Bonnefoi are represented by Rosamund Everard-Steenkamp's *Fugue in Colour*, an outstanding example of the landscape seen from above by this adventurous artist, who was also a qualified pilot, as well as Bertha Everard and Leonora Everard Haden. By contrast, scenes by George Pemba and Ephraim Ngatane offer commentaries on everyday life in South Africa's urban areas.

Walter Battiss' unusually large painting produced around 1979, was likely painted while he was in Boston, at a time when he had become, according to Warren Siebrits, South Africa's most advanced painter.

Powerful sculptures range from Anton van Wouw's *The Bushman Hunter*, a 1902 Massa cast, to Edoardo Villa's *African Mask IV*, produced in 1965, one of his most striking and important bronzes. Norman Catherine's *Speaker* is as much a commentary on today's tragicomedies of kleptocracy and state capture, as when the artist began work on it in 1988.

Cecil Skotnes, one of the founders of the Amadlozi group, remains one of the most influential figures in South African art. His series of carvings depicting stories and legends from the life and death of Shaka, are amongst his most renowned. Much of the stylised energy of his *Shaka* panel, draws on the influences of the German Expressionists.

Younger artists are claiming their space in international art arenas. Mohau Modisakeng's *Frames* series explores the relationship between history and his own body. His work on the current Venice Biennale has catapulted him into international artworld celebrity, while his current show at the Standard Bank Gallery celebrates his Young Artist award for 2017. Likewise, Athi-Patra Ruga, whose work is on view at the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris, depicts a scene of introspection in *Illuwane as uNtsikana*, as a man gazes at himself in the mirror.

Doreen Southwood's installation, *The Dancer*, exhibited at Siena's Palazzo delle Papesse in 2008, explores the balancing act of women's experience in a captivating response to Edgar Degas' *Dancer*.

The catalogue featuring superb images, accompanied by articles from top South African arts writers, provides insights into these significant works. The Aspire team, recently joined by Marelize van Zyl, looks forward to welcoming you and sharing its acknowledged expertise.

Aspire's Spring sale on 4 September 2017, at the Avenue, V&A Waterfront offers a breath of fresh air. Visit this beautiful venue to enjoy some choice works, amongst them a rare early Simon Stone mosaic triptych, sure to delight viewers and collectors.

Upcoming Winter Auction | 17 July 2017  
The Park House of Events on 7 | Hyde Park Corner | Johannesburg  
17 July 2017 | Day Sale | 5pm | Evening Sale | 8pm

Auction preview:  
Friday 14 July | 10am to 7pm  
Saturday 15 July | 10am to 5pm  
Sunday 16 July | 10am to 4pm

Exhibition walkabouts:  
Saturday 15 July & Sunday 16 July | 11am

For gratis and obligation-free valuations, and to consign works of art to the upcoming Cape Town auction, before end July, please contact:

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# ASPIRE

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## *Image Captions*

Marina Abramović | *Golden Mask* | 2009 | framed chromogenic print | from an edition of 9 + 2 AP | 127 x 127 cm |

Photograph: Nina Lieska | Repro Pictures