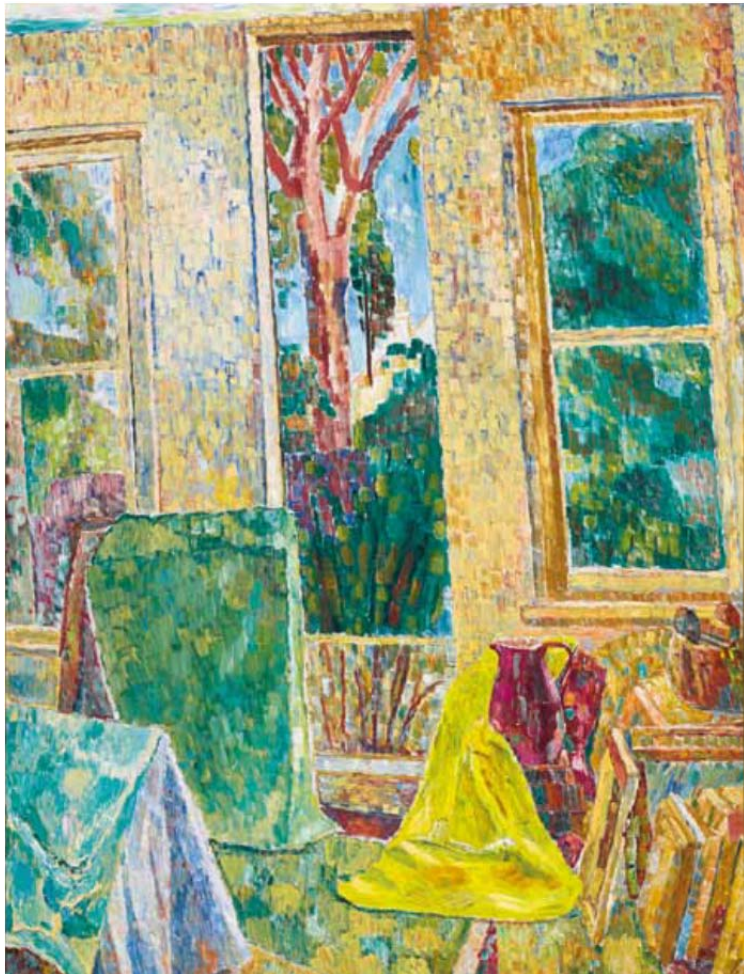


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Rare Modern Masterpiece Tipped to Eclipse Record



Grace Cossington Smith 1892-1984, *The Window* (1956). Estimate \$250,000-350,000

Grace Cossington Smith's highly-acclaimed masterpiece, *The Window* (1956) has re-emerged from a private collection and will be offered for sale at Sotheby's Australia's November auction of Important Australian Art. It is anticipated that *The Window* (estimate \$250,000-350,000) will achieve a new auction record for the artist. Formerly in the collection of art historian and art-museum curator, Daniel Thomas, the composition depicting a shimmering interior painted in a pointillist manner is the largest subject from this revered series remaining in private ownership. One of only three works of this scale, the companion paintings are *Interior with Blue Painting* (1956, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne) and *Interior in Yellow* (1962-1964, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra).

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A pioneer of Australian modernist painting, Grace Cossington Smith employed a variety of techniques, largely characterised by square brush strokes and bright colours. *The Window* is distinctly Australian with a central doorway opening out to a tall gum tree and surrounding native flora. The foreground is awash with warm tones, showing the artist's surrounds. The painting is a spectacular example of the artist's much loved scenes of doorways and windows, with the backgrounding blue skies drawing the viewer to look beyond the initially captivating interior. The artfully constructed composition of yellow, purple, blue and green immediately engages and shows Grace Cossington Smith's mastery of colour and distinct technique.

Grace Cossington Smith's subjects varied from significant global events to quintessentially Australian scenes, capturing a specific time and place. She was a strong supporter of modernism, credited with leading post-impressionist movements in Australia. However it was not until later in her life that she was adequately recognised and in 1973 made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for her services to Australian art. That same year a major retrospective of her work toured Australia, cementing her role as a truly brilliant artist.

The current auction record price for Grace Cossington Smith is \$348,000 for *Centre of the City* (1925), sold by Sotheby's Australia in November 2002 from the collection of John Fairfax Limited and acquired by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

'Grace Cossington Smith's paintings are particularly treasured by public, corporate and private collectors,' says Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia. 'We are honoured to be entrusted with the sale of her most significant interior subject remaining in private ownership which represents a unique opportunity to acquire one of her greatest paintings.'

AT A GLANCE

GRACE COSSINGTON SMITH 1892-1984

The Window 1956

oil on composition board

122.2 x 91.5 cm

Estimate \$250,000-350,000

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