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Sotheby's Australia Discovers Oils in Texas

MELBOURNE 14 MAY 2013



BRETT WHITELEY 1939-1992. *WOMAN IN A BATH 1* 1963. ESTIMATE \$200,000-300,000

Two masterpieces by celebrated Australian artist Brett Whiteley have been rediscovered in a private collection in Texas and will be offered for auction by Sotheby's Australia on Tuesday 14 May in Melbourne. *Woman in a Bath 1* 1963 (estimate \$200,000-300,000, lot 1, pictured) and *White Sacred Baboon* 1964-1965 (estimate \$100,000-150,000, lot 2) were acquired by Texan collectors Mr & Mrs John D. Murchison through Bonython Art Gallery in Adelaide during the 1960s and have remained hidden from public view for almost four decades. Both paintings were created whilst Whiteley lived in London and at time when his precocious talent was first recognised and celebrated by international critics, public institutions and collectors.

Woman in a Bath 1 is the first painting in Whiteley's highly acclaimed *Bathroom Series* that was based on his wife and muse Wendy bathing, and merged abstract and figurative forms. When initially exhibited, the series caused a sensation and *Woman in a Bath 2* 1963, was promptly acquired by the Tate Gallery, London. *Woman in a Bath 4* 1963-1964 resides in the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

White Sacred Baboon (pictured), a monumental and complex work from Whiteley's landmark *Zoo & Christie Series* exhibition in 1965, displays the amalgamation of the two series that explore and confront life's existential issues. The *Christie Series* was born out of Whiteley's fascination with the brutality and sadism of notorious London serial killer, John Christie. Exhibited together with his paintings of caged animals of London Zoo, Whiteley prompted thought on the light and dark of the human condition as well as life and death.



BRETT WHITELEY 1939-1992, *WHITE SACRED BABOON*
1964-1965. ESTIMATE \$100,000-150,000

'Sotheby's Australia is thrilled to have identified and repatriated these major works of art to Australian shores. Both are exceptional examples of Whiteley's singular vision and we anticipate great excitement from collectors' said Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia.

AT A GLANCE

BRETT WHITELEY

1939-1992

WOMAN IN A BATH 1 1963

OIL, TEMPERA AND COLLAGE ON COMPOSITION BOARD

183 X 188 CM

ESTIMATE \$200,000-300,000

BRETT WHITELEY

1939-1992

WHITE SACRED BABOON 1964-1965

OIL, TEMPERA AND COLLAGE ON CANVAS ON COMPOSITION BOARD

188 X 152.4 CM

ESTIMATE \$100,000-200,000

IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN ART, SOTHEBY'S AUSTRALIA
AUCTION IN MELBOURNE

ANZAC HOUSE, 4 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE

14 MAY 2013 | 6.30 PM

EXHIBITION IN SYDNEY

2-5 MAY 2013, 10 AM TO 5 PM

118-122 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA

EXHIBITION IN MELBOURNE

9-13 MAY 2013, 10 AM TO 5 PM

ANZAC HOUSE, LEVEL 4, 4 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE

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For high resolution images, further information or to arrange an interview with Geoffrey Smith, Chairman, please contact John Keats or Yumeko Leung.

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**Pre-estimates do not include buyer's premium.