

CONTEMPORARY MASTERPEICES LEAD SOTHEBY'S AUSTRALIA'S AUGUST
SALE OF IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN ART

Howard Arkley's *Rococo Rhythm* 1992 & Peter Booth's *Untitled* 1999 Poised to
Challenge Auction Records for the Artists

Suburban Dream & Apocalyptic Nightmare Illustrate Depth of Iconography in
Contemporary Australian Painting



HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999

Rococo Rhythm 1992

synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 173.5 x 134.8 cm

Estimate: \$800,000–1,000,000

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MELBOURNE, 12 August 2019 – Sotheby's Australia's forthcoming auction of *Important Australian Art* will feature ground-breaking canvases from two of Australia's most renowned contemporary artists –

Howard Arkley and Peter Booth. Demonstrating the visionary qualities of both artists who have each represented Australia at the Venice Biennale, Arkley's *Rococo Rhythm* 1992 and Booth's *Untitled* 1999 were created during seminal moments in each artist's career and represent defining and compelling images in contemporary Australian art.

HOWARD ARKLEY, *ROCOCO RHYTHM* 1992 (ILLUSTRATED TOP)

One of Arkley's finest interior subjects – and among the most significant ever offered at auction – *Rococo Rhythm* is poised to challenge the existing auction record for the artist. *Rococo Rhythm* 1992 (lot 13, estimate \$800,000–1,000,000) was one of only ten canvases from the artist's influential exhibition of the same year, *Howard Arkley: Mix n Match*. In 2016 and 2019 paintings from this pioneering show were sold at auction, with each establishing a new world auction record for Arkley of \$646,600 and \$1,534,090 respectively. Howard Arkley was renowned for his lurid Popist images of eastern suburban houses, which took on an iconic status as they embraced identifiable middle-class taste and environment. Arkley's unique and explosive critique and celebration of the Great Australian Dream will be auctioned by Sotheby's Australia, on 27 August 2019, at the InterContinental Sydney.

*Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Howard Arkley achieved international attention and acclaim for his images that explored the edifices and interior realms of suburbia. The 1992 series of suburban interiors remain Arkley's most coveted compositions by private collectors and institutions alike, with only one, *Spartan Space (Homage to de Stijl)* (1992, Art Gallery of Ballarat) in a public collection. Arkley's paintings, with their fuzzy black outlines and planes of fluorescent colour, act as a screen for the nostalgia and satire innate to all of Arkley's work. Of exceptional rarity, quality and appeal, *Rococo Rhythm* 1992 represents a defining moment in twentieth-century Australian art.'*

PETER BOOTH, *UNTITLED* 1999 (ILLUSTRATED BELOW)

Since its creation and initial exhibition, Peter Booth's *Untitled* 1999 (lot 12, estimate \$300,000–400,000) has been considered one of the artist's finest winter snow scenes and amongst the most impressive canvases of his entire career. Booth's current auction record – established for *Untitled* 1997 at Sotheby's Australia's *Important Australian Art* auction in 2013 – is a directly comparable painting from the same decade-long sequence begun in the winter of 1989. The series depicts a world of black nights and grey days, of burning books and burning cities, of empty, snow-strewn forests and plains and roads, of demons, mutants and cannibals, of watchers and waiters, perpetrators and victims. When *Untitled* 1999, is offered under the hammer in Sydney on 27 August it will be with the highest auction estimate ever placed on a work by Booth, reflecting the artist's well-earned place among the most celebrated contemporary figures of Australian art.



PETER BOOTH born 1940

Untitled 1999

oil on canvas, 203.5 x 396.5 cm

Estimate: \$300,000–400,000

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*Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Untitled 1999 is a shining example of Peter Booth's masterful control of his medium. The dark, deeply powerful imagery of the artist's snow scenes – of which this painting is perhaps the finest example – causes an almost visceral reaction in the viewer, playing upon the macabre present in every individual's subconscious. Yet, and this is perhaps Booth's most subtle genius, the present work possesses an unquestionable tranquillity. Its richly textured facture, with highlights of red and glistening white, pacifies the viewer, and the delicate notes of pink and blue cresting the horizon render this scene with an intangible sense of hope. While this dichotomy is evident throughout Booth's *œuvre*, it is perhaps most clearly illustrated within this exceptional painting.'*

AT A GLANCE

Lot 12

PETER BOOTH born 1940

Untitled 1999

oil on canvas

203.5 x 396.5 cm

Estimate: \$300,000–400,000

Lot 13

HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999

Rococo Rhythm 1992

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

173.5 x 134.8 cm

Estimate: \$800,000–1,000,000

Important Australian Art

Estimate: \$10,685,000–14,439,000, 87 lots

Auction in Sydney, 27 August 2019, 6.30 pm

InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Exhibition in Melbourne, 13-18 August 2019, 10 am to 5 pm, 14-16 Collins Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney, 21-27 August 2019, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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