

D'LAN CONTEMPORARY BROKERS LARGEST SINGLE PRIVATE ACQUISITION OF AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS ART IN HISTORY

Private Collector and Philanthropist Bruno Raschle Acquires Significant Portion of the Kelton Collection to Form a Canonical Private Collection of Aboriginal Australian art



CLIFFORD POSSUM TJAPALTJARRI (circa 1933-2002), Ancestral Tales of Mount Allen Sites - Yuutjutiung 1979, synthetic polymer paint on linen, bears Papunya Tula Artists cat. no. CP79078 verso, 231 x 365 cm (91 x 144 inches). © Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri/Copyright Agency 2020.

(Melbourne, Australia) December 2, 2020—D’Lan Contemporary announces details of the largest single private acquisition of Australian Indigenous Art in history, following the sale of more than 250 works from the Santa Monica, California-based Kelton Collection, the largest private collection of Australian Indigenous Art in North America, to the Swiss collector Mr. Bruno Raschle in late 2020.

The Kelton Collection was amassed over four decades by the late Mr. Richard Kelton (1929-2019) and is arguably the most important and comprehensive collection of Australian Indigenous Art to reside outside of a public institution. The collection was a reflection of Mr. Kelton’s indefatigable love of and commitment to Indigenous Australian artists and their art, and was driven by his belief in the critical importance and international relevance of Indigenous art and material culture.

This steadfast commitment to the art and artists is what compelled Mr. Raschle, who is known for his support of heritage conservation worldwide, to acquire such a significant portion of the Kelton Collection, allowing him to keep a historical selection intact while adding to the breadth of his existing collection of Indigenous Art.

The record-breaking multimillion-dollar deal was brokered by D'Lan Davidson, the leading Australian Indigenous Art consultant and dealer, in partnership with Miriam Grundy, one of the leading advisors and appraisers in Australian Indigenous Art. The acquisition consisted of over 250 items including seminal paintings by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri; an important collection of early 1970s Papunya boards and canvases; several monumental paintings by the most revered Australian Indigenous artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye; as well as significant paintings by the leading Australian urban artist, Lin Onus.

Mr. Raschle plans to broaden the exhibition, scholarship and appreciation of Aboriginal art outside of Australia, and continue the work of Mr. Kelton and his daughter Kerry Smallwood, and the Kelton Foundation.

D'Lan Davidson said: "This major acquisition combines two of the most significant private collections of Australian Indigenous Art outside of Australia and comes at a time when we are seeing consistent international growth in demand for contemporary Australian Indigenous Art."

The Kelton Family said: "We are extremely happy to see this key portion of our father's legacy in the hands of Bruno Raschle. His enthusiasm to curate and care for these works and his love and respect for the Australian Indigenous culture make him an ideal custodian of these works going forward."

Bruno Raschle said: "The acquisition of the exquisite Kelton Collection, which includes a wealth of unpublished documents and videos, is a very meaningful complement to the existing Raschle Collection. The Raschle Collection will seek to contribute to building an inclusive and transparent narrative of the Australian Indigenous culture and will be further developed with the goal of serving as an important resource that encourages the spirit and culture of the Australian Indigenous people to continue well into the future."

The Kelton Foundation has begun to sunset its collection and exhibition activities and will reorientate to focus its philanthropy within the areas of health and education, with Indigenous Australian organizations to be included within this purview.

Miriam Grundy said: "The Kelton Foundation has done a tremendous amount over the past four decades to bring Australian Aboriginal art and artists into critical dialogue with their North American peers. But the time is now right for this space to be led by the next generations, and the Kelton Foundation is gratified that this new way forward is the best expression of Mr. Kelton's original commitment."

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About the Kelton Collection

A zealous and rigorous collector with a singular focus on the Pacific, Richard Kelton expanded his wide-ranging collection to include Aboriginal art beginning in 1979, while on a trip to Australia where he acquired several canvases from Papunya Tula Artist cooperative.

Kelton's initial experience with Western Desert art was pivotal and was underscored by his emphasis on these artworks as the equivalent of crucial books, transferring knowledge from generation to generation. Accordingly, paintings from the Western Desert account for a significant portion of the Kelton Collection, comprising of over 60 seminal 1971-1975 paintings on board and carvings executed by the founding artists of the Papunya Tula Painting Movement.

