

Sydney 16 August 2017

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# Million Dollar Boyd

Important Australian Art | Auction in Sydney 16 August 2017



ARTHUR BOYD 1920-1999, *Moby Dick Hill* (1949). Sold for \$1,220,000 August 2017

Outstanding results were achieved at Sotheby's Australia's August sale of **Important Australian Art** held at the InterContinental Sydney on 16 August. Surveying major stylistic developments, the auction offered 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. With 97 works of art on offer, the sale realised **\$11.3 million** with clearance rates of **125.4% by value**.

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'The result of \$1.22 million for Arthur Boyd's *Moby Dick Hill* is a testament to the genius of an artist who, following the Second World War, encapsulated the urgency and vitality of an Expressionist style that contributed significantly to the history and development of twentieth century Australian Art. The results' achieved by Sotheby's Australia this evening represents the continued strength and confidence in the Australian Art Market. Our local and international clients possess a deep appreciation for exemplary works by Australia's finest artists.'

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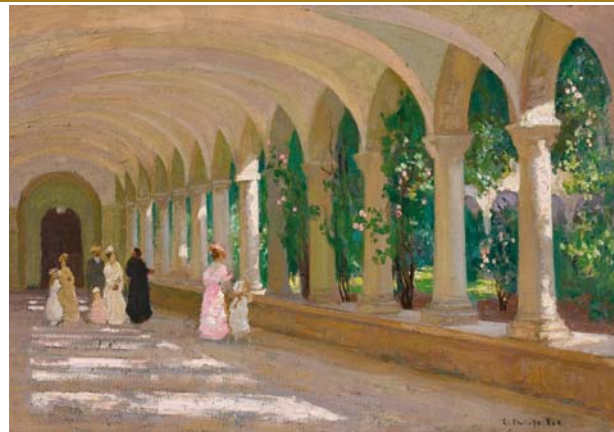
### ARTHUR BOYD – MILLION DOLLAR MASTERPIECE

The ground-breaking painting from the late 1940s by Arthur Boyd, *Moby Dick Hill* sold for \$1,220,000 **becoming the third highest priced work by the artist at auction** (estimate \$1,000,000-1,200,000, lot 9, pictured previous). The painting was awarded the equal third prize of £75 in the inaugural Dunlop Australian art Contest. The jewel-like enamel surface constructed through the combination of combining egg tempera and glaze enabled the artist to construct exquisite details with vast distances. The blending of a micro/macro vision of such a highly personal subject created an immensely rich and rewarding viewing experience. **Sotheby's Australia now holds the five highest auction results for Arthur Boyd.**

Arthur Boyd's 1972 painting *Landscape with Dam* also generated strong bidding interest with numerous telephone and room bids. The painting nearly doubled the high estimate and realised \$195,200 (estimate \$80,000-100,000, lot 15).

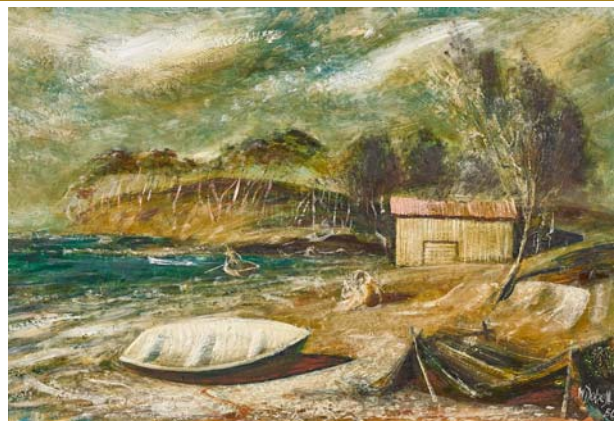
### E. PHILLIPS FOX – RECORD BREAKING MONASTERY MASTERPIECE

E. Phillips Fox's impressionist masterpiece *Monastery, San Lazzaro* (1907) debuted for auction tonight and became the **new auction record for the artist at \$1,061,400 nearly doubling the existing record** (estimate \$300,000-400,000, lot 17, pictured). Depicting San Lazzaro degli Armeni (Saint Lazarus of the Armenians), located on a small island in the Venetian Lagoon, The painting had remained in the Abrahams family collection since 1908, and only recently reappeared when it was exhibited at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane in 2011.



