

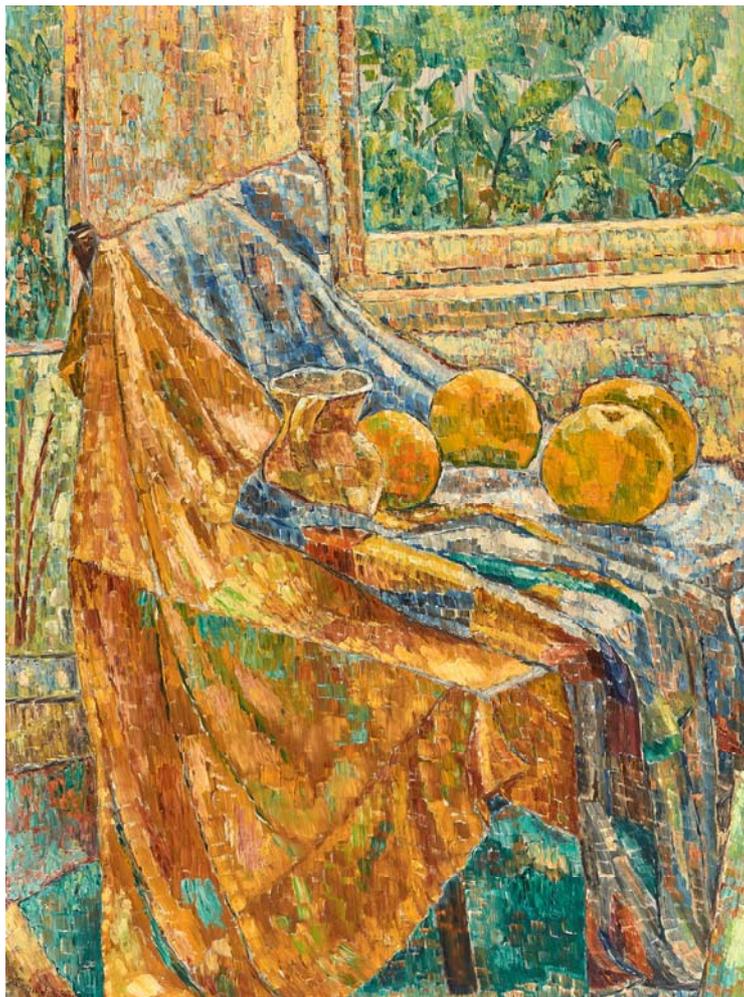
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State of Grace: Important Modernist Interior Emerges for Auction at Sotheby's Australia

Grace Cossington Smith's *Fruit in the Window* formed a cornerstone in the collection of the eminent art dealer and benefactor Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE

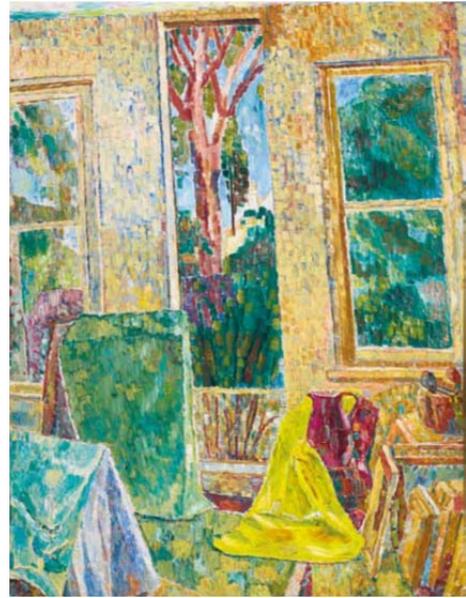
To be offered for auction for the first time, *Fruit in the Window* belongs to the artist's much-acclaimed series of late interiors



GRACE COSSINGTON SMITH 1892-1984, *Fruit in the Window* 1957.

