

Sydney 20 November 2017

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Highest Value November Sale for Sotheby's Australia

Sotheby's Australia has assembled its most valuable November sale of Important Australian Art, to be auctioned on 21 November 2017

Two paintings anticipated to sell for over \$1 million

Sale proceeds from *Image of Modern Evil 29* to be donated by the Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation to assist socially disadvantaged Australians



CHARLES BLACKMAN, born 1928, *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* 1956. Estimate \$1,400,000-1,800,000

Sotheby's Australia's collection of 82 lots of Important Australian Art estimated at \$9.4 million to \$12.1 million, the highest value ever offered by Sotheby's Australia at a November art sale, is set to generate strong buyer interest and auction records on 21 November at the InterContinental Sydney. Charles Blackman's *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* 1956 (estimate \$1,400,000-1,800,000, lot 26, pictured) and Albert Tucker's *Image of Modern Evil 29* 1946 (estimate \$800,000-1,000,000, lot 10, pictured following) are both anticipated to achieve new world auction records, and exceed \$1 million.

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Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'The growing awareness of the significance of Australian Art has lead Sotheby's Australia to present to the market our highest valued offering ever at a November art sale. We anticipate strong market leading results for our end of year Important Australian Art auction. Charles Blackman's Alice in Wonderland series completed in 1956-1957 are amongst the most beloved and admired in twentieth century Australian Art. In *Mad Hatter's Tea Party*, Blackman blends highly personal and universal iconography and creates an image that is simultaneously literal, poetic, and illusory. The art produced by Albert Tucker in the 1940s forms part of the revolutionary iconography that not only changed the course of Australian art, but also profoundly influenced successive generations during the second half of the twentieth century and beyond. An image of rupture, disunity, madness, violence, vulnerability, menace, ambiguity and urgency, Tucker's *Image of Modern Evil 29* represents one of the most forceful and energetic compositions created in Australian art and is the most historically significant painting by the artist remaining in private ownership.'

MAD HATTER'S TEA PARTY

Mad Hatter's Tea Party 1956, one of the most significant works remaining in a private collection from Charles Blackman's Alice in Wonderland series is expected to draw strong interest and exceed the previous auction record of \$1,799,500 for the artist (estimate \$1,400,000-1,800,000 lot 26, pictured previous). Despite being ostensibly illustrations to Lewis Carroll's classic children's story, Blackman's Alice paintings contain a distinct autobiographical resonance, where the White Rabbit represents the artist and Alice, the symbolic avatar of his adored Barbara. The series captured the intimate truths of the couple including the recurrent images of table settings that reflected Charles then current 'day job' as a short order cook at Georges Mora's Eastbourne Café. The couple even owned their own white rabbit, a knitted toy they called Dosty Wovsky.

IMAGE OF MODERN EVIL 29

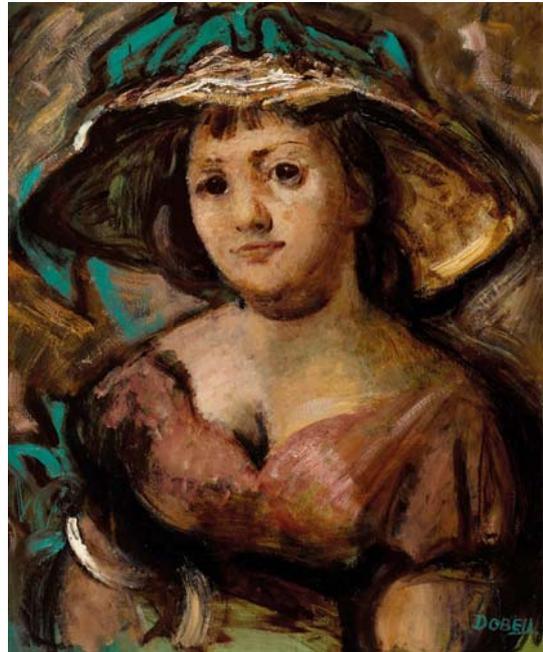
Albert Tucker's *Image of Modern Evil 29* 1946 (estimate \$800,000-1,000,000, lot 10, pictured) is the most significant painting by Albert Tucker remaining in private ownership and the most important ever offered for public sale, and is anticipated to exceed the previous auction record of \$840,000 for the artist.

Forming a cornerstone of Tucker's internationally renowned *Images of Modern Evil* series, which reflect the artist's dark vision of a society experiencing trauma, upheaval and moral decay during World War II on the Australian home-front, virtually every major painting from this series is now held in public collections. From 1979 to 2015, *Image of Modern Evil 29* was on long-term loan to the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. Consigned by the recently established Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation, all of the proceeds from the sale of the painting will benefit socially disadvantaged Australians.



STUDY FOR MARGARET OLLEY

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 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.



