

Melbourne 6 August 2014

John Keats 03 9508 9900
John.Keats@sothebysaustralia.com.au

Sarah Carroll 03 8416 5999
SCarroll@3dm.com.au

Dorrit Black: Thoroughly Modern Master



Dorrit Black 1891-1951, *The Pink House* (1928). Estimate \$40,000-60,000

Two rare and important paintings by Adelaide artist Dorrit Black (1891-1951) are offered for auction for the first time at Sotheby's Australia's Important Australian & International Art sale on 26 August 2014 in Sydney. The paintings have been consigned from the collection of fellow South Australian artist Jacqueline Hick (1919-2004) and represent a unique opportunity for collectors of Australian art.

Black is one of Australia's most respected artists credited for introducing modernist principles and techniques to local audiences. In the late 1920s during her time studying at the Grosvenor School of Art in London and Mirmande in the south of France, Black developed a distinct post-impressionist and cubist style. *The Pink House* (1928) (estimate \$40,000-60,000, lot 25, pictured) and *A Dorset Farmyard* (1944) (estimate \$30,000-40,000, lot 26 pictured following) are particularly rare examples of her unique style. The use of tonal modelling is evident in *The Pink House*, a device Black

successfully adopted during her time working and studying abroad. The foreground of the painting shows the green foliage of trees, while the flat apricot walls and red rooftop prisms show Black's supreme skills as a modernist painter.

The second painting on offer, *A Dorset Farmyard*, was painted by Black in Adelaide from sketches she had made ten years earlier at Chideock, a small west Devon coastal farming village. The artist visited the village in 1935 with a group of artists on her second visit to England and later revisited the sketches while working in Adelaide. The oil painting shows a herd of cattle against the soft organic curves of the farm rooves in the background.



Dorrit Black 1891-1951, *A Dorset Farmyard* (1944).
Estimate \$30,000-40,000

Much of the artist's work was influenced by her studies in Europe, but as a founding director of the Modern Art Centre in Sydney, Black's contribution to Australian modern art is undisputed. Black taught landscape painting at the South Australian School of Arts, where one of her pupils was Jacqueline Hick. Well known for her figurative paintings, Hick was passionate about the arts and served on the board of the Art Gallery of South Australia for seven years and the Council of the Australian National Gallery in Canberra between 1982 and 1985.

'Such fine examples of modern art by prominent Australian women artists are rare to auction,' says Sotheby's Australia chairman Geoffrey Smith. 'Dorrit Black is one of the rarest and her significant contribution to the history and development of Australian art is celebrated in the major retrospective exhibition currently on view at the Art Gallery of South Australia. *The Pink House* and *A Dorset Farmyard* are amongst the most important compositions by the artist ever to be offered for auction.'

AT A GLANCE

DORRIT BLACK, 1891-1951

The Pink House (1928)

oil on canvas on cardboard

36.8 x 47.6 cm

Estimate \$40,000-60,000

A Dorset Farmyard (1944)

oil on canvas board

42.2 x 58.7 cm

Estimate \$30,000-40,000

Important Australian & International Art
Auction in Sydney, 26 August 2014, 6.30 pm
InterContinental Sydney, Fort Macquarie Room
117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Exhibition in Melbourne
14-17 August, 10 am to 5 pm
Level 9, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney
21-26 August, 10 am to 5 pm
30 Queen Street, Woollahra, Sydney

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