

**Press Release
For Immediate Release**

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**CHRISTIE'S TO AUCTION OVER \$4.5 MILLION WORTH
OF ART IN MELBOURNE ON NOVEMBER 25**

Melbourne, Australia – Jon Dwyer, Christie's Director, announced today that the company expects to achieve \$4.5 million in the final art sale of the 2003 season at the **Australian, International & Contemporary Art** auction at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 25 November.

Jon Dwyer said *"The strong offering in this November catalogue re-inforces Christie's dominance in Australian Modern and Contemporary art. Christie's continues to build on an exceptionally strong year which has to date seen 80.2% of stock sold by value with 75.7% sold by lot and a turnover of nearly \$21 million."*

Highlight works on offer include: **Jeffrey Smart's** *Airport at Night* \$150,000-200,000; **Charles Blackman's** *Schoolgirl Crying*, circa 1952 \$120,000-150,000; **Arthur Boyd's** *The White Cockatoo*, circa 1950 \$210,000-250,000; **William Robinson's** *Birkdale Farm with Jacaranda* \$150,000-200,000; two fine works by **Fred Williams** *The Botanist's Garden 1976* \$200,000-250,000 and *St Andrews (The Botanist's Garden)* \$150,000-200,000; **Garry Shead's** *Knighthoods* \$90,000-120,000; **Tim Storrier's** *Reef Dreaming*, 1985 \$70,000-90,000; **Russell Drysdale's** *Untitled, Last Painting* \$60,000-80,000; **Brett Whiteley's** *The River* \$65,000-85,000 and **Peter Purves Smith's** *Mother and Child*, 1939 \$35,000-45,000.

Contemporary highlights include: **Colin McCahon's** *Kaipara Flat* \$100,000-150,000; **Tim Maguire's** *Untitled 1997* \$180,000-220,000; **Emily Kngwarreye's** *A Carpeted Desert* \$90,000-120,000 and **Patricia Piccinini's** *Romance* (from 'Your Time Starts Now' series) \$40,000-60,000.

'Airport at Night', was painted by **Jeffrey Smart** in 1969-70, five years after the artist had settled permanently in Italy. Some of Smart's most memorable images were painted in this period during which he developed the hallmark found in all his significant paintings – his ability to make everyday events appear simultaneously strangely familiar and yet unnerving. He explores the tension and discomfort between humanity and the constructed world in his depiction of the remoteness of a solitary middle-aged woman amongst rows of empty airport seats. *It has a pre-sale estimate of \$150,000-200,000.*

'Schoolgirl Crying', circa 1952, by **Charles Blackman** is from his initial series of Schoolgirl paintings, a body of work that was to prove a foundation of his status as one of Australia's great artists of the post-war period. Blackman had come to live in Melbourne in 1950 and there seemed to him to be schoolgirls and schools everywhere. The atmosphere of impending violence in 'Schoolgirl' paintings of the series is perhaps most powerfully/2

expressed in *'Schoolgirl Crying'*. With the autobiographical character stripped of architectural and decorative hallmarks, it becomes an intensely psychological study of anguish in one of his earliest works exploring the theme. ***It has a pre-sale estimate of \$120,000-150,000.***

Christie's set a new auction record for a painting by **Timothy Maguire** in August this year. Encouraged by the surging demand for Maguire's work *'Untitled 1997'*, a dramatic floral diptych, has been consigned to this auction. It carries a ***pre-sale estimate of \$180,000-220,000.***

An unusual and important painting by **Fred Williams'**, *'The Botanist's Garden, 1976'*, is a vital and vibrant work of art which is emblematic of William's re-assessment of his approach to landscape painting which had begun in the early 1970s whereupon he increasingly dedicated himself to painting oils *en plein air*. A more personal and intimate landscape than that typically expressed in his depictions of forest, scrub and desert is exemplified in *'The Botanist's Garden'* and it demonstrates William's move towards a more descriptive and expressive landscape and a style he would continue to develop in the Kew Billabong series. *'The Botanist's Garden, 1976'* carries a ***pre-sale estimate of \$200,000-250,000.***

When **Russell Drysdale** passed away in 1981 an untitled painting, signed and with a studio stamp, was on his easel at the time of his death. The final painting, a gift from Drysdale to the present owner, is being sold with the artist's easel in this auction. *'Untitled'* demonstrates Drysdale's working method of laying down his characteristic palette of vibrant yellows, reds and black in long vigorous brushstrokes. These strong strokes and blocks of colour represent the underpainting from which Drysdale would paint layer and layer of translucent colour to create the finished work. The painting and easel are ***estimated to realise \$60,000-80,000.***

Australian, International and Contemporary Art will be on view 11am to 5pm daily in Sydney at Caspian Gallery, 469 Oxford Street, Paddington (*Selected Highlights Only*), from Friday 14 to Sunday 16 November. The entire collection will be on view in Melbourne at Christie's, 1 Darling Street, South Yarra, from Friday 21 to Monday 24 November. The sale will be conducted at 6.30pm on Tuesday 25 November at Nine Darling Street, South Yarra. Catalogues are available from Christie's offices.

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Images available on request