



The German model



Miss Moira Scicluna



Alcide de Gasperi



Major Edward Scicluna. The paintings above are by Willie Apap.

# Rich collection of modern artworks under the hammer

Lisa Gwen Baldacchino

Private collections are often veritable treasure troves. And this is true of many Maltese collectors' abodes. However, the public can rarely grasp the wealth of works of art in any such "home" under normal circumstances. That is, unless one is invited inside to view such works first hand.

Here lies the beauty of auctions, and more precisely the viewing leading up to the actual event. Often, were it not for the labels attached to the individual items, these homes would turn into exhibition spaces – almost assuming the role of a historic house museum.

This is the case with Villa Paradiso, in St Margaret Street, Monterosa (San Gwann), whose doors

are open to reveal a plethora of eclectic *objets d'arts* and a fine collection of modern 20th century artworks chiefly produced by Maltese artists.

Works by Willie Apap are very prominent among the 550 plus lots. A number of works on show have even been published in the 1993 monograph written by the late Emanuel Fiorentino and Louis Grasso.

Interestingly, the home in which the auction takes place, as well as the stellar collection of works, belongs to Lilliana Brincat née Zammit La Rosa, whose father, Carmelo, was the publisher of the aforementioned book and a close friend of the Apap family.

Among the works by Willie Apap's going up for auction, viewers will have the opportunity of

noting the artist's 1967 self-portrait; the portrait of Major Edward Scicluna (*Il-Kiks*), and the full-length portraits of Miss Moira Scicluna and Alcide de Gasperi. Another published work, which is quite different in temperament and flavour, is titled *The German Model* – supposedly painted shortly before the artist's demise.

However, the works of Willie Apap do not stand alone in this impressive private collection. Among the other "moderns" showcased in this auction are works by Vincent Apap, Anton Agius, Antoine Camilleri, Joseph Bellia, Giuseppe Briffa, Marquis Joseph Scicluna, Evin Cremona, Gianni Vella, Joseph Kalleya, Harry Alden, Raymond Pitré, Pawl Carbonaro, Gabriel Caruana and Victor Diacono.

Not to mention some beautiful examples of 17th and 18th century Maltese furniture, an extensive collection of ornate Oriental daggers, silverware, topographical paintings by L. M. Galea, Girolamo Gianni and Giovanni Schranz and many other works.

The auction will be conducted by the auction house Obelisk, as instructed by Mrs Brincat.

Viewing started Sunday and continues until Thursday leading between 10 a.m. till 8 p.m. and also during the mornings of auction between 10 a.m. and noon. Lot one till 280 will be auctioned on Friday starting at 2.30 p.m.; and lot 281 till 560 will be auctioned on Saturday starting at 2.30 p.m.

www.obeliskauctions.com



The collection of oriental daggers. Photos: Jason Borg