

Smith&Singer

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MASTERPIECE BY SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN, R.A., R.W.S., R.I. TO BE OFFERED IN
SMITH & SINGER'S JUNE SALE OF IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN
& INTERNATIONAL ART

*Acquired Directly from Clausen by Lindsay Bernard Hall – Director of the
National Gallery of Victoria 1892-1935*

*A Significant Example from Britain's Master of Naturalism whose Images
Reflected the Shifting Social and Economic Forces of the Era*



SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN, R.A., R.W.S., R.I. 1852-1944

A Village Boy 1899

oil on canvas, 41.9 x 31.7 cm

Estimate \$400,000–600,000

MELBOURNE, 17 June 2020 – Smith & Singer is honoured to present George Clausen's remarkable *A Village Boy* 1899 for sale within our *Important Australian & International Art* auction on 24 June 2020. The work bears the unique provenance of having been acquired by Lindsay Bernard Hall – the renowned Director of the National Gallery of Victoria from 1892-1935 – and was last publically exhibited at the Melbourne Town Hall in 1944. Regarded as the most significant painter of English rural life during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, George Clausen's paintings reflected the shifting social and economic forces that were rapidly transforming and defining the modern world.

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A VILLAGE BOY 1899

Painted in 1899, four years after Clausen had been elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, *A Village Boy* was created during a defining period in the artist's career. With his position at the Academy far from assured, the paintings that Clausen made during this pivotal time would go on to secure his place among Britain's highest artistic authority, when in 1905 he was made a full Academician. As Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy, Clausen gave a memorable series of lectures to the students of the Schools, published as *Six Lectures on Painting* (1904) and *Aims and Ideals in Art* (1906). His influence on British, and in turn Australian, art was profound, and he went on to become the most popular Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy since Sir Joshua Reynolds, as such, inspiring the next generation of British artists who emerged around the time of the First World War.



F. MONTEATH (dates unknown)

**Portrait of Lindsay Bernard Hall,
Melbourne** (circa 1910)

sepia toned photograph, 13.7 x 9.4 cm
National Library of Australia PIC/13956

UNIQUE PROVENANCE FROM ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST ARTISTIC FIGURES

A Village Boy 1899 bears the unique and distinguished provenance of being acquired directly from George Clausen by Lindsay Bernard Hall in 1899. Bernard Hall was born at Garston, Liverpool, England, on 28 December 1859, the son of a broker, and grandson of the conductor J.Z. Herrmann. Hall was well-educated and grew up in an atmosphere of culture. He studied painting at the South Kensington School of Art, London, before undertaking further studies in Antwerp and Munich. Hall exhibited at the Royal Academy and was one of the original members of the New English Art Club, where he exhibited, most notably, alongside George Clausen and John Singer Sargent.

On the death of George Frederick Folingsby in 1891, Hall was appointed director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and commenced his duties in March 1892. Hall married Elsinore Mary Shuter on 18 December 1894. Sadly, Elsinore died in 1901. Hall held the position at the National Gallery of Victoria for 43 years and many of the well-known painters of Australia were trained by him at the National Gallery of Victoria Art School. *A Village Boy* is personally inscribed from Clausen 'TO L. B. H. 1899'.

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LEGACY OF A NATURALIST

Commencing in the mid-1880s, and continuing for the next two decades, Clausen created a series of exquisite subjects of young men and women that focused entirely on their features rather than their placement within a broader domestic or rural context. The significance of these detailed and focused compositions of country youth resided in their rejection of the prescribed complex narrative set-pieces demanded by the Royal Academy, and thereby offered a revolutionary subject matter during the 1880s.

George Clausen died in 1944, at a time when his long and significant career was overshadowed by the traumas of the Second World War. For many decades his legacy remained neglected, however, in recent years Clausen's achievements as a Naturalist who confronted, challenged and questioned the social mores of art, has led to a re-assessment of his reputation by institutions and collectors who recognise the timeless and universal appeal of his sensitive, humane and evocative subjects.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Smith & Singer commented: 'As a leading contemporary English artist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, George Clausen is well represented in Australian public collections, and his work influenced numerous Australian artists, perhaps none more so than Hans Heysen, whose images of rural labour and landscape bear a striking affinity. As a shining example of Naturalist portraiture, Smith & Singer is honoured to be entrusted with the sale of George Clausen's defining composition A Village Boy 1899. Reproduced publically here and in our catalogue for the first time in 120 years, this painting represents a rare and remarkable example of the intersection of Australian and international art at the end of the nineteenth century.'



SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN, R.A., R.W.S.,
R.I. 1852-1944

The Bird's Nest 1902

oil on canvas on board,

46 x 30.5 cm

Estimate £150,000–200,000

Sold for £452,750 (\$764,822)

Sotheby's, London

15 December 2016

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AT A GLANCE

Lot 24

SIR GEORGE CLAUSEN, R.A., R.W.S., R.I. 1852-1944

A Village Boy 1899

oil on canvas, 41.9 x 31.7 cm

Estimate \$400,000–600,000

Important Australian & International Art

Estimate: \$5,962,000–8,310,000, 59 lots

Auction, Sydney, 24 June 2020, 6.30 pm

National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, 111 Queen Street, Woollahra NSW 2025

The health of our clients, employees and community is of paramount importance. We have implemented stringent protocols within our premises, including social distancing, frequent hand and area disinfecting, and a maximum number of clients in each exhibition at any time. Full details are available upon request.

Viewings in Melbourne 9-14 June, 10 am to 5 pm

14-16 Collins Street, Melbourne

Viewings in Sydney 17-24 June 2020, 10 am to 5 pm

30 Queen Street, Woollahra

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