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# Epic Murray River Masterpiece Emerges for Auction

Important Australian Art | Auction in Sydney 31 August 2016



Arthur Streeton 1867-1943, *The Murray and the Mountain* (1930). Estimate \$150,000-200,000

An epic masterpiece from **Arthur Streeton's** inter-war period will be exhibited publicly for the first time since 1944 by Sotheby's Australia. *The Murray and the Mountain* (1930) (estimate \$150,000-250,000, pictured) has been held in the same family collection since 1931 and will premier for auction by Sotheby's Australia on 31 August at the InterContinental Sydney.

In September 1930 Arthur Streeton visited Corryong in northern Victoria and fulfilled his long-held dream to paint the spectacular scenery afforded by the source of the Murray River – the snow-capped mountains, dusty-blue ranges, crisp-fertile valleys and gum-tree studded banks of the meandering majestic river. Streeton wrote to Tom Roberts 'I want to produce more work ... and produce bigger, more serious things. I picture in my head the Murray and all the wonder and glory at its source up towards Kosciusko, and the great gold plains, and all the beautiful inland Australia.' *The Murray and the Mountain* fulfilled this vision in majestic and grand proportions.

Vibrating with realism *The Murray and the Mountain* formed the highlight of Streeton's solo exhibition at the Fine Art Society's Gallery in Melbourne in March 1931 and was singled out for reproduction in *The Argus* newspaper. Critics were enamoured with the work with Harold Herbert commenting: 'the great thing is the lasting impression of a landscape filled with light, a valley panorama such as we know and enjoy.'

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The world authority on the artist, Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'The re-emergence of *The Murray and the Mountain*, one of Arthur Streeton's epic masterpieces painted between the wars is cause for celebration and reconfirms his position as one of our finest and most influential artists. The painting was included in the 1932 *Loan Exhibition of Works by Arthur Streeton* at the National Art Gallery of New South Wales and in the *Arthur Streeton Memorial Exhibition* in 1944. The painting retains its original frame and Sotheby's Australia has reproduced the work for the first time in colour. After almost ninety years, this picture can rightfully reclaim its position as one of Streeton's most influential compositions from this crucial period in his career when Australia was grappling with its identity following the carnage and devastation of the First World War.'

## AT A GLANCE

ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943

*The Murray and the Mountain* (1930)

oil on canvas

64 x 102 cm

Estimate \$150,000-250,000

Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney, 31 August 2016, 6.30 pm

InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Exhibition in Melbourne 17-21 August, 10 am to 5 pm, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney 25-31 August, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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