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Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection to be Auctioned by Sotheby's Australia

AUCTION IN SYDNEY 29 APRIL 2018



SIR EDWARD JOHN POYNTER, BT., P.R.A., R.W.S. 1836-1919, *A Corner of the Market Place* 1887. Estimate AUD\$450,000-650,000

The most significant collection of historical international art ever offered for sale in Australia will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 29 April 2018 in Sydney. *Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection* comprising 56 lots (estimate AUD\$3.3 million to AUD\$4.4 million), assembled gradually over several decades, reflects the impeccable taste and connoisseurship of its creator, John Schaeffer.

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Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Sotheby's Australia is honoured to be entrusted with *Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection* and share the unwavering passion and enthusiasm of one of Australia's most eminent collectors. John Schaeffer has built and re-built his collection over many decades and his foresight and generosity has shaped many of our cultural institutions through generous donations for the benefit of all Australians.'

John Schaeffer was born in Amsterdam and migrated to Australia in the 1950s. Like many of his fellow 'new Australians', he arrived in this country virtually penniless and with no formal art education. Schaeffer worked hard and eventually accumulated enough in savings to acquire a cleaning business, transforming Tempo Services from a firm employing 25 people into a publicly listed company with a staff of 23,000. As Schaeffer later recalled, 'It was the early dawn of outsourcing. Within a few years, just about every organisation would no longer think of doing its own cleaning, but would give it to a contractor. The little company I bought flourished ... becoming one of the top 20 companies in Australia.'

Schaeffer's initial art collecting focused predominantly on Australian art and he acquired major examples by the most fashionable and highly regarded artists of the time, including William Dobell, G.W. Lambert, Norman Lindsay and John Russell. It was however, John Schaeffer's visit to the exhibition *The Pre-Raphaelites* at London's Tate Gallery in 1984 that represented a defining and life-altering moment. 'It galvanised my collecting', Schaeffer confessed, 'The whole exhibition struck me ... the poetry, the storylines, the romanticism. As a businessman who did not have any formal training, it ... caused me to suddenly pick up books and feverishly read about what inspired the artists.'



FREDERIC, LORD LEIGHTON 1830-1896 *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python* 1877.
Estimate AUD\$180,000-220,000



SIR ALFRED GILBERT 1854-1934, *Perseus Arming* (1882).
Estimate AUD\$180,000-220,000

Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection includes numerous outstanding paintings and sculptures by some of the finest American, Belgium, British, Dutch, French and Italian artists of the mid to late 19th century. Celebrated works by Sir Alfred Gilbert, Frederic, Lord Leighton, John Poynter, William Wetmore Story, Sir William Hamo Thornycroft, Constant Troyon, John William Waterhouse, and George Frederic Watts, assembled with great discernment, exemplify each artist's most renowned achievements. Another highlight is the inclusion of several notable works by Australian artists whose works were formerly from the collection of Dame Nellie Melba GBE.



FERNAND TOUSSAINT 1873-1963 *The Japanese Print* 1913.
Estimate AUD\$100,000-120,000

HIGHLIGHTS

Edward John Poynter's *A Corner of the Market Place* 1887 is one of a group of small pictures painted by the artist depicting female models in classical settings, without melodrama or strong mythological narrative; a carefree image of the theme of *dolce far niente* (the sweetness of doing nothing) (estimate AUD\$450,000-650,000, lot 22, pictured first page).

Frederic Leighton's *An Athlete Wrestling with a Python* 1877 has been recognised as a *tour de force* of British sculpture imbued with the spirit of the Antique combined with contemporary vitality and vigour; a youth of superb physique locked on a life and death struggle with a serpent (estimate AUD\$180,000-220,000, lot 12, pictured second page).

One of the rare largest sized casts of *Perseus Arming* (1882), long considered one of Alfred Gilbert's finest and most desirable sculptures. Here the artist has transformed an 'old fable' into an arresting image of the vitality and possibilities of a young man as he prepares for this future (estimate AUD\$180,000-220,000, lot 16, pictured second page).

Fernand Toussaint's *The Japanese Print* 1913 is a celebration of the influence of Japanese art and the aesthetics on European and American culture; a glamorous woman situated in a luxurious interior examines a Japanese print surrounded by textiles and floral fixtures and furnishings associated with the Aesthetic Movement (estimate AUD\$100,000-120,000, lot 45, pictured above).

AT A GLANCE

Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection

Estimate \$3,343,000-4,435,000 | 56 lots

Auction in Sydney, 29 April 2018, 6.30 pm

Viewing in Sydney, 24, 26-29 April, 10 am to 5 pm

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