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

Global Interest for Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection

AUCTION IN SYDNEY 29 APRIL 2018



WILLIAM WETMORE STORY 1819-1895 *Orpheus with his Lyre* 1885. Sold for AUD\$268,400 April 2018

The most significant collection of historical international art ever offered for sale in Australia was auctioned by Sotheby's Australia on 29 April 2018 in Sydney. Assembled over several decades, *Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection* reflected the impeccable taste and connoisseurship of its creator, John Schaeffer. The sale was a ground breaking event for the Australian auction market, with the collection composed of 50 works by international artists, of which 56% sold by volume and 63% by value, and 68% sold to Australian buyers. Overall the sale realised AUD\$2,017,270.

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Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Last night's auction represents a turning point in the Australian auction market for offering historical international art. Highly focused and specialised, *Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection* attracted bidding from America, Asia and Europe, however, it was Australian collectors who secured some of the most valuable objects, ensuring that these works will remain on our shores for future generations.'

Sotheby's Australia's local and global connections continue to introduce many new and existing collectors with significant works by Australian and international practitioners. *Important Art from the John Schaeffer AO Collection* was no exception with bidders registering from Australia, Japan, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America, with 36% of buyers registering for the first time with Sotheby's Australia. The total sale saw 39% sold by value and 28% by volume to international clients.



SIR ALFRED GILBERT 1854-1934, *Perseus Arming* (1882).
Sold for AUD\$219,600 April 2018

John Schaeffer was born in Amsterdam and migrated to Australia in the 1950s. Like many of his fellow 'new Australians', he arrived in this country virtually penniless and with no formal art education. Schaeffer worked hard and eventually accumulated enough in savings to acquire a cleaning business, transforming Tempo Services from a firm employing 25 people into a publicly listed company with a staff of 23,000. As Schaeffer later recalled, 'It was the early dawn of outsourcing. Within a few years, just about every organisation would no longer think of doing its own cleaning, but would give it to a contractor. The little company I bought flourished ... becoming one of the top 20 companies in Australia.'

Schaeffer's initial art collecting focused predominantly on Australian art and he acquired major examples by the most fashionable and highly regarded artists of the time, including William Dobell, G.W. Lambert, Norman Lindsay and John Russell. It was however, John Schaeffer's visit to the exhibition *The Pre-Raphaelites* at London's Tate Gallery in 1984 that represented a defining and life-altering moment. 'It galvanised my collecting', Schaeffer confessed, 'The whole exhibition struck me ... the poetry, the storylines, the romanticism. As a businessman who did not have any formal training, it ... caused me to suddenly pick up books and feverishly read about what inspired the artists.'

HIGHLIGHTS

Much admired during the exhibition, William Wetmore Story's rare and unique marble sculpture of *Orpheus with his Lyre* 1885 sold to an Australian buyer for AUD\$268,400 (estimate AUD\$220,000-280,000, lot 50, pictured first page). Orpheus was a Thracian poet, famed for his musical skills which could charm wild animals.

One of the rare largest sized casts of *Perseus Arming* (1882), long considered one of Alfred Gilbert's finest and most desirable sculptures sold to a buyer from the United Kingdom for AUD\$219,600 (estimate AUD\$180,000-220,000, lot 16, pictured second page). Here the artist has transformed an 'old fable' into an arresting image of the vitality and possibilities of a young man as he prepares for this future.

A celebration of the influence of Japanese art and the aesthetics on European and American culture
Fernand Toussaint's *The Japanese Print* 1913

achieved AUD\$122,000 (estimate AUD\$100,000-120,000, lot 45, pictured above) to a Turkish client. The painting depicts a glamorous woman situated in a luxurious interior while examining a Japanese print surrounded by textiles and floral fixtures and furnishings associated with the Aesthetic Movement.



FERNAND TOUSSAINT 1873-1963 *The Japanese Print* 1913.
Sold for AUD\$122,000 April 2018

AT A GLANCE

Important Art from The John Schaeffer AO Collection
Auction in Sydney 29 April 2018, 6.30pm

Lots on offer: 56
Total sold \$2,017,270 including buyer's premium
Sold by volume: 57.14%
Sold by value: 60.34%

International works sold by volume: 56%
International works sold by value: 62.85%
International works sold to Australian buyers 67.86%

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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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