

Smith&Singer

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REDISCOVERED MASTERPIECES BY ARTHUR STREETON & FRED WILLIAMS
EMERGE FOR AUCTION AT SMITH & SINGER ON THE EVE OF THE
STREETON RETROSPECTIVE AT THE ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES
& ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HISTORIC STREETON/WILLIAMS
EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

*Streeton's Magnificent Canvas of the Dandenong Ranges Unseen Since
1933 and Reproduced for the First Time*

*Williams' Definitive 'Lysterfield Landscape' from his Breakthrough Series
Unseen Since 1976*

*Their Exhibition this November at Smith & Singer will mark 50 Years to the
Month Since the Radical and Innovative 'Heroic Landscape: Williams –
Streeton' Exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria*



ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943

A Southern View, Olinda (1933)

oil on canvas, 76 x 101.2 cm

Estimate \$300,000–500,000

MELBOURNE, 11 November 2020 – Today, a poignant and salient canvas by Arthur Streeton that has remained hidden in the same private collection since 1933, will be exhibited alongside Fred Williams' masterful, *Lysterfield Landscape* (painted in 1968 and last seen publicly in 1976), for the first time in Smith & Singer's Sydney galleries. The display will be held exactly 50 years to the month after the National Gallery of Victoria's *Heroic landscape: Williams – Streeton*, exhibition, which radically and inventively showcased Arthur Streeton and Fred Williams – two of Australia's greatest artists – side-by-

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side, one deceased and one living. Following their exhibition, the paintings will go under the hammer at the Sydney auction of *Important Australian & International Art* on 18 November 2020.

ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943 *A SOUTHERN VIEW, OLINDA* (1933) (PICTURED ABOVE)

A Southern View, Olinda (1933) is one of Streeton's largest and most magnificent Dandenong subjects. Offered for auction by the descendants of the original owner, the work was acquired from Streeton's exhibition in 1933 and dates from a celebratory period in his career. The painting is one of the last of its stature remaining in private ownership. In addition to its significance in Streeton's *œuvre*, *A Southern View, Olinda* has remained hidden since its acquisition and is being reproduced here and in the auction catalogue for the first time. Its 're-discovery' coincides with the opening of *Streeton*, the forthcoming retrospective at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (opening 7 November 2020).

Expansive and atmospheric, *A Southern View, Olinda* extols the grandeur of the Australian landscape and beautifully conveys the subtle nuances of light and distance unique to our country. In such compositions, Streeton found for himself exactly what he wished to share with others – feelings that blended exaltation, intoxication, pride and emotion, that together created a kind of poetic Nationalism.

FRED WILLIAMS 1927-1982 *LYSTERFIELD LANDSCAPE* (1968) (PICTURED BELOW)

Last seen in 1976, *Lysterfield Landscape* shimmers with Williams' unique and brilliant mark-making. The colours that fleck the surface appear effortlessly, they are both within and above the image, suggesting a passage through the painting to the summit beyond. It is at once a motif and an image of typography and emotion, typical of the very aspects that make Williams' paintings of Lysterfield so definitive and ground-breaking.

After his return to Australia in 1965, Williams began to draw and paint at Lysterfield at the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, an area easily accessible from his home in Upwey and one to which he returned frequently. There, Williams found diverse hill forms as well as starkly-cleared land and bush. Instinctively, he grasped the various painterly possibilities; a balance between the actual landscape and the motifs of his style. For Williams, the varied and broad horizons seen during these outings were exceptionally influential. Indeed, we see in *Lysterfield Landscape* the first flowering of Williams' development of banding, the initial recognition by the artist of a motif that would define his future output and become perhaps the most distinctive element to his painting's construction. So commonplace has banding become within Williams' painting it is difficult to recognise it as the great innovation it is – a classifying means of description: one, two and three bands by which he could organise open and closed space.



