

Children sent back to violent father

CAROLINE OVERINGTON

A 19-YEAR-OLD Maori woman who abducted her two children from New Zealand has lost her bid to keep them in Australia after the Family Court rejected her claim that the children are at "grave risk" from their violent father.

The woman, who cannot be named, told Australian authorities

the father had started a sexual relationship with her when she was 13, and that she had begun living with him a year later.

She fled to Sydney last June after a violent assault in front of one of the children. Her biological father lives in Sydney and she has been staying with him.

But judge Stewart Austin, in the Sydney branch of the Family Court, ruled that the woman must

return the children to New Zealand, saying it would be "presumptuous and offensive to the extreme" to assume New Zealand did not have a court and welfare system able to support her.

The father made his application to have the children returned under the Hague Convention on international child abductions, which provides for the rapid return of children from one signa-

tory country to another, except where there is risk of harm.

The mother, known in court documents as Ms Morton, argued that she and the children were at "grave risk" if forced to return to New Zealand "because her relationship had been 'punctuated by domestic violence'".

In May last year, there was a "violent incident" in the home in front of the children. The father

was convicted and sentenced to 50 hours of community service. In June, the mother fled on one-way tickets purchased by a friend.

She told Justice Austin she was "particularly vulnerable" to the man because he had been having sex with her since she was a child and because she had *whanau* (friends) but no family in the small town where they lived.

The judge agreed there was "an

imbalance of power" in the relationship, since the father is seven years older and owns property in the area.

But the mother had been able to "muster the courage to sever her relationship with the father" when she fled from New Zealand, and she was "beginning to realise that a relationship at that age (13) was inappropriate". With that knowledge, she might be able to resist

Dealer 'pleased' probe is dropped

ASHLEIGH WILSON
MICHAELA BOLAND

THE competition regulator has dropped its investigation into heavyweight auctioneer Rod Menzies following concerns from rivals about transparency in the multi-million-dollar art market.

Auctioneer Tim Goodman and other key art identities claimed they were seeking a "level playing field" by lodging a complaint against Mr Menzies with the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission two years ago.

Mr Menzies denied any wrongdoing after he was accused of failing to disclose an interest in paintings sold at auction.

The ACCC said yesterday it was no longer investigating Mr Menzies: "Based on information provided by Menzies Art Brands, Deutscher-Menzies and Lawson-Menzies, and changed disclosure statements in sales catalogues, the ACCC does not intend to take any further action at this stage."

The complaint related to the non-disclosure of guarantees and ownership of artworks presented at auction, with Mr Menzies accused of acting contrary to the Trade Practices Act.

It followed concerns about aspects of Mr Menzies's dealings through his two art auction houses, Deutscher-Menzies and Lawson-Menzies, known as Menzies Art Brands.

Mr Menzies said yesterday he was "pleased to announce" he was no longer being investigated by the ACCC.

When the allegations were made in late 2008, he said it was not possible for him to contemplate "the level of envy and hostility" by his competitors.

A month later, Mr Menzies said he had revised aspects of the information provided for buyers and sellers in his catalogues.

This included promising greater transparency about the ownership of paintings.

Mr Goodman would not comment yesterday.

Business makes a show of its art



Barbara Flynn, curator of the Deloitte collection, with one of her offerings, Christian Bumarra Thompson's *Hunting Ground No 3, 2007*

Corporate art used to be kept for the suits, but not any more

MICHAELA BOLAND

SOME of the nation's rarely seen corporate art collections are getting one-off public showings during the inaugural Art Month in Sydney.

Invitation-only tours of law firm Allens Arthur Robinson,

consultancy Deloitte and brokerage JBWere have mostly sold out. The tours were not advertised and tickets cost a hefty \$100.

"You get access to something that's usually off-limits," said Art Month board member Kate Dezarnauds.

JBWere and Allens have amassed classic corporate collections. Allens opened its doors last Tuesday and the JBWere tour is planned for next Tuesday.

Deloitte, which opened its doors to 45 visitors last night, has

for the past five years sought to promote Australian artists.

Curator Barbara Flynn has assembled a new exhibition of artworks lent by galleries around Sydney. The paintings, photographs, sculptures and video installations — curated around the theme "synapse" — will show in the company's corridors and offices for the next four months.

At the end of each exhibition the company will buy some artworks for its collection, and others, while not advertised, will be

for sale to staff and visitors. "There's no other company that's undertaken this kind of series — it's a completely unique initiative," Ms Flynn said.

This exhibition's featured artists are Hany Armanious, Jon Campbell, Destiny Deacon, Shaun Gladwell, Fiona Hall, Newell Harry, Lindy Lee, Fiona MacDonald, Tracey Moffatt and Anne Zahalka.

Ms Flynn said she plays it safe when curating corporate shows.

"I don't tend to select a work

that would be overtly sexual, nationalistic or political," she said. "In a workplace, I don't think it's fair to be confrontational with art. The works are hard-hitting, but they are not offensive."

Art Month is an umbrella festival that the organisers hope will elevate the visual arts in Sydney, akin to the Sydney Film Festival and Sydney Festival of Arts.

Funds raised from the tours will go back into the event.

ARTS P16-17

Nuttall demand 'shameless'

SARAH ELKS

in April 2002, when the politician was industrial relations minister

who had delivered a public performance worthy of Hollywood,

Porn baron's \$1m payout

MICHAELA BOLAND

sellers renege on consignments. Mrs Ange must pay \$731,000.

had been unexpectedly blocked. Mrs Ange had authorised