



## Design - Two Day Sale - Live Online (A981)

Tue, 19th Oct 2021

### Viewing:

#### VIEWING BY APPOINTMENT

We will be offering viewing by appointment. Thirty-minute time slots will be available from:

Fri 15 Oct, 9am - 5pm

Sat 16 Oct, 10am - 2pm

Sun 17 Oct, 10am - 2pm

Mon 18 Oct, 9am - 5pm

[Book Appointment](#)

All lots are, however, extensively illustrated and carry detailed condition reports - see 'Condition report' at the foot of each lot description.

#### REMOVAL OF LOTS

We operate a booking system for collections - please see [here](#) to book a time slot. You must book your appointment 24 hours in advance, to ensure your items are ready when you arrive:

#### Furniture and Carpets

Furniture and Carpets will be available to collect as follows:

- **FROM THURS 21 TO FRI 29 OCTOBER**  
Available at our **Stansted Auction Rooms, Stansted Mountfitchet CM24 8GE**
- **FROM TUES 2 NOVEMBER**  
Available at **Unit 1 Harps Farm, Bedlars Green, Great Hallingbury CM22 7TL**

Please select '*Collection/Furniture*' as your appointment type when booking your collection time. **Lots not collected by 5pm Monday 1 November will incur storage charges.**

#### All Other Items

All other items will be available to collect from **the day after the sale** at our **Stansted Auction Rooms**. Please select '*Collection*' as your appointment type when booking your collection time.

[Book Appointment](#)

**Estimate:** £2000 - £3000 + Fees

**Robert Prenzel (German, 1866-1941),**

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two wood carved reliefs, one depicting a laughing Aboriginal man, the other depicting an Aboriginal woman smoking a pipe, signed and dated 'R. Prenzel 1917' and 'R. Prenzel

1918' respectively, the laughing man incised to the verso  
'Robt. Prenzel, Toorak Rd South Yarra, Sept 1917',  
the man 45 x 35cm  
the woman 40 x 36cm (2)

### **Robert Prenzel (1866-1941)**

Robert Prenzel was born in 1866 in the Prussian town of Kittlitzreben, in present-day Poland. After a four-year apprenticeship, further studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, and another four years of work experience around Europe, he emigrated to Australia at the age of 22. Trained in the classical European styles, he went on to define Australian craft and design throughout the first quarter of the 20th century.

Basing himself in Melbourne from 1888, Prenzel's work was pivotal to the movement and epoch of 'Marvellous Melbourne'. In the early 1900s, he predominantly produced commissioned works for churches and public spaces in Continental, rococo and baroque styles, before opening his own furniture workshop on Toorak Road in central Melbourne in 1910. From there, Prenzel came to pioneer the secessionist movement of Australian woodcarving, known as Gum Nut Art Nouveau.

Using predominantly native timbers, Prenzel produced everything from pictorial wall plaques to longcase clocks. Developing a unique artistic style, his works combined the vogue of European Art Nouveau with carved motifs of Australian flora and fauna, the majority of which were based on paintings, descriptive texts and photographs by his contemporaries. Through the use of this two-dimensional imagery, Prenzel often allowed for individual interpretations and imaginations of his subject matter, introducing minor changes and alterations to each three-dimensional rendering, giving each its unique characteristics.

Prenzel's work was phenomenally well received by his contemporaries, both in Australia and abroad. Throughout his career, he championed Australian flora and fauna, founding a botanical garden in South Melbourne and serving as an advisor on the subject to the Commonwealth government. However, his endeavours were cut short by the anti-German sentiments of the post-World War I era, eventually forcing him into retirement during the mid-1920s. In spite of this, he continued carving and working from his home in Black Rock until his death in 1941.

Lot 15 shows Prenzel's most recognised designs from the peak of his career. 'Woman with a Pipe' and 'The Laughing Man', after the original photograph by Henry King, were among his most frequent and celebrated subject matter, both as small embellishments and as standalone portrait carvings. Having been dismantled from their original backboards, these works are indicative of the intricacy and skill of Prenzel's carvings.

Qty: 2

### **Condition Report**

Both would previously have been mounted on plaques. Both with mounting holes to the verso. The woman with a pipe possibly with a later signature. The pipe broken from the woman. Both with later hanging rings to the verso.