### WILLIAM DOBELL – DELICATE WANGI LANDSCAPE DELIGHTS

Following Sotheby's Australia's recent success for paintings by William Dobell, another significant landscape *The Narrows Beach* 1956 realised \$280,600 (estimate \$150,000-200,000, lot 6, pictured). Dobell created the delicate and beautiful work for Frank and Thelma Clune in recognition of a 'lost' work, which was stolen from an exhibition years prior. The painting occupies an important position within the artist's oeuvre and has long been considered one of Dobell's finest compositions.



**BRETT WHITELEY – MAGNIFICENT MAGNOLIA**

Paintings of Lavender Bay by Sydney modernist Brett Whiteley attracted strong bidding. Articulating the Asian aesthetic that appealed so greatly to Whiteley, *Magnolia Tree in the Rain* 1977 achieved \$585,600 with frenetic bidding from the telephone and room (estimate \$300,000-400,000, lot 11, pictured). *In the Bottom Park at Lavender Bay there is a Jacaranda and a Gardenia Tree* (1984-1985) achieved \$793,000 (\$650,000-850,000, lot 35).

The third highest price of the evening was \$1,024,800 with Brett Whiteley's *The Drought Crow: Sloping Up on the Olgas 1 (Up Front and Outback)* 1984-1985 selling for over the high estimate (\$700,000-900,000, lot 21).



**RUSSELL DRYSDALE – NATIONAL IDENTITY**

The essence of inland Australia captured the attention of bidders with Russell Drysdale's *Boy with a Lizard* (1966) selling for \$536,800 (estimate \$400,000-600,000, lot 7, pictured). During a time of tremendous social change of the 1960s in Australia, the painting helped define a national identity. Painted in Sydney, *Boy with a Lizard* was an exceptional example of Drysdale's compositions from the mid-1960s, inspired from the artist's four months of travel across Western Australia's central desert and Kimberley regions in late 1958.



**JEFFREY SMART – AUSTRALIAN MODERNISATION & INDUSTRIALISATION**

Jeffrey Smart's *The Mail Exchange, Rushcutters Bay* (1989-1992) created enormous interest amongst collectors and sold for \$506,800 (estimate \$300,000-350,000, lot 8, pictured). The painting provided 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 included 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.



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

**Achieving an auction record of \$512,400 for the artist**, a remarkable collection of visual and literary documents by Thomas John Domville Taylor provided 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 had come directly from the artist's descendants and substantially amplified 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

Lots on offer: 97  
Total sold \$11,314,890 including buyer's premium  
Sold by volume: 70.1%  
Sold by value: 125.43%

**World auction records were set for the following artists;**

- E. PHILLIPS FOX 1865-1915, *Monastery, San Lazzaro* (1907), oil on canvas, 44.5 x 64.8 cm  
Sold for \$1,061,400 (estimate \$300,000-400,000, lot 17)
- ELIOTH GRUNER 1882-1939, *Silver Sands (Bondi)* 1918, oil on board, 16 x 28.5 cm  
Sold for \$244,000 (estimate \$120,000-140,000, lot 16)
- PAUL JONES 1921-1997, *Magnolia Denudata*, gouache on paper, 54.5 x 35 cm  
Sold for \$15,860 (estimate \$1,500-2,000, lot 92)
- THOMAS JOHN DOMVILLE TAYLOR, circa 1817-1889, *Drawings* (1840-1848), 21 sheets, pencil on paper, *Sketchbook* (1840-1848), 22 pages, pencil on paper, *Journal* 1845, 38 pages, ink on paper, various sizes  
Sold for \$512,400 (estimate \$200,000-300,000, lot 83)

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*\*Estimates do not include buyer's premium and prices achieved include the hammer price plus buyer's premium.*

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