

# Artists won't miss out at AUSiMED auction

ZELDA CAWTHORNE

AN upcoming Melbourne art auction to raise funds for the Australia Israel Medical Research group (AUSiMED) is rethinking the conventional fundraising model by allowing artists to be properly rewarded, according to organisers.

Artists will receive 90 per cent of the amount their work fetches under the hammer, with the other 10 per cent going to AUSiMED, a not-for-profit organisation founded by Hadassah Australia. It is a model strongly supported by AUSiMED curator Vicki Finkelstein, the driving force behind the February 3 art auction.

"Artists are forever being pressed to donate works for charitable causes, but that's a big ask in the current economic climate," she told *The AJN*. "That's why we've turned the usual charity art auction model on its head – a unique initiative as far as I know. In effect, vendors will get the full amount that their work fetches."

The standard buyer's premium of 20 per cent will also be directed to AUSiMED, and the Menzies Gallery in South Yarra has donated its services and use of its premises.

The incentive for the artists proved galvanising. "We received more than 190 submissions, and 92 works by 66 artists made the cut," said Finkelstein,



Artist Dean Bowen's work, *Nocturnal Woodpecker (detail)*, one of the pieces to be auctioned.

who was assisted in the selection process by Melbourne art industry pros John Buckley, Vivien Anderson and Jeremy Kibel.

"Most of the works are by accomplished mid-career Australian artists and at least 90 per cent of them have only ever been seen in the primary market – that is, in galleries, not at auction. That freshness is an important point of difference."

It won't be lost on seasoned collectors, though even the greenest novice will appreciate the care that has gone into selecting enticing contemporary art that ranges from oils, watercolours and acrylics, to lithographs and digital prints. "For an auction, this is a really exceptional group and many of the pieces are very affordable," said

Finkelstein, who majored in curatorial management for her master of arts at Melbourne University and has worked for major galleries.

"My favourites include works by Graeme Drendel, Alexander McKenzie, Kate Elsey and Dean Bowen, though I was impressed by the high quality of most of the submissions."

The funds raised by the art auction will have far-reaching benefits, said AUSiMED's chief executive Roz Kaldor-Aroni. The organisation will offer grants for collaborations between Australian and Israeli medical researchers, as well as a range of scholarships.

"Australian and Israeli medical scientists are well matched in terms of excellence, but the Israelis are way ahead when it comes to commercialising their work. They're the world's best in that area, so the Australians will be able to leverage off the Israelis' expertise."

The paintings and works on paper to be auctioned offer a raft of favourites, including Wynne Prize and Archibald Prize finalist Alexander McKenzie, and internationally acclaimed installation artist Jill Orr.

Viewing for the AUSiMED art auction on February 3 will be held at the Menzies Gallery, 1 Darling St, South Yarra, from February 1-3, 10am-3pm daily. Enquiries: [info@ausimed.org](mailto:info@ausimed.org); (03) 9272 5699.

## Adelaide Jews to reunite, reminisce

ASHLEY SHENKER

ADELAIDE'S Jewish community was once thriving, though in recent years many of its herd have flocked to Melbourne, Sydney and Perth. But the South Australian expats are set to reunite on Australia Day to reminisce about the old city and reconnect as a community.

Current and former Adelaide Jews will gather for what organiser Miriam Millingen said will be a special and important occasion.

"It's important, because Adelaide is a great city and we have some very good memories," Millingen told *The AJN*.

"We'd like to have about 150 to 200 people ... and it allows people to network with ex-Adelaideans."

The Jewish community in the South Australian capital can be traced back to an influx of English Jews in the mid-19th century. They congregated at what was then called Emanuel Solomon's Temple Tavern, but is now the Adelaide Hebrew Congregation.

More recently, Jews from other parts of Europe, Egypt and Israel also settled in Adelaide, and when a wave of South Africans came in the 1980s, the Jewish community was around 2000 strong.

But that number has since deteriorated, with more than half

moving to both the east and west of the country.

"At the time, we had a big influx of South Africans," Millingen said.

"But a lot of the South Africans used it as a stepping stone to move to Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, and moved on for their children."

At the moment, there is no Jewish day school in Adelaide, but the community is still maintaining its heritage, with a number of Jewish organisations still going strong.

"It's important, because Adelaide is a great city and we have some very good memories."

Miriam Millingen

Community reunion organiser

"There are between 800 and 1000 [Jewish] people living here today," Millingen said.

"We have both synagogues, which are running regular services, we have Maccabi, WIZO, JNF, Jewish Community Services and the JAZY youth group, which is a combination of Habonim and Netzer."

The Adelaide Jewish community reunion will take place from 10.30am on Saturday, January 26 at Allnutt Park, Bentleigh (Melway: 68 C11).