

Sydney 21 November 2017

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## Records Tumble at Highest Ever November Auction for Sotheby's Australia

8 new artist auction records including: Charles Blackman's *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* 1956 selling for a world auction record of \$1.89 million and Albert Tucker's *Image of Modern Evil 29* 1946 selling for a world auction record of \$1.16 million

Sotheby's Australia realised its highest November art auction result with \$10.6 million

Sotheby's Australia realised its highest annual art auction result since 2007 with in excess of \$37 million

Sotheby's Australia continues to lead the Australian art auction market with outstanding results



CHARLES BLACKMAN, born 1928, *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* 1956.  
Sold for \$1,891,000 November 2017. Auction Record for the Artist

Strong buyer interest led to Sotheby's Australia achieving its highest ever November *Important Australian Art* result of \$10.67 million, and the auctioneers highest yearly art auction sale total since 2007. Charles Blackman's *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* 1956 led the sale with \$1,891,000 (estimate \$1,400,000-1,800,000, lot 26, pictured) and Albert Tucker's *Image of Modern Evil 29* 1946 sold for \$1,159,000 (estimate \$800,000-1,000,000, lot 10, picture follows), both established new world auction records.

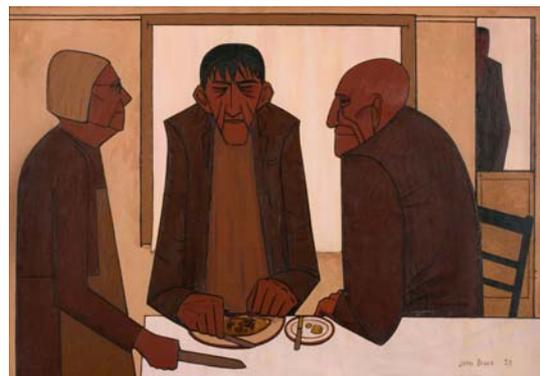
Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Tonight we were thrilled to continue the outstanding successes that we have achieved for historical, modern and contemporary Australian Art throughout 2017. It was a privilege to offer masterpieces by Charles Blackman, John Brack, Albert Tucker and Brett Whiteley amongst others, and we were delighted to deliver exceptional results. Eight new world auction records were established with the two stand-out results over \$1 million being Charles Blackman's *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* for \$1,891,000 and Albert Tucker's *Image of Modern Evil 29* with \$1,159,000. We carefully assembled a sale to match the demands of today's collectors, and the market responded enthusiastically. The growing awareness of the significance of Australian Art has led Sotheby's Australia to achieve its highest annual art auction result since 2007 with over \$37 million sold and we have maintained our Australian art market leading results.'

#### **MILLION DOLLAR TEA PARTY**

*Mad Hatter's Tea Party* 1956, one of the most significant works remaining in a private collection from Charles Blackman's *Alice in Wonderland* series drew strong interest and established a new auction record of \$1,891,000 for the artist (estimate \$1,400,000-1,800,000 lot 26, pictured previous). Despite being ostensibly illustrations to Lewis Carroll's classic children's story, Blackman's *Alice* paintings contain a distinct autobiographical resonance, where the White Rabbit represents the artist and Alice, the symbolic avatar of his adored Barbara. Tonight's result broke the previous auction record for the artist of \$1,799,500 achieved for *The Game of Chess* 1956 by Sotheby's Australia in November 2016.

#### **PRODIGAL SON RETURNS A STELLAR RESULT**

Selling for over double the low estimate John Brack's *The Return of the Prodigal Son* 1953 sold for \$1,372,500 (estimate \$600,000-800,000, lot 53, pictured). The painting was one of the artist's most commanding and complex compositions from the early 1950s that remained in private ownership. The title and subject are taken from the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke's Gospel 15: 11-32), though in this painting there is little sense of joy, with a frugal kitchen supper and the three main figures set in tight horizontal grimaces.



### MILLION DOLLAR RECORD FOR ALBERT TUCKER

This evening the auction record for Albert Tucker exceeded \$1 million dollars with *Image of Modern Evil 29* 1946 achieving \$1,159,000 (estimate \$800,000-1,000,000, lot 10, pictured). Consigned by the recently established Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation, all of the proceeds from the sale of the painting will benefit socially disadvantaged Australians.

The painting forms a cornerstone of Tucker's internationally renowned *Images of Modern Evil* series, which reflected the artist's dark vision of a society experiencing trauma, upheaval and moral decay during World War II on the Australian home-front. Virtually every major painting from this series is now held in public collections. From 1979 to 2015, *Image of Modern Evil 29* was on long-term loan to the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra.



In addition, Albert Tucker's *John and Sunday Reed* 1982 drew strong bidding and realised \$122,000 (estimate \$100,000-150,000, lot 28) establishing an auction record for a portrait by the artist.

