

Strauss & Co

A warming current of satire and irony energises Art Month at Welgemeend



Ever since 2014, when collectors Lizelle and Frank Kilbourn initiated Art Month at Welgemeend, this month-long celebration of art has been a highlight of Cape Town's winter art calendar. This year's programme once again promises to delight and please, and is guided by the feature exhibition, *Satire and Irony*, which features a selection of paintings by Robert Hodgins, Stanley Pinker and Alexander Podlashuc and sculptures by Peter Haden, an almost-forgotten artist.

As is tradition, the exhibition is an expression of the camaraderie and friendship that defines Cape Town's art collecting community. Works drawn from the Kilbourn Collection will be shown alongside select pieces from the collections of Marion and Jonathan Bloch, Erin and Leo Podlashuc, Caro Wiese and other private collectors.

Frank Kilbourn, who is Strauss & Co's chairperson, says: "Art Month at Welgemeend is an important passion project for Strauss & Co and ourselves as a family. It grew out of a conversation Stephan Welz, Strauss & Co's founding managing director and I had about hosting a charity event at Welgemeend to support the preservation and administration of this significant cultural heritage. Over the past six years Art Month at Welgemeend has established itself as a wonderful platform for private collectors to show their work to an art-interested public. I am particularly delighted this year to be collaborating with long-time friends from the art community and business."

Art Month at Welgemeend is pleased to announce that its feature exhibition, which focuses on themes of satire and irony, will include works by Robert Hodgins loaned by Marion and Jonathan Bloch. Similar to Stanley Pinker, Hodgins was a progressive artist and educator whose paintings offer a fine mix of formal daring and biting social commentary.

Jonathan Bloch says: "I bought my first Robert Hodgins in the 1990s, a print, and quickly graduated to his work on canvas. Over time Robert grew to be a dear friend. I was lucky enough to enjoy his famous scrambled eggs at his home in Midrand. In 2008 he inscribed a book for Marion, generously saying I discovered him before he did. It is a pleasure to join our friends, the Kilbourns, in sharing our collection with the public in the intimate setting at Welgemeend."

Frank and Lizelle Kilbourn are long-time collectors and admirers of the works of artists Marianne and Alexander "Pod" Podlashuc. Alexander Podlashuc may not be as well known as Hodgins or Pinker, but was no less a gifted painter. Trained in London, he possessed a sardonic edge and contributed cartoons to the British satirical magazine *Punch*. Podlashuc is closely associated Port Elizabeth, where he taught for many decades. The exhibition will also feature works loaned by Erin and Leo Podlashuc.

"I delighted that the exhibition *Satire and Irony* features works by Stanley Pinker," says Frank Kilbourn. "He is one of my most-admired painters. His influence as an artist is immense, and partly owes to his service – like Hodgins and Pod – to teaching. Interestingly, both Pinker and Pod lived in the Cape Town suburb of Tamboerskloof, where Lizelle and I now live. Visitors to the exhibition *Satire and Irony* should also look out for works by contemporary artists, which will add a more immediate slant to the exhibition's theme."

Alongside the curated exhibition *Satire and Irony*, this year's Art Month at Welgemeend also includes a small exhibition of bronzes by the Johannesburg-born sculptor Peter Haden. Titled *Peter Haden: Almost Forgotten*, this meticulously researched exhibition offers a penetrating insight into Haden, a little-known modernist sculptor associated with Johannesburg dealer Egon Guenther. It is accompanied by a catalogue featuring an essay by Dr Gavin Watkins, a Sydney-based collector and noted authority on 1960s and 70s South African sculpture.

As is custom, Art Month at Welgemeend will also include an exciting social and educational programme. The educational committee has selected two art-themed films. On Monday 12 August, *Herb & Dorothy* (2008), about collectors Dorothy and Herb Vogel, will screen, and on Monday 18 August, Art Month at Welgemeend will premier a new documentary about Cape Town-based painter Simon Stone.

This year's Art Month at Welgemeend includes four masterclasses. On 5 August, Michael Godby, an emeritus professor at the University of Cape Town, will talk about his association with Robert Hodgins. On 17 August Lizelle Kilbourn will be in discussion with art critic Amanda Botha, their talk offering a helpful introduction to art evaluation. On 28 August, Hayden Proud, a curator at Iziko South African National Gallery, will deliver a lecture on Alexander Podlashuc. He is joined by Strauss & Co's Dr Alastair Meredith who will consider the work of sculptor Peter Haden.

Art Month at Welgemeend runs from 1 to 31 August and is a joint initiative between the Friends of Welgemeend, Lizelle and Frank Kilbourn, Marion and Jonathan Bloch, Erin and Leo Podlashuc, Strauss & Co, Delaire Graff Estate and others, with the support of Hoerskool Jan van Riebeeck. This year's convivial programme of satire, irony and winter fun kicks off on Wednesday 31 July with a gala dinner.

A full programme of Art Month at Welgemeend events is available online at www.straussart.co.za

About the venue:

Welgemeend is an illustrious manor home founded on the slopes of Table Valley in 1693. It was declared a monument in 1944. Welgemeend houses an important historical collection of earlier

20th-century masterpieces assembled by the much-loved Afrikaans poet and scholar Izak Wilhelmus "Boerneef" van der Merwe.

Art valuation days at Welgemeend:

Strauss & Co specialists will be holding art valuations at Welgemeend on 2 and 3 August 2019 at a cost of R20 per item. Proceeds will benefit The Friends of Welgemeend
For an appointment contact 021 683 6560 or email jean@straussart.co.za

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