

Melbourne 17 April 2015

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Rare Masterpiece Reveals the 'Underbelly' of Marvellous Melbourne

Important Australian Art, Auction in Sydney 28 April



FLORENCE FULLER 1867-1946, *Weary* 1888. Estimate \$150,000-200,000

A rare image of nineteenth century Australia will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 28 April 2015 at the InterContinental Sydney. Held in the same family collection for over 100 years, Florence Fuller's provocative painting *Weary* 1888 (estimate \$150,000-200,000, lot 103, pictured) depicts a destitute child slumped against a wall of bill-boards, with the backdrop of Melbourne's thriving wharves in the distance.

Completed in 1888, *Weary* is both a landmark in the artist's own career as well as in the history and development of late-nineteenth century Australian Art. Fuller, like her contemporaries Frederick McCubbin, John Longstaff, David Davies and Aby Altson painted in a social realist narrative format – with expressive depictions of daily life given a particularly local, frontier inflection.

Enthusiastically received when shown in Melbourne in 1890 and 1891 and again when included in the 1992 exhibition *Completing the Picture: Women Artists and the Heidelberg Era* Fuller's image of a homeless child remains a powerful and provocative statement – 'bearing the unmistakable stamp of poverty and suffering' and, as further written in *Table Talk* in 1890, 'Miss Fuller may well be congratulated on the working out of the subject.' Fuller was bold enough to address social inequality in a time when her male contemporaries were celebrating the urbanisation and mercantile advancements of Marvellous Melbourne.

'The subject of *Weary* is equally astonishing today as it was when first shown in its portrayal of social inequality and homelessness' said Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia. 'Nearly one hundred and thirty years after it was painted, Fuller's composition remains confronting and daring in both its subject and technique.'

AT A GLANCE

FLORENCE FULLER 1867-1946

Weary 1888

oil on canvas, 91.8 x 70.8 cm

Estimate \$150,000-200,000

The David Clarke AO Collection of Australian Art, lots 1-43 | Estimate \$4,035,000-5,605,000

Important Australian Art, lots 44-111 | Estimate \$5,043,000-6,711,000

Auction at InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney, 28 April 2015, 6.30 pm

Total estimate \$9,078,000 to \$12,316,000

Exhibition in Melbourne, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, 17-19 April, 10 am to 5 pm

Exhibition in Sydney, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra, 23-28 April, 10 am to 5 pm

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