

PRESS RELEASE
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CHRISTIE'S TO AUCTION \$1.5 MILLION BLEASEL COLLECTION OF AUSTRALIAN PAINTINGS ON TUESDAY MARCH 22 IN MELBOURNE

Melbourne, Australia - Christie's Director and Head of Australian & International Paintings, Jon Dwyer says the company's March 22 auction in Melbourne of The James & Margaret Bleasel Collection represents the dispersal of a meticulously assembled survey of Australian art.

"The Bleasels have assembled an absolute jewel of a collection which, in a small survey of less than four dozen works, represents most of the finest of Australian artists and spans the colonial to modern eras. Compiled with an impeccable eye for traditional taste, it is a triumph of quality over quantity in art collecting. Christie's is honoured to have been entrusted with the auction." said Jon Dwyer.

Highlights of the 40 lot sale, which is expected to realise in excess of \$1.5 million, are:

Frederick McCubbin (1855-1917) **'The Artist's Garden, South Yarra'** *Estimate \$120,000-150,000*

Tom Roberts (1856-1931) **'Portrait of Mrs Tom Roberts'** *Estimate \$60,000-90,000*

John Peter Russell (1858-1930) **'Belle Ile en Mer'** *Estimate \$70,000-100,000*

Arthur Streeton (1867-1943) **'Calm Morning, Sirius Cove'** *Estimate \$100,000-140,000*

Walter Withers (1854-1914) **'Young Girl on Hillside'** *Estimate \$80,000-120,000*

Brett Whiteley (1939-1992) **'Reclining Nude'** *Estimate \$280,000-350,000*

James and Margaret Bleasel lived in Sydney until early 1984, when they moved to Hobart upon Mr. Bleasel's appointment to head of the Australian Antarctic Division. In previous travels they had collected art from both Australia and overseas. However, after moving to Hobart their purchases became exclusively Australian art and encompassed paintings, drawings and sculpture.

While head of the Australian Antarctic Division Mr. Bleasel commenced collecting Antarctic focussed art and presented major sculpture by Stephen Walker which is now located in front of the Division's headquarters in Hobart. He inaugurated the Australian Antarctic Division's *'Artists in Antarctica'* program, where each year some Australian artists are taken to the polar region to produce work with an Antarctic focus.

After Mr. Bleasel retired from the Antarctic Division in 1988, concluding 38 years of distinguished public service, the Bleasels became hoteliers and now operate a number of hotels and hospitality venues in Tasmania.

In the early years of their new career, the Bleasels commenced securing quality works of importance in Australia's art history, concentrating originally on Colonial and Impressionist works. The collection later expanded to encompass Modern and Contemporary paintings and most of the important works are being included in this sale.

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The Bleasels have been significant patrons of the arts in Tasmania. Over recent years they commissioned and installed a major sculptural tableau on the Hobart waterfront as a gift to the people of Tasmania and its visitors. The sculptures are located on the land at water's edge and in the adjacent Derwent River.

The Bleasels are moving to a new home in Tasmania which is unable to accommodate the collection, thus precipitating this unique and important auction.

Hobart viewings will be at Salamanca Collection, 91A Salamanca Place, Hobart from Friday 25 February until Sunday 27 February.

Sydney viewings will be at Christie's, 287 New South Head Road, Edgecliff from Friday 11 until Monday 13 March.

Melbourne viewings will be held at Christie's, 1 Darling Street, South Yarra from Friday 18 March until Sunday 21 March.

All viewings are from 11.00am to 5.00pm daily.

The evening session commences at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 22 March. Catalogues are available now at Christie's offices.

*Visit our Website on
www.christies.com
Images available on request*