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# Convict Artist Captured Tasmanian Gentry

IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN ART

SYDNEY 27 AUGUST 2013



THOMAS WAINEWRIGHT 1794-1847, *PORTRAIT OF THOMAS GIBLIN* (1846). ESTIMATE \$40,000-60,000

A rare colonial watercolour by the colonial convict artist Thomas Wainewright will be offered for sale at Sotheby's Australia's 27 August 2013 auction in Sydney. *Portrait of Thomas Giblin* (1846) (estimate \$40,000-60,000) provides a fascinating insight into early colonial life, where the fashionably dressed and prominent sitter engaged the most accomplished portrait painter of the day, regardless of the artist's convict status and criminal past.

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Wainewright was transported to Van Diemen's Land on the *Susan*, charged with forgery after attempting to access money placed in a trust for his wife, having landed in significant debt. Wainewright was also purportedly responsible for the poisoning and deaths of family members from which he stood to gain financially. His reputation as a model prisoner allowed him to work as an orderly in Hobart's Colonial Hospital and paint commissioned portraits of respected members of the Hobart community, many of which have considerable importance in the documentation of the colony's historically significant figures.

Thomas Giblin and his family arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1827 on the *Sir Charles Forbes*. Entering the Bank of Van Diemen's Land as a junior clerk, he rose through the ranks to become a director of the bank until a short time before his death in 1880. Among his many positions were Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hobart Town Gas Company, Director of the Colonial Mutual Insurance Company and Trustee of the Public Library. He was a key figure in the development of the colony's mining resources. His portrait, recently rediscovered in the United Kingdom, was most likely a commemorative commission, dating from around the time of his second marriage.

'From a position of social and personal abjection Wainewright produced some of the most delicate and valued portraits in colonial Australian art,' said Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia. 'Sotheby's Australia is delighted to have repatriated from Scotland a rare watercolour by such a celebrated Australian artist. The work is of great historical interest to Australia and particularly to the first decades of European settlement in Tasmania.'

## AT A GLANCE

THOMAS WAINEWRIGHT 1794-1847

*PORTRAIT OF THOMAS GIBLIN* 1846

PENCIL AND WATERCOLOUR HEIGHTENED WITH WHITE

36 X 30CM

ESTIMATE \$40,000-60,000

IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN ART, SOTHEBY'S AUSTRALIA  
AUCTION IN SYDNEY

118-122 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA

27 AUGUST 2013 | 6.30 PM

EXHIBITION IN MELBOURNE

15-18 AUGUST 2013, 10 AM TO 5 PM

ANZAC HOUSE, LEVEL 4, 4 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE

EXHIBITION IN SYDNEY

22-26 AUGUST 2013, 10 AM TO 5 PM

118-122 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA

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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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