FRED WILLIAMS 1927-1982

Lysterfield Landscape (1968)

oil on canvas, 91.6 x 107.3 cm

Estimate \$450,000–650,000

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PRESCIENT REMINDERS OF THE FRAGILITY OF VICTORIA'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

'I'd like to come back and haunt my Blackwood trees – and scare the life out of anyone who cuts down any of the trees I've planted.' Arthur Streeton to Tom Roberts, 19 February 1930, quoted in Christopher Wray, *Arthur Streeton: Painter of Light*, Jacaranda Wiley, Milton, Queensland, 1993, p. 168

Arthur Streeton's commitment to, and interest in, the preservation of the Australian landscape can be seen most consistently in the celebrated series of paintings of the Dandenong Ranges to which *A Southern View*, *Olinda* belongs. Like other residents of the area, Streeton formed strong views about preserving the forest – from natural disaster, particularly devastating bushfires – but also from the deliberate destruction caused by land-clearing and deforestation for short term commercial gain. The titles of Streeton's compositions could not be more explicit in their political and social messages. Paintings such as *Bushfire Blue* (1925, Private Collection) and *Burning Log* (1925, Private Collection) gradually transgressed to far more radical statements on the environment that commenced with *Last of the Messmates* (1928, Private Collection) and *Our Vanishing Forests* (1929, Private Collection), *The Vanishing Forest* (1934, Private Collection), *Getting Rid of the Trees* (1936, Private Collection) and *Gippsland Forests for Paper Pulp* (1933, Private Collection), and culminated in the most prophetic of all,

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Silvan Dam and Donna Buang, A.D. 2000 (1940, Private Collection). This highly personal and sustained series has long been acknowledged as one of the key contributions to the history and development of Australian landscape painting.

Streeton's anxiety for the environment and his conservationist concerns were inextricably entwined into the reading of these otherwise bucolic scenes. *A Southern View, Olinda* clearly details the recent felling of trees to create small parcels of land for the planting of crops and small dwellings can be seen nestling within the valleys, forever changing the typography of the area. The contrast it makes to the Williams' *Lysterfield Landscape*, painted just south of Streeton's position thirty-five years later, is stark. While stylised, the heavily dappled treeline illustrates further logging of the previously lush woodland, living up to Streeton's prophetic warnings with his Dandenong works of the 1930s. In a moment where Australia's natural environment is inextricably threatened by its use of the resources found therein, Streeton's and Williams' earnest celebration of, and concern for, their home becomes all the more relevant.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Smith & Singer commented: 'We are delighted to present these remarkable works by Streeton and Williams – which have not been seen in public since 1933 and 1976 respectively – alongside each other in our forthcoming auction. To be able to do so during the 50th anniversary of the NGV's far-reaching Streeton and Williams exhibition, brings a special significance to their sale. Moreover, the 're-discovery' of Streeton's *A Southern View, Olinda* coincides with his upcoming retrospective in Sydney – to be the first to illustrate an essentially never-before-seen painting by this titan of Australian art at the same time as this important retrospective, is an honour, and presents a remarkable opportunity for collectors.

Fred William's *Lysterfield Landscape* meanwhile – painted just thirty-five years later but perfectly encompassing the radical transformation of Australian painting during that time – presents a wonderful contrast to *A Southern View, Olinda* and also emerges to the public eye for the first time in a generation, having been retained in a private collection since 1976. Together, these prescient paintings of the Dandenong Ranges and nearby bushland re-emerge to assume their rightful position as two of these artist's most fully realised and renowned subjects. We look forward to welcoming visitors to our galleries this November to see the paintings and take in the view for themselves.'

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AT A GLANCE

Lot 14

ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943

A Southern View, Olinda (1933)

oil on canvas

76 x 101.2 cm

frame: original, John Thallon, Melbourne (label verso)

Estimate \$300,000–500,000

Lot 8

FRED WILLIAMS 1927-1982

Lysterfield Landscape (1968)

oil on canvas

91.6 x 107.3 cm

Estimate \$450,000–650,000

Important Australian & International Art

Estimate: \$7,261,000–10,283,000, 74 lots

Auction, Sydney, 18 November 2020, 6.30 pm

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, 111 Queen Street, Woollahra NSW 2025

The health of our clients, employees and community is of paramount importance. We have implemented stringent protocols within our premises, including social distancing, frequent hand and area sanitising, and a maximum number of clients in each exhibition at any time. Full details are available upon request.

Viewings in Sydney 11-18 November 2020, 10 am to 5 pm

30 Queen Street, Woollahra

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