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Whiteley Worth His Salt

Important Australian & International Art, Sydney, 25 November 2014



BRETT WHITELEY 1939-1992, *Washing the Salt Off II* (1984). Sold for \$976,000 November 2014

Exceptional results were achieved in Sydney tonight at Sotheby's Australia's November 2014 sale of Important Australian & International Art, with works by historical, modern and contemporary Australian and international artists achieving a total of \$5.36 million including buyer's premium. Comprising 72 lots of rare paintings, sculptures and works on paper the sale sold 62.5% by volume and 102% by value.

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Just in time for a long hot summer, Brett Whiteley's *Washing the Salt Off II* 1984 was keenly pursued, achieving \$976,000 (estimate \$800,000-1,000,000, lot 16). Depicting a celebration of Australian beach culture and the sexual liberation of the 1980s the painting was sold to a telephone bidder. Brett Whiteley's *Seagull over Lavender Bay* 1979 sold for \$732,000 against an estimate of \$600,000-800,000 (lot 30) that augmented Whiteley's pre-eminence as one of Australia's most sought after artists.

The sale commenced with a bidding duel for lot 1, Cressida Campbell's *Eucalypts* (1999), the work from the Estate of the renowned playwright Nick Enright AM, with a final result of \$46,360 (estimate \$20,000-30,000). Also from the property of Nick Enright, who wrote *The Boy from Oz*, was Clarice Beckett's *Collins Street* (1931) that exceeded its high estimate and sold for \$26,840 (estimate \$12,000-18,000, lot 2).

Setting a new auction record for the Australian leading modernist, Grace Cossington Smith's *The Window* 1956 sold for a staggering \$671,000 against a pre-sale estimate of \$250,000-350,000 (lot 14). A flaming success was Hans Heysen's *Bushfire, Hahndorf, South Australia* (1912), which conveyed the terror and immense destruction caused by bushfires in Australia selling to a telephone bidder for \$244,000 (estimate \$200,000-250,000, lot 26).

Jeffrey Smart's *The Four Closed Shops* (1982) was a highlight from a private collection of modern art assembled in Melbourne over the past 50 years. The painting exceeded its high estimate and sold for \$695,400 (estimate \$350,000-450,000, lot 7). Also from this collection Bridget Riley's *Study 1970 Orange, Violet and Green Twists in Different Proportions* 1970 was contested by local and international bidders and achieved \$51,240 (estimate \$30,000-40,000, lot 6).

The remarkable story of Rupert Bunny's *Au Soleil (Girl in Sunlight)* (1913), which was stolen in 1991 and recovered after being hidden from the public for nearly 20 years, has secured a new owner. The painting achieved \$244,000 (estimate 200,000-300,000, lot 20). Australian Impressionism featured strongly in the sale including Tom Roberts' *With Wistful Eyes* (1889) that nearly doubled its high estimate and achieved \$158,600 (estimate \$60,000-80,000, lot 22). Also from *The 9 by 5 Impression Exhibition* was Charles Conder's physical manifestations of the catalogue. The first was the plate and block that the exhibition catalogue was printed that sold for \$73,200 (estimate 60,000-90,000, lot 23). The second was a print taken from that plate (this print was a proof impression) which realised \$18,300 (estimate \$10,000-15,000, lot 24).

The popularity of contemporary art continues to grow, with several works of art selling strongly. Photographer Bill Henson's *Untitled 73, 74, 72* (1983-1984) exceeded the high estimate of \$22,000 and sold for \$39,040 (lot 33), while Robert Rooney's *Silly Symphony 3 (Morocco Bound)* 1988 sold strongly at \$18,300 (estimate \$12,000-18,000, lot 32).

'Our November sale of Important Australian & International Art sale has produced impressive results for our vendors' says Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia. 'This sale represents the highest total for a November sale held by Sotheby's Australia in the past four years, exceeding previous highest result by 25%, and reflects our ongoing commitment to offering only the finest art from leading practitioners.'

AT A GLANCE

Important Australian & International Art
Auction in Sydney, 25 November 2014, 6.30 pm
InterContinental Sydney, Fort Macquarie Room
117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Lots on offer: 72

Total sold: \$5,357,630 including buyer's premium

Sold by volume: 62.5%

Sold by value: 101.99%

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**Estimates do not include buyer's premium and prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium.*

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