

# CASSIRER FINE ART

(PROPRIETOR REINHOLD CASSIRER)

*Denis*

*Mme Denis asleep  
original copy*

MUTUAL SQUARE  
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CASFINEART JOHANNESBURG

15th September, 1986

Johannesburg Art Gallery  
Joubert Park  
JOHANNESBURG

INVOICE: 1188

MAURICE DENIS

Portrait of Madame Denis asleep

Oil on canvas, C. 1930

33 x 91cm

Provenance: The Estate of Maud Sumner. The painting was a gift of the artist to Sumner, whose misspelt "Mlle. Summes" is inscribed on a label on the stretcher

A photostat of a Certificate of Authenticity from Dr. A.J. Werth dated 7th August 1986, is enclosed.

	R30 000,00
LESS 10% Museum's Discount:	3 000,00
	<u>R27 000,00</u>
G.S.T.	3 240,00
	<u><u>R30 240-00</u></u>

*Denis*  
*Mme Denis asleep*  
*archive copy*

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 22.9.86  
 CULTURE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE 10.9.86  
 ART GALLERY COMMITTEE 21.8.86

COMMITTEE

LIBRARY DEPARTMENT (ART GALLERY)

## AS PURCHASE OF WORKS OF ART

The Art Gallery Committee has recommended the purchase of the following works of art:

Artist	Title	Medium	Price
Maurice Denis	Portrait of Mme. Denis asleep, c.1930	Oil on canvas	R27 000 excl GST
Pieter Wenning	Portrait of D.C. Boonzaier	Oil on canvas	R25 000 excl GST

Maurice Denis (1870-1943) was an influential French painter and writer on art theory. He was a member of and spokesman for the Nabis, a group of painters formed in 1892 by members of the Académie Julian in Paris. He was also one of the chief exponents of the theories of the Symbolists, a loosely-organised movement associated with French poetry from c.1885. His writings include two books on art theory (1912, 1922) and a history of religious art (1939). During his lifetime Denis participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions and his works are represented in many major art museums overseas. Denis has also been the subject of many scholarly articles and a number of monographs.

This accomplished painting, executed in typical pink and blue-grey colours, depicts the wife of the artist asleep in a domestic setting. It typifies the Nabis expressive use of line, colour and flat planes which they adopted from the French painter, Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) in reacting against the Impressionist style.

This work would form a suitable and valuable complement to the Gallery's collection of French 19th and 20th century art which includes works by other members of the Nabis such as Pierre Bonnard, Edouard Vuillard, Félix Vallotton and the sculptor, Aristide Maillol. It would also fill a notable gap as the Gallery only has prints by Denis in its collection. This painting would also enrich the Gallery's collection of 15 Maud Sumner (1902-1985) pictures, one of which is Chez Maurice Denis (1938). During Sumner's second period of study in Paris (1929) she studied under Denis who thereafter became an important influence on the artistic development of this well-known South African artist. He personally gave this portrait painting to the artist.

/Dutch-born

archive original

JOHANNESBURG ART GALLERY

NOVEMBER 1986

Draft catalogue entry  
SL - November 1986

DENIS, Maurice (b. Granville (Manche) 25.11.1870 - d. Paris 13.11.1943)

Portrait of Madame Denis asleep, c.1930 - to check

Not inscribed  
Oil on canvas  
33,3 x 91 cm

PROVENANCE:

*Given by the artist to Maud Sumner c.1930*  
Maud Sumner Estate;  
purchased from Cassirer Fine Art, Mutual Square, Rosebank, 2196 (September 1986).

EXHIBITIONS:

REFERENCES:

RELATED WORKS:

SUBJECT MATTER:

Depicts a portrait of the artist's second wife, Lisbeth, asleep. Probably executed at the artist's home, Le Prieuré, at St. Germain-en-Laye which was an old priory. (see Date below)

DATE:

The work is dated c.1930 and was given to Maud Eyston Sumner (1902-1985) by the artist when she was studying in Paris under Denis. Sumner went to Paris in January 1926 and first studied at the Ateliers de l'Art Sacré under George Desvallières and Maurice Denis.\* She worked there for five years.\*\* In her "Recollections of Paris" (Apollo, Vol.102, October 1975, p.287) Maud Sumner describes her relationship with Denis as follows:

Denis was quiet, benevolent and fatherly and took an interest, not only in our painting, but in our advancement. It was he who after a few years insisted that I should hold an exhibition of my work in Paris and arranged for the Galerie Druet to give me a show. I felt I was not ready for that, but I had brought back from the Christmas holidays a series of snow paintings that I had done at my grandmother's house in Warwickshire. These delighted Denis and were exhibited at Druet's, where Matisse had also had his first exhibition. I was greatly encouraged by the reception I had there and felt I was on my way. And that is what Denis wanted.\*\*\*

In this same article Sumner goes on:

"Later on, he came to me after class one day and said: 'Maud looks a bit pale. She had better come for a week to Le Prieuré'. This was his home at St. Germain-