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John Keats 03 9508 9900 | 0412 132 520  
John.Keats@sothebysaustralia.com.au

# Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney 16 August 2017



ARTHUR BOYD 1920-1999 Moby Dick Hill (1949). Estimate \$1,000,000-1,200,000

*Million dollar masterpiece by Angry Penguins artist Arthur Boyd*

*National identity defined in paintings by Russell Drysdale*

*Jeffrey Smart's rare and unique record of 20th century Australian modernism & industrialisation*

*One of the most significant images from Charles Blackman 'Schoolgirl' series*

*Important visual & literary records of Australian Colonisation by Thomas John Domville Taylor*

Strong buyer interest is anticipated at Sotheby's Australia's August sale of **Important Australian Art** on 16 August at the InterContinental Sydney. With **97 works** of art for auction estimated at **\$9.02 million to \$11.77 million**, the sale presents a collection of extraordinary moments in Australian art history. Surveying major stylistic developments, the auction offers rare and prestigious examples of Colonial Art, Naturalism, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Modernism, and Abstraction, along with ground-breaking paintings and works on paper by the most influential artistic innovators of historical, modern and contemporary Australian art.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Following the outstanding result of our May 2017 sale, in which Sotheby's Australia achieved its highest auction result in ten years, Sotheby's Australia has assembled a strong selection of historical, modern and contemporary Australian art for our August sale.'

### ARTHUR BOYD – MILLION DOLLAR MASTERPIECE

A ground-breaking painting from the late 1940s by Arthur Boyd, *Moby Dick Hill* (estimate \$1,000,000-1,200,000, lot 9, pictured previous) was awarded the equal third prize of £75 in the inaugural Dunlop Australian art Contest. The painting is the most expansive and ambitious of Boyd's remarkable group of paintings from 1948-1949 remaining in private ownership. The jewel-like enamel surface constructed through the combination of combining egg tempera and glaze enables the artist to construct exquisite details with vast distances. The blending of a micro/macro vision of such a highly personal subject creates an immensely rich and rewarding viewing experience.

### RUSSELL DRYSDALE – SOCIAL OBSERVER

The essence of inland Australia from the mid-1960s is captured by Russell Drysdale in *Boy with a Lizard* (1966) and helped define a national identity at a time of tremendous social change in Australian history (estimate \$400,000-600,000, lot 7, pictured).



Painted in Sydney, *Boy with a Lizard* is an exceptional example of Drysdale's compositions from the mid-1960s. The painting was inspired from the artist's four months of travel across Western Australia's central desert and Kimberley regions in late 1958. Exhibited in 1966 at the Leicester Galleries, London, it follows on from the artist's major solo exhibition held at the same gallery in 1965 which was received with critical acclaim with acquisitions from both national and international collectors.

### JEFFREY SMART – AUSTRALIAN MODERNISATION & INDUSTRIALISATION

Jeffrey Smart's *The Mail Exchange, Rushcutters Bay* (1989-1992) (estimate \$300,000-350,000, lot 8, pictured) is poised to create enormous interest amongst curators and collectors for its national significance, providing a rare and unique record of 20th century Australian modernisation and industrialisation.



The subject is a singular image in the small canon of Australian subjects created by the artist during this period and also includes the image of the Australian flag. Since the work was painted, the modernist architectural structure of the mail exchange building at Rushcutters Bay has been demolished.

**CHARLES BLACKMAN – ‘SCHOOLGIRL’ MASTERPIECE**

Tightly held in a private collection since it was acquired over 60 years ago, an extraordinary painting by Charles Blackman, *The Pink* 1953 (estimate \$250,000-350,000, lot 34, pictured) will be auctioned by Sotheby’s Australia.



Acquired directly from the artist’s solo exhibition in Adelaide in 1953, the composition was recently included in the comprehensive *Charles Blackman: Schoolgirls* exhibition at Heide Museum of Modern Art where, with the assistance of Sotheby’s Australia, it was fully catalogued and reproduced for the first time. During the process another painting of a schoolgirl at Kooyong Stadium was revealed on the reverse and is reproduced for the first time by Sotheby’s Australia.

**THOMAS JOHN DOMVILLE TAYLOR - EXPLORATION & COLONISATION ACCOUNT**

A remarkable collection of visual and literary documents – field sketches, finished drawings and a journal by Thomas John Domville Taylor – provides an important insight into life on the colonial frontier during the 1840s in what is now southern Queensland (estimate \$200,000-300,000 lot 83, pictured).



This substantial collection of material has come directly from the artist’s descendants and substantially amplifies our understanding of early colonial expansion in Australia. There is an intellectual honesty in the artist’s work, as he acknowledged the costs of European settlement on Aboriginal Australians.’

**AT A GLANCE**

Important Australian Art  
Auction in Sydney, 16 August 2017, 6.30 pm  
InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney  
Total estimate \$9,021,000-11,768,000, 97 lots

Exhibition in Sydney 10-16 August, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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