This arc continues through surveying the unfolding artistic expressions of these artists and the burgeoning art communities and outstations of the Western Desert region. The collection pays particular attention to large and monumental paintings and carvings by the founding artists of Papunya Tula between the mid 1970s to the early 1990s, including Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri, Long Jack Phillipus Tjakamarra, Kaapa Mbitjana Tjampitjinpa, Anatjari Tjampitjinpa No. 3 and Yala Yala Gibbs Tjungurrayi, showing the explorations and experimentations of these artists' paintings. This focus section of the collection is bookended out with contemporary works by leading artists of the region, including senior female painters.

Another focus area of the collection are bark paintings and sculpture from Arnhem Land, Tiwi Islands and Wadeye (Port Keats). Kelton collected consistently over three decades from these communities and regions, buying from art centers, galleries and auction houses to form an insightful collection of bark paintings and sculpture made by senior artists and figures spanning the 20th century, including Deaf Tommy Mungatopi, Nym Bunduk and Lofty Bardayal Nadjamerrek.

Other regional artists that Kelton collected with passion were the early artists of Yuendumu. Kelton collected landmark solo and collaborative paintings from some of the most distinguished Warlpiri artists, including some of the first works produced for public sale by the artists at Yuendumu, including Darby Ross Tjampitjinpa, Paddy Sims Tjapaltjarri, Paddy Nelson Tjupurrula and Paddy Japaljarri Stewart.

To the north west, the artists of the Balgo community were also of great interest to Kelton, and his collection spanned paintings from the 1990s by some of the most critical artists from this community, including Eubena Nampitjin, Wimitji Tjapangarti, Bridget Napanangka, Muntja Nungurrayi and Donkeyman Lee Tjupurrula.

Kelton amassed a careful selection of paintings and carvings from north east region of the Kimberley that captured the dynamism of the East Kimberley art movement of the 1990s and 2000s. Significant paintings and carvings by Rover (Julama) Thomas, Freddie Timms, Jack Britten, Peggy Patrick and Hector Jandany Joongoorra form the basis of the East Kimberley collection.

Kelton was also deeply moved by the watercolors of Albert Namatjira and the Hermannsburg School, and his collection included several nuanced watercolors by Namatjira and his contemporaries.

While Kelton followed the careers and developments of these artists mentioned and many, many more, the two artists that are singled out in the collection as having the closest affinity with are Emily Kame Kngwarreye and Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri. The Collection contains five major paintings by Emily, one of the most important female artists of the 20th century, including three monumental large-scale panels

and a rare, late period Yam Dreaming painting. There are seven consequential and rarely seen works by Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri, including two of the major paintings and a carving that were last shown publicly in Possum's 2004 retrospective at the Art Gallery of South Australia and the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

About D'Lan Contemporary

D'Lan Contemporary was founded in 2016 by D'Lan Davidson, a leading international art consultant and dealer in Australian Indigenous Art with over 20 years of industry experience.

Located in Melbourne, Australia, D'Lan Contemporary hosts annual exhibitions of exceptional Australian Indigenous Art in Melbourne, Sydney and New York. From December 2020, the gallery's exhibition programme will expand to incorporate survey exhibitions dedicated to highlighting the work of a selection of important Australian Indigenous Artists.

With a view that exceptional Australian Indigenous Art can and should stand alongside the greatest art in the world, D'Lan Contemporary aims to engage and educate local and international collectors and to elevate Australian Indigenous Art on the global stage.

D'Lan Contemporary operates and maintains strict ethical practices and aims to create a healthy and sustainable marketplace for Australian Indigenous Art by exclusively handling artworks with a clear line of community provenance, respecting the integrity of the artist, the buyer, and the seller, and protecting them - and the marketplace - from fraudulent sales or unethical procurement.

In January 2020, D'Lan Contemporary introduced the Voluntary Resale Royalty initiative, from which date the seller has the option to include a resale royalty of 2.5%, which D'Lan Contemporary will match to 5%, creating a positive revenue stream for Indigenous artists and their communities.

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