

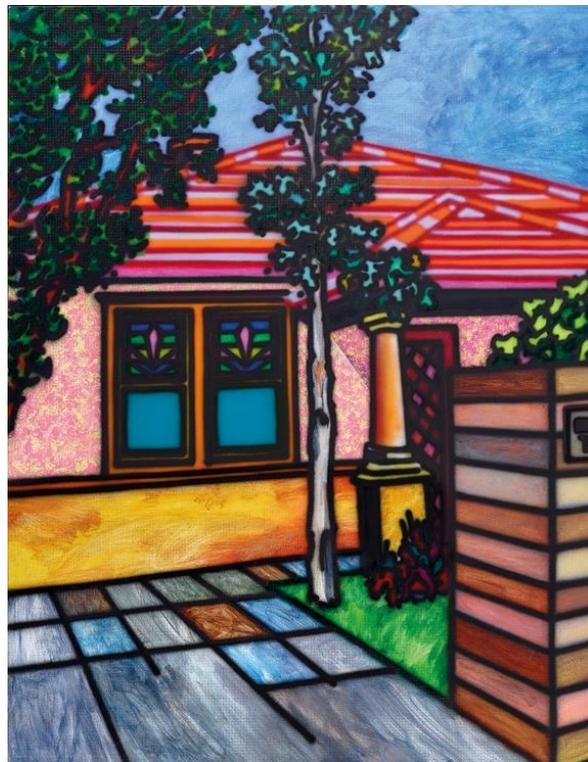
Smith&Singer

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CONTEMPORARY MASTERPIECE BY HOWARD ARKLEY TO LEAD JUNE SALE OF
IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN & INTERNATIONAL ART AT SMITH & SINGER

*Acquired Privately by a Collector from the Artist's Breakthrough
Solo Exhibition in 1988*

*'Stucco House' 1988 will be Offered at Auction for the First Time Since its
Creation 32 Years Ago*



HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999

Stucco House 1988

synthetic polymer paint on canvas,

175 x 135 cm

Estimate \$700,000–900,000

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Rolfe Contemporary Art

MELBOURNE, 10 June 2020 – on 24 June 2020, Smith & Singer will offer one of Howard Arkley's zeitgeist-defining suburban exteriors at auction. *Stucco House* (1988) was first presented to the public during Arkley's breakthrough solo-exhibition in 1988 and is now offered for sale for the first time since it was created 32 years ago. The mesmerising canvas illustrates Arkley's infusion of pulsating and levitating patterns, creating an extraordinary plateau that is simultaneously familiar/suburban and

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magical/other-worldly. It is a privilege to offer such a remarkable work at auction and we look forward to exhibiting it to the public in Melbourne and Sydney in advance of its sale.

HOWARD ARKLEY AND AUSTRALIAN SUBURBIA

Arkley's house pictures have their beginnings in the 1983 *Urban Paintings* exhibition, where he found analogies and matrices for his airbrush abstractionist dots and stripes in the multi-coloured bricks and patterned wallpaper of *Suburban Exterior* (1983, Private Collection) and *Suburban Interior* (1983, The Baillieu Myer Collection of Art in the 1980s, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne). A few years later, when collaborating with architect Howard Raggatt on the exhibition *5AR: 5 Artists/5 Architects '86* (George Paton Gallery, Melbourne) he again engaged with the forms of domestic architecture, this time the half-timbered houses of the model Tudor Village in Melbourne's Fitzroy Gardens, and the same year showed two more vernacular house pictures: *Our Home* (1986, Private Collection) and *Nubrick* (1986, Private Collection). But it was the landmark 1988 *Houses and Homes* exhibition that marked Arkley's fullest commitment to the theme and established the housescapes as his most original and popular inventions. They were to remain a recurrent, even a signature device up to and including the Venice Biennale exhibition *Howard Arkley: The Home Show* in 1999, the year of his untimely death.

HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999 *STUCCO HOUSE* 1988 (Illustrated above and below)

Renowned as one of Arkley's defining suburban subjects, *Stucco House* is a painting which is at once critique and celebration of the Great Australian Dream. Arkley's paintings, with their thick, furred outlines and flat planes of day-glo colour, function as a screen for the projection of nostalgia or satire, nationalism or formalism, according to the viewer's conceptual and aesthetic inclination. To the 'New Wave' generation of the 1970s and 1980s, the garish 'featurism' of the Australian urban landscape was simply a matter of fact, something they grew up with. Howard Arkley was the most celebrated of these post-punk villa visionaries and his lurid, Popist images of eastern suburbs houses aspired to iconic status.

As Arkley himself described his celebration of Australian suburbia: 'What I'm trying to do, I believe, is explicitly the right thing, and if it isn't me, it will be someone else. It has to be done. And we're not talking about just doing the work, but about inspiring a whole generation of future artists to delve into this area and exploit it. It looks like overstatement, like it's obvious, and I would much rather make some subtler art, but I don't think it will get across.'

(Howard Arkley, in Ashley Crawford and Ray Edgar, *Spray: The Work of Howard Arkley*, (rev. ed.), Craftsman House, Sydney, 2001, p. 89)

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Stucco House 1988 was one of nine paintings that featured in Arkley's seminal exhibition *Howard Arkley: Recent Paintings: Houses & Homes* that opened at Tolarno Galleries in Melbourne on 13 August 1988 and was selected and featured as the cover illustration for the exhibition brochure.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Smith & Singer commented: 'One of the most complex and exuberant from the series, Stucco House bursts with a disruptive profusion of colours, shapes, patterns and textures. Arkley's delight is clear in his careful selection and collaging of magazine cuttings and interior design swatches, that were then photocopied, projected onto the canvas, and meticulously coloured, undergoing their own renovation and transformation. Offered for the first time for public sale since its acquisition from Arkley's landmark exhibition of suburbia in 1988, Stucco House is a composition of enduring appeal and represents a defining moment in the history and development of twentieth-century Australian art.'



HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999

Stucco House 1988

synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
175 x 135 cm

Estimate \$700,000–900,000

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Contemporary Art

A MARKET-LEADING TRACK RECORD WITH HOWARD ARKLEY

During the last year, Smith & Singer has achieved three of the four highest prices ever realised for Howard Arkley. In both of our most recent *Important Australian Art* auctions, we have sold individual paintings by the artist for more than \$1,000,000 each – indeed, Smith & Singer has realised more prices in excess of \$1,000,000 for Howard Arkley than any auction house in the world. These results include *Neapolitan Delight* 1993 (lot 33, sold for \$1,464,000, estimate \$800,000–1,000,000, *Important Australian Art*, Sydney, 20 November 2019); *Plain and Fancy* 1993 (lot 35, sold for \$1,220,000, estimate

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\$600,000–800,000, *Important Australian Art*, Sydney, 20 November 2019); and *Rococo Rhythm* 1992 (lot 13, sold for \$1,098,000, estimate \$800,000–1,000,000, *Important Australian Art*, Sydney, 27 August 2019) – the second, third and fourth highest results for Arkley at auction respectively.



HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999
Neapolitan Delight 1993
synthetic polymer paint on
canvas, 175.2 x 134.7 cm
Estimate \$800,000–1,000,000
Sold Sotheby's Australia (now
trading as Smith & Singer),
20 November 2019
for \$1,464,000

SECOND-HIGHEST PRICE
ACHIEVED AT AUCTION FOR
THE ARTIST

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HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999
Plain and Fancy 1993
synthetic polymer paint on
canvas, 173 x 135 cm
Estimate \$600,000–800,000
Sold Sotheby's Australia (now
trading as Smith & Singer),
20 November 2019
for \$1,220,000

THIRD-HIGHEST PRICE
ACHIEVED AT AUCTION FOR
THE ARTIST

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HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999
Rococo Rhythm 1992
synthetic polymer paint on
canvas, 173.5 x 134.8 cm
Estimate \$800,000–1,000,000
Sold Sotheby's Australia (now
trading as Smith & Singer),
27 August 2019
for \$1,098,000

FOURTH-HIGHEST PRICE
ACHIEVED AT AUCTION FOR
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AT A GLANCE

Lot 12

HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999

Stucco House 1988

synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 175 x 135 cm

Estimate \$700,000–900,000

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 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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