

PEDIGREE AND PANACHE

A History of the Art Auction in Australia

PEDIGREE AND PANACHE

A History of the Art Auction in Australia

Shireen Huda





Published by ANU E Press
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200, Australia
Email: anuepress@anu.edu.au
This title is also available online at: http://epress.anu.edu.au/pedigree_citation.html

National Library of Australia
Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry:

Author: Huda, Shireen Amber.
Title: Pedigree and panache : a history of the art auction in
Australia / Shireen Huda.
ISBN: 9781921313714 (pbk.) 9781921313721 (web)
Notes: Includes index.
Bibliography.
Subjects: Art auctions--Australia--History.
Art--Collectors and collecting--Australia.
Art--Prices--Australia.
Dewey Number: 702.994

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Cover design by Teresa Prowse

Cover image: John Webber, *A Portrait of Captain James Cook RN*, 1782, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 89.7 cm, Collection: National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Purchased by the Commonwealth Government with the generous assistance of Robert Oatley and John Schaeffer 2000.

Printed by University Printing Services, ANU

This edition © 2008 ANU E Press

Table of Contents

Preface	ix
Acknowledgements	xi
List of Figures	xiii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1. The International Context for Art Auctions	7
French Art Auctions	8
English Art Auctions	9
Dealers, Artists and Auctions	11
Nineteenth Century American Art Dealers/Auctioneers	12
Dealers' Rings	13
The Reputation of Auctions	15
Chapter 2. The Major London Auction Houses	19
Christie's	21
Bonhams and Phillips	26
Sotheby's	28
Chapter 3. Colonial and Early Australian Art Auctions	33
Art Unions and their Role in the Art Market	35
The Art Auction Market	37
Early Auction Houses — Gemmell, Tuckett & Co.	38
Thomas Sutcliffe Mort and Thomas Ware Smart: Two Collectors, their Agents and Auctioneers	40
Carl Kahler's Studio Auction	43
The Baldwin Spencer Collection	47
Chapter 4. Australian Art at Auction: the 1960s Market	55
Lawson's	55
The G. W. Eedy Sale	57
The W. A. Little Collection	57
The James T. Hackett Collection	58
The William Barclay Collection	59
The Norman Schureck Sale	60
Leonard Joel	66
The Charles Ruwolt Collection	67
The George Page-Cooper Sale	68
Trends in the Australian Art Auction Market in the 1960s and '70s	70
Chapter 5. Christie's Australia	77
Christie's Autonomy	79
Christie's Satellite and Telephone Link-up Sales	85

Christie's First Auction in Australia	86
The Como Sale	87
The 1971 Dobell Sale	88
The Major Harold De Vahl Rubin Sales	88
Christie's Retreat, Re-establishment and Restructure	90
The Trout Sale	92
The Dallhold Sale	94
The Mertz Sale	95
In Recent Times	98
Chapter 6. Sotheby's Australia	103
Robert Bleakley and the Establishment of Sotheby's in Australia	105
Sotheby's First Australian Sale — The Webber Portrait of Captain Cook	108
The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Market	112
Chapter 7. Art Auction Practices and Innovations	123
Buying-in	124
Setting the Rhythm	125
Referrals, Reserves and Estimates	125
Art Auction Catalogues	127
Art Education	130
Guarantees of Authenticity	131
Commissions/Buyer's Premium	132
<i>The Bath of Diana Sale</i>	134
Marketing and Glamorizing Art Auctions	136
Buyers at Auction	139
<i>The Mount Wellington and Hobart Town Sale</i>	140
Chapter 8. Other Major Art Auction Houses	149
F. R. Strange	149
Geoff K. Gray	150
Lawson's/Lawson-Menzies	153
Leonard Joel	157
Phillips/Shapiro Auctioneers	161
Goodmans/Bonhams & Goodman	163
Deutscher-Menzies	163
Sources	173
Interviews and Oral Histories	173
Art Auction Catalogues and Brochures	175
Christie's	175
Deutscher-Menzies	176
Gemmell, Tuckett & Co.	176
Geoff K. Gray	177

Hamilton & Miller	177
Lawson's	178
Lawson-Menzies	178
Leonard Joel	178
Phillips	179
Sotheby's	179
Exhibition Catalogues	182
Electronic Sources	184
Media Releases	186
Newspaper and Journal Articles	188
Books	224
Unpublished Theses	232
Unpublished Papers	233
Index	235