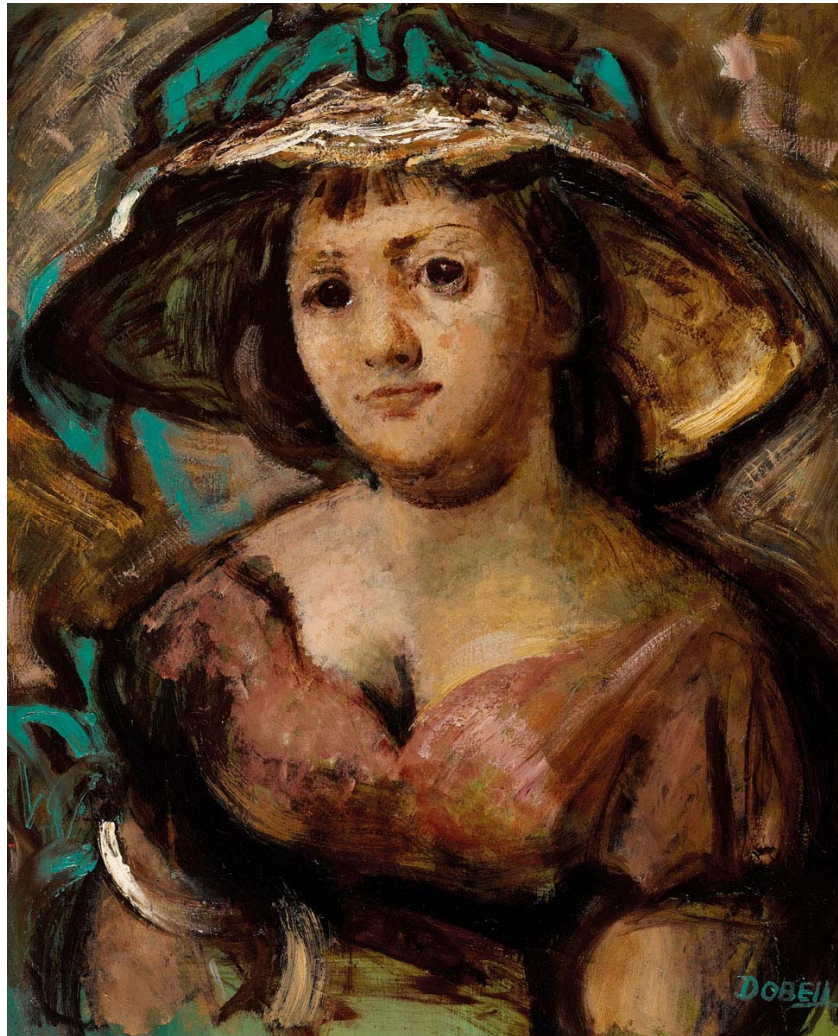


Melbourne 6 November 2017

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Study for One of Australia's Most Famous Portraits for Auction

Important Australian Art | Auction in Sydney 21 November 2017



WILLIAM DOBELL 1899-1970, *Study for Margaret Olley* (1948). Estimate \$180,000-220,000

A significant oil portrait of Australian artist Margaret Olley will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 21 November at the InterContinental Sydney. William Dobell's *Study for Margaret Olley* (1948) (estimate \$180,000-220,000, lot 11, pictured) is the major preparatory work for the Archibald Prize winning *Margaret Olley* (1948, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney). In 1948 recognition for Dobell's artistic talents was lauded as the Australian artist won both the Archibald Prize and Wynne Prize after his tumultuous court battle in 1943 as a caricaturist after he won the 1943 Archibald Prize.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'William Dobell's *Study for Margaret Olley* is a work of exceptional quality and historical importance. In 1948 Dobell was awarded both the Archibald Prize for portraiture for *Margaret Olley* (1948, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney) and the Wynne Prize for *Storm Approaching, Wangi* (1948, Private Collection). It was the first time an artist had been awarded both prizes in the same year and created a national sensation. This followed Dobell's infamous and bitter court case regarding his *Portrait of Joshua Smith* (1943, Private Collection), which was challenged as a caricature after it won in 1943.'

When Dobell was announced the winner of both the 1948 Archibald and Wynne Prizes, crowds flocked to view the exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. On the opening weekend approximately 14,000 visitors attended and in the first week almost 40,000 visitors made the pilgrimage.

In the present and most detailed study on oils, Olley is shown in her 'battered hat' and 'plain beige cotton dress.' The paint is applied in broad, vigorous strokes and captures the overall structure of the facial features, placement of the hat and position of the body that remained largely unchanged in the finished composition.

In both the study as well as the final work, Dobell conveys an image of a young woman who possesses somewhat contradictory traits of inner shyness and timidity coupled with more outwardly signs of confidence and flamboyance.

Born in Lismore, Margaret Olley held over 90 solo exhibitions in her lifetime, with the first retrospective of her work held in 1990. In 1990 Margaret established the Margaret Olley Art Trust to acquire paintings for public collections. The artist was appointed an Officer Order of Australia (AO) in 1991 followed by Companion of the Order of Australia in 2001. Olley was awarded Honorary Doctorates from Macquarie University, the University of Sydney, the University of Newcastle, the University of Queensland, Southern Cross University, Lismore and Griffith University, Brisbane.

Honouring the artist and her contribution to the arts the Tweed Regional Gallery opened The Margaret Olley Art Centre. The Centre combines exhibitions of paintings and objects, an interactive multi-media drawing activity, research library and education workshop. Included is a recreation of areas of Olley's famous home studio, principally the Hat Factory and the Yellow Room that features original architectural elements such as windows and doors, relocated from Olley's home studio at 48 Duxford Street, Paddington, Sydney. The interiors are filled with over 20,000 items Olley collected over many years as subject matter for her paintings.

AT A GLANCE

WILLIAM DOBELL 1899-1970

Study for Margaret Olley (1948)

oil on composition board

77.5 x 61.9 cm

Estimate \$180,000-220,000

Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney, 21 November 2017, 6.30 pm

InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Total auction estimate \$9,400,000-12,123,000 | 82 lots

Exhibition in Melbourne 8-12 November, 10 am to 5 pm, 41 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney 16-21 November, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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