

Smith&Singer

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SMITH & SINGER OPENS 2021 AUCTION SEASON WITH \$11,965,909 SALE

93.44% Sold-By-Volume & 144.22% Sold-By-Value as Buyers Compete Fiercely in Saleroom

Auction Represents the Greatest Total from the Smallest Number of Lots in Smith & Singer / Sotheby's Australia History

Frederick McCubbin's Masterpiece, 'What the Little Girl Saw in the Bush' 1904, Realises Highest Price of the Evening at \$1,472,727

Historic Fred Williams Canvas Realises \$1,227,273, While a Further Six Works Set World Auction Records



FREDERICK MCCUBBIN 1855-1917

What the Little Girl Saw in the Bush 1904

oil on canvas, 96.5 x 66 cm

Estimate \$1,200,000–1,600,000

Sold for \$1,472,727

SYDNEY, 21 April 2021 – Last night, at Smith & Singer's first *Important Australian & International Art* auction of the year, bidders from across Australia and the around the world competed for the works of art on offer. Two prices in excess of \$1 million were achieved, with six works setting new auction records. Bidding from clients in the saleroom, on telephones, and online resulted in a sold rate of 93.44% by volume and 144.22% by value, with a total of \$11,965,909 including BP. Outstanding results were achieved for traditional, modern, and contemporary Australian artists including George Baldessin, Arthur Boyd, Bessie Davidson, Rosalie Gascoigne, Robert Klippel, Frederick McCubbin, Sidney Nolan, Jeffrey Smart, Constance Stokes, Arthur Streeton, Albert Tucker, and Fred Williams, amongst others.

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6 WORLD AUCTION RECORDS

- Lot 5, BESSIE DAVIDSON 1879-1965, *Interieur* (1935), oil on board, estimate \$200,000–250,000, sold for \$662,727.
- Lot 6, CONSTANCE STOKES 1906-1991, *The Three Graces* (1951), oil on board, estimate \$60,000–80,000, sold for \$220,909.
- Lot 40, AKIO MAKIGAWA 1948-1999, *Work 1 (Sun)* (1990), Paonazzo marble, Marquino marble, Carrara white marble, galvanised steel and gold leaf, estimate \$80,000–120,000, sold for \$135,000.
- Lot 41, MICHAEL ZAVROS born 1974, *Spring / Fall II* 2004, oil on canvas, estimate \$40,000–60,000, sold for \$79,773.
- Lot 42, RON ROBERTSON-SWANN born 1941, *Vault* (1979), painted steel, edition of 10 plus 1 AP, estimate \$15,000–25,000, sold for \$55,227.
- Lot 48, GEORGE BALDESSIN 1939-1978, *Pear* (1971-1972, cast 1972), bronze, unique state, foundry proof, estimate \$50,000–70,000, sold for \$196,364.

The evening sale commenced with a series of seven stellar results for some traditionally under-represented Australian artists – Clarice Beckett, Freda Robertshaw, Grace Cossington Smith, Bessie Davidson, and Constance Stokes – the last two of which established new auction records for their work at \$662,727 for Bessie Davidson's *Interieur* (1935) (lot 5, estimate \$200,000–250,000) and \$220,909 for Stokes's *The Three Graces* (1951) (lot 6, estimate \$60,000–80,000). Each one of these remarkable paintings exceeded its high estimate, while the combined total achieved 250% of their pre-sale high estimates.

Following this dynamic opening sequence was Albert Tucker's *Antipodean Figure* 1967 (lot 9, \$80,000–120,000) which more than doubled its high estimate at \$294,545; lot 12, *On the Lake* (1964) by the enigmatic Ian Fairweather also exceeded its high, when it sold for \$331,364 (estimate \$200,000–300,000); Jeffrey Smart's *The Arezzo Turn-Off I* (1973) almost achieved the \$1 million mark when it sold for \$981,818 (lot 16, estimate \$800,000–1,200,000); and was followed by the first work of the evening to exceed \$1 million, Fred Williams's *Guthega Landscape* (1975) (lot 17, estimate \$1,000,000–1,200,000), which sold for \$1,227,273; the second Jeffrey Smart of the auction, *Containers and Silos at Livorno* (1990), also galvanised strong competition, selling for \$822,273 against a \$450,000–650,000 estimate; William Robinson's *Autumn Sunset* 1997 achieved \$368,182 (lot 20, estimate \$300,000–350,000); followed by Sidney Nolan's *Ned Kelly: The Return* 1964 (lot 21, estimate \$500,000–700,000) which realised \$613,636; Arthur Streeton's *Hobart* 1938 (lot 24, estimate \$750,000–950,000) achieved \$920,455; the highest price of the evening went to Frederick McCubbin's masterpiece, *What the Little Girl Saw in the Bush* 1904 (lot 26, estimate \$1,200,000–1,600,000) which sold for \$1,472,727 to a bidder on the telephone; shortly followed by Albert Namatjira's *Rock Pool, Ormiston Gorge* (circa 1945-1951), which sold for \$63,818 – doubling its pre-sale low estimate of \$28,000.