THE LOVER'S HOUR

Debuting for auction, Tudor St George Tucker's impressionist masterpiece *The Lover's Hour* (1895) (estimate \$180,000-220,000, lot 41, pictured) was thought lost for over a century and only known of through contemporary references and descriptions. The painting has remained in the same family collection for successive generations, and possibly since it was first exhibited at the Victorian Artists' Society in 1895. With a relatively small output and the previous auction record of \$187,000, Tudor St George Tucker's *The Lovers' Hour* is poised to establish a new auction record for the artist.



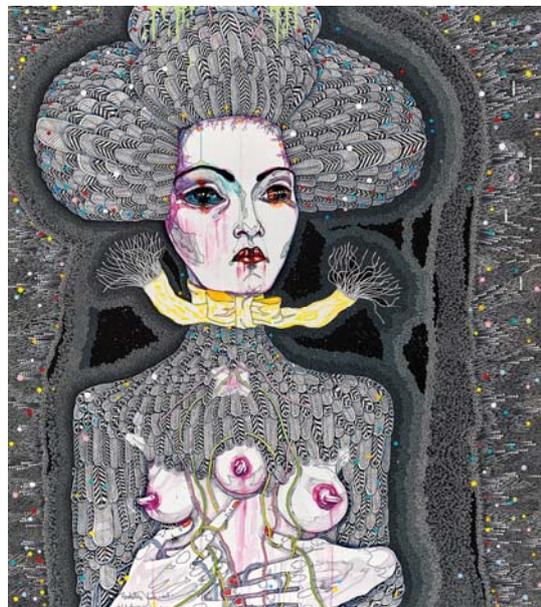
CARCASE

In June 1952 Sidney Nolan travelled to the Northern Territory and Queensland, under commission from Brisbane's *Courier-Mail*, to record the effects of the most severe drought on record in a series of black and white drawings that were published in two instalments in August 1952. Nolan continued to explore the ravages of drought and when he moved into a new studio in 1953, he commenced his most confronting single series to date. *Carcase* 1953 (estimate \$150,000-180,000, lot 34, pictured) was inspired by Nolan's harrowing experience of witnessing the drought first hand, and preserves the gruesome and cruel nature of drought on livestock, with the beast contorted and flattened with dehydration from the hot and dry drought conditions.



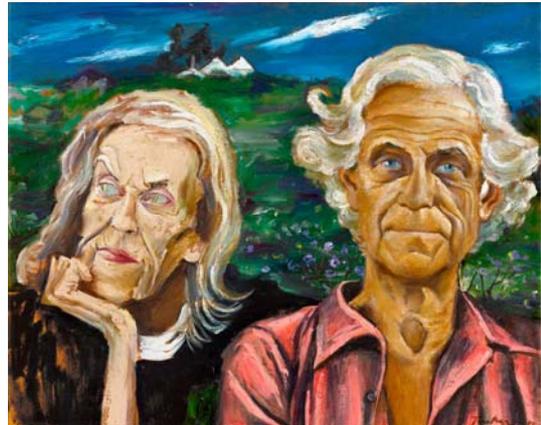
SATELLITE FADE-OUT

Del Kathryn Barton is an artist of great vision who has worked across a variety of media. The artist has been honoured with a retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne which opened this month, showcasing more than 150 works by the artist across all disciplines. *Satellite Fade-Out* 2011 (estimate \$140,000-180,000, lot 14, pictured) is an exceptional example by the artist with all parts of the female torso resplendent. Barton has won the Archibald Prize twice (2008, 2013) and other prizes for art and film.



JOHN AND SUNDAY REED

Albert Tucker's *John and Sunday Reed* 1982 (estimate \$100,000-150,000, lot 28, pictured) formed the cornerstone of Tucker's series of portraits collectively titled *Faces I have Met: Albert Tucker* and appeared on both the cover of the exhibition catalogue and the subsequent publication. John and Sunday Reed are recognised as of Australia's greatest private art patrons of the twentieth century. John and Sunday Reed had ruled their domestic domain of Heide (now Heide Museum of Modern Art) with a fierce combination of love and generosity entwined at times with unrealistic demands for control and loyalty from their subjects. Tucker's piercing and perceptive portrait reveals the strengths and vulnerabilities of one of the most influential and inspiring advocates of Australian culture.



FLOWERS WITH SUNSET: PANEL FOR 'ORION'

Considered lost for many decades, *Flowers with Sunset: Panel for 'Orion'* 1946 is one of Adrian Feint's most important paintings every to appear for public sale (estimate \$15,000-20,000, lot 3, pictured). Commissioned by the Orient Company, Feint painted two flower pieces for the restaurant on board 'Orion' which had been refitted for peace time sailing and is one of the artist's largest and most significant compositions.



AT A GLANCE

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 Sydney 20-21 November, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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