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Cross-Cultural Feng Shui

IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN ART

AUCTION IN MELBOURNE 26 NOVEMBER 2013



LIN ONUS 1946-1996, *ROBYN* (1995). ESTIMATE \$160,000-180,000

A significant nude painting by Lin Onus will be offered for sale at Sotheby's Australia's **Important Australian Art** auction in Melbourne on 26 November 2013. *Robyn* (1995) (estimate \$160,000-180,000, lot 17, pictured) was commissioned by a European collector in response to a work by Lin Onus exhibited at the Arco Fair, Madrid in 1995. This work was painted a year before the artist's untimely death and has remained in the same collection since it was acquired through Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne. Repatriated to Australia from its European collector, the painting will be reproduced for the first time in the Sotheby's Australia catalogue.

Lin Onus had a diverse and multicultural heritage. Born of Scottish and Aboriginal parents, his father, William (Bill) Onus, was a founder of the Aboriginal Advancement League. Originally, Onus identified as Wiradjuri, but later learned that his Indigenous lineage was Yorta Yorta. Through his pursuit of raising awareness of Aboriginal rights and re-affirming his own sense of Aboriginality Onus spent time in Arnhem Land in 1986 with artist Jack Wunuwun, a Yulungu Elder. Onus was taught about the culture and art of the Yulungu people. A man of mixed descent, he developed a unique painting style that harmoniously integrated 'western' realistic painting styles with Indigenous culture.

Lin Onus was always adapting and developing his artistic style. While self-taught, he continuously sought guidance and associated with artists of various cultural backgrounds. It is this cross-cultural awareness that underpins the importance of Lin Onus. In a personal response to his painting *Robyn*, Lin Onus said:- '...The eight fish have assumed significance since I have completed the work, as my Chinese friends have told me that eight is the very best "Feng Shui."'

This is a work of great beauty and sensuality. Onus explains:- 'I liked ... the idea of placing *Robyn* against a background of large coloured pebbles as they reminded me of rock pools which I had seen in the Kimberley region, North Western Australia. ... Similarly the notion of bright colour appealed to me as I was reminded of the vividness of the urban environment and all the artwork I saw whilst I was in Madrid.'

There is in this work a fusion of the visual and the conceptual, of Barmah Forest and Kimberley and Spanish landscape, of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. *Robyn* is an exceptionally fine example of the work of this pioneer urban Aboriginal artist, and of his remarkable practice of cultural reconciliation.

'*Robyn* is an evocative image and a truly Australian painting encapsulating the multi-cultural melting pot that makes up Australia referencing Chinese, Western and Indigenous culture,' said Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia. 'The work's return to Australia for sale has brought the work full circle in its international and cultural journey.'

AT A GLANCE

LIN ONUS 1948-1996
ROBYN (1995)
SYNTHETIC POLYMER PAINT ON CANVAS
181 X 181CM
ESTIMATE \$160,000-180,000

IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN ART, SOTHEBY'S AUSTRALIA
AUCTION IN MELBOURNE
ANZAC HOUSE, LEVEL 1, 4, COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE
26 NOVEMBER 2013 | 6.30 PM

EXHIBITION IN SYDNEY
14-17 NOVEMBER 2013, 10 AM TO 5 PM
118-122 QUEEN STREET, WOOLLAHRA

EXHIBITION IN MELBOURNE
21-26 NOVEMBER 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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