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SOTHEBY'S AUSTRALIA TO PRESENT
John Brack's 'Antipodean' Masterpiece
Two Running Girls 1959



John Brack 1920-1999, *Two Running Girls* 1959. Estimate \$1,000,000-1,200,000

© Helen Brack

Emerging from a Private Collection and Offered at Auction for the First Time in 25 Years.

On 11 May, Sotheby's Australia's evening sale of **Important Australian & International Art** in Sydney will feature a striking modernist painting of *Two Running Girls* 1959 by **John Brack** (estimate \$1,000,000-1,200,000, pictured). One of only ten examples included in the highly acclaimed *Antipodean* exhibition of 1959, the painting remains one of the artist's most significant works from this period remaining in private ownership.

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Brack first depicted images of childhood in 1954 when he painted and drew his own children with *First Daughter*, *Second Daughter*, *Third Daughter* and *Fourth Daughter*. Five years later, Brack returned to the theme to explore the dynamics of children in the school yard, in their natural environment, away from adult supervision and intervention. Schoolyard, quadrangle and shelter-shed play host to activities in which isolation, alienation, rivalry, violence and jealousy are explored in their many nuances. *Two Running Girls* is an image in which contradictions and tensions are explored in both a physical and psychological manner; the composition is intelligent, wry, humanist and incisive.

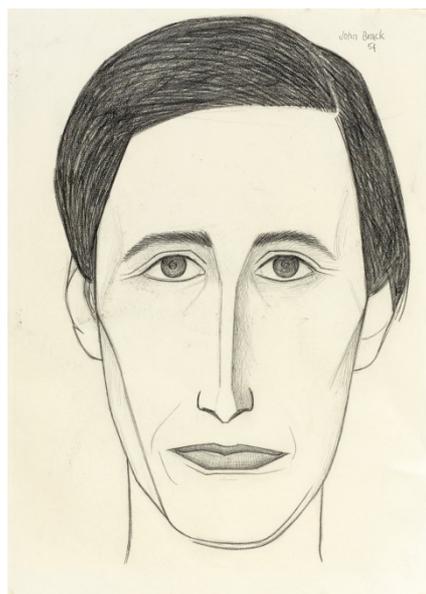
Included in the seminal *Antipodeans* exhibition in Melbourne in August 1959, *Two Running Girls* was one of Brack's major contributions – together with fellow artists, Charles Blackman, Arthur and David Boyd, Robert Dickerson, John Perceval and Clifton Pugh – that re-asserted the importance of figurative art amidst the proliferation of Abstract Expressionism that dominated world art in the 1950s.

John Brack is a central figure in Australian modernist painting and the subject of two monographs and three public gallery retrospectives. In 2006 Sotheby's Australia sold *The Bar* 1954 for \$3,120,000, which established a new world auction record for Australian art. This was exceeded the following year when Sotheby's Australia sold *The Old Time* 1969 for \$3,360,000.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: *'Only two other paintings from John Brack's acclaimed series of school children has ever appeared for auction, with Two Running Girls the most dynamic and complex of these. Two Running Girls delves into the duality of childhood – the fragility and resilience, innocence and danger. A compositional highlight is the tiny, clenched fists and open hand represent compressed power and energy – and the determination to succeed.'*



John Brack 1920-1999, *Christmas Lillies* 1955. Estimate \$200,000-300,000.
© Helen Brack



John Brack 1920-1999, *Portrait of Dr Ursula Hoff* 1954. Estimate \$40,000-60,000.
© Helen Brack

Important Australian & International Art includes two additional masterworks by John Brack

- Held in the same private collection since 1956 ***Christmas Lilies 1955*** (estimate \$200,000-300,000, pictured) was acquired from the artist's solo exhibition of 15 oil paintings at Peter Bray Gallery; nine of these are now in public collections, including the artist's most renowned, *Collins St., 5.p.m.* 1955.
- From the **Estate of the Late Dr Ursula Hoff AO OBE** is ***Portrait of Dr Ursula Hoff 1954*** (estimate \$40,000-60,000, pictured). An informal 'close up' pencil portrait of Hoff, who was an early admirer and supporter of Brack.

AT A GLANCE

Important Australian & International Art

Auction in Sydney, 11 May 2016, 6.30 pm, InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Exhibition in Melbourne 28 April – 1 May, 10 am to 5 pm, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney 5-11 May, 10 am to 5 pm, Paddington Town Hall, 249 Oxford Street, Paddington

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