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# 'Lost' Australian Impressionist Painting Rediscovered

Important Australian Art | Auction in Sydney 23 November 2016



Arthur Streeton 1867-1943, 'And the Sunlight Clasps the Earth' 1895. Estimate \$250,000-350,000

A significant painting believed to be from Arthur Streeton's first major solo exhibition in 1896 has been re-discovered in a private collection in Tasmania. Offered for auction by Sotheby's Australia on 23 November 2016 at the InterContinental Sydney, 'And the Sunlight Clasps the Earth' 1895 (estimate \$250,000-350,000, lot 15, pictured) has remained hidden from public view since it was acquired by the family of the present owners almost a century ago.

A world authority on the artist, Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'And the Sunlight Clasps the Earth' is a major rediscovery and addition to Arthur Streeton's *oeuvre*. Reflecting the optimism of his youthful brilliance and brimming with all the possibilities that art offered, it is an image that beautifully captures the Golden Age of Australian painting that defined the last decades of the nineteenth century.'

'*And the Sunlight Clasps the Earth*' derived its title, like several other works in Streeton's 1896 exhibition from popular poetry, in this case Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Love's Philosophy* written in 1820. The inspiration from poetry was both literal and metaphorical, stimulated by a response to Nature, Beauty and Love. Stylistically, the painting looks to the past, present and future, with a path emerging from a floral grassy expanse (past), leading to a middle-ground of trees with figures (present), then extend beyond to a horizon of mountains with a broad sky (future).

After 120 years, the rediscovery of this picture re-affirms Streeton's command of the brush, which through his eye and hand extoll the poetic nature of Australia's landscape' said Geoffrey Smith . 'The painting will be reproduced for the first time in colour by Sotheby's Australia in the November *Important Australian Art* catalogue.'

The re-emergence is particularly timely as an exhibition of Australian art opens for the first time at the National Gallery in London. *Australian Impressionists* features the work of four artists, Charles Conder, Tom Roberts, John Russell and Arthur Streeton, and will be the first exhibition in the United Kingdom to focus of the subject.

'Sotheby's Australia continues to lead the market for the appreciation of the art of Arthur Streeton', said Geoffrey Smith. 'In August 2015 we achieved the second and sixth highest prices for the artist at auction, with *Sydney Harbour* 1907 selling for \$2,074,000 and *The Murray and the Mountain* for \$915,000, against an estimate of \$150,000-200,000.'

## AT A GLANCE

ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943

'*And the Sunlight Clasps the Earth*' 1895

oil on wood panel

43.2 x 26.8 cm

Estimate \$250,000-350,000

Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney, 23 November 2016, 6.30 pm

InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Total auction estimate \$6,699,000-9,265,000 | 102 lots

Exhibition in Melbourne 9-13 November, 10 am to 5 pm, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney 17-23 November, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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