Following the two auction records set for Stokes and Davidson early in the sale, there came a further four, starting with lots 40, 41 and 42, for Japanese/Australian artist, Akio Makigawa's *Work 1 (Sun)*

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(1990) (estimate \$80,000–120,000) for \$135,000, Michael Zavros's *Spring / Fall II* 2004 (estimate \$40,000–60,000) for \$79,773 and Ron Robertson-Swann's *Vault* (1979) (estimate \$15,000–25,000) which doubled its high at \$55,227. Lot 46, Rosalie Gascoigne's vibrant *Gaudy Night* 1992 soared past its pre-sale high estimate of \$120,000, eventually selling for \$202,500; before the final record of the night was set by George Baldessin's shapely *Pear* (1971-1972, cast 1972) (lot 48, estimate \$50,000–70,000) which almost quadrupled the previous artist record when it achieved \$196,364; it was followed by the highest price of the evening for a three-dimensional work, Robert Klippel's *No. 448 Birdbath* 1982 which doubled its high estimate when it sold for \$245,455 after a fierce bidding battle (lot 49, estimate \$90,000–120,000); the sale then finished with a pair of screen-prints from Andy Warhol, *Scotch Broth* (1969) (lot 60, estimate \$25,000–35,000) which sold for \$88,364 and *The Nun* (1983) (lot 61, estimate \$28,000–35,000) which sold for \$61,364.

FREDERICK MCCUBBIN'S MASTERPIECE SELLS AT AUCTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 100 YEARS

Having not been offered for public sale for more than a century, Frederick McCubbin's *What the Little Girl Saw in the Bush* 1904 (lot 26, estimate \$1,200,000–1,600,000, pictured top) has long been considered one of the artist's masterpieces and most highly original Australian subjects. Last night at Smith & Singer it achieved \$1,472,727. A key work in McCubbin's *oeuvre*, the painting provides a definitive example of the artist's subtle synthesis of the European masters with the distinctive character of the Australian experience and the Antipodean light, together with the poetry and spirituality he found in the landscape he cherished. Following almost 60 years in the revered collection of Mr Graham Joel, Smith & Singer are delighted to have played a role in this painting's journey to its new custodian.

FRED WILLIAMS'S HISTORIC *GUTHEGA LANDSCAPE* (1975) SELLS FOR \$1,227,273 AT AUCTION DEBUT (PICTURED RIGHT)

Painted just two years before Williams exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York – the first Australian artist to do so – *Guthega Landscape* (lot 17, estimate \$1,000,000–1,200,000) represents the artist at his most ambitious, and indeed effective.

It is undoubtedly one of the finest paintings from the remarkable series of Australian Alp subjects that Williams completed in 1975, following a trip to the top of the Great Dividing Range in January of that year. Now over 45 years old, the work has no sign of age, with each nimble brushstroke glowing as vibrantly as it did when the great artist first laid it down. Collectors responded strongly to the painting, with bidders in the saleroom and on the phone driving the final result.



FRED WILLIAMS 1927-1982

Guthega Landscape (1975)

oil on canvas, 153.3 x 122.2 cm

Estimate \$1,000,000–1,200,000

Sold for \$1,227,273

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JEFFREY SMARTS GALVANISE COMPETITION

Painted almost two decades apart, *The Arezzo Turn-Off I* (1973) (lot 16, estimate \$800,000–1,200,000, pictured left) and *Containers and Silos at Livorno* (1990) (lot 19, estimate \$450,000–650,000, pictured below) are shimmering examples of the artist's work and reflect his career-spanning examination of the urban environment and its perception in, and impact on, twentieth-century life.

JEFFREY SMART 1921-2013
The Arezzo Turn-Off I (1973)
oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas,
80 x 100 cm
Estimate \$800,000–1,200,000
Sold for \$981,818
© The Estate of Jeffrey Smart

Offered from a private New South Wales collection, multiple bidders vied for the works, which sold for \$981,818 and \$822,273 respectively. The former carried the highest pre-sale estimate for a work by the artist and achieved the third highest price at auction.

SIR ARTHUR STREETON'S DEFINITIVE TASMANIAN LANDSCAPE SELLS FOR \$920,455

Among the auction highlights was one of Sir Arthur Streeton's finest twentieth-century canvases remaining in private hands. *Hobart* 1938 is among the largest and most ambitious of all of Streeton's Australian landscapes and remains his masterpiece of Tasmania. Consigned from a private Brisbane collection, *Hobart* records the distinct natural beauty of Tasmania, and was originally unveiled as the centrepiece of Streeton's 1938 solo exhibition in Melbourne, where it commanded the highest price of 700 guineas. This price was modestly improved upon last night, when it sold for \$920,455 (lot 24, estimate \$750,000–950,000).