### SHAO TAKES FLIGHT

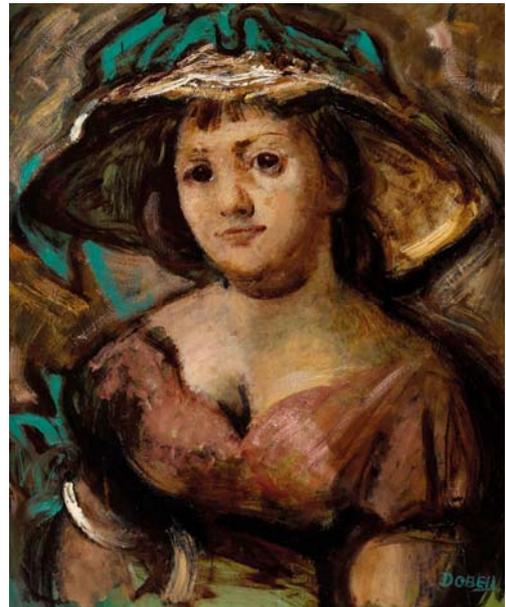
*Shao* 1979, auctioned for the first time and one of Brett Whiteley's most exuberant and joyous avian paintings took flight and realised \$1,159,000 (estimate \$850,000-950,000, lot 20, pictured). Perched on slender branch of a frangipani tree, the bird presides over the glistening, moonlight waters of Sydney Harbour.

Brett Whiteley is widely and appropriately celebrated as one of Australia's great cultural identities. Versatile and expansive his *oeuvre* encompasses a wide range of media and subjects – in 1978 he became the first (and only) artist to win all three of the Art Gallery of New South Wales' prestigious painting prizes, the Archibald (portraiture), the Wynne (landscape) and the Sulman (subject/genre).



**BOLD RESULT FOR SHY PORTRAIT OF MARGARET OLLEY**

William Dobell's *Study for Margaret Olley* (1948) achieved \$268,400 (estimate \$180,000-220,000, lot 11, pictured) and was the major preparatory work for the Archibald Prize winning *Margaret Olley* (1948, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney). The most detailed study on oils, Olley is shown in her 'battered hat' and 'plain beige cotton dress.' The paint is applied in broad, vigorous strokes and captures the overall structure of the facial features, placement of the hat and position of the body that remained largely unchanged in the finished composition. In both the study as well as the final work, Dobell conveys an image of a young woman who possesses somewhat contradictory traits of inner shyness and timidity coupled with more outwardly signs of confidence and flamboyance.



**THE HOUR FOR A NEW RECORD FOR TUDOR ST GEORGE TUCKER**

Debuting for auction and setting a new auction record for the artist of \$256,200, Tudor St George Tucker's impressionist masterpiece *The Lover's Hour* (1895) was thought lost for over a century and only known of through contemporary references and descriptions (estimate \$180,000-220,000, lot 41, pictured). The painting had remained in the same family collection for successive generations, and possibly since it was first exhibited at the Victorian Artists' Society in 1895.



**HUNTED – ADRIAN FEINT'S FLOWERS WITH SUNSET: PANEL FOR 'ORION'**

Considered lost for many decades, Adrian Feint's *Flowers with Sunset: Panel for 'Orion'* 1946 found a new auction record for the artist at \$76,860 (estimate \$15,000-20,000, lot 3, pictured). The painting was one of artist's most important paintings ever to appear for public sale. Commissioned by the Orient Company, Feint painted two flower pieces for the restaurant on board 'Orion' which had been refitted for peacetime sailing and is one of the artist's largest and most significant compositions.



## AT A GLANCE

Important Australian Art  
Auction in Sydney, 21 November 2017, 6.30 pm  
InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Lots on offer: 82  
Total sold \$10,666,216 including buyer's premium  
Sold by volume: 64.63%  
Sold by value: 113.47%

2017 art auction total \$37,019,192

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

- CHARLES BLACKMAN, born 1928, *Mad Hatter's Tea Party* 1956, tempera and oil on composition board, 105 x 121 cm  
Sold for \$1,891,000 (estimate \$1,400,000-1,800,000, lot 26)
- ALBERT TUCKER 1914-1999, *Image of Modern Evil* 29 1946, oil on cotton gauze on cardboard, 63.1 x 47.2 cm.  
Sold for \$1,159,000 (estimate \$800,000-1,000,000, lot 10)
- TUDOR ST GEORGE TUCKER 1862-1906, *The Lovers' Hour* 1895, oil on canvas, 76 x 126 cm  
Sold for \$256,200 (estimate \$180,000-220,000, lot 41)
- ADRIAN FEINT 1894-1971, *Flowers with Sunset: Panel for 'Orion'* 1946, oil on canvas, 61.5 x 92 cm.  
Sold for \$76,860 (estimate \$15,000-20,000, lot 3)
- JEAN APPLETON 1911-2003, *Self Portrait* (1942) oil, sand and collage on canvas, 77.5 x 57 cm  
Sold for \$63,440 (estimate \$45,000-65,000, lot 47)
- EDWIN STOCQUELER 1829-1895, *Digging for Gold Along an Old Creek Bed* 1877, oil on canvas, 61.2 x 51 cm  
Sold for \$48,800 (estimate \$40,000-60,000, lot 80)
- LESLIE WILKIE, 1879-1935, *The Hammock (The Leisure Hour)* 1907-1911, oil on canvas, 71.5 x 101.7 cm  
Sold for \$31,720 (estimate \$25,000-35,000, lot 40)
- NORMAN CARTER 1875-1963, *Girl in White* 1923, oil on canvas, 92.5 x 77 cm  
Sold for \$26,840 (estimate \$10,000-15,000, lot 76)

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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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