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Rare Image of Colonial Australia Offered for Auction

Important Australian Art, Auction in Sydney, 24 November 2015



ALEXANDER SCHRAMM 1813-1864, *Bush Visitors* (1859). Estimate \$500,000-700,000

AN IMPORTANT AND RARE COLONIAL PAINTING BY ALEXANDER SCHRAMM will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 24 November 2015 at the InterContinental Sydney. The large oil painting *Bush Visitors* (1859) (estimate \$500,000-700,000, pictured) has been held in the same family collection since its original purchase in 1859 by the King William Street watch-maker and jeweller, Henry Muirhead. The painting retains its original frame crafted in Adelaide by the city's first professional frame-maker, David Culley.

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In October 1859 *Bush Visitors* was entered in the *South Australian Art Union Exhibition* which was devoted to local artists. Initially awarded second prize for an original painting by a South Australian Artist the work was upgraded to first prize following the elimination of the initial first prize-winner, James Hazell Adamson, on the grounds that he was not a resident of South Australia.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Alexander Schramm is recognised as the most accomplished professional artist active in colonial South Australia and the first new Australian to be trained in art beyond Britain. Behind Schramm's art lies an extraordinary intellect, sharply critical of colonial realities. In *Bush Visitors*, Schramm offers a fascinating insight into the disrupted life faced by Indigenous Australians post European settlement.'

Alexander Schramm remains one of the rarest of all Australian colonial artists of the 19th century, with examples seldom appearing on the market. This is only the fourth major painting by the artist to appear at auction in the past four decades and only nine oils are recorded in public collections. In 2012 Sotheby's Australia offered Schramm's *Native Encampment in South Australia* (circa 1859) which, following a bidding duel, sold for \$588,000 (estimate \$300,000-400,000, pictured top). In 2005, as part of the Foster's Collection of Australian Art, Sotheby's Australia sold *Adelaide, a Tribe of Natives on the Banks of The River Torrens* (1850) for \$760,500 (estimate of \$400,000-600,000, pictured above). The work was purchased prior to the auction for the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Schramm migrated to Australia from Germany in 1849 and is noted for his portrayal of Aboriginal-settler contact on the colonial frontier of South Australia. Schramm's Australian output was relatively modest during a 15 year period prior to his death in 1864 at the age of 50.



ALEXANDER SCHRAMM 1813-1865, *Native Encampment in South Australia*. Sold for \$588,000 May 2012.



ALEXANDER SCHRAMM 1813-1865, *Adelaide, a Tribe of Natives on the Banks of The River Torrens* (1850). Sold for \$760,500 May 2005. Auction Record for the Artist

AT A GLANCE

ALEXANDER SCHRAMM 1813-1964

Bush Visitors (1859)

oil on canvas

68.5 x 91.5 cm

Estimate \$500,000-700,000

Important Australian Art

Auction at InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney, 24 November 2015, 6.30 pm

Exhibition in Melbourne, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne, 12-15 August, 10 am to 5 pm

Exhibition in Sydney, 30 Queen Street, Woollahra, 19-24 August, 10 am to 5 pm

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