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John Keats 03 9508 9900
John.Keats@sothebysaustralia.com.au

SOTHEBY'S AUSTRALIA TO PRESENT Arthur Streeton's Sublime Masterpiece of Sydney Harbour



Arthur Streeton 1867-1943, *Sydney Harbour* 1907. Estimate \$1,500,000-2,000,000

Sotheby's Australia Secures Streeton's Australian Icon for Important Sydney Sale

Sydney Harbour 1907 Re-emerges for Public Sale for only the Fourth Time in its One Hundred and Ten Year History

Sotheby's Australia will offer one of **Sir Arthur Streeton's most significant paintings** remaining in private ownership for auction on 31 August at the InterContinental Sydney. ***Sydney Harbour 1907*** (estimate \$1,500,000-2,000,000, pictured) is the second largest and most spectacular composition from the artist's renowned series that celebrated the intoxicating beauty of one of the world's iconic cities.

A world authority on the artist, Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: '*Sydney Harbour* caused a sensation from the moment it was created. Streeton, collectors and contemporary and subsequent critics considered this painting to be the artist's finest statement of one of his most beloved and enduring subjects. Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer, Streeton's most ardent and enthusiastic patron (who at one time owned 41 works by the artist), immediately acquired *Sydney Harbour* from the artist after it was painted. When Spencer's Collection was sold at auction in 1919, *Sydney Harbour* achieved the highest price – an astonishing sum of 500 guineas – a price that redefined the secondary art market in Australia. The work was purchased by Thomas Elder Barr Smith and remained in the family collection until 1976, when it fetched \$30,000.'

Streeton created images of Sydney from the 1890s and revisited the city in 1907. The majority of these works were painted on elongated wooden draper's panels. In addition to these, in 1907 Streeton produced two large-scale, career-defining images of Sydney Harbour: the present work and *Sydney Harbour* (1907, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). Both were painted from Mosman looking towards and over the headland of Cremorne to the city of Sydney beyond.

In the present work, the artist captures the scene with confidence and bravado with scintillating beauty – clear evidence of the artist at the height of his powers.



Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer Collection, National Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1916, with *Sydney Harbour* 1907 shown lower right

Sydney Harbour is a symphony of blue, where deep, mid and lighter tones are delicately applied to the canvas. With each stroke of paint, Streeton captures the subtle nuances of the gentle light of the soft winter sun's reflections on the sea, ships and yachts, land, buildings and sky. Here the broad expanse of the Harbour's water, shores and sky are presented as a Whistlerian harmony in blue and gold and grey and mauve.

'Arthur Streeton's *Sydney Harbour* remains an enduring masterpiece of Australian Art and Australian Impressionism as well as illustrating the genius of an artist who created images of intoxicating beauty that continue to astound, exhilarate and inspire' said Geoffrey Smith, who is currently preparing a catalogue raisonné on the artist's oil paintings.

There has been a recent resurgence of interest in the paintings of Arthur Streeton led by strong results achieved by Sotheby's Australia, including;

- *St Kilda Pier* (1907), estimate \$50,000-70,000, sold for \$128,100 Sotheby's Australia, November 2015
- *Point Piper* (1907), estimate \$100,000-150,000, sold for \$170,800 Sotheby's Australia, August 2015
- *Unloading Bricks, Kew* (1905), estimate \$30,000-40,000, sold for \$122,000 Sotheby's Australia, August 2015
- *The Windsor Damsel, Fishing* (1903), estimate \$40,000-50,000, sold for \$189,100 Sotheby's Australia, March 2015
- *Palaces in Sunlight* (1908), estimate \$60,000-80,000, sold for \$219,600 Sotheby's Australia, May 2014

AT A GLANCE

PROPERTY FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR WALTER BALDWIN SPENCER, MELBOURNE
ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943

Sydney Harbour 1907

oil on canvas

61.3 x 122 cm

Estimate \$1,500,000-2,000,000

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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