

Melbourne 1 August 2016

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# Wanted: Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly

Important Australian Art | Auction in Sydney 31 August 2016



Sidney Nolan, *Ned Kelly: Crossing Bridge* 1964. Estimate \$800,000-1,000,000

A **Ned Kelly painting by Sidney Nolan** will be offered for auction for the first time by Sotheby's Australia on 31 August at the InterContinental Sydney. ***Ned Kelly: Crossing Bridge 1964*** (estimate \$800,000-1,000,000, pictured) was retained by Sidney Nolan until 1992 and belongs to a group of large-scale compositions that Nolan produced between October and December 1964 and is one of the most active and dramatic images from the series that the artist produced.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'If the paintings that Sidney Nolan created in 1964 were the only survivors from his entire career, we would be still left with a remarkable legacy. This single year represents an astonishing achievement that is extraordinary in its breadth, depth, invention and quality.'

Sidney Nolan was one of Australia's leading artists of the 20th century with an international reputation. Best known for his series of paintings of legends from Australian history, Ned Kelly,

Australia's most infamous bushranger, was Nolan's most recognised. Examples from this series are held in major public collections throughout the world, including the Tate, London and Museum of Modern Art, New York.

*Ned Kelly: Crossing Bridge* is a tumultuous composition, with the figure and horse being thrown from the bridge – falling/diving into the water. The composition is derived in part from photographs than Nolan sourced and his earlier painting, *The Slip* 1947, now in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. Pictorially, *Ned Kelly: Crossing Bridge* exemplifies several key aspects of Nolan's practice. Here he has applied fast, aggressive and expressionist slash, smear, drag and scumble of the paint surface as a means of representing the landscape. The colours are reminiscent of the ochre earth and tannin-stained water of Shepparton and the Goulburn River and the overall composition is cinematic in its scope.

From the same series, *River-Bank* 1964 was sold by Sotheby's Australia in May 2016 for \$1,647,000, the second highest price ever achieved for the artist at auction. In 2010, Sidney Nolan's *First-Class Marksman* 1946 achieved the world record for an Australian painting at auction selling for \$5.4 million, and resides in the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

## AT A GLANCE

SIDNEY NOLAN 1917-1992

*Ned Kelly: Crossing Bridge* 1964

oil on composition board

122.5 x 153 cm

Estimate \$800,000-1,000,000

Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney, 31 August 2016, 6.30 pm, InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Estimate range: \$6,769,000-9,072,000 | Lots on offer: 68

Exhibition in Melbourne 17-21 August, 10 am to 5 pm, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney 25-31 August, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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