

Art market news: Tate acquires first Arthur Boyd

Bride Drinking from a Creek is the first painting by the eminent Australian artist Arthur Boyd to enter the Tate collection.

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A lifelong Daily Telegraph reader has left more than half a million pounds' worth of art to the nation, including the first ever painting by the eminent Australian artist Arthur Boyd to enter the Tate collection.

Ann Forsdyke (1913-2007) assembled her collection while working successively for the Whitechapel Art Gallery, Apollo magazine, and the British Museum. Before she died, she bequeathed her collection to the Art Fund, the arts charity that raises money to buy art for UK museums.



Arthur Boyd's Bride Drinking from a Creek

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The Fund is now to distribute the works to 15 different museums throughout the country, according to their needs and interests. The most valuable, at £250,000, is Arthur Boyd's Bride Drinking from a Creek (1960), an expressive image of an Aboriginal woman in Western bridal dress (right).

Boyd lived in England from 1959 until his death in 1999, and the painting fills a significant gap in the Tate's collection. Forsdyke's interest in Australian art was fostered through her experience working with Whitechapel director Bryan Robertson, who promoted new Australian art in the Sixties. Valued at £60,000 is Man by a Tree (1960) by Roy de Maistre, who lived in London from the 1930s and was associated with Francis Bacon. It has been bequeathed to the Leeds City Art Gallery, which owns several works by Bacon.

Other works in the collection were by Sidney Nolan, Henry Moore, and Prunella Clough.

Russian art sales in London last week totalled £54.5 million, nearly twice as much as last year, but still far short of the market peak in 2008. Several sales fell below their estimates, but dealers confirmed London was still the centre for the Russian market.

Modern Indian art was the main success story of the London auctions last week as Christie's sold all but 19 out of 223 lots for £12.5 million – a record for such sales. A collection of 152 works from the estate of Francis Newton Souza, who lived in England from 1949 until he died, largely unrecognised, in 2002, was almost a complete sell-out. With estimates set low because so much was on the market, bidding was plentiful, and the total of £5.4 million was double the amount Christie's had anticipated. In a further sale of Indian art, another £7 million was taken,

£3 million more than the estimate. Top price was £2.4 million for a large abstract painting by S.H. Raza. The painting set a record for any modern Indian work at auction, and was bought by the Delhi-based collector, Kiran Nadar, for her private museum in Noida. Nadar also bought the second- most expensive work in the sale, Falling Bird by Tyeb Mehta, for £1.1 million.

Richard Branson's brother-in-law, Robert Devereux, is to sell £4 million of modern British art from his extensive collection at Sotheby's in November to raise money for the African Arts Trust. CG

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