

Sydney 31 August 2016

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Stunning Results as Auction Records Tumble at Sotheby's Australia

Important Australian Art | Auction in Sydney 31 August 2016



ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943, *Sydney Harbour* 1907. Sold for \$2,074,000 August 2016

Auction records tumbled at Sotheby's Australia's August sale of **Important Australian Art** held at the InterContinental Sydney on **31 August**. Surveying major stylistic developments, the auction offered rare and prestigious examples of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Modernism, and Abstraction, along with ground-breaking paintings, sculptures and works on paper by the most influential artistic innovators of historical, modern and contemporary Australian art. With 69 works of art on offer, the sale realised \$8.96 million with clearance rates of 132% by value and 75.4% volume.

Generating strong interest prior to auction, **Sir Arthur Streeton's *Sydney Harbour 1907*** achieved the second highest price at auction for the artist at \$2,074,000. The painting is the largest and most spectacular composition in private ownership from the artist's renowned series that celebrated the intoxicating beauty of one of the world's iconic cities (estimate \$1,500,000-2,000,000, lot 31, pictured).

'The result of over \$2 million for a painting by Arthur Streeton of *Sydney Harbour* is a testament to the genius of an artist who created images of Australia that continue to astound, exhilarate and inspire. The sale of this work has reinvigorated interest in the works by Australia's most significant Australian impressionists, whose works will feature in a major exhibition at The National Gallery, London later this year' said Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia, a world authority on the artist who is preparing a catalogue raisonné of Streeton's oil paintings.

The Great Australian Dream was celebrated as **Howard Arkley's *Mod Style 1992*** realised \$646,600 and established a new auction record for the artist (estimate \$400,000-500,000, lot 39, pictured). The painting is one of Arkley's finest interior subjects and the most significant ever offered for auction. Arkley was renowned for his lurid Popist images of eastern suburbs houses, which took on an iconic status as they embraced identifiable middle class taste and environment.



HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999, *Mod Style* 1992. Sold for \$646,600 August 2016
Auction record for the artist

The largest and most significant work by **Albert Namatjira** ever created set a new world record price at auction for the artist. Selling to a room bidder ***Finke River Mission and Mount Hermannsburg (1951)*** realised \$122,000 against a presale estimate of \$80,000-100,000 (Lot 21, pictured below). The watercolour is one of only a handful of works in his productive career known to depict the whitewashed sandstone buildings of the Finke River Mission.



ALBERT NAMATJIRA 1902-1959, *Finke River Mission and Mount Hermannsburg* (1951). Sold for \$122,000 August 2016
Auction record for the artist

A Lassie Yet 1888, one of **Emma Minnie Boyd's** most significant oil paintings generated fierce interest and with a flurry of bids achieved \$170,800 and a new auction record for the artist (estimate \$30,000-50,000, lot 24). Comparable works by the artist held in the Bendigo Art Gallery, Art Gallery of South Australia, and National Gallery of Victoria.



EMMA MINNIE BOYD 1858-1936, *A Lassie Yet* 1888. Sold for \$170,800 August 2016
Auction record for the artist

Paintings by Arthur Streeton were highly regarded during the exhibition and sought after at the auction. ***The Murray and The Mountain* 1930** peaked at an astonishing \$915,000 six times above the low estimate (estimate \$150,000-200,000, lot 27). ***Melbourne from Afar* (1920)** sold for \$170,800 (estimate \$80,000-120,000, lot 30).

Other sale highlights include:

- **Brett Whiteley's *The Robin and The Moon* 1981** sold for \$1,098,000 well above the high estimate of \$800,000 (lot 8). Unlike earlier avian compositions where the subject was placed against an anonymous or generic background, here Whiteley places the warbling, red-breasted robin in a Moreton Bay Fig tree on the shores of Lavender Bay where he lived and worked.

- One of **Albert Tucker's** most powerful and compelling subjects from his explorer series *Explorer and Bird 1968* achieved \$597,800 over double the low estimate of \$250,000 (lot 16).
- **Charles Blackman's** *Tryst 1959* sold over the high estimate and realised \$402,600 (estimate \$200,000-300,000, lot 7). The work possessed all the sensitivity and poetry of the artist's finest creations.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'This evening's results achieved by Sotheby's Australia represents the continued strength of and confidence in the Australian Art Market. Our local and international clients possess a deep appreciation for works by Australia's finest artists which are exemplary and, in many instances, offered for auction for the first time.'

AT A GLANCE

Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney, 31 August 2016, 6.30 pm

InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Lots on offer: 69

Total sold \$8,965,170 including buyer's premium

Sold by volume: 75.36%

Sold by value: 132.05%

World auction records were set for the following artists;

- HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999, *Mod Style 1992*, synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 172.8 x 135.7 cm
Sold for \$646,600 (estimate \$400,000-500,000, lot 39)
- EMMA MINNIE BOYD 1858-1936, *A Lassie Yet 1888*, oil on canvas, 60 x 45 cm
Sold for \$170,800 (estimate \$30,000-50,000, lot 24)
- BRENT HARRIS, born 1956, *Swamp No. 3 1999*, oil on linen, 274 x 137.5 cm
Sold for \$57,340 (estimate \$20,000-30,000, lot 40)
- ALBERT NAMATJIRA 1902-1959, *Finke River Mission and Mount Hermannsburg, Northern Territory (1951)*, watercolour over pencil on paper, 47.7 x 83.5 cm
Sold for \$122,000 (estimate \$80,000-100,000, lot 21)

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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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