



Media Release

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Art auction will help Collection foster next generation artists

One of Australia's leading private art collections, established by accounting firm Lowensteins, is auctioning a significant proportion of its works – so it can collect more art.

Lowensteins will auction 255 works – about one-quarter of its Australian contemporary art collection – through Mossgreen in Melbourne on Tuesday 7 March.

Founder of the accounting firm, and long-time art collector, patron and commentator, Tom Lowenstein, said the auction was a necessary part of the life-cycle of a private collection that was committed to fostering the careers of Australian artists.

“We have been collecting Australian art since the 1970s, when I first came to know and work for John Olsen, arguably Australia's most famous living artist, whom I'm honoured to call a friend.

“Since then we have provided accounting advice to a wide variety of clients, many of whom are in the arts, including painters, sculptors, musicians, performers and writers.

“Collecting contemporary Australian art has become a passion, and one we are keen to continue. As Olsen has said, ‘art is an itch – it's an incurable disease’.

“Art is not to be stored, but to be shared with the public,” Mr Lowenstein said.

The Lowenstein Collection last sold-off works fifteen years ago when the firm restructured in 2002, creating capacity to collect and display new works.

The March auction will feature paintings, works on paper and sculpture by some of Australia's greatest artists including John Olsen, Charles Blackman, Brett Whiteley, Garry Shead, Tim Storrier, Ben Quilty, Robert Klippel and Akio Makigawa.

Many of the works in the auction were included in a book on the Lowenstein Collection, “*Accounting for Taste*”, published by Macmillan in 2013.

According to Lowenstein, deciding which works to part with was an agonising but necessary process, so that the Collection can continue to collect and display emerging and mid-term artists.

“Lowensteins is committed to its long-term support program for Australian art, which includes:

1. Collecting new works;

2. Sponsoring awards for emerging artists through art schools including the Victorian College of the Arts, Monash and Sydney Universities;
3. Lobbying Government on issues of significance to artists; and
4. Gifting of works to major institutions.

“This commitment will continue as I assume a Consulting role in the firm, together with my on-going Directorship, and handover day-to-day management responsibilities to fellow Directors Adam Micmacher and Evan Lowenstein, as Joint Managing Partners,” Mr Lowenstein said.

In June 2016, Lowensteins moved its Melbourne head office from St Kilda Road to new premises in South Melbourne, allowing an important rehang.

“The new hang in our Melbourne office has helped us to display that part of the Collection in the best manner possible.

“Because of our accounting work for, and long-term relationship with, many of Australia’s major artists, the works we collect are often among the artists’ best examples.

“But, as a Collection, we need to part with some of these much-loved works so we can continue to purchase and display new works by the next generation of artists.

“This auction will allow Lowensteins to add some new artists to our Collection, while sustaining our on-going support for those already represented,” Mr Lowenstein said.

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Images available upon request.

Interviews can be arranged with Tom Lowenstein, Evan Lowenstein and Adam Micmacher

Background

The Lowenstein Collection has been described by leading art academic and writer, Sasha Grishin, as “a remarkable collection ...which tells one particular story of the development of recent art in this country”.

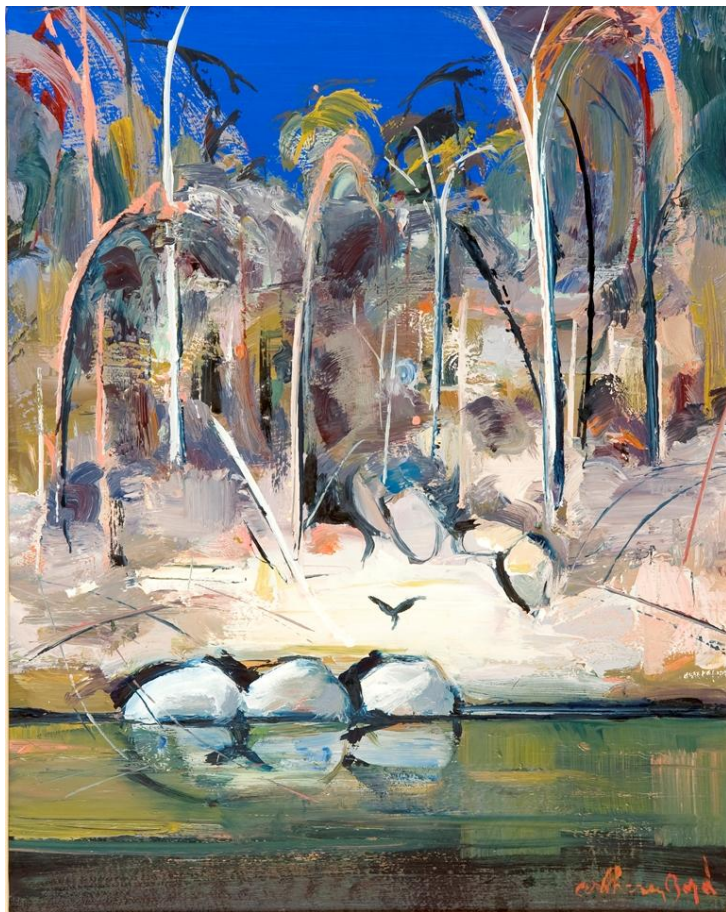
Grishin has referred to Tom Lowenstein as “the modern day patron saint of Australian artists”.

Born of a Jewish Slovak family, Lowenstein fled the Nazis in Europe, eventually arriving in Australia in 1948 as a 12-year old, with no English. Blessed with a brilliant head for figures, and a gregarious nature, Lowenstein developed a prominent accounting practice in Melbourne and Sydney, and came

to specialize in advising some of Australia's leading artists, many of whom became his life-long friends.

Lowenstein's artist clients are the who's who of Australian contemporary art over recent decades. Lowenstein, with business partners Evan Lowenstein and Adam Micmacher, developed close working and personal relationships with so many artists leading to the growth of their business and the creation of the Lowenstein Collection.

"Accounting for Taste", published by Macmillan Art Publishing in 2013, tells the story of the Lowenstein Collection, featuring 260 works by 137 artists, including Rick Amor, Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, Bill Henson, Robert Klippel, Margaret Olley, John Olsen, Ben Quilty, Garry Sheard, Sally Smart, Tim Storrier, Imants Tillers, Aida Tomescu, Danila Vassilieff, Jenny Watson and Brett Whiteley.



ARTHUR MERRIC BLOOMFIELD BOYD (1920-1999), *Shoalhaven*, circa 1980
oil on board, signed lower right: Arthur Boyd, 37 x 29.5 cm