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Smith & Singer, commented: 'We are thrilled with last night's auction result of almost \$12 million, augmenting the outstanding private sale and international consignments we have achieved in the first quarter of 2021, and reaffirming our position as the premier art business in Australia. The auction galvanised demand, with record numbers of visitors to both our Melbourne and Sydney exhibitions, resulting in a sold rate of 93.44% by volume and 144.22% by value. Last night we created history and achieved the highest total from the smallest number of lots in the company's (both Smith & Singer and formerly as Sotheby's Australia) history. With six world auction records set during the evening for traditional, modern and contemporary artists, the sale demonstrated a broad and robust level of demand in the Australian art market, and we are delighted that so many of the works

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on offer found new owners. We thank the ongoing trust of both our consignors and buyers for choosing Smith & Singer, and look forward to welcoming you back with our next auction of *Important Australian & International Art* in August this year.'

AUCTION RECORDS



BESSIE DAVIDSON 1879-1965

Interieur (1935)

oil on board, 124.5 x 104.5 cm

Estimate \$200,000–250,000

Sold for \$662,727

AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST



CONSTANCE STOKES 1906-1991

The Three Graces (1951)

oil on board, 70.2 x 55.9 cm

Estimate \$60,000–80,000

Sold for \$220,909

AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST

AKIO MAKIGAWA 1948-1999

Work 1 (Sun) (1990)

Paonazzo marble, Marquino marble,
Carrara white marble, galvanised steel
and gold leaf, 236 x 300 x 75 cm (overall)

Estimate \$80,000–120,000

Sold for \$135,000

AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST

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MICHAEL ZAVROS born 1974

Spring / Fall II 2004

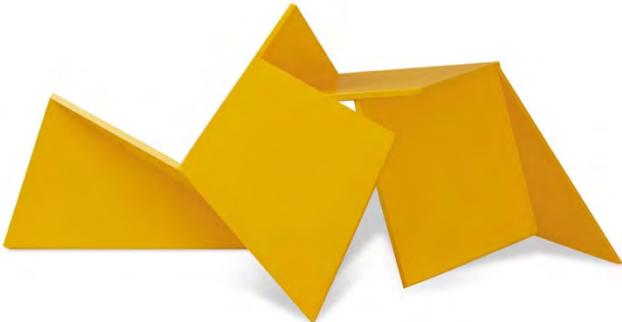
oil on canvas, 214 x 167.5 cm

Estimate \$40,000–60,000

Sold for \$79,773

AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST

© Michael Zavros



RON ROBERTSON-SWANN born 1941

Vault (1979)

painted steel, edition of 10 plus 1 artist's

proof, 50 x 116 x 63 cm

Estimate \$15,000–25,000

Sold for \$55,227

AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST

© Ron Robertson-Swann/Copyright Agency, 2021



GEORGE BALDESSIN 1939-1978

Pear (1971-1972, cast 1972)

bronze, unique state, foundry proof,

160 x 80 x 80 cm

Estimate \$50,000–70,000

Sold for \$196,364

AUCTION RECORD FOR THE ARTIST

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COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



CLARICE BECKETT 1887-1935
Boatsheds (circa 1928)
oil canvas on board, 40 x 32.5 cm
Estimate \$20,000–30,000
Sold for \$61,364



GRACE COSSINGTON SMITH
1892-1984
Buttercups 1944
oil on pulpboard, 31.5 x 26.5 cm
Estimate \$20,000–30,000
Sold for \$79,773
© Estate of Grace Cossington Smith



ALBERT TUCKER 1914-1999
Antipodean Figure 1967
oil on composition board, 60.7
x 75.8 cm
Estimate \$80,000–120,000
Sold for \$294,545
© Albert & Barbara Tucker Foundation.
Courtesy of Smith & Singer Fine Art



JEFFREY SMART 1921-2013
**Containers and Silos at
Livorno** (1990)
oil on canvas, 72 x 95.5 cm
Estimate \$450,000–650,000
Sold for \$822,273
© The Estate of Jeffrey Smart



ARTHUR STREETON 1867-1943
Hobart 1938
oil on canvas, 102 x 152 cm
Sold for \$920,455
Estimate \$750,000–950,000

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AT A GLANCE

Important Australian & International Art
Auction, Sydney, 20 April 2021, 6.30 pm
National Council of Jewish Women of Australia, 111 Queen Street, Woollahra NSW 2025

Lots on offer/sold: 61/57
Total sold: \$11,965,909 including buyer's premium
Sold by value: 144.22% including buyer's premium
Sold by volume: 93.44%

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Please note all prices include buyer's premium. Sale session totals are net aggregate figures inclusive of premiums. Smith & Singer's buyer's premium is 22.7% of the hammer price not including GST. ** Estimates do not include buyer's premium**

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