

Melbourne 10 March 2015

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# Property from the Collection of Dame Nellie Melba GBE

Auction in Melbourne 31 March 2015



An Important gold presentation paperweight depicting Australian flora and fauna, Hammerton, Geelong, Victoria, 1922.  
Estimate \$40,000-50,000

Sotheby's Australia is delighted to present *Property from the Collection of Dame Nellie Melba GBE*. The sale of over 160 selected Asian, Australian and European Art, Decorative Arts, Jewels and Objects of Vertu will be auctioned on 31 March 2015 at the Grand Hyatt Melbourne with an estimate range of \$550,000-750,000. The collection will be exhibited in Sydney 19-22 March then Melbourne 26-31 March at Sotheby's Australia's premises.

In 1922 Melba gave a concert at His Majesty's Theatre in Geelong to raise funds for the Kitchener Memorial Hospital. As a token of appreciation the Mayor on behalf of the citizens of Geelong, presented Melba with a **gold paperweight depicting Australian flora and fauna**. Manufactured by Hammerton and Sons the paperweight is estimated at \$40,000-50,000 (lot 21, pictured).

In 1920 Dame Nellie Melba gave a concert to the world by wireless telephone from the Marconi Company's station at Chelmsford,

United Kingdom. Through research of photographic records Sotheby's Australia discovered that an **18ct gold and platinum mesh evening bag by Cartier** was held by Melba during the broadcast and is now included in the March 2015 sale (estimate \$12,000-15,000, lot 43, pictured following).

Melba was known for her flamboyance and impeccable sense of style. Her friends included renowned and celebrated artists such as Arthur Streeton and Hans Heysen, as well as actors and royalty whom she regularly entertained at her home, Coombe Cottage. Her link with famous French chef Escoffier is undeniable, with his creation of Peach Melba in her honour.

As an avid collector of works by **Hans Heysen**, Melba officially opened his exhibition at the Athenaeum in Melbourne in 1915. Eleven works from her personal collection were lent to the exhibition and she acquired a further three oil paintings including *Zinnias* 1914. Purchased for 80 gns the painting is estimated at \$18,000-22,000 (lot 44, pictured).



An 18ct gold and platinum mesh evening bag, Cartier, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Estimate \$12,000-15,000

Helen ‘Nellie’ Porter Mitchell was born on 9 May 1861 and became one of the most famous operatic singers of the late Victorian Era and early 20th century. She was the first Australian to achieve international recognition as a classical musician.



Hans Heysen 1877-1968, *Zinnias* 1914. Estimate \$18,000-22,000

During her extensive travels, Melba amassed a wonderful collection of fine art, luxurious furnishings, silverware and many objects of vertu. A small selection of that collection, that until now has been housed in Melba’s private home and bank vault, is being offered for sale to allow Melba lovers and collectors the opportunity to own, treasure and appreciate their own piece of Australia’s first ‘international diva’.

## AT A GLANCE

**Property from the Collection of Dame Nellie Melba GBE** (lots 1-162, estimate range \$550,000-750,000)

Auction in Melbourne, 31 March 2015, 6 pm

Grand Hyatt Melbourne, 123 Collins Street, Melbourne

**Fine Asian, Australian & European Arts & Design** (lots 163-461, estimate range \$920,000-1,300,000)

Auction in Melbourne, 1 April 2015, 6 pm

Level 2, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

**Exhibition in Sydney**, 19-22 March, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 Queen Street, Woollahra (Melba only)

**Exhibition in Melbourne**, 26-31 March, 10 am to 5 pm, Level 9, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

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