

Melbourne 28 April 2016

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Expressionist Masterpiece for Auction

Important Australian & International Art | Auction in Sydney 11 May 2016



Jon Molvig 1923-1970, *The Bridesmaids* 1956. Estimate \$30,000-50,000

A painting by one of Australia's most important figurative expressionists will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 11 May at the InterContinental Sydney. Jon Molvig's *The Bridesmaids* 1956 (estimate \$30,000-40,000, lot 155, pictured) is an intense composition of gestural paint strokes capturing the atmosphere of bridesmaids together for a wedding.

The Bridesmaids is the most significant work by the artist to appear for auction since *The Lovers* (1955) which sold at the Harold E Mertz Collection of Australian Art in 2000 for an auction record of \$134,500. *The Bridesmaids* was reproduced on the cover of Betty Churcher's monograph about the artist in 1984 highlighting the importance of this work in the artist's oeuvre. Molvig was one of Queensland's most influential artists who made a major contribution to the history and development of twentieth century Australian art.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Jon Molvig was a strong presence in the national art scene throughout the 1950s and 1960s, both as an artist and as a tough, uncompromising personality. *The Bridesmaids* remains one of the most important works by the artist in private ownership and is offered for auction for the first time.'

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Molvig's period overseas between 1949 to 1952 exposed the artist to the European modernists including the German and Norwegian expressionists, whose works influenced him markedly. Upon his return to Australia, he visited Brisbane in 1953 where the gestural style of W.G. Grant reinforced Molvig's expressionist tendencies. Molvig subsequently settled permanently in Brisbane where he produced a series of expressive, figurative works including *The Bridesmaids* (the present work), *Bride and Groom* (1956, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney) and *A Twilight of Women* (1957, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane). These remarkable works are renowned for their aggressiveness and intensity.

Tragically Molvig's artistic career was cut short, dying at a relatively young age of 47 from complications following a Kidney transplant.

AT A GLANCE

JON MOLVIG 1923-1970

The Bridesmaids 1956

oil on composition board

152.4 x 122 cm

Estimate \$30,000-40,000

Important Australian & International Art

Auction in Sydney, 11 May 2016, 6.30 pm, InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Estimate range: \$7,493,000-10,058,000

Lots on offer: 75

Exhibition in Melbourne 28 April – 1 May, 10 am to 5 pm, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney 5-11 May, 10 am to 5 pm, Paddington Town Hall, 249 Oxford Street, Paddington

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