Estimate \$200,000-250,000. © The Estate of Grace Cossington Smith

Consigned by the granddaughter of Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE, Grace Cossington Smith's highly-acclaimed masterpiece, *Fruit in the Window* 1957 is offered for auction for the first time by Sotheby's Australia at its August sale of Important Australian Art (estimate \$200,000-250,000, pictured previous). Dr Brown has long been revered as Australia's most prolific art collector and dealer, *Fruit in the Window* formed the cornerstone of his personal art collection. With the painting's particularly distinguished provenance and exhibition history, the composition is a pictorial record of the artist's domestic environment, a shimmering interior painted in a pointillist manner. In 2014, Sotheby's Australia achieved the artist auction record of \$671,000 for *The Window* 1956, formerly in the collection of art historian and art-museum curator, Daniel Thomas, and acquired by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.



GRACE COSSINGTON SMITH 1892-1984, *The Window* 1956. Sold for \$671,000 November 2014 to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. ***Auction Record for the Artist.***
© The Estate of Grace Cossington Smith

Geoffrey Smith, Chairman of Sotheby's Australia commented: 'A leading Australian modernist, Grace Cossington Smith's paintings are particularly treasured by public, corporate and private collectors; in particular her iridescent light-drenched rooms and windowscapes of the late 1950s and early 1960s are amongst her most accomplished and best loved works. We are honoured to be entrusted with the sale of this most significant interior by a descendant of the eminent art dealer and benefactor Dr Joseph Brown AO OBE. Dr Brown's numerous gifts to Australian museums and galleries greatly enriched our cultural institutions. The sale of *Fruit in the Window* represents a unique opportunity to acquire one of Cossington Smith's greatest paintings and is sure to generate much excitement.'

Jenny Brown, vendor and descendent of Dr Brown commented: 'As a child, I fondly remember walking around Caroline House with my grandfather, Jojo [Dr Joseph Brown], and looking at his collection piled high on his walls. One of my favourites was Grace Cossington Smith's *Fruit in the Window* with the warm yellow colours and the individual brush strokes in the painting. I recall Jojo describing how he acquired the work, a swap for a painting by Peter Purves Smith known as *Pyramid Landscape*. Jojo and I would admire the control of Cossington's Smith's brush; each vertical stroke seemed to have its own unique colour and quality. *Fruit in the Window* also reminds me of Jojo himself, he would find delight in the most simplest of things in his garden – a lush blooming flower, a ripe citrusy lemon – he would pick the beauty, bring it inside and take a photo of it on his kitchen table. In effect, he was constantly creating his own still life, much in the same way Cossington Smith did – haphazardly placing fruit on the table while nature beckons with even more wonder out the window.'

A pioneer of Australian modernist painting, Grace Cossington Smith employed a variety of techniques, largely characterised by square brush strokes and bright colours. Forming the

cornerstone of Dr Brown's collection *Fruit in the Window* shows the artist's studio in the family home, 'Cossington' at Turramurra, a highland suburb on Sydney's North Shore Line. The composition discloses a view into the garden on the cool south side of the house, while the foreground is awash with warm tones, scattered with the still life of a chair, drapery, fruit and jug. The artfully constructed composition of yellow, orange, blue and green immediately engages and shows Grace Cossington Smith's mastery of colour and distinct technique.

Grace Cossington Smith's subjects varied from significant global events to quintessentially Australian scenes, capturing a specific time and place. She was a strong supporter of modernism, credited with leading the Post-Impressionist movement in Australia. However it was not until later in her life that she was adequately recognised and in 1973 made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for her services to Australian art. That same year a major retrospective of her work toured Australia, cementing her role as a truly brilliant artist.

AT A GLANCE

GRACE COSSINGTON SMITH 1892-1984

Fruit in the Window 1957

oil on composition board

78.5 x 58 cm

Estimate \$200,000-250,000

Important Australian Art

Auction in Sydney, 28 August 2018, 6.30 pm

InterContinental Sydney, 117 Macquarie Street, Sydney

Total estimate \$10,042,000-13,694,000 | 67 lots

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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