

Melbourne 12 October 2015

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Australian Design Icon for Auction

Fine Asian Australian & European Arts & Design
Auction in Sydney 27 October 2015



A Café Australia dining chair, blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), plywood and leather designed by Marion Mahoney Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin (1916). Estimate \$3,000-4,000

An icon of Australian 20th Century interior design, a Café Australia dining chair designed by Marion Mahoney Griffin and Walter Burley Griffin will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 27 October 2015 in Sydney. This is the second only known complete chair to appear for auction, the only known other was acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria in 2003. There are two other partial chairs that have been identified.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Very little remains of Café Australia, which at the time was regarded a *tour de force* in interior design. Located on Collins Street, Melbourne it was demolished in 1938 to make way for the new Australia Hotel. Rare highlights such as this complete dining chair are a valuable insight into the burgeoning modernist style created by one of Australia's greatest architectural and interior design teams. There is richness to the chair's design, while still remaining economical with the fabrication.'

Café Australia opened on 8 November 1916 and became regarded as the most handsome café in Australia, frequented by the elite of the city, including Dame Nellie Melba.

Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion Mahoney Griffin are widely known for the design of the national capital Canberra. Other buildings constructed include Newman College, University of Melbourne and the Capitol Theatre, Melbourne. Café Melbourne was the Griffin's first architectural and interior design commission in Australia including plasterwork, stained glass and tables and chairs with highly distinctive decorative elements.



Afternoon Tea Room and Stairway to balcony of Banquet Hall at Café Australia. Collection of the New York Historical Society.

AT A GLANCE

Fine Asian, Australian & European Arts & Design

Auction at InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney, 27 October 2015, 6 pm

Total lots 347 | Total estimate \$1,217,900 to \$1,750,150

Exhibition in Sydney, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra, 22-27 October, 10 am to 5 pm

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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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