

NEW RECORD OF \$13,917,150 FOR A NOVEMBER SALE OF *IMPORTANT AUSTRALIAN ART* AT SOTHEBY'S AUSTRALIA

Bringing Sotheby's Australia's Annual Auction Total for Fine Art to \$39.80 million, the Second-Highest Ever Recorded

Five Paintings Realise Prices in Excess of \$800,000, with 10 Paintings Exceeding \$500,000

13th Consecutive Sotheby's Australia *Important Australian Art* Auction to Exceed \$8,000,000

SYDNEY, 21 November 2019 – Last night at Sotheby's Australia's auction of *Important Australian Art* bidders in the room, on the telephones and online competed fiercely to secure the exceptional survey of Australian art on offer. Outstanding results were achieved for traditional, modern and contemporary Australian artists, confirming the depth of demand for fine Australian art. The auction totalled \$13,917,150, establishing a new record for a November sale in the history of Sotheby's Australia, and bringing the annual total for auction sales of fine art in 2019 to \$39.80 million, the second-highest total in the company's history.

The sale commenced with a world auction record for an Australian photograph. Carol Jerrems's iconic *Vale Street* 1975 (lot 1, estimate \$30,000–50,000) sold for \$122,000 – more than ten times the previous record for the artist. Further remarkable results included Tom Roberts's *She-Oak and Sunlight* (1889) (lot 16, estimate \$220,000–280,000), which sold for \$939,400 and achieved the second-highest price for the artist at auction, and Howard Arkley's mesmerising *Neapolitan Delight* 1993 (lot 33, estimate \$800,000–1,000,000) which sold for \$1,464,000, the second-highest price at auction for a work by the artist. The highest price of the night was realised by Brett Whiteley's *The Orange Table* 1977-1978 (lot 30, estimate \$1,000,000–1,400,000) – considered one of Whiteley's grandest still life subjects – when it sold for \$1,586,000.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia, commented: 'We are enormously pleased with our record-setting result of \$13,917,150, which continues our market leadership for the sale of art at auction in Australia for the fourth consecutive year. The result brings our annual total for the auction of fine art to \$39.80 million and maintains our singular position as the foremost auctioneer of fine art in Australia. It is our thirteenth consecutive *Important Australian Art* auction to have realised a total in excess of \$8 million – with last night's auction representing a record total for a November sale in our company's history.'

We would like to warmly thank our clients for entrusting these seminal works to our care and whose faith allowed us to assemble an expansive and remarkable survey of Australian art. This depth of artistic talent was reflected in the broad demand, as new and established collectors were drawn to the sale, and we look forward to continuing this success in our forthcoming major sales in 2020.'

ARKLEY MASTERPIECES CAUSE BIDDING WAR

Presented for the first time for public sale since their acquisition almost three decades ago, two groundbreaking canvases by Howard Arkley generated intense competition and realised a combined total of \$2,684,000, against a pre-sale high estimate of \$1,800,000.

After a lengthy battle between bidders on the telephones and in the room, *Neapolitan Delight* 1993 (lot 33, estimate \$800,000–1,000,000, illustrated below) sold for \$1,464,000, the second-highest price for any work by the artist. It was shortly followed by *Plain and Fancy* 1993, which realised the third-highest price at auction for the artist when it sold for \$1,220,000 (lot 35, estimate \$600,000–800,000, illustrated below). Howard Arkley's Day-Glo, Popist images of suburban houses extended, explored and re-defined Arkley's preeminent position as Australia's foremost commentator of the Australian urban/suburban experience and represent a defining moment in twentieth-century Australian art.



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 for \$1,464,000

SECOND-HIGHEST PRICE ACHIEVED AT
AUCTION FOR THE ARTIST

© The Estate of Howard Arkley/Licensed by Kalli
Rolfe Contemporary Art



HOWARD ARKLEY 1951-1999

Plain and Fancy 1993

synthetic polymer paint on canvas,

173 x 135 cm

Estimate \$600,000–800,000

Sold for \$1,220,000

THIRD-HIGHEST PRICE ACHIEVED AT
AUCTION FOR THE ARTIST

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MONUMENTAL WORKS BY BRETT WHITELEY CAPTURE INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION

Two of the highest prices were achieved by paintings by renowned Australian modernist, Brett Whiteley. *The Blue Bathroom* 1963 (lot 29, estimate \$600,000–800,000) – recently rediscovered in the United Kingdom and repatriated to Australia – was offered for public auction for the first time since it was created fifty-six years ago and was sold for \$732,000.

Immediately following was *The Orange Table* 1977–1978, which realised the highest price of the night when it sold for \$1,586,000 (lot 30, estimate \$1,000,000–1,400,000). The work dates from the period when the artist first turned to the genre – marking a change not only in his artistic output but also for contemporary Australian art at the time, which until that point had largely eschewed the genre.



BRETT WHITELEY 1939-1992

The Blue Bathroom 1963

oil, tempera and collage on board,
188 x 183 cm

Estimate \$600,000–800,000

Sold for \$732,000

© Wendy Whiteley



BRETT WHITELEY
1939-1992

The Orange Table

1977-1978

synthetic polymer
paint, oil, tempera,
charcoal and oyster
shells on plywood,
124 x 205 cm

Estimate \$1,000,000–
1,400,000

Sold for \$1,586,000

© Wendy Whiteley

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

The auction commenced with a lengthy battle for a rare icon of Australian photography as Carol Jerrems's *Vale Street* 1975 established a new world auction record for an Australian photograph.



CAROL JERREMS 1949-1980

Vale Street 1975

gelatin silver photograph, edition of 9,
plus artist's proofs, 20.1 x 30.4 cm
(image); 30.3 x 38.1 cm (sheet)

Estimate \$30,000–50,000

Sold for \$122,000

AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST
HIGHEST PRICE EVER ACHIEVED AT
AUCTION FOR AN AUSTRALIAN
PHOTOGRAPH

© Courtesy of Ken Jerrems & Estate of Lance Jerrems



TOM ROBERTS 1856-1931

She-Oak and Sunlight (1889)

oil on wood, 30.5 x 30 cm

Estimate \$220,000–280,000

Sold for \$939,400

SECOND-HIGHEST PRICE ACHIEVED AT
AUCTION FOR THE ARTIST

AT A GLANCE

Important Australian Art
Auction in Sydney, 20 November 2019, 6.30 pm
InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Lots on offer: 79
Total sold: \$13,917,150 including buyer's premium
Sold by value: 138.3%
Sold by volume: 75%

2019 art auction total: \$39,800,574

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