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Arthur Boyd Masterpiece Debuts for Auction at Sotheby's Australia

Poised to exceed the current artist auction record of \$1.68 million established by Sotheby's Australia in 2012

One of the largest and most compelling works from the artist's most renowned and revered series

To be unveiled for auction for the first time in its six decade history



ARTHUR BOYD 1920-1999 *Drowned Bridegroom* (1959). Estimate \$1,600,000-1,900,000. © The Estate of Arthur Boyd/Copyright Agency, 2018

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'Arthur Boyd's *Drowned Bridegroom* (1959) makes its auction debut at Sotheby's Australia this August in Sydney, 60 years after the work was painted and first exhibited. *Drowned Bridegroom* is one of the most powerful, tender and monumental of the entire 'Bride' series by Boyd, which articulated his deep concern for social, political and psychological complexities that faced Indigenous Australians during the 1950s. This compelling painting is anticipated to break the current artist record Sotheby's Australia achieved in August 2012 with *Bride Running Away* (1957-1958) realising \$1.68 million, surpassing the previous record of \$1.2 million for *Frightened Bridegroom* (1958) which we established in 2011.'

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Fresh to the secondary art market, *Drowned Bridegroom* (1959) (estimate \$1,600,000-1,900,000, lot 20, pictured previous) has been held in a private Melbourne collection for over 30 years. This impressive work has been highly prized and integral to many exhibitions on Arthur Boyd and his contemporaries, including *Arthur Boyd: Brides* in 2014-2015 at Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne that assembled 50 paintings and works on paper, and proved the series was equally astonishing today as when it was first exhibited.



ARTHUR BOYD 1920-1999, *Bride Running Away* (1957). Sold for \$1,680,000 August 2012. ***Auction Record for the Artist.***
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Drowned Bridegroom depicts the bride standing with clasped hands over the groom, surrounded by some of the most potent motifs and emblems that feature in the series, including the bridal gown and veil that shimmer and glisten as they catch the light of the moon. The large bouquet with a pair of eyes embedded amidst its blooms sprouts from the ear of the sorrowfully prone facedown figure of the groom. The seduction-rejection story is played out against a dark and empty background that clearly owes something to Boyd's experiences of the vast night sky of inland and Central Australia.

Arthur Boyd's inspiration for the 'Bride' series was his visit to Alice Springs in 1951, with his first close and extended encounter with the Central Australian desert and with the socio-economic degradation of the Indigenous Australians. During that time, Boyd witnessed Aboriginal women in wedding gowns driven to church on the back of an open truck. The artist was noted as saying, 'I had, prior to my trip, only seen one Aboriginal, a chap around Melbourne who played a gumleaf ... I was quite unprepared for the Simpson Desert and seeing people living like that ... My contact with Aborigines was not close at all, but was close enough to know that it wasn't right.'

Sotheby's Australia leads the market in the sale of works by Arthur Boyd with the five highest results at auction, all for over \$1 million dollars. These results were achieved since 2011 and three are for paintings from the 'Bride' series.

AT A GLANCE

ARTHUR BOYD 1920-1999

Drowned Bridegroom (1959)

oil and tempera on composition board

122 x 182.8 cm

Estimate \$1,600,000-1,900,000

Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney, 28 August 2018, 6.30 pm

InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Exhibition in Melbourne, 15-19 August 2018, 10 am to 5 pm, 14-16 Collins Street, Melbourne

Exhibition in Sydney, 23-28 August 2018, 10 am to 5 pm, 30 & 34 Queen Street, Woollahra

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